

# Towards a Post Suicide Career: Some Humble Suggestions for KSUB<sup>1</sup>

Reading this pretentious essay will not train you in the mechanics of writing an effective Suicide Note. You have to spare half an hour of your life and watch KSUB's video.

Anonymous Referee for A4

I have been asked by A4 University Press to prepare a detailed analysis of the collected essays of KSUB or Kiran Subbaiah. As everyone knows, A4's KSUB project is cursed – all past writers who had begun working on it have died mysteriously before finishing it. However I have a hunch that the curse could possibly be avoided if one approached the analysis of KSUB with a tangential gaze.

Where does one begin? After the Nth viewing of *Suicide Note*, KSUB's last work, I seriously started wondering about his afterlife. Of course, he wouldn't do art, but then what would he do? Therefore I have decided to offer a list of afterlife career suggestions for KSUB, as the 'tangential' text to avoid the curse.

## 01. Motion Controller at *LichtPunkt*, an Experimental Lighthouse

In the closing years of the last century, after ploughing through terabytes of data that reconstructs ancient climactic conditions a team of paleobotanists had discovered a momentary but definitive spike in atmospheric oxygen just five thousand years before the CT (Cretaceous –Tertiary) mass extinction. Recently, there has been a general consensus that this Oxygen spike can only be explained by the emergence and flourishing presence of *Gnosia Pendorasa*, a special photosynthetic bacteria. A genetic analysis of *Gnosia*'s fossil remains revealed an interesting fact: the bacteria could photosynthesize only when the intensity of the incident light varied in a complex manner with its frequency.

Some suspect that *Gnosia* is not yet extinct but deprived of its very specific light requirement it remains dormant in certain shallow sections of the Iberian coast. In an effort to lure the bacteria out of its deep historic slumber, the International Palaeobotanist Consortium has installed *LichtPunkt*, an experimental lighthouse close to a suspected *Gnosia* site. Although *LichtPunkt* has been equipped with the most advanced electronics until now it has failed to generate the required *Gnosis*-friendly light. As a possible solution, an old technician from a turn of the century lighthouse suggested a skilled and meticulous hand cranking of *LichtPunkt*'s light generating apparatus. Given that one is trying to persuade one of the most primordial life forms to come back into the fold of the fully living, the technician felt that the tactile, hand-felt presence of a sentient, photosynthetic biological unit, namely a human, might just be able to coax the machinery of *LichtPunkt* to generate the required light.

---

<sup>1</sup> If you have any confusion regarding the identity of KSUB as elaborated here, please consult the curator of the show

With KSUB's extensive experience in crafting panning video projectors that essentially breathe motion into multi-coloured but static beams of light, I strongly suggest he applies for the post of the Motion Controller at *LichtPunkt*.

## 02. Manufacturer of an Innovative Anti-Spamming Textile

Outside the teaching machine, in the more collegial setting of Parade Café, our little gang of third rung art historians often spend time in making the corpse of authenticity's dead horse look more exquisite than it should be. Or rather, we devise games for celebrating the inauthentic – one of our popular ones is a diagnostic tool that generates an 'Inauthenticity Rank' for a given artwork. It does so by mapping the location of all the texts, places and people cited (both direct and indirectly) in the artwork on a Google Map in relation to the artist's place (city, town, village) of origin. The logic here is simple: the Inauthenticity Rank is the product of the density and spread of these locational points. It goes without saying that to our obvious delight, KSUB's *Suicide Note* always clinched a high 'inauthenticity rank' and we would often use that as a benchmark to compare it with other works that promised its viewers a glimpse into the life of this bewildering beast called South Asia.

Our mapping exercise also revealed that when we connected the locational dots in *Suicide Note* it produced one of the most breathtakingly beautiful network diagram – a pulsating mesh of dots and lines that was pure contradictory pleasure, as it was both deeply ordered and riotously chaotic. My textile designer friend was so taken in by this diagram that she reproduced it in an intricately woven sample that looked like a heavy velvet drape but in reality weighed as little as some flimsy beachwear. Recently in one of the memorial services held after KSUB's suicide, all of us wore ponchos stitched from this material. The seemingly magical attributes of this were revealed to us later in the night as we browsed through our inboxes. For the duration of the memorial service our inboxes somehow managed to stave off the constant influx of spam – the moment we took off our ponchos, spam mail started to trickle back in.

Although it saddened us that KSUB's resolutely useless art could hide within its inner logic an use for something so banal as spam filtering, we were all quite pleased in having found such a elegant solution for one of the most annoying fallouts of digital communication. Now, as I am thinking through various career options for KSUB's afterlife, I do think he should consider monetising this wonderful innovation. If he doesn't want to get into the murky waters of product design, he can always outsource it.

## 03. Customised Earthquake Relief Service

One of the more engaging ideas in *Suicide Note* is its recasting of death, not as "rupture" but as a gradually shaded "continuity". Does death then become a metaphor for thing-ness where death is nothing but the ontological boundary that separates one thing from another? Apropos rupture and continuity, one has to say that there was a strong presence of non-linear or circular time in KSUB's imaginative worldview, which often surfaced as his love for repetition. Therefore for him, the banal homily – *This is nothing new* – was invitation to remember. For he believed that any acknowledgement of 'newness' is in fact a sign of amnesia – before we celebrate concept X as the most radically innovative thing to have erupted since opposable thumbs – we should patiently rummage through our collective memory to unearth earlier instances of X.

Fuelled by his 'rupture-abhorrence', whenever KSUB encountered a news image of a post-earthquake landscape scarred by faults and gaping chasms, he would rush to the disaster site and help in the relief work. Now, let me tell you that KSUB hardly ever engaged in actual relief work as traditionally understood. Instead of helping the relief workers heal the cracks and fissures he would often (using his set of specialised equipment) exaggerate and open up the cracks more to make it resemble earlier, more severe earthquakes.

Although the aid agencies hated him for it, the actual visual confrontation with earthquake history, always managed to calm those actually rendered homeless and injured by the earthquake. They could then contextualise their misfortune in the larger scheme of things – always a difficult act to pull off in times of emotional stress. Thus calmed, the affected would co-operate more keenly with the relief operations and were more eager to abandon their self-image as ‘victims of fate’.

Since KSUB was already involved in earthquake (anti) relief before his suicide, I would strongly suggest that he takes this up as a full-time career.

-----

Well, I think my ‘tangential’ hunch is failing me. Why do I suddenly have sweaty palms accompanied by a throbbing headache? Perhaps its just indigestion and I am being unnecessarily paranoid. However, if these turn out to be my last words, then goodbye dear reader. I did my best to avert the accursed gaze. And I hope that at least some of these suggestions reach KSUB, wherever he might be.