

Impress your friends by quoting lines from *Time Out* in the local lingo.

We write: A bunch of bloodthirsty monsters are swarming up Brigade Road in Bangalore, a legion of mutants has linked up to wreak mayhem on Churchgate in Mumbai and superhuman Adonis figures are pitted in bar brawls in Delhi. Page 10.

You say: BengaLurina Brigade Roadinalli raktapipasu pichaachigala gumpu daaliyiduttide, Mumbaina Churchgatinalli ghoragaLabhe nadesalu kolegadukara ondu padeye jaala heNedide, mattu

Dehaliya baarugaLalli atimaanusha pranayadevategaLu kittaaduttiddaare.

We write: Contrary to the claims on their website, the world is not your bathroom. Page 71.

You say: Avara antarjaala saitinalli heLikondaddakke viruddhavaagi e jagattenu nimma bacchalumaneyalla.

We write: The mere sight of Upendra in a feathered hat will have you weeping in a bout of ecstasy. Page 75.

You say: Upendra pukka sikkisikonda hyaat haakikondaddannu nodidarene santoshada aleyalli

aluva haagaagutte.

We write: Both machines weigh about a kilogram each, and are lighter than some manuals we've lugged. Page 31.

You say: Eradoo yantragalu pratiyonda onde kilograminashtu tukavide mattu naavu hottukondu hogjiruga kelavu pustakagaliginta hagaravagive.

We write: It is for this reason that Sartre would have loved a Page 3 party in Bangalore.

You say: Ee kaaranakkaagiye Saartre BengaLurinalli ondu puta murara santoshakutavannu ishtapaduttidda.

Lies to tell horny expats

Boobsandra, the locality in Nagachettyhalli, is so named for the profusion of large-bosomed women that live there. Given this, it witnesses the largest number of road accidents in the city – all of which feature male motorists of varying ages. There are plans afoot to set up a second Brabourne Stadium in this locality, modelled on the original in Mumbai.

OPINION by Shyam Bhat

Keeping it real

Sartre would have been fascinated by the social workings of contemporary Bangalore. Heidegger would have been inspired beyond insanity. And Socrates, I can just see him now, walking around the social scene urging everyone to look within, saying, with a wave of his wine glass, "The unexamined life is not worth living."

"Authenticity", defined as "the degree to which one is true to one's own personality, spirit, or character, despite social pressures and expectations", is the striving to reconcile two sometimes opposing forces – the needs and motivations of oneself, and the expectations and norms of society.

In the old India, people acted in accordance with society; social institutions were still influential in the realm of private life and since individual drives were relinquished in favour of social propriety, people did not think much about authenticity.

Existential questions – what do I really want to do with my life? What does it really mean to be me? Who am I really? – were, if asked at all, buried so deep in the subconscious that the questions might as well not have been asked at all.

In old India, we lived our lives in neat, pre-ordained roles: first, as a daughter or son, then as

a husband or wife, and shortly after that as fathers and mothers, before playing indulgent grandparents, and then a merciful death.

Social norms and rules were followed so carefully, that the complexity of the individual, of being a person, was not apparent and to all outside observations (and often to the person himself) – the person was the role that they played in society.

But things are different now, of course. And if you really want to see how much we have changed, then all you have to do is observe a particular kind of social strata of urban Bangalore. You will notice that an increasing number of people are feeling a sort of "materialistic ennui", the feeling of emptiness, of despondency, of dissatisfaction, and pain that is peculiar to societies that have plenty of money but have broken free of cultural moorings.

I went to an event recently that can be best described as a "Page 3" party. Lots of young pretty things, and older rich things, appetisers, free flowing booze, intrusive photographers, and lots of air kisses. "Wonderful outfit, love the hair darling." "Meet Mr So and So, he's the CEO of such and such" "How are you, sir, so wonderful to see you." As I circulated through the crowd, I wondered – who here was really having a good time?

The hilarity seemed forced and artifice clouded the air along with the fragrance of Chanel No 5. As I helped myself to some brie and crackers, I overheard two women talking. They seemed to be in their early 30s.

"I don't like fake people," she said.

"Yes, me too, she is just so artificial," the other one answered.

Later that evening, I overheard (believe me, I wasn't trying – the lady's voice just happened to have a piercing quality about it): "He is so superficial, I cannot stand it."

To which her male companion replied, "Fake people, I don't have anything to do with them."

The new Indian is beginning to take an interest in selfhood, identity, and authenticity – issues that have long plagued Americans, who after all created a nation that was based on the premise of

autonomous selfhood.

It is for this reason that Sartre would have loved a Page 3 party in Bangalore.

In our most comfortable environments, we are not aware that there is a difference between our outward behaviour, and our internal self. We act as if we are doing so without regard to what someone else expects us to do.

But when you are with a roomful of personas and not people, where how one presents oneself has become more important than who one is, then you cannot help but ask – what is fake and what is authentic?

The discordance between what we feel and what we display is normal, and human. But when a society goes through flux – as ours is now – then the social face is mistaken for the real thing.

Instead of keeping it real, we are in danger of aspiring, of pretending, of layering our social interactions with the artifice of contemporary India.

