

One Monday morning, as I sipped my coffee in a cafe, lost in thought, I pondered on the wisdom of my grandmother's words: "chakanaka chawaita wazviitira, chakashata chawaita wazviitira"- for every action, there is an equally matched consequence. The coffee's deep brown colour seemed to mirror the complexity of human nature, and I wondered if we, like the coffee, were also a blend of contradictions.

Just as I thought this coffee was too bitter, a man waddled in, cutting in line, clearly late and his manners where nowhere to be found and no one seemed bothered by it as he cut off a woman with a stroller. Wealth screamed from his eloquent suit, polished shoes, and bleached teeth- obviously trying to hide the stains from his everyday dose of coffee. He was the master of the universe, or so he thought. His eyes betrayed his exhaustion, his skin pale from lack of sleep. As he ordered his black coffee, his eyes darted around the cafe, betraying his inner turmoil. He was a corporate slave to his corporate job, relying on coffee to fuel his relentless pursuit of success, even as the waves of burnout crashed against his shores. Little did he know, the very coffee that sustained him was also slowly draining his life force, perpetuating a cycle of stress. I wondered how this tragic mask could belong to such a man of status and yet it did.

Across me sat a young professional fueled by her latte, Vimbai, I assume was her name, hinted by the sticker on her laptop back. Her eyes were fixed on the screen, her brow furrowed in concentration, as she sipped her latte with a practiced air, a ritual that sustained her, like a sacrament. She didn't even flinch as the man cut in line, too engrossed in her work to notice commotion. Was it ignorance, lack of care of perhaps both, I wondered.

Just then, the man ordered his black coffee, the barista, expertly crafted his coffee, unaware of the true cost of the coffee she served- deforestation, the pollution, the exploitation of farmers. Yet in her kindness, I saw a glimmer of hope, a chance for redemption, a chance to make a difference, one cup at a time, like a single raindrop that ripples the surface of a stagnant pool. As I watched the steam rise from my cup, I thought of the smoke and mirrors of our daily lives. We present ourselves to the world, like the coffee, with a carefully crafted exterior, hiding our true selves beneath the surface. But what lies beneath? Is it a rich, full bodied flavor, or a shallow bitter taste?

The mother, cradling her child in the corner, caught my eye. She was feeding him a sugary snack, unaware of the caffeine in her own coffee subtly affecting her milk, potentially affecting her child's sensitive physiology. The innocence of childhood, lost amidst the hustle and bustle of adult life. This made me to think whether the human race had found purpose in drowning in ignorance whilst holding on to lost hope thinking that this wasn't much of a big deal. I gazed out the window, watching the ruffled movement of humans on a race to sacrifice their bodies to the plague of a Monday morning. I realised that time was like the coffee's temperature -constantly changing, in a flux. One moment it's hot, the next it's cold. One moment we're full of life, the next we're drained and coffee was there to balance it.

The man with the briefcase grabbed his coffee and rushed out, leaving behind a trail of ignored hellos and unacknowledged smiles. I took my last sip, savored the taste, I thought of the man with the briefcase, was he, like the coffee, driven by a desire for warmth and connection, or was he simply trying

to escape the chill of his own emptiness? And so, over coffee, our stories intertwined, a complex tapestry of consequences, each thread connected, each action rippling out, affecting the world around us. The choice is ours, and the consequences will be equally matched.

The cafe', once a hub of mindless consumption, had transformed into a canvas of human experience, a testament to the power of awareness and the wisdom of my grandmother's words. As I left the cafe', i carried with me a newfound appreciation for the complexity of our actions, and the profound impact they have on our lives. The cup, fragile and delicate, seemed to represent the vulnerability of human connection . We grasp it afraid to let go, yet it is in the letting go that we find our true strength, like the coffee's flavour which is released when we surrender to it's warmth.And as I walked away, i knew that I would never look at coffee, or humanity, in the same way again, for in the depths of that one cup, I had discovered a reflection of our own fragile, beautiful and complex race.

815 WORDS