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AP/WRIT1702 A - Becoming a Better Writer: Methods and Models

18 February 2022

Speak recklessly, speak often and most of all, listen.

As a person who loves spending time reading and writing literature I often wonder and question myself about whether we really have the freedom to write and speak what we want and be carefree. A question which shouldn't even come to one's mind considering we have a 'freedom of speech', but outside laws do we really have that luxury.

It's hard to not question such stuff because of one experience I encountered while I was still back in my country. While I was learning and appreciating the art of standup comedy and how certain comedians twist stories into words and make their sets enjoyable and relatable to their audience attracted me a lot. I enjoyed writing but had never tried writing this genre which was very different, after my first few attempts i got an opportunity to open for a comedian in Goa but was called of by the comedian because he thought my set was a bit offensive and in his words would bring 'heat to his work', which baffled me because what I wrote were just twisted experiences I had growing up or the folktales my parents read me as a child. A country where there are hundreds of religions is anyone even left with any freedom to talk or have opinions about.

If a million dollar production house's movie 'Padmavat' can be taken off the theaters due to a group of people not liking it does a small boy or an unknown writer have the courage to write his mind out, restrictive writing has never produced any good ever and never will. Where theaters were broken down just, death threats were spread like it means nothing, laws hold no power a writer can only think and not lay down his ideas because a work of his can be his death note the next day.

In society, a comedian's role is to challenge authority and discuss topics that may be considered taboo . Comedians are expected to push boundaries, yet when they do, they are chastised. However, the audience may only laugh at a joke because it would be awkward if no one did. "They like to disguise their feelings because they don't want others to know how they actually feel—so people may chuckle nervously in order to balance their uncomfortable feelings."

That's what I thought till I went to an appearance of Munawar faruqai, a performer/comedian who was arrested in front of my eyes while the whole audience including me was thrown away while a group of so called politicians broke chairs, mics and everything on the set for a joke that the comedian had not even performed the given day. He was arrested for a joke he posted on youtube 2 years ago, Time news quoted “when a group of Hindu nationalists walked into the café in Indore, a city in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, where Faruqui was to perform, clad in jeans and trendy white sneakers. One of the men forced his way onto the stage and **accused the stand-up**, who is Muslim, of hurting Hindu sentiments. The intruder was referring not to a joke Faruqui had just made, but one that he’d uploaded on YouTube in April 2020.

Just because the son of the city's mayor didn't like a joke hundreds of people were thrown out of a cafe and an artist had to spend months in jail, Not even an opinion, ‘A joke’ with a disclaimer can lead to circumstances like this for a writer in a country with freedom of speech. This incident discouraged me from writing any form of dark comedy as such, till a few months back.

But now fuels me to write fragments of truth and present them in such a way that it doesn't offend or atleast intend to do so till a limit. Which is another hard aspect of writing, but I aspire to learn along the way. Will I ever be able to perform what I write after my experiences? I don't know but atleast I am writing now and what the future holds no one can know. The reality is that we need more of this speech. Not hate speech, but unpopular opinions. Ostracizing viewpoints is not going to change people’s minds.

How can we tell if a concept is incorrect? We discuss it with others. Conventions of acceptable speech have stifled people's willingness to express their views.

The only way to make a difference in society is for everyone to voice what they think. We will have more hate, not less, if we allow opinions to flourish while maintaining the cleanliness of public settings. The only way to make progress is to speak foolishly.

We cannot claim that something has changed if half of the country remains silent. Silence is not a sign of surrender; people will continue to believe what they already believe. Honesty, not correctness, is the best approach to ensure change. Listening has to be the first step if we want to actually alter a society. It's vital to accept that people have beliefs that don't always align with cultural norms. To change these mindsets, you must first recognise that they are a possibility, not a blip on the radar.

Daniel Sloss is an artist/comedian who gives me courage to do so and keep writing in this genre, his dark comedy sets are the best piece of storytelling I have ever seen or heard, He often quotes comedians as 'desperate storytellers', just trying their best to amuse the crowd in front of the stage. His quote "People get offended on behalf of other people" in his ted talk which is a must watch, is what people need to understand more, who's got the right to be offended? People have developed an amazing new ability recently. People can be offended on behalf of other people. You can't be offended on behalf of someone. At the end of the day we are all storytellers who are just portraying ourselves in the world out there be it a writer writing his next book, a politician giving up his speeches, a comedian trying to get his audience's reaction or me meeting my friend in the bus, we are all just storytellers, just let us tell our stories let us exercise our freedom to speak what we want.

CITATIONS

- 1) Faleiro, Sonia. "Munawar Iqbal Faruqui Was Arrested for Joke He Didn't Tell." *Time*, Time, 10 Feb. 2021,  
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- 2) S, Pangambam. "It's Only a Story: Daniel Sloss at TEDxEaling (Transcript)." *The Singju Post*, 31 Mar. 2020,  
<https://singjupost.com/wp-content/cache/wp-rocket/www.singjupost.com/its-only-a-story-daniel-sloss-at-tedx-ealing-transcript/index-https-webp.html>.
- 3) *It's Only a Story: Daniel Sloss at TEDxEaling - YouTube*.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8a-UUhW7-HU>.

## REFLECTION OF BECOMING

For the life writing portfolio I did not write any draft or a rough sketch and just brainstormed the ideas I was gonna talk or write about in my mind. As we had to talk about our personal experiences I believed writing them down on the paper with a flow was the best approach to go with which makes the work more personal.

For this essay I went through All my favourite specials by Daniel Sloss which I had not seen in a long time and enjoyed them a lot. I read some new articles by him and a few articles about the incident that I experienced back in Mumbai. The ted talk by sloss is always a great watch as a writer because of how creatively he presents his ideas which I try to instill in my work. I believe that having some sort of rough work or even a single page draft with some pointers helps a lot while writing the final draft which I will follow mostly from now on but did not have the luxury to do so for this essay due to personal issues. The essay overall was very fun to write and I ended up choosing a topic I often talk about and finally got to put it down on paper for the first time.