

R.K. N*r*yan on the invasion of Ukraine and specialization

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Abstract. In this paper, I present a challenge to Adam Smith's specialization recommendations, at least according to the "unzany" interpretation suggested by his famous pin factory example. I present it while attempting the style of a notable fiction writer from the Indian sub-continent, as befits the challenge. I have adapted the style slightly for the Western setting.

Sulman and his beautiful wife ran a restaurant in Rusholme, the famous Curry Mile of Manchester. Actually the area was changing. It was not so much a curry mile these days. Old vendors had shut and new ones had opened. There were Indian and Pakistani curry houses, but also places specializing in American hamburgers, Greek kebabs, oriental noodles, and more.

The minor philosopher walked in with a woman, an academic type with blonde curly hair, long by English standards, and glasses. He opened his wallet to check what funds were available. "You know Adam Smith used to be on the £20 note? Adam Smith and his pin factory. He's gone now," said the philosopher. "You know why?" She made an expression of not knowing. "Specialization's over." He started laughing. "Well, unzany specialization mostly is. Because of the war in Ukraine. Lots of new talent will be escaping, coming here. Maybe you can teach logic, but so can the man coming in. You need something extra." The blonde woman began to do a dance. Her hips swayed this way and that, as she moved her backside closer to the ground. It was as if that last sentence had charmed a snake. "You know it's a Muslim restaurant?" the minor philosopher said to her. No one reacted to this. "1 lamb samosa please."

"1 piece or 1 portion?" asked Sulman.

“What’s the difference?”

“1 portion has two pieces,”

“Shall we share?” The blonde woman nodded. “1 portion,” said the philosopher. “Eat in.”

Sulman took two samosas to heat up. As he was about to put them into the microwave, the minor philosopher feared he forgot to mention the meat. “Lamb samosa,” he said. Sulman went back to the display and changed the samosas.

An Asian family sat next to the pair: a father, a mother, and a pre-school girl, with cropped hair, wearing a dress with flower patterns on it against a dark background. A children’s song was playing from the mother’s phone which sounded like “The wheels on the bus go round and round,” but was subtly different. “What a lovely dress!” said the minor philosopher loudly. The girl turned around and smiled brightly.

As they left, he looked at the girl again, and said, “You want to wear trousers?” Finally understood, she smiled even more!

The minor philosopher and the blonde woman went to another restaurant and ordered a samosa each. They were overheated. He opened some of the pastry to expose the filling and out came steam. “Do you know what that is?” the philosopher asked her, drawing her attention to an Englishman in the restaurant in his puffer jacket. “His job is to put you out of business.” He laughed. The blonde woman grinned and brought the samosa to her mouth in a dancing motion. “You know you look a bit like a lamb samosa? Cannibal!” She showed her teeth. “They’re attacking Lviv. There’s some mathematical school there, the Lviv school. Do you want people from the Lviv school coming here?” She hadn’t heard of it, but crossed her head. “How can you compete? He can do whatever you can. Zany combinations: that’ll be the only way for some

people. You study air turbulence, you once had a girlfriend who studied Merleau-Ponty, you do some stuff to combine them. You have to. That's my thesis!"

She was not based in Manchester, she came here from elsewhere in the north. She wrote half-decent imitations of a European psychoanalyst of popular culture and had somehow entered into the narrow domain of the minor philosopher. So few people could do the trick that there was little chance of her going out of business, 19 people in the entire world. She didn't much like the minor philosopher, but was guided by the saying "Keep your friends close, your enemies closer." She used to speak a lot with her friends, but they were like people from a youth team she had left behind. In this new league, the enemy would have to serve as friend too. With the essayist of centuries past who said, "A plain unletter'd Man is always more agreeable Company than a Fool in several languages," her ambitions didn't agree.

The samosas were tasty. The pair walked past Sulman's shop in search of desserts, looking pleased. Sulman said to his wife, "He looks like he's eaten another samosa. We're going to have to find out where."

"It's a Sri Lankan style samosa," she said and then cursed, irritated by the task of searching for the ingredients. He put his arm around his wife: this business was chess and he made much use of his queen.

Reference

Hughes, J. 1915 (1698). On Style. In. W.H. Durham (ed.), *Critical Essays of the Eighteenth Century, 1700-1725*. New Haven: Yale University Press.