

Department of English, Kamala Nehru College

WHITE NOISE

NEWSLETTER

COVID-19
anguish in a
divided world
isolated from
it's own self.

Buried Notions

from the
gulf of the
heart come
ashore in
the gullible
travels of
the 21st
century.

The dissected
anatomy of
depressive
realism and the
journey towards
the center of
social
privilege.

Musings of the Postmodern
Era Isolationists.

Issue for 2019-20.
Digital Edition



From the Editorial Board's Desk

by Hiral Goyal

In school, we were often told to write essays on how the youth can shape the future of our world. It seemed quite impossible then that we, as young adults and individuals, could bring about a change that could impact the future even minutely. My English teacher told me that John Donne once wrote, "No man is an island entire of itself" and that "I am involved in mankind". She wanted me to understand that all our actions, no matter how small or insignificant, contributed to something and that it was our choice to either contribute positively or negatively.

With White Noise, I have had the opportunity to work with some unique writers and editors, who have made me perceive the world from a different point of view. This year our main goal was to free the expression of art from its form and let the artist decide how they wanted to express. As editors, we did not want to impose restrictions on the

subjectivity of the art that was being created. Rather, we wanted to act as facilitators and ensure that the voices could be heard, far and wide.

As students of literature we often look back and realize that if certain events of our history were unrecorded maybe we would have never learned about them. We realize that while literature itself may not be history, it definitely is not devoid of it. The world that we are living in right now is at once unprecedented and historically important. This year has been a remarkable milestone for people all around who have stood up for their rights and fought against all who sought to oppress them. While the fight has only just begun and there is still a very long way to go, I hope this newsletter allows us to take a moment's pause and to reflect on the solidarity that we have witnessed amongst ourselves.

This newsletter was put together in the middle of the pandemic while we were trying to make sense of our lives through uncertain times. Despite the shortcomings and impediments, the team managed to coordinate among themselves and produce the 2019-20 issue of the White Noise newsletter. Since this year's issue did not have a central theme, it allowed us to incorporate the true essence of what 2019-20 has meant for us as students of Delhi University and as the citizens of India.

I hope this newsletter serves to remind us and everyone else who comes across it—now or in future—that when the world around us was in shambles, we did not turn to art because it offered an escape; we turned to art because it became the only means through which we could make sense of our reality.

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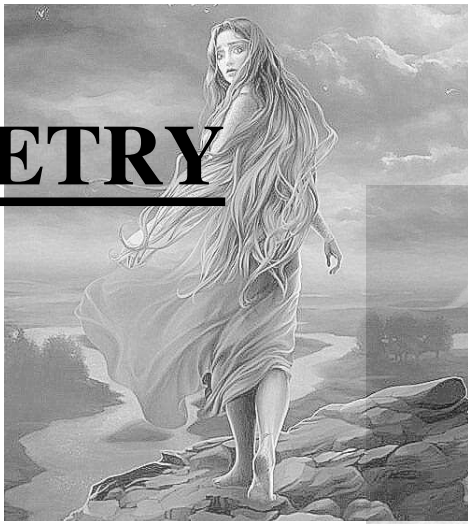


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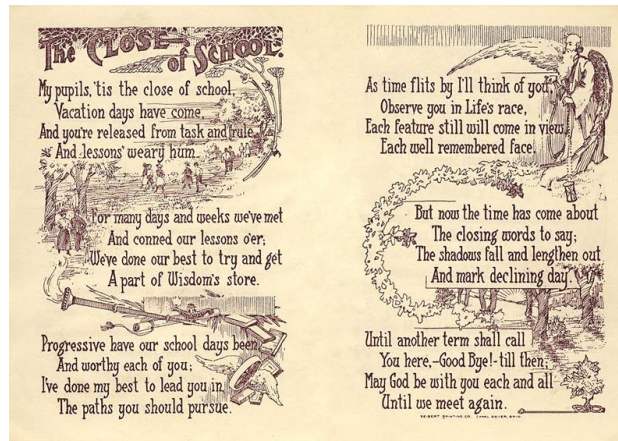


STORIES

CON

PLAYS

MOVIE REVIEWS



IS YOUR NOSE

AGAINST

THE

GRINDSTONE

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As an aid to financial independence nothing can equal a bank account. Keep your savings in our bank. With a little economy, you will be surprised how they will grow.

All kinds of Insurance, Farm Loans
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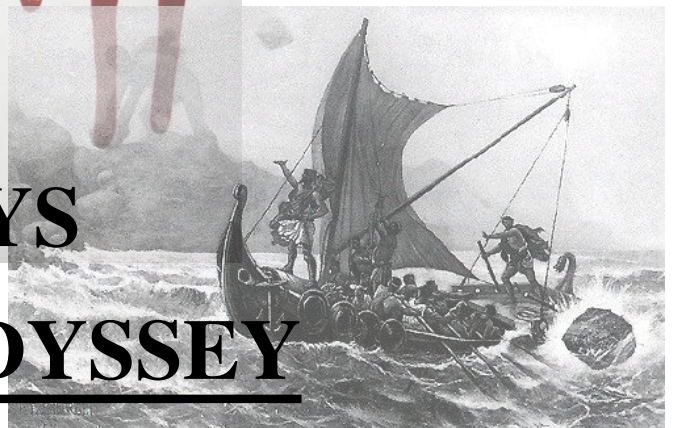
ARTICLES

TENTS



ACADEMIC ESSAYS

THE ODYSSEY



POETRY





Listen

By Deeksha Pareek

If I invite you to come see me,
would you come to speak about all
the things you have filled your
plate with or for once, listen?

Would you listen to me talk
about where my home is, is it a place,
a thing, a person, or do I have a homi
or if I even want one, for I am really
a wanderer, you know ?

Would you listen to me talk about the
I found myself swept into vertiginous cycles
of pain and happiness and how I got out
from there or am I out yet?

Would you listen to me talk about how I like
the sweetness of all the sweets in the world
and how sweet I find you to listen to me talk about this?

Would you listen to me if I tell you the story
of all the lovers I have had and all varied forms of love that I love in?

Would you listen to me talk about love in general?

Would you listen to me talk about how

I am so proud of myself for growing each day
and becoming stronger but yet struggling to fully
accept myself with the flaws I have ?

Or do I ever plan to do something about those flaws,
for we can always rectify them, right?

Would you listen to me talk about the universe,
and magic, and the things that might be
false to you but are real to me?

Would you listen to me talk about
how I miss a lot of things and do I want them back,
for is it really necessary to want them back again?



CURATED QUARANTINE

By Subhalakshmi Gautam

There's a monster running loose,
Half tied the world around its
noose.

Tightening it's grip on the old and the young
Sparing neither the rich nor the strong.

The wandering hearts make its best prey
Themselves, or as a medium - oh how it slays.

They say it'll bring the human race to an end,
And to nature we will brew and blend.

I say, fear is the ingredient this flame fans,
It's only an epidemic if you don't wash your hands.

...

WORLD - A MERE NOVEL?

By Hiya Khanna

What if the world is a
novel and we are all
mere chapters in it?
Different in forms, in
shapes, in colours, in
beginnings and
endings.
Couple of protagonists
with their own
antagonists
Good or bad, heroic or
villainous or maybe just
normal beings
Where every chapter
begins with a cry and
ends in satisfactory
emptiness,
Leaving the adventures
acknowledged in the
middle,
Battles fought, thoughts
sought, things brought
and what not?



ME TO ME

By Sonali Samal

Pull me from the darkness,
Lead me to the light.
Throw that sturdy harness,
I will hold it tight.
I never knew how it was like,
I just wanted it to be bright.

Your rescue plan wasn't good once,
Yet I gave you another chance.
Those scars scare me in a devilish way,
My mind tells the heart to stay at bay.
Tears roll down my cheeks at night,
Hoping the morning to be right.

I never was weak, I never was hungry.
Hungry for happiness, hungry for brightness.
You tried hard to bring me to the world,
While trapped in hell I forgot how looks globe.
The only way to my redemption,
Was to feel the eternal connection.

Finally tried waking up one day,
I saw myself fighting with you.
You punched me on my face,
I knocked you up at the second phase.
I saw myself winning over you,
Now I see the self redeeming way.

Here's to you my little heart,
It wasn't your fault that you went senile.
My hunger made me so cruel,
I had to fight you and win over.
Now I eventually feel redeemed and whole.
Now not never I am going to be in that hellhole.



SELVES OF DISSENT

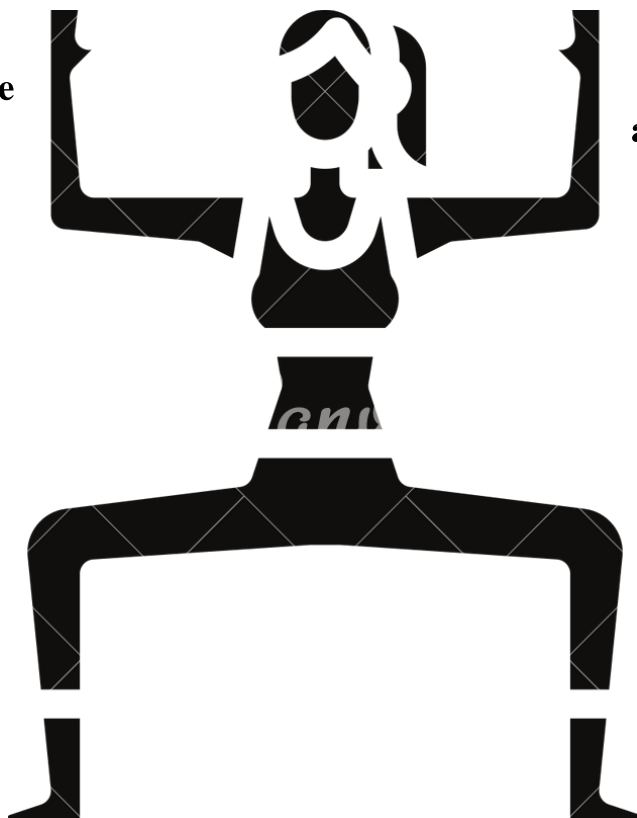
by Aamna Siddiqui

I am the woman watching the television.
I've checked the doors and windows twice,
they're bolted.
I don't know how minds and media work
but I know personal is political.

I am the woman who writes.
I don't have anything significant to contribute
to a language they do understand,
I have so much more to say
In a language they scoff upon.
People forget that language is as much my choice
as my breakfast.

I am the woman who was called 'woman'
for the first time today.
New wayfarer to crimson roads
and naked trees.
My hands, swollen like the saccharine sweets.

I am the woman In the
painting.
Wet your brush in the
salty waters
and pick the silky
merlot,
to fill in the nape of
my neck.
You won't see them
on my skin,
Neither will my
bruises speak for
themselves,
But they grow
on me like love does.
Blind to the eye.



I am the woman who doesn't wear a saree
and refuses to take a name.
I eavesdrop on dishonest people
through thin, honest walls.

I am the woman in the photograph,
my name is just an extension to his name,
my ambiguity a migraine.
My love is an agenda.
I am everything wrong
And everything right about my brain.

I am my neighbor and my friend:
lousy and loud.
A hundred in number.
I am stuck in silk threads
and ruffled blue in India ink.
I am sixty three people
and one fluttering heart,
tinkling on the insides of a bell jar.

I don't know my name.
They insist on making me
a product of a three syllabled
blame
Call me the lonely, loveless
woman,
An uninvited stranger on a
road unknown.
I am you and I am me.

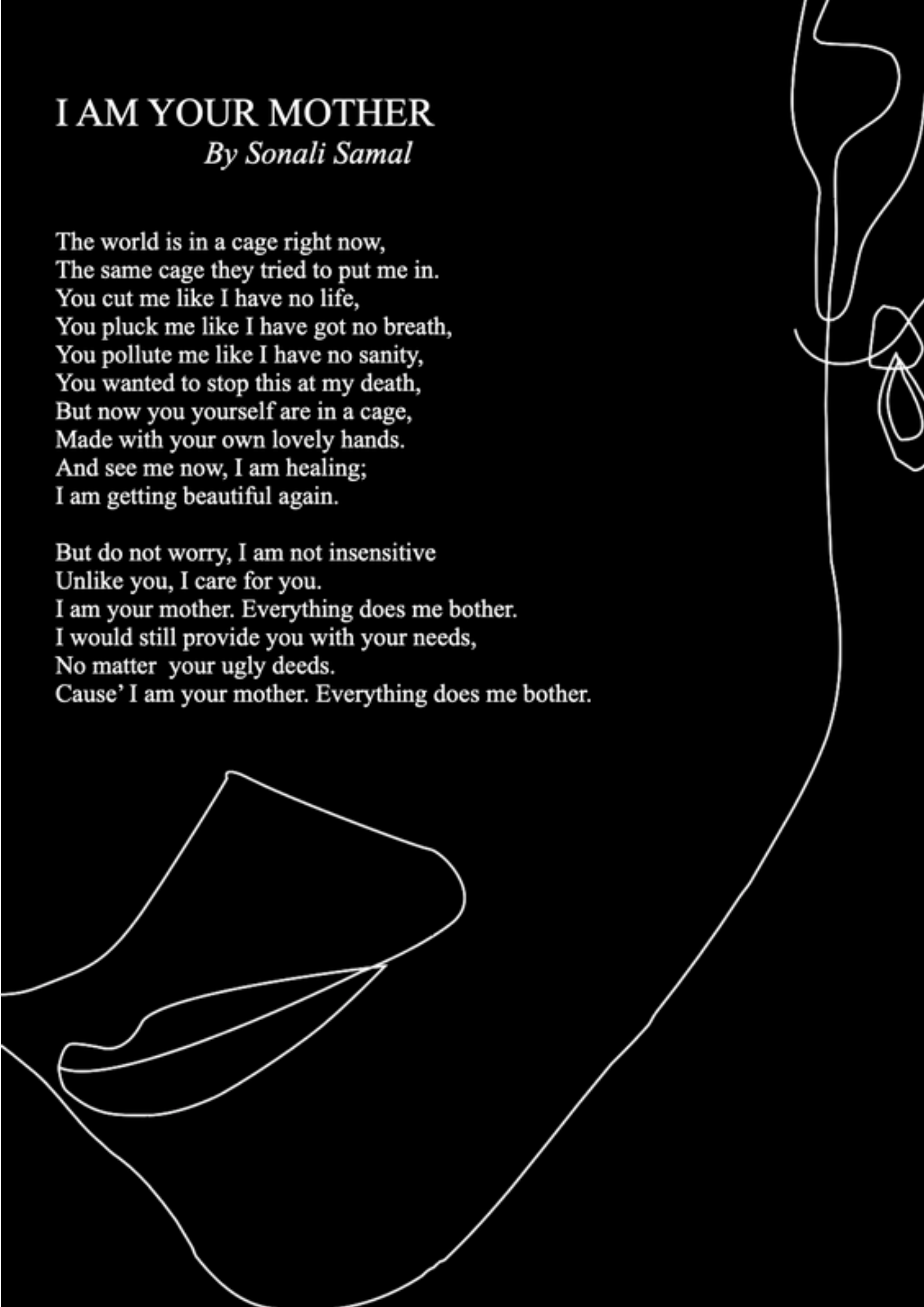
Do you know who I am?
My joy? My love?
My regret? My blood?
My sorrow? My laugh?
What am I but a question
mark?


I AM YOUR MOTHER

By Sonali Samal

The world is in a cage right now,
The same cage they tried to put me in.
You cut me like I have no life,
You pluck me like I have got no breath,
You pollute me like I have no sanity,
You wanted to stop this at my death,
But now you yourself are in a cage,
Made with your own lovely hands.
And see me now, I am healing;
I am getting beautiful again.

But do not worry, I am not insensitive
Unlike you, I care for you.
I am your mother. Everything does me bother.
I would still provide you with your needs,
No matter your ugly deeds.
Cause' I am your mother. Everything does me bother.





You needed air to live;
I gave you all.
You needed ground to stay;
I made sure you don't fall.
You needed food to feed;
I gave you that and paid heed.
Then you asked me more;
I provided you all with love.
Then you tried to violate me,
I cried until the pain stopped.
Now it's your turn, let me heal.
Let me breathe.

But do not worry, I am not insensitive
Unlike you, I care for you.
I am your mother. Everything does me
bother.
I would still provide you with your needs,
No matter your ugly deeds.
Cause' I am your mother. Everything does
me bother.

...





LOST

by Nandini Sharma

I try to piece myself together
The puzzle keeps getting
tougher,

I try harder again to
ascertain whether

I embody the courage to sail
through the rough.

I force myself in demanding
situations

In order to subjugate my fears,
Yet I fail to attain salvation
And end up soaked in tears.

I get lost in the puzzle of my
mind

Trying to navigate my way
through the toil,

I find myself struggling in the
grind

Unable to withstand the
brooding embroil.

I lose myself in silence

Only to find myself in chaos,
For when I try to piece myself
together through patience

My skepticism hangs around
my neck like an albatross.



THE THEORY OF NAKED THOUGHTS

By Aditi Dhyani

There is a chain of thoughts
Visible to all, only some can truly see-
Like water; transparent
Yet so obtrusive.
Rippling you may notice
Although basically static.
Ironic they might seem.
Well, ironic they are.
Just like a thread is needed to hold the rosary beads, and
that thread itself becomes a spiral.
So my thoughts, too, spiral around my naked soul.
The theory lies within them all.
How they form, to what extent they remain coherent,
when do they become sensual, plausible, exuberant?
I guess they're just bare and raw.
So primitive-
perhaps I should learn how to blend.

...



Remember?

by Ambica Sharma

**Remember when we were little,
How we pretended the floor was molten lava?
Jumping from bed to bed,
Across the divide,
Lest we put a foot,
In the molten lava,
And be burned alive?**

**And outdoors,
Stepping carefully,
From paving stone to paving stone,
Avoiding each and every crack,
Lest we break our mother's back?**

**Now once more,
We look to the floor;
Observing the line,
Watching the signs!
Don't step over,
Stay well back
Behind the line,
Like every crack.**

**The streets are empty now,
Apart from those shopping,
Or out for their daily jog.
Children kept close to their parents,
From the man just walking his dog!**

**No football in the car park;
No hopscotch grids, and no street art.
The only lines drawn on the pavement,
Have been set six feet apart.**

**Busy rush-hour traffic,
Replaced by the occasional car.
Neither friends nor lovers are meeting,
In any restaurant or bar.**

**And I, the selfish poet:
Did I not often long for this day,
When everything falls silent?
I never thought I'd miss the tumult,
Until it all went away.**

**But the world has become more lonely,
As standing back now is our task.
Familiar faces become anonymous,
With each one hidden behind a mask!**

**Some people are kind and patient,
Others can't help being mean.
Curtain twitchers can't wait
When you leave your gate
To say 'that's three times you were seen!'**

**This is no childish innocence,
And the distance we cannot deny.
For the floor is molten lava,
In the two metres between you and I!**



TO THIS DAY

By Hiya Khanna

I wonder what the future will be?
Whether it would have us, you or me?

Or

Maybe no one.

Spending a couple of days with myself,

I have nothing to do but wonder,

When will all this end?

Whether it will end or not?

But I have no answers.

All I know is that the earth didn't look so beautiful with us in
it,

That this silence has a nothingness that doesn't seem to fit,
That we can't exist even for a little while because we might get hit,
That I can't see the world anymore without some minister's permit,
And whatnot?

I wonder how we used to wish for a pause button in this running life,
And now that we have it, it's making me do nothing but strife, one hour, one day,
one month... how far can I possibly go with all of this happening around me?
Living everyday, uncertain but praying that everyone I love should stay alive,

Finding every possible way in order to survive,

Hoping that one day, you, me and everyone would thrive,

Just like in nature, our planet earth!

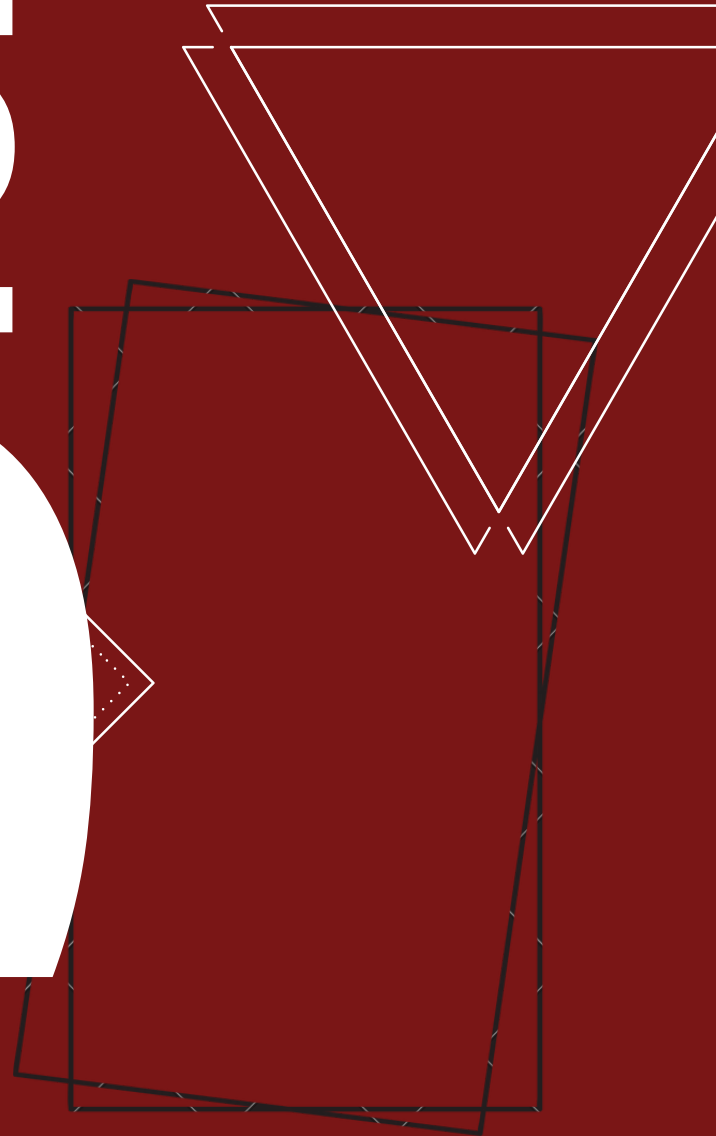
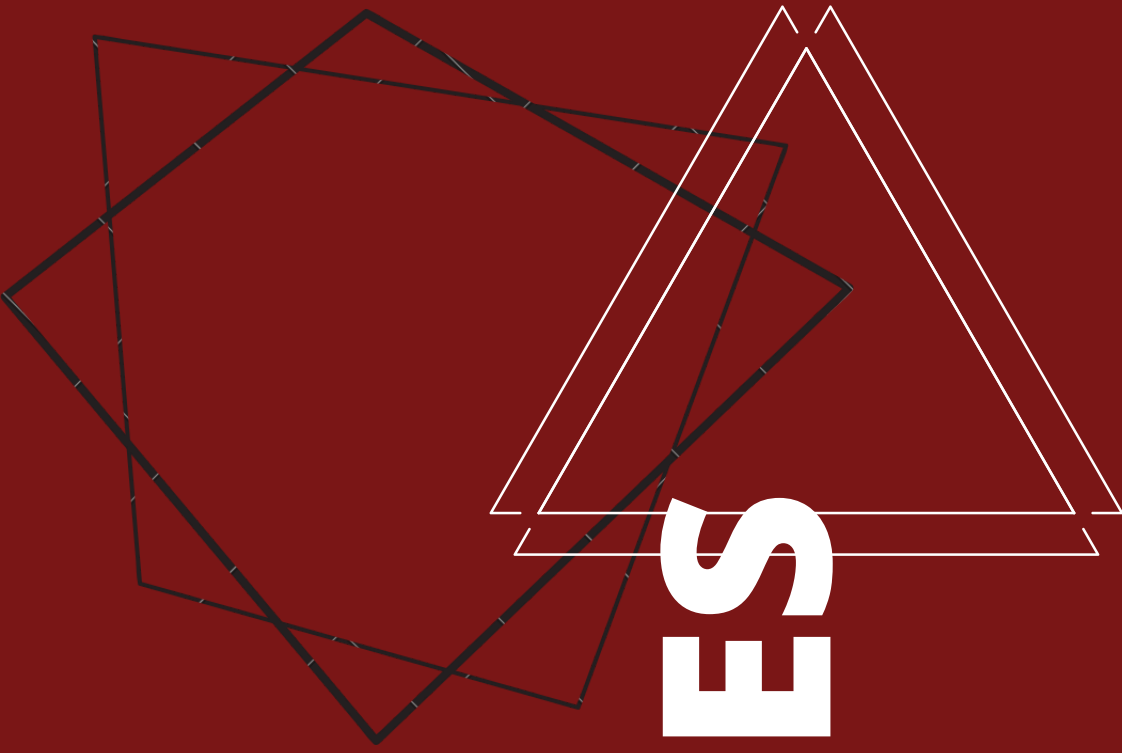
So I hold on, looking at the dusk falling,

With the moonlight and the stars brawling, with the white notorious clouds,

Trying to hide them from me watching them.

...

STORIES





JEDDAH: MY PRESENT PAST

by Manaam

I woke up to the scent of freshly cooked kebabs that I so wanted to savour. I was drooling on my bed, rubbing my eyes, wishing that Mrs. Yasmin would send me a bowl of them just when my alarm started buzzing. My hand reached out to touch down the button, wishing it could touch the kebabs as well. But I put aside the idea for if I didn't cook myself an omelette, I would be late for office. Oh, this reminded me that it's our pay day. Finally, I could buy proper groceries. Oh wait, only after I pay all my debts.

After a hasty breakfast of just an egg and untoasted bread, I rushed outside. Just as I was locking my one-room apartment, Mrs. Yasmin approached from next door. 'Beta, you're leaving already? I got you some kebabs for breakfast.' It was so sweet of the old lady to always send me the most delicious Mughlai food I could ever find. 'Uhm, thank you so much, Amma. I am running late for the office, I'll pack it for lunch.' She handed me the covered steel bowl.

I crossed Al Baladeyyah street to reach my office, just beside the famous paratha store. I craved those famous frozen Indian parathas, and longed to buy them - but my time restricted me, as did my pocket. I reached my cabinet to find the envelope. It was the first thing my hands reached out to. But it wasn't worth the wait. My cheque was for only 950 Saudi Riyals as opposed to the expected 1300 SR. I hurried towards the opposite cabinet, occupied by my childhood friend. 'Rishab, why did they cut 350SR from our salaries?'

'Income tax,' he reminded me. and my heart sank in disappointment. But he didn't seem disheartened - rather, he seemed happy. Before I could question him, he started jabbering. 'From next month onwards, we'll get twice the amount we receive now.' His eyes widened in enthusiasm as he spoke. I thought it was one of his usual practical jokes that I had never found funny. 'I am not kidding, believe me!'

When he told me about the new scheme for the refugees, by which the King had granted us privileges after a lot of demands, my excitement took wings and flew away. He continued speaking, '...this means, a villa of our own, double the salary and other such privileges. The Sheikhs have a lot of money and this time it has worked well for us.'

When he saw my saddened face, he asked, 'Are you crazy? You'll be rich soon. What makes you sad...oh wait! If you're worrying about the arrangement of documents, then don't be. They'll just see our birth certificate...' I stopped Rishab mid-way and said 'Don't make use of it,' and walked away.

I saw a bouquet on my table, with a note that read "Congratulations, you'll be rich soon Insha Allah and then we can make our investment for marriage soon. I'm so happy for us! Love, Nadia."

The flowers were beautiful, and yet they horrified me about my past. I couldn't stand them, and the next thing I remember is throwing them in the trash. Nadia was standing behind me as I threw the bouquet. The sound of her cry made me feel the void inside me grow bigger in size, so big that I could cry in my own abysmal distress. 'Nadia, this is not what it seems...', I tried to explain, but she closed her cabinet door on my face. 'I can explain, please', I knocked on her door to no avail. Since I didn't want to create a scene in the office, I decided to talk to her later.

I stared at the poster on my computer screen. NADIA & AHAAN'S RESTAURANT. WE COOK WITH LOVE. My dream of being a chef seemed so distant. Nadia and I had been together for 4 years now. It had been our dream to open up our own restaurant and get married soon after. But for the past 4 years, we never had enough money to work for our dream. Now, it feels unreal. I couldn't tell Nadia that I can't take advantage of the scheme. Why? I can't tell you either.

My day didn't go well, except for the lunch break in which I had Mrs Yasmin's delicious kebabs. There is something about those Kebabs that uplift my mood, however bad a day is. I wonder what magic the kebabs and Indian aloo paratha would do together, with the green chutney...and ahh! Of course the desi curd! I could open up an amazing restaurant with the amalgamation of Arabian and Indian cuisines, an amalgamation of Nadia and I, an amalgamation of love...oh Nadia! I need to call her.

I got out of my happy fantasy back to reality. It was 8pm when I was waiting at the gate for Nadia since in my voice note, I had proposed to walk back home together. But clearly, she didn't turn up.



Not talking to her made a bad day worse. As I walked back home, it felt as if I was on a broken boat in an unmoving sea. It was a still boat until a sudden gust of wind pushed it forward. This was when I smelt murgh-musallam from Mrs. Yasmin's door. The aroma had awed me for just a few seconds when Mr. Ali asked me to share dinner with them. I greeted Mrs. Yasmin who proposed to take my office bag to a safer place. Their house always felt so homely. I could roam around anywhere as if it was my own home. So I made my way to the kitchen when the old lady was rolling chapatis. 'Amma, allow me to make chapatis today. You rest. Give me 15 minutes before I serve them on the table.' My stubbornness made her give in.

My cooking seemed to wow them - Mr. Ali said, 'I've never had such amazing chapattis before.' I told them that they weren't chapattis; they were in fact theplas, famous in Gujarat. 'I could imagine the taste of murgh-musallam with the Gujarati thepla and realized it would be the best combination so I just went with it.' I blushed at the end of my sentence, and Mrs. Yasmin asked for the recipe.

A month passed by, a month of solitude. Nadia hadn't replied to my texts or picked up any of my calls. She ignored me in the office. Everything seemed to be falling apart. My dream. My love. My life. Everything until I saw my paycheck, SR2600. Just as I was about to celebrate my joy, Rishabh came up to say 'You can thank me later.' It took me minutes to realize what just happened. He enrolled me for the scheme in spite of my constant denial. 'I can't believe you just did it...' I suppressed my voice, trying hard not to shout.

went straight to the governing office to withdraw my name before they handed me a villa I believed I did not deserve. They kept me waiting for 45 minutes before an officer agreed to converse. Before I could say anything, the Sheikh dressed in a white Tope began to say, 'Salam walekum. Mr. Ahaan, if you've come here for modification in the allotment of your villa regarding the location that suits you best, then I am afraid we can't do anything for you. The King is offering this gift to a thousand refugees. It would be better to not come up with more requests. I hope you will understand. If you have any enquiry further to this, I am here to take care of it.'

'I do have a request and it is to withdraw my name from the scheme.'

Shocked, he suggested, 'But consider it a gift from the King.'

'You're not understanding, I'm not a refugee. I am an immigrant.'

He gave me a bemused smile. 'But Mr. Ahaan, I don't understand, why would you return a life changing gift?'

I sighed and began my story. 'My father, M.K Awasthi, was born in Jeddah. After my parents' marriage in India, he settled down in the state of U.P. It was the year of clashes between religious groups there. My family was attacked because my father had his roots in Jeddah. My mother had passed away by then. I was only 3 years old when father and I were rescued by a Muslim family at a time when we could trust nobody. The family that rescued us called us to their area, from where they would usher us to the airport. Initially, we refrained from believing in them, afraid it was a tactic to maul us over. But their car kept waiting for us in disguise. Their driver safely led us to the airport, from where we took off and reached Jeddah to start afresh. We couldn't even thank them. We didn't have their contact information or their address to show our gratitude. Ever since my father's death, I've been finding ways to pay his debt to the Muslims for saving our lives. I can easily take all the money the King is willing to give me but that would mean losing another opportunity of paying our debt. With my honesty of being an immigrant, I would like to free us from our debt. So please withdraw my name from the scheme. If you'll excuse me sir, allow I must leave now!'

"Ever since my father's death, I've been finding ways to pay his debt to the Muslims for saving our lives."

I can't tell you what his reaction was. I just asked for my withdrawal and returned from his office, satisfied. Even though my one room apartment wasn't very welcoming, I was content to return, content because now I had paid our debt of honesty with honesty. My father could rest in peace now.

A month passed by. Rishab was no longer in the same office as me. He had begun his dream job of being a motor mechanic in a renowned company, and was living his dreams unlike me.

I was yawning before my mundane computer when I got a text from Nadia. 'Meet you at Al Sharafiyah at 9pm today. Will text you the full address soon!'. I was on cloud nine and could barely contain my happiness.

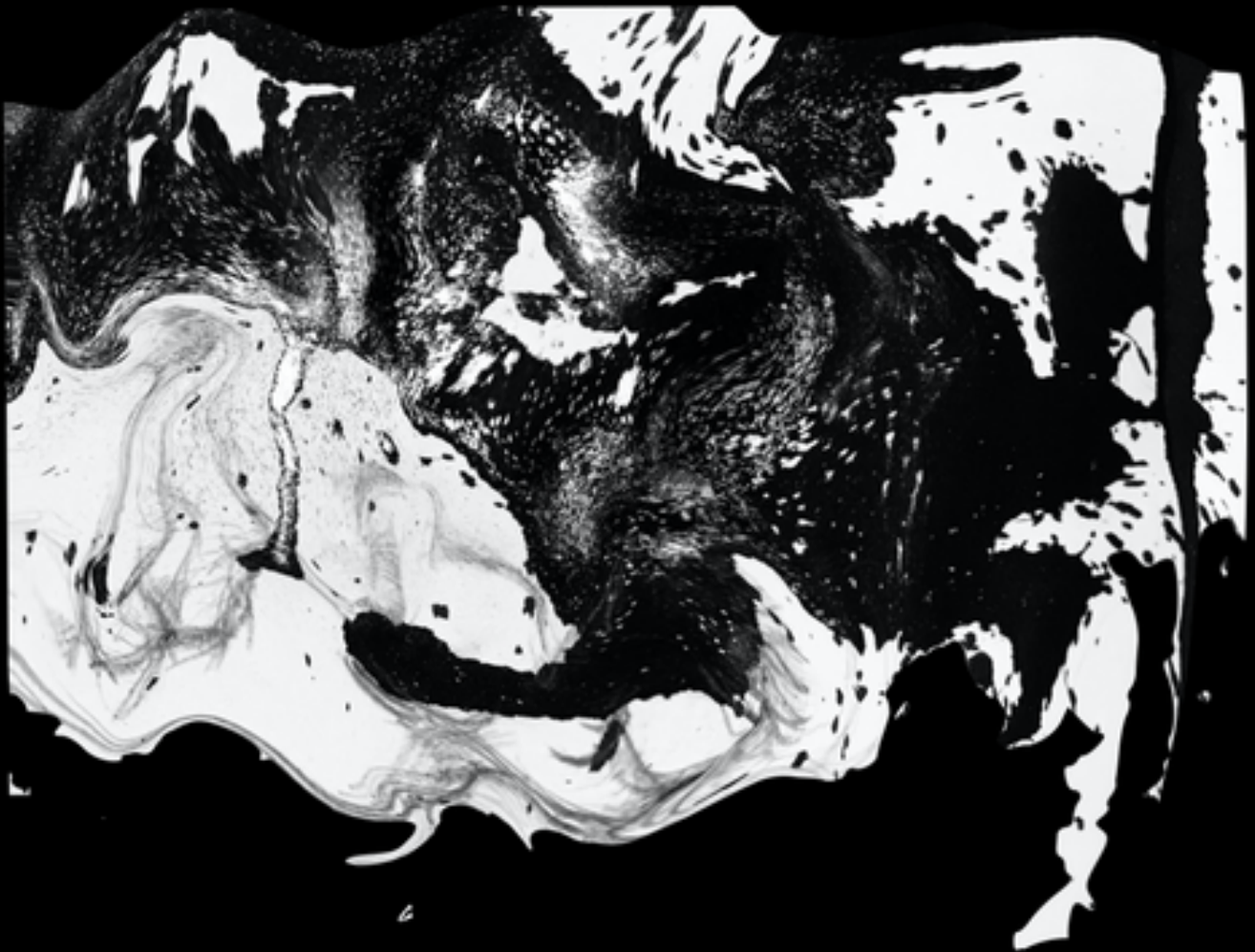
I took a cab towards the address. As I remunerated the driver and turned back, my eyes fixated on a board that read 'Nahaan's Restaurant. We cook with love'.

There were two statues of elephants decked up in colorful clothes at the threshold. I could read the sign of 'Namaste' hung on the entry door. I felt like a part of my country was in front of me. It all felt like a dream; I wanted to swim in my happy tears. 'Oh my God...what is th...' Nadia interrupted me and took me inside. It was exactly how I pictured it to be. The seatings were made of jute and wood, just like those in my Dada's mansion. My heart was beating in time with the rhythm of the soft desi tune playing in the background.

'I know about your reason for withdrawing your name from the scheme, don't ask me how! I just want you to know I am so proud of you. I have invested all of my savings on our dream restaurant... well, you can repay me later, considering the fact that you'll earn a lot from this Insha Allah. Let's resign from our office and take this venture forward. I know it's risky, but it's worth it. I want to marry you. I want to work with you and I am sorry for how I acted earlier. I didn't know the real you then. Now I do, you're truthful; this is the time for you to be a true dreamer and do this with me'.



I didn't have words. I didn't say anything. My silence spoke a thousand words: it spoke of my acceptance, and of my love for Nadia; it was the voice of the dreamer within me, silent. I embraced Nadia and I was ready to begin a new life, without any debt over me this time.



AMADEUS

By Lakshi Phogat

They sometimes believed that the hall was a delicately crafted mirage. The deceased paraphernalia of bygone ages and their fancies that brought slow, crawling, summer rains through the roof. Domesticated and effortlessly falling in purpose.

The spectating dead of a furniture-al crisis.

You could feel a palpable vacuum slithering in that setting. A grandfather clock that struck hours in traditional moulds of corporal punishment. A rug, that you could watch become the pitiful ravage of time. Artillery that you dined with. Florentine orchids that sung in synchronicity of sober sacrilege, dying in unmarked and unclaimed crevices of nowhere.

Under a dark grey sky, the solemn child of a barren monotony, they bothered one another for the aesthetic that was dead.

Sleep Paralysis

by Lavisha Taneja

It was 6:30 in the evening as per my watch but the curtain of shadow had already fallen upon the sky.

I was hurrying back home. It was only an hour ago when the sky was painted with the hues of red, orange and pink but now it had darkened, leaving only a matte black canvas with no stars in sight. These frosty

New Hampshire evenings always reminded me of those days in Kashmir when Ammi used to put kanger inside our cloaks to keep us warm during those harsh winter months. It has been a long time, around ten and a half years since I last saw her - since the day she forced me to leave Kashmir after my father's demise in a terrorist attack. It was dark. I switched on the torch but it hardly lit my path, throwing light only on the area within my arm's reach. I tipped over the cobblestone. My knees were covered in dirt and my face in frustration. After a fifteen-minute walk, I finally reached home.

Despite being in the suburbs, it was believed that a long time ago, it was a haunted hospital. It was surrounded by woods and there was a gravel road that formed a horseshoe, where the houses stood like quarreling sisters, closely built but separated in their isolated islands by seas of hostility. A chilling wind struck me. I brought my legs together while my teeth chattered against each other. I struggled to open the door of my cottage as my blood ran cold and bones stood frozen. I immediately sought the warmth of my wool blanket after putting some kahwa on the boil. I hung my jacket up in the room and hastened towards my bed as I hadn't slept in the last two nights. In no time, I fell asleep. I dreamt of Ammi



and my homeland. I dreamt of Abba, still alive, feeding me pieces of roasted lamb with his hands. I dreamt of a lady from our neighbourhood feeding me peeled almonds. All of a sudden, I woke up. I felt a pressure on my chest, gentle like a finger. The pressure started to increase. It felt almost like a sharpened pencil was cutting through me. I wanted to scream but couldn't. I tried opening my eyes as wide as I could but I could not see anything. Gradually, my eyes adjusted to the darkness and I saw a dark hooded figure staring down at me. It made a sharp metallic/scratchy noise like the car keys being scratched on the chalkboard. It was of such high frequency, I thought my ears would burst. I could feel the goosebumps on my arms due to the blizzard entering through the gaps in my collapsible door.

There was no warmth left now.

With a sudden bang my bedroom door was shoved open. I stared up at the ceiling and saw a shadow moving across it. A little boy was standing in front of my bedroom door, naked I felt numb. The boy started walking towards me. I tried to scream and call out for help but I still couldn't speak. I couldn't even part my lips. I was paralyzed. I couldn't close my eyes. I had to see this, I had to witness it. Meanwhile, the pressure on my chest was digging into me and the shadow was becoming bigger and bigger. The very next moment, that boy was standing next to me. He brought his hands close to my neck and started choking me. I cried and cried but nothing happened. Not a single part of me moved. I prayed to Allah. I recited everything that I had been taught in the madrasas. I even recited the Christian prayers from my time in the convent school. I might have even chanted Om in my mind a few times. But no God would listen to me. I prayed to Allah to give me a glimpse of my motherland before I died. I began to lose consciousness

and I saw the face of Allah. I was dying. I was dying. I was dying. This was it. That's when I woke up. The clock struck five and the cuckoo bird popped out of the clock laughing at me. I couldn't move my arms and my heart was still pounding like a war drum. The hooded figure had disappeared. My jacket hung right where I had left it. My bedroom door was open but the little boy had vanished. It was the time for my morning prayer, but I was still getting flashes of the terror-filled night and I knew it wasn't just a nightmare. Neither was it a nightmare nor a ghost. This was not the first time it had happened.

The prescription lying in my drawer, along with my diary filled with my longing for the motherland read, Sleep Paralysis.



Death or The Reality of My Dreams

by Prabhdeep Kaur

She woke up naked to an azure sky and peered into a seascape of sunbeams when she realised that she fell asleep under the shade of a tree; blanketed in a warm summer breeze. She felt comfortable in her bare skin, like a baby in a cradle unlike how her body would disgust her usually. She got up, yawned and dandelion fuzz flew into her mouth which left it tasting like what she thought love would taste like. As she started walking, she descried upon the shape of the leaves that were distinctly elliptic; she wasn't in the woods of her town. There was an ethereal symphony thrumming in her ears, which resonated like the song that clouds would sing. It was as if someone had breathed new life into her - she felt a sort of bliss that 21st century's language didn't have a word for because people hadn't felt this emotion in centuries, and it had gotten lost in the waves of melancholy through in the dust of time and space.

As she tread down a trail, she came across a group of people who were unclad like her near the bank of a river. They seemed harmless, so she approached them to ask about the whereabouts of the place, time and day.

She couldn't discern anything about the identities of this anomalous bunch of people who talked with each other in a language of their own and with her in a tongue she could decipher.

They said, "This is the Trout River, in year 2500."

She clamoured, "Did you just say year 2500?"

"Yes."

"What's the exact date? And Trout River? Can you be more specific in terms of the country and territory?"

"Dear oh dear, did you have a dream living in the past? Or are you playing in a historical drama? Or are you time travelling?"

She was baffled, much like when you find yourself reading an obtuse text, but after taking a minute to assess their disposition she replied,

"Yes, a drama! You got me. I'm preparing for a skit. But I need to research more, please help me!"

"Well, have you checked the resources in the library? We can take you down there and help you through all of it."

"Yes I'd love that. But you don't have to help me through everything, I don't want to be much trouble. If you could just tell me the way that'd be great."

"Yes dear, come. It's no trouble, but as you wish."

She reached the library, and read up the books on history and googled the news of the past century.

It was 2500 AD.

Although it wasn't because time had been abolished, along with places in 2070. The world had united into one and overthrown the concept of tyranny

altogether. The underground revolution had finally succeeded in

demolishing the status quo of oppressive institutions over

the years. The nemesis had been neo-despotism in

the 21st century, but after thousands and thousands

of years: the revolution came and it came like a

bulldozer and swept everything and everyone

that made modern civilisation a dystopia..



took some decades but in progression, there were reparations for years of trauma inflicted on the oppressed. Resources were redistributed, capitalism was destroyed and human life on earth was pulled back as it was standing on the edge of the chasm of death.

As all of this happened, unadulterated joy found its way back into the realm. Art of any kind was simply a way of expression, nothing more or less - simply a channel for your emotions and all notions and ceaseless imagination stripped of any purpose or use in itself. There were no families, you could be with anyone with whom you felt you have a connection. Love was boundless and non-exclusive. There was no pain, except for the natural anguish of childbirth, disease and injury. There was space for everyone. Everything was the norm. There were no hierarchies. Everyone tried to learn all languages by the time they were adults, and worked on trying to improve their communication capabilities. A lot of things became redundant: from countries, to schools, to factories, to currency, to the concept of time and space itself. Anything which caused harm to earth was demolished. No one had self-esteem issues or any issues, because everyone respected and believed in everyone. There was no concept of worth, no one was on a pedestal. Everyone cultivated their own food according to their needs and abilities. Everything was in perfect sync.

She fell asleep on a pile of books as she was reading in the library and discovering this new world with no

knowledge of how she ended up there. A world which is ordinary in essence for life here has come to resemble the times of ancient civilisations, and yet every aspect of it is surreal like a flightless bird marrying a unicorn to see a rainbow, because it isn't the good old hunter-gatherer days and the relics of the 21st century still exist here. But how did she end up in the future?

She woke up to the clangour of an alarm, to find herself in her bed. "Did I dream all this?" she thought to herself as she woke up in a sharp pang of colour and beads of sweat on her head and neck. She looked up at the wall clock and had to rush for college in fifteen minutes. But the journey from her bed to stand up on the floor of her room seemed to require superhuman strength and she fell back into the cocoon of her sheets, curled up in her small corner of the bed. It was as if a wave of melancholia had nailed her to the bed. She closed her eyes for just one moment of peace where she'd find the will to get up and go on.

She shut her eyes tightly and felt a soft kiss on her cheek, gentle fingers nudging through her hair and heard the same ephemeral symphony again that left bliss in her heart like a meteor shower that lights the dark sky.

And a whisper blew into her ear,

"Dear, I'm going across Trout River to the valley. I'm leaving; when you wake up, meet me there."





Plays.

A DAY IN CORONA

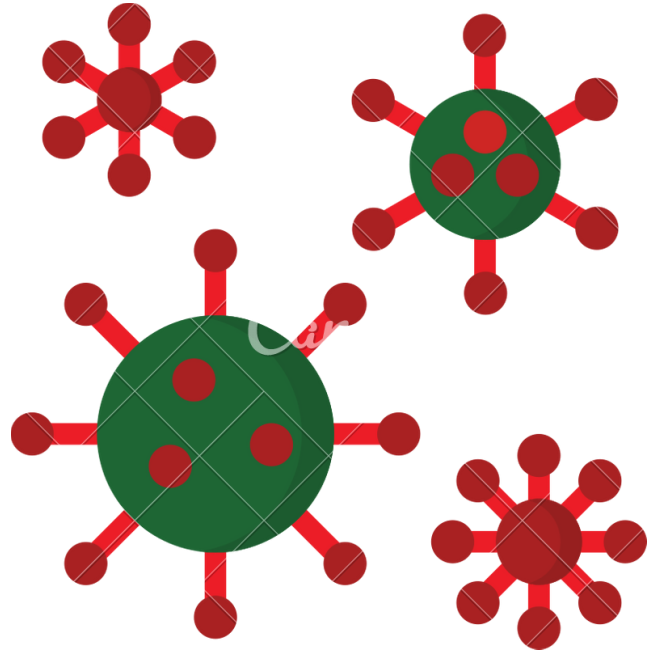
by Bhumika Nagpal, Ritika Kumari,
Arohi Shyam Choudhury, Amisha
Nath

Dramatis Personae:

Aurora (mostly sleeping)

Rapunzel (Outspoken)

Lady Macbeth (Bunty in Lifebuoy's ad)



Act 1, scene 1

Inside Rapunzel's tower, Lady Macbeth is busy washing her hands while Aurora sleeps on a bed next to the sink. Rapunzel is looking out of the window of her tiny room.

Lady Macbeth: Germs germs go away, come again another day!

Rapunzel (sings): Lady Macbeth wants to slay.

Lady Macbeth: Even the soaps of Sanitopia* can't cleanse my little hands.

Rapunzel: And what about thy unclean soul?

Lady Macbeth continues washing her hands rigorously.

Lady Macbeth: Is that the long-haired witch I hear here?

Rapunzel: Yes malady (my lady).

Lady Macbeth: Hush! The deceased voice in my head.

Rapunzel: Corona is not thy Kingdom, so stop blabbering thy commands.

Lady Macbeth: Oh, I see you (picks up the dagger), now you'll see what I can do! looks like you need a new haircut.

Rapunzel: Dare you touch my hair, I will throw you out in the open air.

Lady Macbeth: I request thee (stops washing her hands and bows down) to keep me as a captive, don't expose me to Corona.

Rapunzel: That's the plan, be adventurous! Don't you want to see the light tonight?

Lady Macbeth (shaking nervously): What your mouth speaks, do your ears even hear?

Rapunzel (enthusiastically): You make no sense and that is why I can't bear to be under the same roof as you. Buckle up, wear your mask and be ready for the party. Anyways, the sight of thee does infect my eyes. Also, wear the gloves and keep your dirty hands away from me...oh you make my soul weary!

Lady Macbeth:

No thanks, I would much rather prefer being here and writing an eulogy for you.

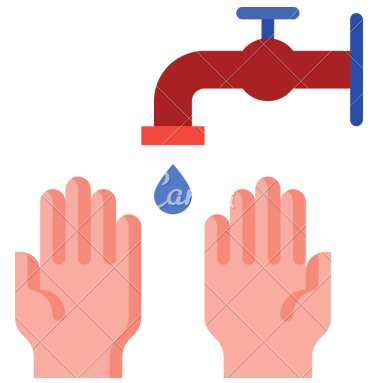
Rapunzel: A life inside these walls is a eulogy in itself.

Aurora wakes up, rubbing her eyes.

Aurora: I would happily die to stay inside these walls.

Lady Macbeth (to Aurora): And avoid Corona.

Rapunzel: Why are you scared of Corona? You are more toxic than it.



Lady Macbeth goes and wears her mask and gloves to hands.

Aurora: You misjudged the place, my girl. Besides, why go out when you can chill at home and learn something new?

Rapunzel: But the light is outside.

Aurora: But the paints are inside, so create thy own light - no one is stopping you.

Lady Macbeth hands over gloves and masks to Aurora and Rapunzel.

Aurora: Wear your armour let it soak the darkness and be stained by paints and not blood (Winks at Lady Macbeth).

Lady Macbeth: Oh stop it, you too! Wasn't this beautiful witch enough?

Rapunzel (rolls her eyes): Seems like I have no other choice. (picks up white and yellow colours)

Lady Macbeth (panics and screams): Where's my soap? Did the germs eat my soap? Oh! I'm finished.

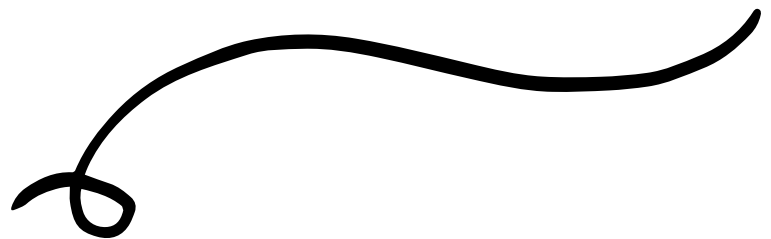
Rapunzel: Stop screaming, Why don't we all learn something new? Malady, how about we make a bar of soap?

Lady Macbeth and Rapunzel start working.

Aurora: Oh! what a tiresome day it was. All my energy is drained in teaching these little girls. Time for a refill.

Aurora goes back to sleep.

THE END.



End Notes

CORONA: Corona is an island kingdom and the birthplace of Rapunzel in the 2010 animated feature film, Tangled. The word corona (in Latin) means crown.

SANITOIPIA: It is a fictional place. A portmanteau of Sanitation and Eutopia.

SALE OF INDULGENCES THE INERTIA OF FAITH

*By Swagata Das, Lakshi Phogat,
Aishwarya Bhatia, Subhalakshmi Gautam
and Aamna Siddiqui*

**TO THE RIGHT,
HONOURABLE
AMRITA MA'AM,
THE TEACHER OF CREATIVE
WRITING**

RESPECTED MA'AM- The world might think us vain and doused to the core in selfishness of the greatest pedigree for dedicating this to you. However, 'tis not the want of numbers that moves us to seek your patronage and approval but your own self which moves all who are acquainted with it. To be received by thee would be the greatest accolade our humble work could ever receive (like for real). In the hopes that this blinding play - which would've made Oedipus so, had Oedipus seen it, and one which we personally would like to never look at again - shall leave no indelible marks on your psyche (for the quarantine allows us not to approach psychologists), and that you shall, like we do, see it as a satire on all playwriting (out of compulsion).

Your humble servants,
Lakshi, Swagata, Aishwarya, Aamna
and Subhalakshmi

Dramatis Personae

1. Darya- Christian Bale
2. Salesman- Willem Dafoe
3. Priest- Yogi Adityanatham
4. God - Lakshi Phogat
5. Employee 1 - Aishwarya Bhatia
6. Employee 2 - Subhalakshmi Gautam
7. Employee 3 - Swagata Das
8. Devotees and Workers in the temple - Aamna Siddiqui and others

Act 1 Scene 1

The stage is divided into two sections- the left half is a place of religious worship.

*Symbols of various prominent religions like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism etc are present. Subtly visible - a car in the background with a symbol that integrates major religious symbols of the world. A religious priest-like figure performs a ritual for a group of people sitting around him in a havan kund-like space. A salesperson sells tickets to people to enter this havan. The salesperson has a stall in front of the havan towards the side with a banner saying '*Dispelling all Evils At Rs.100 only*' underneath which is written 'Terms and Conditions Applied' in an almost invisible ink and indecipherable font. A cacophony of Ave Maria, Gayatri Mantra and Adaan can be heard.*

SALESPERSON (apathetically): The ticket to enter the congregation costs Rs. 100/-. The ticket to participate is 400/-. One to have an individual prayer at the end is for 800/-. Which one do you want?

Darya (nervous but with high hopes, trying to be enthusiastic): The 400 one! Wait! Is the 800 one more effective? What do you think? Has it had better results?

SALESPERSON: The 800/- one is our premium package. Our surveys show that it has given the best results, outcomes, lives, and cash-back alike (for capitalism). It has a 4-star rating on eBae.

Darya: 800 seems a bit expensive. Do you have a similar deal for a smaller fee?

SALESPERSON: Do you really want to take chances with your life, *sir*? What's 800 bucks for a good life? Does your life account for so less? Surely you can spare a mere 800 rupees for the guarantee of Heaven and The Right Life in return?

Darya (fidgeting, contemplating): Bold of you to assume I want to live at all but well, yes, of course. 800 is a really low price for Heaven and The Right Life, and the guarantee to be born a human in my next life, and eternal redemption, and a buffet in Heaven. Alright, then! I'll buy the 800/- ticket!

SALESPERSON: Here's your ticket, *sir*. Enjoy!

The guy enters the congregation, very excited. He gets his ticket checked by the security personnel. Sits down in the first row, reserved for those with the 800/- ticket. After the preliminary ritual, the individual rituals begin.

PRIEST (mechanically): Yes, what's your name?

Darya: Darya.

PRIEST: Yes. Daryaganj. Sit down. Drink this (hands a glass with what looks like red wine). Now pour this into the fire as I chant the prayer-am for you (hands him another glass).

Darya: Okay.

The rituals end. Darya gets up, is handed a certificate stating that a seat, along with a breakfast buffet, has been

booked in his name in Heaven, with 'Terms and Conditions Applied' written at its back. Darya exits the head office, smiling and walking joyfully. Stage goes dark.

Exeunt.

Scene 2

An office room. Employees all gathered in the meeting room watching the presentation on the screen, sitting in their respective seats around the table.

Two people, who are giving the presentation, are standing at the head of the table near the screen. At one side of the room sits the God-like figure, their boss.

The presentation ends.

EMPLOYEE 1 (*nervous, expectant*): So, what do you think, if thinkest thee at all?

EMPLOYEE 2: This definitely placest us at the top of the game.

ANOTHER EMPLOYEE: Very impressive. Boss, what do you think?

GOD (*indifferently*): It leaves a lot to be desired on the creative front, this advertisement of yours, o unworthy sons of capitalism that look not like the inhabitants of the earth and yet are on't...but anyways, as long as it gets me more followers on the gram, it works, I

guess. Test the advertisement with the testing batch. If it works out, ask the ambassadors to broadcast the ad everywhere. (looks around) Where did the cow go?

Lights out.
Exeunt.



MOVIE REVIEWS



“Emma.”- A Breezy Delight!

By Swagata Das



“Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.” Thus begins Autumn de Wilde's whimsical adaptation of Jane Austen's beloved 1815 novel Emma. de Wilde, best known for her portraiture and commercial work photography of musicians and music videos, in her directorial debut based on the screenplay by the Man Booker Prize winner Eleanor Catton, gives a fresh face to this heavily adapted story. With an impressive ensemble cast including Anya Taylor-Joy, Johnny Flynn, Bill Nighy, Miranda Hart, Mia Goth, Josh O'Connor and Callum Turner, 'Emma.' (self-consciously styled with a full stop to signify that it's a period drama), presents a peculiar assortment of characters in this tale of a young woman consistently meddling in the love lives of her friends, entertaining herself by matchmaking.

Emma Woodhouse (Anya Taylor-Joy) is a spoiled, headstrong, vain woman who lives with her widowed father (Bill Nighy) in the fictional country village of

Highbury in Regency-Era England. Miss Taylor (Gemma Whelan), her governess, is getting married to Mr. Weston (Rupert Graves), a result of Emma's matchmaking skills. Searching for a new companion now that Miss Taylor is gone, she settles on Harriet Smith (Mia Goth), a parlour-boarder at the nearby school, whom Emma supposes to be the unclaimed child of a gentleman, and thus in need of a good match. Much against the advice of her father as well as her friend and her sister's brother-in-law Mr. Knightley (Johnny Flynn), Flynn), she begins to weave a thread of matrimony which goes hilariously wrong as the story progresses. After several youthfully vain relationship misunderstandings, the film concludes, in a typical comedy-of-manners fashion, with three couples united and Emma getting married to Mr. Knightley, who promises to

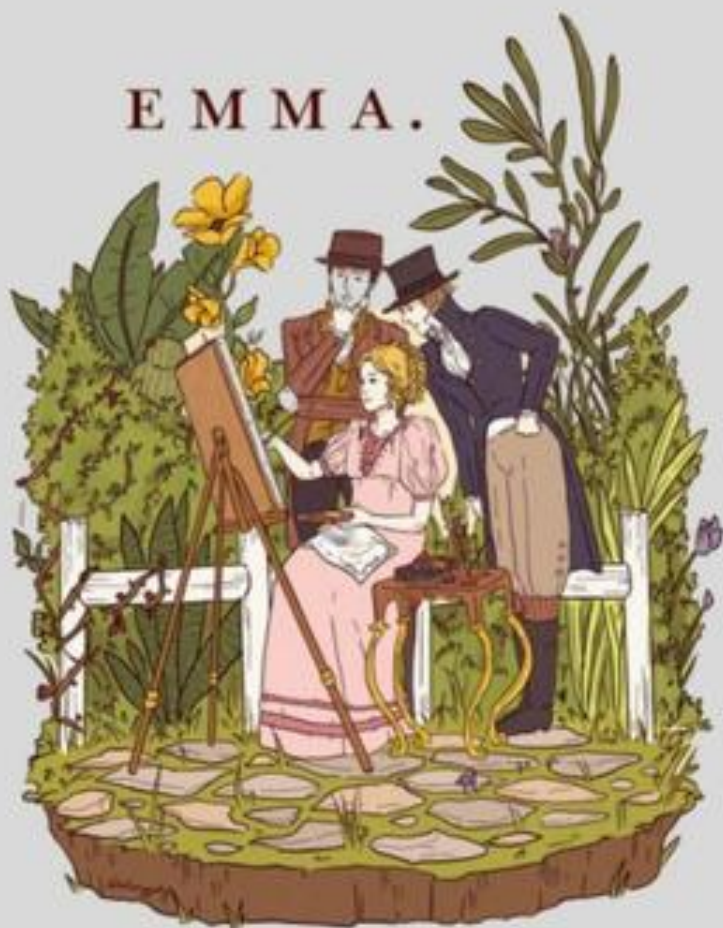




move into Hartfield (the Woodhouse estate) to fulfill Emma's wish to stay with her father. Taylor-Joy shines in the role of Emma, bringing out not just the bratty, spoiled, vain girl but also a woman in Regency England who understands the importance society places on social status and propriety. Taylor-Joy and Flynn's chemistry is commendable as Emma and Knightly, especially in their quarrel scenes and, of course, the final proposal scene, which is given a hilarious addition by de Wilde. Bill Nighy as the hypochondriac Mr. Woodhouse and his animated obsession with chill drafts is amusingly entertaining. The exaggerated silliness of the characterisation emphasises Austen's satirical style though it does run the risk of keeping the characters at a distance from the audience and over caricatured, at times. The cinematography, by Christopher Blauvelt, especially in the use of pastels, resembles a Wes Anderson-esque style of filmmaking, coupled with the exaggeration in the mannerisms of the characters like in Anderson's *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. The beautiful costumes by the brilliant Alexandra Byrne along with the score by Isobel Waller-Bridge and David Schweitzer add to the vivacity of the film. The film does get a bit slow in the middle but picks up its pace again towards the end.

Autumn de Wilde, in making her own adaptation, creates a playful, thoroughly enjoyable film, and not only makes you fall in love with the charm of period dramas but also portrays the social reality of dependency in these women's lives- who, moving from father to husband, negotiate their way through their lives once youthful amour passes to adult responsibility and marriage.

EMMA.



The Relevance of Leila in Contemporary India

by Nandini Iyer



Netflix's *Leila* (2019), based on Prayaag Akbar's dystopian novel of the same name, is one of the first Indian shows that features a dystopian India, one that operates under a totalitarian regime. The show is set in 2047 and focuses on Shalini Pathak, an upper-caste Hindu woman who entered into an interfaith marriage with Rizwan Chowdhury, who is a Muslim, and her struggle to reunite with her "mischrit" (born out of an intercaste/interreligious union) daughter, Leila. Leila had been separated from her mother by the Aryavarta, a religiously extremist regime fuelled by their goal of achieving an ideal state wherein people abide by a long-standing caste system which forbids interfaith marriage and establishes a division of labor in society. Despite the existence of the Aryavarta ,



a religiously extremist regime fuelled by their goal of achieving an ideal state wherein people abide by a long-standing caste system which forbids interfaith/inter-caste marriage and establishes a division of labor in society. Despite the existence of the Aryavarta and the overriding presence of cataclysmic circumstances where children are separated from their

parents in the name of religion, what is most striking about this show is its relevance to the present-day Indian society. *Leila*'s depiction of a profound water crisis that drives people to kill for water has a resounding resemblance to the Kauvery water crisis. In Tamil Nadu, the state worst-hit by the crisis, a man was beaten to death for objecting to a neighbor storing large quantities of water, unmindful of the rest of the locality. Elsewhere in the state, a woman was stabbed in a clash over a water pump. The severe air pollution in the show echoes the suffocatingly polluted air of present-day India, with 22 of the 30 most polluted cities in the world being located in India. The central conflict in the protagonist's life—her forced separation from her husband on account of the difference in their faiths

and his subsequent murder by an institution defiant on ensuring socio-religious purity as well as her daughter's capture by them—is also reminiscent of the current, rapidly expanding propaganda of Hindutva activists and right-wing goons driven by extremist religious sentiment which manifests itself in hate crimes. One such incident is the murder of a Muslim man and the torture of his Hindu wife as a retribution for their inter-religious marriage - moreover, their only child was sent to a camp where organ-harvesting is practiced on the offsprings of inter-community marriages. The Aryavarta's extreme and unjust treatment of lower-caste individuals and its stringent caste boundaries can be easily compared to the contemporary era where even decades after the legal abolishment of the practice of untouchability and caste-based discrimination, its deep-rooted general mechanisms are firmly embedded in the very structure of our society and continue to marginalize lower-caste groups. In a recent example, a Dalit boy in Maharashtra was beaten up, stripped and made to sit on hot tiles as punishment for entering a temple space. Meanwhile, in a parched Uttar Pradesh district, water tankers were being sent only to upper-caste settlements where lathi-wielding men had prevented Dalits from approaching water pumps. These incidents are clearly indicative of tyrannical and oppressive societal forces at play which, by way of being reflected in an amplified manner, continue to dictate and ruin the lives of many on Leila.



The show faced ample criticism for its commentary on right-wing extremism, with some disreputing it by branding it as anti-Hindu. Director Deepa Mehta's response to such criticism was that “At the end of the day, it is just a movie and not life. You have got to have the ability not to take it so seriously. What is important to me is my daughter, mother, husband, humanity, ending pollution, ensuring education for everyone, and equality for women.” Leila, ultimately, features the severe consequences of the rigid ideological divide among the major communities of the country and voices the growing concerns of contemporary India in a very sophisticated and appropriate manner through a dystopian lens.

LOOTERA

*Review By
Jaishree
Malik*

★★★★☆

Director:
Vikramaditya
Motwane

Starring:
Ranveer Singh,
Sonakshi Sinha,
Divya Dutta,
Vikrant Massey



There's a mellow, old world charm to Looter. The style of direction, cinematography, appearances, veneers, and settings draw you into its realm and take you back 70 years in time where there was little to no urbanisation, vintage cars, and vast *havelis* with their enormous mango groves. This world created by Vikramaditya Motwane does not share a similitude with ours: time moves slower here, feelings are declared and understood through gestures, subtle glances and expressions, and more time is spent enjoying the moment than in an endless race, pursuing a mindless goal. A fair warning is due here: this world is neither for those seeking action nor for the fast-paced. Inspired partly by O. Henry's widely acclaimed short story 'The Last Leaf', the

movie recounts the tale of Paakhi Roy Chowdhury (Sinha), the only daughter of a Bengali archaeologist, and Varun Srivastava (Singh), who claims to have come to scavenge for a civilisation under Roy Chowdhury's land and forms a close bond with the family, but is later revealed as a con man. Quite inevitably, they fall in love and what follows is their doomed romance.

This is Ranveer Singh's third movie, after the hits 'Band Baaja Baaraat' and 'Ladies vs Ricky Behl'. While his first two films established him as a commercially successful Bollywood leading man, this was the movie where he marked himself as an accomplished actor as he displayed his range and prowess as an artist. This helped him get roles such as those of Ram in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's 'Goliyon ki

Rasleela: RamLeela', Khilji in 'Padmaavat' and Murad in Zoya Akhtar's highly celebrated 'Gully Boy'. He shines through Motwane's lens, first as a quiet and reserved gentleman and then as a completely mad and off-the-hook swindler, shifting through these personas and adapting himself to various settings, looks, and moods of his character with a ridiculous ease. Here, Varun is the archetype anti-hero for whom no sympathy is felt when he's exposed as a con man and yet the phenomenal performance by Singh ensures that one sits up and remains bewildered and invested all the same. It is a testimony to his skill that he manages to make the audience like him initially, then loathe him, and in the end, pity him, all within a runtime of 2 hours and 20 minutes. Varun is an intense, layered character: he falls, makes mistakes, gathers



up his courage, admits to those mistakes, and later redeems himself. No actor is more suited for the role than Singh. Sonakshi Sinha performs just as well, firstly as the childish and naïve Paakhi, and later as a more mature character but does not reach the level of her co-star which is a shame because Paakhi has the potential of being a character just as interesting as Varun. A girl who shows childlike wonder at a light turning on and off by the press of a button and who experiences love for the first time develops as the movie progresses - a heartbreak leaves her angry but most of all, it leaves her hurt. She holds a grudge against Varun, who broke her heart and is in a way responsible for her father's death. But, it is clear that she still loves him and her internal battle between protecting him and leaving him to his fate makes for a noteworthy scene. Paakhi's transition from a lively, bubbly Bengali girl with a fondness for big *bindis*, *laali*, and *kajal*

to a wiser woman is depicted by a maturity in Sinha's demeanour and costumes, if not her performance.

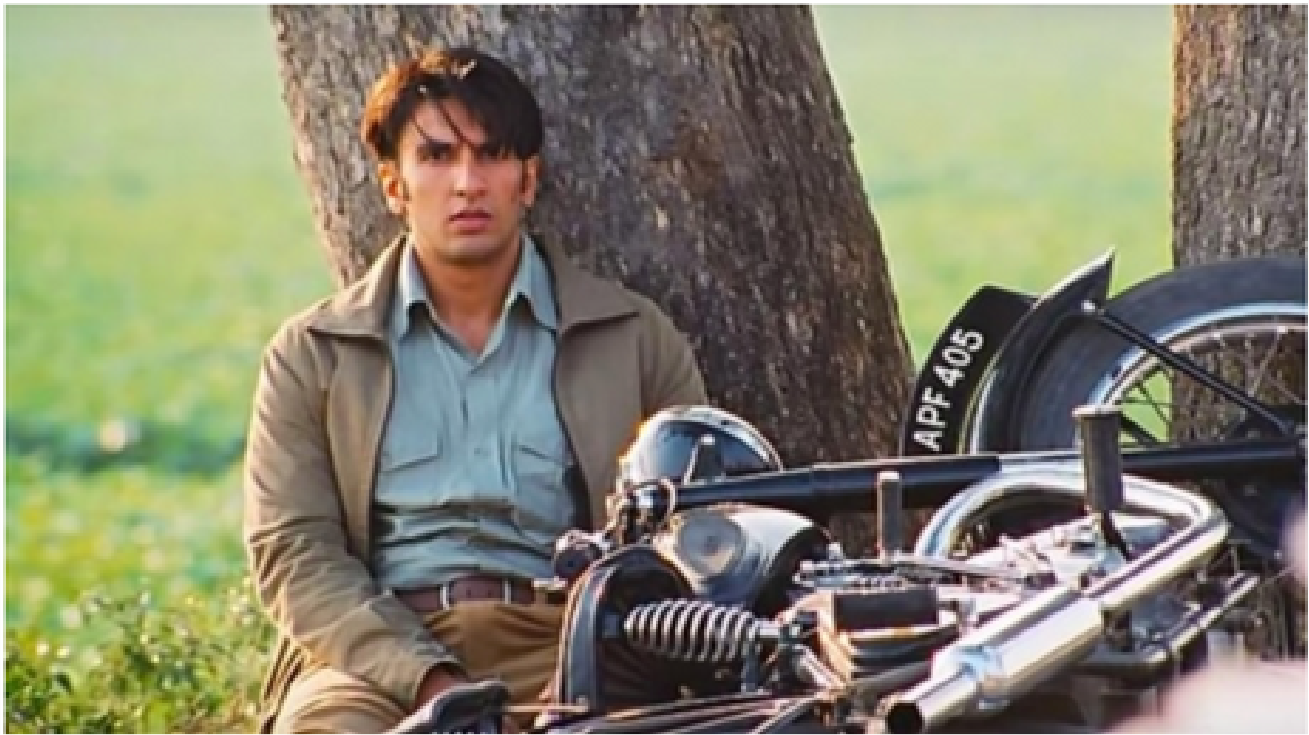
Despite her wonderful looks in the film, Sinha comes across as somewhat stiff and monotonal in nature. Sinha did not do a bad job, infact a relatively good one compared to her other works; however, this was a role with more potential and perhaps could've been done more proficiently by another contemporary artist. The music by Amit Trivedi,

movie's enchantment. The music also resonates with the setting of the film, laced with Bengali touches that delves into the characters and their feelings, whether it is Varun falling for Paakhi with Swanand Kirkire's 'Monta Re', or Paakhi and Varun resisting their feelings for each other in Shilpa Rao's 'Manmarziyan', which helps lure the audience even more into this universe. The open groves of Bengal, along with their grand mansion in a time when electricity has just been introduced are cleverly depicted in dim lighting. The setting of Dalhousie, with its hills and packed houses on cobbled streets have done full justice to the scenic aesthetics.



along with Amitabh Bhattacharya's lyrics and cinematography by Mahendra J. Shetty, are the soul of this film; the song "Zinda" is one of the most stunning sequences in cinema. Supporting roles performed by the likes of the very talented Divya Dutta and Vikrant Massey add to the

Era appropriate costumes, styles, and makeup for the cast add to the sheer beauty that is Looter. Looter, though claimed to be one of the best films of 2013, failed at the box office. This is not a surprising fact. In an industry where *masala* movies - basically mindless

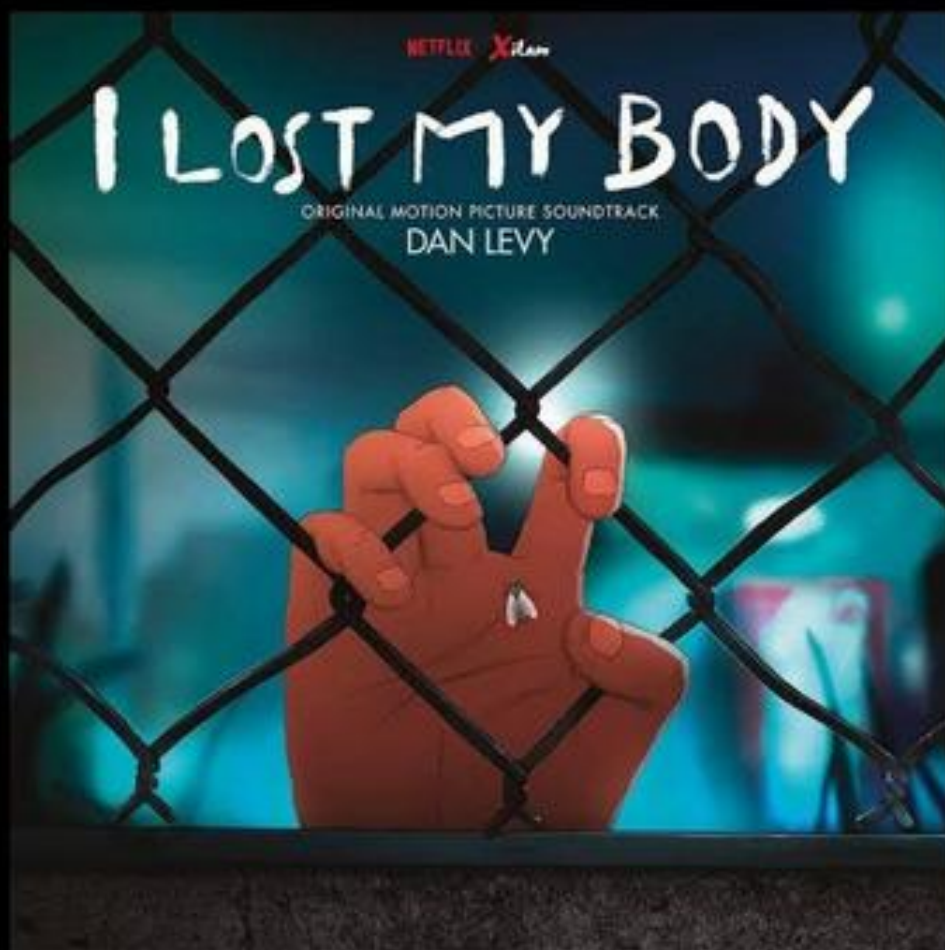


mediocrities focusing on the hero saving the damsel in distress- are mass produced expeditiously, and where flashy item numbers and dancers are the norm, subtle cinematic gems such as Lootera get lost in the herd. This movie takes its time: it makes the audience appreciate things they usually might miss in the hubbub of their lives like the leaves rustling through the wind, and the pristine beauty of an unbounded grove, things that most of today's generation does not have the time for. This is a crowd that has a proclivity for masala films, and anything apart from that seems as mundane as dullsville. It is a vicious cycle that Bollywood has found itself in—wherein the production of simple masala movies has led to the audience watching and thus appreciating only these. As a result of which only this is what is demanded after a

while, and hence produced by profit seeking movie makers. This cycle has detrimental effects on the quality of cinema made which has been getting lower with each passing year, so much so that it is now up to story writers and directors such as Vikramaditya Motwane and for actors to take up these roles like Ranveer Singh and Sonakshi Sinha did for this film even after many had rejected the role, in the foreseeable knowledge that the movie won't be as profitable. Only then can the Indian audience savour the cinematic art and we can uphold the varied flavour palate and standards of Bollywood. Lootera is like a French film, without the extra drama and action that foregrounds the philosophical and sensorial meaning. Rewards come to those who wait. This has never been truer than with a movie like Lootera. It takes its time,

it takes the viewer through the beauty of India in the 1950's at its own unhurried pace. It is not composed of a ground-breaking, or a completely innovative thought --- in some senses, it is familiar. The story, while interesting, is not exactly new and it can be easily anticipated what would happen next. However, the movie comes across as a breath of fresh air and it leaves the viewer feeling a sort of bittersweet satisfaction in the end.

This movie is not for everyone. It will not appeal to those who like to keep moving in their lives, rushing about from here to there. But if for once, you do choose to take a minute to sit down, take a breath, and look around, you might find that Lootera has a lot to offer and that there is so much more to it than what meets the eye.



I Lost My Body by Swagata Das



Can a cut-off hand see or hear? Can it feel? Is a hand a part of the body, an extension of the body or the body itself? Does it feel attached to the human body like the human is attached to it?

"... must be peaceful being cut off from the world... Nothing to see, nothing to hear."

Jérémy Clapin's directorial debut, *I Lost My Body* (*J'ai perdu mon corps*), a French animated drama fantasy film, follows two parallel storylines:

one of Naoufel, a young Parisian man in trying to overcome the abyss his destiny keeps throwing him into, and the other of Naoufel's severed hand as it tries to reunite with its body. Clapin's adaptation of

Guillaume Laurant's novel *Happy Hand* makes you empathize with a severed hand; you feel nervous and anxious when it is in the possibility of danger, and you are

rooting for it to reunite with its body. Running for just 81 minutes, the storyline jumps back and forth in terms of chronology, indicated by the shift in the cinematography from colour to black-and-white to colour again. Dan Levy's beautiful and melancholic score adds a sad yet enchanting effect to the film.

*Naoufel: How do you catch a fly
Father: You aim off the side.
Naoufel: That's dumb.*

The film opens with the distinct sound of a fly buzzing, a motif recurring throughout the film.

Naoufel, a young Frenchman, lying on the floor with his severed hand next to him. The scene then cuts to the hand in a dissection lab, from where it escapes on its journey to rejoin its body. The fly represents Naoufel's destiny, which he keeps trying to catch, but never seems

to be able to hold on to. The theme of fate and destiny is intricately woven throughout the film.

Naoufel: Do you believe in destiny? I'm serious.

Gabrielle: As if everything was pre-written and we were on a path.

Naoufel: Yes.

Gabrielle: And we couldn't change anything?

Naoufel: We think we can, but it's an illusion.

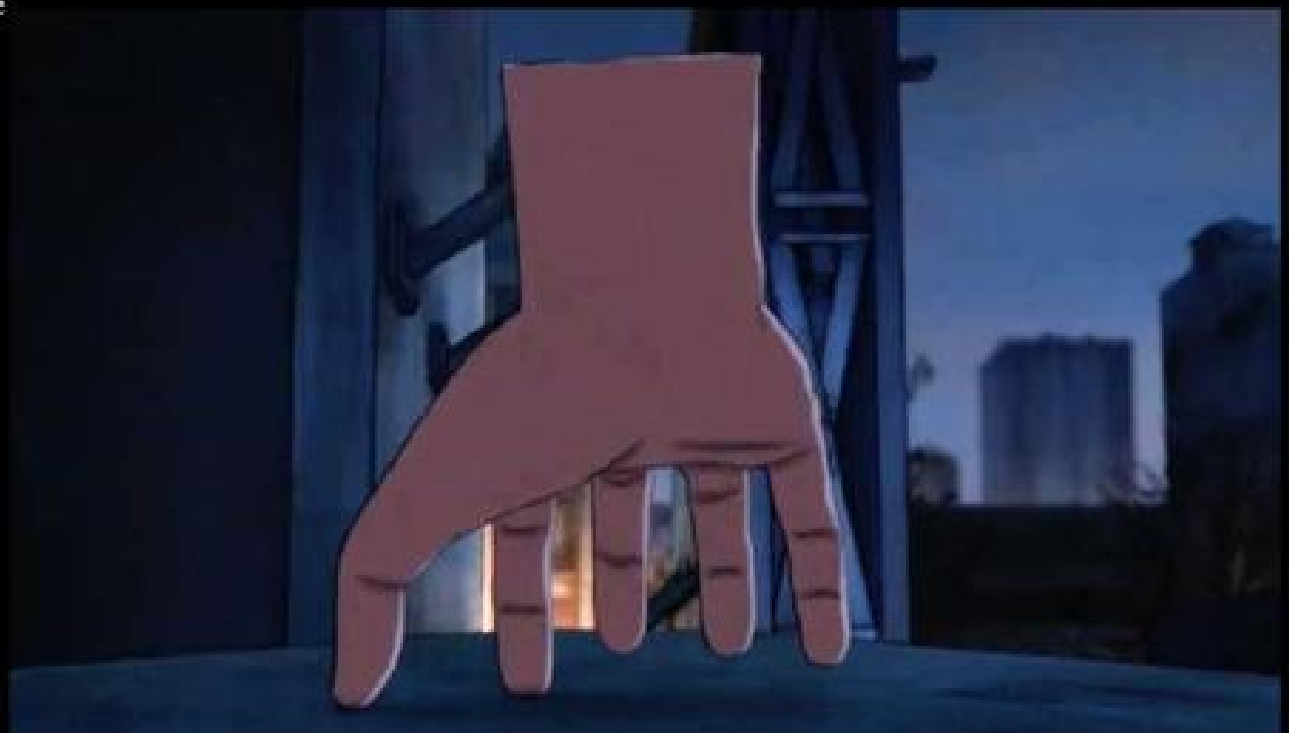
In a flashback, we are told that Naoufel wanted to be an astronaut and a pianist, and wanted to perform concerts with his mother, who was a cellist. But an accident leaves him an orphan, and he is left on his own, at the mercy of his fate. Working as a pizza delivery boy, trying to make his ends meet, he meets (or rather hears) Gabrielle, and resolves to get to know her, which takes him to a wood workshop where he becomes an apprentice. It is here, at the workshop, the day after a disappointing and frustrating night, his hand gets cut off by a sawing machine, while trying to catch a fly. Trying to get a hold of his destiny. Along with the fly, the astronaut is another recurring symbol in the film - representing his unfulfilled destiny. His dream of becoming an astronaut is over when his parents die. In a scene towards the end of the film, the disembodied hand wandering through the streets of Paris, in search of its body "sees" the

astronaut standing over a billboard - Naoufel's unfulfilled destiny and his reality face each other here. Naoufel believes that we can't change our destiny, that this very belief is an illusion. Perhaps, in this scene his hand laments the "illusion" of the astronaut.

In the final scene, as the hand finally rejoins its body, it strives to reattach itself to Naoufel, but fails. The hand's destiny has been altered, just like Naoufel's. One of them is without a body, the other without a hand. Both have to readjust their lives, both have to change their destinies. Naoufel finally realises, as he takes a leap of faith and jumps from the roof of his building to the crane, that we may not be able to control our destinies to the fullest, yet we can change it by doing things that make us feel alive.

And what does the hand feel now that it realises it cannot go back to being a part of Naoufel's body? Does it really feel, see or hear? Does it feel alive knowing that it has possibilities? Perhaps, it too will find its destiny.

I Lost My Body premiered at the International Critics' Week section at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival, where it won the Nespresso Grand Prize, becoming the first animated film to do so in the section's history. The film was also nominated for Best Animated Feature Film at the 92nd Academy Awards. It can be streamed on Netflix.



ARTicles

IF YOU REPEAT A
LIE OFTEN ENOUGH,
IT BECOMES TRUTH



POLITICS





Children/Parent

by Muntaha Bhat

“Baccha, it is not right to go there.” “Don’t allow anyone to touch you unnecessarily. They might not have right intentions.” “Come now, clean your hands before eating something.” “All day you roam and play on streets with those friends of yours! What am I going to do with you?” - these were mamma and papaji’s words as they chided me. Being the youngest in my house, I was the apple of everyone’s eye. They always guided me, held my hand, taught me everything and I was given the freedom that I asked for. It is like I can’t imagine my parents would need any guidance in life. I, as a ten year old, believed that my parents wouldn’t need any advice, and were the most sensible of all. As a naive child who didn’t have any

clue about the world, I never thought that I would have to teach them anything. I look back to those times and smile. Yes, I have grown up a lot but I still do not think about my parents in the same manner. All of us siblings do love them and care for them, but as we grew up we learned a lot. We learned that our parents are not perfect just because they know ‘things’, our parents make mistakes that need to be corrected and reprimanded, and that our parents, at the end of the day, are human too. Life has taught me that you need to be open-minded to learn new things, to gain knowledge and to teach people. Now I find myself telling my parents not to use money

unwisely, solving their family problems and answering all their questions related to technology. It is no longer the same: it is no longer the scene of me understanding new things with wide innocent eyes, asking childish questions out of nowhere and using my privilege in futility. Since March 2020, our lives have turned topsy-turvy. We no longer have the same ‘normal’ that we used to cherish. Many things have changed, such as that I do go to college but ‘online classes at home’ is now my only source of education, my siblings are not running late for work with a toast in their mouth but rather they are working in a secluded room confined to their laptops and my parents are the most affected as they both run businesses,





so the pandemic is indeed affecting them economically. Covid-19 is very personal. It has displaced all of our lives and it has taught us what life without the rush of everyday routine feels like. I consider this situation a boon as well as a bane. The crisis of Covid-19 has affected the economic conditions of many families, the physical condition of many patients and most of all, the mental health of each and every individual on this planet. Covid-19 has brought about the change that we all deserved yet did not want. We deserved to stay at home for all the hazards that we cause to nature and to others. It is maybe a punishment on all of us from a higher power. But I consider it an opportunity as well. Many families got to experience 'family time' with fathers who were always busy with work, movie-binging sessions with siblings instead of friends led to stronger family bonds and most astonishingly, we are all coping with it as a family.

My parents have always taught me many things but with Covid-19, I can affirm that I am the 'parent' to my mother and father. It feels like our roles have been reversed. This experience is like I am living my childhood again but this time with me as the guide. I am the one who runs after my mother with a mask instead of her running after me with a mosquito cream. I am the one asking my parents to clean their hands after coming back home instead of them reprimanding me over dirty hands from playing in the fields, and I am the one telling them news and warning them about social distancing instead of them telling me to keep my distance from strangers. Yes, Covid-19 did change all of our lives in ways we could not have predicted. In life, everything happens for a reason. Everything has a price, and everything teaches us something.

Covid-19 taught us perseverance in times of collective suffering, it helped us understand the

other side of our life at home which many of us were ignoring, and it made us realize that humans are nothing in front of God's will. Covid-19 has been an ironic opportunity for me to say "Mamma- papaji this is not right. What are you doing?" when all I ever heard was "Beta, what is this behaviour?".

TRAVEL IN THE TIMES OF COVID

- *Aishwarya Bhatia*

A young traveler had her tickets booked to visit the Louvre to boast about it to her other friends, the Eiffel Tower to see what the fuss is about, the Anne Frank House to get a smidgen of the experience she had. The desire to know what it must have been like for a little girl to be trapped in the attic of a house with the rest of her family, and have nothing to do except look outside the window and wait for all of it to be over was desperate. News flash! She now gets to have Anne Franks' experience in the most privileged way possible! The pandemic has shut the world down and has restrained all eager travellers to the confines of their homes and to the company of their families. As an exercise to lift spirits and rejuvenate others, I took it upon myself to travel every nook and cranny of my family home in Jaipur (Spoiler Alert: I found some hidden family secrets and vaults).

The three-storey building, established in 1977, located in the most average locality imaginable has little to offer when looked at from the outside. The architecture is reminiscent of the owners' desperate attempt to make it a unique building. Sadly, their ambitious endeavour ended in

the most basic looking building of all time. The entry to the house is through a huge black gate that stands strong even after 12 years of its installation. Its predecessor was fragile, half its size and was replaced because the lid covering the underground tank of the house was stolen quite easily by a passer-by, aided by the easy access it provided. The entrance gives way to a passage which leads to the staircase. It had been coloured blue by the outrageously ambitious adults who were unaware of the devious little perpetrators' plot of ruining it from the beginning. The paint



peels off the walls because yours truly scratched it off with help from her cousins as a child (yes, large chunks of paint). The ground floor houses one part of the three-part family that makes up the Bhatia family tree. The floor has three

bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen and a living room. It has experienced the greatest number of changes than any other part of the house. Different members have shifted to and from here due to all kinds of reasons, which include its tendency to be colder in the summers and warmer in the winters. It has seen all the birthday celebrations and parties thrown by reluctant parents and enjoyed only by the over-enthusiastic kids of the family. Currently, it is the center of entertainment where the family assembles for games like

charades and carom, when boredom makes them want to smash their heads into the wall.

The walls of the staircase hold the evidence of the artistic talents that the youngest of the house held as children. The graffiti has elements of mathematics, and words barely known by them are written in a penmanship that best

suits the category of abstract art. However, the real treasure of the house is found as we climb the stairs. Just before one enters the first floor, there's a set of doors that open into what you'd call a storage room. On further research, it was found that it

used to act as a bedroom to the eldest of the family back when it was nuclear-sized. The information seemed so fascinating upon its discovery that yours truly couldn't help but slither inside the tiny room which could barely accommodate two people at once.

Glossing over the multiple bruises gained from that experience, we move to the first floor of the house. Lived in by the heads and accompanied by the second part of the family, this floor holds the official meetings. A panchayat sits here every day with their evening teas and discusses politics and exchanges gossip, because why not. It consists of three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen, a living room, and a highly sought-after balcony. The recent uses include banging utensils, which improves the frequency of the sound waves which, in turn, kills the virus (as reported by the elders of the house). One of the bathrooms has a mirror that is probably older than some of the residents themselves. This also happens to be the floor yours truly resides on, without a room of her own, because who needs privacy? The living room is where all the frantic writing occurs to meet deadlines for assignments that could've been written 3 weeks ago. The living room also holds the dining table which is used to pile on heaps of clothes and books together, and is used by none at all. Moving ahead,



we find the third floor, which contains the most modern architecture and interior design that the 43-old house features. This is the floor that has been labelled "cool", since it comes furnished with the only couch that can accommodate all 12 members of the family at once! It also has a home theatre system that has been in excessive use nowadays. It attracts the younger generation the most because the third part of the family is cool and lets them do whatever they want. There's a washing station on the floor that has led to terrible accidents, one of which resulted in a smashed elbow which the lady of the floor wears as a permanent accessory to her person. The last and final part of the house is the terrace. The exceptionally terrifying and dangerous stairs that lead to it are unexplainable by yours truly because of the countless number of times she has fallen down those death stairs. The

trauma has rendered her incapable of explaining the structure, so let us promptly move on. The terrace is where the magic happens. The location of the house is such that one can see the sunset from one end of the terrace and see the sun rise from among the hills of the Aravalli range of Rajasthan from the other. The beauty of the clear sky is enjoyed best by laying on the spare mattresses kept in a bunker on the terrace. Stars have never been more beautiful to look at.

The privilege of having a roof over our heads in these testing times should be acknowledged with gratitude. Let's quit complaining about our cancelled plans and find ways to appreciate the space we live in. So, to all those disappointed travellers, you can still satisfy the wanderlust. Change your perspectives and explore your own houses!

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Rape Culture in India and the Role of Cultural Dynamics

By Muntaha Bhatt

"Rape is the only crime in which the victim becomes the accused."

-Freda Adler

Ensnared in the selfhood of every Indian woman is the normalisation of experiencing the male gaze that encounters us in many sundry streets. The 'rape culture' surreptitiously becomes the crowning glory of the diadem of culture that India is, as we see an unhindered drilling of the dichotomy of the male-female sexuality upon the masses and its unabashed encouragement amongst men. India has seen an unforgivable rise in rape cases in the year 2019, which warrants reflection upon the crime rate and its causal factors. The difficulty of bringing rapists to justice in India further sheds light upon the why and how of rape culture's rise in India.

Etymologically, 'rape' originates from the Latin word 'Rapere' which means to seize or abduct (in relation to an object). Hence, the very use of word 'rape' ushers objectification as it rests on an etymological history pertaining to objects. According to the official data pertaining to India, published by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), there were 4,15,786 cases of rape reported between 2001 and 2017.

The data inadvertently records the debasement of women's security in India. To be held in charge for the antagonism towards women is social conditioning. The root of this horrific situation thus lies in the cultural dynamics that are prevalent in the Indian society. A woman as an individual is generally not seen as 'human', but rather as an object by Indian men. And this distinction permeates every caste, gender, creed, class etc. Penultimately, it is the breeding of Indian men that leads them to this viewpoint. Women are seen as 'castrated' figures whose yonic self stands in not for itself but for the absence of the phallus. A woman is not a distinct person according to most men, and that is one of the biggest reasons for the growing rape culture in India.

The very presence of a woman has more to do with 'visual attraction' for Indian men to be entertained than with her own self. As Laura Mulvey states,

"Women then stand

in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning." Thus, a woman herself becomes the representative of her 'sexuality', which is interpreted in a peculiar way by men. This interpellation of meaning to a woman's sexuality is closely related to the irremissible rise of rapes in India. The web woven around little girls within the brackets of patriarchy, is the clear-cut adult presence in both genders growing up simultaneously.

In 2017, there has been a record increase of 103% in rapes in India. It is very clear that the 'drilling through culture' leads to this rapidly rising rape culture. Indian traditions such as wedding night rituals, kanyadaan in marriages, etc. mark the normalised presence of the debasing culture in Indian societal dynamics.

The mise-en-scene of Indian cinema itself is guilty of formulating visual pleasure through a 'woman's body, the focus of the camera presents the underlying ideology of objectifying women, on larger than life theater screens and billboards and in everyone's homes.

When the greater sphere presents such closed door narratives, we as individuals must reflect on the effect it has over not just the rural uneducated masses, but also on the uninformed and voluntarily ignorant laity.

It is imperative that the youth - both women and men - reflect upon the conventions of ancient traditions and debase these unnecessary cultures, which in parts form the 'rape culture'.

A woman is not anyone's property, she is a woman, a mother, a daughter and a wife. She is herself not for any man to devour her.

That's her power.

She is a woman.

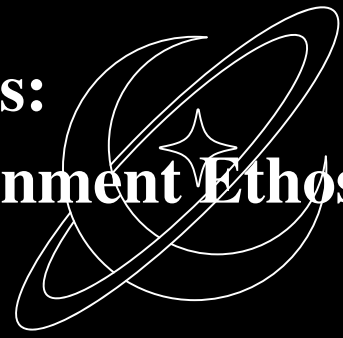
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ACADEMIC WRITINGS

Gulliver's Travels: A Dissection of the Enlightenment Ethos

by Lakshi Phogat



In a compendium of satire, sarcasm and irony, i.e. the third volume of Gulliver's Travels - hailed by Harold Bloom as "properly Swiftian"(1) - is delivered Johnathan Swift's critique of the palimpsestic development of the new science of the enlightenment era, in the form of a satire aptly and ceremoniously dressed as travel literature. In this volume, Swift - while traversing regions like Laputa, the "parody of a Platonic academy"(2), a literal academy resembling the practical impotence harboured by the royal society, Glubbudrib and Luggnagg - efficaciously interacts with the twin concerns that traversed the conceptual vista of early 18th century, symbolised in the division of the axis of knowledge along two points, namely those of temporality (knowledge from antiquity and nascent conceptions of science) and type (natural scientific philosophy and moral humanistic philosophy). In a classic play of Swiftian satire, the acolytes and propagators of the Enlightenment are allegorised in alien lands and through foreign figures in order to deliver a cutting critique of certain enlightenment views and values, in a primarily neoclassical and Augustan frame of mind harboured by Johnathan Swift.

The zeitgeist of the age Swift was writing in, namely the age of reason, was an ardent believer in fiction of 'modern cumulative progress' which was underscored by technological and ideological feats in the evolution of modern sciences. As J.A. Cuddon puts it, the period was characterised by "a profound faith in the powers of human reason, devotion, to clarity of thought, to harmony, proportion and balance."(3). The 'self' of modern science was ironically being created from a distancing of the 'other', which was represented by the knowledge passed on from antiquity, while the former came to be represented through emerging scientific revolutions of thought, and by the likes of Isaac Newton etc. the latter was seen to be housed in the field of humanities.

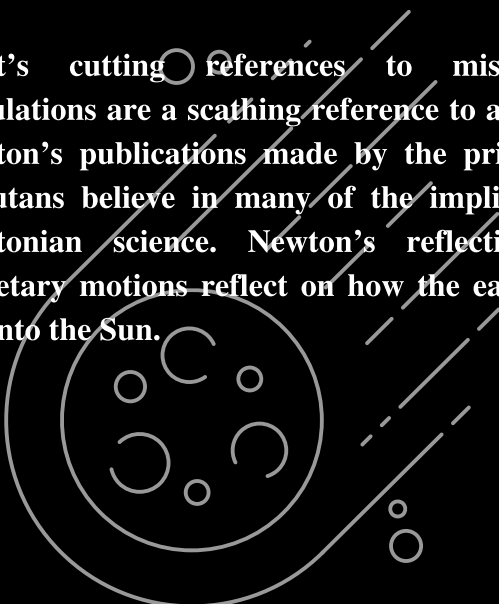
Many monomaniacal criticisms that singularly see Gulliver's Travels as a conservative anti-scientific clarion call, labelling, Swift 'the enemy of science' elide over the fact that for people like Swift, Samuel Johnson, Alexander Pope and many others, the word 'science' is not used in its modern connotations but refers to an all encompassing term for knowledge in general. For Swift, science only refers to all that one can be absolutely certain about, anything that does not resemble this certainly to the tee, falls into the chasm of 'the arts of prudence'. Hence by Swiftian understanding, the behaviour exhibited by the projectors of the Academy at Lagado - emblematic of London's own Royal Society - merely uses the instrument of the sciences i.e. logical demonstrations but does not resemble the certainty of the 'scientific', and the import is that these scientists, who are in reality, artists that belong in the realm of the 'arts of prudence', lose their veracity by aspiring to anything more than probability and by not using traditional authority and experience to supplant logical proof. Thus, by using scientific methods of demonstration, the projectors try to pass opinions for scientific facts and in reality are merely imitating the true scientists and the true science. (4) Their work product is not applicable and the conjectural remains of their views and speculations are but opinions. As Douglas Lane Patey suggests, Swift's understanding of the behavioural conduct that should be appointed by these 'scientists' or natural philosophy emerges from the fact that he believed that the opinions of the projectors and their real life counterparts 'could' not be factually verified due to the the limitedness of human capacity. The scientists' adoption of scientific methods of demonstration is merely an aesthetic call and a facade hiding the reality of opinions that are being projected as facts.

The flying island of Laputa (its very name may highlight a prostitution of views, values and actions), is very much a glorified bourgeois public space, and was most probably inspired by the great interest shown in possibility of flying machines, and is “a kind of science fiction punishment machine, always ready to crush earthlings who might assert liberty” (5). The Laputans represent the English of the reign of George I and reflect the enthusiasm shown for scientific theorising and music and the proclivity to relating both, through specious analogies. Marjorie Nicholson points out that the Laputans are only concerned with theories, “not with the application, of both mathematics and music”(6). It is amply manifest that they stand more susceptible to harming mankind than they do to aiding it. The wish to extract sunshine from cucumbers or breed sheep without wool, along with many others seen at the Academy in Lagado like the creation of a machine to write books through random combinations of letters highlight the impracticability of these endeavours, the likes of which were also taken up in England. Through this display, Swift provides evidence regarding what happens when the ancient distinction between the sciences of demonstration and the arts of prudence is blurred. It is also here that we see Swift in a slightly feminist light, stating that women and the vulgar-basically the oppressed proletariat-are the real learned who lament being stuck on the island. (However, to see Swift entirely as a champion of feminist thought, is clearly not possible because of the myriads of other opinions he advances towards women).

Swift's cutting references to mistakes in calculations are a scathing reference to an error in Newton's publications made by the printer. The Laputans believe in many of the implications of Newtonian science. Newton's reflections over planetary motions reflect on how the earth might fall into the Sun.

The value of ‘method’ shown in the template format which was adopted by English scientists to contribute papers to the Royal Society, does not go untouched either, as Swift's usage of points and lines shows the movements of the island, marks the egregious strain of Swift's humour while also underscoring the redundancy and uselessness of the methods and actions of the Laputans. Swift's masterstroke in his call for harkening back to antiquity and humanities comes when he ventures into the realm of education. He is trying to highlight how the Enlightenment system of education based on factory line production of students murders all innovation and imagination, for the lack of which he has already heavily critiqued the Laputans. The rejection of previous authorities in the field of education in order to bring in experimental science distanced humanist philosophy of probabilism and placed scientific philosophy at the forefront. People like Thomas White had piped in immediately, stating that the antiques being replaced were more of empiricists than the moderns. The belittling of humanistic philosophy by showing it as being inferior to the modern sciences was particularly detrimental to originality, innovation, fancy and imagination. The modern method of education, symbolised in the academy, was shown to be not so new, at least in terms of results. A particularly ‘enlightening’ example, mark the irony, is the lack of concern for geometry in Laputa, which from Aristotelian times was the “paradigm of demonstrative science” (7). It is caveat to the enlightenment era English and their views, as is evidenced in the catastrophic consequences of such an omission, like the flawed architecture of Laputa and Balnibarbi. Swift has produced what Patey eloquently calls the “catalogue of the arts of prudence”, in which the Laputans and Balnibarbians fail miserably.

The third volume is also relevant in its critique of enlightenment philosophy as it juxtaposes the figures and ideals critiqued with figures like the kin of the king of Laputa and especially Munodi, who seems to be the only one with any standard of living and life whatsoever - this not only tells the reader what should not be done,



but also what should be done. His adherence to prudence and antiquity, be it in terms of the architecture of his house, his food, his farms and his excellence in conversation (as evidenced in his enquiries regarding Gulliver's Travels, which were completely ignored by the King) is delightful to the reader after witnessing the man-made apocalypse that seems to reign over Laputa.

Swift also criticises the language and philology of enlightenment heavily. The third volume of Gulliver's travels becomes exceedingly relevant in this respect in its mockery of contemporary philology. Douglas Patey eloquently highlights how the scientists of the 17th century had rejected what Hobbes called "insignificant speech" - it included scholastic terms that only gave the appearance of factual answers, being inherently tautological in nature. The modern day scientists believed in exploring the real and primary essence of things (whose unknowability had previously been highlighted by John Locke). Swift uses the assertions of the scientists themselves against them as he unequivocally suggests that with respect to their new entities and forces the modern day scientists also function primarily in a frame of speech that does little to explain. What Patey calls "instances of modern day dogmatism"(8) is Swift's point that since analogy is a cornerstone of reasoning and is limited to our own bounds of knowledge, the claim to a complete understanding of nature's laws must be untimely, underdeveloped and premature, and the explanations drawn for these are, consequently, no better than old tautological explanations. The scientists perhaps lay claim to knowledge that is yet unpossessed by them. Furthermore, the school of language gives Swift the opportunity to display humour by jibing at the notions put forth in the Royal Society by people like Comenius and John Wilkins for the creation of a universal language, one of the ideas forwarded was that the name of a thing should disclose the whole nature of the thing. Swift hyperbolically treats this issue by eliminating names altogether and using things. The third novel is replete with hilarious masterpieces of scenes that constantly critique what is happening in the enlightenment era and 17th century Europe.

All this also boils down to a critique of pride and unlimited, unbounded personal preference, coupled with a severe want of merit and certainty to substantiate the preference - this pride leading to misconceptions is exactly what causes Gulliver himself to idealise the Struldbruggs who are in reality the most pitiable creatures. The reversal of opinions regarding the Struldbruggs is a place where Gulliver carries the reader along with him to showcase how things are not what they seem. And how the 'new' (achievement of immortality) might just be the 'old' both literally and metaphorically. The use of the travelogue method itself is particularly ingenious in this context as it takes the reader 'with' the narrator to achieve 'understanding' in the Lockean sense through 'sensations' and 'reflections', making the reader a "surrogate traveler" who literally and metaphorically arrives at the desired conclusion. It also allows the reader to create distance from the depictions, and hence effectively critique their own reality.

The journey to Glubbdubdrib is perhaps one of Gulliver's most important, as this sojourn is where we see Swift's direct presence and a masterful juxtaposition of the themes of antiquity and modernism quite literally with the presence of necromancy and magical realism. Patey compulsively highlights how the spirit of Aristotle has been spared censure and abuse, and presented in a sort of reversed role, propagating probabilistic science by advocating, "proceeding upon conjecture". The Moderns claim absolute factual accuracy and ability to demonstrate through mathematical principles and projections. In their claims for certainty the moderns are put in line with the ancients who also claimed certainty, but by the benefit of hindsight, can be proved inaccurate - one such ancient i.e. Aristotle is in a completely reversed role as he proclaims all new understandings to be ephemeral and prey to newer ones that will come in the future.

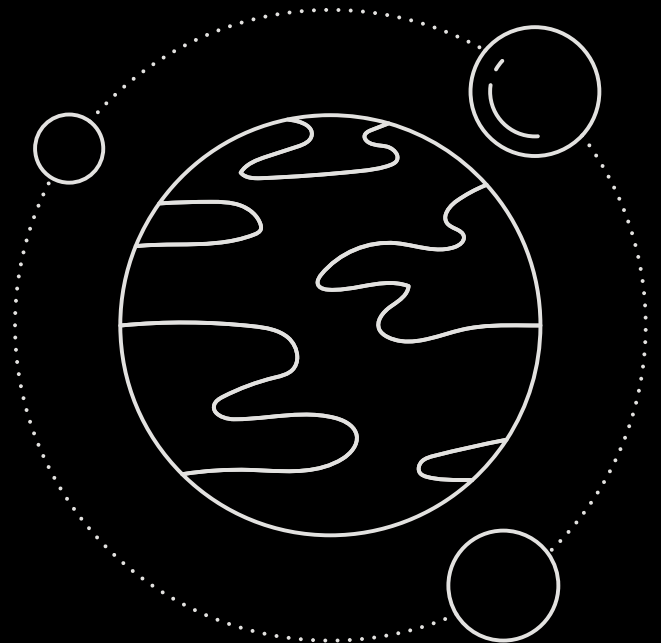


This syllogistic analogy, with remarks on Newton (by the invocation of “Philosophiae naturalist principia mathematica”), Descartes among others, is quite effective as it critiques the enlightenment proclivity of the modern scientists of claiming a factually certain status for speculative opinions. The third volume is instrumental in showing the modern scientists as “old fashioned scholastic Aristotelians”(9) and portraying the enlightenment values enshrined in them as restatements of the values of antiquity.

The Enlightenment critique culminates into a critique of the modern society of Swift’s era - this critique does not ameliorate the kingship or modern science, but highlights the corrupt reality in the enlightenment era of progress where personal interest has led to history being polluted along with lineages and kings who are so distanced from the plight of their subjects and their duties so as to not even flinch over massacring them for their vested interests. The third volume is monumental in the kind of treatment it advances towards the issues of kingly examples, modern science, desire and misconceptions. It highlights furthermore how Enlightenment methods effectively endeavoured to pollute states of mind by distancing innovation, pollute ideals, morals, and virtues. However, the volume also effectively advances the understanding that what Swift is critiquing is not science itself, but the methods used and the resultant subjugation and disregard of antiquity and humanism that they have evinced; the same is where the core of his problem with the era lay.

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The Iliad: An Epic of War and A Song of Loss

by Namira Khan

Homer's Iliad is perhaps, at this point in literary history, synonymous with the term epic poetry. The characteristics laid down for epic poetry have been largely derived from the two earliest-surviving, great Greek epics, the Iliad and the Odyssey, both of which have been traditionally attributed to the Greek bard Homer. The Iliad was passed down through spoken word over generations and penned down around the 8th century BC. The action of the epic happens on the outskirts of the city of Troy, which experienced a ten-year siege by a coalition of Hellenic states led by the Greeks. It is most certainly an epic of war – war as a means of resolving a dispute, war as a means of attaining glory, war as a source of death, suffering and loss, and war as an elicitor of every human emotion in its best and worst form.

When it comes to qualifying as an epic, The Iliad sets the standard for the definition of the word epic, which has been briefly defined by Gregory Nagy's *Heroes and the Homeric Iliad* as "an expansive poem of enormous scope, composed in an archaic and superbly elevated style of language, concerning the wondrous deeds of heroes". The Iliad is both expansive and written in an archaic, elevated style - 15, 693 lines of dactylic hexameter. An epic's central figure is generally a heroic, quasi-divine figure on whose actions depends the fate of a nation, a tribe or the human race, and the Iliad is centered on Achilles, a mighty hero and the son of goddess Thetis, whose actions to a large extent dictated the course of the war, the fate of his countrymen and the survival of the Greek people. Other characteristics usually associated with the epic - such as its exploration of serious subjects, its masculine bias, its beginning in *media res* and with an invocation, its

use of supernatural machinery, catalogues and epic similes - are all fulfilled by this text. The text covers several universal themes from war, heroism, mortality, humanity to anger. The Iliad's masculine bias is present in almost every nook of the story - female characters are sidelined for the most part, heroism and male ego is highlighted, and even among gods the male gods occupy a dominant position and the female gods' efforts are frequently thwarted by the all-powerful Zeus. A lengthy, detailed catalogue of Greek and Trojan ships is present in the second book itself, and smattered throughout the narrative are epic similes so masterfully crafted that they have been dubbed Homeric similes. The epic begins in the tenth year of the Trojan War, with an invocation to the Muses and supernatural machinery is heavily employed throughout - the gods all have their own biases, constantly meddle in the lives of heroes on the battlefield, and even fight alongside them at times.

The Iliad also qualifies as an epic of war in every aspect of it. The glory and heroism associated with war, especially among Homer's audience, occupies sufficient time in the spotlight. A good chunk of the work is dedicated to thorough descriptions of the clashes between the two armies, and all the warriors are not just nameless, faceless entities mindlessly engaged in battle – the greatest of the lot have had their heroic deeds underscored by the poet. Book 8 displays the Trojan hero

Hector's martial prowess, a man who knows 'all the steps to the War-god's deadly dance'. Book 11 is Agaememnon's aristeia, he springs 'like a lion' at the Trojan ranks and an almost joyful description of slaughter follows. But all these brave men, despite all their mighty deeds, are afflicted with mortality. The scene of Ares going through the motions of death in Book 5 has a humorous touch because this is only a 'mock' death. The gods' immortality is the one true marker of difference between them and the humans, and death is the prerogative of men only. Thus, the only rationale for the warriors' willing, onward surge towards death is that heroism, valorous deeds on the battlefield or a death where a man goes down fighting are seen as the only true honor, the primary source of a hero's kleos (the glory he achieves in the field) and perhaps the only replacement humans have for immortality.

Yet this dedicated heroism is not all pervasive. Several instances in the text display the fractures in this ideology of indefatigable heroism – Diomedes is willing to switch sides and disclose strategic information in exchange for his life, Lycaon begs for his life at the foot of the man who slaughtered his countrymen, even Hector is 'deeply troubled' when the time comes to face Achilles and reflects on the various paths he can take to avoid it. The greatest warrior Achilles himself at one point chooses life over glory, when he tells the conciliatory assembly sent by the Greek camp in Book 9 that "The same death awaits the man who does much, and the man who does nothing." Even when he eventually rejoins battle, it is in pursuit of vengeance, not glory.

What perhaps largely contributes to the epic's universal appeal to this day and age is the fact that Homer frequently shifted away from the metanarrative to touch upon the subtext of emotions, familial relationships and the ravages of war on human life. The emotion that is the central subject of the epic is *menis*/fury – specifically, the wrath of the Greeks' best warrior, Achilles. This 'accursed anger' causes almost irreversible damage to the Greek army, but the heights it reaches after

the death of his beloved companion Patroclus turns into a hatred so strong that it turns Achilles into a savage animal and sets him on a killing spree grotesque even by the standards of *The Iliad*. This same anger, however, subsides and leads to Achilles conceding to give back the body of his mortal enemy back to his family for an honorable burial. "The anger is at an end", notes Nagy. "And the story can end as well." The other prominent emotion is grief, which is illustrated best in the second half of the epic. 'Achilles...fouls his handsome face...lay there fallen...tearing his hair...' when Antochilus confirms Patroclus' death at the beginning of Book 17. In Book 19 Brises' lament over Patroclus's death is taken up by the other women, 'each one recalling through Patroclus her own misfortunes'. It is grief over his son's death that makes Priam risk his life and kneel in front of the man who 'took everything' from him and request for his dead body and it is grief over their respective losses that unites Achilles and Priam in a moment of mourning and gives a rather poignant end to an epic focused on something as sardonic as war.

Parental affection permeates several key scenes – when Sarpedon is about to be killed by Patroclus in Book 16, the seemingly invincible Zeus hesitates to give life to his self-written fate; he is "in two minds" about whether he should save his son or not. In Book 22, even though Hector's death is the last nail in the coffin of the city of Troy, Priam is seen not mourning the loss of the city but lamenting the death

of his son. This parental instinct goes as far as to directly overlap with the metanarrative at one point - a horrible amount of bloodshed on the Greek side happens because Thetis, grief-stricken at her son's humiliation, acquires a promise from Zeus to turn the tide of the war against the Greeks until Achilles rejoins it.

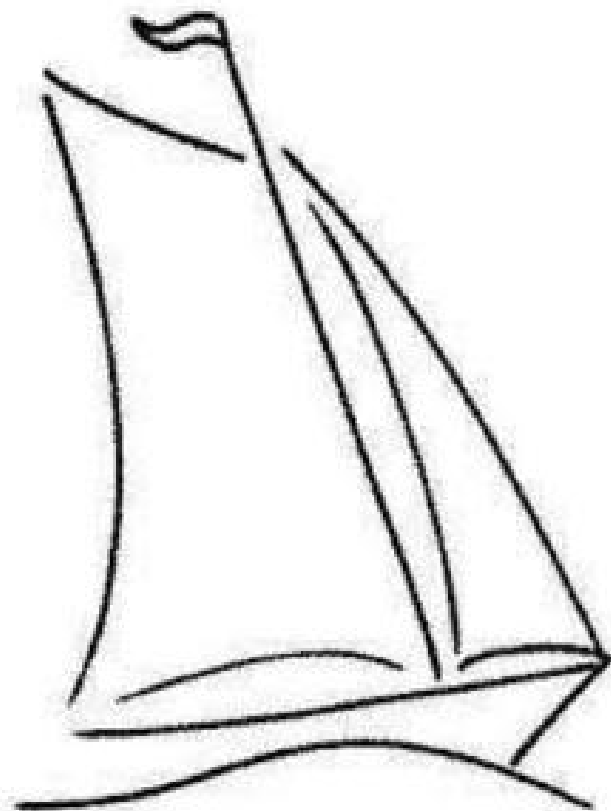
Catherine Alexander calls *The Iliad* "a mediation on the catastrophic effects of conflict". These effects include the calamitous fall-out of the war on its female victims – its 'collateral damage'. Helen is blamed and hated for being the supposed cause of the conflict, and her story in the epic

ends with her being all alone with none to 'treat (her) kindly and befriend (her)'. Singled out as one of the most touching scenes in the epic by many is the meeting and parting of Andromache and Hector in Book 6 – her belief in her and her son's fate as slaves in the event of Hector's death enunciates that war's consequences extend well beyond the battlefield.

The Iliad thus is an epic of war as well as a song of loss – loss of life on both sides, loss of freedom for the families on the losing side, and loss of humanity in some extreme moments (such as the merciless killing of Dolon by Diomedes and the murder of twelve blameless Trojan children by Achilles in the name of revenge). Homer, Rachel Bepaloff notes in *On The Iliad*, had "a virile love of war and a virile horror of it". In episode after episode, he sings of mortals, in a state of utter vulnerability to the arbitrary whims of ruthless gods, snuffing out the flames of their own existence in pursuit of a rich legacy. He accords proper honor to the courageous heroes, and yet the horrifying deaths and the unfair fates of innocents illustrate the pointlessness of war. The bard emphasizes that in the course of war glory can be attained, but war itself has no glory.

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Kamala Das "An Introduction"

By Aamna Siddiqui

About the poet

Kamala Surayya (born Kamala; 31 March 1934 – 31 May 2009), also known by her pen names Madhavikutty and Kamala Das, was an Indian poet and author. She wrote in Malayalam and English. Her writing style is seen as confessional and semi-autobiographical. Her father was an editor and her mother a poet. Her literary contributions are postcolonial writings. She was married to Madhav Das for 43 years. She was awarded with the Poetry Award for the Asian PEN Anthology in 1964, the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award for the best collection of short stories in Malayalam, and the Chaman Lal Award for fearless journalism. She was also shortlisted for the Nobel prize in 1984. She converted to Islam when she was 65 and died at the age of 75. Kamala's writing adopts a direct approach towards writing. She was criticized by her

family and the people around her for her straightforward treatment of female sexuality and her openness to convey the desires and truths of her sexuality in her bold writing. She is seen as an iconoclast of her generation. She once said that "like many women writers of my class, I'm expected to tame my talent to suit the comfort of my family". She wrote candidly about the relationship between a man and a woman and her probity is what made her an outcast. Her writings are seen as feminist literary work. She believed in the 'Personal is Political' motto of the second wave of feminism. "A characteristic of postcolonial approach is that there is an emphasis on identity as doubled, or hybrid, or unstable and the language which is being used leads to linguistic differences and a sense that the furniture of the language belongs to

someone else" - this is how Peter Barry in his book *Beginning Theory* explains postcolonial texts and their writers. Das was also a spectator to India's partition and the effect it had on people's dynamics, language and minds. It resulted in the split of attention paid to Hindi and Urdu as English paved its way onto people's tongues.

About the collage artwork

In Kamala Das's poem 'An Introduction', there's an encounter with the conflict of her selves: the ones she perceives herself to be and the identities that are being forced onto her. There is a counter identity



formation which is a result of the expectations people have from her as a woman. The artwork is so structured that we can see how there is multiplicity of selves in an individual or a poem. The identities overlap and are sometimes more dominant than others. The ones in the black and white print show that identity can be binary to the eye of the beholder. For instance, the conversion of Kamala's religion must've been seen as right or wrong by people in society. Similarly her readers might see her writing as right or wrong. This is to portray that finding middle ground for an identity might sometimes be difficult. This artwork as well as the poem accompanying it conveys how people identify labels before personalities and link chunks of information to each name. They want to make being a product of certain known things and not the hundred more things the beholder is unaware of. It's about how people see other people. L

labels which are like the opaque curtain through which people see us. Just like every person refers to himself/herself as 'I', Das explains that she too is similar to most people as she sees herself as 'I' and that she is no different from them. People have this habit of degrading the faults of the person standing in front of them but not their own self. We can see in two of the pictures that there's a placard reflecting the word 'I' in the mirror, but to the person who looks straight at the person there will be a question mark. That shows how people perceive, and had they perceived the personality of the other person they would've realised that they too are 'I' like them. In a traditional, conservative Indian society women are expected to be only of one kind. They are expected to wear sarees and hide their sexuality as if it is Pandora's box and if someone peeks into it the entire humankind will perish. Kamala Das's writing is unapologetic and bold - she doesn't care what people think when they read what she writes. She honestly refuses

the framework of how an Indian woman should act and rebels. The collage form was chosen because an individual has multiple selves hidden in their own self and most identities have a name. For instance, the self that a child dons when being called by a nickname by someone close to them is different from other selves. All of this can coexist inside people's minds and that is very interesting.

About the poem

The poem is drawn from Das's 'An Introduction'. It begins with the descriptions of multiple women and ends with the identity still being unknown. It has a reference from the second wave of feminism - 'Personal is Political' - because she believed in this statement and how the lives of common people (mostly women) had been politicized by power structures.

Another reference - 'tinkling on the insides of a bell jar' - is from Sylvia Plath's 'Bell Jar', because Das has been compared to her because of her bold and confessional writing style. The poem goes

through the same road that is followed by 'An Introduction'. It talks of women and how they feel in an Indian setting and people in general who are confused about themselves.



The Negotiation of Spaces in the Construct of Family in *The Glass Menagerie*

Sakhi Thirani

The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams, published in 1945, contains the exploration of delicately intricate relationships in a confining setting, one which is sparked by the peculiarities of memory, making the quest for reality seem in itself illusive.

The portrait of the father as introduced by the narrator, Tom, as 'ineluctably smiling,' (Williams 10) epitomises the trope of the absurd in the apartment, making it a microcosmic representation of the burden of the 'normative', deriving juxtaposing responses within the four walls of the Wingfield apartment, and fostering the social presence of a palimpsestic America, loaded with layers of economic and political turmoil. The construct of the family in the Wingfield apartment is thus governed by the constant negotiation of spaces, the indoctrination of institutional ideals along with the encroachment of personal spheres consistently, leading to the unavoidable shattering of the binary of the inside from the outside, highlighting the permeability of the construct of the socioeconomic worldview that founds the apartment, one which Tom can never truly escape.

The Glass Menagerie begins in an apartment, as dull and as tamed as the others in the vicinity: Tom describes the setting as 'one of those vast hive-like conglomerations.' (Williams 9). The social construction of its emblematic structure in the unstable political and economic foundation of the 1930s, and being situated in the interwar period with the Great Depression evokes a keen sense of distaste, foregrounding the smothering air of a harsh reality seeping in through Tom's memories and furthering the apartment as one is thrown abrasively into it with the dinner table conversation about mastication. Further, this initial description of the very functioning of the apartment evokes the continual trope of the idea of confinement in the play. The 'drop-leaf table', (Williams 11) as well as the living room - which transforms from Laura's personal space to a space that accommodates outsiders such as Jim - can be seen as metaphorizing the presence of 'the other' in the very core of Laura, the impact of which prevails in the burden of her brace, which while physically supporting her, confines her as being disruptive

mentally. This, along with instances such as Tom's struggle with the overcoat - an object present both in the inside as well as outside space - can be inferred as foreshadowing his eventual attempt to trespass the boundary that he feels constricts his idea of the 'man'. The consistent breaking of glass throughout the play along with the very movement of the characters on the stage brings forth the language of the theatre, highlighting the socio-political presence of space in drama. Williams' usage of the plastic theatre then, as Tom Scanlan mentions, contains the paradox of creating intensity as well as relieving the intensity of the family struggles (86).

Amanda's idea of ideal social functioning predominantly can be subsumed in her consistent distillation of the human from the animalistic behaviour of her children in her role as a mother, as mentioned by Kenneth Krauss (17), resonating with the very title of the play - what isn't socially ideal for her is, in essence, animalistic and hence, not "normal". (Williams 55) Amanda's character description outrightly presents the idea of the paranoiac surrounding her life. Her character can be seen as intricately woven by the playwright, right from the onset of the play, being presented as a devout christian with an instantaneous shift to a nagging mother, while simultaneously imposing the institutionalised norms of her glamorous past on her children. The aetiology behind the transformation of the D.A.R to *The Homemaker's Companion* aptly comprises the world-view that contains Amanda, and the insanity she associates with D. H. Lawrence as opposed to a solace she finds in the heterosexual romance of *Gone with the Wind* furthers her presence as inculcating the system as a means to locate oneself in the societal world, trespassing the economic baggage with the catalogue of the ideal woman. Being the precise mechanical production of a social as well as economic conditioning, despising the lack of a 'masculinity' she desired off of her husband, Amanda's sudden outbursts of the glorious realm of the past can be seen precariously taking a hold onto her, and in doing so, she can be seen resonating with Tom who is, like her, governed by his memories.

Trapped in the mirror of social judgement held up by Amanda, Laura's overwhelming nature can be seen as containing a casualty based off of presuppositions of expectancy and her 'performative' nature which consists of her 'deception' (Williams 16) of not going to business school. Instances in the play, such as that of Laura staring at her reflection after being told that this is the prettiest she'll ever be, suggest the indoctrination of a dogma through repetition that causes her physical collapse in the world outside. Laura's 'deception' towards Amanda then leads towards the purging of a side to herself that contains her desire towards a mobility: knowing entrapment with a brace literally, Laura's inconsistency furthers through her 'walking' and going 'inside places to get warmed up,' (Williams 19), and the enthusiasm that arises with the mention of penguins contrasts the known image of her as the homely girl she is tagged as, bringing to surface her 'performative' nature, resonating with the notion of "performativity" as stated by Judith Butler. This notion fits not only Amanda as the girl with the jonquils or the "injured mother," but Laura as well, as one who is tutored into becoming a "woman" but simultaneously develops the capacity to pretend with her lie about the business school. As Kenneth Krauss mentions, "In the medium of theatre, which relies on actors performing roles, Williams offers the audience actors playing characters who seem to be performing their lives." (18)

The absurdity associated with the absentee father - with his love of long distances, his everlasting smile and "Hello — Goodbye!" and no address,' (Williams 11) - transform the socially constructed notion of 'masculinity' associated with gentlemen collars that Amanda brands along with an economic burden, as well as a consistent encroachment in his space, into an idea of travel for Tom. Tom's experience of his workplace as being the 'oddly fashioned dog' (Williams 49-50) marks him apart from the ideal Amanda desires, which is reverberated through the character of Jim. Tom's desire to acquire the skills to "perform" the most 'wonderfullest trick' (Williams 30) Malvolio the Magician presents - to get out of the coffin of confinement into the realm of his private space, but without removing a single nail, without causing a scar of destruction - is one which is never really disclosed outrightly by him despite Amanda's continual inquisitive nature about what are the spaces Tom indulges in, and in his illusory intoxicated state resonates to the very opening of the play where he differentiates himself from a stage magician dressed as a merchant sailor. As stated in the promptbook and the original production of the play, where Eddie Dowling plays the role of Tom, the image of the father is a photograph of the very actor who plays Tom and

thus, as Kenneth Krauss mentions, "Tom is twice present on stage and eventually, twice absent", (16) painting the intrinsic connection Tom finds within his father's absent photograph, constructing along with the merchant uniform, a convenient identity for himself "instituted through a stylised repetition of acts," as Butler states. (519)

The stage directions in Scene 3 emphasises 'a clear pool of light' (Williams 24) on Laura's figure throughout the scene and through it, epitomise the claustrophobia in the family of the socially constructed arrangement that subsumes the trope of 'masculinity' in the play. The almost violent struggle of negotiation of the idea of the selfish between two opposing masculinities in the play - one through Tom and the other one through Amanda who is disguised as the 'relic of the faithless Mr. Wingfield', (Williams 25) - each conceived out of a convenience, highlight the inescapability of constructs as well as its disguised embeddedness, contained in the shallow yet ghostly, unrefined 'gesticulating shadows.' (Williams 25) Williams, therefore, presents his characters with such an intricately complex experience of space that each of them can be seen as measured artefacts of the very production of that space. Tom's attempted escape from the smothering walls of the inside space thus renders futile, as Butler mentions, the idea that the "self is not only irretrievably 'outside,' constituted in social discourse, but that the ascription of interiority is itself a publicly regulated and sanctioned form of essence fabrication." (528)

With the precision in its craftedness, Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* can be seen constituting the claustrophobia of convenience habituated in the arrangements and negotiations of space which can be seen epitomised in the very construction and locale of the apartment. The impact of the smothering grin of the absentee father through Williams' inculcation of the conventions of the 'plastic theatre' (Williams 4) magnificently emphasises the complications in the intricately complex web of relationships in the Wingfield family. Amanda's desire for normalcy, juxtaposing with Tom's desperate need 'to move', can be both inferred as socially founded constructs highlighted through the awkward anxiety of an almost rendered immobile Laura. As Kenneth Krauss mentions, this can be inferred as "William's way of questioning the nature of coherence in any construct", (36) through a Tom that spends his functional present ventriloquised by his literal past and by the impinging illusively of his memories. It is this construct of his notion of family that trespasses each and every wall, even that of his memories.

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THE ODYSSEY

of The Literary Society

Comic Workshop

by Lakshi Phogat and Prabhdeep Kaur

'Comic-al Jargon', exuberant pieces of work, and a new experience were some of the byproducts of the 'Comics Workshop' organized on the 7th August '19.

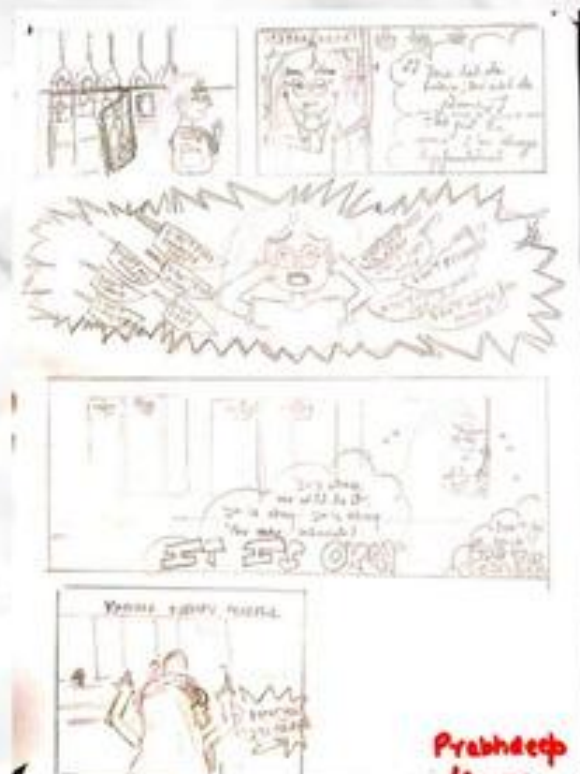
Organised by the Literary Society of Kamala Nehru College for Women for its Second Year students pursuing English Literature, to illuminate the genre of graphic narratorial art in the landscape of literary works, the workshop was conducted under the aegis and guidance of Ms. Payal AP, who works as an Independent Comic artist and has joined our department as a teacher this semester.

The workshop commenced with Ms. Payal delineating the conventions of comics as visual sequential accounts in conjunction with textual narratives that are portrayed by the utilization of one's boundless artistic abilities in a space encompassed with panels and speech bubbles separated by a gutter space.



"It was like we moved on to exploring another great thing that we could successfully fail at – making our own comic strips on our morning commute from home to college – which in terms of punctuality is about as successful an endeavour as perhaps our semester exams are."

–Arushi (Second-year student)



The Second Year students of English Literature, currently studying the hybrid graphic textual-biographical art, Bhimayana, which tells the life story of Bhim Rao Ambedkar, as part of their course could discern as to why the text is considered to be a pioneer in graphic art around the world, and how it dismantled artistic and political bridges. It uses the concept of a comic in conjunction with Pardhan Gond art to shed light on the discourse of caste discrimination in India and finds a rendezvous between Tribal Folk Art and Urban Popular Culture.

The workshop markedly facilitated the transition from looking at comics as just accessories to mainstream art and literature to the admiration of the art and handwork poured into the boxed pieces of visual narratives.

In the first activity conducted, the students were required to convey a standard set of emotions on a piece of paper by charting lines of different colours and designs. Subsequently, they designed their own comic strips with Ms. Payal helping them wherever they were stuck.

One of the students portrayed the psychological battle between them and their depression nailing them to the bed, while others drew their bus ride to the college or the journey through the metro whilst protecting themselves from being groped. From being transported to a musical realm by putting on their headphones to being kidnapped on the way, all tales were covered and, fact and fiction existed in perfect synchrony.



They fashioned their own characters from scratch into caricatures and created their life stories. The act of putting those symbolic personas into a comic made them reflect on the choices they made in portraying the same, furthermore facilitating introspection and allowing them to understand themselves better.

Consequently, the students could imagine themselves as comic artists wherein the unceasing horizon lay in front of them like a canvas, only as distant as the pencil laid to their hands and as far as their emotions and imagination rested in their hearts. They went home with the contentment of having produced and created a piece of art to call their own, relishing in artistic fulfillment and inspiration.



W E L C O M E

*The English Library
Society of*
KAMALA NEHRU
COLLEGE
Presents
COLLECTIVE
Rubbish
Best from Waste (and)

A REPORT ON COLLECTIVE RUBBISH

Collective Rubbish: A Glance into Modernist Thought

by Manaam and Jaishree Malik

On the morning of 15th October, 2019 students of the English department came together to put up their art exhibits for the 5th edition of Collective Rubbish, a conceptual art exhibition organized by the English Department of Kamala Nehru College. This year's theme was modernism, a late 19-20th century movement that redefined traditional schools of thought and led to many cultural trends and changes, such as the emphasis on self-consciousness and irony.

The first exhibit was a beautiful portrayal of modernism by the third-year students, who had incorporated a unique theme of 'Making It Different Over New!'

It was a painting made by one of the participants with a girl in the middle that depicted how colours could be used to remake old things. For instance, painting a bulb, focusing on the theme of subjectivity present in the modernistic thought. There were pictures around the painting that were quite remarkable, like a bowl of the universe coming out from a cereal box, titled Milky Way.



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of getting up and picking the daisies, when suddenly
White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her.
There was nothing so very remarkable in that;
nor did Alice think it so very much out of the way
to hear the Rabbit say to itself, 'Oh, dear! Oh, dear!
I wonder what will happen next.'

One of the exhibits by the first-year students employed the use of a painting made by one of their participants to depict their view of modernism through the use of various colours which added layers of meaning to the art. It was inspired by T.S. Eliot's 'The Wasteland'. The woman in the picture held an imaginary baby in her arms, wearing a pair of digital glasses. Their vision was to show how the digital world could enable a woman who could not conceive a child to feel like a mother through Virtual Reality – an interestingly up and coming technologies of the 21st century.

The exhibition enthralled students and teachers from all other departments as well and was enjoyed by them as much as it was by the participants. The students had put their heart and soul into their work which was quite visible. They were delighted to witness a crowd of visitors who not only praised their exhibits but also engaged in conversations around Modernism which opened up many new avenues of interpreting it. It was a deeply admired exhibition that invoked a sense of eagerness and anticipation about the next edition already.

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The next participant had put up a few curated pictures of herself depicting revolution and reclaiming her naked body that she hates, a filthy trash-can representing the abyss, and paintings symbolizing alienation – each individually and collectively portraying aspects of herself and her understanding of the modernistic movement. An artist's note on the table explained her views on the matter, while also discussing Marxism, and the idea of the New Woman emerging during the modernist movement, along with revolution and liberation, among other things.

Yet another group of third-year students had on display a pair of headphones connected to a phone. Inspired by the acclaimed physicist Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity, these students had attempted to show how the same sound could mean and be interpreted in a different manner by different people. This particular exhibit served to conclude how singularity and individualism are some of the key pillars of the modernist movement.

Another group of students used a camera to depict their view of modernism by talking about the idea of "I", the self, and self-reflexivity in a creative way. It emphasized how different we looked in pictures as compared to a mirror. Their innovative use of the camera and the broken mirror was a distinct way of interpreting modernism.



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LIT LUMI NOUS 2020

The English Literary Society of Kamala Nehru College, University of Delhi held its annual literary festival 'Litluminous' on the 28th February 2020. Continuing its glorious tradition of thought-provoking themes such as Queer Narratives and Detection through the Ages, the theme for this year's fest was 'Satire in Literature and Cinema'.

Satire is a form of constructive social criticism which, while being humorous, intends to make the audience think after they laugh. Its main pillars are irony and sarcasm, and its other features include, the usage of burlesque, exaggeration, double entendre and parody. Satire aims to ridicule the various follies and shortcomings of the individual, and the society at large- it hopes to shame them into improvement. A modern form of satire that everyone is familiar with is stand-up comedy, which continuously takes digs at our society and culture. Some of the most widely-popular works of literary and cinematic satire include 1984 by George Orwell, Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift, Fight Club, Jojo Rabbit and Black Mirror. A variety of events were organised during this festival: such as a panel discussion, student paper presentation, meme making competition, open mic, caricature making competition, street play performance, treasure hunt, and a film screening in collaboration with Wide

Angle, the Film Society of Kamala Nehru College.

Panel Discussions are a great way to get differing perspectives on a single topic. This exposure to many viewpoints may give way to a different way to think, learn about and process the world --- often, in academia, leading to research projects and papers. They both act as tools for students to think for themselves, form their own ideas, and defend them in front of an audience.

A panel discussion on the theme of the literary fest, Satire in Literature and Cinema, was organised with esteemed panellists such as Mr. Amit Sengupta, Dr. Nirmala Samanta and Dr. Lalit Kumar. A lively session commenced, touching upon various themes like the history of the ethics around the genre, the lack of it in the sensitive contemporary times we live in and its necessity as a tool to ensure that the voice of the public can be heard by the higher authorities. A sequence from Charlie Chaplin's 1940 political satire, 'The Great Dictator' was screened to illustrate the power it holds if used effectively. The audience was left enthralled, and when the floor was opened for questions, the queries left the panellists engaged in a friendly debate to look for answers.

This event was immediately followed by the student paper presentation. Students from all across the University of Delhi were there to present their take on satire in various mediums, ranging from film analyses like Parasite to historical accounts such as satire in ancient Greece. All the students gave impeccable showings of their knowledge and research, wowing all the audience members and judges alike. Vaishnavi Chaudhary from Sri Venkateswara College was ultimately declared the winner.

SLAM POETRY

The regenerative spirit of dissent whose conscious presence could be felt lingering in syllables, the articulated and unarticulated alike, permeated the bilingual Slam Poetry competition, sponsored by 'Baatein', held on 28th February at Litluminous 2020, in the environs of Kamala Nehru College and poetic imagination alike. The event, organised by The English Literary Society of Kamala Nehru College was themed '*Verdict is Vengeance*', a call to not just veer your verbiage into verse but also an ode to a "*humble vaudevillian veteran cast vicariously as both victim and villain by the vicissitudes of fate*".

In honour of contextualisation, and to further quote *V for Vendetta*, -for can we ever have enough of this movie that, in life, leaves nothing to be desired and is complete in itself and veers most verbose- "the only verdict is vengeance, a vendetta held as a votive not in vain, for the value and veracity of such shall one day vindicate the vigilant and the virtuous."

The event witnessed, in a warmly lit seminar room replete with fairy lights and paper boats the repertoire of poetic dissent in performances of over twelve avid poets, cathartically letting out their emotions through words and expressions.

Chhaya Dabas, a TEDx speaker, a creative entrepreneur and the founder of the creative community, Baatein, judged the event along with the Creative Head of Baatein, Parnika Bhardwaj.

As God (rather predictably) succumbed to

playing spoilsport, yet again, we witnessed a microscopic delay and about 6 minutes of our lives were collectively and irretrievably lost when the event finally began at 2:36 p.m. The pieces of poetry performed, were nothing less than a mosaic of variegated voices that elicited all the awe than an audience can possibly be expected to lend. The laity that had assembled in tremendous numbers (to whomsoever it may concern : no sarcasm is intended by the writers) to partake of the poetic feast made the seminar room ring in the synchronicity of snaps, a slam tradition that marks the transition of humanity from noise pollution to mind pollution (subjective assertion). The first performer took to ridiculing the authoritative statures through the use of a famous phrase from an age-old game, 'Simon says...'. The poets brought in the current political situation in their pieces extraordinarily. For instance, a Hindi poem pertaining to the Delhi riots was a diadem of motivation and used the line: 'Dilli fir uthegi'.

The winner was Anushka Gupta from Shivaji College who performed a jaw-dropping poem, titled 'Pause and Repeat', satirically commenting on the government's apathy towards revolution and the shield of neutrality that is used by privileged citizens to distance themselves from a crisis that continues to assail many. The slogans of 'Azaadi' and the passionate female protestors were the revolution that she wanted voiced.

The second position was bagged by Manaam from Kamala Nehru College who performed a powerful piece on Islamophobia, asking for vengeance

towards authorities who attack a particular minority community. Shivani Kashyap from Bhagat Singh College stood third with her Hindi poem titled, '404 Not Found'. Shivani's piece was an audience favourite and touched a cord with many, as evidenced by the constant snapping at all the things that are absent in the locations they should be present in, like the Prime Minister in his own country.

Before the results were announced, Parnika Bhardwaj presented her poem titled, 'A Letter To Delhi' to which the audience could relate on a personal level. Her poem marked the beautiful end to a fun event that gave all the participants a new experience and bountiful memories.

MEME MAKING COMPETITION

Memes are succinct, millennial satire in graphic narrative which has developed as a canvass for expression in idiosyncratic, minimalistic art form with popular culture as its substratum in recent times. It's the parlance of the youth, it connects people across ideological spectrums and its burgeoning into a pivotal medium for dissemination of ideas and information. While memology's position in the space of literature is ambivalent, nonetheless it's a crucial part of our contemporary lives and thus, an online meme-making competition was part of one of the many events and activities of the literary fest.

Amongst the themes ranging from brown and pop culture to literature and politics, the participants were asked to send original submissions on any one of the four. The sweeping variety of entries received: Brutus' back-stabbing,

right wing's ruthless travesty politics, brown mom's melodrama, Elon Musk's absurdities so on and so forth, were astounding. Memes influence our notions and thought-process deeply, and play a subtle yet crucial role in developing socio-economic political consciousness amongst the masses. They leave an imprint on our psyche. The submissions exhibited the craftsmanship of wit and irony and the literary and political entries covered all the same thus slowly but astutely, aiding in the demolition of the oppressive social fabric of our society on the path to eventually convulse the status quo.

The 2020's chapter of Litluminous, the Literary Fest of Kamala Nehru College mirrored the parodical, political landscape of the world from Donald Trump's imbecile tweets to Alexander Pope's mockery of the elite, as it swept across all the contemporary issues of our times. One of these concerns are "Gender Stereotypes" and a creative writing competition was organised; where the participants were asked to present these stereotypes in a derisive manner in any style and genre of writing under a time limit. Satire's technique is rooted in critiquing social structures and it serves its function very well by using humour but for the participants, it also served as an outlet for their rage and antagonism against the chains of patriarchy. It made them come a petite step closer to shedding the dust of its internalisation off their shoulders, to unlearn their oppression and learn how to embrace freedom with open arms.

CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION

STREET PLAY

CARICATURE MAKING COMPETITION

The caricature-making competition 'Saterior Motives' encouraged the students to give creative expression to their takes on political satire. The participants were given a choice between 5 news articles revolving around contemporary political issues, and were instructed to base their cartoon on the article of their choice. They were provided with stationery to create their pieces, and allowed to use google a maximum of three times during the two-hour period allotted for the fulfillment of their work. Their work was assessed on the basis of the piece's originality, the participants' interpretation of the content, their artistic skills and on their overall engagement of their piece with the article. Tanishka, a final year English Honours student from Kamala Nehru College, took home the first prize.

Litluminous also housed an awe-inspiring street play revolving around the evils of the caste system that the society turns a blind eye to. Through the engrossing Hindi Play, the actors first extended a declaration that they didn't endorse any anti-humanitarian policy. All eyes were glued on the play as they announced the title: Casteism, to seek knowledge about the repression that lower stratas suffer even today. The audience enjoyed the melody as they sung the Ravabaraaj song about caste

discrimination. The play depicted several events that are common to most Dalits in the country, exploiting their elemental needs like thirst being one of them. They showed the tumult in the Bhojpur Village where hundreds of Dalits were victimised and killed. The actors indeed brought the harsh reality of the Varma system before the eyes of the ignorants. They kept the audience enthralled with the depiction of several protests that took place after the death of a Dalit worker. The play ended on a cathartic note showing a conversation between two people who said that loyalty lies with the Nation, not with one particular God.

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SOURCES AND CREDIT

for artwork, images, photographs and all visual work

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https://blog.nikoneurope.com/en_gb/tag/food-photographer/;

Artwork of two lovers by Egyptian Artist Muhammed Salah,

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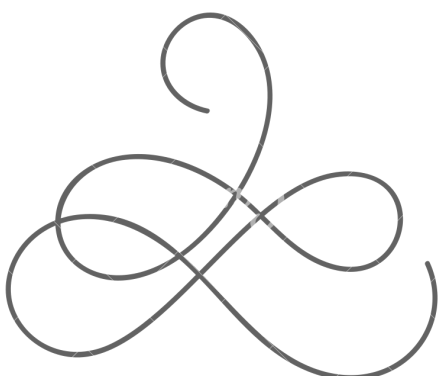
Academic Essay: "The Iliad.." -art from Pinterest

Academic Essay: "Kamala Das..."-art by Uma Krishna Moorthy; Photography by Aamna Siddiqui

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Report: "Comic Workshop"- Comics (first page to last, top to bottom) made by Arohi Shyam Choudhury, Prabhdeep Kaur, Sonali Samal, Lakshi Phogat and Cheshta Sagar.

Report: "Collective Rubbish..."- Photography by Arushi Rawat



FIN.

