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This page contains personal writings of Jijo Punnoose.
Some of which are sensitive and may not be palatable to every reader.

All the other articles by this author, a reader would find, technical and scientific in nature.
But not so here.

It is cautioned that unless the reader has had some spiritual foundation, these articles would
seem absurd. Because, spirituality is a domain beyond rational minds.



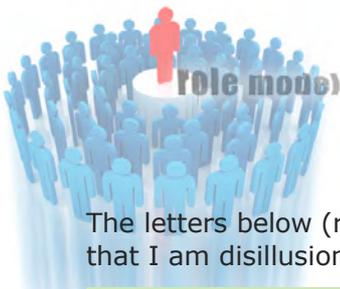
In the October of 2001, my artdirector David while standing in his home neighborhood of the NY 9/ 11 WTC twin towers site, was speaking with me about life after death. "For us Jews to reach heaven" ... he said, "we have to follow 620 strictures while for you christians, you need only follow Jesus". He was not a practicing Jew yet he knew these basics of both Judaism & Christianity. He was referring to Mitzvah in rabbinical Judaism - a total of 620 commandments. And he was also referring to me as a christian who is supposed to 'emulate Jesus'. Though the practice of it is still hard, this simple definition for a 'christian' never occurred to me till it was presented in contrast with a 'Jew'. Nevertheless, the subtext had always been there from the time I held the first copy of Kemphis 'Imitation of Christ' book in my hands. You are told that by being christian, you 'wear' Christ ... Jesus is your rolemodel.

Like most children of my young days, my role model had been my Pappa. Though we belong to a 'filmmaking' household, celebrities & stars (of sports, athletics, films, comics, Vj, Dj, etc.) were not influential in our behavior. All families were close knit in small towns & villages of those days. On becoming an adult, when I grew out of my dad-is-my-hero age, even then I could see that my papa had qualities that should be emulated ... qualities that which were highlighted even by business rivals moral qualities which even my boyhood class bullies gave me credit for. (കുഞ്ചാക്കോടെ അനുജന്റെ മകനാ അപ്പച്ചന്റെ !!) . But when we grow out of childhood, we cease to fan-follow our parents. We are on our way to become our own heroes & heroines.

When many of my rank-holding classmates were still battling out their MTech & IAS finals, by then having already entered into a professional career I didn't have any role models to adore. Jesus was a God somewhere up above there whom I remembered, sometimes absent-mindedly, during my daily morning eucharist and evening rosaries and then there was Mary. To me then she was a woman glorified and positioned above the other beloved of God, just to keep the female audience at the churches satisfied. In fact, I remember during school days there was this skewed mentality I had ... I held in contempt the devotees attending saturday novena of *Our Lady Of Perpetual Help* at Alleppey Latin Cathedral while I prided myself in going there to meet Jesus daily for the morning mass! Gandhiji I considered the *Man of the Millennium*, and admired so was for me Churchill, *the Man of the Century*. Quite a contradiction given the characteristics associated with both these men .. but then, such was what I inferred from my readings. Abe Lincoln too I admired. Coming to inventors, scientists, mathematical genii, discoverers, artists, creators and performers ... though fascinating, they didn't make my adoration list since I found most of the accomplished happened to be at the right place at the right time with the right talent. And coming to kings & conquerers, when the totality of each life is considered, unlike in fairytales and valor stories most of them cut pathetic figures towards the end of their lives.

Given such realities, I never much admired even people around us - since they have lesser achievements listed to their credit than those above. My outlook changed about the time I had problem/s in my personal life. My mid-30s. Thats when I noticed my limitations in handling issues ... which some of the less admired ones around seemed to handle quite well. One was Senthil Kumar, a colleague 6 years younger than me, whom I saw calmly picking up the salvageable pieces of his studio burnt down in a fire and despite odds - which would have me furious if stacked against me, quietly went on to rebuild a corporate empire. On 1991 sept 23, I stood shellshocked amidst the smoking embers while he sorted the half burnt. Later, I made a mental note - what I saw before my eyes is perfection ... difficult for me; yet worthy of emulation.

And then, I remembered Jimmy's mother and Bobachan's wife



The letters below (redrafted) are those I sent Anil Madhavan & Amma when they thought that I am disillusioned with the turn of events in my life.

To Anil Madhavan 25/july/2012
confidential

jimmy's mother's story

During the years 1968 to 72, we used to see Jimmy's mother sitting all day long at Alleppey 'latheen palli' (Latin Church Cathedral) in the front row of benches near to the altar. Everybody would have left after the conclusion of the last mass at 7.30am. But she would remain there *'weeping like an injured water-buffalo'* (my Ammachi's words).

Jimmy, unlike his two younger siblings, was an extrovert and would shoot his mouth off to everybody ... to you and to Josmon - his classmates, to new-found acquaintances - like myself, and even to total strangers. He was bombastic about his father, how his father had made it big and rich in erstwhile British East-Africa. It would be only a matter of few weeks, he claimed, before Jimmy's father - who had sent his family ahead of him as transfer residents, joined them with his fortunes and then instead of a rented shack they would have a new house, a car, television set (in 1970!) etc., and would be acknowledged among the prosperous in Alleppey township. Myself, unlike my brother Josmon, being 12 to 15 years of age then, elder to you guys by 2 years, had found it strange that even with such fortunes at his father's disposal, to make a living Jimmy should skip classes and breed aquarium fishes for sale! Fantastic tales he would narrate about his father! Yet Jimmy was affable, without any tint of malaise. Only later in life I realized that the fanciful stories he had made-up was to overcome his inferiority and pain. (Like my own child I heard used to do at CHOICE SCHOOL just before her teens).

After what seemed to be a futile waiting, by the time Jimmy's family decided to emigrate to U.K. (as British passport holders are entitled to), my ammachi - Baby Punnoose & my aunt - Annamma Kunchacko (your mother's friend), revealed to me what we kids were unaware of and what women's gossip society of small-town Alleppey had known all along - DESERTION! by their father.

Their emigration was facilitated by their East African friends then settled in U.K. They also helped the fatherless family to survive in London. In the ensuing years I didn't keep in touch with Jimmy, but Jos always was well informed. Jimmy had completed a secretarial course, landed up with a high paying job as a personal assistant to Jewish Diamond Merchant in London, educated his siblings, would travel on his boss's private jet, call from a radiophone for hours-long conversation with Jos during glob-trottings. No fantasy trips in this part of Jimmy's narrative!

Another cinematic irony was that a penniless, remorseful and distraught Jimmy's Father had reached Alleppey enquiring for his family just a few months after they had left Alleppey.

By the time I was making *Manjil Virinja Pookkal*, my Ammachi used to say that Jimmy's mother do phone her occasionally from London, to say her husband has joined them there recently, all is well, and they need to find a good conservative Malayali groom for Jimmy's younger sister Jessy.

We family members (with Liza) met them in London during 1987 summer. Jimmy took us around in England (just like Shan was benevolent in Philadelphia and you in Munich). We all noticed that everything turned out well for Jimmy's family. I specifically observed that Jimmy's father was behaving very natural without being guilt-ridden, as if he had

known us all along in Alleppey! And the children were reverential to him because Jimmy's mother didn't carry any emotional baggage.

A family drama with conservative happy endings!

Now, we come to rationality, spirituality, faith, etc., also, the ... conflicts.

You asked me about the conflict. Well, what Jimmy's Mother did in good faith was to wait for her husband. If she were 'rational' or a 'practicable woman', she could have found an alternative life and spared herself a lot of tears. When she was clutching a straw in those hopeless years at Alleppey, the then social setup would not have given her much leave-way. But once in U.K. she could have put away the past - just as many others I know have done (different stories, though). She held onto some 'archaic' conventions and didn't pursue any *practical alternative/ rationality*. Infact, you AM are in some way Jimmy's Mother when you agreed with me (in the year 2000, summer) that "whatever be the differences with Shan, he being a major reason to what Anil is today, you wont seek *practical alternatives* so as to diminish your discomfiture". And with the inside secrets of the family business you were once part of, you can force anybody to submit to your own fair self-interest. But you dont. That is *Jimmy's Mother within Anil Madhavan*. But when it reaches extremes (for example; when Jesna taunts and the salt gets rubbed into the wound), there is a conflict as to "*why not become the tough Anil Madhavan?*"

Fortunately, I had grown-up without any intense emotional pains (like Jimmy, for example.... also, you may know of Lolamma/ Madathilakkal Georgekutty's kids). But I did learn a lesson on realities early in life from Jimmy's Mother. It is *Jimmy's Mother within me* that had restrained me in dealing with Pappa and Liza in a *practical/ rational* way.

But then, when situations become too intense, there is a conflict in your brain that brings in rational/ practical thoughts pitted against your faith. It gnaws at your hope which had said to you 'a good time would eventually come'.

This would explain the bout of mental strain I had yesterday. In Christian Spiritual parlance it is called "a trial". It lasted about 10 hours. Suddenly it was gone (I did take EPIDRYL tablet though). I am OK now. Thankyou for your concern.

Jijo

Yes, I should admit jimmy's mother had become
a role model for me.



To Tessy Paul --/xx--/2014
confidential

bobachan's wife's story

I say; Amma you are the only person whom I did actually slap in my life. On that morning after Vishu day in 1994. I beg your pardon again am so ashamed I don't even want to talk about it.

But Amma ... this is about Moley Chechi, my cousin Bobachan's wife ... yes the very same Moley from your neighborhood in Chalakudy. Her husband, my cousin Bobachan is the only other person whom I *almost* slapped. The incident happened in 1985 here at the Mahalingapuram house right under the Sacred Heart consecrated in the drawing room. I was at the top of my career then. My film *Kuttichathan 3D* was being exhibited all over India, and I had just returned from Dubai after the Arabian Gulf releases.

So, caught up in a world of my own in the morning hours I was irritated to hear arguments outside my room* in this house then newly purchased from Prem Nazir. There was Pappa come down that day from Cochin and also Mariammaunty (Sr. Celine) dropped in on a stopover during her travel from her Secunderabad convent in Andhra to their Wellington convent in Nilgiris. I knew Pappa and Auntie were talking outside in the drawing room. The only other persons around were the manager, the driver, the watchman & the cook - all of them downstairs in the office floor.

Hearing noises, I walked out to see Bobachan shouting abuses at Pappa. He was angry since Pappa denied his demand for further loans towards his personal needs. Pappa had been obliging him for sometime in providing financial assistance. The rest of us - ammachi, jos & myself had told Pappa that enough is enough. For, Bobachan had been making frequent visits to every one of our places - Alleppey home, Kakkanad Studio, Palirivattom residence (our stay near bye-pass you would remember) and here at Madras with his never-ending requests for funds. ... sometimes at 1 am, in the dead of the night.

Till a few months before, all of us were indulgent towards Bobachan sympathetic, because he has had a mental breakdown following the tumult in 1977 when he chased us out of Udaya Studios. During the ensuing years which saw Navodaya's prosperity and Udaya's oblivion, we had reconciled. In fact it was papa who took Bobachan to have him admitted at Kusumagiri mental hospital at Kakkanad.

(Incidentally, the mental asylum story-element in film Mamattikkuttiyammakku of 1983 was suggested by me to Fazil. What the character of Bharat Gopi experienced when the character of Mohanlal took him to a place to meet the character of Poornima, is my own shock in suddenly realizing that I am at a mental asylum and Bobachan was there when without forewarning I one day did accompany papa to Kusumagiri. We even did shoot the film sequence at the same hospital).

** the hindmost bedroom which you occupied when staying here with Aarcha. ... also that was our room - Liza's, mine & our child's, during the time my family was intact. Traveling between Secunderabad & Wellington Mariammaunty used to drop in here when Liza was here too.*

Everybody were on their feet. Bobachan was shouting. Pappa & Mariammaunty were silent. For some time I watched the spectacle from a distance. It was true that I had a soft corner for Bobachan. We all had ... Fazil - who had been his college mate, Bindan of Bheema - who was a his teammate and myself 8 years younger to him was groomed on his vast books & record collections. Bobachan had been a mentor to me in many disciplines such as music, film and literature. But now had come the time to act. I had a feeling that Bobachan, like a pampered child, was exploiting everybody's sympathy towards him. And today he was pouring out utter filth - gutter language even against my ammachi who was absent. One solid slap ... കരണക്കുറ്റിക്കു ഒരു നല്ല പൊട്ടിക്കൽ ... that would be the right medicine, I thought to myself as I entered the drawing room and asked him to shut up. Having never seen me confront him, he was taken aback for about two seconds before he turned on to me with angry retorts. I was ready to slap but Pappa and Auntie seeing a red situation came in-between saying " ജിജോ ... വേണ്ടോ .. വേണ്ടോ .. നീ ഇടപെടണ്ട ... go back to to your room" .

But at that moment I clearly recollect that my concern was not their restriction. I who by then had become a great personality, had decided to prove my integrity. (**with a slap? ... !!**) . My only hesitation was the implication of such an act. People would later say that Jijokuttan is the same as Bobachan. Boban Kunchacko - who from his teens had gained notoriety by manhandling his less privileged employees and his weaker friends & relatives. (At that moment, I was thinking of my reputation not a good virtue, today I can say).

That was when I suddenly noticed something that had always been there all along with Bobachan something, which went unnoticed & unmentioned because of the attention Bobachan would draw on himself with his furious action & speech. That something was his wife Moley ... she was softly pulling at his elbow, murmuring " ബോബച്ചാ ... പോകാം bobacha pokaam ..." sounding repeatedly like a scratched vinyl record stuck in a loop.

Whatever be his other shortcomings, Bobachan adored his wife and kids. Bobachan - though a self-conscious person like me, yet was not reluctant to exhibit his affection for



The last photograph at Udaya Studios before departure in Aug 1977.
Just after this, Bobachan - with a handgun in his madikkuthu, chased Pappa out into NH 47.



Navodaya Studio inauguration and Kuttichathan Switch-On in April 1984

his family in public. Still it would have been too much for a woman like Moley to bear the misfortunes she begat by becoming the spouse to Boban Kunchacko. I had been witness to the tragedy that occurred to their family fortunes and personal lives after the short period of 2 years following what seemed as a *fairytale wedding*. Amidst all that misfortunes, she did walk the thin line. She was a dutiful wife onestep behind her husband .. yet with one protective arm held in front of her 'mental' (sic) spouse. She was a responsible mother warding off insults her children got taunted at school ... all these while remaining submissive to a mother-in-law who would not loosen the pursestrings. When situation demanded it, Moley Chechi was seen pro-active in business dealings also like the instance of approaching Bindan for a badly needed loan repayment.

[Which when brought to papa's knowledge, in a rare act of communication with his estranged sister-in-law, he phoned Bobachan's mother - Mrs. Kunchacko, to reprimand the act of sending a housewife to seek funds from personalities unaware of christian morality]. Also, till recently I remember Moley Chechi sending editing assistants to me with requests for free videotape transfers at our facility on the first floor here - when selling their old Udaya films' telecasting rights to Asianet, Surya TV.

Now as I turned my attention to Moley Chechi, that was when I realized that this person was all along there, unnoticed, softly restraining my cousin. Actually Bobachan did always go around accompanied by two individuals. One - Sasi, the driver-cum-personal assistant.

The second person, to restrain him, would be either manager Thommahan - a distant relative of Moley, or Moley herself. They who accompanied Bobachan remained virtually invisible. I wouldn't remember Moley Chechi the times Bobachan came and left ... but she was always there with him.

What I saw shook me up (as when seeing Senthil years later amidst smoldering embers)

It was the calmness on Moley Chechi's face. As I gaped at this inconceivable phenomenon, she gave a fleeting glance at me and continued her " ബോബച്ചാ ... പോകാം ... *bobacha pokaam* ..." Something that I couldn't fantom was a quick smile that came to her lips ... I am a filmmaker who has coached many actors ... but that expression of hers I couldn't define. The smile had a sadness ... but today when looking back it seemed graceful ... a supreme knowledge that said "*In this room now, the most acceptable character to God happens to be Moley*".

Pappa & Aunty would have thought that I backed off due to their intervention. Bobachan left immediately after that with some scoffing comments about the muslim style construction of this house and the inadequacy of the new Honda Accord being washed and polished by driver Baby. And, I made a note later ... what I beheld besides a very visible Bobachan was true perfection, invisible though.

Yes Amma, I should admit bobachan's wife became a role model for me. In fact 15 years later, when I came and sat smiling at Kombara Johnyville while Liza with abuses tried her best to shout me off the premises, I was being Moleychechi - subconsciously.

Now, this would seem cliché - the long suffering female but here I am noting down that great suffering mother recorded in the history of catholic church ...

Saint Monica^[1] (AD 331^[2] – 387), also known as **Monica of Hippo**, (*Be. Timaniket*) was an early **Christian saint** and the mother of St. **Augustine of Hippo**. She is honoured in the **Roman Catholic Church** where she is remembered and venerated for her outstanding **Christian virtues**, particularly the suffering against the **adultery** of her husband, and a prayerful life dedicated to the reformation of her son, who wrote extensively of her pious acts and life with her in his *Confessions*. Popular Christian legends recall Saint Monica to have **wept** every night for her son **Augustine**.

Another thing unique about the above is the making of a duo, mother-son saints. Also the fact Augustine is the greatest sinner turned saint.

Yes, I should admit that saint monica also has become a role model for me.

I should then illustrate a few other role models (both admired and not admired) below. This is from the reallife shortfilm biopics of mob cinema.



Katherine of Aragon
 Born: Dec 16, 1485
 Died: Jan 7, 1536
 Tenure as Consort: 1509-1533
 Mother of Queen Mary I

Humble and Loyal
 Widow of Henry VIII's elder brother King Arthur, Katherine was a gifted, pious, regal and intelligent Spanish princess. Later, as Henry's first lawful wife, Katherine bore his daughter Mary, but no sons to survive beyond infancy. Remaining a loyal consummate consort despite his infidelities, her faith would not allow Henry to cast her aside for marrying and making Anne Boleyn his new Queen.

Denying the king's will only led her to be alienated by royalists at the court, stripped of the Queenship and everything that came with it, and even forcibly separated from her only child. Yet she won the admiration of great men as Thomas More. Though a foreigner, she was beloved by her English subjects. Such was Katherine's impression on people, that even her staunch enemy at the court, Thomas Cromwell, said of her "If not for her sex, she could have defied all the heroes of History." Being forthright, Henry himself conceded "If she had mobilised a sympathetic English nobility ..." (which she had actually done by riding in full armor into the battle field to defend England against a sudden Scottish attack. This was when Henry was campaigning in France. She won the battle in which King James IV of Scotland was killed). "..... she could have had me overthrown!"

Mona Kapoor
event manager, ceo future studios.
 "I had an arranged marriage with Boney Kapoor. He was 10 years older to me. I was 19 when I married him. Ours was a 13-year-old marriage in a family rooted in traditions. So it came as a shock when I realised that my husband was in a second relationship. Friends from filmworld advised me to slim down, go to gyms, do yoga, etc. But, at my age how can I compete with a film heroine!"

Mona Kapoor was the wife of Bollywood film producer Boney Kapoor – who walked out on her to marry Actress Sridevi. After Boney Kapoor moved out of the house, Mona lived with her in-laws and her two children for 10 years. At age 48, she died of cancer on 25/3/2012.

"There was nothing left in our relationship to give it a chance because Sridevi was already with a child. That itself was a big statement for me to opt out. It was also a tough time for my son Arjun and daughter Anshula, who were both in school. My children had to face torment from their classmates. What held us together was the thread of pain. I continued staying with Boney's Parents as before. My children live with me but are close to their father too. They travel with him, dine with him. I have no animosity or hatred for the man. It would be cruel if I kept the children away from him ... because, I cannot substitute him. I cannot deprive my children of their father however unfair he has been to me. I want him also to be happy. After all, I gave up my place so that he could be happy".

Hers would sound like the much cliched story of a 'long suffering Indan bahu'. But to those who knew her, she was a woman who stood with her integrity fully intact ... and also a successful business person at that





Diana
 The Dowager
 Diana Princess of Wales
 Her Royal Highness
 The Princess of Wales
 Her Royal Highness
 The Duchess of Cambridge

Twenty-year-old Diana Spencer's wedding to Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales on 29 July 1981 was held at St Paul's Cathedral and seen by a global television audience of over 750 million. The marriage produced two sons, the princes William and Harry, who were respectively second and third in the line of succession to the British throne throughout her lifetime. During the early 1990s, the marriage of the Prince and Princess of Wales fell apart, an event at first suppressed, then sensationalised, by the world media. Both the Prince and Princess allegedly spoke to the press through friends, each blaming the other for the marriage's demise. But the actual factor which broke the matrimony was the Prince of Wales' reignited romances with his former girlfriend, Camilla Parker Bowles who he eventually married. And, Diana had commented, "My husband made me feel inadequate in every possible way that each time I came up for air he pushed me down again ..."

Princess Diana then began a relationship with Major James Hewitt. In the interview on BBC current affairs show Panorama, to journalist Martin Bashir on 20 November 1995 she admitted her adulterous affair with Hewitt saying, "Yes, I adored him. Yes, I was in love with him. But I was very let down [by him]." This was in reference to James Hewitt selling his 64 personal letters from Diana for £10 million. On 20 December 1995, Buckingham Palace publicly announced the Queen had sent letters to the Prince and Princess advising them to divorce.

On 31 August 1997, Diana was fatally injured in a car crash in the Pont de l'Alma road tunnel in Paris, which also caused the deaths of her companion Dodi Fayed and the driver, Henri Paul, acting security manager of the Hôtel Ritz Paris. Millions of people watched her funeral. From her engagement in 1981 until her death in 1997, Diana was a major presence on the world stage, often described as the "world's most photographed woman". In 1999, TIME named Diana one of the 100 Most Important People of the 20th Century. In 2002, Diana was ranked 3rd on the BBC's poll of the 100 Greatest Britons, outranking the Queen and other British monarchs. A role-model for every feminist, Diana had declared that "I would rather remain the Queen of Hearts than become the Queen of England".



Sunanda Pushkar
business person, fashion & sports
 Born on 27 June 1962 in a Kashmiri family of landlords and army officers, she was the only daughter of Lt Col Pushkar Nath Dass. She married fellow Kashmiri Pandit, a management graduate, Sanjay Raina. They divorced in 1988.

Sunanda went to Dubai in 1989 and married Sujith Menon. A son was born in Nov 1992. In Dubai she started an event management business called Expressions, and became well known for fashion shows. But she and Sujith ran into financial loss. Sujith then returned to India, and died in an accident in Delhi in March 1997. Sunanda started getting threatening calls from Sujith's creditors. As her son needed speech therapy, she emigrated to Canada to live with a banker companion in Toronto. In 2004 she moved back to Dubai with a Canadian passport to own Rendezvous Sports World, became successful enough to buy a dozen apartments at Palm Jumeirah, Jumeirah Beach Residence and the Executive Towers.

Sunanda Pushkar was a highly successful Indo-Canadian businesswoman and the wife of Indian minister Shashi Tharoor. On 17 Jan 2014 she was found dead of drug overdose - most likely a combination of sedatives, other strong medicines and probably alcohol.

In October 2009, she met Shashi Tharoor – Under Secretary General at the U.N. who resigned after losing to Ban Ki-moon in the election for the Secretary-General, at a party organised by the billionaire Sunny Varkey. Tharoor then got elected to the Indian Parliament. It was through the tweets of IPL commissioner Lalit Modi that the world first heard of Sunanda Pushkar. In April 2010, Lalit Modi questioned on Twitter who indeed was she and why was an influential union minister interested in keeping her equity stake in the Kerala team private. The equity was worth Rs 70 crore. While the episode cost Tharoor his job and was grist to the media mill for months, Pushkar became well known in India, and the two married with a paparazzi-frenzied Malayali wedding ceremony in Tharoor's ancestral home at Elavanchery in Kerala, India. This was the third marriage for both of them.

They were the picture of a happy couple, attending events and parties together, living in the limelight of Delhi Durbar. But it so occurred in Dubai, a reporter of Khaleej Times alleged that a hysterical Sunanda had threatened to throw a drink on him for conducting interview of Tharoor in the midst of a wedding reception. It was then followed by a barrage of absurd tweets from Tharoor's widely followed Twitter handle. On 15 Jan 2014, came the latest controversy in which Sunanda accused Pakistani Journalist Mehr Tarar of stalking her husband and having an affair with him. No one could have imagined that these angry tweets would end with the death of Sunanda Pushkar. On 17 Jan 2014, a day after the Twitter controversy, Sunanda was found dead in room number 345 of The Leela Palace hotel in the Chanakyapuri area of New Delhi.

The closing chapter of Sunanda's story is a study on living & dying in full Twitterati glare

In *'Life Imitate Art'* and *'Media influence History'* studies, Harriet Beecher's book *Uncle Tom's Cabin* would probably come first in the reference listing. No other work of art has influenced history in a positive way, thus enhancing "the role of literature as an agent of social change."

Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, *Life Among the Lowly*, is an anti-slavery novel by American author Harriet Beecher Stowe. Published in 1852, the novel "helped lay the groundwork for the American Civil War, *The Emancipation Proclamation* and *The Abolition of Slavery*". It's author Ms. Stowe, a Connecticut-born teacher at the Hartford Female Seminary and an active abolitionist, featured the character of Uncle Tom, a long-suffering black slave around whom the stories of other characters revolve. The novel depicts the reality of slavery while also asserting that Christian love can overcome something as destructive as enslavement of fellow human beings.

Uncle Tom's Cabin was the best-selling novel of the 19th century and the second best-selling book of that century, following the Bible. When Abraham Lincoln met Stowe at the start of the Civil War, Lincoln declared, "So this is the little lady who started this war." (This quote is apocryphal).

Feminist theory can also be seen at play in Stowe's book, with the novel as a critique of the patriarchal nature of slavery. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is criticized for being written in the sentimental and melodramatic style common to 19th century sentimental novels and domestic fiction (also called women's fiction). Yet *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has exerted an influence equaled by few other novels in history. As a best-seller, the novel heavily influenced later 'protest literature's.

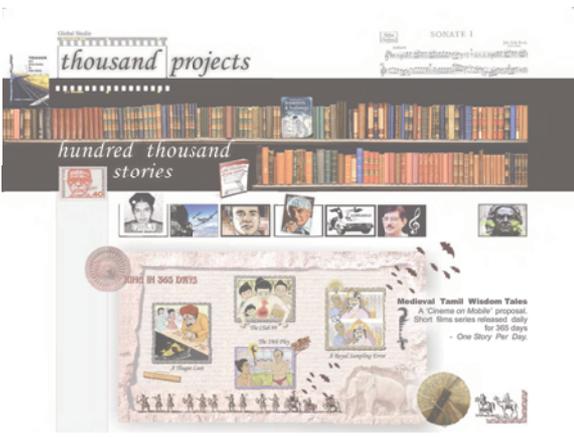


Harriet Beecher Stowe

social activist, author.



Ms. Stowe was married to Calvin Stove - professor at seminary, who as an ardent critic of slavery, had her support his cause. The Stoves ran an *Underground Railroad*, temporarily housing several fugitive slaves in their home. A committed wife and mother of seven children, Ms. Stowe also remained an activist involved in social issues of her days. Such was her personal life (and that of the then American society in 1870s), when Stowe's brother Henry Ward Beecher was accused of an adulterous relationship, it became the subject of a national scandal. Stowe, unable to bear the public attacks on her brother, fled to Florida but asked family members to send her newspaper reports. Through the affair, however, she remained loyal to her brother and believed he was innocent. Harriet Beecher Stowe died on July 1, 1896, at age eighty-five in Hartford, Connecticut.



Joanne (27) while teaching english in Portugal, married and gave birth to a daughter in 1993. When the marriage ended, she and Jessica returned to the UK to live in Edinburgh, where *Harry Potter & the Philosopher's Stone* was completed. The book was first published by Bloomsbury Children's Books in June 1997, under the name *J.K. Rowling*.



J.K. Rowling

celebrity, author.



Rowling has led a "rags to riches" life story, in which she progressed from living on state benefits to multi-millionaire status within five years. She is the United Kingdom's best-selling author since records began. *Sunday Times 2008 Rich List* estimated Rowling's fortune at £560 million, ranking her as the *twelfth richest woman* in the United Kingdom. *Forbes* ranked Rowling as the forty-eighth most powerful celebrity of 2007, and *TIME* magazine named her as a runner-up for its 2007 Person of the Year, noting the social, moral, and political inspiration she has given her fans. In October 2010, Rowling was named the *Most Influential Woman in Britain* by leading magazine editors.

When her marriage had failed, she was jobless & penniless with a dependent child. But she described her failure as 'liberating' - **rock bottom became a solid foundation on which I rebuilt my life** - J. K. Rowling, "The fringe benefits of failure", 2008

Having married since and being a mother to three, Rowling has occasionally expressed ambivalence about her religious faith. In a British documentary, *JK Rowling: A Year in the Life*, when asked if she believed in God, she said, "Yes. I do struggle with it, I couldn't pretend that I'm not doubt-ridden about a lot of things and that would be one of them but I would say yes."

A christian critic comments

"Harry Potter is a cleverly crafted story of witchcraft that begins by casting a spell on readers to condition them as fans of Harry Potter to respond with anger to anyone who criticizes the **materialistic desires & fancies** proposed in these works. The conditioning/ stereotyping is subtle and takes the form of presenting all people who criticize or mistreat Harry as mean, evil and close-minded Muggles. [Muggles is a derogatory term for all people who reject magic]. The series communicate the consistent theme that the real evil in the world is from people who reject magic. Another major harmful message for children is that people can use **Black Magic** - which was traditionally considered evil, for good purposes. It proposes the tools of evil is actually good when used to defeat evil....

If vanquishing an evil can be done by the use of any power within our means, and qualify such powers as 'good', today we should not be wasting time in debates on **gun control, videogame violence & children or the validity of Afghan/ Iraq wars**. It would be much simpler to trash the entire christian ethos on which the western civilization was found.

As christians, we know the tools of occult are not from a neutral power source, but are 'Satanic'. But my own niece - a girl of 8 years, lambasted Pope John Paul II when in a sunday homily it was mentioned that the pontiff had criticized the series for inculcating in children values that are wholly worldly".

Yet, on this Ms. Rowling has said, "I don't take any responsibility for the lunatic fringes of my own religion."



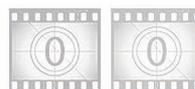
yes, a thousand projects

..... a hundred thousand stories



.... a million films !!

Arabic, Assic, Amharic, Bambara, Batak, Chinese, Hebrew, Hittite, ... Lezgian, ... Quechua, ... Turkmen, ... Uighur, ... Zulu, ... and also in all other world languages



Well, it would now seem that I am subscribing to the cliché of 'a suffering wife'. ... and there is a gender reversal for me if I take them as role models. Actually I am. But I don't consider the feminine part significant it is just besides the point. Spiritually speaking, all those who take up suffering, be it male or female, are following Jesus. The mother of all suffering wives (to use a middle-east expression) is actually Mary - the first disciple of Jesus.

Yes, in a strict sense it is the Lady who happens to be my role model.

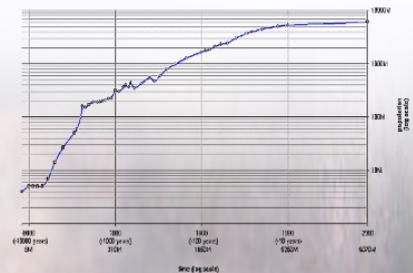
Agreed, at one time I would not have considered this as chivalrous as proclaiming Jesus my role model. But, despite the gender anomaly, I acknowledge a heavenly fact below ... its just not merely marian devotion of old-fashioned catholics.

Maybe Amma would remember the talk I gave to LIBA kids Marina, Tulip & Belind who from their nearby Serviette hostel came here with Ajjio for dinner on Aarcha's 20th birthday. I was explaining to them this in IT terms - the discipline they had graduated in.

What would a software programmer consider as the ideal or perfect application he/she/the team has designed ? the one which fulfills in its performance everything that was intended in its arrays of algorithms ? Well, the task could be anything but **an ideal one is that software application which performs the task exactly as the designer expect it to execute.**

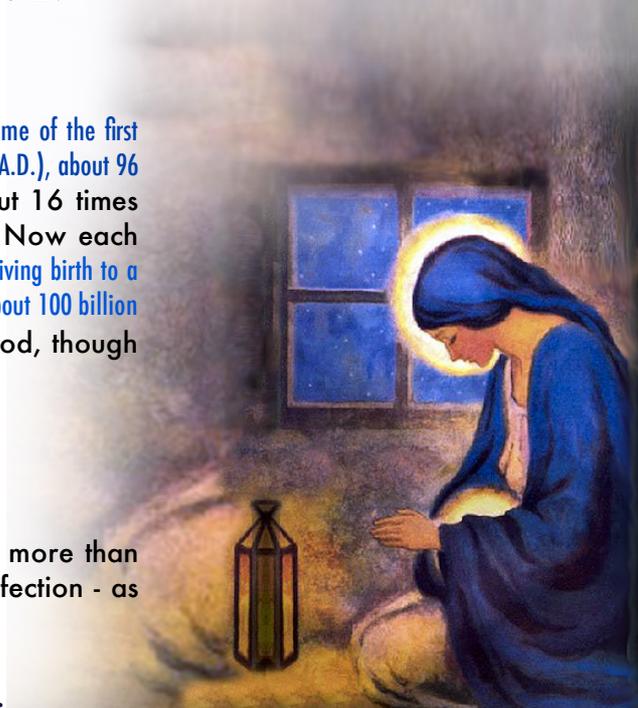
No, there is no question of out-performing the developers' expectations ... that would amount to an illogical aberration.

Mary of Nazereth is considered the perfect creation of God since she fulfilled the task assigned to her by the designer, in full accordance to which it was expected of her.



Now, there is yet a fascinating fact ... what exactly is the task Mary of Nazareth was made to perform?

It is one statistical enumeration that from the time of the first civilized humans (circa 6000 B.C.) ... till present day (2000 A.D.), about 96 to 106 billion humans have born on this earth. i.e; about 16 times the present population occupying the earth. Now each of these humans would mean that the task of giving birth to a child and bringing it up has been performed by a woman about 100 billion times on this planet - making this act of motherhood, though noble, the most performed among all tasks.



The point is Mary had accomplished nothing more than doing this most ordinary among tasks to perfection - as expected by the designer.

Yes, that makes The Lady my role model.

It is a situation I can't escape from because she stands in front of me always.