

## #PSYCHOLOGY

### Smile Please!

Posing a smile can brighten your mood, according to new research.



When we're happy, we smile. The corners of our mouths move out and up, our cheeks lift, and the skin around our eyes crinkles. But does it work the other way? Can posing our muscles in a smile brighten our mood?

This question has been part of a long-standing debate among psychology researchers about whether facial expressions influence our emotional experience, an idea known as the facial feedback hypothesis.

In a recent paper in *Nature Human Behaviour*, researchers report strong evidence that posed smiles can, in fact, make us happier.

The effect isn't strong enough to overcome something like depression, says Stanford University research scientist Nicholas Coles, who led the research, but it provides useful insight into what emotions are and where they come from.

"We experience emotion so often that we forget to marvel at just how incredible this ability is. But without emotion, there's no pain or pleasure, no suffering or bliss, and no tragedy and glory in the human condition," Coles says. "This research tells us something fundamentally important about how this emotional experience works."

Psychologists still aren't sure about the origins of this central part of the human condition. One theory is that our conscious experience of emotions is based off sensations in the body of the heart that the feeling of a rapid heartbeat provides some of the sensation we describe as fear, for example. Facial feedback has often been cited as evidence for this theory, but some recent experiments have called it into question.

Before completing this project, Coles considered himself a fence-sitter on the issue. There had been seminal facial feedback research suggesting that participants found Gary Larson's *The Far Side* comics funnier when they held a pen or pencil in their teeth without letting their lips touch it (supposedly activating the same muscles as a smile). But in 2016, 17 different labs tried and failed to replicate these results, casting the hypothesis into doubt.

When Coles conducted a meta-analysis of previous studies on the subject in 2019, which included a variety of different methods, his results seemed to indicate there was at least some evidence supporting facial feedback. So he decided to try to settle the matter in a way that would convince both skeptics and believers. He organized the Many Smiles Collaboration, a group that includ-

ed people on both sides of the issue as well as fence-sitters like Coles, and together they devised a methodology that everyone was satisfied with.

"Rather than quibble and debate over Twitter and through journal articles, which would take decades and probably not be that productive, we says, 'Let's just come together and design something that would please both sides.'" Coles says. "Let's figure out a way that we could potentially convince proponents that the effect isn't real, and potentially convince critics that the effect is real."

The researchers created a plan that included three well-known techniques intended to encourage participants to activate their smile muscles. One-

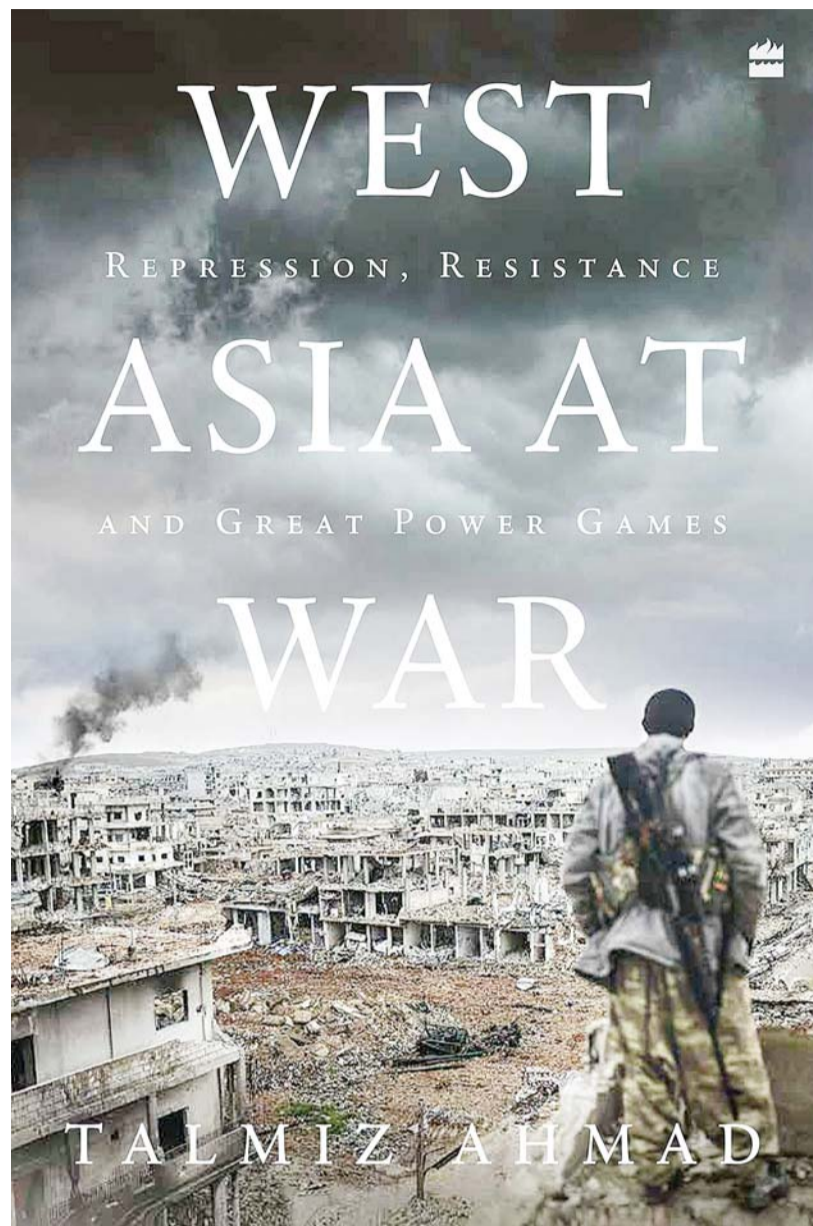
third of participants were directed to use the pen-in-mouth method, one-third were asked to smile at the facial expressions seen in photos of smiling actors, and the final third were given instructions to move the corners of their lips toward their ears and lift their cheeks using only the muscles in their face.

In each group, half the participants performed the task while looking at cheerful images of puppies, kittens, flowers, and fireworks, and the other half simply saw a blank screen. They also saw the same types of images (or lack thereof) while directed to use a neutral facial expression.

In order to disguise the goal of the trial, the researchers mixed in several other small physical tasks and asked participants to solve simple math problems. After each task, participants rated how happy they were feeling.

The Many Smiles Collaboration collected data from 3,878 participants from 19 countries. After analysing their data, the researchers found a noticeable increase in happiness from participants mimicking smiling photographs or pulling their mouth toward their ears. But much like the 2016 group, they didn't find a strong mood change in participants using the pen-in-mouth technique.

Nonetheless, the evidence from the other two techniques is clear and provides a compelling argument that human emotions are somehow linked to muscle movements or other physical sensations.



# A Monumental Work of Rare Scholarship



Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh VSM (RETD)

## #BOOK WORM

beginning in 1900 which is the colonial period, the rise of Arab nationalism from 1950 including the consequences of the establishment of Israel as an independent state, to 1979; a year which can rightly be considered a watershed with 'nationalism' being replaced by 'religion' due to the effect of the Iranian revolution of 1979 and other events of that fateful year. The Post-Cold War period, America's Afghan and Iraq wars and the Arab Spring. But what is of great relevance is India's engagement with this region.

The advent of Western "enlightenment", found the Arabs, struggling to rid themselves of the yoke of centuries of Ottoman dominance, and were in a predicament regarding their reaction. Initially impressed with the ideas and tech-

nology that came they felt they must learn from the West. In 1826, Rif'a al-Tawhidi was sent to France by the Khedive of Egypt with a 44-member team on a five-year mission that resulted in al-Tawhidi translating the French Constitution into Arabic. While noting that although it was "the West's superiority in science and technology" in the last 200 years that was fundamental to their easy domination of Arabia (ironically built on "Islamic scientific achievement").

An equal and opposite reaction sparked the Al-Nahda ("Renaissance") that sought to find these same values of liberty, justice and equality, including gender equality, in Islamic tradition. Led by Jamaluddin al-Afghani and his pupil, Muhammad Abduh, this influential school of thought urged "weighing in the scale of reason" what had been handed down as injunctions from the past, using three criteria sanctified by Islamic

### Napoleon's Attack

Beginning with Napoleon's attack on Egypt in 1798, Ambassador Ahmad has traced the impact of Europe in West Asia. He then covers the five decades of upheaval

All that changed in the 1990s with Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao extending full diplomatic recognition to Israel, backstopping Yasser Arafat's last throw of the dice at Oslo, and initiating a process that has resulted in a policy of "balance" towards rival forces playing out in the region; in other words, replacing principle and idealism with a transactional relationship with all. This has involved strengthening relations with monarchies who have made their peace with Israel; "de-hyphenating" Israel from Palestine but coming down so heavily on the Israeli side that neither the Palestine Authority nor Hamas are taken in; weakening India's support in the UN and elsewhere for the Palestinian cause; attempting to accommodate Iran without jeopardising relations with Iraq or the US: that is, being all things to all people, none of whom are hoaxed.



Shah of Iran.

First World War after the Brits accorded their approval in principle to an "Arab Khaliphate" under Sharif Hussain replacing the Ottoman Caliphate, then dividing Arab from Arab by supporting and enforcing the Saudi claim, under Abdulaziz al-Saud, to the throne, while pacifying the Hashimites by handing over the thrones of Iraq and Transjordan to the sons of Sharif Hussain. Meanwhile, Jewish settlement in Palestine continued apace leading to "regular and increasingly bloody communal riots". The system of League mandates might have made French and British occupation of Asian Arabia legitimate - international law, but colonial exploitation remained just that in Arab eyes.

This resulted in protests; an immediate consequence was the emergence of pan-Arab nationalism against the division of Arab lands by the colonial authorities into five separate regions. From Rashid Rida and the distinguished Christian Arab historian George Antonius, in the 1920s and '30s, till its final flowering under Sati al-Husri, identified by Ahmad as "the most influential Arab thinker through the 1950s and 1960s", the yeast of pan-Arab nationalism was added to this intellectual churning. They shaped the region's national aspirations into a pan-Arab ideology that incorporated under one umbrella all the religious faiths of the Arab world. Such Arab

The focus of Arab nationalism shifted from "Albion perfidie" to Israel after the November 1947 UN partition of Palestine. War broke out almost immediately, but the combined Arab armies were no match for the Western-funded and militarily well-equipped and brilliantly led Jewish army. The Arabs were thus unable to forestall "Al Naqba" (The Catastrophe) that overtook them with the proclamation of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948.



Talmiz Ahmad- Former Indian Diplomat.

jurisprudence: maslaha (public interest), shura (consultation) and jihad (independent reasoning) to "become part of the modern world while remaining Muslim": "the original message of Islam", it was held, "was sufficient to confront Western intrusion". Islamic fundamentalists of the Wahhabi variety continued, with powerful Saudi backing, to try to cast the new awakening in the most reactionary theological terms. Thus, political evolution in the region remained (and remains) cast in a mould of extremist vs moderate, secular vs theocratic approaches.

### Western Parameters

Western perfidy continued (and continues) to set the parameters within which Arab politics are played out. First to be betrayed were the Hashemites whose Bedouin troops under Sharif Hussain were instrumental in defeating the Ottoman Turks in the

of Israel on May 14, 1948. Since then, however opportunisticly Arab states might have changed their stance on relations with Israel, especially after the crushing military defeats of 1967 and 1973, and more recently at the prodding of the United States, for the average Arab the sense of grievance against Israel, especially its total lack of generosity even in victory, has aggravated "the experience of defeat and disaster" by "the torment of tyranny".

The really disturbing outcome for secularists, Arab and global, is that "in the face of the shame of defeat and humiliation and state repression... the answer that appeared most self-evident was Islam" - albeit an Islam "thoroughly reformed, wholly modernised... but still the ancestral faith founded on morality, social justice and public order". Yet, Al Qaeda and ISIS are children of the same disillusion.

During the Freedom Movement, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and the Indian National Congress were unambiguous that "Palestine is an Arab country and Arab interest must prevail there... It is the misfortune of the Jews that they have aligned themselves with British imperialism". Even more forcefully came Gandhiji's famous dictum, "Palestine belongs to the Arabs as England to the English and France to the French." Following this stand

second wave, the leaders of Sudan and Algeria were deposed. But no monarchy fell and Bahrain's Emiri was saved by Saudi intervention. Counter revolutions to confront political Islam, in particular the Muslim Brotherhood, were staged in Tunisia and Sudan by Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the UAE.

Political Islam may now have run its course. Gulf rulers fortify themselves by making Islam an adjunct of state order and seek legitimacy through appeals to Muslim moderation, Arabic identity and nationalism, with special emphasis on enlisting the youth. But the rationale for popular discontentment endures. The Wahhabi doctrine, mainly associated with Saudi Arabia, is where the ruler is accepted as fount of political authority, welfare and guarantor of security, doctrinal support being provided by state-appointed ulema. Contrasted to Wahhabis are Salafis who advocate activism to achieve a state based on Islamic principles. The Muslim Brotherhood, founded by al Banna in 1928 and refined by

of principle, India became one of the few non-Arab, non-Muslim countries to vote against the Partition of Palestine, having exercised only months earlier experienced the horrors of Partition.

As the Arab republics came into their own after the revolutions that spanned the '50s, the Delhi-Cairo axis set the course of India's relationship with the Arab world. India played a key role in defusing the Suez crisis in 1956. Pakistan's machinations through the hijacking of Arab Airlines, the States to line up the Arabs on their side of the Kashmir dispute on grounds of religion were thwarted, and non-alignment became our shared worldview. We also became perhaps the first state to recognise the State of Palestine. These, not the "appeasement" of Indian Muslim sentiment, was the rationale for our emerging as a principal partner of the Arab awakening.

All that changed in the 1990s with Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao extending full diplomatic recognition to Israel, backstopping Yasser Arafat's last throw of the dice at Oslo, and initiating a process that has resulted in a policy of "balance" towards rival forces playing out in the region; in other words, replacing principle and idealism with a transactional relationship with all. This has involved strengthening relations with monarchies who have made

since Israel could never offer 'final status' sovereign viable statehood. Trump's strategic incoherence identified with Saudi Arabia and Israel and his peace plan for Israel/Palestine was dead on arrival with 94 per cent Palestinian rejection.

Biden for his part 'got most things wrong', and veers between idealism and pragmatism. He lost the momentum to renew the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) abrogated unilaterally by Trump, will continue towards Israel is expected, and arms exports to Saudi Arabia will change as before. Washington's shortcomings, whether on Covid, Iraq, Afghanistan or withdrawal from the JCPOA, are palpable. The US has the capacity to damage but not to heal or reconstruct. Saudi Arabia, Iran, UAE, the main frictions in the Arab Peninsula are- Israel against Palestinians and Saudi Arabia against Iran. Israel's founding ensured a pattern of racial discrimination and violence against Palestinians who, Israel claims, reject peace with Israel along with

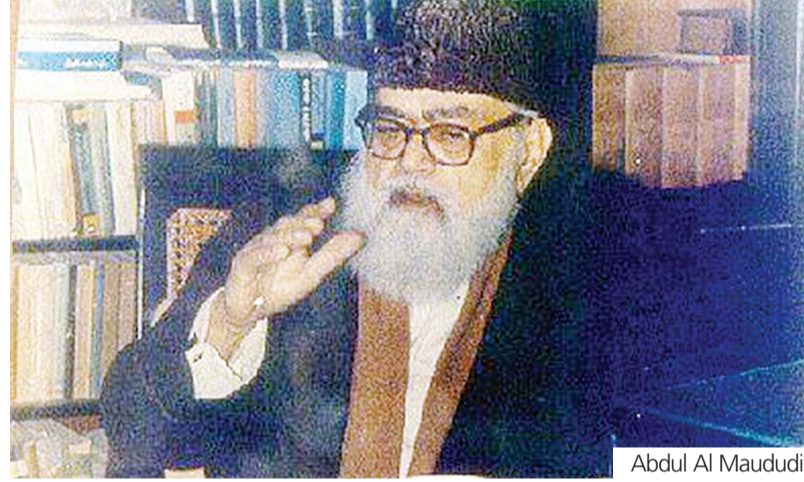
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Sayyid Qutb, extols martyrdom and militancy, and defined Islamic principles with the Koran as the basis of constitutions; governments must function with shura or consultation; a ruler must comply with the laws of Islam and the people's will. This translated into a democratic government of Islamic principles with protection of rights of women and non-Muslims. This form of activist Islam, towards which Turkey and Qatar are accused of feeling sympathy, was condemned and suppressed.

Jihad Abdul Maududi later stressed Islam's central role to establish God's justice, whose instrument would be jihad. This was exemplified by the support of the US, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, each for its own reasons, for the anti-Soviet campaign in Afghanistan (1979-89), which had many outcomes: the first battlefield victory over a western power for several centuries, the unleashing of international jihadis, extremism culminating in 9/11 in US and western Islamophobia. American presence in WANA expanded as centrality of oil to economies increased; its objectives are access to oil and security of Israel, with its role invariably expressed in military terms. The region was too important for any hands-off attitude, not least to prevent Soviet influence. Attempts by successive US presidents before Trump to broker an Israeli peace with the Palestinians collapsed,

efforts to balance ties with the US with its interests in Iran but rarely successfully. Indians are the largest expatriate community in every Gulf country, remit \$35 bn to India each year and total trade with the Gulf reached \$121 bn in 2018-19. However, Ahmad faults India for never trying to address shared security issues with the Gulf countries and sees no future in the announced Israel-US-UAE-India partnership, describing it as "theatre as an end in itself". Ahmad's chapter on India-West Asia ties is a fine survey of the changing contours of the relationship. It also factors in Indian-Israeli and Indo-Iranian ties.



Abdul Al Maududi.

Chronological details of crucial events and impact of 'Arab-Spring' on region's states gives further a better understanding. Country wise elaboration of facts and analyses makes the picture of region emerge with clarity. At the same time it gives better perspective of how the fate of one state was and still is entwined with that of other states and how several states came into being with Anglo-French machinations.

From the period when Western invasion began into Egypt and the Arab and adjacent lands in Iran and Turkey right up to the 21st century, the vastness of book with its focus on key historical, political, religious and economic developments in each of the countries which comprise the region is indeed most comprehensive. What stands out is the manner in which diverse matters have been weaved into a 'coherent narrative' to give an understanding of the dynamics of the region.

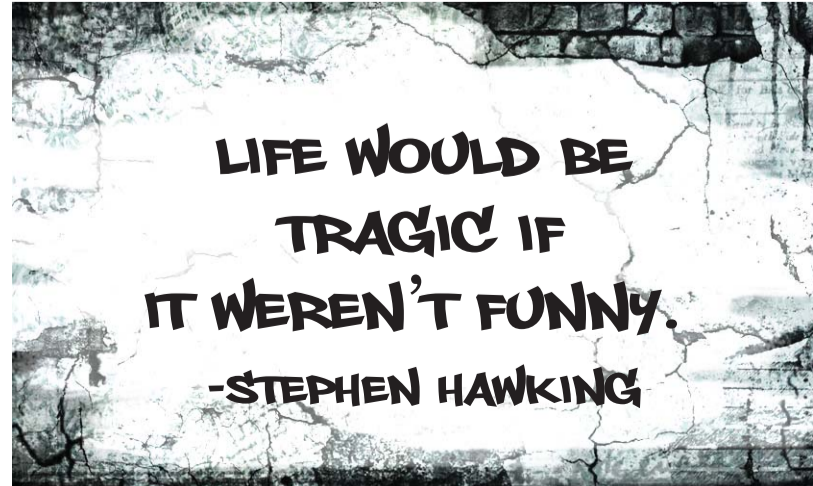
The book tells us that neither republican nor monarchical models have produced strong Arab states capable of ensuring their own security. They have remained dependent on the US as protector of rulers who dispense patronage from oil money to tribal chiefs, clergy and heads of corporates. These revenues enable the rulers to control their citizens through access to education and health, silencing any demand for reform, and threaten them with the heavy hand of repression at the first sign of dissent.

It is deeply engaging book which gives details of every significant and crucial event of the region and allied historical aspects that have shaped West Asia as it has emerged in present times. Talmiz Ahmad's has an intimate knowledge of West Asia this imprint is clearly discernible in the book. It is no doubt a monumental work, and provides a great insight of the developments over the past two centuries in a region with which India has had deep historical ties and one which continues to remain to our contemporary interests.

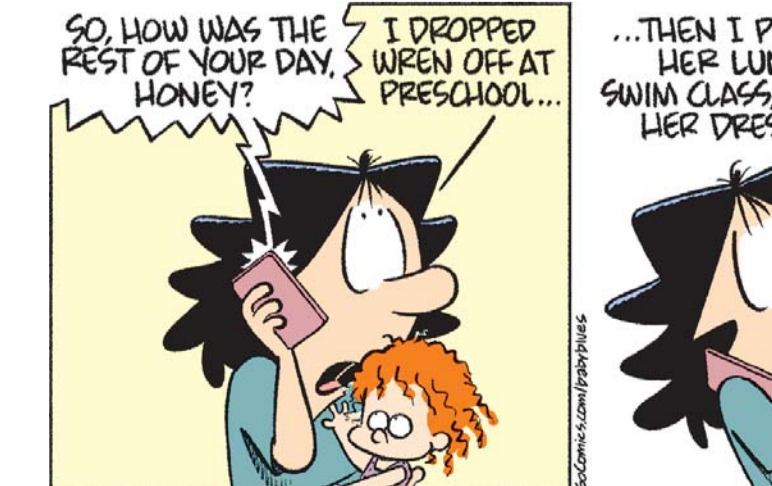
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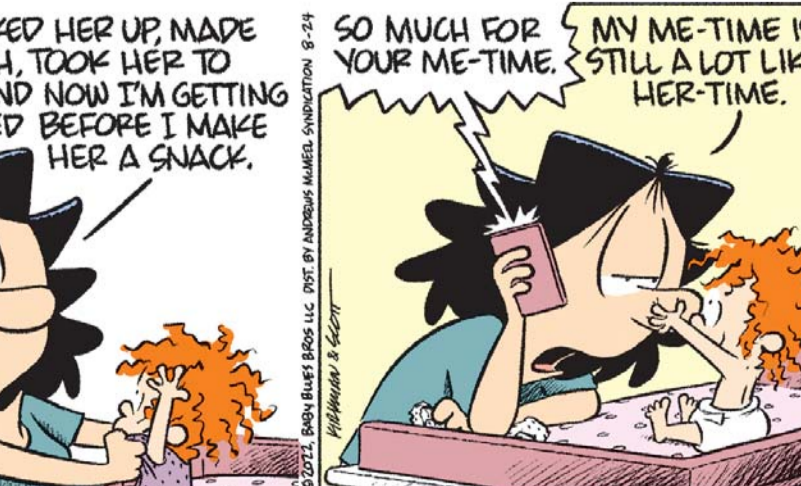
## THE WALL



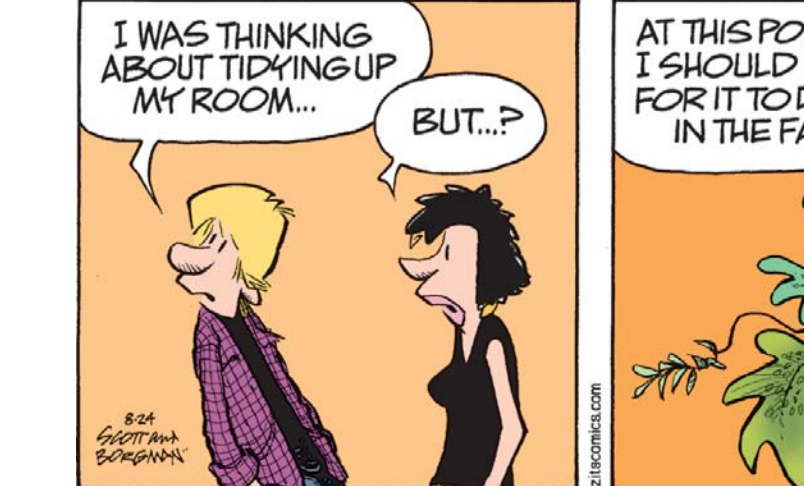
## BABY BLUES



## ZITS



## BY RICK KIRKMAN & JERRY SCOTT



## BY JERRY SCOTT & JIM BORGMAN

