

## REMEMBER

Alynah Hyder Ali

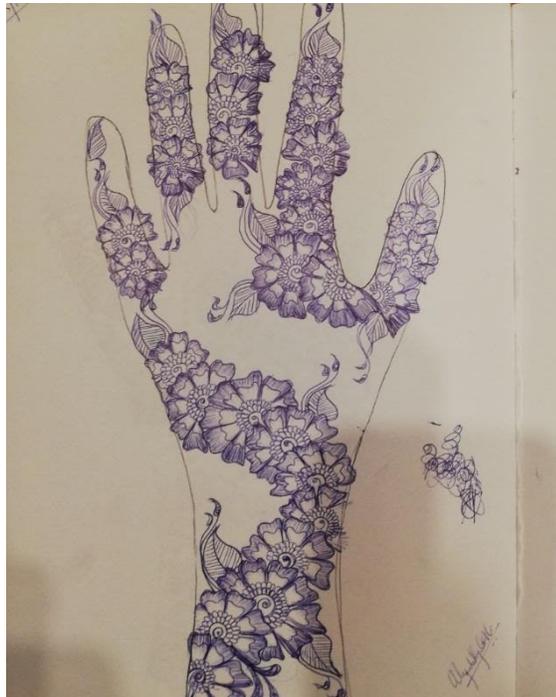
Artistic expression is particularly favoured in our family as both my parents have always had a keenness for the complexities of the Arts. I distinctly remember my mother embroidering beautiful patterns on pieces of loose fabrics while longingly sharing stories from her childhood. Profound memories would surface as songs playing in the background would trigger memories that she held dear to her heart. Coming from a lineage of migrants and living within the capitalist, patriarchal epochs, my parents could not pursue their artistic talent(s) but always encourage their children to celebrate and polish ours. Growing up, art had been a way to escape the realities of everyday life; from listening to music while cooking and doing chores, sitting with my family and listening to melodic songs and ghazals - a form of poem in Arabic, Persian and South Asian cultures - on the weekends, to creating henna during the Summer holidays in elementary school. Today, it embodies a sense of legacy, one which symbolizes empowerment, resilience and self-expression.



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Upon the recent (re)discovery of an old sketchbook and looking through my work, I was transported through the dimensions of time. Ensuing the momentary nostalgia, feelings of anxiousness, naivety and self – doubt resurfaced and ultimately, it reminded me of how far I have come. It's much easier to identify the conditioned colonial responses in others; however, through introspection, I began to realize that these negative emotions are rooted in the systemic oppression(s) I had faced, and continue to face, as a woman of colour. Albeit some aspects of myself have remained the same in the last 10 years, I am much transformed; as anybody else who has thrived, withered, explored, accepted and persevered, and not always in the same order.



As I contemplate my identity – where I come from, who I am, and currently as I complete the B.Ed. program, what kind of an educator I want to become, I am sometimes left conflicted as the narrative around identity is quite complex, i.e. one's beliefs are corroborated if their identity

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is. It is unfortunate that people of colour, particularly with the intersections of class, gender and/or sexuality are underrepresented and not regarded as worthy members of society; therefore, many of us are inherently fearful of voicing our beliefs and lived experiences. In his book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Franz Fanon states that de-colonization is a violent process not only of overthrowing a colonial government but of freeing the colonized from the mindset which is imposed upon them. It is, then, imperative that engagement through reflective practice(s) are necessary not only for self expression, but also to emancipate our consciousness.

Hence, being an educator and a learner, I aim to challenge and dismantle the systems of oppression and foster space(s) where my students can explore, prosper and honour their socio-cultural identities. It is unclear what that looks like yet, however, I am committed to the (un)learning which is reflective and thus, liberating. Integrating the Arts in the ‘curriculum’ could create a space where students can begin to accept and love who they are and envision the vast possibilities of what they can accomplish academically and socially.

