

Editorial

A New Card: Sci Phi Web

Srajana Kaikini. Published 17.07.2020

These are unprecedented times for most of us. A pandemic having brought life to a standstill across the world, now is that rare historical moment where most of us across the world are given a universal condition, in some way, to come together. In this Kafkaesque world, *SciPhiWeb* opens its doors to you. Given the several unforeseen, unrealistic and unfathomable kinds of experiences many across the globe are having, the question of philosophy and its dire needs in such times is on the rise. Does this tiny virus have its own kind of philosophy? Are human beings the only ones who lay claim to thinking? Given that a lot of time and minds are hard at work trying to make sense of this tiny COVID virus and its aftermath for humans as a species, there could not be a better time to understand the place of humans, fellow creatures (virus included) and the ways in which we negotiate our relationships with each other. Philosophy and science, ancient siblings who later went separate ways, have to engage with each other now more actively than ever.

Meanwhile, given the sudden onset of a bombardment of state rules and laws, curfews and endless waits, a thousand do's and don'ts, e-passes and sudden collapses, our world resembles a strange big game; only in this one, the players have no second chances at life. If you make a wrong move, the game's over. Gamers may relate to this with a sense of thrill, but then there are also those players who love the process of play and have no interest in winning or losing. Playfulness, for them, is a way to shuffle the narrative, experiment, test - all with due caution - so that they stay in the game but are not way sided by the tyrannical clouds of winning and losing. For such gamers, playing puts into motion the imagination of the wondrous in a world of possibilities and of small triumphs.

But what happens when one cannot play? What of the hungry migrant workers in India who did not even make it home, let alone hope to play? To play is a privilege that will appear only when we pause and reflect on our conditions. Our privileges shimmer like mirages, visible in extreme conditions, leaving us with a sense of false contentment, yet futile helplessness of not knowing what to do with them. These are times to reflect on the privileges we can afford, that no amount of scientific justification can help alleviate. Come to think of it, science itself arrives from a great arena of the privileged – the place from where you can claim to see everything. Even the view from nowhere has a geographical tag in this world. Everything discrete,

everything digitizable, all things appearing in want of an explanation or solution. Meanwhile the two friends playing a game of cards under the shaded tree outside that car factory, watch a policeman wearing the COVID-19 virus as a helmet for an awareness drive, and wonder if the image of this virus would make for an amazing fifth card after the diamond, the spade, the clover and the heart. A new card has been played. Now it's your turn.