

POLITICAL SCIENCE SOCIETY PRESENTS



# UNCENSORED

A THEATRE OF DEMOCRACY: *Faces change, games don't*



PRIZE GIVING EDITION | 2024

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# PRESIDENTS' NOTE

It has been a privilege to be a part of the Political Science Society-a mélange of perspectives and opinions. Here we are committed to fostering an environment that encourages robust discourse, critical analysis, mutual respect for diverse perspectives and engages in thought-provoking discussions. This year's edition of "Uncensored" explores the complexities of the world that surrounds us and how every aspect of this society that we live in is POLITICAL and that each decisions taken by the system affects us. We would like to extend our gratitude to the Head of the Department, Dr. Pinky Vaishnava for always being a strong pillar of support. We would also want to thank the teachers in-charge, Mrs. Anita John and Ms. Ambika Rajbongshi for constantly guiding us and helping us in exploring the political world differently. We hope this magazine allows you to dive deeper into the issues of our ever evolving world.

Jayanandini Sodha (K/2429)  
Kulgaurvi Chauhan (M/2191)





## DIPLOMACY or COWARDICE?

The recent asylum request by former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has raised significant questions regarding India's diplomatic stance. Mrs. Sheikh Hasina, who has been criticised for her authoritarian rule and controversial policies, is now being sheltered by the government of India. Her administration, in power since 2009, has faced numerous accusations of human rights violations, including suppression of political opposition, curbing press freedoms, and extrajudicial killings. In a 2021 report, Amnesty International highlighted the alarming rate of enforced disappearances in Bangladesh, with hundreds of opposition figures still missing, further fueling accusations of Hasina's undemocratic governance. Despite these concerns, Hasina remains a crucial ally for India, especially in matters of regional security and economic cooperation.

Despite Indian authorities remaining tight-lipped about their motivations for harbouring a leader with such a contentious history, one must ponder whether this move is aimed at maintaining diplomatic relations with Bangladesh or securing an alliance with PM Modi. India and Bangladesh share deep-rooted historical and strategic ties, with India playing a key role in Bangladesh's independence in 1971. Bangladesh is also India's largest trading partner in South Asia, with bilateral trade reaching nearly \$18 billion in 2022. The countries collaborate on cross-border energy projects and share intelligence for counterterrorism efforts. However, Hasina's increasingly authoritarian tendencies have drawn criticism both domestically and internationally, making this asylum request controversial.



British Foreign Secretary David Lammy's recent statement highlights global concerns: "The people of Bangladesh deserve a full and independent UN-led investigation into the events of the past few weeks. The UK wants to see action taken to ensure Bangladesh a peaceful and democratic future." This comes after reports of unrest and violence in Bangladesh, with opposition parties accusing Hasina of engineering fraudulent elections in 2018. International observers have criticised the lack of transparency in these elections, with many questioning the legitimacy of her continued rule. The European Union, in its post-election report, expressed "serious doubts" about the fairness of the electoral process, adding further pressure on India's position. These developments place India's decision to shelter Hasina under international scrutiny.

By providing shelter to Mrs Hasina, India risks being scrutinised on the international stage, especially when viewed through the lens of its own democratic values. Though Hasina has been instrumental in maintaining economic and security ties with India, her controversial governance raises ethical questions.

In this atmosphere of uncertainty, the question arises: Is India standing with the Bangladeshi people, or with Sheikh Hasina? New Delhi's decision may reflect a pragmatic approach to regional stability, prioritising strategic interests over supporting democratic movements in its neighbouring country.

Mimansa Singh

P\3366

Pre Sc Arts B





# INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT PARADOX

Home to 1.4 billion people and the world's largest democracy, India has been a living, breathing paradox since the 21st century began. On one hand, the country is a rising star on the global stage, but on the other, it is engulfed in many societal ills such as communalism, gender inequality, and caste based discrimination.

For instance, recently during the G20 Summit, India's presidency was a remarkable success. The New Delhi Summit set new benchmarks for future presidencies and solidified India's position as a champion for the Global South. India secured global agreements on various issues, including climate finance and digital public infrastructure, and even launched the Global Biofuels Alliance. However, this global showcase came at a domestic cost. The government launched a massive "beautification drive" for the Summit, resulting in home demolitions and installing large green curtains to hide the slums. Thousands of workers lost their homes and livelihoods. According to a report by Reuters, around 3,00,000 informal workers were displaced, unable to earn wages during the Summit, reflecting the harsh reality behind India's global ambitions.

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent foreign engagements underscore India's growing influence, the grim domestic reality remains unchanged. India recorded nearly 32,000 sexual assaults in 2021 alone, according to the National Crime Records Bureau, thus highlighting the serious safety issues for women. The "high-profile" cases, such as the Kolkata rape case, have only emphasised how crimes against women persist, despite India's booming economy and rising middle class.

While India's urban centres boast technological progress and affluence, over 21% of the population still lives below the poverty line, (as per the World Bank's 2023 report). In areas like Madhubani, Bihar, over 40% of residents earn less than \$1 a day, struggling with access to clean water, healthcare, and education. Despite nationwide initiatives like Swachh Bharat and Ayushman Bharat, rural poverty remains rampant, with millions continuing to rely on subsistence farming and informal jobs to survive.

India's development paradox is stark: while the world sees the country's glory, a darker truth looms in the background. According to the UN, around 200 million Indians still go to bed hungry every night, a glaring reminder of the inequality beneath the surface of India's success (According to the National Health Survey (NHS)), more than 19 crore Indians are undernourished or face hunger. India might be the world's largest democracy, but for millions, the country's triumph is overshadowed by daily struggles and broken dreams.

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**“To the press alone, checkered as it is with abuses, the world is indebted for all the triumphs which have been gained by reason and humanity over error and oppression.”**  
– James Madison.

In March of 2024, on the tongue of every man worth his salt laid the praises of the intricate detailing of the Pradhan Mantri's kurta. The devotees of Lord Vishnu remained silent as the deafening pleas of the people of Manipur shook our country, as light vanished from the eyes of our daughters, and the media houses had first row seats to watch the fall of democracy and justice.

The media did not initiate a narrative around Mamta Banerjee protesting against a crime in her own state, all the while the cheers for the won world cup still rang in our ears. Perhaps the intent of our media lies with crisper bills and inflated bonuses from major leaders in power.

We ranked 159 out of the 180 nations in the press freedom index 2024, merely seven ranks above us was our peaceful neighbour whose military takes over on a whim with their financial state being a well-rounded joke.

The media houses are limited to publish and report only what the popular political leaders deem necessary. The fear of political backlash has restricted the media houses to only toe with the borders of controversial topics which can voice out against the government.

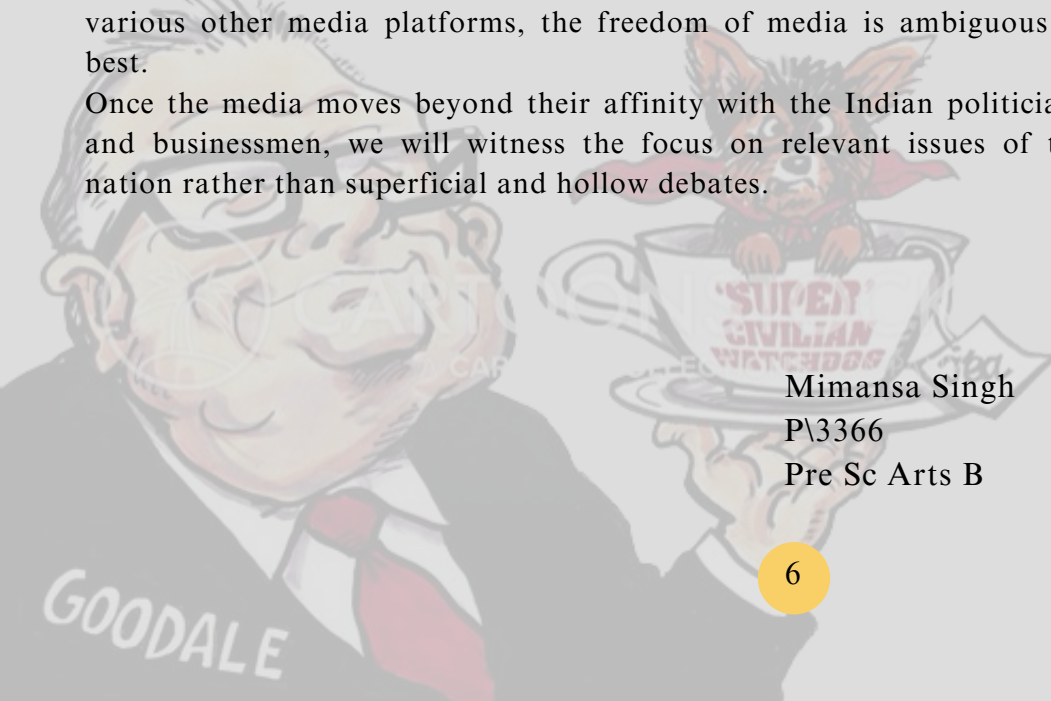
One of the senior and experienced journalists at New Delhi Television Ltd (NDTV), handed in their resignation as rumours of the Adani takeover of NDTV solidified. Amid the questions raised against the biased media of our nation, they declared the current media ecosystem as the 'dark age' of journalism. It served as a somber reminder of the decreasing independent media in the largest democratic country in the world.

With the concentration of power at the hands of elite businessmen as they hold reins of the workings of news channels, newspapers and various other media platforms, the freedom of media is ambiguous at best.

Once the media moves beyond their affinity with the Indian politicians and businessmen, we will witness the focus on relevant issues of the nation rather than superficial and hollow debates.

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# THE WATCHDOGS IN CHAINS





# THE SOUTH CHINA

The South China Sea dispute is one of the most complex and enduring geopolitical conflicts in the Asia-Pacific region, involving multiple countries with overlapping territorial claims. The dispute centres on control over the South China Sea, a crucial waterway for international trade and an area rich in natural resources, particularly oil and gas reserves. It also involves significant military and strategic interests, making it a key point of tension in global politics.

The South China Sea spans approximately 3.5 million square kilometres and is surrounded by multiple nations, such as China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan. All these countries lay claim to portions of the sea and its islands, but China's claim is the most extensive. Through the "nine-dash line," China declares dominion over nearly the whole South China Sea, which stands in conflict with the maritime entitlements of other nations as outlined by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

The Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands, and Scarborough Shoal rank among the most hotly contested zones in the South China Sea. Controlling these territories not only grants access to potential oil and gas deposits beneath the seabed but also allows for the extension of maritime boundaries, providing strategic leverage. Additionally, nearly a third of global maritime trade passes through this region each year, making it a crucial hub for international commerce.

China's activities in the South China Sea have sparked significant controversy. Over the past ten years, China has developed artificial islands on contested reefs, transforming them into military installations equipped with airstrips, ports, and missile defences. These actions have drawn condemnation from neighbouring states and major global powers, especially the United States, which champions the principle of freedom of navigation in international waters.



# SEA DISPUTE



In 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague ruled in favour of the Philippines, stating that China's extensive claims in the South China Sea were not legally valid under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). China rejected this decision, which heightened regional tensions. Despite protests and agreements like the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), China continues to assert its claims, often clashing with Vietnamese and Philippine fishing vessels and U.S. naval patrols in the area.

While the United States does not have territorial claims in the South China Sea, it plays a significant role in the dispute. As part of its broader Indo-Pacific strategy, the U.S. conducts freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs) to challenge China's expansive claims and support the principle of open maritime access. Additionally, U.S. military alliances with countries such as the Philippines, Japan, and Australia add another layer of complexity, with China viewing these activities as infringements on its sovereignty.

The South China Sea is not only a regional issue but a global one. The Sea's energy resources and strategic position make it a critical asset in the 21st-century economy and global trade. The ongoing dispute risks destabilising the region, with the potential for military conflicts involving major powers.

For Southeast Asian countries, the South China Sea dispute complicates diplomatic relations. Nations like Vietnam and the Philippines are forced to navigate between asserting their territorial rights and maintaining economic ties with China, their largest trading partner.

The South China Sea dispute is far from a localised territorial conflict—it is a geopolitical flashpoint with significant implications for global trade, regional stability, and international law. While diplomatic efforts continue, the rising militarisation and entrenchment of national positions suggest that this dispute will remain a central issue in Asia-Pacific geopolitics for years to come. The future of the South China Sea will depend on how regional powers, external actors, and international institutions manage competing interests and avoid escalation.

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*\*Image sourced from Forbes*

# REVOLUTIONARY or REACTIONARY?

The caste system in India has always been said to exist because of the struggle between the oppressors and the oppressed. In the light of this understanding, it becomes important to remember Gandhi, Ambedkar and Savarkar. Each of these figures has, in their own way, proposed conflicting and partial solutions to a problem that has ruined India for hundreds of years. Yet the Varna ideology, in particular, has been misinterpreted both by the colonialists and reformers.

Paradoxically, it was Veer Savarkar who actively advocated for inter-caste marriages, and encouraged lower castes to literally reclaim their space within Hindu temples. His key objective for the same was Hindu Mobilisation. Savarkar's Hindutva was a 'communalism' that competed with Gandhi and Ambedkar for the complete unity of Hindus not 'under' but 'across' caste, a vision opposed by many for different reasons.

Could it be that Savarkar's vision of caste abolition was more progressive than Gandhi's passive support for the Varna system or Ambedkar's complete rejection of Hinduism?

Indeed, the critique of Gandhi, the supposed for Dalit rights, takes yet another turn when we recall his urge to term Dalits as Harijans; and his opposition to Ambedkar's demands for separate electorates for Dalits.

The real controversy lies in how Savarkar, Gandhi, and Ambedkar overlooked the original purpose of the Varna system.

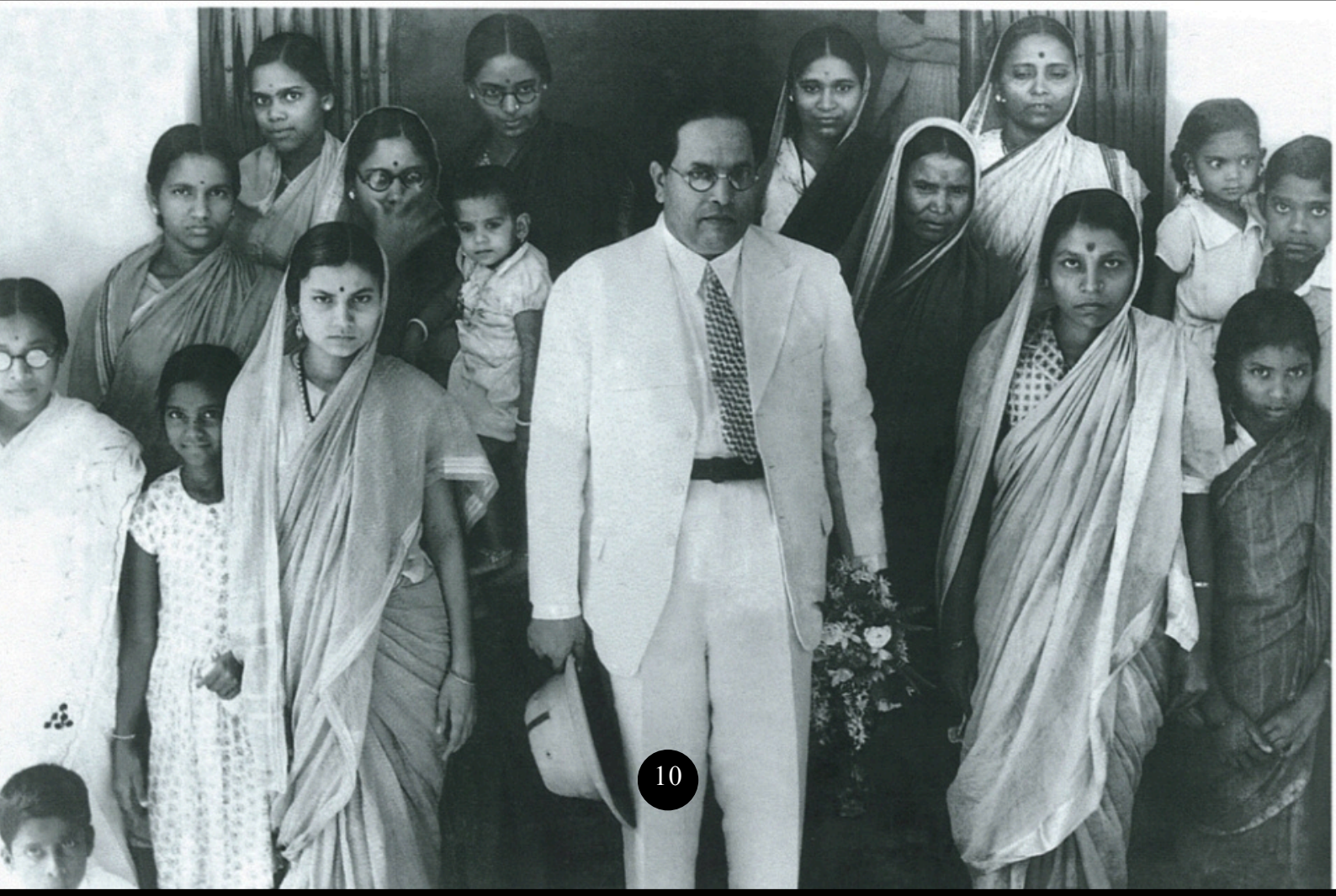




It was made to classify people based on their abilities, not as a rigid caste system determined by birth. The true problem lied with following of the system and ideology set by colonialists who further abused the Varna system.

The harsh reality is that Savarkar, Gandhi, and Ambedkar may have unintentionally contributed to the existence of the very caste system they were trying to reform. They prevented social change by fighting an ideological battle. By thinking about caste abolition or hierarchy preservation, they avoided questions that Indians desperately need an answer to today: why are the existing generations still debating about caste which is more about fulfilling political agendas than achieving social reforms that we have inherited from these three revolutionaries?

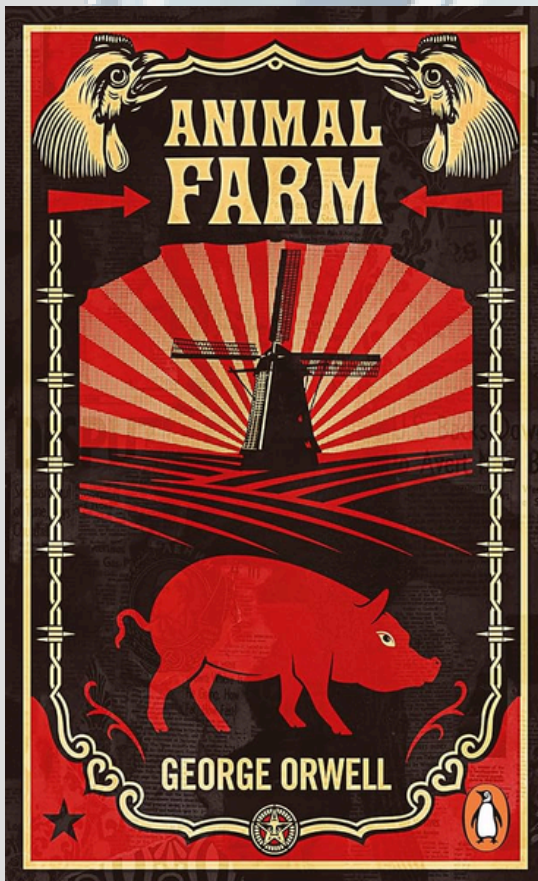
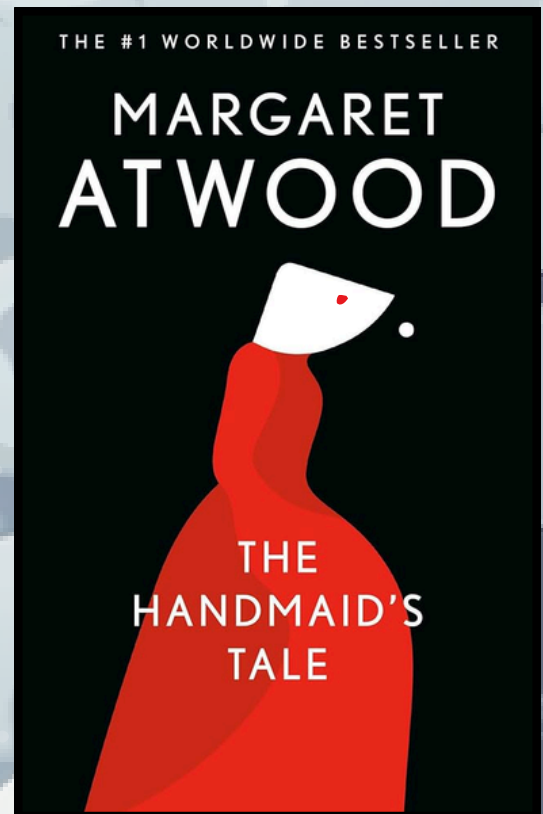
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# INSIGHTS THROUGH LITERATURE

## *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood

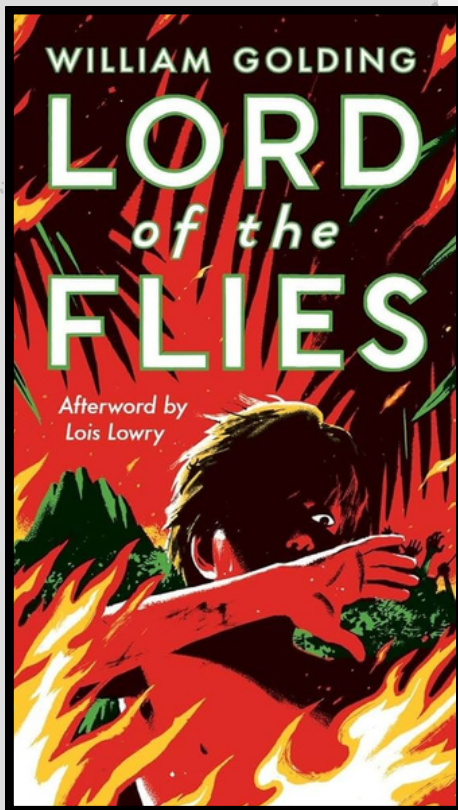
A gripping story about a theocratic regime where women are stripped of their rights, sparking reflection on power and resistance.



## *Animal Farm* by George Orwell

A satirical novella that allegorises the Russian Revolution, exploring the corruption of ideals in a quest for power.



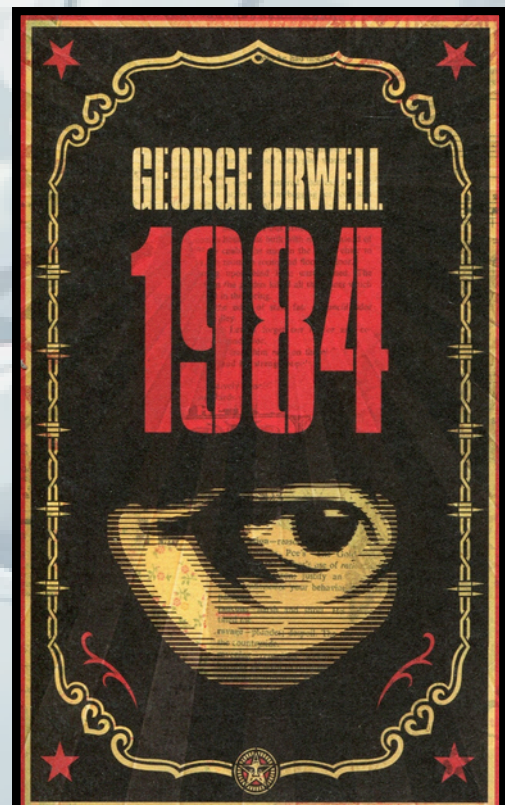


### *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding

A tale of societal collapse and the dark sides of human nature, illustrating political themes of power, order, and governance.

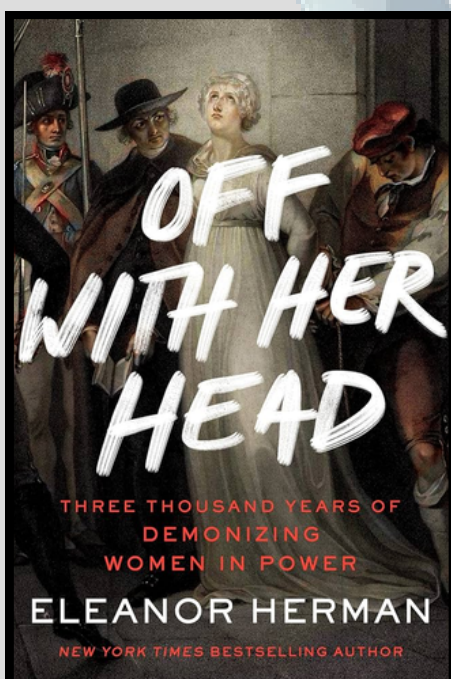
### *1984* by George Orwell

A dystopian classic that explores the dangers of totalitarianism, government surveillance, and mind control.

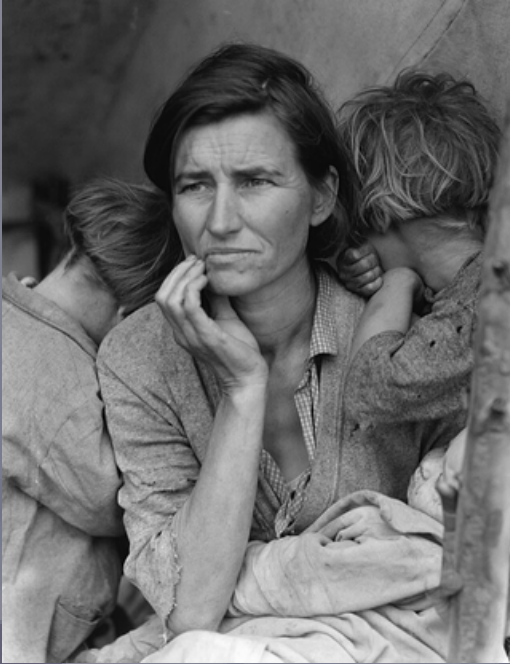


### *Off With Her Head* by Eleanor Herman

The book offers a unique and provocative exploration of the relationship between power and femininity. The book critiques historical and contemporary narratives of female leadership, highlighting the struggles women face in a male-dominated society.



# THE CANVAS



## **‘Migrant Mother’ (1936) by Dorothea Lange**

This iconic image of a destitute mother during the Great Depression humanises the economic crisis and the social failures of the period. It became a symbol of resilience and poverty.

## **‘Death of the Loyalist Soldier’ (1936) by Robert Capa**

This photograph, taken during the Spanish Civil War, shows a soldier at the moment of death. It’s become an enduring symbol of the human cost of ideological wars.



## **‘Guernica’ (1937) by Pablo Picasso**

It remains one of the most potent anti-war paintings, capturing the terror of civilians under attack. Its abstract, fractured forms express the chaos of war.



# OF POLITICS



## **‘Liberty Leading the People’ (1830) by Eugène Delacroix**

This painting symbolises the July Revolution in France, where the people rose against the monarchy. The figure of Liberty, leading the masses, embodies revolutionary spirit and the fight for freedom.

## **‘The Street Enters the House’ (1911) by Umberto Boccioni**

This work illustrates the chaotic energy of urban life and the industrial revolution, reflecting the political upheaval and modernization of early 20th century Italy.



## **Banksy**

Banksy is a renowned anonymous street artist known for his politically charged, satirical graffiti that critiques social issues, capitalism, and authority. His works blend humor and powerful imagery, often appearing in unexpected public spaces.





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