



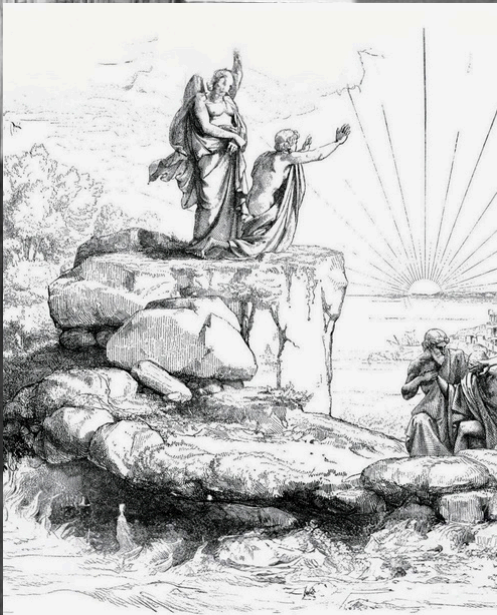
Department of Philosophy  
Gargi College  
Delhi University

ANNUAL MAGAZINE  
**G N O S I S**

31ST EDITION | 2025-26

ILLUSION  
AND  
REALITY :

BEYOND APPEARANCE,  
INTO TRUTH.



**Cover Design by:  
Muskan Singh, 2nd Year  
BA (Hons) Philosophy**



# CONCEPT NOTE

## *Illusion and Reality: Beyond Appearances, Into Truth*

The 31st edition of Gnosis, the annual magazine of the Department of Philosophy engages with the theme Illusion and Reality: Beyond Appearances, Into Truth.

This theme addresses a central philosophical concern the relationship between appearance and truth. Human understanding is often shaped by perceptions, assumptions and representations that may not fully correspond to reality. Philosophy, across traditions has continually examined how illusions arise, why they persist and how truth is approached through reflection and experience.

At the heart of this inquiry lie questions such as:

- How are perception and reality related?
- Why do illusions appear persuasive?
- How do social, cultural, and technological forces shape what we take to be real?

The theme allows engagement with classical ideas like Maya and skepticism, alongside contemporary contexts such as social media, cinema, artificial intelligence and algorithm-driven realities, where appearances are increasingly curated and mediated.

The tension between illusion and reality is also evident in everyday student life, where expectations often diverge from lived experience. Through this theme, Gnosis seeks to encourage philosophical inquiry beyond conventional academic writing, welcoming articles, creative writing, poetry, visual art and reflections.

This edition envisions Gnosis as a space where critical thought and creativity converge, inviting readers to question appearances and reflect on the complex relationship between illusion and reality.



# EDITOR'S NOTE

**Dear Reader,**

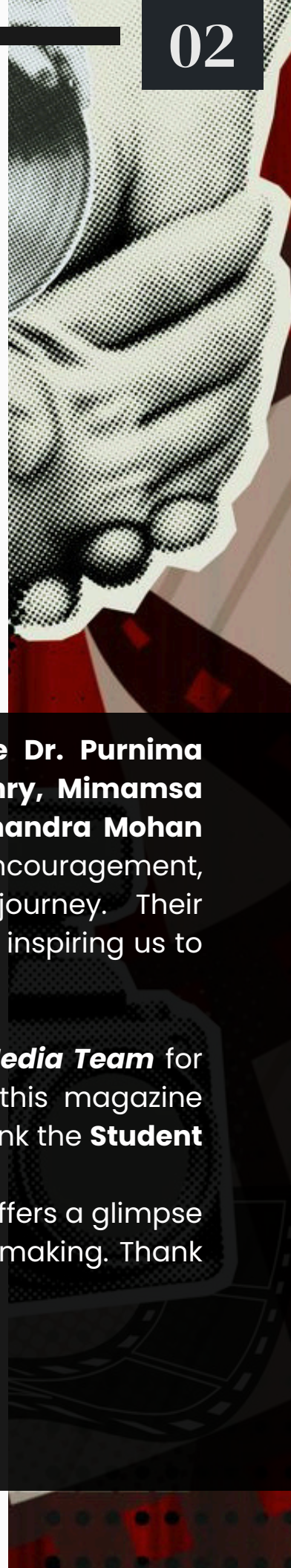
It is with immense pride and joy that we present this year's edition of our magazine. Curating this creative journey has been a truly enriching experience, filled with learning, collaboration and moments that have shaped us both as individuals and as a team. Each page reflects our shared passion, dedication and the vibrant spirit of expression that defines our association.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to **Teacher in Charge Dr. Purnima Agarwal** and **Association in Charge Ms. Saachi Chowdhry**, **Mimamsa Convenor Dr. Rashmi Bhardwaj** and **Co-Convenor Dr. Chandra Mohan Panday** and **other faculty members** for their constant encouragement, guidance and unwavering support throughout this journey. Their mentorship has been invaluable in shaping this edition and inspiring us to bring out our best.

A special note of appreciation goes to our **Creative and Media Team** for their dedication, creativity and tireless efforts in making this magazine visually engaging and meaningful. We would also like to thank the **Student Union** for their continued support and encouragement.

We sincerely hope that this edition resonates with you and offers a glimpse into the effort, creativity and enthusiasm that went into its making. Thank you for being a part of this journey.

Warm regards,  
Priyani Kanojia (Media Head)  
Sheetal Tomar (Creative Head)





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# DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

# UNION 2025-26



Department of Philosophy Student Union 2025-26 with  
Teacher-in-Charge Dr. Purnima Agarwal and  
Association-in-Charge Ms. Saachi Chowdhry.

# DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

# UNION 2025-26



**Madhushree**  
President



**Priyani Kanojia**  
Media Head



**Sheetal Tomar**  
Creative Head



**Tanisha**  
Treasurer



**Harshita**  
Mimamsa Convener



**Udit**  
Mimamsa Coconvener



DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

# UNION 2025-26



**Tamanna**  
1st year CR



**Khiyati**  
1st year CR



**Nikita Thakur**  
2nd year CR



**Simran**  
2nd year CR



**Nausheen**  
3rd Year CR



**Yogeshwary**  
3rd year CR



**Riya Yadav**  
4th year CR

# DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

# FACULTY



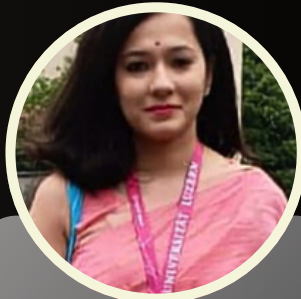
**PROF. REKHA NAVNEET**  
Professor



**DR. RASHMI BHARDWAJ**  
Associate Professor  
**Mimamsa Convenor**



**DR. PURNIMA AGRAWAL**  
Associate Professor  
**Teacher In Charge**



**MS. SAACHI CHOWDHRY**  
Assistant Professor  
**Association In Charge**



**MR. AMULYA GURUNG**  
Assistant Professor



**DR. DHARMENDER KUMAR**  
Assistant Professor



**DR. CHANDRA MOHAN PANDEY**  
Assistant Professor  
**Mimamsa Co - Convenor**



# *Department* **HIGHLIGHTS**



# Faculty Achievement



## Dr. Rekha Navneet

Dr. Rekha was featured by Doordarshan National for an upcoming documentary on Abhinavagupta and received certification for her publication in a high-indexed journal. Her paper titled "Philosophical Counselling" was also included as essential reading in Unit IV of a General Elective course in the eighth semester.

Under her supervision, two PhD scholars submitted their theses, and one scholar, Tanweer, was awarded a PhD following the successful completion of the viva voce. She also earned a Silver Medal in a teachers' race on Sports Day.







## Dr. Purnima Agrawal

Dr. Purnima Agrawal represented the department at a historic academic milestone by participating in the Centenary Session of the Indian Philosophical Congress (100 Years of IPC). The prestigious event was organized by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT Bombay from 9th to 12th December 2025. During this landmark session, she presented a research paper titled **"Ramanuja's View on Bhakti as Embedded in Jnana and Karma."** Her participation in this centenary celebration underscores her commitment to deepening Indian philosophical traditions and engaging with the national scholarly community.

## Ms. Saachi Chowdhry

Ms. Saachi Chowdhry contributed to community outreach through several initiatives. She organised a two-day outreach programme on 3rd and 4th October 2025, along with a donation drive on 29th and 30th September for children of Prayas Juvenile Aid Centre (JAC) Society and Welfare Home for Children.

She also organised a field trip on 18th March 2026 to the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) for first-year students, enabling them to explore the evolution of Indian art and engage with works of renowned artists.



# STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS



## Department of Philosophy – Annual Sports Day (SPIN'26)

The Department of Philosophy, Gargi College, achieved a significant milestone by securing the 3rd Position in the March Past for the first time at the Annual Sports Day, SPIN'26, organized by the Student Sports Council, Gargi College, University of Delhi, on 12 February 2026.



## Piyali Das (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)

Piyali Das, secured the 2nd Position in the 50m Flat Race at the Annual Sports Day, SPIN'26 (12 February 2026).





## Akshita Rathore (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)

Cadet Akshita Rathore has actively contributed to the NCC through participation in major national camps. She represented the Delhi Directorate at the Prime Minister's Rally (2024) as part of the cultural contingent. She also took part in the All India Girls Trekking Expedition (2024) in Himachal Pradesh, where she served as Cultural In-charge, demonstrating leadership and teamwork in challenging conditions.

Her shooting journey began at the All India Thal Sainik Camp (TSC) – 2024, where she participated in the Snap Shooting event. Based on her performance, she was selected for the Inter-Directorate Sports Shooting Competition (IDSSC) in Kolhapur, where she competed in the 50 m Rifle Peep Sight Prone Women event. She was the only cadet selected from SW for the DG NCC team and was the highest scorer from the Delhi Directorate.



She further competed in the All India GV Mavlankar Shooting Championship 2025 in Bhopal, securing All India Rank 8 and NCC Rank 4 with a score of 575/600. This achievement qualified her for the National Shooting Championship Competition (NSCC 2025).

At the 68th National Shooting Championship in Bhopal, she represented the DG NCC Shooting Team in both Junior and Senior Women categories. Scoring 611.9, she qualified for the National as well as Indian Team Selection Trials and secured Rank 1 among NCC shooters. Her consistent performance highlights her strong potential in shooting sports.



## Madhushree (3rd Year)

As a senior member of GlassEye, the college film society, Madhushree mentored the team for the production "Ka?", which served as the first official project for many members.

She co-directed, wrote, produced, and acted in the film, which utilizes an intersectional feminist lens. The work explores themes of divinity in an embodied and cathartic form, responding directly to the feminine experience of violence in public spaces.

Under her leadership, the film achieved notable success across the film circuit, securing 1st Prize (Best Film) at RAY-S, 35MM (VIPS), Karwaan, QISSA (MAC), and Chalchitra, Celluloid (Miranda House), along with Special Mentions for Best Story and Best Writing. It also won 2nd Prize at Chitragaatha 2.0 (Vivekananda College) and earned a Special Mention at the Short Filmmaking Competition WDC (KNC). Additionally, she secured 2nd Prize at "Final Draft," a 4-hour on-the-spot filmmaking competition organized by SVC, AUD.



## Khushi Lohchab (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)

Khushi Lohchab, secured the 3rd Position in the Tark Winger Online Conventional Debate Competition (22 February 2026), reflecting excellence in oratory and critical thinking.



## Udita Negi (2<sup>nd</sup> Year)

Udita Negi, has excelled in both academics and debating. She secured 3rd Prize at Miranda House, Runner-Up at Aurobindo College, a Consolation Prize at Deshbandhu College, and Best Speaker (Hindi) at Ramanujan College. She has also maintained a CGPA of 8.45, secured 9th Rank in South Campus, and received the Gargi College Award for Excellence, reflecting her all-round achievement and dedication.





## Faeza (1<sup>st</sup> Year)

Faeza, has showcased exceptional talent in inter-college cultural competitions. She secured 2nd Position at Innosta (Miranda House, 12 November 2025), 3rd Position at Kalakriti (DTU, 29 January 2026), 1st Position at Celluloid Dreams (Sri Venkateswara College, 18 February 2026), and 1st Position at Mosaic (NSUT, 1 March 2026). Her consistent achievements reflect creativity, dedication, and excellence in the cultural sphere.



## Himanshu (1<sup>st</sup> Year)

Himanshu secured 1st position in the Poster Making Competition (Senior Wing) at the inter-college NCC Fest SARVATRA'26 held at Motilal Nehru College. Her achievement reflects her creativity and active participation in co-curricular activities.



## Pari Bansal (1<sup>st</sup> Year)

Pari Bansal, has shown active participation in NCC and cultural activities. She represented her contingent at the Prime Minister's Rally (PMR), performing at the Cariappa Parade Ground alongside 500 cadets. In addition, she secured 1st Position in a Group Dance Competition, reflecting her enthusiasm and talent in cultural events.



## Aradhya (1<sup>st</sup> Year)

Aradhya, has demonstrated commendable involvement in NCC and cultural platforms. She represented at the Prime Minister's Rally (PMR), performing at the Cariappa Parade Ground with 500 cadets, and also secured 1st Position in a Group Dance Competition, highlighting her dedication and team spirit.

# NOTABLE ALUMNI

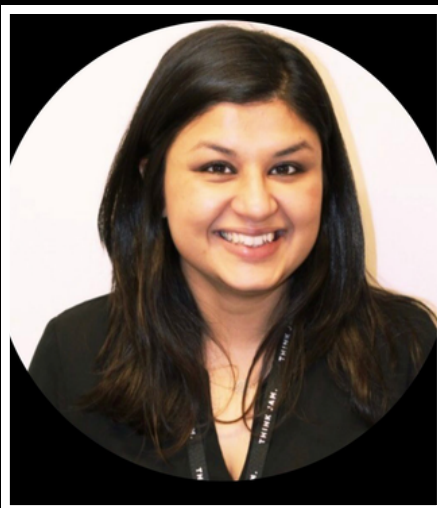


## **NIDHI SINHA**

COMMONWEALTH SCHOLAR  
HEAD, PROSPECT DEVELOPMENT  
MANAGER

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

YEAR OF PASSING: 2006



## **VIDHU DUTT**

EUROPE PRACTICE LEAD-  
MARKETING TRANSFORMATION  
,ECCENTURE , UK

YEAR OF PASSING: 2007



## **SWATTI KAPOOR**

FASHION DESIGNER

YEAR OF PASSING: 2012



## **DR SHIVANI SHARMA**

TEACHING FACULTY, IILM  
UNIVERSITY GURUGRAM

YEAR OF PASSING: 2012



## **PRAGYA GHOSH**

ODISSI DANCER AND A SENIOR  
DISCIPLE OF THE RENOWNED  
PADMASHREE RANJANA GAUHAR

YEAR OF PASSING: 2016



## **VRINDA CHADDHA**

ODISSI PERFORMING ARTIST

YEAR OF PASSING: 2017



# NOTABLE ALUMNI



## ALVIA SYED

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER

YEAR OF PASSING: 2021



## EKTA KUMARI

FOUNDER  
& DIRECTOR OF HER SQUARE FEET

YEAR OF PASSING: 2021



## DIVYA YADAV

ASSOCIATE, AQUILAS LEGAL SOLUTIONS LLP

YEAR OF PASSING: 2022



## RIDDHI RAGHUVANSHI

FOUNDERS OFFICE ANALYST,  
QUICKCLEAN LAUNDRY SYSTEMS

YEAR OF PASSING: 2022



## SAPNA SRINIVASAN

AUTHOR

YEAR OF PASSING:



## DR. SURBHI UNIYAL

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,  
BENNETT UNIVERSITY

YEAR OF PASSING:





*Department*  
**EVENTS**

# Community outreach

The department launched a vibrant and impactful two-day community outreach event, **“Threads of Tomorrow: Weaving Creativity and Care.”** This initiative was thoughtfully organised in collaboration with two esteemed organisations: **Prayas Juvenile Aid Centre (JAC) Society** on the first day and **Welfare Home for Children** on the second. By bringing creative and mindful activities directly into the heart of these institutions, the department aimed to foster a sense of belonging and joy among the children, meeting them in their own spaces and responding to their unique needs. The event was designed not only to engage the children in artistic expression but also to nurture emotional well-being and encourage positive social interaction.







On Day 1 (3rd October'25), children of varying ages, including both pre-teens and teenagers, enthusiastically participated in hands-on candle and diya painting activities. Many children expressed their excitement as they experimented with colours and designs, resulting in beautifully decorated candles and diyas that they could proudly call their own. Volunteers guided the children through each step.

On Day 2 (4th October '25), children aged six and below were introduced to important life lessons through a series of fun, interactive, and engaging activities. These sessions were thoughtfully designed to make learning enjoyable and meaningful, allowing the children to absorb values in a way that was both memorable and impactful. For the volunteers, the experience proved to be deeply moving, enjoyable, and fulfilling.





## Donation Drive

In addition, a two-day donation drive was successfully organised from 29th September to 30th September by the students of the department. The drive focused on collecting essential stationery items and festive supplies, carefully selected in accordance with the specific needs of the orphanage. The initiative witnessed enthusiastic participation and reflected a strong sense of empathy and social responsibility among the students. Through this collective effort, the department was able to extend meaningful support to the children of Prayas Juvenile Aid Centre (JAC) Society and Welfare Home for Children, contributing not only to their immediate needs but also to the spirit of care and inclusivity.



## Field Trip

The Department of Philosophy organized a field trip for first-year students of General Elective course, Art and Film Appreciation, to the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) on 18th March 2026. The students got an opportunity to observe our country's artistic evolution from 1850 till present, exploring the work of renowned Indian artist like Amrita Sher Gil, Raja Ravi Verma, Jamini Roy, Rabindranath Tagore, Satish Gujral, M F Hussain to name a few. The visit enabled students to engage with modern and contemporary works, with a focus on visual narratives and their relation to artistic practices.



# MIMAMSA



Mimamsa 2025–26: Teacher Convenor Dr. Rashmi Bhardwaj and Co-Convenor Dr. Chandra Mohan Panday, Student Convenor Harshita and Co-Convenor Udit.

Mimamsa, the Philosophical Society of Gargi College, stands as a vibrant space where ideas are not merely discussed but truly experienced, questioned, and transformed. Rooted in the spirit of inquiry that defines philosophy itself, Mimamsa seeks to cultivate a community of thinkers who are curious, reflective, and unafraid to challenge the familiar. It is a platform where dialogue becomes a tool for discovery and where diverse perspectives converge to create deeper understanding.

At its core, Mimamsa encourages students to move beyond passive learning and actively engage with philosophical thought. Through discussions, debates, and collaborative exploration, it enables individuals to articulate their ideas with clarity while remaining open to the viewpoints of others.

This dynamic exchange not only sharpens critical and analytical abilities but also fosters intellectual humility and empathy—qualities essential to meaningful philosophical engagement.

More than an academic forum, Mimamsa nurtures a culture of thoughtful listening and respectful disagreement. It inspires students to examine complex questions about existence, morality, society, and knowledge, while grounding these reflections in lived experiences. In doing so, it bridges the gap between theory and practice, making philosophy both relevant and accessible.

It is not just a society, but a space where ideas find voice, minds find connection, and philosophy finds life.



# SESSIONS



## Session 1: 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2025

### Meaning and Fulfillment of Human Life by Angie Hobbes

The question of what gives human life meaning has long occupied the heart of Philosophy, and in this context, Angie Hobbs offers a rich and nuanced perspective. She invites us to look beyond mere survival or material success, emphasizing instead the importance of purpose, virtue, relationships, and intellectual growth. Her approach beautifully blends ancient philosophical insights with modern concerns, encouraging us to seek not just happiness, but a deeper sense of meaning and flourishing in our lives.

## Session 2: 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2025

### Animal Rights around the world by Neil Clarke

Humans have long exploited, abused, and harmed animals, treating them as mere resources. It invites us to expand our circle of concern beyond human interests and reflect on justice, compassion, and the intrinsic value of all living beings. In this spirit, Animal Rights Around the World by Neil Clarke explores the evolving ethical and legal recognition of animals across different cultures and nations.



## Session 3: 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2025

### Production and Consumption Ethics by Bob Fischer

Each of us sees ourselves as beings with inherent value and expects recognition and respect from others. Bob Fischer explores the ethical dimensions of everyday choices through the lens of production and consumption, urging us to see how our seemingly private actions are deeply entangled with broader systems of harm and responsibility.



## Session 4: 19<sup>th</sup> November , 2025

### Managing an Ethical Dilemma by Nadia Figer and Biljana dordevic

Philosophy has always been the quiet compass of human life guiding us through uncertainty, questioning what is right, and illuminating the path between duty and desire. Ethical dilemmas arise when individuals must choose between conflicting alternatives that impact multiple stakeholders, including agents (decision makers), principals (those represented), and the broader public.



## Session 5: 21<sup>st</sup> January , 2026

### Freedom and Determinism and its Moral Consequences by Akinola Fagbemi

This session examined the conceptual tension between freedom and determinism through a critical analysis of their definitions and major philosophical positions. It focused on the implications of this debate for the notion of moral responsibility.



## Session 6: 1<sup>st</sup> April , 2026

### Changing dynamic and evolving relationship Norms in modern Times

Family dynamics are undergoing a significant transformation driven by generational change. While Millennials act as a transitional group balancing tradition and modernity, Gen Z is leading a shift toward more flexible, inclusive, and digitally influenced relationship norms. These changes have important implications for social institutions, workplace policies, and family support systems, which must adapt to align with the evolving expectations of younger generations





# *Heart of the* **MATTER**

# BEYOND APPEARANCE INTO TRUTH

- Nikita Thakur  
2nd year  
B.A.(H) Philosophy

Human experience is never as simple as it appears. What we take to be real is often shaped by perception, expectation and context making it difficult to draw a clear line between what is and what merely seems to be. This tension between appearance and truth has occupied philosophers across traditions raising a fundamental question: do we encounter reality directly or only through layers of illusion that filter and reshape it? The distinction between illusion and reality therefore, is not merely a conceptual exercise but a central problem in epistemology the study of knowledge. Illusion and reality are frequently understood as opposites.

However, a deeper philosophical inquiry reveals that they function less as binaries and more as interdependent layers of experience. Illusion may be described as that which appears to consciousness what is perceived, assumed, or constructed while reality refers to what exists independently of such appearances. Yet this distinction is not as stable as it initially seems.

As Immanuel Kant argues in Critique of Pure Reason (1781), human beings do not have access to things as they are in themselves ( noumena) but only to things as they appear to us( phenomena). This suggests that what we call "reality" is always mediated by the structures of human cognition.

Illusion in this sense, is not simply an error or deception but an unavoidable feature of how knowledge is constituted. A similar insight can be found in Indian philosophy, particularly in the concept of Maya as articulated by Adi Shankaracharya. According to Advaita Vedānta, the world we experience is not absolutely unreal but relatively real it appears in a certain way due to ignorance( avidya).

The well-known example of mistaking a rope for a snake illustrates that illusion arises not from non-existence but from misinterpretation. Reality is not absent, it is misunderstood.



In Western philosophy, the tension between illusion and reality is powerfully illustrated in Plato's allegory of the cave in *The Republic*. The prisoners confined to seeing only shadows take these shadows to be the whole of reality. Their condition reflects the human tendency to accept appearances uncritically, mistaking partial truths for complete ones. For Plato, the movement toward reality requires intellectual effort – a turning away from illusion toward deeper understanding. In the contemporary world, this philosophical problem has become even more complex.

Social media for instance, constructs a reality that is curated and selective, presenting edited fragments of life as complete narratives. These representations are not entirely false yet they create a powerful illusion by omitting struggle, failure and contradiction. As a result, individuals often internalize these images as standards of reality leading to distorted self-perception. This condition aligns with Jean Baudrillard's analysis in *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981), where he argues that modern society is dominated by simulacra representations that no longer refer to an original reality.

In such a "hyperreal" world, the distinction between illusion and reality collapses and what is artificial begins to feel more authentic than what is real. Technological developments such as artificial intelligence further intensify this uncertainty. Deepfakes, generated content, and algorithm-driven realities challenge the reliability of perception itself. This recalls the skepticism of René Descartes in *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641), where he questions whether the senses can ever provide certain knowledge. What was once a philosophical doubt has now become a practical concern in everyday life. Despite its problematic aspects illusion is not merely deceptive.

It also plays a constructive role in human existence. Art, literature, and imagination depend on forms of illusion that while not literally real, express deeper truths about human life. As Friedrich Nietzsche suggests in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), illusion can be life-affirming allowing individuals to engage meaningfully with an otherwise chaotic reality.

At the same time, human vulnerability makes illusion particularly persuasive. People tend to believe what aligns with their expectations and emotions which is why misinformation, stereotypes and ideological narratives can easily take hold. In this sense illusion is not just an individual cognitive error but also a social and political phenomenon as seen in Karl Marx's critique of ideology in *The German Ideology*.

Ultimately, the relationship between illusion and reality cannot be reduced to a simple opposition. Reality is not immediately given but gradually revealed often through the correction of illusions

At the same time, illusion cannot be entirely eliminated as it is embedded in the very conditions of human perception. To move "beyond appearances, into truth" is therefore not to reject illusion completely but to become critically aware of it. It involves questioning what is presented as real, examining the processes through which perception is shaped and remaining open to revision.

Truth in this sense, is not a fixed destination but an ongoing process of inquiry. In conclusion, the theme of illusion and reality offers a profound framework for understanding both philosophical traditions and contemporary life. It reminds us that what we see is not always what is and that the pursuit of truth requires both skepticism and curiosity. By recognizing the limits of perception, we do not abandon reality rather we approach it more thoughtfully moving gradually from appearance toward a deeper and more reflective understanding of truth.

# “IF”

- Aaradhya Gupta  
1st year  
B.A.(H) Philosophy

If Humans and their connection with 'if' have always been there since ages. Their minds revolve around the other possibilities which aren't even existing in the true world (the world they see). In the factual surrounding, they bring the word, 'if'. Humans live in the reality while back in the mind, they get thoughts of it, which makes them delusional. But is it a delusion? Or just a thought that might have been true. It's a fact that people are never happy enough with the 'whatever' they choose. They usually think of the other choices while continuing with the one to chose, because of which, they never actually enjoy what they have. As the famous quote says, "Grass is always greener on the other side." The other choices might look tempting but that's not the reality anymore. It's just in the head.

Humans and their connection with 'if' have always been there since ages. Their minds revolve around the other possibilities which aren't even existing in the true world (the world they see). In the factual surrounding, they bring the word, 'if'. Humans live in the reality while back in the mind, they get thoughts of it, which makes them delusional. But is it a delusion? Or just a thought that might have been true. It's a fact that people are never happy enough with the 'whatever' they choose. They usually think of the other choices while continuing with the one they chose, because of which, they never actually enjoy what they have. As the famous quote says, "Grass is always greener on the other side." The other choices might look tempting but that's not the reality anymore. It's just in the head.

What if I chose that course, what if I gave that exam, what if I didn't do that, and what ifs, what ifs, what ifs with a lot of that. The consecutive path which might have led to different outcomes, better than the current situation. The reality might hurt for a while but that doesn't conclude that the whole choice is wrong. People start to blame themselves, doubting and cursing. It's never wrong to think about the parallel things but ignoring the reality is. There is no guarantee that whatever would have been, it would have been great. Before taking any decision, people should think twice, but once implemented there should be no doubts. Because the decision you took, might not look right at that particular point but in future it will give you the answers. But the decision should be ethical.





As the Greek philosopher Parmenides states that one can only think and talk of the existing world not the one that is non-existing. Just like that, everyone in their life should think about what is existing, what has already happened not what it would have been. The other path always looks smoother and way better than what it is currently because that's the human tendency, it always looks on the better side of others plate, forgetting the struggles whereas remembering their own struggles and forgetting their pros. Life has always been pretty much unpredictable, so one can never actually calculate the moves and work accordingly. You have to be always prepared about the uncertain things.

If one plan doesn't work out, go for another. Try again and again, but just thinking about the failed /unsuccessful plan every time or the imaginative one that would have been, will just make one, sad and think of himself as unworthy. Being creative and thinking about the other route is not wrong, but just being there and questioning everything with 'what if' is. One should always be grateful about what they have right now and not what they don't possess. As "what if you didn't have this too".



# GLITCH IN THE MATRIX

## WHO MUST PAY THE COST OF NARRATIVE DISRUPTION BY HAVING THEIR COMPLEXITY ERASED?

- Madhushree singh  
3rd year  
ba(h) philosophy

In March 2026, the Indian state performed a system-wide reboot. With the passage of the Transgender Persons Amendment Act, the Right to Self-Identification, present even in the 2014 NALSA judgement, and once hailed as a landmark of personal liberty, was deleted from the legal code. In its place, a Medical Board was installed as the new Architect of identity. For thousands of trans-men, genderqueer individuals, and non-binary folk, their legal existence was effectively patched out of the system. This isn't just a legislative change; it is an ontological erasure and a refusal to account for the complexity of a Glitch that refuses to be coded into a binary machine.

This is not an issue that only impacts trans and queer people. It is not simply about the subsequent path this Bill opens for the erasure of other identities. Rather, the situation itself must raise a fundamental question: Why must someone's lack of understanding cost me my whole truth?

There is an iconic moment in *The Matrix* (1999) where the protagonist is offered a red pill and a blue pill. The red pill represents the harsh, visceral truth; the blue pill represents the comfort of illusions.

Ironically, in modern online discourse, this analogy has been co-opted by the "manosphere" to frame political conservatism as the "red pill," while progressive ideas are dismissed as "blue pill" corruptions. The deeper irony lies in the fact that *The Matrix* was created by the Wachowskis, who are trans women; they have explicitly stated the film is a metaphor for the trans experience and the fluidity of identity. To see this allegory used to impose rigid binaries is a huge and disturbing example of Narrative Hijacking. It forces us to ask: Who gets to tell stories, and which ones continue to "legitimately" shape our worldview? When the dominant culture steals the language of the marginalized to reinforce the cage, it performs a double theft. First of the right to exist, and second of the right to describe that existence.

It is a profound manifestation of epistemic injustice when a narrative is constructed by those standing entirely outside the lived experience it seeks to define. While imagination can stretch across centuries and galaxies, it often fails to account for the situated knowledge of a life lived in the margins.

What is the impact of this distance? It creates a vacuum where knowledge from lived experience is replaced by how the dominant observer relates to the subject. This, for instance, becomes the core of the Male Gaze in cinema as described by Mulvey; it is less about seeing women and more about projecting a specific relation to them, as one of sexual objectification.

Similarly, when a cis-heteronormative framework attempts to 'account' for queer and trans lives, it often does so through a lens of Othering. The truth of the marginalized is swapped for a correlation of how the observer feels about them; as an oddity to be studied, a fraud to be feared, or a 'device' to be managed.

When this deficit of understanding becomes the word of law, it is no longer just "bad art" or a "ridiculous trope." It becomes a systemic weed that uproots lives. If you identify as a feminist or even prefer identifying as someone who believes in gender equality, you must consider: Why is it easier for us to oppose the imposition of gender roles than the imposition of gender itself?

Judith Butler's theory of Gender Performativity is often misunderstood as "gender as performance." A performance implies an actor who exists before they step onto a stage to put on a costume. Butler's performativity, however, is a "stylized repetition of acts" over time that actually creates the subject. There is no "true self" behind the gender; rather, the way we talk, walk, and dress produces the illusion of a stable internal identity.

Butler identifies the Heterosexual Matrix (or Matrix of Intelligibility) as a rigid, artificial connection between biological sex, gender identity, and sexual desire. Any act that does not adhere to these norms is labeled "deviant" and punished. We see this play out in society like Method Acting: the cis-performers (and the audience) get so engrossed in the role that they forget they are playing one. In this powerplay, any seemingly subversive expression is delegitimized as "fake" or "bad acting" because it disrupts the audience's comfort in the illusion. The 2026 Act adds a lethal layer to this powerplay.

Subversive gender expression now requires confirmation from law and medicine to acquire social legitimacy. Individuals are put under a microscope to perform a specific form of distress (gender dysphoria) or to show features of legitimacy that satisfy the Architect's standards whether that is biological (intersex status/surgeries) or cultural (legitimized communities like the Hijra or Kinnar, among others, whose identities are boxed into a state-sanctioned 'manageableness' through the strategic invocation of myth). This puts into question one's right to dignity and interiority. It forces a person to integrate their complex narrative of resistance into a narrow, handed-down language. It demands that the Glitch to explain itself to the very system that created the error.



We must ask: Is the Glitch something to be "fixed," or is the real glitch the unidentified lens that taints our view? In filmmaking, a badly done color grade can make essential parts of a scene appear washed out or distorted. Our current societal "color grade" is a cis-heteronormative overlay that makes diverse identities appear as errors. Genderqueer persons are not oddities seeking benevolence or pity. They are the ones constantly breaking through the Matrix. They are the reminder that the system is an authored illusion.

As the Architects attempt another reboot, the Glitches will remain. They are not a failure of the system; they are the evidence that a different, more complex reality exists beyond the code. Hopefully, with solidarity, we can finally begin to see the Glitch for what it is: the most honest part of the machine.

## A Mini Trans-Matrix Parallels Index

The Wachowski sisters, Lana and Lilly, have confirmed that The Matrix was originally intended as a transgender allegory, created from a "closeted point of view". The film centres on themes of self-actualization, escaping a false binary, and transforming into one's true self.

Here are five interesting parallels between The Matrix and the trans experience:-

| Element in The Matrix       | The Transgender Parallel     |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| The Red Pill                | Hormone Therapy(HRT)         |
| The "Splinter in the Mind"  | Gender Dysphoria             |
| Agent Smith / "Mr.Anderson" | Deadnaming & Enforced Binary |
| Switch (The Character)      | Gender Fluidity              |
| Residual Self-Image         | Internal Identity            |
| The Architect               | Systemic Cisnormativity      |

### Philosophical/Lived Reality

In the '90s, the most common estrogen (Premarin) was a literal red pill. Choosing it represents the point of no return in transition.

Morpheus describes a nagging sense that "something is wrong with the world." This mirrors the persistent misalignment between internal identity and assigned gender.

Smith's refusal to call Neo by his chosen name represents the system's insistence on a "legal" or "birth" identity over a self-identified one.

Originally written to be a woman in the Matrix and a man in the real world, Switch embodies the "Glitch" that disrupts the binary code.

In the construct, you appear as your "mental projection." This reflects the trans experience of an internal self that exists independently of the "official" biological record.

The creator of the Matrix who demands logic, balance, and binaries. He views any deviation (The One/The Glitch) as an anomaly to be "balanced" or deleted.



# "DO YOU DREAM IN PIXELS?"

- Radhika Bhargav  
2nd year  
B.A.(H) English

In a time when the glow of screens often lasts longer than the colors of a sunset, an interesting question quietly appears: do we now dream in pixels? Much of our daily life happens through screens: phones, laptops, and tablets, where moments are captured, shared, and judged through likes, comments, and endless scrolling. The digital world surrounds us with images and voices that feel immediate and real. But these images are rarely simple reflections of reality. They are filtered, edited, and carefully chosen, while algorithms silently decide what we see and what stays hidden. This gap between what seems real and what actually is real is not a new concern. Long before social media or artificial intelligence existed, philosophers were already wondering whether human beings ever experience reality exactly as it truly is.

The ancient Greek philosopher Plato explored this problem through one of the most famous ideas in philosophy: the Allegory of the Cave, described in his book *The Republic*. In this story, a group of prisoners spend their entire lives chained inside a cave, watching shadows move across a wall. Because these shadows are all they have ever seen, they believe them to be reality itself.

Plato used this image to show something troubling about human perception: what we accept as truth may only be a shadow of something deeper. When we look at the modern world, this idea begins to feel surprisingly familiar. Today, many of our encounters with the world come through screens filled with photographs, videos, and stories shaped by digital platforms.

Like the prisoners in the cave, we often accept these images without stopping to question how they were created or what might exist behind them.





If Plato questioned what we see, the philosopher René Descartes took that doubt even further. In his work *Meditations on First Philosophy*, he wondered whether our senses can ever be fully trusted. Descartes raised a simple but unsettling question: how can we be sure that our waking life is not just another kind of dream?

At the time, this idea was mainly a philosophical exercise meant to test how certain our knowledge really is. But in the twenty-first century, his doubt feels surprisingly relevant. Modern technology can create images and voices that look and sound incredibly real. Virtual reality can place people inside convincing artificial worlds, and deepfake technology can generate videos where someone appears to say or do things that never actually happened. In a world like this, Descartes' question no longer feels purely philosophical. When images themselves can be manufactured, telling the difference between reality and illusion becomes something we face in everyday life.

Even if reality exists on its own, philosophers have long argued that human beings never experience it directly. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant explained this idea in his work *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant believed that the world we experience is partly shaped by the way our minds understand and organize it. He made a distinction between the phenomenal world, the world as it appears to us and the noumenal world, which is reality as it exists beyond our perception. In other words, we never see the world exactly as it is; we see it through the lens of our own minds. Our thoughts, experiences, and mental structures shape how reality appears to us. When we think about this idea in today's digital world, another layer becomes clear. Algorithms quietly arrange the information we see online, deciding which posts appear in our feeds and which stories receive attention. In this way, technology does more than simply show us reality, it also helps shape the version of reality that we experience.

The idea that reality itself may resemble an illusion is not limited to Western philosophy. Within the Advaita Vedanta tradition, the Indian philosopher Adi Shankaracharya described the world as *Maya*, a cosmic illusion that conceals a deeper unity of existence. From this perspective, the distinctions people perceive between objects, identities, and experiences are temporary appearances rather than ultimate truths. When considered alongside the culture of social media, this concept begins to feel surprisingly contemporary.



Online identities are often carefully constructed through photographs, captions, and fragments of personal narrative. Profiles present edited versions of life, highlighting moments of beauty, happiness, or success while quietly concealing uncertainty and vulnerability. The result is a digital self that can resemble a mask, an image presented to the world that feels convincing but reveals only part of the truth.

Modern thinkers have taken this idea even further while reflecting on media and representation. The French philosopher Jean Baudrillard argued in his book *Simulacra and Simulation* that modern society has entered a condition he called hyperreality. In this state, simulations do more than represent reality, they begin to replace it. Images and representations start to carry more influence than the realities they were meant to show. The digital world offers many clear examples of this idea. Virtual influencers such as Lil Miquela have millions of followers even though they are not real human beings. Artificial intelligence can now generate faces, music, and writing that appear convincingly human. In situations like these, the line between what is real and what is artificial becomes harder to see. What often matters less is whether something is truly real and more whether it simply appears believable.

Yet the digital age reveals something else about human participation in illusion. Unlike the prisoners in Plato's cave, modern individuals are not merely passive observers of shadows; they actively participate in creating them. Every edited photograph, every carefully chosen caption, and every filtered video contributes to the shaping of digital reality. People become both the audience and the architects of illusion. Literature has long explored this human tendency toward self-creation and reinvention. In *The Great Gatsby*, the mysterious figure of Jay Gatsby constructs a dazzling identity in order to hide the uncertainty of his past. His life becomes a carefully arranged performance shaped by dreams and appearances. In many ways, the digital world allows millions of people to attempt a similar transformation, crafting identities that exist somewhere between aspiration and reality.

Seen in this broader philosophical context, the question "Do you dream in pixels?" becomes less an accusation against technology and more an invitation to reflect. Long before the emergence of the internet, thinkers such as Plato, René Descartes, Immanuel Kant, and Adi Shankaracharya recognized that human beings live within layers of perception, interpretation, and belief. Illusion has always been part of the human condition. What the digital age has done is intensify these layers, placing them directly into everyday life through screens, algorithms, and simulated identities.



The challenge of the modern world, therefore, may not be to escape illusion entirely. Perhaps that has never been possible. Instead, the deeper task is to remain aware of the forces that shape what we see and what we come to believe. Awareness, reflection, and philosophical curiosity become essential tools for navigating a world in which images can be manufactured and identities performed. In a landscape illuminated by pixels and algorithms, philosophy becomes a form of wakefulness. And perhaps the most meaningful response to the digital world is simply to keep asking a question that has echoed through centuries of thought: what part of what we see is real, and what part are we choosing to believe?



# THE HIDDEN

# REAL

In morning light, the world awakes,  
Shadows dance on walls so near,  
We chase the shapes our eyes mistake,  
But truth hides still, both far and clear.

The mirror shows a smiling face,  
Yet whispers doubt beneath the skin,  
What we see is a lie,  
The truth remains behind the veil.

Dreams weave gold in empty space,  
Reality pulls the strings within.

Lift the veil, let illusions fade,  
What's real remains, steady and true,  
In heart's quiet, the light is made,  
No more tricks-the world's anew.

- Misha Pankaj  
2nd year  
B.A.(H) Philosophy





# THE OTHER ME

Rain-streaked glasses and a cold, sombre wind  
Snuck its way into a world long forgotten.  
A childhood home painted with silent rage, A coffee table  
with stories of yearning dreams.

She sits there, a silhouette against the pane,  
Curled in the chair where the window meets the sill,  
Her gaze fixed on a land far away,  
In the anonymity of trees, by evening's chill.

A frosted breath drifts through the gap, Whispering a  
silent tongue-  
Bereft of warmth, colder than death. Uncertain of her  
feelings, she sits unfazed, As I, the shadow corrupted  
within, step ahead.

Compelled to draw nearer, but my feet wouldn't move.  
A soft breeze pulls me near-  
Yet my courage knows no hand that isn't fear.

Enveloped by darkness for a lifetime,  
Light is the serpent I have never met.  
But she is luminescent, soft, and bright  
A scene so serene, yet draped in fright.

A story lingers in her stillness, waiting to be told. With a  
doll in her lap,  
She awaits a childhood in books.  
Her fear, her screams, her cries in my head Is this the call  
my weary soul must take?

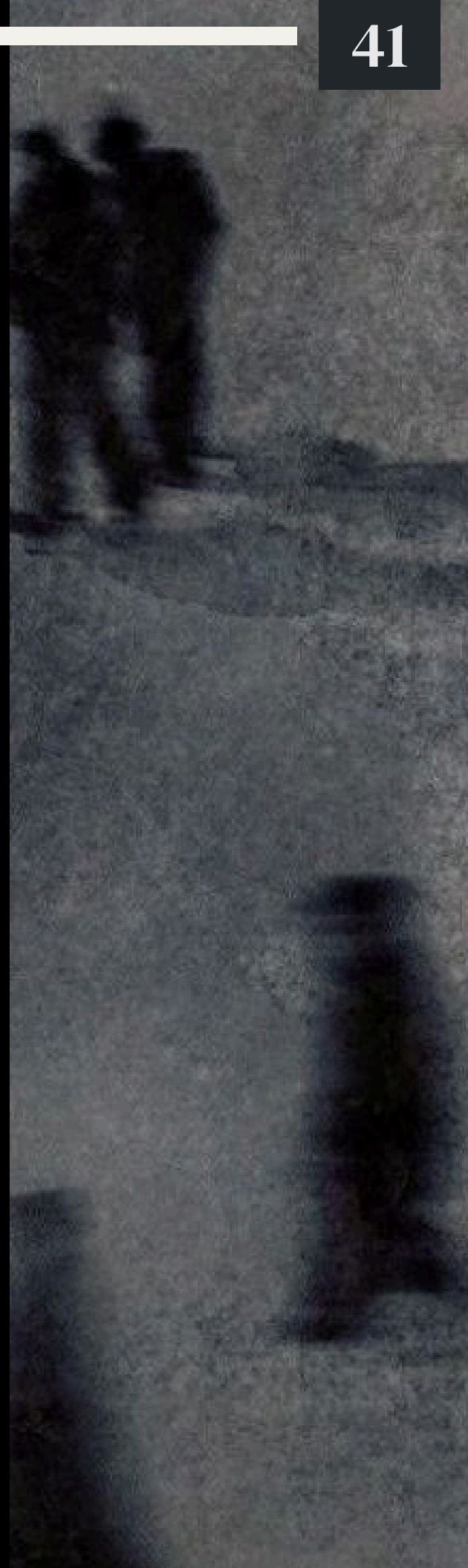
Perhaps it is not her,  
But a life once resided in me.  
From the quiet window, from the lost realm, Offering to  
me, pieces of me.

- Faeza  
1st year  
B.A.(H) Philosophy

# LIFE

The unearthed sin devoured  
Cherished the grins  
While losing sanity  
Keep crawling  
A cinematic growl  
lie against the dirt and breathe  
Make the soul dance to the serene vocals  
and the symphonies.  
Set your ground on fire  
Remind those you held  
The tale of living,  
kiss beneath the sweet sorrow  
Taste the bureau of ecstasy  
Is pain what's captured?  
Counting the long-gone springs?  
Who's summon  
We have to follow —  
The lord's devious trick?

- Riddhi Singh  
1st year  
B.A.(H) Economics





# आईने के उस पार

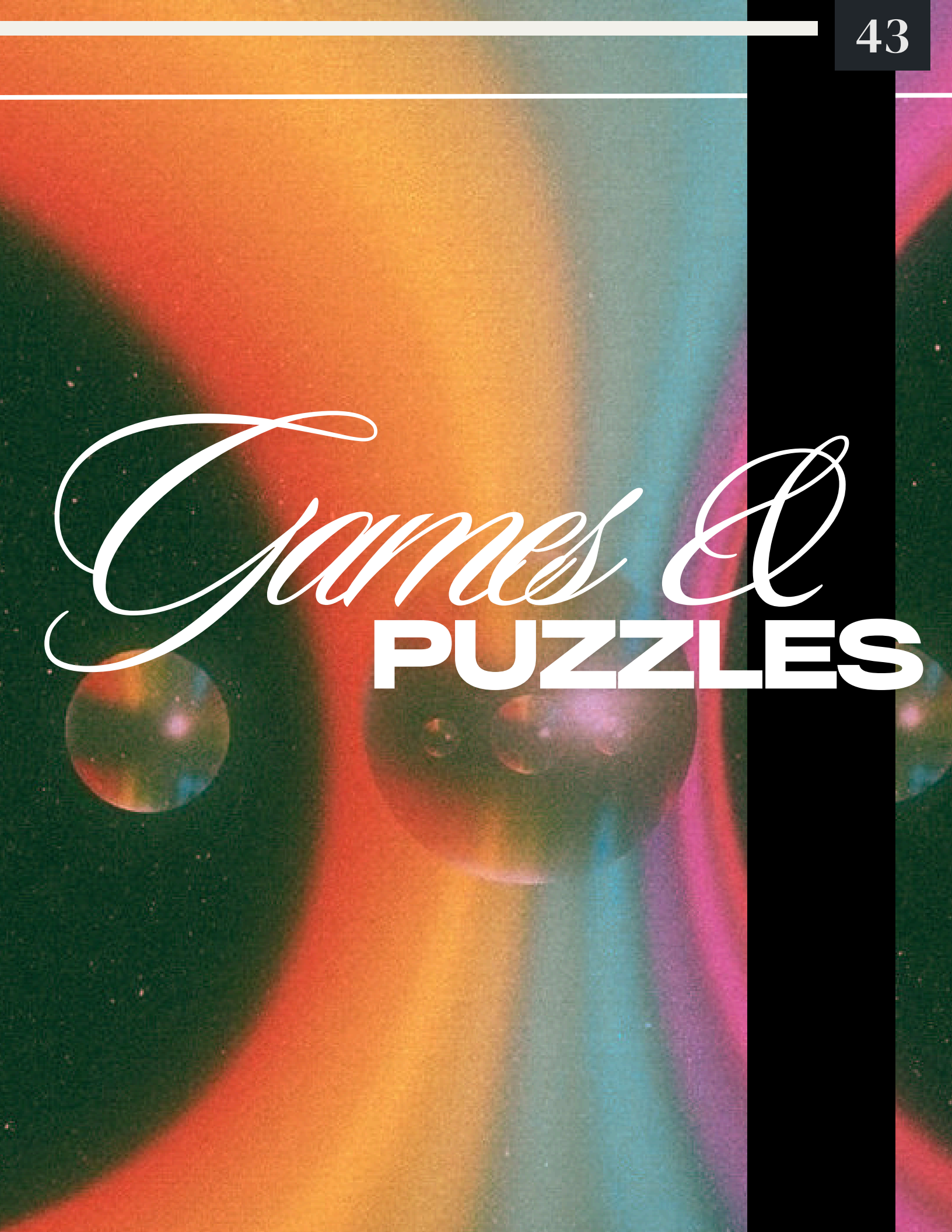
आईने के उस पार को एक शख्स खड़ा है  
 क्या है मेरी पहचान ये जानने पे अड़ा है,  
 मन में मेरे एक दुविधा सा जो बसा है  
 आँखों पे सत्य और चेहरे पे मिथ्या छुपा है,  
 मुझे तो शक है कि दो मन में मेरे दो जन रहता है  
 एक जन जो हमेशा सब ठीक है कहता है  
 दूसरा जो भावुक और चंचल सा रहता है,  
 एक जो भीड़ में हंसता और मुस्कुराता है  
 दूसरा जो अकेले होने पर बच्चों सा अश्रु बहाता है,  
 एक जो बीती हुई तस्वीरों से खुदको जानता है  
 दूसरा जो खुद को इस दिखावटी दुनिया से ही परे मानता है,  
 एक जो दुनिया के लिए साहसी, शरारत और सफल है  
 दूसरा जो जानता है कि उसमें भी कुछ कमियाँ और डर है,  
 एक जो इस दुनिया के सच रंग में ढल जाता है  
 दूसरा जिसे इस फरेबी दुनिया के मतलबी रंग से घिन आता है,  
 इन दो जनों के बीच एक पतला सा दरार है  
 वहीं से झलकता मेरा असली किरदार है,  
 असल में ये कठोर और निडर जन एक माया है  
 जिसे ओढ़ कर इस मन ने अपनी वास्तविकता को छुपाया है,  
 अब उस पर्दे से अधूरा पर वास्तविक जन सामने आना चाहता है  
 आईने के उस पार खड़े शख्स को सत्य से मुकाबिल कराना  
 चाहता है॥

- Purnima Kumari

2nd year

B.A.(H) Political Science





# *James O* **PUZZLES**

# Code Breaker



Decode hidden words using numbers , where each number represent a specific letter and its position.

Can you uncover the real meaning behind the code ?

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1 16 16 5 1 18 1 14 3 5

1. Not based on sensory experience-

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1 16 18 9 15 18 9

2. Philosopher known for "to be is to be perceived"-

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2 5 18 11 5 12 5 15

3. A system of thought that doubts the certainty of knowledge-

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19 11 5 16 20 9 3 9 15 13

4. The world as it appears to us-

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16 8 5 14 15 13 5 14 1

5. Opposite of reality; something deceptive-

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5 12 12 21 19 9 5 14

6. The study of knowledge and its limits-

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5 16 9 19 20 5 13 15 12 15 7 25

7. A mistaken belief held despite evidence-

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4 5 12 21 19 9 15 14



# BEYOND THE VEIL

Spot and circle all the hidden words linked to Illusion and Reality concealed in different directions.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | Q | T | A | T | R | U | T | H | L | A | N |
| I | E | A | P | P | N | S | H | A | D | O | W |
| R | X | L | P | U | J | K | L | M | N | O | P |
| A | I | I | E | R | E | A | L | I | T | Y | Q |
| G | S | T | A | D | V | B | N | M | A | S | W |
| E | P | E | R | C | E | P | T | I | O | N | I |
| K | E | U | A | I | L | L | U | S | I | O | N |
| L | N | D | N | R | F | G | H | J | K | L | N |
| M | D | E | C | E | P | T | I | O | N | C | K |
| A | E | E | E | X | I | S | T | E | N | C | E |
| Y | P | A | N | R | T | U | V | W | X | Y | C |
| A | T | M | Q | D | R | E | A | M | Z | F | E |

Illusion, Reality, Appearance, Deception, Truth,  
Perception, Mirage, Shadow, Dream, Maya,  
Existence.

# Real or Illusion?

Read each statement carefully and decide whether it represents:

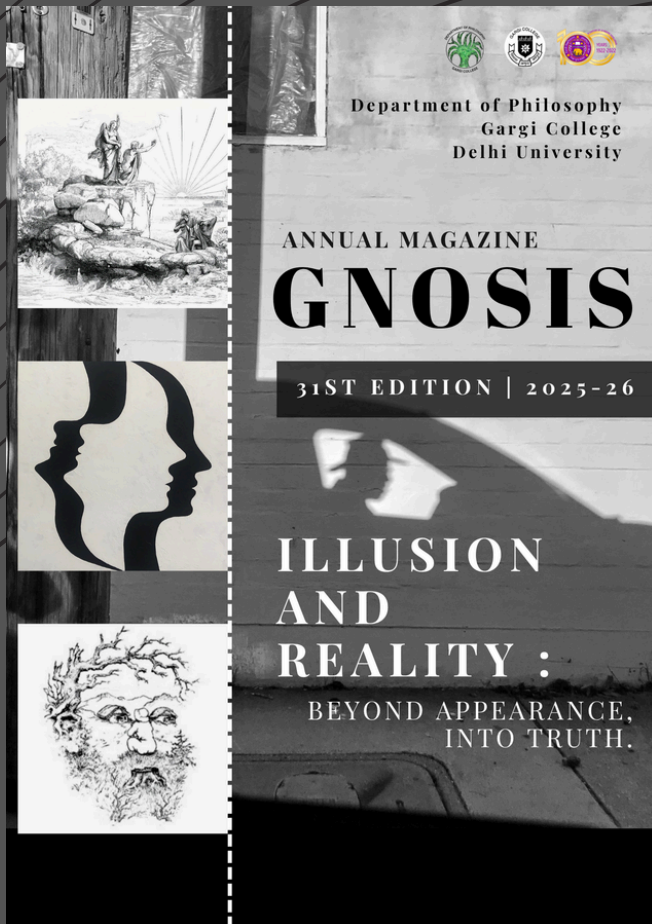
R – Reality

I – Illusion

Write your answer beside each statement.

1. In dreams we cannot always distinguish illusion from reality. \_ \_ \_
2. Sense perception provides certain and infallible knowledge. \_ \_ \_
3. Reality exists independently of the human mind. \_ \_ \_
4. The world we perceive is only a shadow of a higher, more real world. \_ \_ \_
5. Doubting all beliefs can lead to one indubitable truth. \_ \_ \_
6. What we experience is shaped by the categories of our mind. \_ \_ \_
7. The self is a stable and unchanging reality. \_ \_ \_
8. Beauty reveals an objective truth about reality. \_ \_ \_
9. What we call “reality” may just be a mental construction. \_ \_ \_
10. Knowledge derived from reason is more reliable than that from senses. \_ \_ \_

# COVER DESIGN CONTEST FEATURED ENTRIES

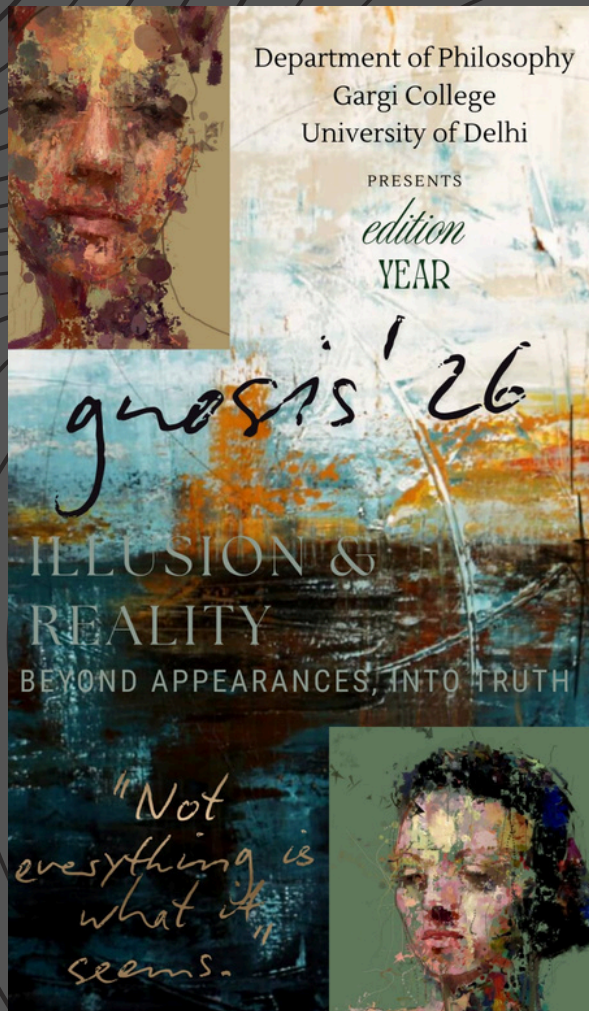


- Muskan Singh  
2nd year  
B.A.(H) Philosophy



- Krishty  
1st year  
B.A.(H) Philosophy





- Pari Bansal  
1st year  
B.A.(H) Philosophy



- Pari Metha  
1st year  
B.A.(H) Philosophy

# Answer key :

## Code Breaker

TRUTH BEHIND APPEARANCE  
(Master code)

1. Apriori
2. Berkeley
3. Skepticism
4. Phenomena
5. Illusion
6. Epistemology
7. Delusion

## Real or illusion

1. I – Illusion
2. I – Illusion
3. R – Reality
4. I – Illusion
5. R – Reality
6. I – Illusion
7. I – Illusion
8. I – Illusion
9. I – Illusion
10. R – Reality

## Beyond the veil

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | Q | T | A | T | R | U | T | H | L | A | N |
| I | E | A | P | P | N | S | H | A | D | O | W |
| R | X | L | P | U | J | K | L | M | N | O | P |
| A | I | I | E | R | E | A | L | I | T | Y | Q |
| G | S | T | A | D | V | B | N | M | A | S | W |
| E | P | E | R | C | E | P | T | I | O | N | I |
| K | E | U | A | I | L | L | U | S | I | O | N |
| L | N | D | N | R | F | G | H | J | K | L | N |
| M | D | E | C | E | P | T | I | O | N | C | K |
| A | E | E | E | X | I | S | T | E | N | C | E |
| Y | P | A | N | R | T | U | V | W | X | Y | C |
| A | T | M | Q | D | R | E | A | M | Z | F | E |



**Thank you for stepping into Gnosis 2025–26,**

where Illusion and Reality meet in thought and expression.  
Within these pages, appearances are questioned, truths  
are explored and ideas find their voice.  
May every piece inspire you to look beyond what seems  
and discover what is.

Scan the QR below to keep this journey with you.



With sincere regards  
The Editors  
Department of Philosophy, Gargi College







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**Department of Philosophy**  
**Gargi College**  
**University of Delhi**