

SRK & his Others (Or, Killfies: Killing in the Name of the Self)

*[in which I make an argument to reject working-classes's
“subaltern” qualifications to call him a comrade already]*

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*One who knows his Engels is always already a **comrade**, he was never a “subaltern”*

SRK (also, Shahrukh) is a झुग्गी वाला¹, *jbuggi-walah*. He was born a *jbuggi-walah* & will most likely die as one, but not in the one he lives in (the slums he calls his world are currently being cleared²). Even if his address shifts, it is unlikely that he will escape his *jbuggi-walah* designations &/or the indignities which are this location's destinies. SRK knows this too well. Even though he possesses lifelong, experiential &, thus expert knowledge on matters of slumming, he isn't reckoned to be a reliable witness to his own life. This account is a meagre attempt to make autoethnographic corrections to call out my own (also, hegemonic location's) complicity in absencing, silencing & unseeing the presence of the working class man (WCm) in any body of work.

I start my revisions by, first & foremost, registering SRK's presence in the ways he desires most, his body to be acknowledged as the object as it is, which 'effing hurts, sometimes bleeds & often whose heart feels like it is breaking into million pieces. His deepest fantasy is to be obscenely objectified, not as ambitiously, but perhaps some real version of how his namesake superstar is lusted after. What he really, really, like desperately, wants is for the slums to not always haunt him, to not fear that his client might demand sex without rubber, or insist on a slap or two, if he finds out he is only a *jbuggi-walah*, but the dread of being shamed is worse. To be yet again reminded that it doesn't matter what he does, the city clothes & all its accessories & some of its manners too; that if he allows himself to be a tad bit too relaxed (जब थोड़ी ज़्यादा हो जाती है), he will reveal his addresses, which he already knows are universal.

He knows that the city doesn't matter, it could very well be another continent, but he already knows, a slum dweller anywhere will always be treated like a *jbuggi-walah*. He doesn't need Engels to tell him that he is working class, part of the universal proletariat, that is he is only a cog

¹ Resident of a slum, any slum, everywhere, universally

² <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/flats-allotted-demolition-at-bhoomiheen-camp-begins/articleshow/100806962.cms>

in the capitalist machines, that the elite, hegemonic, capitalist gaze will always only locate him as an object subtracted of its essence, that he will always be treated like as an unreliable, hostile & witness to his own life: a subject whose subjectivity will always be suspect.

When SRK articulates what the rich reckon of him, he doesn't know it, but even after a century & then some, he is really repeating what Engels' already called out as bourgeois's cunning of reason to contain the pro-le-trait. SRK knows that the rich, “..grant..[the]...poor a right to exist, but only to exist; the right to multiply you have not, nor the right to exist as befits human beings. You are a pest, and if we cannot get rid of you as we do of other pests, you shall feel, at least, that you are a pest, and you shall at least be held in check, kept from bringing into the world another “surplus”, either directly or through inducing in others laziness and want of employment. Live you shall, but live as an awful warning to all those who might have inducements to become “superfluous³”.”

Auto-ethnographic Corrections: In Defense of the Working-class Man (he was always an ally, never really to be feared, not always a fear factor)

I begin my corrections by returning to the basics. I start my submission in defence of the working-class man (WCm) by categorically rejecting his known “subaltern” qualifications. The subaltern as a subject who cannot speak, constantly circulates in eternal, idiotic nothingness, always in search itself, always speaking in tongues unable to point directions to its “own” self, is in fact precisely the *cunning of reason* which has permitted the hegemonic gaze to identify the WCm into a “fear factor” to be tamed on an everyday basis, but most definitely, philosophically & politically as well. I dismiss the celebration of particularities which are beyond any universality & thus any understanding, which is precisely the cunning of reason which renders a “subaltern” into a bumbling idiot, devoid of intent, interiority & essence (or even worse, only of an interiority which remains even inaccessible to him).

Here I am aligned with Chibber's call to commit to, “a robust structural theory of capitalism [which] is useful precisely because it helps us better locate the place of culture and contingency in social reproduction. It enables us to understand where culture is decisive and where its

³ Engels, F., 1845. The Condition of the. *Working Class in England*.

force is subordinated to material interests; to see where the force of structural factors ends and, hence, other social forces settle the course of events; and to decipher which properties of capitalism are in fact universalized and which are left to the local and the particular⁴”.

Counting SRK with the universal proletariat for whom Engels argued for in *The Conditions of the English Working Class* is an urgent philosophical & political appeal to recognize that the WCM is a knowing subject aware of that “the peculiarity of class resides in the fact that it is the only social relation that directly governs the material well-being of its participants. Because it has a direct bearing on their welfare, it motivates them to learn and internalise the meanings required to participate in their structural location⁵”. Thus, the autoethnographic commitment to undertake a forensic autopsy of the hegemonic, elite, upper class, savarna, upper caste, lifeworlds I inhabit & embody, which is responsible & singular in its commitment to not only keep the working-class in its pitiable position, but also for never letting him forget his is nothing but a pest, which can & will be done away with.

Fit, fair & fully elite form's encounter with the specifically working-class man's body

To amplify the structural violence SRK experiences in the everyday (here, embodying the working class man, universal proletariat), both in his material form (the body) but also the material this body produces (here, manifest in its selfie form), I enter my body & its very material & visceral experience of “slumming” over the last 25 years, all of my adult life.

I am fit & fair, these markers carry inscriptions of my caste & class locations. In my material form, irrespective of aesthetic deliberations & even from a far distance, my body is an object of inquiry, fantasy, violence & always under threat, or at least that it is what the popular & political discourse, mainstream media, cinematic representations & postcolonial feminist wisdom would like to insist by insisting that

⁴ Chibber, V., 2022. *The class matrix*. Harvard University Press. See also, Chibber, V., 2014. *Postcolonial theory and the specter of capital*. Verso Books.

⁵ quote contd...”. Hence, a wage labourer might be new to the idea of having to enter the labour market. But he will quickly appreciate that if he wants to survive, he will have to understand the cultural content of certain practices—finding a job, working for a certain number of hours, developing the skills needed, and so forth. He may not have experience in these practices—they may be phenomenologically alien—but the very fact that his wage is now his lifeline will impel him to acquire cultural competence in them. He is compelled to adjust his meaning orientation to his structural location. The causal arrow thus runs from the class structure to the meaning orientation of its actors”, Chibber, V., 2022. *The class matrix*. Harvard University Press. See also, Chibber, V., 2014. *Postcolonial theory and the specter of capital*. Verso Books.

"subaltern masculinity" is a fractured project because the "subject" cannot locate itself, is given to nativist sentimentalities, gives in easily to temptations & cannot distinguish between love & lust. This is the "fear factor" of the poor in its "subaltern" avatar, which dominates the theoretical discussions, & of course, eventually manifests in disciplining policy decisions & brutal denial of political agency.

I present myself as autoethnographic evidence to categorically *insist* that when it comes to it, on the street level, in the lanes of the slums with dim lights & clogged drains, that in my material form, my body screaming of caste & class privilege, possess a higher currency, capital & thus more effective capacities to inflict real & every other form of violence than a working-class man. The fact that I could hang out in the slums or on the streets, late into the night, walking for hours, stopping in strange corners, drinking barely masked gin in sprite bottles, sharing joints with working class men from all quarters of life is precisely because of the class & caste privilege my material form, my body, is inscribed with. I am not romanticising the working-class man, as the last romantic man of the streets who is the only one who understands the street walker's pain.

Of course, there were times when it felt dangerous, & when it potentially could have been translated into real violence, but even in those situations, I prevailed precisely because of the caste & class privilege (thus, cunning) my body is inscribed with.

I recount one such encounter. It was around 11 at night, I was sitting at the chai shop, across from Nehru Place metro station. Abdul had wound up his world for the day, the chai shop is strategically located at the intersections of the main road & the lane which leads into Delhi's first planned district centre's shadier sides. Two working-class men were doing exactly what I was in these corners, which at this late hour & owing to its location, engulfs into a delicious darkness to allow for a cover for illicit, & थोड़ा सा illegal, delights.

They & I, we were both drinking in public using the same tactics, plastic bottles which barely mask the smells. All of us were under influence & showing its effect. We were also chasing our cheap drinks with smokes, also not entirely legal. They had arrived after me. After about half an hour of them talking loudly enough to make sure I was hearing their fantasies & desires & lame लेने देने threats, I involved

myself in the conversation. I should mention, I am no longer young, so along with class & caste, I also have the age advantage (*age is always an authority, unless of course you are poor, then it is a [terminal illness](#)⁶*), this is a deadly combination, in my form I could be mistaken for the South Delhi RWA aunty, fully elite form. In fact, it is precisely this “RWA aunty authority” which allowed me to not only facilitate, but also be in charge of the dialogue.

This is what I told them, after which we broke the ice by sharing smokes which aren't exactly legal but didn't feel illicit either. I give away the ending to highlight that these working-class men immediately, intuitively & astutely understood what is in fact a sophisticated dialectical materialist reading of gender relations across class spectrum. This is what I told them, in my very दिल्ली की सड़कों वाला style, refined to perfection by my years of slumming, which I can only repeat in translation here, the transcription of this conversation cannot be presented in "polite" company.

This is what I said, (here, heavily sanitised), whatever you plan to do, let me tell you, you will have only one choice. You will have to kill me, but even that won't work. एक तो, I am not giving in without a fight, I used to box, run marathons when I was bored, & I will not hesitate to kill, if it came to it. Secondly, I told them, if they leave me brutalised & mutilated, the full wrath of the state will come for them. They already knew, but I reminded them of the brutal capitalist realities. **I told them in any situation, even when there isn't a situation, between you & I, the cops will always believe me.** This also, they already knew. I asked them to imagine what would happen if I walked into a थाना, or worse, had to be rescued by a patrol car. **They knew exactly what I meant, that if the voice which was making the complaint belonged to a body like mine, not only they, but a few others who look like them & they know will really have their intensities turned inside out.** So, after your fun, I again insisted, you really will have to kill me. **But they already knew that a dead body which looks like mine will make it worse for them.** So, I proposed that we quit the nonsense, & quietly-quietly, together-together drink in peace , बस हो गया यार, थोड़ी सी तो फिन्क हो रही है, फिर दारू तुम्हारी और मेरी भी खत्म होने वाली है, तो चुप चाप enjoy करते हैं.

⁶ https://www.business-standard.com/article/beyond-business/ill-treatment-112031000037_1.html

They did, & it was then we shared a smoke, & explaining as a way of apologising, but really completing the dialectal reading I had started, I was told, but, हमारी भी तो सोचो, you understand our intrigue, it's not everyday we find someone like you doing things we do in our corners.

Poverty is Perverse, the Wcm knows, thus again NOT an idiot, surely not a "subaltern"

What I am aiming at here is to insist that the poor in every context are acutely aware that material conditions of poverty produce their own "perverse" formations factored by their particular cultural, gendered, sexual contexts, which in turn marks their presence in any context only as a perversion. If one really listens to the poor, even without having referred to Engels, they already know what will be an Engelian way out of their predicament. A refrain which is universal among the poor, in its many particular variations, जब पैसा होगा, जब हम गरीब नहीं होंगे, सब बदल जाएगा, हम अलग होंगे (IF TOMORROW WE ARE NOT WORKING-CLASS, WE WILL NOT BE THE SAME, WE WILL BE SOMEONE ELSE) needs to be registered as working-class's astute knowledge of his dialectical materialist locations & the only positions it permits.

This digression was necessary to set the stage to locate SRK's material form & the forms his materiality produces (selfies which I will talk about in a moment) within the capitalist logic which extends to all social relations (in so far as they block or preclude) for the successful reproduction of capital. SRK's material form (body) & forms his materiality produces (selfie) embodies & exemplifies the violence necessary to feed capitalism's unnecessary & insatiable appetite.

The working-class is a Hegelian subject in the bootcamps of being, he ain't incoherent & not an idiot, surely not a "subaltern"

By registering working-class's knowing of its own location on the class matrix, via SRK's "selfing" account I want to highlight the sophisticated sense of "self" he reveals at the intersections of the **historical** (as a slum-dweller), **material** (poverty & its perversions) &

dialectical (his location pregnant with its opposite, to not be a jhuggi-walah). In his negotiation with the hegemonic, his poverty dominates the discourse.

His being a jhuggi-walah overshadows his Muslim, transgender, sex worker identities. **HE KNOWS THAT VERY WELL. HE KNOWS IF HE WASN'T POOR, HE WOULD BE A LOUD & BOISTEROUS DRAG QUEEN, HE WOULD PERFORM ON STAGES, PEOPLE WOULD PAY TO WATCH HIM, HE WOULDN'T HAVE TO SELL HIS BODY. HE KNOWS IT IS THE PERVERSITY WHICH POVERTY PRODUCES, पढ़ाई नहीं हो पाई, गली में गाली से दिन शुरू होता है, और वोही हमारी GOODNIGHT होती है, झुग्गी की SOCIETY THEEK नहीं है, WHICH DIDN'T ALLOW HIM AN EXPLORATORY PHASE OR A COMING OUT OF THE CLOSEST CRISIS.**

In Untitled⁷, I documented SRK's crisis of being in the times of the COVID.

Here, evoking the autoethnographic intent, I quote myself without risking self plagiarism accusations. Here I noted that, "The violent world of working-class male sex workers [irrespective of sexual orientation, one doesn't identify as gay to be a male sexworker] is a constant negotiation between being violent or becoming a victim. Within the broader structural hierarchy, as 'men' they occupy a far more privileged position than their female counterparts. But it is precisely on account of their 'privileged' gendered position that they become easy targets for rape, violence and humiliation by the cops, the 'big bad boys' in the locality and with their lovers. Within the heteronormative narrative, the possibilities available to the lower-class male sex workers are few and far between. A few of SRK's friends have been blackmailed, if not for financial gains then for free sex, group sex or actualizing rape fantasies and some of them have taken to blackmailing, particularly the married middle-class men".

⁷ Chandola, T., 2022. Untitled: I am still becoming:[Kya title bolon? Main tho abhi bhi badal rahan hoon]. In *COVID-19 Assemblages* (pp. 81-88). Routledge India. Available here, https://www.academia.edu/117092738/Untitled_I_Am_Still_Becoming_Kya_title_bolon_Main_tho_abhi_bhi_badal_rahan_hoon_COVID_19_Assemblages_Routledge_India_2022

Of those who were NEVER are “subaltern” in any schematic & never in solidarity with the subaltern they identified themselves with = liberal, Lutyens, fully elite form lot

In Untitled, I recounted "rescuing" SRK from a brothel he had willingly joined for love, his lover drifting away from him, he needed the money to lure him back, about which I noted that, "The choices available to this constituent group are to claim the violence inflicted on them by normalizing and internalizing violence by evocations as “rape is also one kind of sex”...The vocabularies of expression of emotions might be different for the marginalized, but these unfold within the architecture of the grammar available to everyone. However, love (and the capacity of loving) is an assertion of the social, political and cultural positions one occupies within the spectrum of hierarchical class-caste-gendered negotiations. **THE REFRAIN, OFTEN EVOKED IN BOLLYWOOD FILMS WHEN CLASS DIFFERENCES HAVE TO BE ESTABLISHED, BUT ALSO REITERATED TO ME DURING MY TIME IN THE SLUMS OR ON THE STREETS, HOLD ALL THE TRUTH INTO THE STRUCTURAL INEQUITIES THE MARGINALISED HAVE TO ENDURE: “तुम्हारा प्यार, प्यार, हमारा प्यार, साला केवल ठरक (YOUR LOVE IS LOVING, WHEREAS MY LOVE IS ONLY LUST).**

This auto-ethnographic turn was necessary to present the working-class man (here, SRK) in a dialogue, and not as a subject who cannot speak. I would obscenely celebrate SRK's astuteness in resounding Engels's emotions, if he was not a working-class man who had not learned of these realities from a reading list but knew of them by living, experiencing & knowing very well that he would die ailing from poverty which is in fact capitalism's perverted core, which has, “managed to establish a perverted society where the individuals who construct homes often endure homelessness, those who produce food often go to bed hungry, and those who build roads frequently lack a footpath to walk for themselves⁸”.

⁸ <https://countercurrents.org/2024/03/perverted-society-under-global-capitalism/>

Slums are an ontological necessity to sustain capitalist realism. With slums as a containment of perversions (always in plain sight), the city has the permission to commit the same crimes, also in plain sight, but only with staunch support & enthusiastic reception by the “polite” company the city keeps: the hegemonic, the elite, the liberal Lutyens lot, who are NEVER “subaltern” in any schematic & never in solidarity with the subaltern they identified themselves with.

THE POOR, ALONG WITH SUBSIDISING OUR LIVES, THEY ALSO SANITISE OUR CRIMES. THEY KNOW THAT TOO.

That night at the Nehru metro station, even if the two working-class men were not intrigued by me & we were already maintaining the peace of allowing each other our illegal, if not illicit, indulgences, and a patrol car stopped, the cops even without my raising any complaints, seeing those two working class bodies in such peaceful proximity, ethical co-habitation, with a fit, fair, fully elite body like mine, would have taken the men to task, on my behalf, to provide me protection against these dangerous sort. What I am attempting to insist here is the cops speaking on my behalf is the gendered oppression to silence my voice & limit my agency, as postcolonial feminist reading will locate it, instead, & in fact, owing to my elite form, irrespective of all my illicit & illegal, even immoral, undertakings, the state already is always working for me.

I am the state’s chosen subject, whilst the working-class has “not the right to exist as befits human beings”⁹.

The “perverted capitalist society, moulded by profit driven capitalist market, [which] systematically erodes the very fabric of social cohesion, rendering individuals as isolated and atomised beings, bereft of meaningful connection¹⁰” is always the background & backdrop of every working-class man’s every “selfies”. When he is attempting to distance & differentiate himself from his backdrop, he is manifesting

⁹ Engels, F., 1845. The Condition of the. *Working Class in England*.

¹⁰ <https://countercurrents.org/2024/03/perverted-society-under-global-capitalism/>

his dialectical desires to be someone else, anyone else other than the pervert & the pest he is reckoned to be by the “polite” company the hegemonic, elite, casteist society keeps.

Killfies: Killing in the Name of the Self

It is within backdrop of the perverted capitalist society that I want to propose a schematic, located within the class matrix, emboldened & inspired by Jodi Dean¹¹'s formulation of [selfie communism](#) with the acceptance that “capitalism is communicative and communications are capitalist” & thinking alongside her about, “where might we find opportunities for resistance, possibilities of breaking free, differently put, if a central contribution of Marx's analysis of capitalism was his identification of the ways capitalism produces its own grave diggers, what elements of the present pointing beyond it, does communicative capitalism identify?” *& agreeing with her that*, “[O]ne answer appears in the commoning of faces, a practice that emerges out of the communicative practices of mass social and personal media” **to identify “selfie” as a hegemonic manifestation of its dictionary meaning, that is, “an image that includes oneself (often with another person or as part of a group) and is taken by oneself using a digital camera especially for posting on social networks¹²” with “killfies” as its perverted manifestation, emerging & immanent with the perversions of poverty which is the everyday reality of the working-class man, & also his ontologically assigned location necessary to legitimise the crimes of capitalism.**

¹¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZvvH56XqCw&list=PL0mJZdLJAu8iURUgZIJNzFLldEgU_b168&index=4. See also, https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0mJZdLJAu8iURUgZIJNzFLldEgU_b168&si=sWwvrNlc9YHK5_Zg

¹² <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/selfie>

Here, sharing my enthusiasm about the inherent power of “selfies” with Dean¹³, I propose to read “killfies”, in all their perversions, born out of the perversity of poverty as they are, as the material evidence to testify the crimes capitalism’s commit so that, again in alignment with Dean, we can stretch its powers to “its logical extreme” to recognize that “selfies are a communist form of expression, social products appropriated by capitalism”.

Killfies is not a theatrical invention, it is a warning issued by the Indian state to warn its subjects to be “careful[ly] about the circumstances in which they take selfies, in case they become “killfies”” which as the state insists are “selfies [that] can kill¹⁴”. Here, I evoke “killfies” as an epistemological marker to locate the working-class lifeworlds.

In the schematic I am proposing, which I am presenting as provocations & not an eventuality, also, argument as ethnography & vice versa, ethnography always ought to be an argument,

- a. “Selfies” to be recognized in their most nominal philosophical, poetic & political essence as the objectified “other” of the self with the complete willingness & knowledge of the latter, the self, to be someone else, anyone else than the self.
- b. Selfies are an acrobatic indulgence. The act demands inverting the technological object to make the self the subject of the production to obscenely objectify it to be received as an object of desire in that *othered* iteration. This othered, inverted self is further manipulated, edited and circulated onto networks and platforms on which a newer reality of this rendered, inverted othered iteration robustly displaces the real of the self prior to its inversion¹⁵.

¹³[Comrade Dean][00:21:04.21] Enthusiasm arises out of experience of collective imitation because the collectivity comes into being as a collectivity by feeling amplified, feeling strengthened, and yet our enthusiasm- and yet it's still controlled in platforms that do not belong to us, our enthusiasm belongs to another, not ourselves....Communicative capitalism's circulation images are images without viewers, it's not that the images are unseen, although many go unshared, cold and deleted like so many unset thoughts. It's that they are not seen as separate or unique, they flow into our life montage, becoming the visual common through which we converse, the archive or inchoate lexicon of our expression....Under secondary visibility, faces are common and private belonging to those other than their bearers, circulating they express the feelings of anyone, as private property they are claimed by corporations, just as verbal colloquialisms are expressed as common places, so are repetitive visuals, common faces, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZyvH56XqCw&list=PL0mJZdLJAu8iURUgZIJNzFLldEgU_b168&index=4.

¹⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-41966981>

¹⁵ Cf. Benjamin, Walter, “The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction”, 1936.

- c. The power of “selfies” as material objects, which circulate & reproduce the logic of capitalism within its communicative currency, is nothing compared to the profound exploration of true self-consciousness, in its very Hegelian sense, the **act** of producing the selfies technically opens up: *irrespective of which body is holding the camera, either a fully elite form like mine, or specifically the working-class, not subaltern, body which imprisons SRK destinities.*
- d. The power of selfies lies in the process of othering of the self towards a desired objectified fate the act depends on. There is nothing accidental or incidental to the act of production of a selfie, even if the “selfie” as its material object might be merely registered as a mistake.
- e. The act of selfing in its nominal essence is a Hegelian one. In that, the act of returning one’s own gaze is the Hegelian recognition that recognition is the game, desire throws the dice, all the faces the dice show, particularly the ones which are not shown, are still of the same, the self. The only escape from the misery of self, its being & becoming, is to acknowledge the mystery of the others of the self.
- f. In that, the act of selfing allows the Hegelian self to braces itself, & all of its others too, to enters the bootcamps of being, **not** to resolve the mystery, but to commit to knowing the mystery, even when knowing that mystery by its default etymological ‘mystic presence, hidden religious symbolism’ associations, shall always remain an aspiration, never an ambition (an ambitions demand destinations). In this always knowing that the mystery cannot be contained, only ever constrained but only by putting “it” (everything which seems mysterious, even the others of self, & particularly the others of the other which the others are presenting) under rigorous due-diligent dialectical bootcamp demands is the Hegelian hack to not let the mystery become mysterious.
- g. A self which surrenders to the mysteriousness of the others of the self (& thus also, others of the other) without applying due-diligent dialectical bootcamp instructions can only emerge as a savage self knowing only the grammars of idiotic nothingness & thus only inscribing vocabularies of violence (Ss)¹⁶.

¹⁶ <https://networkcultures.org/theblogofdisquiet/2024/05/01/listening-as-philosophy-in-action-a-poetic-presentation-2/>

- h. I emphasise on the philosophically revolutionary potential & merit of the act inherent to selfing to **insist** that the working-class man, here in SRK's embodiment, intuitively recognizes & enacts this existential hack of violently abstracting oneself to its desired objectified, obscenely lusted, othered forms.
- i. Considering SRK experientially also knows his Engels, he is acutely aware that even a camera might be a neutral observer. He knows that when his smooth looking & feeling, bi-curious client, shares his selfie with **SRK being tied to the chair, bruises which look really real because they are**, with those he shares his penchant for poverty porn, his client gets so, so many likes. 500 to the 55 he got, most of them from his already clients, or their friends, but not any "real" strangers, no new लोग. However, it's not as if doesn't gain something out of this aggressive circulation of his tied selfie, his client tags him so that आता है और clients DM करते हैं.
- j. I have given the backdrop of my relationship with SRK in the earlier quoted text, Untitled. But repeating here for contextual bearing, there is nothing neutral or not involved about our relationship. I am deeply emotionally engaged with his particular material form & its ordeals, & I am philosophically committed in service of listening to the universal pro-le-trait spirits which he embodies.
- k. The only other time when I had wanted to raise my hand at SRK, to give him the थपड़ of his life was when he had casually told me, but, didi rape is also only a kind of sex.
- l. I was visiting the jhuggis. On this day, I found SRK yet again been beaten up by the client who called him 25 kms away to fuck him mercilessly as agreed, but left him curled in pain on the roadside, with blows as the only payment he deserved, but also leaving with his 15 हजार वाला, बिलकुल नया ही, almost new phone.
- m. Perhaps his pain numbed his brain that day because otherwise he would never dare to show me his tied to the chair selfie, bearing marks of his client's adventures, he knows better. If I know him well, he also knows me too well. This time I didn't contain my desire to raise my hand, but employed cinematic theatrics to express my raging anger by throwing the stainless steel glass with chai still hot on the wall which was barely 6 feet from me.

- n. SRK showed me the tied image as his glimpse of hope, his strategic plan to yet again procure a phone with a camera, which will have to be थोड़ा सा expensive for its filters & other features, but he is getting a lot of client requests.
- o. He was borrowing his sister's smartphone. She is also struggling to be recognized as an objectified, other of the self, in her material form. Her कोठी वाली madam will not increase her salary from 800 to 900 per month, even though the madam also knows how मंहगा everything is.
- p. She is also told the same thing which SRK is, in different vocabularies, but the violence in its philosophical essence is the same, she is also told, she also knows her Engels, "you are a pest, and if we cannot get rid of you as we do of other pests, you shall feel, at least, that you are a pest, and you shall at least be held in check" by refusing to recognize that hers is the body, same-to-same, much like madam's, & this body registers indignities, humiliation, & the ultimate pain of not being recognized in any form much like her madam, same to same. Except the madam can make a crisis of not being seen into a political cry. She can in fact demand that the public park be barricaded, the poor who she thinks of pests can be kept away, so that her husband, who has not seen, or worse tasted, her properly below the waist, can really, finally see her through a netted household item to separate wheat from the chaff, whilst Munni is not even allowed to show her tears to her own madam, don't cry, didi, देखो दीदी अब आप यह रोने धोने का drama मत शुरू करो, मुझे देखो काम पे बैठना है, और आप मेरा mood खराब कर रहे हो। छोड़ो ना, अच्छा चलो, चाय बना दो, मेरे लिए वो green tea, अपने लिए packet वाले दूध से, वोह tetra pack वाला बाबा का exercise के बाद वाला है ना, कल भी आप भूल गए थे। ठीक है, हो गया, don't worry, be happy.
- q. Here as an aside, it is again the cunning of postcolonial studies which refuses to recognize the everyday solidarity, camaraderie, trust & loving, across, over & above, gendered identities that negotiating the prevailing perversity of poverty demands. **Is it a wonder that whilst academic literature is rife with whether or not the poor can emote, there is hardly any casual, let alone serious, engagement with how the poor love, what it demands to still love with kindness, empathy & with the most potent of the poor's power, hope, in spite of the perversions that is their everyday life & in any & every foreseeable futures?**

- r. Munni doesn't approve of SRK's occupation, but still lets him use his phone, insisting to seek exemption from my anger, "didi, how else will he get business, to do anything else also, he will first need investment, कुछ तो पैसे".
- s. **The TIED SELFIE with this client did not compel me into rage**, his material form in its visceral present was far worse bruised. It was a client request I read, I cannot repeat the text ad verbatim, even though I remember it to its last punctuation, it is not fit for polite society. SRK had to decode the text's horrifying, perverse desire, I didn't understand all the lingo. It was when I really understood what this client's request was that I had thrown the cup.
- t. The request was detailed. This man with his friends wanted to throw a rape-fantasy party for a man who really goes both ways & is also a local bully too, हमारे यहां का हीरो है, who is getting married for very obvious reasons. Not that the friend won't fuck boys to prepare him for his shaadi-life, they want to present him a rape-party to enact his deepest fantasy.
- u. **Even the rape fantasy wasn't shocking to me.**
- v. Here to again insist on the comparative currencies of our respective, my fully elite, south delhi, RWA aunty form & SRK's specifically working-class body, I report that one night, I could walk into a thana, obviously drunk & I could sweet-talk the cops by titillating their own edgy imaginations of speaking in street-walker tongues, when the body which was its carrier was oh, so fit & fair like mine. Even this is not gendered oppression on my not at all frail, fully elite, form, it is still the state working in my favour. That night SRK was brought home by us, he had been raped by cops & clients alike.
- w. I had seen worse, but this client with rape fantasies was really a savage who wanted to push his desires to its extreme perverted end. SRK, who is known for his junkie ways, was promised injection-waala fun if he could pretend to be dead, or they could make sure he passes out, so that they could actualize their rapist friend's **necrophiliac** desires too.
- x. Aside, **necrophiliac** = *Psychiatry*. a person who is sexually excited by or attracted to dead bodies (*The serial killer was also a known necrophiliac*¹⁷). Evoked metaphorically & meant in its very Freudian sense, Our PM's narcissistic tendencies (conscious wish), are tame, almost tolerable, compared to his unconscious necrophiliac desires, which are also no longer a secret.

¹⁷ <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/necrophiliac>

- y. The fact that DID SRK shrunk in size, when I was screaming in anger, started crying as copiously & as loudly as I was is all the testimony I want to submit to insist that the “subaltern” who does not speak is a fiction of the savarana, caste-logic, status-quoist cunning imagination.
- z. **The working-class man knows too well the perversions poverty produces, he lives them, he is only ever recognized as a pest. Given half a hearing, every poor, any marginalised, from the most preferred minority to the always distanced dalits & adavaasis, across & beyond genders from every religious denomination, even the non-believers, will let you know, why they cannot talk in our (elite) ways, कहां से करेंगे, कभी समय ही मिल पाया, पढ़ाई छोड़ो, कब सोचेंगे अपने बारे में, जब पूरा दिन जीने की मारा मारी में लग जाता है.**
- aa. SRK did not have to be told using innovative communicative strategies & behavioural change interventions about how philosophically painful & humiliating the ask of playing dead was, the fact that the ask made him howl only reiterates how deeply the imagined “subaltern” feels the pain & is only & always shrieking.
- bb. Here, I present SRK’s tied selfie which provoked necrophilia desires as the material evidence to insist on “Killfies” as an epistemological marker of the only forms & formations available to the working-class, pro-le-trait, to present themselves.
- cc. Again, agreeing with Dean, I do not dismiss the culture of narcissism¹⁸, instead within the schematic I am proposing,
 - i. **selfies in its obscenely self-indulgent, narcissistic, catharsis of the self is the permissions, platforms & praxis of the hegemonic, fully formed elite, upper caste & class, body like me,**

¹⁸ [Comrade Dean] [00:22:46.29]...the narcissism critique approaches the selfie as if it were analysing a single photograph, it views the person in that photograph as the photograph subject. Selfies though should be understood as a common form emerging out of the communicative practices of secondary visibility. Understood from within this practices, the selfie has a collective subject, the many participating in the common practice, the many imitating each other, the figure in the photo is incidental, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZvvH56XqCw&list=PL0mJZdLJAu8iURUgZIJNzFLldEgU_b168&index=4.

ii. whilst each iteration of othering a working-class body enacts in its desire for selfing already always is a “killfie”. They cannot really follow the Indian state’s advice to avoid the circumstances in which they take selfies, in case they become “killfies”, poverty is their only circumstance.

- dd. Poverty is a compelling circumstance, it is pregnant with perversions. BY RECOGNIZING THE WORKING-CLASS ONLY AS A “PEST”, IT IS ALSO RECKONED THAT THE POOR SHOULD CLEAN UP BEFORE HE PRESENTS HIMSELF TO EXTERMINATE, EMPTY, HIMSELF OF HIS PEST-LIKE FEATURES. If the poor were not so indispensable & necessary to the capitalist & casteist cunning, or could be more easily done away with, the fully elite form would not hesitate to propose a scheme which offers a new poor each time they needed his spirits, bones & spine to erect their building or clean after their shit, with necrophiliac desires to be actualized on a discount.
- ee. Through epistemological marker of “killfie”, I want to present SRK’s tied selfie as a starting point towards deliberating strategies to ensure that such fates in every & each real, metaphorical or fantastical evocations do not await the working-class, which is in fact the desired end of the hegemonic whole’s never-satiating, wide appetites.
- ff. To arrive at the assured collective promise, inherent to the act of selfing, of the shared exhilaration that “my identity or sense of self is not so singular or unique that it can only stand for itself, it’s interchangeable with others¹⁹”, we need to make a revolutionary gesture. Nothing less will do.
- gg. First & foremost, the working-class man needs to be liberated from his “subaltern” sentencing & its non-speaking qualifications, by admitting in evidence the “killfies” he circulates as material evidence of his knowing, always knowing, not only directions to his own “self”, but the many others of his self in his loud, clear & shrieking ways.

¹⁹[Comrade Dean] [00:16:52.03]... Their faces and expressions convey my own. Not only do I see myself in others, I present others as myself. The face that once suggested the identity of a singular person now flows into collective expression of common feelings, so reaction gives work because of the effect they transmit as they move through our feeds, imitative moments in the larger heterogeneous being we experience and become, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZvvH56XqCw&list=PL0mjZdLJAu8iURUgZIJNzFLldEgU_b168&index=4.

hh. By acknowledging the working-class as already part of a universality, not only in its self-aware universal pro-le-trait positions, but also in its presentation of himself within Hegelian prescription towards true self-consciousness, we need to abandon & vehemently reject the assigned qualifications of “subaltern” as a fiction of the savarna, caste-logic, status-quoist cunning towards keeping everything, but particularly all the freedoms exclusively & only for itself.

II. IN FACT, INSTEAD WE SHOULD MAKE A REVOLUTIONARY GESTURE TO RECOGNIZE WHAT THE WORKING-CLASS ALREADY KNOWS ABOUT HIS UNIVERSAL PRO-LE-TRAIT LOCATIONS & CELEBRATE HIS PHILOSOPHICALLY, POLITICALLY & HISTORICALLY SUBSTANTIATED REVOLUTIONARY SPIRITS & CALL HIM A COMRADE ALREADY.

jj. To end, lest there are any hesitations, more evidence is required, let me draw on my 25 years, quarter of a century in clock time, experience of working in close collaboration with the working-class, to let you know that each, every & anytime you do **in fact call a working-class by his preferred noun, comrade²⁰** [1591–n, originally. One who shares the same room, a chamber-fellow, ‘chum’; esp. among soldiers, a tent-fellow, fellow-soldier (also comrade-in-arms);...²¹], rest assured, you shall be welcomed with greetings common in these circuits, roaring **लाल सलाम**, we shall overcome someday²² **हम होंगे कामयाब²³** to walk hand in hand. He does know a thing or two about revolution, after all, isn’t his whole life an unactualized desire to be someone else, anyone else, other than what he is, which, if you really think about it, is **REVOLUTION IN SHORT.**

²⁰ See also, Dean, J., 2009. *Democracy and other neoliberal fantasies: Communicative capitalism and left politics*. Duke University Press; Dean, J., 2012. *The communist horizon*. Verso Books; Dean, J., 2014. Communicative capitalism and class struggle. *Spheres: Journal for Digital Cultures*, 1, pp.1-16; Dean, J., 2021. Faces as commons: The secondary visuality of communicative capitalism. *The Aesthetics and Politics of the Online Self: A Savage Journey into the Heart of Digital Cultures*, pp.357-370; Dean, J., 2019. *Comrade: An essay on political belonging*. Verso Books; Dean, J., 2017. Four theses on the comrade. *E-flux: Journal*, 86, pp.1-16.

²¹ <https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=comrade>

²² <https://youtu.be/nM39QUiAsoM?si=LhjQFRy-R5r-3UtY>

²³ https://youtu.be/dA_rI2KNm0o?si=JOAMNDYZZA5Weukv