

WORDWEAVES

CREATENG - THE ENGLISH LITERARY SOCIETY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
VIVEKANANDA COLLEGE

SOPHIA PDE
(TEACHER IN CHARGE)

ARUNABHA BOSE
(TEACHER COORDINATOR)

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**NOW
SHOWING:
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LITERATURE
AND CINEMA**

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DOUBLE TROUBLE

EDITOR'S CORNER



PRAYANSHI
JAIN



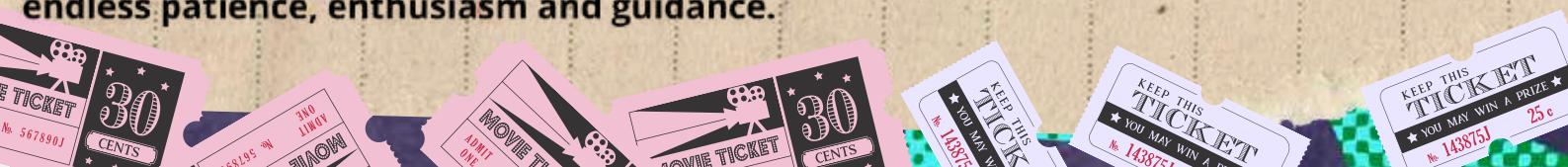
DEVISHI



We cordially welcome you to the annual newsletter of Department of English, Vivekananda College, WORDWEAVES. This year we have decided to explore the intersection of literature and cinema, delving into the stories that have shaped our world and the cinematic adaptations that bring them to life. From the bloody world of "Maqbool" to the silent comedies of Charlie Chaplin, from the kawaii and mature allure of Japanese anime, the wholesome and cozy world of Ghibli to the timeless rom-coms of South Korea, we have it all here in a blend that we have weaved with utmost love, labour and passion.

We wish to give students a chance to indulge in a wide range of cinematic possibilities and broaden their horizon. We hope the constantly blurring boundaries between literature and cinema will bring you as much curiosity and inquisitiveness as it has brought us joy and wonder. Welcome to a world where words and images intertwine, where each turn of the page and frame of film holds the promise of discovery and inspiration.

We sincerely thank our Principal, Professors and students who are featured here without whom none of this could have been possible. A special thanks to Arunabha Bose for his endless patience, enthusiasm and guidance.



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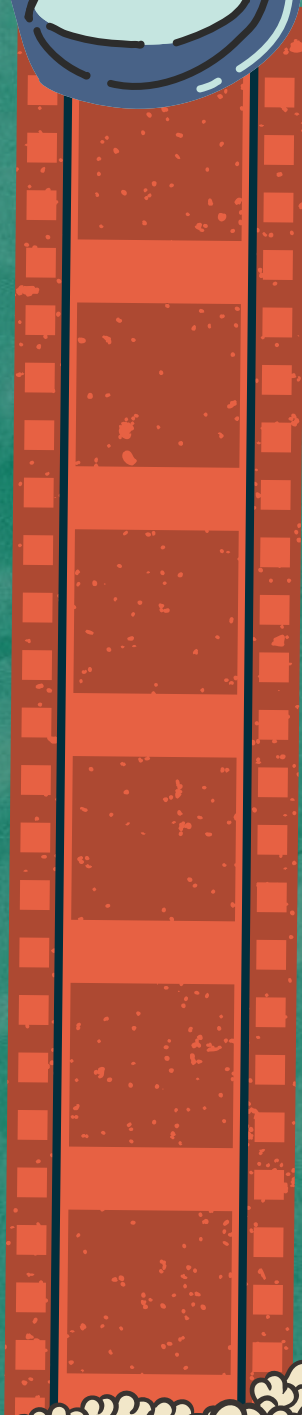
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THE POPCORN ANGLE

A REVIEW
MEDLEY



THERE MAY NOT BE MEANINGS, BUT THERE WILL ALWAYS BE STORIES

Priya Jain, B. A. (H) English, III Year

You can't wake up if you don't fall asleep
(Song by Jarvis Cocker)

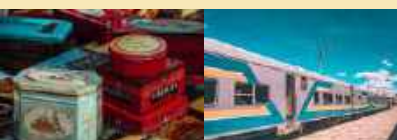
If you have ever watched any Wes Anderson movie before - *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, *The French Dispatch*, *Fantastic Mr. Fox* - you know that entering into the *Andersonian* world is like leaving your material body behind to freely float in a three-dimensional canvas he creates with his visions. *Asteroid City*, released in 2023 is an American comedy-drama. It is much like his other movies, a cinematic feast paired with musical scores that will make you break out into a dance at the oddest hours. But Anderson takes his storytelling up a level by creating a metanarrative where the boundaries between fiction and reality are set in place rigidly at times like a stretched rubber band, but at others they are so blurred they become almost invisible as we catch ourselves questioning did the actor bleed into the character or was it vice versa?

Watching this movie is a unique experience because you are thrown into it with full knowledge that it is a story within a story, in a black and white frame a television host introduces you to a documentary about the creation and production of *Asteroid City*, which is itself a play written by the playwright Conrad Earp, who then proceeds to introduce you to the actors, setting, scenes; almost as if you were not a spectator but a member of the production crew witnessing an everyday occurrence on the play set. What follows is the vivid, quirky and isolated *Asteroid City* in stylized color, but we are kept under no illusion that it is "reality" we are watching. The narrative of a documentary-turned-play follows the peculiar fashion of its setting and we are aware we are watching actors infusing life into a script titled "Asteroid City" which is a fictional desert town.

Having read Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and Bertolt Brecht's *The Good Person of Szechwan*, I relished the movie with the enthusiasm of a reader who one day discovers two of her favorite writers had a love child who shares half the brain of both its parents.



Anderson's *Asteroid City* is a blend of Beckett's existential absurdism but its narrative structure is armed with Brecht's refusal to allow his audience the lull and illusion of reality. You can try as you may to make sense of the movie, to draw meanings either from their absence or presence but the narrative alters so quickly – one minute you are sharing Augie Steenbeck, the war journalist's grief over losing his wife in full color and the very next moment you are almost swiveled in a chair watching black and white frames and discovering that the playwright of the play you are watching died six months into the runtime of its production – that you end up losing track and one narrative becomes entangled with another until you are lost to the meaning of it at all, but maybe that's the point. Augie's son Woodrow the brainiac says:



***WR: What's out there? AS: Something.
WR: The meaning of life. Maybe there is one.***



The movie might frustrate you for being too quick, too cluttered and too fragmented but maybe that's the intention, maybe we don't have to understand everything in its concise details and minute imperfections for it to leave a profound impact. The movie is life-as-play, life-as-story, life as a period between birth and death where all we try to do is look for meanings, purpose, and a reason for being. To summarize it as Albert Camus would, *"You will never be happy if you continue to search for what happiness consists of. You will never live if you are looking for the meaning of life"*. An overwhelmed actor Jonas Hall (playing Augie Steenbeck) asks the play director Schubert Green:



***JH: Do I just keep doing it? SG: Yes.
JH: Without knowing anything? SG: Yes.
...
JH: I still don't understand the play.
SG: Doesn't matter. Just keep telling the story.***



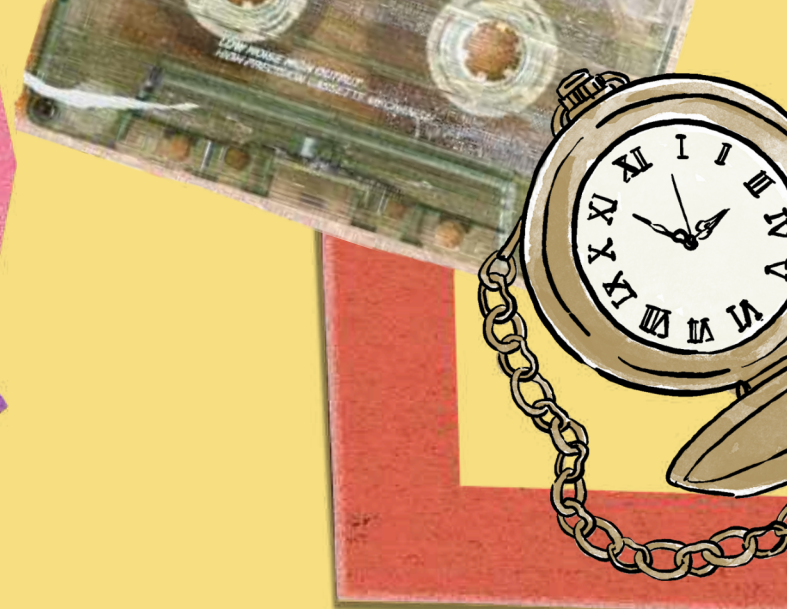
And isn't that life miniaturized? We don't understand it, and yet we make plans for days in advance, we plant flowers knowing we will live to see them blossom, we burn away our present for a fictional future. We don't understand anything, yet we continue to live, and we persist every day; just like Augie who believes all his pictures will come out, or Midge who rehearses her lines and cannot feel guilty for putting herself before her children.

***Asteroid City* comes across as an absurd but intensely emotional cinematic feat. In addition to being a visual cuisine of delicacies in sets, colours and proportions it is also a philosophical dive into stories and their meanings, or perhaps stories still existing in all their glory without a singular meaning. Maybe it is about telling your story even without a listener because it will always remain the story of a life once lived or a character once played in a time and universe. The joy lies in watching this marvel and discovering for yourself what it has in store for you, for me it was a moment to revel in absurdism with wonder and affirmations. Shakespeare worded it brilliantly, *"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts"*.**

TANGLED IN TIMELINES

TWO GENRE BENDING K DRAMAS

GARIMA SINGH, B.A. (H) ENGLISH, III YEAR



"A Time called you" (2023) is an absorbing K-drama starring Ahn Hyo Seop and Jeon Yeo-Been, lauded by K-drama fans for its manifold genres including time travel, drama, romance, mystery and thriller; offering an enthralling experience to viewers. The narrative unfolds through two timelines, one set in the present and the other in 1998, with the cassette tape *"Gather My Tears"* serving as a pivotal link between them. The intricate plot and suspenseful twists keep audiences on the edge of their seats, while delving into themes of friendship and emotional depth and showcasing stellar performances from the lead actors. The drama's conclusion, coupled with the surprise cameo appearance of Rowoon, further enhances its appeal.

The recent drama, *"Marry My Husband"* (2024) shares similarities with *"A Time Called you"* with its focus on altering destinies, albeit involving a "makjang" twists (a stylistic, tonal, or narrative element in dramas that chooses to play up outrageous storylines to keep viewers hooked despite how ridiculous the stories become with themes of adultery, revenge, rape, birth secrets, fatal illnesses, or flirting with incestuous possibilities). Still, I would accord some extra points to *"A Time Called You"* because of its relatively soothing conclusion and unpredictable plot developments, making it a standout in the realm of K-drama.

A tour de force of suspense and intrigue, *"A Time Called You"* would be a refreshing choice for viewers seeking a departure from traditional romantic comedies in K-dramas, as well as for those who enjoy mystery and suspense.

ghibli corner: exploring the surrealism of miyazaki

Riya Gautam, B. A. (H) English, III Year

spirited away



If there's one animated masterpiece deserving of eternal admiration, it's undoubtedly 'Spirited Away' (2001). Through meticulous attention to detail, the artists at Ghibli breathe life into every aspect of the film, capturing the nuances of a young girl's emotions, and crafting landscapes rich in intricate details, reflecting the profound spiritual meaning found in Japanese Shinto traditions. The film is a coming-of-age story with a straightforward plot. Chihiro, a young girl trapped in a mysterious realm where she must work in a bathhouse to save her parents who have been transformed into pigs. The animation is breathtaking and fluid and has a psychologically compelling urgency and authenticity to it and at times evokes a hallucinatory fantasy. It's this oscillation between realism and meta-realism, synthetic and sensual, the phenomenal and the philosophical which makes the film a masterpiece. The music is absolutely enchanting, eliciting a range of feelings from wonder to melancholy. (*One Summer Day is a fever dream*). The characters are deeply engaging, along with the whimsical spirits who are inspired from traditional Japanese Shinto culture and add to the mythological subtext of the movie. The central message of the movie is the importance of staying true to oneself and never forgetting one's identity, along with other themes like the conflict between societal expectations and personal identity. As a Studio Ghibli essential and an Oscar winning gem, it's a must-see for a good time! You will be so spirited after watching it that you'll find yourself watching it more than twice or maybe thrice.

the tale of princess kaguya

"The Tale of Princess Kaguya" (2013) is a captivating anime film that captivates the audiences with its spellbinding storytelling and dazzling animation. Directed by Isao Takahata, and produced by Studio Ghibli, this adaptation of the ancient Japanese folktale "The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter" delivers a cinematic experience unlike any other. What really stands out is its unique artistic style, resembling traditional Japanese watercolour paintings and evoking the aesthetics of ancient Japanese scrolls.

It's a world of charcoal lines and water-coloured hues; you can almost feel the brushstrokes upon paper as the intricately hand-drawn action unfolds. The narrative is a beautiful blend of fantasy and folklore, revolving around the life of Kaguya-hime, a mysterious princess with otherworldly beauty who has origins tied to the celestial realm. Besides its surrealistic and symbolic allure, it's a tale of exile and forgetfulness, reward and banishment, but the dominant tone is one of painful tenderness - of the rapturous, bittersweet enchantment with nature that has underwritten so much of Studio Ghibli's output. From moments of whimsy and wonder to scenes of heartache and longing, the film tugs at the heartstrings with its haunting portrayal of the human experience. The animation is masterful, with every frame resembling a moving work of art. The film's pace is deliberately slow, allowing the audience to savour each moment and appreciate the intricacies of the narrative. "The Tale of Princess Kaguya" shines in its unique approach, offering a refreshing departure from convention. It's a celebration of beauty, both visual and emotional. Whether you're a fan of Studio Ghibli or simply appreciate artistry in film, this film is a must-watch, and its charm is sure to leave a lasting impact

howl's moving castle

Studio Ghibli's enchanting creations, "Howl's Moving Castle" (2004) is a mesmerizing masterpiece that captivates effortlessly. From the enigmatic and immersive world-building to the wholesome character design and a heart-tugging storyline, this movie is a celebration of Hayao Miyazaki's inexhaustible versatility and imaginative abundance. The world-building (production design) in the movie is nothing short of breathtaking. The whimsical landscapes, magical creatures, and intricate steampunk inspired castles create an immersive universe that invites viewers to lose themselves in its wonders. Be it the bustling city streets or the serene countryside, each setting seems to be teeming with life, evoking a sense of bewilderment. The characters in the film are equally captivating. From the plucky and resourceful Sophie to the sassy fire demon Calcifer and the enigmatic and charming Howl, each character is brought to life with such depth that you'll feel they actually exist. At the core of this cinematic gem lies the dynamic relationships and deeply personal journeys that'll have you so invested in these characters' fates; you'll feel a kinship with them. And of course, the animation style is another highlight of "Howl's Moving Castle"! Studio Ghibli's trademark hand-drawn animation brings every frame to life with stunning detail and fluidity. The breathtaking magical sequences are truly awe-inspiring. Yet, it's the film's timeless and thought-provoking storyline that truly shines, elevating it to a level of profound significance. At its core, it's a tale of enduring love, the power of self-discovery and acceptance. The film tackles complex themes with grace and sensitivity, accompanied by Joe Hisaishi's enchanting score, which is an icing on the cake, perfectly capturing the whimsy and wonder of Miyazaki's imagination.




A DIALOGUE BETWEEN *Literature and Cinema*

Anshul, B.A (H) English, II Year

Literature and Cinema both are an integral part of our society and capable mediums for expressing social ideology. Both mediums have connected our society with new ideas. They play an important role in social formation. Before the development of cinema, the most popular form of expression was literature. Through literature a writer could make people aware of social problems, challenges and beliefs. The only drawback of literature was that it was not accessible to uneducated people. But a medium which made both educated and uneducated people aware about social conventions was cinema. Literature and Cinema both are different forms of art, but they have a shared goal to create sublimity in human imagination and understanding. In literature, a writer takes the readers to a world different from the real world through the written word while in cinema, a filmmaker represents that imaginary world in front of the audience by using technological visual advancement. But the goal remains same, to transport the consumer of film and fiction into a dreamscape.

If we talk about similarity in literature and cinema, then both the narrator of the text and the director of film adapt and adopt a theme in accordance with their worldview. In literature a writer uses literary language while in cinema, a filmmaker uses an imagistic language which is more accessible and universal in its appeal. A filmmaker usually takes inspiration from a novel, play, or drama to make a film. So, we can say that literature has a primary value and cinema has a secondary value. Cinema has gained widespread popularity owing to its visual appeal. However, can there be anything such as a perfect adaptation? When a filmmaker adapts a sweeping epic to a film, he has to make creative concessions and omit significant narratives from the final cut. Similarly, a filmmaker adapting a short story or novella has to insert sequences to expand the thin source material. In a book, a writer often uses dialogue which might seem obtuse and sonorous but in films dialogues sound more conversational and relatable.

People usually prefer cinema over literature because in cinema they don't need to transform words into images themselves, the text has already been translated into a performance. But we can't deny the fact that it is literature which provides the blueprint for cinema. In literature, a single author orchestrates the plot while cinema is a collaborative medium which requires seamless coordination between technicians and actors. Both art forms supplement each other and hold a mirror to society.



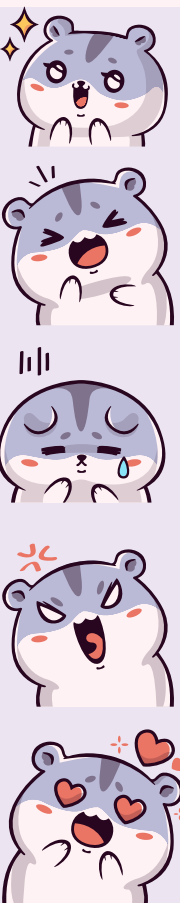
A DEEP DIVE INTO ANIME

AASTHA RAJPUT, B. A. (H) ENGLISH, III YEAR

"Asobi Asobase" (2018) is an absolute riot of an anime that will have you laughing until your sides hurt. It's a unique anime that revolves around the hilarious misadventures of three high school girls: Hanako, Olivia, and Kasumi. Now, these girls may seem like your typical high school students, however they are anything but ordinary. The show is known for its off-beat humour and unexpected twists; delivering punchline after punchline with impeccable timing; from outrageous misunderstandings to over-the-top reactions, "Asobi Asobase" takes everyday situations and turns them into crazy laugh-out-loud moments. It's like a rollercoaster ride of comedic chaos that keeps you on the edge of your seat, eagerly awaiting the next hilarious twist. The best part of the show is the quirky dynamic between the three main characters. Hanako, the self-proclaimed "queen of games," is competitive and determined, often leading the trio into bizarre situations. Olivia, the blonde-haired pretend-transfer-student-from-America, adds a touch of foreign charm and a knack for mischief. And then there's Kasumi, the seemingly innocent and serious girl who often finds herself caught up in the chaos caused by her friends. If you're in the mood for a comedy that's equal parts absurd, unpredictable, and downright hilarious, "Asobi Asobase" is definitely worth a watch.



"Devilman: Crybaby" (2018) is a modern retelling of the classic "Devilman" manga by Go Nagai and it delves deep into the darkest corners of human nature. The story follows Akira Fudo, a super nice and innocent teenager who becomes a vessel for a powerful demon named Amon. As Akira embraces his newfound demonic abilities, he must navigate a world filled with prejudice, violence, and moral ambiguity. What sets "Devilman: Crybaby" apart is its fearless approach to storytelling and exploration of complex themes. Tackling topics like identity, morality, sexuality, and nihilism, it blurs the line between good and evil. The animation style is trippy and vibrant which perfectly match the chaotic and psychedelic vibe of the story. And the hauntingly beautiful soundtrack, might leave you with a sense of unease and wonder, capturing the nightmarish world of demons and despair that permeates the series. But be warned, this anime is not for everyone. It doesn't hold back on the violence and gore, so if you're squeamish or easily unsettled, you might want to think twice. But for the fans of dark fantasy, psychological drama, or avant-garde animation, "Devilman: Crybaby" will blow your mind! It's a wild ride that challenges your preconceptions and leaves you questioning the very nature of humanity.





"Sasaki and Miyano" (2016) is like the ultimate match for you if you're into heart-warming and relatable stuff! It's got super fun characters, smart humour, and it's all about friendship and teenage romance. It captures all the essence of youth and first love. From moments of awkwardness to light-hearted laughter, vulnerability to self-acceptance, and heart-wrenching lows to exhilarating highs. It's a story that will have you smiling from ear to ear. The anime revolves around the lives of two high school boys, Sasaki and Miyano. One's a shy fudanshi (Miyano) and the other's an outgoing sweetheart (Sasaki). When their paths cross and their friendship deepens, it's all about those universal truths that we can all relate to since we all want connection, understanding, and the courage to be ourselves. And it's not just these two, the whole crew adds depth and dimension to the story. It's awesome seeing these two boys trying to figure out their feelings for each other and being all confused about what to do. And the best part? The show doesn't rush them into falling head over heels right away. It takes a slow-burn approach, planting those relationship seeds and letting them grow nice and slow. The animation style is beautifully top-notch and detailed. The soundtrack perfectly complements the mood. It's like you're right there with the characters, laughing, crying, and cheering them on. A must-watch for fans of wholesome, feel-good anime and newcomers alike.

"Erased" (2012-16) is a thrilling and suspenseful anime that will keep you on the edge of your seat the whole time. It has elements of mystery, time travel, and personal growth. Adapted from Kei Sanbe's manga, it transcends the confines of its genre. Exploring the themes of trauma, redemption, and the power of second chances; it delves into the consequences of our actions and the impact we can have on the lives of those around us. So, the plot revolves around Satoru Fujinuma, a struggling manga artist who possesses a unique ability called "Revival." This power allows him to go back in time and prevent tragedies from occurring. As cool as you might find this ability to be when Satoru's mother is murdered, he is sent back 18 years in time to his childhood, where he must uncover the truth behind a series of child kidnappings, including the incident that led to his mother's death. Honestly! a journey not everyone would have a heart to undertake. What stands out most is the masterful storytelling of "Erased". It keeps you guessing and constantly on your toes as Satoru goes back in time to change the future. With visuals that pops and themes that hit hard, "Erased" isn't just a show, it's a whole experience! And last but not least, the evocative soundtrack!! "Erased" is both haunting and emotionally impactful. So, get prepared to be enthralled and ultimately moved by the unforgettable journey that is "Erased".



ANWAR



AN UNNOTICED CINEMATIC MASTERPIECE

DIVYA SRIVASTAVA, B.A. (H) ENGLISH, III YEAR

**“SHAMA KO
PIGHALNE KA
ARMAN KYU HAI
PATANGE KO
JALNE KA ARMAN
KYU HAI
ISI SHAUQ KA
IMTIHAN ZINDAGI
HAI”**



Anwar is a 2007 Indian romantic thriller written and directed by Manish Jha, who is famous for his work in *Matrubhoomi* (2003). The lead actors are Siddharth Koirala as Anwar, Manisha Koirala as Anita, Vijay Raaz as Master Pasha and Nauheed Cyrusi as Mehru. The film is set in the city of Lucknow. The film “*Anwar*” is a perfect blend of art and evident social, political and economic issues of the time. The film takes a very different approach to the portrayal of male characters. It portrays them as sensitive and emotionally expressive which is different from a culture that dictates a stereotypical behavior where men cannot demonstrate emotions. To bring this to cinema was uncommon at the time. The cinematic and multicultural symbolism adds to the aesthetics of the film.

The film begins with a beautiful scene where a child sobs seeing the broken wings of a butterfly. He softly holds the butterfly in his hands, buries it and puts a small wooden cross on it. The scene signifies the mere innocence of Anwar and how deeply the death of a butterfly affects him. There are frequent images of broken bangles, burnt sketches and drowned earrings which constantly symbolize unrevealed despair. Further, as the story proceeds, it is shown to us that Anwar has visions of himself dressed as Krishna, longing to find his Meera but suddenly wakes up devastated and emotionally exhausted. He takes refuge in an old building, a mandir, only to wake up the next morning to find his world turned upside down. He is mistaken for a terrorist and finds himself in an unusual set of circumstances that resonate deeply with the modern Indian condition. Anwar is haunted by his memories through such symbols as a decaying flute, and tears rolling down from Krishna’s eyes.

The film serves as a political satire and shows how power can make people hollow from within. It is shown to us that politicians who declare Anwar a terrorist are themselves suffering emotionally in their personal lives. We see fragmented emotions in the character of a policeman who is forced to investigate this case. His wife is dying of cancer. He says "There, my wife is fighting for her life and death. And here, I am confiscating valentines day cards." This scene shows the absolute absurdity of the controversy. When the politician is asked about the controversy, he confesses, "The boy looked like a terrorist from his appearance". The story unfolds and Anwar is asked about his sketchbook. Anwar is a student of Hindi honours and his research is about Hindu temples. We are introduced to Master Pasha in a beautiful and overwhelming scene where he expresses his emotions about true love.

" LOVE SOMEONE ANWAR, THEN YOU WILL KNOW THE TRUTH OF LIFE. LOVE, THAT HAS TRUTH, SACRIFICE AND TRUST. LIKE MEERA'S LOVE FOR KRISHNA. MEERA IMMERSSED HERSELF IN KRISHNA'S LOVE. WHEN TWO PEOPLE UNITE IN LOVE, OR SHALL WE SAY THAT THEY BOTH CROSS ALL THE BOUNDARIES, THAT IS LOVE."

Master Pasha was a theater artist, when Anwar asks him not to beg but join theater again, he says, "I was never talented Anwar, it was love that taught me everything. I am again in search of love. If I find it, I will become talented again." Anwar's eyes are shown full of hope to find love. He finds Mehru, a girl he loves with all his heart. We are then introduced to Anwar's friend Udit and a conversation between them reveals a lot about social and political issues of the time. Udit and Mehru both are willing to leave India since Mehru hates India and calls America, a place of dreams and Udit deeply criticizes Indian politics and economic issues affecting the masses. Anwar, when asked why he didn't leave India for Pakistan during independence replies "We were told on the day of freedom, that we will be given equal rights. I still couldn't understand, why did they lie to us?"

A small yet significant scene occurs where a man standing with a banner "lost and found" shouts:

" A CHILD WHOSE NAME IS BHARAT, IS LOST IN THIS HOLY PLACE OF THE VILLAGE"

It is further revealed that Mehru elopes with Udit. All hell breaks loose. Anwar is broken and shattered. The girl's brothers kill Udit, Mehru commits suicide and Anwar feels responsible for her death. Master Pasha falls in love again, but he's eventually denied love. He frantically screams, "I am not a beggar, I am an artist! The whole world is my stage." The scene shows Master Pasha eventually committing suicide. The story ends in the present day where Anwar wakes up losing all hope and is shot dead just outside of the mandir. The film ends with Anwar's hallucinatory vision where Meera/Mehru is addressing Anwar, "I know who you are, Anwar. Once, when you were a kid, you cried a lot seeing the broken wings of a butterfly. I also know that your heart is filled with love, and you want to immerse yourself in me. So why are you waiting?" Anwar and Mehru as Meera and Krishna are shown reuniting in Anwar's vision. The next moment, the scene shifts to Anwar's dead body lying on the ground, with blood mingled with the rain.

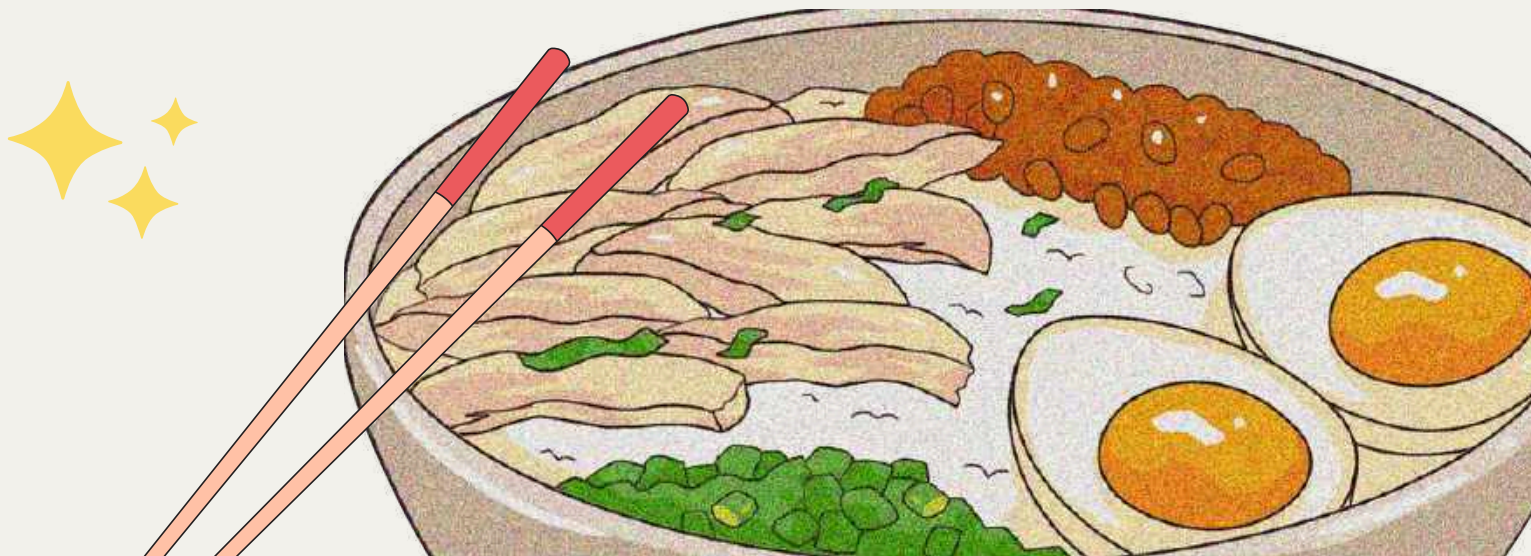
MULTIVERSE OF BURAKKU KIGYŌ

**PRIYA JAIN, B. A. (H) ENGLISH, III YEAR AND
HARSHITA SINGH, BATCH OF 2023**

My New Boss Is Goofy (2023)

This quirky anime follows the life of a man in his thirties named Momose, who was harassed by his superior at workplace. Having been traumatized by this experience, he starts working at a new advertisement company where his new boss, Shirasaki is "goofy". Far from being a power-drunk lowlife, this new boss is kind and a bit silly. His perfume is a fabric softener and he takes forever to decide on a name for his adopted kitten. While the episodes are light-hearted and full of goofiness of all the employees, this anime still presents the exploitative capitalist society and corporate work culture. This anime is the journey of a traumatized employee finally getting healed and regaining interest in his passion - advertising.

Marketing has always been a symbol of capitalism, as most of the advertisements target the insecurities of the masses or simply create problems out of thin air to promote consumption. However, the fluffy duo of Momose and Shirasaki along with their co-workers also bring forth the humane and emotional aspect of advertisements. The quiet moments such as watching a bird in the garden or walking back at night from the grocery store are some of the most memorable scenes from this fluffy and soothing anime.



Zom 100: Bucket List of the Dead (2024)

This anime is an adaptation by Bug Films of the Japanese manga series written by Haro Aso. It follows the journey of 24-year-old Akira Tendo, who is freshly employed in a marketing firm in Japan and is filled with ambition. However, things start going downhill when he discovers the extremely exploitative nature of the company; forced to work ungodly hours he is unable to even go home at times, and with a manipulative manager he finds himself trapped in a meaningless routine with his mind close to breaking. After three years of enduring this physical and mental abuse, one day when he miraculously comes home to his trash-filled apartment, a zombie apocalypse breaks out in Japan. The world is painted in colours (the anime uses a series of colours to paint the streets and people of Japan almost like an artwork, a humorous replacement for blood) but Akira finally comes out of his dread and depression, he awakens to this new opportunity life has presented him: he can survive without having to go to work.

The story then follows Akira as he makes a bucket list of 100 things he wants to do before he turns into a zombie, and they range from the simple pleasure of having a rooftop barbeque to owning a large screen TV (juxtaposed with the ongoing apocalypse it adds a ring of absurdity to the equation). On the way, we explore the themes of friendship both the lost ones and new, surviving an apocalypse and forging bonds in crisis, and what defines a purpose in life (if there is any). With colourful characters the story follows the bloody-but-colourful streets of Japan as these ambitious and full-of-life people go on bizarre adventures.

My favourite episode is one where the now free and almost unhinged Akira meets his manipulative manager again and we see how quickly and easily he relapses into a depressed mental state where he justifies all the actions of his abuser. The anime shows that even when the victim creates an entirely new lifestyle it doesn't mean that abuse has simply been erased. We also see that no matter the apocalyptic situation, humans will always remain greedy and play with power relations to make a new power hierarchy. Watching Akira overcome his trauma and stand up to his abuser is truly the highlight of the show and a leap in his character development. If you love zombies and dystopian settings but do not want something gory then this anime is a perfect fit for you.



Exploitative companies (Burakku Kigyō) are not particular to Japan as we see a rampant capitalism infesting the entire world much like a zombie apocalypse. You too might be prone to stomach aches like Momose because your work superior was just that horrible. In this Multiverse of Burakku Kigyō, Japanese animation, both throw light on the issue of horrendous working conditions and becomes the beacon of healing and catharsis.



ENTRAPMENT, SUSPICION AND FREEDOM


JAZA MAHAJAN, B.A. (H) ENGLISH, III YEAR


Where do we stand in this world?

Human beings can go beyond their limits to prove themselves. This quest for self-assertion and self-worth comes between a person's character and his/her relationship with the ethics that an institution upholds. Who are we to blame? This essay takes inspiration from the movies "About the Dry Grasses" (Turkish), directed by Nuri Bilge Ceylan and "The Teachers' Lounge" (German) directed by İlker Çatak. The world seems like a marketplace. We meet different people and hardly know their importance. They are like 'nameless grasses that no one cares about' as the protagonist of the Turkish movie "About the Dry Grasses" says. But are they nameless? Or do we refuse to acknowledge these nameless people and enshrine them in anonymity?

The fact that Samet in "About Dry Grasses" thinks that he is better than Nuray only because she has lost a leg showcases his perspective toward disability. In the initial meeting with Nuray, Samet seems to be a narcissist. Later, Nuray is the one who stands as a symbol of Istanbul. She is the one who becomes a ticket to freedom for Samet because he has lost hope in the world and is trying to escape his life.

The movie showcases an existentialist crisis faced by schoolteachers. Almost every teacher has a favourite student, but doesn't this go beyond the actual norms of the institution? Like Samet's Sevim, who was a symbol of transcendence for him, and Samet was attracted to this quality in her. Similarly, we have Oscar in a German movie, "The Teachers' Lounge", who seems to be the teacher, Carla's star student. There shouldn't be a problem in having a soft corner for one student until it crosses the limit. In "The Teachers' Lounge" Carla, who is true to her job takes up the task of finding the thief who is among one of her beloved students. She doesn't like invading people's personal spaces but is compelled to do so. From checking the wallets to leaving the laptop camera on, the situation keeps becoming messy.





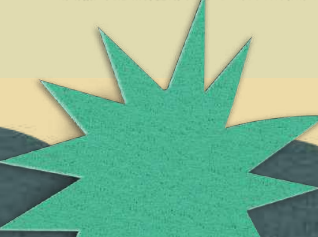
The movie gives a hint towards racial discrimination faced by a Turkish boy who is the presumable first suspect. There comes so much in between Carla's identity and what she becomes later, that even her favourite student starts hating her for her actions. Sometimes the most loved people end up making the biggest mistakes and they don't realize it. In this case, an act of theft leaves the teacher's lounge suspicious making the environment toxic for every single person. Carla being a good Polish teacher who has certain set standards goes beyond her limits and ends up ruining her reputation. Some light is even thrown at her own identity, being a Polish teacher, she doesn't take pride in it, nor does she want other people to know about it.

Teachers are more than role models for everyone. We have been given this picture of an ideal teacher. But is there really an ideal teacher? Or everyone is trying to become one? Carla's act of finding the felon on the campus makes her psychologically question her own motivations. There seems to be a clash between her idealism and the morals and ethics of the institution. All her acts of investigation are highlighted as if she did no good in her entire teaching career. 'The truth is brutal as it is boring' said Samet.

In both the movies, the teachers are accused, and the audience decides whether they are really at fault. Is favouritism a natural tendency that should be avoided? Is there a limit to finding the truth? In "About the Dry Grasses" Samet and another fellow history teacher Kenon are accused of inappropriate behaviour with the students. The love letter in Sevim's bag becomes the roller coaster of Samet's life. We see Samet turning hopeless and still trying to escape life wanting to make Sevim his dream world. 'In the motionless landscape, he found something in her which he couldn't figure out himself, a tiny sign of transcendence.' Samet was hopeful for Sevim's future and said that she will have a direct and a better connection with life unlike him who keeps ranting about life.

He calls life an unending loop of setbacks and thinks that to live is to survive. As life passes by, everyone goes through turbulent phases and according to Samet, this unending loop makes you tiresome even if you survive the winters of your life.

So where do you find yourself? Do you find yourself entangled in life? Life is about words, experiences, emotions and they shape a part of your life. Every part of your life has a reason and everything that has reason is worthy. Life is not just about surviving or escaping, it is about making the most of every summer, winter, and spring. With time, life passes, and nothing remains constant.



THE CINEMA OF GENOCIDE

DANIYA NAAZ, B.A.(H) ENGLISH, III YEAR

I remember watching the film, *Farha* in 2022 when I came across an Instagram post about the Nakba which took place in 1948 in Palestine and was intrigued to watch it to understand the history of Palestinian people. I never thought that I'd be affected by something so much that I would watch it again and talk about the ongoing genocide which is taking place in Palestine. *Farha* released in 2021 is an internationally co-produced historical drama about a Palestinian girl's coming-of-age experience during the Nakba, the 1948 displacement of Palestinians from their homeland. The film is directed by Darin J. Sallam. It is based on the real story of a girl named Radiyyeh who was able to flee the catastrophe. The film commences with a captivating scene featuring *Farha* engrossed in a book, surrounded by her companions. Set against the backdrop of Palestine in 1948, the narrative unfolds as *Farha*, and her friends eagerly immerse themselves in learning the Quran under the guidance of their teacher.

Their joyous demeanour during such moments captures the essence of girlhood and the inherent beauty found in the pursuit of knowledge, particularly in the formative years of adolescence. Within this tight-knit community, anticipation permeates the air as one of the girls from *Farha*'s group prepares for her marriage. Amidst the festivities, *Farha* emerges as a spirited and determined young woman, harbouring a desire to pursue education akin to the boys in her village. Her unwavering resolve to learn is palpable as she appeals to her father, yearning for the opportunity to continue her education in school. Throughout the narrative, *Farha*'s deep bonds of female friendship resonate prominently, underscoring the strength and solidarity among the women in her community. As a result of her persistence, *Farha*'s father ultimately relents and enrolls her in a city school. Their relationship is characterized by a profound bond, evident in her father's unwavering support and his aspirations for her future success. Additionally, the film sensitively touches upon the plight of Palestinians in the southern regions, who are displaced and seek refuge elsewhere, adding a layer of socio-political context to *Farha*'s personal journey. Despite the escalating turmoil, *Farha*'s father, serving as the village mayor, implores his acquaintances to defend their land, buoyed by the assurance that Arab forces will come to their aid. Amidst the chaos and exodus of villagers, *Farha* chooses to stand steadfastly by her father's side, a testament to her remarkable courage and resilience in the face of adversity.



Her unwavering presence amidst the collapse of the community underscores her profound commitment to her family and heritage, embodying the spirit of defiance amidst the tumult of displacement. To ensure Farha's safety amidst the chaos, her father takes the desperate measure of locking her away in a storeroom, shielding her from the reach of Israeli soldiers. From within the confines of the room, Farha is tormented by the sounds of gunfire and destruction echoing outside. The following morning, the continuous sound of bullets and clamor persists, intensifying Farha's anxiety as she anxiously awaits her father's return. Frustration mounts with each passing moment, driving her to push against the door in a desperate bid for escape. However, a chance encounter alters her trajectory when she hears a voice outside and glimpses through a small hole in the door to see a pregnant woman in labor, supported by her husband and surrounded by their children. In a heart-wrenching turn of events witnessed through Farha's eyes, the tranquility is shattered as Israeli soldiers intrude upon the intimate scene. Following a harrowing interrogation, the soldiers kill the innocent family, extinguishing hope in a brutal display of violence.

Despite her enduring hope for rescue, Farha finds herself abandoned and alone, her spirit worn thin by the relentless weight of despair. Emerging into the harsh light of day, she is met by an empty landscape, devoid of solace or salvation. Weary and disillusioned, Farha seeks solace by the river, where she bathes her weary soul in the soothing embrace of nature's abundance. Reflecting upon the fleeting dreams of education and liberation symbolized by the abandoned registration form, she finds herself drawn to the familiar comfort of a swing, a relic of happier days now tinged with the bitter taste of shattered aspirations. In the final shot, Farha stands at the precipice of departure, her gaze fixed upon the horizon as she takes her first tentative steps away from her homeland.

With each footfall, she carries the weight of her shattered dreams and the indomitable spirit of resilience forged in the crucible of adversity, a silent testament to the enduring power of the human spirit in the face of insurmountable odds. As Edward Said wrote, "Israel was constructed on the ruins of other society and the mass dispossession of another people who remain unacknowledged." This movie has done an exceptional job to show the events which took place in Palestine during Nakba when the Palestinian people were asked to leave their homeland by the Israeli forces. The Nakba which took place in 1948 is again happening in 2024 (started in 2023). It has been 183 days since this genocide began and it baffles me that there's no humanitarian aid and international pact to stop it. The world powers have failed us and the people of Palestine. Farha only talks of one story but what about the other Farhas who had dreams and aspirations and wanted to flourish in life but were thwarted by Israel. Everyday, we encounter hundreds of videos of Israeli soldiers killing the innocent civilians of Palestine. To those reading this article I would encourage you to not stop talking about Gaza and help them in anyway possible. And indeed- "they are children, they're not fighters".

AAVESHAM

Redefining Gangster Narratives and Emotions in Mollywood

Deepanwitha, B.A. (H) English, II Year

Mollywood, the Malayalam film industry, has been impressing audiences with its incredible films, and "Aavesham," released on April 11, 2024, is no exception. Directed by Jithu Madhavan, the film stars Fahad Faasil, Hipster, Mithun Jai Sankar, and Roshan Shanavas in a captivating blend of action and comedy. The story follows Aju, Bibi, and Shanthan, three engineering students from Kerala who are troubled by their senior, Kutty in Bangalore. Seeking revenge, they befriend Ranga, a gangster of Malayali-Kannadiga descent. However, their association with Ranga begins to affect their studies, leading to a series of conflicts and dilemmas. As the narrative unfolds, it delves into the characters' motives and complexities, challenging stereotypes and exploring themes of friendship, redemption, and personal growth.

In "Aavesham," the storyline goes beyond seeking revenge, delving into the complexities of human emotions and relationships. As the trio gets involved with Ranga, they discover a different side to him—not just a tough gangster, but also a man with a troubled past who craves genuine companionship. The film seamlessly blends moments of intense action and light-hearted comedy, crafting a rich and engaging narrative. It challenges the stereotypical portrayal of gangsters by presenting them as individuals with their own vulnerabilities and complexities. This nuanced approach adds layers to the story, making it more relatable and captivating for viewers.

Moreover, "Aavesham" provides a platform for young talent to shine, alongside established actors like Fahad Faasil and Ashish Vidyarthi. Hipster, Mithun, and Roshan deliver commendable performances, showcasing the depth of talent in Mollywood waiting to be discovered. In conclusion, "Aavesham" is a film that entertains, enlightens, and leaves a lasting impact. It showcases Mollywood's creativity and is a must-watch for anyone who appreciates movies that delve into the human experience.

ARTWORK BY AASTHA RAJPUT



EVER WONDERED WHAT BOOK A CERTAIN CHARACTER WOULD READ? WORRY NO MORE, BECAUSE HERE ARE THE CHARACTERS GIVING YOU THEIR BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS!

PRIDE NOT PREJUDICE

QUEER MEDIA RECOMMENDATIONS



CAPTAIN HOLT IS A PROMINENT QUEER CHARACTER IN THE TV SHOW "BROOKLYN NINE-NINE," KNOWN FOR HIS STOIC DEMEANOR, DRY WIT, AND GROUNDBREAKING PORTRAYAL OF A GAY, BLACK POLICE CAPTAIN. HE WOULD DEFINITELY BE CAUGHT READING "A LITTLE LIFE" BY HANYA YANAGIHARA OR "ORLANDO" BY VIRGINIA WOOLF

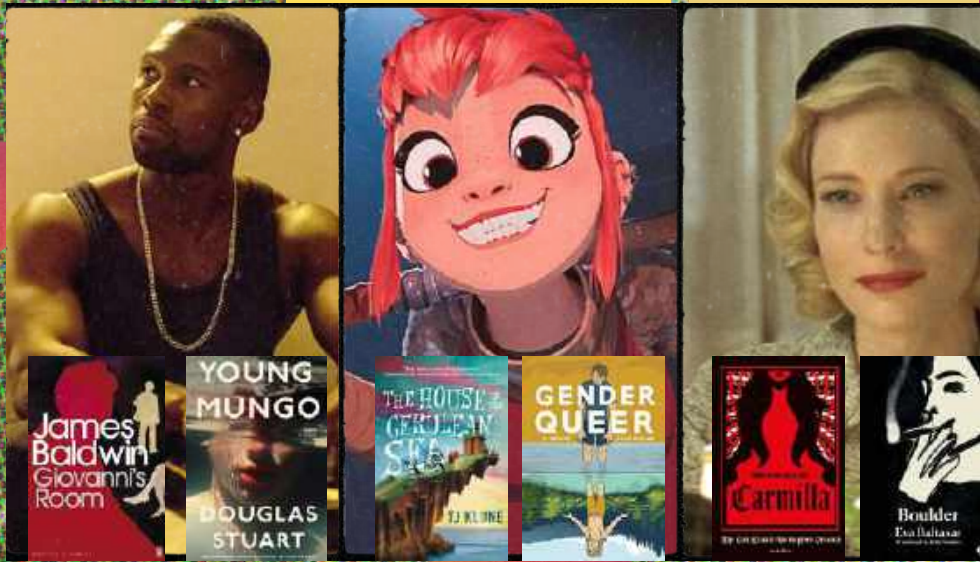
NICK NELSON OF "HEARTSTOPPER" IS A KIND-HEARTED AND ARTISTIC TEENAGER WHO NAVIGATES THE COMPLEXITIES OF LOVE AND SELF-DISCOVERY IN A QUEER COMING-OF-AGE STORY. HE WOULD RECOMMEND "SIMON VS. THE HOMO SAPIENS AGENDA" BY BECKY ALBERTALLI AND "THEY BOTH DIE AT THE END" BY ADAM SILVERA

KORRA IS THE BISEXUAL PROTAGONIST OF "THE LEGEND OF KORRA," A GROUNDBREAKING ANIMATED SERIES, CELEBRATED FOR ITS REPRESENTATION OF LGBTQ+ CHARACTERS IN MEDIA. SHE WOULD RECOMMEND "RUBY FRUIT JUNGLE" BY RITA M. BROWN AND "CALL ME BY YOUR NAME" BY ANDRE ACIMAN

NIMONA IS A SHAPE-SHIFTING, MISCHIEVOUS SIDEKICK WHO TEAMS UP WITH THE VILLAINOUS BALLISTER BLACKHEART IN A QUEST TO CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO AND UNCOVER HIDDEN TRUTHS IN THE GRAPHIC NOVEL "NIMONA" BY NOELLE STEVENSON. SHE WOULD RECOMMEND "THE HOUSE BY THE CERULEAN SEA" BY TJ KLUNE AND "GENDER QUEER: A MEMOIR" BY MAIA KOBABE

CAROL IS A CHARACTER FROM THE FILM "CAROL," PORTRAYED BY CATE BLANCHETT, WHOSE FORBIDDEN LOVE AFFAIR WITH THERESE CHALLENGES SOCIETAL NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS IN 1950'S AMERICA. SHE WOULD LEND YOU "CARMILLA" BY SHERIDAN LE FANU OR "BOULDER" BY EVA BALTASAR

CHIRON OF "MOONLIGHT" IS A QUEER CHARACTER NAVIGATING IDENTITY, LOVE, AND ADVERSITY AMIDST THE COMPLEXITIES OF HIS ENVIRONMENT. HE WOULD RECOMMEND READING "GIOVANNI'S ROOM" BY JAMES BALDWIN AND "YOUNG MUNGO" BY DOUGLAS STUART



POP QUIZ!

1. WHO WROTE THE DYSTOPIAN NOVEL "1984", WHICH HAS BEEN ADAPTED INTO SEVERAL FILMS AND HAS INSPIRED COUNTLESS WORKS IN LITERATURE AND CINEMA?

- A) ALDOUS HUXLEY
- B) GEORGE ORWELL
- C) RAY BRADBURY
- D) H.G. WELLS



2. WHO DIRECTED THE FILM ADAPTATION OF THE NOVEL "NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN", WHICH WON THE ACADEMY AWARD FOR BEST PICTURE IN 2008?

- A) QUENTIN TARANTINO
- B) MARTIN SCORSESE
- C) COEN BROTHERS
- D) CHRISTOPHER NOLAN

3. WHICH OF THESE NOVELS WAS NOT ADAPTED INTO A FILM DIRECTED BY STANLEY KUBRICK?

- A) "A CLOCKWORK ORANGE"
- B) "LOLITA"
- C) "2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY"
- D) "THE CATCHER IN THE RYE"

- A) "THE GREEN MILE"
- B) "CARRIE"
- C) "THE SHINING"
- D) "MISERY"


4. WHICH FILM ADAPTATION OF A STEPHEN KING NOVEL FEATURES A PRISON INMATE WITH A MIRACULOUS HEALING ABILITY?

5. IN THE FILM "FIGHT CLUB", BASED ON THE NOVEL BY CHUCK PALAHNIUK, WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE PROTAGONIST'S ALTER EGO?

- A) TYLER DURDEN
- B) JACK
- C) MARLA SINGER
- D) ROBERT PAULSON


6. IN WHICH YEAR WAS THE FIRST INDIAN FEATURE FILM, "RAJA HARISHCHANDRA", DIRECTED BY DADASAHEB PHALKE, RELEASED?

- A) 1905
 - B) 1913
 - C) 1920
 - D) 1931
-



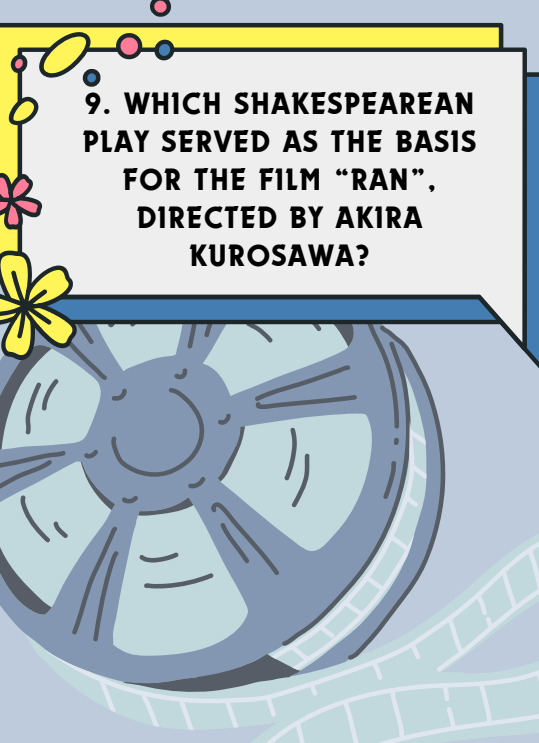
7. IN WHICH INDIAN STATE IS THE FILM INDUSTRY KNOWN AS TOLLYWOOD BASED?

- A) MAHARASHTRA
- B) WEST BENGAL
- C) TAMIL NADU
- D) TELANGANA




8. WHO DIRECTED THE FILM ADAPTATION OF "THE NOVEL THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING"?

- A) CHRISTOPHER NOLAN
- B) PETER JACKSON
- C) STEVEN SPIELBERG
- D) JAMES CAMERON



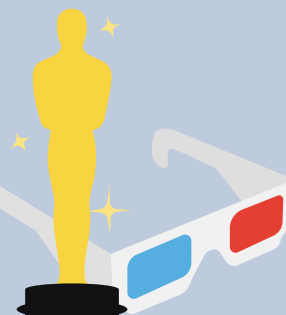
9. WHICH SHAKESPEAREAN PLAY SERVED AS THE BASIS FOR THE FILM "RAN", DIRECTED BY AKIRA KUROSAWA?

- A) "HAMLET"
- B) "KING LEAR"
- C) "MACBETH"
- D) "OTHELLO"



10. WHO DIRECTED THE FILM ADAPTATION OF THE NOVEL, THE COLOR PURPLE BY ALICE WALKER?

- A) SPIKE LEE
- B) AVA DUVERNAY
- C) STEVEN SPIELBERG
- D) BARRY JENKINS



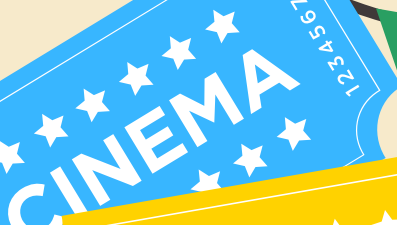
11. WHICH OF THESE NOVELS WAS NOT ADAPTED INTO A FILM DIRECTED BY ANG LEE?

- A) "SENSE AND SENSIBILITY" BY JANE AUSTEN
- B) "LIFE OF PI" BY YANN MARTEL
- C) "BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN" BY ANNIE PROULX
- D) "THE ROAD" BY CORMAC MCCARTHY

12. WHICH JAPANESE NOVEL, ARE THE INDIAN FILMS, DRISHYAM (2015) AND JAANE JAAN (2023) BASED ON

- A) "THE MEMORY POLICE"
- B) "NORWEGIAN WOOD"
- C) "DEVOTION OF SUSPECT X"
- D) "THE HONJIN MURDERS"

ANSWERS : 1. B , 2. C , 3. D , 4. A , 5. A , 6. B , 7. B , 8. B , 9. B , 10. C , 11. D , 12. C



From Trivia! Fiction to Film

Did You Know?

1. Satyajit Ray adapted Tagore three times. He adapted three short stories *Postmaster*, *Samapti* and *Monihara* into *Teen Kanya* (1961). His *Charulata* (1964) was based on *The Broken Nest*. His final Tagore adaptation was *Ghare Baire* (1984) based on *Home and the World*.

2. Rituparno Ghosh's *Shubho Mahurat* (2003) was based on Agatha Christie's *The Mirror Cracked from Side to Side*


3. Saratchandra Chattopadhyay's *Devdas* has been adapted by P. C. Baruah (1935), Bimal Roy (1955), Sanjay Bhansali (2003) and Anurag Kashyap (2009)

4. Kumar Shahani adapted a short story by Nirmal Verma into *Maya Darpan* (1972), Chekhov's *Into the Ravine* into *Kasba* (1991) and Tagore's *Fourth Chapter* into *Char Adhyay* (1997)



5. Mohan Rakesh's *Uski Roti* (1969) and *Aashad Ka Ek Din* (1971) were adapted into films by Mani Kaul

6. Mira Nair's *The Namesake* (2006) was based on a novel by Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2013) was based on a novel by Mohsin Hamid and *A Suitable Boy* (2020) was based on Vikram Seth's work








7. Ruskin Bond's *A Flight of Pigeons* was made as *Junoon* (1978) by Shyam Benegal and *The Blue Umbrella* (2005) was adapted by Vishal Bharadwaj





8. Vishal Bharadwaj's *Maqbool* (2003), *Omkara* (2006) and *Haider* (2014) are based on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *Hamlet* respectively





9. Gulzar adapted Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* into *Angoor* (1982)



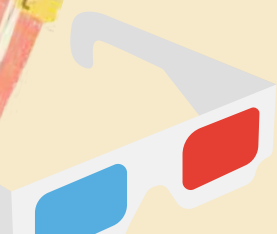

10. M.S. Sathyu's *Garam Hawa* (1974) was based on story by Ismat Chughtai



11. Vijay Anand's *The Guide* (1965) was based on a novel by R.K. Narayan

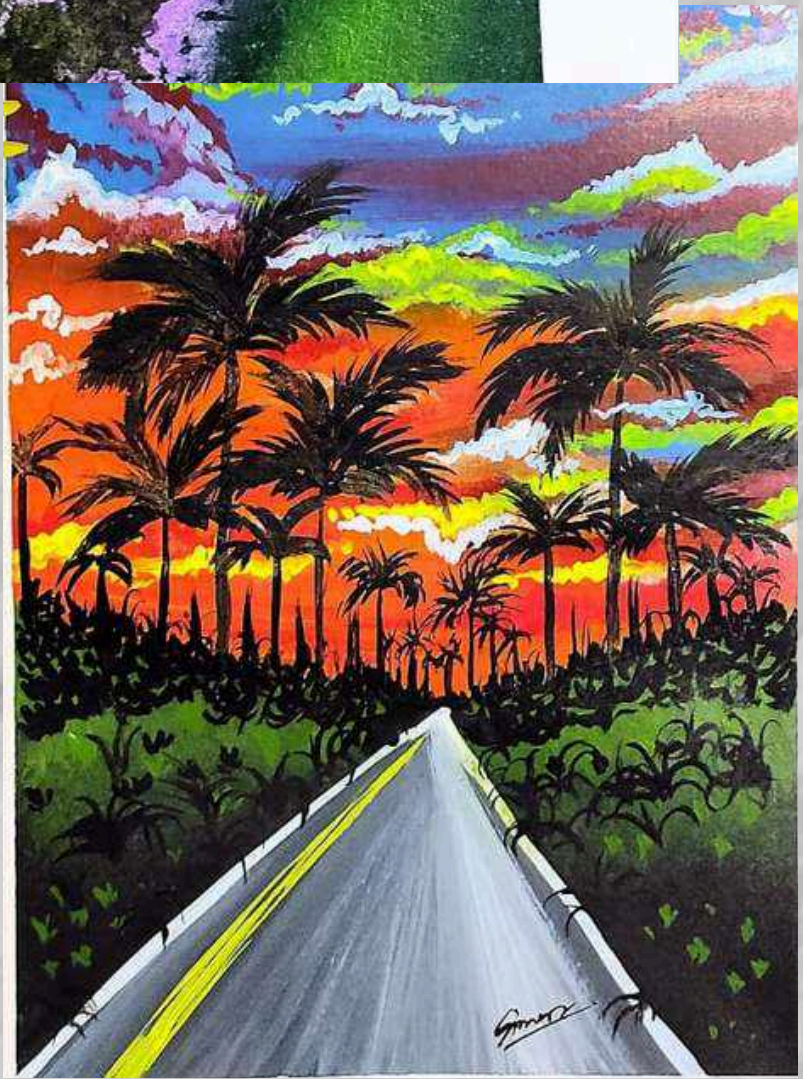


12. James Ivory and Ismail Merchant have adapted Ruth Praver Jhabvala's *Heat and Dust* (1983), E.M. Forster's *A Room with a View* (1985) and Anita Desai's *In Custody* (1993)





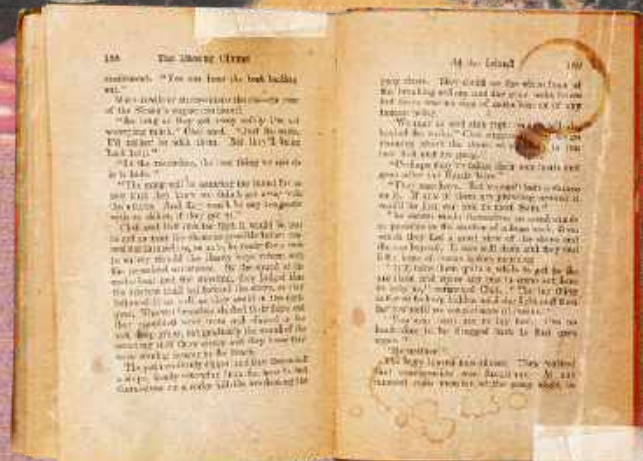
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BOOK REVIEW CORNER



188 The Hunchback of Notre-Dame

CHAPTER XXV

"You see how the book begins with the...

...of the story's development...

...the first of the great scenes...

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A LITERARY ALCHEMY

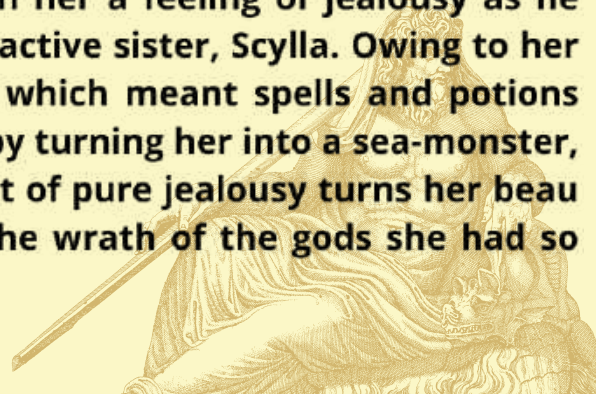
REVIEWING MADELINE MILLER'S "CIRCE"


DEVISHI SUTRADHAR, B.A.(H) ENGLISH, II YEAR

There are some books which stay with you and "Circe" is one of them. Madeline Miller's "Circe" is an exquisite tapestry woven from the threads of ancient mythology, skillfully blending timeless themes of power, love, and the search for identity into a mesmerizing narrative. In this reimagining of the mythological figure of Circe, Miller breathes new life into a character often relegated to the periphery of ancient epics, offering readers a captivating exploration of agency, resilience, and the complexities of the human condition. I was first introduced to the world of Greek mythology retellings through Miller and I have not been disappointed by her works since. What she was doing was nothing new - writers have been reimagining Homer's work since the "Aeneid" - but the contemporary tone and modern sensibility did something extraordinary to the well-known tale. The best historical fiction balances the past and present in the text, so that it both celebrates and collapses the distance between then and now. The novel begins in the court of Helios, the sun god, who is about to announce the punishment fit for the heinous crime committed by Prometheus, the titan who stole fire. The trial's sequence is where Circe witnesses the wrath of gods and develops a feeling of affinity towards the humans. Being one of the countless children of the illustrious sun god, she rarely gets any attention and is named aptly, Circe - meaning hawk, a name owed to her slender, golden eyes and her squeaky voice, which took after the nymph blood in her, resulting in a much shrill, human-like voice. The opening line of the novel truly encapsulates the essence of abandonment and ignorance she faces by her family of illustrious gods and nymphs, where she grappled for attention in the midst of beauty and grandeur, both of which did not come easily for her, which is described to us perfectly by the opening line of the novel:

"WHEN I WAS BORN, THE NAME FOR WHAT I WAS DID NOT EXIST."

Perhaps this is where her affection for humanity first developed. Perhaps feeling misunderstood is what led to her compassion for the humans, who were much misunderstood by the gods. As we progress in the novel, we witness her encounters with several men, one of them being the mortal fisherman, Glaucos. Circe develops feelings of affection for him, which later churns in her a feeling of jealousy as he gains popularity and steers towards her much attractive sister, Scylla. Owing to her lineage, she developed a curiosity for witchcraft, which meant spells and potions potent enough to vanquish Scylla, which she does by turning her into a sea-monster, who later dominates a part of the vast sea. This act of pure jealousy turns her beau against her as he reprimands her and she faces the wrath of the gods she had so desperately avoided.





Circe gets banished to a remote island, Aiaia where she is cut off from the outside world and thus begins the development of Circe as a witch who with time hones her skills to perfection; as a person for whom men in her life had been disappointing and shifty, she discovers peace within herself and as a demigod whose responsibilities fall before her personal life where she sacrifices love and opts for the sensible choices. It is not only a story about sacrifices, hardships and heartbreak, but also about complexities of life, differences of mortals and immortals as well as the true meaning of empowerment. Miller's prose is lyrical and evocative, transporting readers to a world of magic and myth where gods and mortals coexist in a delicate balance of power and ambition. Through Circe's eyes, we witness the rise and fall of legendary heroes, the machinations of vengeful deities, and the enduring power of love and longing. Miller's meticulous research and attention to detail imbue the narrative with a rich sense of authenticity, drawing readers deeper into the tapestry of Greek mythology with each turn of the page. Circe is not only about love and longing. At its core, it is about facing adversities, coming to terms with the transient nature of time. There have been countless retellings of mythological stories but what is unique to Circe is that it is told through the eyes of a character that did not hold much importance in the original book, *The Odyssey*. Miller gives us the previously muted perspectives in the classics and presents a spectacular tale which was forged from the scraps left by the ancient writers. It is quite well said by Circe herself that:

**"HUMBLING WOMEN SEEMS TO BE A CHIEF PASTIME OF POETS."
"AS IF THERE CAN BE NO STORY UNLESS WE CRAWL AND WEEP"**

With overwhelming support comes criticism as well. Fusty - and almost always male - critics lamented the historical inaccuracies, the liberties taken with the text. Miller wrote "*Circe*" which was heavily influenced by Homer's original tale, however she did take a bit of liberty to present the female perspective, which got lost in the "*The Odyssey*", even if we talk about Odysseus' wife or Circe and her elder sister who marries Minos, or even Scylla, their perspectives, their stories remained unfinished as all became well once the king returned home. But what happened to the women? Miller masterfully unveils their point of view. The critics missed the point that Miller was seeking to popularize stories that were first popular three millennia ago.

Overall, *Circe* by Madeline Miller falls under what I would call "female rage", the kind of rage where the woman does not sit motionless, distraught, as a single teardrop falls from her eye but where she is livid, she is furious, fiercely defending herself and her dear ones. While reading this novel, you will come across many familiar characters such as Hermes, Daedalus, Minos and his son the Minotaur, Odysseus as well as several more.

AS AN AVID READER AND HISTORY ENTHUSIAST, I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT "CIRCE" IS AN AMAZING, ENGAGING READ. EVERYTHING FROM THE DESCRIPTIONS TO THE CHARACTERS COMES TO LIFE THROUGH MILLER'S BEAUTIFUL STORYTELLING. "CIRCE" IS INDEED AN AIRY DELIGHT, A NOVEL TO BE DEVoured GREEDILY IN A SINGLE SITTING.



MASKING DEATH IN PRINT:

A REVIEW OF "NO LONGER HUMAN" BY DAZAI OSAMU

ANUSHKA CHOUDHARY, B.A (H) ENGLISH, II YEAR

"As long as I can make them laugh, it doesn't matter how, I'll be alright. If I succeed in that, the human beings probably won't mind it too much if I remain outside their lives. The one thing I must avoid is becoming offensive in their eyes: I shall be nothing, the wind, the sky."

— Dazai Osamu, *No Longer Human* (1948)

No Longer Human (*Ningen Shikkaku*) was Dazai's last complete work, published in 1948 shortly after his seemingly inevitable suicide on the thirteenth of June, six days before he would have turned thirty-nine. The quasi-autobiographical work is considered a modern-day classic and has seen a great rise in popularity in recent years. The most acclaimed translation of this work is by Donald Keene, published in 1958. The book is presented as a collection of three notebooks that the author came in possession of through an acquaintance, and tells the story of Yozo Oba, a man tortured by life and people.

"What did he mean by "society"? The plural of human beings?"

— Yozo Oba, *No Longer Human*

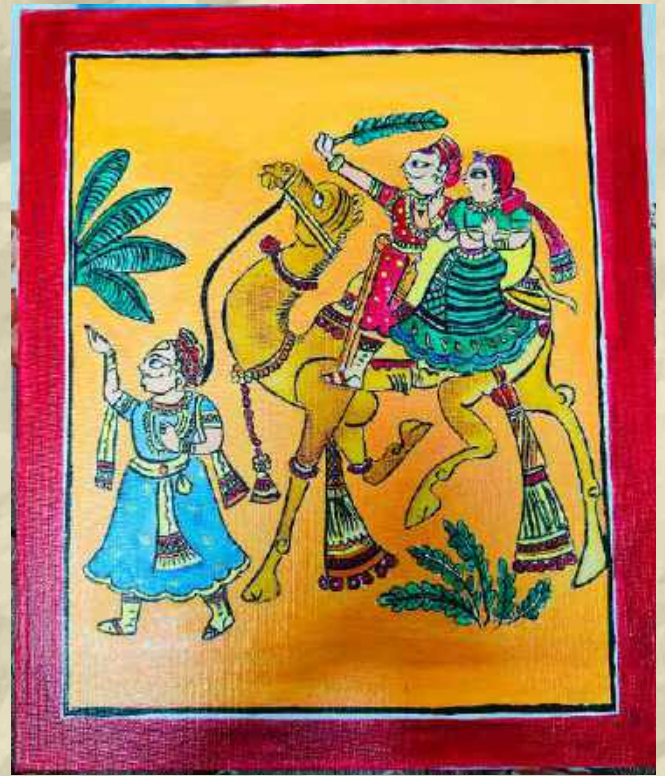
Humans are the bane of Yozo's existence, he fears them and believes himself to be a "clown", entertaining them with his parlour tricks and easy charm to hide his real self. As he transitions into adult life, the mask starts to fall apart and he struggles to be human. The first-person account of his life lets us dive into his psyche from childhood to adulthood and it's an uncanny ride. To quote Freud, "The uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar." Throughout the novel, you can immerse yourself into Yozo's consciousness, his depression, his addiction, and his masks. He is a flawed human being, a dysfunctional piece of the puzzle that is society. But what is society, if not the successful or contrived attempt to wear artful disguises and manufacture believable masquerades? *No Longer Human* takes you down different rabbit holes and could prove to be a harrowing read, it contains topics like suicides, addiction, and sexual assault. It is descriptive but in a way that takes you through the haunting thoughts of Yozo Oba as he grapples with life. The protagonist slowly pulls the thread of his disguise and drowns in the misery of his creation. He fails and falls into the void of escapism, and his only attempt at holding onto the rope of make-believe leaves gashes so deep that he gets "disqualified from being human."

Yozo leaves such a big an impact on you that you do not stop re-checking your own mask for days. The attempted suicides, the cheap addictions to escape reality, the distrust of society, and overthinking to the point of depression are all too real; a painting of Dazai's own life with strokes of fiction. Dazai presents the ordinary and often overlooked ailments of social existence in all its vivid intricacies in post-war Japan. Dazai took his own life with his last lover Tomie, by drowning, at the age of 38. *No Longer Human*, is a page-turner that grips you with an uncanny sense of intrusion, as you pierce Yozo's masks and voyeuristically peep into life in an abstruse manner. I will end the review with a quote that made me want to read the book.



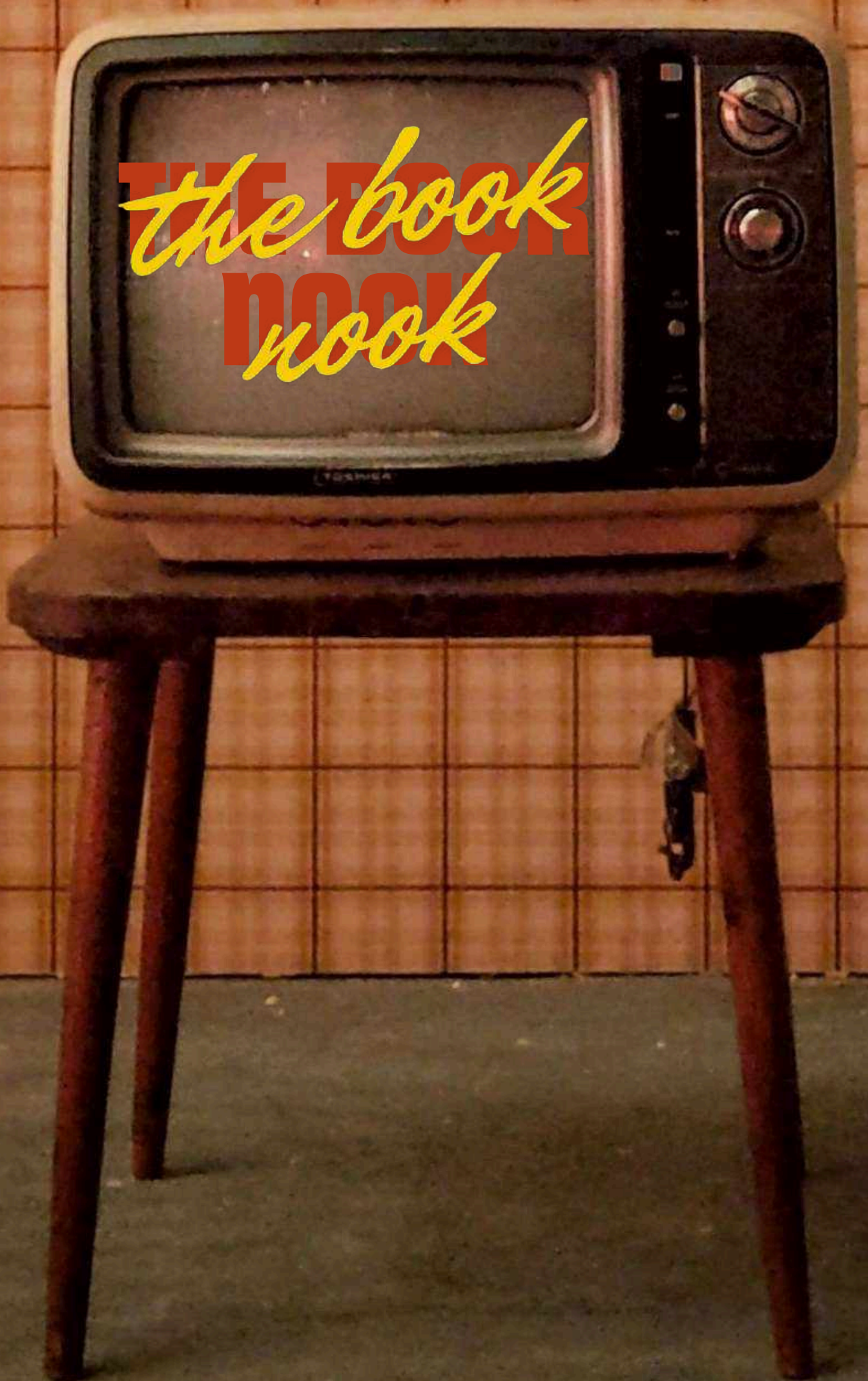
“I thought, I want to die. I want to die more than ever before. There’s no chance now of a recovery. No matter what sort of thing I do, no matter what I do, it’s sure to be a failure, just a final coating applied to my shame...All that can happen now is that one foul, humiliating sin will be piled on another, and my sufferings will become only the more acute. I want to die. I must die. Living itself is the source of sin.”
— Dazai Osamu, *No Longer Human*





**ARTWORK BY
AAYUSHI RAJWAR**

THE BOOK
nook



GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Our youth is often caught in the dilemma of whether to stand out from their peers by being completely themselves and unique, or to fit in with their friends so that they do not feel left out. While being unique is often misunderstood as being "not normal", there are also a few cases where people encourage each other to stand out and not to blend in. But why is the youth forced to choose between the two? Why is the choice never easy for them? They could both stand out or fit in according to their own choice. And this choice should not be result-driven. Why should one stand out with the uneasy expectation that they ought to become someone's role model or inspiration? They can stand out and still fail. In the same way, fitting in or standing out is also one's own choice. Why should the decision of someone wanting to blend in with their peers equated with them lacking the courage to choose their passion or joining the rat race?

The society pressurizing the youth to make a choice is nothing new but I would like to point out the overbearing hypocrisy of society that compels us to make a choice. They first plant an idea or dream in the child's mind, normalising the choice of engineering and medicine as key to social success. On the other hand, the same people will also eagerly point out "Everyone has succumbed to the exploitative rat-race. There's no originality and courage to dream differently in youngsters anymore".

Believing in your own self-worth is the only way to get out of this common dilemma. What you really want will always show you the path in your life. One must remember not to belittle one's dreams. Something that one likes might be misperceived as trifling by others but it should not compel us to sacrifice our own dreams. Blending in or standing out should always be our own independent choice regardless of what consequence we need to face because of our choice.

"You should never give up your inner self" - Clint Eastwood

Riya Saikia
B.A. (H) English, II Year



A REQUIEM FOR ROCHESTER

**KHUSHI KAPOOR, B.A (H)
ENGLISH, III YEAR**

Stripped of everything, having resigned from her position as governess and roaming on the road, destitute and penniless, Jane found herself stranded outside Marsh End. Jane was welcomed inside and introduced to the residents. Two sisters Diana and Mary were at their German lessons. After a month of living at Marsh End, Jane accidentally eavesdropped on St. John River on her way to the kitchen. He gave some startling news to Diana, "I am going to ask for her hand in marriage."

Diana replied in disbelief, "Whose hand, brother?"

"You know of whom I am talking about. Don't act so foolish."

"No brother I do not know what you are talking about. Besides, why this sudden interest in marriage?"

"I am going to ask Jane Eyre to marry me. And to answer your latter question, I have my reasons."

"That can't be true brother." Diana replied in disbelief.

Jane, who was listening to their conversation, straightened her back at the pitch of Diana's voice and John Rivers was surprised by his sister's reticence.

Diana continued, "No brother you cannot do this to poor Jane. She has already suffered a lot in life, of which you have no idea. I am not letting you get along with your proposal until you tell me your reasons." John Rivers was surprised at the mention of Jane's sufferings because he had no clue about what his sister was saying. "What are you saying Diana? By the looks of how perfect Jane appears, she must have had the most amicable life." "That's where the problem lies, brother. You never endeavored to ask her about anything, and now you intend to ask her hand in marriage. She has had a traumatic childhood and I think what she has told us is not the complete story. She must be omitting some of the harrowing details to avoid reliving them."

Diana took John Rivers down Jane's past, revealing what Jane had told her and Mary. Jane felt a tear rolling down her cheek as she remembered her own past and the sudden guilt of leaving Mr. Rochester resurged within her but she reminded herself that she is not the one who should be feeling guilty for what happened. It was Mr. Rochester who betrayed her and what she did was righteous and in line with her Christian belief. Jane wiped away these painful thoughts and listened to John Rivers' reply to Diana after what she had told him. He said, "Oh, Jane truly has suffered! But I am sure she will agree to my proposal if I tell her the advantages of marrying me."

"And they are?" Diana asked lifting her eyebrows.



John Rivers answered with a smile playing on his lips "In a couple of weeks, I am visiting India to be a missionary and therefore, I want Jane to be my wife and assist me on trips without causing any scandal."

Jane thought how marriage could be such a simple decision for someone. The thought of marriage never really occurred to Jane before this. She was in no position to face St. John Rivers and thought that it would be better to just escape from this situation. She remained in her room until dinner time. She knew what she was going to do. She packed her belongings in a cloth, tied them up, made sure her door was locked, opened the window and threw a bed cloth down the window, securing one end of it in her hands and tying the other end to a table. Jane first threw her bag down and with the help of the bed cloth she climbed down the window. Jane, now looking up at the place which she had thought would give her a new life, a new beginning, sighed ruefully. After giving it one last glance, Jane ran. Jane ran as fast as she could without knowing her destination. After running for almost a while, she stopped near a tree to catch her breath and thought of the only place where she could find her happiness. A smile imperceptibly appeared on her face at the thought of Mr. Rochester. Jane knew where she would find Mr. Rochester, Thornfield. Jane ran as fast she could to Thornfield. And after almost a day when she reached the Manor, she couldn't believe her eyes. The place had turned into a desolate ruin. Jane thought it would be better to first ask someone around about the events that transpired since she left Thornfield. Her eyes suddenly fell on a woman standing afar from the scorched earth where the manor once stood. Jane instantly recognized the woman. It was Bertha Mason. Jane knew instinctively that the instrument of this carnage and evil could only be Bertha. She approached Bertha with indignation and fear but only managed to utter, "Mr. Rochester... is he?"

Bertha bowed her head and just wearily shook it. Jane's heart was shattered. She was torn apart by grief and regret and an unspoken terror washed over her. Jane was inconsolable and distraught. But she knew she could not let this be her end. She remembered her parting words to Mr. Rochester; "I am no bird; and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being with an independent will." Perhaps it was time for Jane to be free, to be free from the past, the horror and beauty of it, the loss and longing of it, the strength and fragility of it. Now twenty and unmarried Jane Eyre is a headmistress at a school of her own which she established on the grounds of Thornfield, in the loving memory of Mr. Rochester. Jane lives her life carrying inside herself the everlasting love of Mr. Rochester.



The Law of KARMA

Deepali Kumari Mahato, B.A. (H) English, II Year

*"Why is there trauma? Is it because of Karma?
Yes! We will suffer till we realize that
Life is just a Drama!"*

Karma means action. It is a universal law of action and reaction or the law of cause and effect. It is based on the universal principle, 'As you sow, so shall you reap'. According to this universal law, nothing happens by chance. Everything unfolding in this world is a result of our past actions or Karma. This law seems to have been created by the creator of this universe. Just like there is the Law of Gravity that states that everything gets pulled to the center of the earth due to a force called Gravity, the Law of Karma governs everything unfolding on the planet. There are many universal laws. The cycle of seasons and the revolution of the earth around the sun, are all part of the several universal laws that govern our planet.

One of the most important universal laws is the Law of Karma. Every Karma or action of a conscious human being is recorded in his karmic account. Every action has a reaction and thus we are rewarded or punished for every deed, accordingly. It means that every action will initiate an equivalent reaction. The Law of Karma is based on the principle - 'What you give is what you get'. Our action becomes the cause and this cause will result in an effect. Good actions will be the cause of a good reaction or a good effect and bad actions will become seeds that will sprout as bad destiny.

The irony is that we cannot escape Karma (action). A human being must act. There can be no freedom from action and human beings have been given a free will. Only Man can discriminate because we are blessed with a fully developed intellect. We can choose what we do but once we do it, it becomes our Karma. Whatever is happening in life is all Karma. It is neither luck nor chance nor is it God's will. We often see people considering life to be all about fate and destiny. Why is it so? It is because they don't understand Karma. Everything unfolding in our life, is a result of Karma. First, it is our past karma that appears as our destiny and then, it is our present karma that bears fruit in our life and this will not stop. Sometimes, it may not bear fruit for several years or even several lifetimes but the Law of Karma is unforgiving and unavoidable. We often wonder as to why bad things are happening to good people. It is their Karma that is unfolding. It may be some old Karma that had been left unsettled in our Karmic account that is getting redeemed now. Whatever Karma is redeemed in life, it is settled. Whatever Karma remains unsettled in this life, will be carried forward and return to earth in a rebirth. "Just like the seeds we plant decide the Fruit on the tree, The Law of Karma ensures, our Deeds decide our Destiny!"



আমার সোনা

MY DARLING



They say that when you become a parent, when the small bundle of joy arrives, you temporarily lose yourself in that euphoric state as you hold your child for the first time in your arms... so tiny, and so fragile. It is a responsibility that many had not carried well but Ashutosh was adamant about becoming the best father. Better than his own Baba, whose regular beatings were etched in his mind and the scars on his back were the physical engravings of pain. "You are going to be named Khushi, our bundle of joy", whispered Ashutosh as he kissed his daughter's feet and wiped his tears which seemed to flow nonstop. Years later, Khushi, now a young adult had found solace in the quietude of her apartment, away from the cacophony of familial discord. Amidst the distant echoes of children's laughter and barking dogs, she immersed herself in her work which gave her a semblance of tranquility amidst life's turbulence. Her father, battling cancer back home, his prognosis grim, loomed heavily on her mind. It had been several months since they found out that there was no chance of survival for him and so the family had started preparing for the inevitable.

This evening, Khushi felt inexplicably anxious. Perhaps it was the question, perhaps it was the bitter tea, now cold that she had left untouched. A guttural feeling formed in her throat as she stopped writing and sat up, taking in a few deep breaths. 'I should go outside and get some fresh air', she thought. Taking her mug, she went outside in the balcony and took a few sips as she watched the kids play. 'Oh, so bitter', she grimaced. A child, roaring with laughter as he ran, suddenly tripped, and fell. Immediately, his father ran up to him, dusting off the mud as he cajoled his child not to cry, "Let's go and have some ice cream, Shivam", he said lovingly and the child sniffled as he nodded, his big watery eyes turned towards his father as he clutched his finger and waddled with him. Khushi pursed her lips as she watched this incident unfurl. She was eight when she had to shift to Kolkata when her mother got a job, leaving behind memories and her Baba. Baba was the best, he would bring gifts whenever he visited them, take her brother and Khushi to amusement parks, and make delectable egg rolls! He would play with them till sundown and narrate adventurous tales before they fell asleep. It was probably when she turned fifteen that things started to turn awry. Suddenly her thoughts were interrupted by her phone ringing.

"Hello...?", she stammered, sipping the god-awful tea. "Khushi, shona", it was her mother, sobbing on the other end of the phone. Panic set in her as her eyes widened. "Ma? What is it? Why are you crying? Is Baba alright?" After her mother had calmed down, she told Khushi that her Baba was not doing well and was on his deathbed. He had asked, through a strained whisper emanating from his clenched jaws "Bring Khushi to me, let me see her last time"

The flight was delayed, the passengers groaned at the announcement. Meanwhile Khushi typed away on her laptop, fighting back the urge to breakdown and cry for hours at end. Memories came flooding in as she wiped the tears on her keyboard every now and then. Munching on her protein bar, she took deep breaths and typed on.

She was sixteen when she got into a relationship for the first time. He would come by her house frequently, whisking her away on his scooter for a few hours before returning her back. Khushi, with her heart full and a smile on her face, would run up the stairs and excitedly tell her brother everything even though he was least interested in her romantic getaways. Then one day, on Diwali, everything changed. Her baba, sat reading Ananda Bazar Patrika, turning every page fiercely. Not knowing something was wrong, Khushi gently slipped into her room and started dressing for the Diwali celebrations.

"Who was that, Khushi?" Baba asked in a gruff voice. She turned around, a bit scared and answered meekly, "He is my friend, baba. We study together." Throwing his newspaper across the table, he got up and took long strides towards her and roared at her face with a deafening voice. "Friend? Why does he come every day? Do you take me for a fool? I never taught you to become this promiscuous woman, how I wish you were not my daughter, how shameful!" he screamed as he slapped Khushi across her face. It seemed as if the whole world had come to a standstill, everything moved in slow motion. Reeling from the shock, Khushi staggered back to her room and collapsed on the floor, too stunned to speak. What happened next was a blur to her, all she remembered was a cacophony of screams, doors slamming and her mother shrieking.

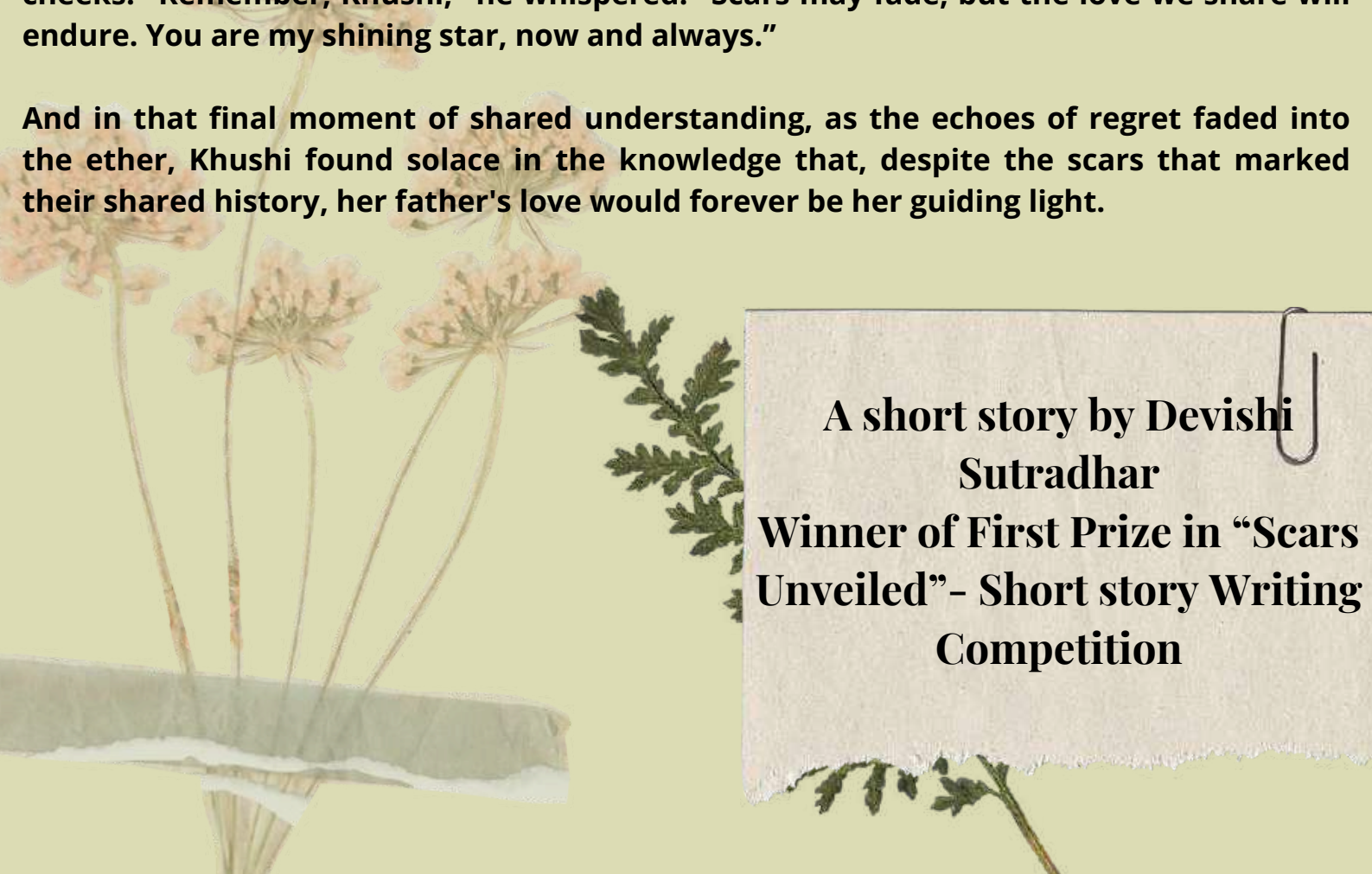
Pulling her suitcase from the conveyor belt, Khushi made her way to the exit. She hopped in the cab and raced to the hospital. The ICU looked desolate, everyone looking pale under the fluorescent lights. Ma ran up to her, clutching her as she sobbed uncontrollably, whispering incoherent gibberish as she clung on to her daughter. "Wait here, I'll go see baba," said Khushi as her brother pried their mother away from her. Her brother nodded, looking at her with his empty eyes as she turned the knob and went inside. It had been several years since she had talked to her father. That episode had left her rattled and she left soon to pursue her education, somewhere far away from the man she had begun to despise. Now she looked at him, tethered to the ventilator, heaving as the pumps infused oxygen in him. As the weight of the years settled upon Ashutosh, he found himself standing at the precipice of remorse, his gaze fixed upon the blurred form of his daughter, Khushi, now a young woman. The echoes of his own tumultuous past reverberated within him, mingling with the anticipation of his imminent departure from this world.

In the solitude of his hospital room, tubes and wires tangled around his weakened frame, Ashutosh sought solace in the presence of Khushi, the embodiment of both his deepest joys and his most profound regrets. Each breath he took seemed to carry the weight of missed opportunities, of words left unspoken and wounds left unhealed. As Khushi entered the room, her heart heavy with the knowledge of what lay ahead, she was met with the sight of her father, once penetrating and reproachful. The lines etched upon his face were indentations of time and weariness, of battles he had fought, both with himself and the world that had shaped him. With trembling hands, Khushi approached her father's bedside, her eyes brimming with unshed tears. In that moment, the barriers that had long stood between them melted away, leaving only the raw, unfiltered essence of their shared love intact.

"Baba," Khushi whispered, her voice barely audible above the hum of machines. "I am here." Ashutosh turned to her, his eyes clouded by repentance and remorse. "Amar shona," he murmured, his voice barely more than a whisper. "Forgive me." Tears welled up in Khushi's eyes as she reached out to grasp her father's hand, the years of agony and resentment melting away in the warmth of their shared sorrow. In that fleeting moment of vulnerability, they found redemption. "I always wanted to be the father you deserved," Ashutosh continued, his words heavy with the weight of broken promises. "But I failed you, my darling. I failed you in ways I can never undo."

Khushi shook her head, her own tears mingling with those of her father. "No, baba," she whispered. "You were the best father I could have ever asked for". A bittersweet smile crossed Ashutosh's lips as he reached out to brush away a stray tear from his daughter's cheeks. "Remember, Khushi," he whispered. "Scars may fade, but the love we share will endure. You are my shining star, now and always."

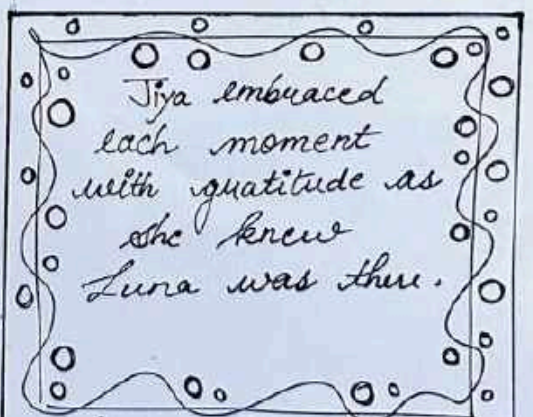
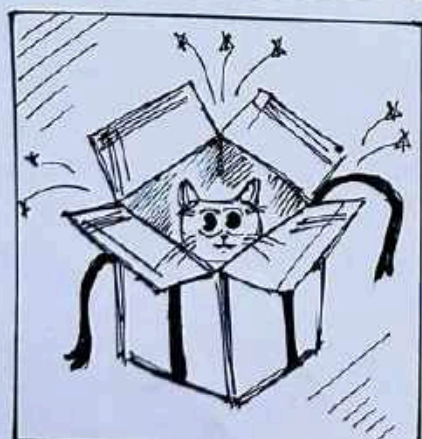
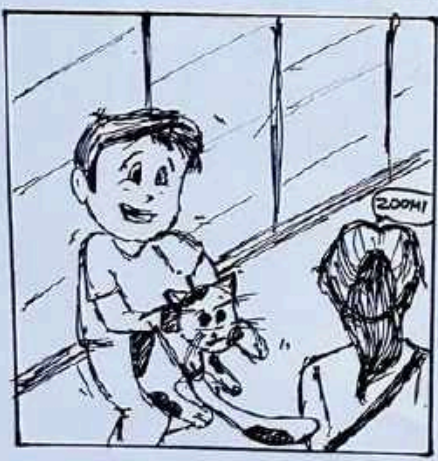
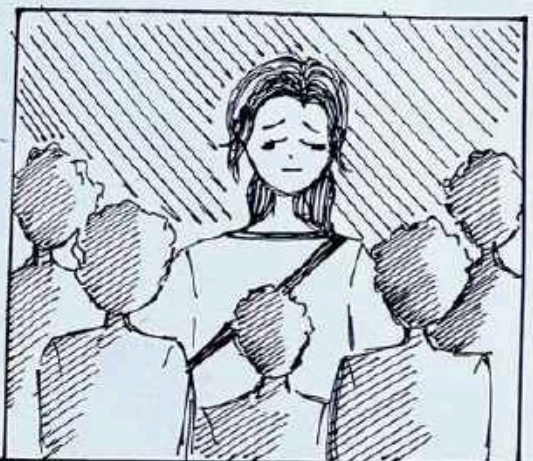
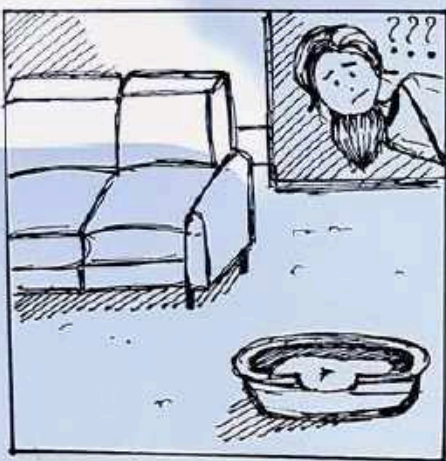
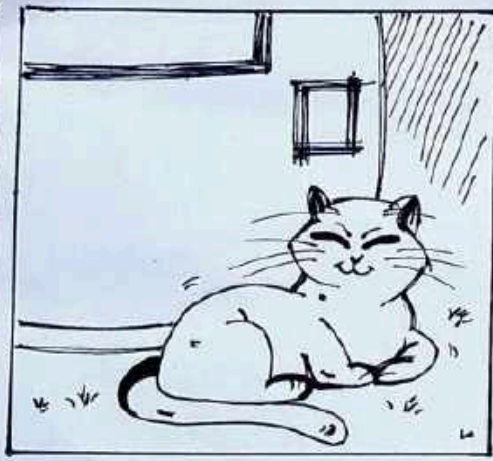
And in that final moment of shared understanding, as the echoes of regret faded into the ether, Khushi found solace in the knowledge that, despite the scars that marked their shared history, her father's love would forever be her guiding light.

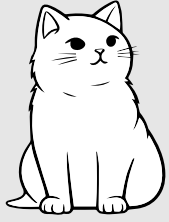


**A short story by Devishi
Sutradhar
Winner of First Prize in "Scars
Unveiled"- Short story Writing
Competition**

Lost And Found

Illustration by Simardeep Kaur, B.A. (H) English, III Year





Lost And Found



Story by Asha Singh, B.A. (H) English, III Year

"It has been six years, since the day you came into my life, and filled it with warmth and insurmountable joy." Jiya was talking to her cat, Zoomi. Suddenly, her phone rings. "Hello??" Jiya asked, "Oh Rohan! Don't worry about the presentation. I'll complete it before I go off to sleep. Boss will approve it this time for sure! Okay bye, see you tomorrow!"

Jiya turned to her work again. Suddenly her door-bell rang. "Who is it now?" she groaned, exasperated. She opened the door in a rush.

The moment she opened the door her eyes sparked with joy. "Maasi, you! What a great surprise! How are you?" That night Jiya worked late, chatting away with her dear relative she met after many months. The next morning, she woke up in a panic, "Oh God ! I am already late the boss will bite my head off", she groaned. "Bye maasi, I'm leaving. Take care of Zoomi!"

In the office, she gave her presentation. "Excellent! Good team work," commended her boss, leaving her absolutely elated, and left the cabin.

"I knew only you could impress the boss", said Rohan. And they all burst into laughter.

"Let's have a celebration tonight", said Nisha. "Not possible tonight. I have to reach home early, my aunt has come from Lucknow, I'll be on leave and spend some time with her, maybe next time, bye now!" she said as she bid goodbye to her friends.

When Jiya returned home, her aunt was not there. She found that only her cat was there. "What are you doing? where's maasi?" She searched her flat and the building block but couldn't find her aunt anywhere. She called Rohan who arrived soon. She narrated the whole story to him and eventually they decided to file a 'FIR'. When they returned, they were shocked to see Jiya's aunt in the house. "Where did you disappear maasi? I was worried sick! You scared me."

Jiya's aunt replied, "When you left the house this morning, I got a letter and followed the instructions given in it. I thought you had sent me the letter and wanted to surprise me. When I reached the destination, I found a room filled with darkness, dust and cobwebs. When I tried to retract my steps and escape, I discovered that someone had locked me from outside. I managed to escape after a lot of efforts."

"But you are new to this city...why would someone want to harm you maasi?" said Jiya. "I don't know dear" Maasi replied. "Maybe they wanted to hurt you Jiya" said Rohan. "But when I reached home, there was no sign of struggle or vandalism... everything was in its place...wait where is Zoomi? Zoomi? She was right here."

That night they searched every nook and corner but Zoomi was nowhere to be found and Jiya was inconsolable.

One month passed but there was no sign of Zoomi. Mukunda, her maasi went back to Lucknow. Jiya's life felt so incomplete without Zoomi, she had forgotten to smile and withdrew into a shell, she stopped talking to people, even Rohan.

She became forlorn and bitter, the weariness in her heart grew. Rohan and Nisha saw Jiya wilting away before their eyes but they were helpless, only Zoomi could bring back life into her.

One day when Jiya was returning home from work she saw a girl playing with her kitten. Jiya smiled but there was an imperceptible grief behind her smile. After a few months, Jiya's birthday arrived. "Today is Jiya's birthday" said Rohan to Nisha. "We should do something special for her" "But how? She will never agree to go out with us, she has become a loner" replied Nisha. "Every cloud has a silver lining... Boss will help us in our plan," said Rohan.

Jiya was sitting near the window holding a photograph of her cat and tears streamed down her cheeks. Suddenly her phone rang, she picked the call, it was her boss, "Ok boss! I'm coming with the file", she ended the call and got dressed in a hurry. She reached the office but the moment she entered the room, the lights went off. She dialed her boss but didn't get any response. Out of the blue, Rohan slipped into the room, caught Jiya's hand and whispered into her ear, "Happy Birthday", the lights tuned on and everybody started cheering for Jiya.

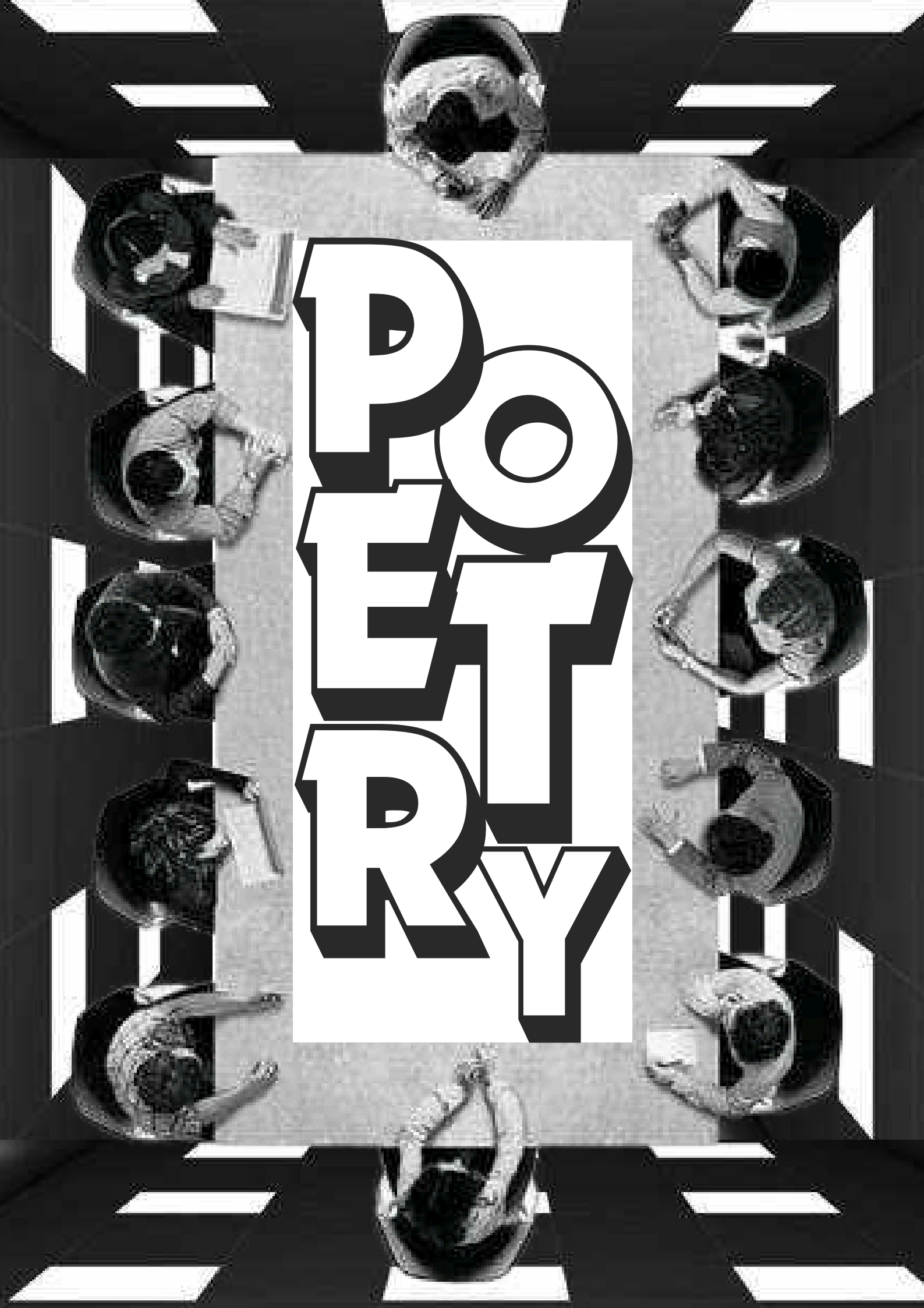
Afterwards Rohan insisted that he would drive Jiya home but suddenly took a detour and drove towards the beach. "Trust me Jiya...I am not going to kidnap you... there's a surprise waiting for you." The beach was strewn with flower petals and glistened as the light from the stars illuminated it. Rohan gently helped Jiya into a chair and offered her a drink. "I'll be back", after a few minutes he came back with a wrapped cardboard box. Jiya looked at him stunned. "Open it", he smiled playfully as Jiya unwrapped the box; upon opening it, a tear trickled down her cheeks... she was speechless and could only murmur a faint "Thank you". Rohan clasped her hand and wiped her tears, "Maybe she's not your Zoomi, but she will cuddle in your arms and lick your face and play with your hair just like Zoomi did. She will give you the love which you have been craving and wipe away your sorrows" Jiya picked up the kitten, the warmth of its small body against hers brought a sense of comfort she hadn't felt in weeks. As they sat together on the beach, watching the waves roll in, Jiya felt a weight lift from her shoulders... it seemed like it was speaking to her... "Don't cry... I'm back". The cool night breeze felt like a gentle caress and lulled Jiya into happiness

With Rohan's support and the new kitten by her side, Jiya began to heal. Each day, she found solace in the kitten's playful antics and affectionate purrs. Slowly but surely, the sadness that had consumed her started to fade away, replaced by a newfound sense of happiness. Weeks turned into months, and Jiya's bond with her new kitten only grew stronger. She named her Luna, after the moon that had illuminated their first night together on the beach. Luna became Jiya's constant companion, bringing light and laughter back into her life. One evening, as Jiya sat by the window with Luna curled up in her lap, she felt a sense of peace wash over her. She looked down at Luna's sleeping form and whispered, "Thank you for finding your way into my life, little one. You may not be Zoomi, but you're exactly what I needed." And as the days passed, she embraced each moment with gratitude, knowing that she was never truly alone as long as Luna was there.



**ARTWORK BY
SANA UBAID**

POETRY



HOUSE OF JUSTICE

Welcome to the house of justice,
Here the Head sits on the throne
Handing out judgement from the
pulpit,
Sidelining the evidences drawn.

Here are the witnesses, wallowing in
their hostility
Prejudice running through their
veins;
Minds being filled with their own
bigotry
Relentless until lives are drained.

Then there's the benighted audience,
Heads bowed down to the miserable
Incriminate
In whose Name they justify their
violence,
And to whom they sacrifice the
innocents.

A torrent of resentment and curse
Spill from their lips like a current,
They condemn them for their birth,
And happily, sign their death
warrant.

Welcome to the House of justice
Here appearances are but charades.
Where, poor souls think equity might
be
But don't realise it's a mere facade.

Puja Sarmah
B.A. (H) English, II Year

THE SCEPTIC'S ADMONITION

Dystopia plays hide n' seek,
the soldiers march and cry,
The king struts to utopia,
while the poets choke and die.

Close your eyes and draw the blinds,
the boy is crying wolf again,
"Beware! A sycophant in sheep's
clothing
is more treacherous than a villain!"

Will you use your last life?
or are you scared of strife?
Click on resume before,
your screen, game over, lights.

How long will you go on?
in your contagious blithe,
in this passive existence,
while the King, unchecked, reigns?

The lute, webs of twisted truth,
spins,
the lyre screams and breaks its
strings,
John's mice will die in Hamelin,
while the pied piper, lullaby, sings.

"Mirror! Mirror!", head for the hills,
Before, "Off with your head", the
Queen trills!

Anushka Choudhary
B.A.(H) English, II YEAR

LOVE SONG OF ILLUSION

Sitting under this blue canvas that we
call the sky, with these emotions quitted.

Sounds like a torture right?

These vibrant Flowers are turning white

Even though, the spring has arrived!

Then a strong gust of wind carrying the
brown leaves, for the last time

Carried away the love I had for you,

Maybe that's why the spring has knocked
on my door, bringing the colors back to
Life.

But still, the words flow like the river
gliding down, drenching it with
emotions, thoughts and feelings of the
time we met

Why does reminiscing about that time
brings me to tears?

Maybe because of the realization that
you are not here

Why am I still seeing Blue?

Maybe because it reminds me of you

Those eyes of yours,
impenetrable and opaque
or is that the entire truth?

Those dark orbs are hiding something
sinister, as one may suspect them to
But oh! The naïve child didn't have a clue
with complete faith,
he devoted himself to you.

One with the face of an angel, can grin
like the devil too.

Maybe it's true that one has both yin and
yang, hiding deep within

But not everyone can see through
The devil was that someone who was
once loved by that child or the naïve you.

Komal Joshi
B.A. (H) English, II Year

REEL VERSE

In the dimly lit room of my mind,
Words and images dance hand in hand,
Literature whispers secrets into my
ear,

Cinema paints stories on the canvas of
my imagination.

The novel's depth, the film's visual
grace,

Both worlds of wonder, a perfect place,
To lose oneself, to dream and to
explore,

A journey of the heart, a treasure store.

The silver screen flickers to life,

A symphony of light and sound,

Transporting me to distant lands,

Where dreams and reality intertwined.

Books lined up like soldiers on the
shelf,

Each one a world waiting to be
explored,

Pages filled with magic and wonder,

Inviting me to lose myself in their
embrace.

Characters come alive before my eyes,
Their stories unfolding like petals in
bloom,

Emotions raw and unfiltered,
Leaving a mark on my soul long after
the credits roll.

I'll let myself get lost in the pages,
And submit to the magic of the screen,
For in literature and cinema, I find
solace,

And a glimpse of something greater
than myself.

Simardeep Kaur
B.A. (H) English, III Year

IT WAS JUST A DREAM

There was a kind hearted guy
Whom I met last night...
His eyes were full of longing and quiet
warmth,
He was the one with whom I wanted to
dance.

He glided towards me
Exuding charm and grace,
And whispered in my ear
Will you be mine...dear?

It made my heart beat so fast
Oh my god! Will this magic last?
Wooing and sweeping me off my feet
His mysterious smile, oh so sweet!

I was spellbound and smitten
Goosebumps on my arms, a love story
unwritten
Yet, my cheek didn't turn crimson, the sky
didn't glisten;
I found a concealed suspicion beyond his
smile.

When he stepped further to kiss,
I closed my eyes as he touched my neck
I winced and screamed
Oh what a dream I'd dreamed!

Asha Singh
B.A. (H) English, IIIrd Year

LIGHT AND DARK

This is a poem about a whore
Living on one of the many streets
Which you pass by, yet never stop.
You never stop
Because you never want to be seen
In the dingy alleys whose darkness
You fear will wash over
All the years of morality
That you have carefully put on your
body
Like makeup.

This is a poem about a whore
Who stops the car
Of every person like you passing her by
And whispers
"There are enough neon lights here
To sweep away the dark"
You don't even roll down the window
You don't want the smoke
Of her cigarette enter your car.
You don't want the scent of her body
To leave traces on you
But you stop for a minute
Look at her
And then at light
And ask
What is light and what is dark?
Who is light and who is dark?

Rashi Sachdeva
B.A. (H) English, III Year

BELOVED INDIA

Beloved India,
Are you a place?
Or the celestial music of solace?
An infinite circle of patriotism
How are you so great?

For uneven social stratification
False dreams and aspirations
For poverty and inequality
For injustice and illiteracy

NO, not just that.

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam
Whole world is a family
Rich culture and civilisation
Here's the story of our country

India flows in the tears of them
Who see the rising Indian flag
They fight, win, show courage in
companionship
They celebrate India through
their glory in championship

The precious land of diversity
Land of colours and festivity
Where art never regresses
Where the Indus valley was
pinnacle of progresses

The land of oldest written
Rigveda
From point to zero to navigation
to calendar
From dance, singing, instruments
and all arts
To spirituality, astronomy,
literature
And the constitution of natural
laws

Divya
Srivastava
B.A. (H)
English, III
Year

There is beauty of unity in diversity
Beauty in the life of certainty
The land of golden ocean
Where the cuisine is temper of traditions

Where a soldier begs to pluck his veins
Making it a sitar
which plays raag bharaat
And spreads the euphony afar

A country which is not just a country
But a mother
A little more kind, A little more human
Beloved, our MOTHER INDIA.

HEROES OF INDEPENDENCE

In a land adorned with colours so bright,
Where unity resides and hearts ignite,
Lies a flame of love, burning ever strong,
Indian patriotism, a timeless song.

Brave souls fought, their spirits unwavering,
For Mother India,
their devotion unchanging,
From Lahore to Kolkata, Delhi to Mumbai,
The echo of Independence, resounding high.

Through fields of saffron, white and green,
A proud nation's flag ardently seen,
Symbolic threads, woven with pride,
Our Indian heritage, we'll never hide.

In art and literature, a vibrant tale,
Indian patriotism, the artists unveil,
With ink and brush, they speak their heart,
Love for the nation, a boundless art.

Today, the flame of patriotism still burns,
In the hearts of every Indian, it churns,
To uphold freedom, to protect our land,
Unite as one, hand in hand.

Simardeep Kaur B.A. (H) English, III Year

NOBODY KNOWS

Nobody knows what destiny has hidden in its womb for you,
Life, death, mystery - no clue to construe.
Nobody knows what ceases to exist when life starts dying,
in a single snap all relations and motivations shatter for which we forever keep trying.
The cycle comes to its completion but something remains incomplete,
Maybe they call it aspirations, dreams and bonds that keep us close to our kin.
Nobody knows what sets one apart from the mundane,
the bird caged in the cosmic dilemma escapes the chain and finally liberation is granted from the burdens of pain.
The soul imprisoned in the mortal body gets its freedom not knowing that it is the temporary emancipation.
Nobody knows when reality got confined in the memories,
The life that had faded away again got revived.
Maybe in someone's hope, some object and some habits, it has disguised.
The soul that is immortal transcends leaving the mortal body behind,
Giving pain of longing to those who are alive.
In the agony, in the separation where anguish resides
Nobody knows how to release the pain of partition.
Slowly, year by year, the body comes from the state of denial,
Accepting the loss that has trembled the soul from inside
Knowing that the ocean of tears has already dried.
Thus life's ephemerality is disclosed
in someone's liberation, someone's suffering and someone's woes.
In the end, we're left with memories to hold,
In the vast tapestry of life, each thread unfolds.

Ayushi Patel, B.A. (H)
English, II Year

WHISPERS OF WIND

Give me a kiss
I'll praise your heart.
Nevertheless, it'll endure
Our bond won't splinter
Like moon, it is gentle and light
If I plead for loyalty
Will you endure?
What if I weep for the sky?
Will you make it true once in a lifetime?
I won't ask for dusky red roses and diamond rings.
Promise me a dream with dazzling wings.
First, you won my attention then led me into despair.
As I depart from this life's fleeting shore,
Will you call my name, like once before?
And honour our moments so tender and sweet?
Or lament at my shrine, your heart obsolete?
Back in our home with bittersweet memories,
I won't demand allegiance, just recognition to mend.
With whispers of wind, our love's journey will end.

Asha Singh, B.A. (H)
English, III Year

Gaia's Frankenstein

the wind would caress your hair,
and cradle all your laughs
the sun would kiss your cheeks,
and make you blush and sigh
do you miss your father's car?
when you didn't have to drive
when you used to race the raindrops
or bring the clouds alive?

did you lose all your friends?
just like Gaia did,
the nymphs, naiads, and dryads
all ran and hid,
she calls for Ouranos now
but Cronos cut him to bits

Superman couldn't save him
since you stopped dreaming
she won't stop screaming
Gaia's still grieving ...
she sings like a siren now
calling you her Frankenstein;
is she not the same as you
just reaching for her kin?

it fills you with dread
when you think of her now
but what about that picture
the one you look at sometimes
the way she smiled with you

the trees would sing at night
when the wind would come alive
the sky would take your pictures
and you could simply hide
the blanket no longer covers your feet
the house is a little too quiet
no stories to fill the silences
no covers to hide from the
tempestuous night

Anushka Choudhary
Winner of 2nd Prize in Echoes of
Earth: Poetry Competition

I walked out in the woods and I saw

I walked out in the woods and I saw
Among the grasses green and untamed
trees.

Veins etched with tales of seasons past
Of budding seeds and flowering petals,
Then the canopies breath their last
And the circle of life forever revels.

Stumbling over twigs and fallen leaves,
I was looking for a way out when
The myriad of flowers gave a whiff
Of young summers and days forgotten.

A moment of sunlight when it rained
Took me back to the bygone days, with
My weariness and misery drained,
When I first took in the gentle breath.

Can I ever live this life again
When I didn't have any liability to
bequeath?

'Cause now I think I'm in chains
And my happiness was just a myth.

And can the river ever go back to where
it came from—
Fearful of losing itself and plunging into
the ocean?

For take a pause if you must
But never stay rooted in the memory
lane.

For the trees do not shed tears
When they bid their vitality adieu,
They carry whispers of eons and eras'
fears

Waiting to paint the earth anew.

Puja Sarmah
Winner of 3rd Prize in Echoes of Earth:
Poetry competition



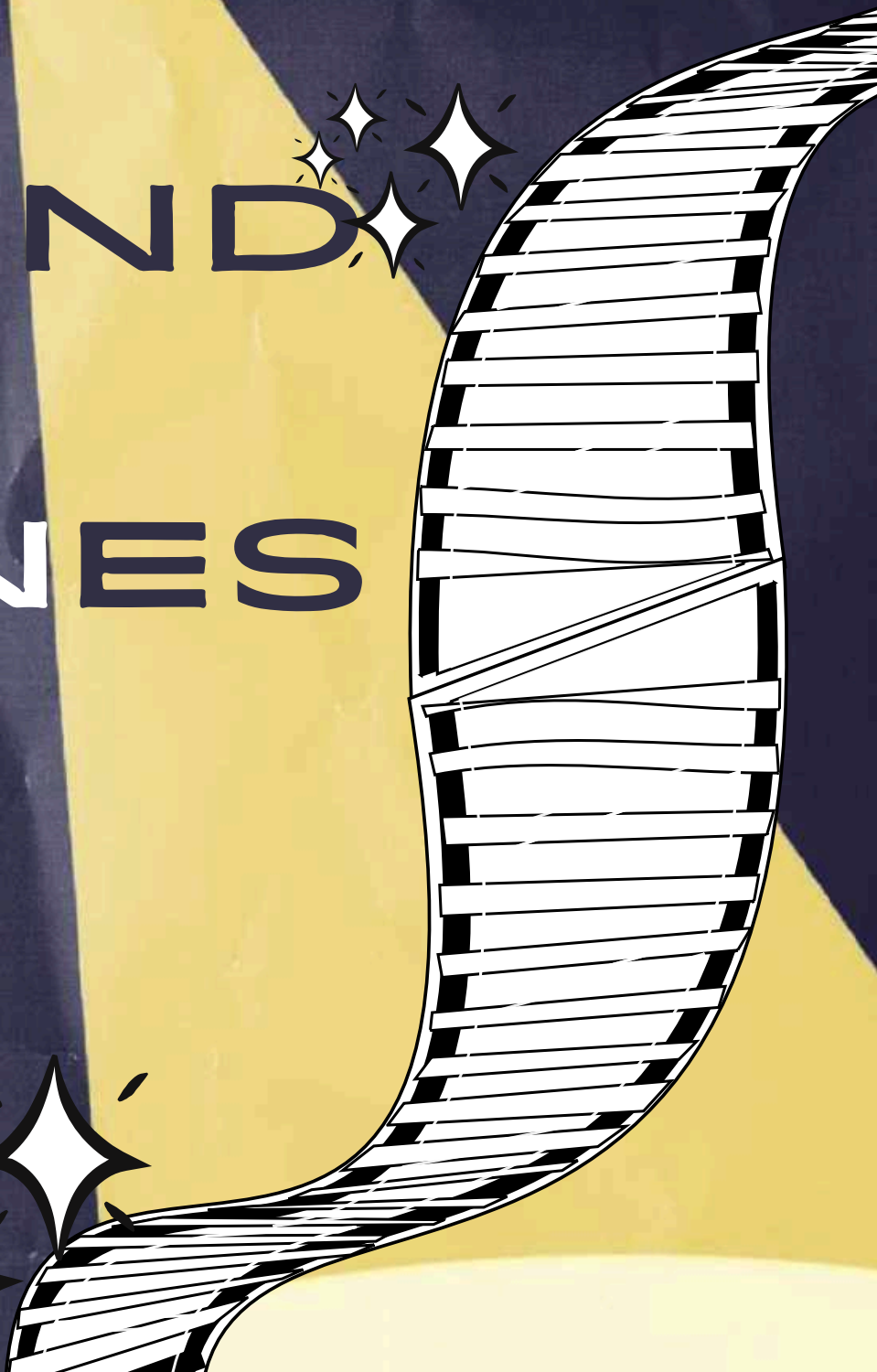
**ARTWORK BY
SIMARDEEP KAUR**



INTERVIEW SECTION

BEHIND THE SCENES

SPEAKING WITH
CREATIVE MINDS OF
THE CINEMA REALM





Anuja Jain is Assistant Professor of Film Studies, College of Film and the Moving Image at Wesleyan University. She is also an affiliate faculty in Global South Asian Studies. She is the co-editor of the dossier, *The Poetics of Indian Cinema (Screen)*. She is an alumni of Vivekananda College.

Editor: Can you briefly tell us about your work on documentary films.

AJ: I am a historian of South Asian film, media, and visual culture. My current work on documentary cinema analyses the role documentary film plays in representing crises and constructing new forms of spectatorial engagement with a focus on the 1990s-2000s. The 1990s-2000s were the decades of communalisation and the consolidation of the right-wing following the cycles of violence from Babri Masjid demolition to Gujarat genocide. Following the process of liberalisation after fifty years of political non-alignment and economic protectionism there were also the decades of rapid economic growth, cultural and technological transformations in India. Fuelled by rapid urban transformations that followed the processes of India's deeper integration with global economy, the 1990s-2000s were marked by the unprecedented democratisation and diversification of the India mediascape and visual culture with the proliferation of low-cost technologies of mechanical and digital reproduction. My work situates the independent documentary practice within these overlapping political, economic, infrastructural, and technological changes, for a study of the 1990s-2000s that allows for a timely and urgent opportunity to reflect on ways in which political commitment was given political expression and aesthetic form by documentary filmmakers.

Editor: Today there's a preponderance of true crime documentaries, what do you attribute this recent surge to?

AJ: Documentaries have many forms and audiences - the true crime documentaries are journalistic iterations and examples of how the urban continues to be a site for news, surveillance, security, advertising, and entertainment. Following the rapid expansion of the ways we consume, inhabit and access the world around us - from older forms of dissemination like news to the newer forms like TikTok or X - the culture for constant stimulation, instantaneous consumption and growing appetite for the sensational has informed and been informed by these new forms of dissemination. The rise in true crime documentaries speaks to this culture which feeds into and is informed by the nature and forms of pleasure.

Editor: How do you see the changing nature of Indian documentaries from those of Satyajit Ray and Anand Patwardhan to films like *The Elephant Whisperers* and *Period End of Sentence*?

AJ: Indian nonfiction is witnessing its most creative phase - from *The Elephant Whisperers* to the academy award nomination for *All That Breathes* (2022) to two years ago, Payal Kapadia's *A Night of Knowing Nothing* (2021), winning the award for best documentary at Cannes. The critical acclaim of these documentaries, distinctive and essential in equal measure, has marked a renewed international interest in Indian nonfiction cinema, thrusting them into a long overdue spotlight. If auteurs Anand Patwardhan, Rakesh Sharma, Lalit Vachani, and Deepa Dhanraj among others worked tirelessly to forge models for activist, independent nonfiction cinema in India, then the work of their successors is making a case for the cinematic vitality of the medium of documentary. While all the contemporary documentaries are concerned with the turbulent political landscape in contemporary India, what has evolved is the form, and a desire to experiment with the language of the medium. But while the form has evolved in the last decade, the conditions for nonfiction cinema continue to remain unfavourable for Indian filmmakers. Despite the global celebration, ironically the battle for financial support, formal networks of distribution or audience for nonfiction in India remains an uphill one.



Anugyan Nag teaches Film, Media and Cultural Studies at AJK Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Milia Islamia University. He is a recipient of the Fulbright-Nehru Doctoral Research Fellowship at Tisch School of Arts, Cinema Studies, New York University. He has a Masters Degree in Film Production and Film History from Salford University, U.K.

Editor: Most adapted films based on literature are often dismissed for being inauthentic and unfaithful reproductions of the original. What is your opinion on this contested issue about experimentation versus puritanical faithfulness to the original?

AN: Film is a different medium altogether and when a literary text is adapted into a film the process is intermedial, so it ought to undergo certain changes that are specific to the medium (medium specificity). Coming to the concepts of puritanical faithfulness and experimentation - most well-made and well-received adaptations are not entirely faithful to the literary text. In fact, if faithfulness was the criteria for a film's popularity or its critical merit, then the exact film adaptations of Shakespeare's plays would be extremely popular with tremendous repeat viewing possibilities but that is not the case. Several films that have taken cinematic liberties and incorporated experimentation or made some radical departures from the original text remain highly acclaimed films and popular globally and for decades.

One can think of countless examples from Hollywood and other cinemas, like Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* or Sharatchandra's *Devdas*.

Editor: Do you think there are certain inherently cinematic and visual elements in literature which lend it to being adapted on screen?

AN: Yes and No. Literature provides tremendous scope for visual imagery; it also provides words and linguistic expressions that can serve as useful tools for scriptwriters and screenplay development. But cinema is inherently an audio-visual medium, it also has sound effects, background score and music, dance, choreography, action and other formalistic elements which the medium of literary text doesn't. There are also VFX or visual effects which can transform the visual and aesthetic dimensions of a film in unthinkable directions.

Editor: Adaptations of classics on screen have often produced sanitised and dated films which have rarely resonated with contemporary audiences. What kind of literature should be chosen to create a cinematic vocabulary which seems relevant and pertinent?

AN: I don't quite agree with the first part of the question you propose, because that is not true when you examine a vast body of cinematic work from across the world. Adaptations of classical texts from antiquity or Greek epics have been very successful and popular, it is a very well-established genre in Hollywood and many such films are among the finest films made in Hollywood and continue to enthral audiences even today.

The choice of the text purely depends on the individual who wants to visualise it in a certain way and certainly in a cinematic way. When it comes to mythologies for instance, in the present times they are increasingly made into spectacular fantastical films. Even old science fiction novels have been turned into very experimental futuristic films. How something is crafted into a sophisticated cinematic text depends on multiple factors and the creative geniuses of the craftsmen and the creative individuals who adapt a text to a film.

Editor: Can you tell us about some of your favourite films adapted from literature. Why do you think they deserve to be recognised as independent artwork instead of derived art?

AN: My favourites are many and diverse - *Pather Panchali* is a great example of how the cinematic adaptation is novel, it is true to the text in so many ways but also so much more creatively thoughtful in terms of its imagery, sound design, music and performance (a very important aspect of cinematic adaptation). *Throne of Blood*, *Maqbool* and *Haider*, *Namesake*, *Kamasutra* by Mira Nair, *Brokeback Mountain*, *Rebel Without Cause*, *Godfather*, *2001 A Space Odyssey*, *Dev D*, Bhansali's *Devdas* and Rituparno Ghosh's *Chokher Bali*.

All of the above and many others that I can't list here deserve to be recognised as independent art because of what the makers have done with the medium of cinema and its formalistic elements, also how they have made the actors perform and lastly the politics of such representation that they have been able to bring forth with complexity and experimentation.



Indraneel Kaul is a film-maker and alumnus of the Film & Television Institute of India. He has worked extensively in Madhya Pradesh (*MP. Tourism*) and Kashmir (*Kashmir File*). Made short films (*In Thin Air*), videos (*Kathi*), documentaries (*Freedom from fear?*) and promotional projects (*for Microsoft*). He has also helmed a number of projects for Television like *Turning Point* (Doordarshan) and *Sanrachna* (Epic). In addition, he has been associated with feature films directed by Sudhir Mishra (*Yeh Saali Zindagi*) and Kundan Shah (*P se PM tak*). His films have participated at festivals in Geneva, Paris, Amsterdam, Asolo, Houston, Madison, Kathmandu, Mumbai and Kerala.

Editor: What kind of cinema inspired you to become a filmmaker?

IK: Tastes change over time. In childhood one had seen the Hindi film *Sholay*. *Pather Panchali* was always a part of the house, since my mother is a Bengali. Born and brought up in the suburbs of Juhu, *The Sound of Music*, *Mary Poppins*, there were a lot of English films. Doordarshan at that point of time was showing a lot of English films. I remember, there was this time when Guru Dutt's films were being shown, so there was a lot of mix and match. But gradually over a period, when I was in my teens, and as you start veering towards your interests - Japanese films started, Iranian films started, Czech, Yugoslavia, there was a lot of these international film festivals that I had access to probably because a lot of people in my family had a background in the film industry, and were cinematographers, or in the linked arts. One sees Akira Kurosawa, one sees Bergman, even in Hollywood or Bollywood, one starts watching films with a different perspective.

So, film-makers that inspired you too keep changing. In fact, there is a whole long list of film makers. In Indian cinema, there was Bimal Roy and Guru Dutt. In Hollywood there was George Lucas and Spielberg, then one sees the old timers and in Europe the sky is the limit! There is Charles Chaplin. We see his film, *The Great Dictator*, which at the age of 17-18 you watch from a different perspective, so a huge list of people starts inspiring you for wanting to be a film maker. And then when you become a film maker and start understanding the nuances of it, then it becomes a way to interpret the same things!

Editor: Do you think streaming platforms give more importance to content over commercial imperatives?

IK: Everything is commercial. Film making is an expensive medium, so if anyone says there are no commercial aspects to film making, then they are lying. Streaming platforms have certain kind of films catering to the audiences. What happens to a series is that they are commissioned to cater to people or add value to the streaming platform so there might be platforms that are more interested in crime or woman's honour or there might be OTT channels that are more "Glocal" (global and local) in their content. So commercial imperatives are very important for streaming platforms.

Editor: Do you think that films today are driven by political motivations rather than artistic courage?

IK: As a film maker you start wanting to express yourself and gradually over a period, you have got to balance that with finances and funds and people who are putting money into that content, so at that point of time, gradually the singular narrative changes to having to cater to producers or to distributors. Unless the films are not expensive you can continue going. Look, the political films that are made, their budget is not that high. With the kind of political current that we see now, it's difficult to be "politically incorrect " rather this is an old question (*laughs*). Actually, very few films are now driven by political motivation.

Editor: What would be your advice to young film maker's who want to enter Bollywood?

IK: Don't enter Bollywood if you don't have what it takes. This is a very cruel line. Being an artist, you work from pay cheque to pay cheque. You have to be driven by a thirst to want to do more interesting stuff. My advice to the budding young film makers would be to watch a lot of films. Not just Hollywood and Bollywood. There was a reverse migration that happened in my case where I went from Bombay to Delhi for different reasons and I remember watching around 100 to 200 films a year on the big screen. There was Korean cinema, there were a lot of these embassies, there was "Bergman Retrospective", there was IIFI that used to happen in Delhi at that point of time. So, when you prepare for competitive exams, you have got to prepare! That is the investment you do. So similarly, watch several films. Hang around NSD, hang around the corners where these plays happen. Even in Pune at FTII, we watched a film every day. That was a part of the curriculum. We discussed cinema. Our jokes were also cinema oriented (*laughs*). My advice would be to watch films and not just passively but also to have discussions about it - analyse, deconstruct a film, see the structure. It's like liking a car and its design, understanding it and then trying to replicate it. The same thing is done for cinema. Screenplay writing is applied writing. These are tools and techniques that do not come from vacuum. At the age of 21, I was already making short films and projects for Doordarshan. You could be thinking that you are experimenting or doing arbitrary stuff and when you go to film festivals, see the films, you see that these very things have been done 50-60 years back. So, there is no point in reinventing the wheel. You need to be abreast with what has happened in the art world, in cinema and then you have to take it forward. My advice would be to watch those masters and take the narrative forward. Film making is a relatively newer medium. It's just a little more than 100 years old! We are still finding our language, still finding ways to express ourselves and kind of stretch the envelope. So, watch and learn - do this investment and then come in the field.



Saumya Tiwari is based in Mumbai. She has been associated with Films and Advertisement. She recently wrote the screenplay of the critically acclaimed Hindi Film, *Bheed* (2023). She is an Alumni of Vivekananda College

Editor: Why did you choose to be a scriptwriter?

ST: I honestly didn't choose to be a scriptwriter. But let me explain how and why it happened. My dream, since the time I discovered the world of filmmaking, has been to direct my own film, just like lots of people who come to Bombay to pursue their dreams. There are, however, an ample number of ways to achieve that dream, since there is no specific guideline to success (whatever your definition of that might be) here, which also makes it tougher for struggling people. Some professions in this industry, other than direction, are mostly considered stepping stones towards it. Screenwriting being one of them. Initially, in college, I thought I would want to be a cinematographer while acquiring enough skills to direct my film, but cinematography requires a lot of technical training which I didn't probably have the brains for. Writing, on the other hand, just came to me in different forms like Advertisement writing and other stuff. Also, I believe that I need to write my own film first before I get to direct one. So, I started writing screenplays. And once I dived into that world and interacted with other people around the same subject, I realised how complicated the process of writing a good script is. Again, it's not very tough to write a script, but it is excruciatingly tough to write a good screenplay, the art of which I don't believe I have even come close to mastering.

But learning and working on screenplay writing gave me a lot of perspective on stories, the different ways of telling them, and what needs to come on screen and what can stay out of it. While writing might not have been an end goal, it has immensely helped me to understand the nuances of storytelling and cinema. And even though all different kinds of art forms come together to make cinema, I do believe that at the heart of every great film lies a great script. Or maybe I am just biased.

Editor: What are the challenges which a young scriptwriter faces while writing a screenplay or adapting a book?

ST: I think an unavoidable challenge that we all face when we start writing our first screenplay is not having enough knowledge of writing screenplays. And there is no way to run away from this challenge because it also solves itself once you write and read enough screenplays. These days we have more than enough scripts available online. Just like it's important to read books if you want to be an author, it's extremely important to read great screenplays, even though most of us think that we have the knack for it already and we might not need any help. Also, because beyond just understanding the format, it is important to understand the language which has to be used in your action and dialogue lines. It is important to understand the flow of emotions in your script and how to bring it out. There are many more nitty-gritties that help you write a good screenplay but I think it takes time to learn, understand and implement these things, for which one needs to keep reading and keep writing.

About adapting a book, I haven't had the chance to explore that yet and I don't think I would be qualified to comment and advise on that. But it does seem interesting with its own set of complications. I would love to adapt a book someday and then I will tell you about the challenges of that.

Editor: Do you think the streaming platforms and diversification of content has given more creative freedom to scriptwriters?

ST: Creative freedom, not sure. Jobs, yes.

The thing about streaming platforms is, when they arrived in the country it did seem like any kind of content which was not accepted or possible to fly in films would find a stage through these platforms. And for some time they probably did that job also. But eventually, commercialisation of any medium is bound to compromise the quality of work. While earlier they were looking for writers who would think differently from the set standards of storytelling, now they are looking for any writer who can listen to their instructions while they find another formula which has been working in films/shows/TV. Look at the number of crime shows on Indian OTT's today. I don't believe that every writer wants to write a crime drama at the same time. If they had their creative freedom, I think we would be seeing better and much diverse content on our platforms. Having said that, I think for a writer, there is a certain kind of freedom in writing a web show, compared to a feature film, and vice versa. But this freedom comes from the necessity of the story, not from implementing certain formulas cracked by the marketing teams sitting at the top floors of these streaming platforms.

Editor: What are the components of a successful script according to you?

ST: I don't believe that I have really written a successful script by myself yet, so it might be tough to list out. But I would mention the components that I don't think shine through but are really important in making a script work.

***Interesting characters* - The most obvious component. There are character driven films and story driven films. But I believe that in all kinds of films, it is very important to have interesting characters.**

While I still struggle to figure out what exactly makes your character interesting on paper, I think one way to do that is to find out what your character's attitude and opinions are about what is happening around them in the script.

Exposition - This is something which I think comes with a lot of experience, but I believe that how you decide to expose different elements of your story, while telling your story, becomes very important. For example, one of your characters comes from a very poor background. Now, you can design a scene in the beginning to expose his background, or hold that information and reveal it at a time when it might hit harder. It's a writer's decision. There is no right or wrong answer, just the need of your story.

Emotional beats - The different notes and intensity of emotions that your script is hitting from beginning to the end, and how varied they are, is very important for a good script.

Good action descriptions - most of the new writers prioritise dialogues above the action description, since that is what seems to separate a script from a book or any other piece of writing. But not only are action descriptions important, they are what decides the mood, atmosphere and emotion of your scene. So it is important to create a world through your descriptions that engulfs the reader. Before somebody makes that film, they are going to read that film.

What you choose to exclude - When we decide to tell a story, it's quite normal to try and see it from every nook and corner, and include as much of it as possible. But I think what becomes very important is what obvious piece of information you choose to exclude from your script.

DEPARTMENT REPORT



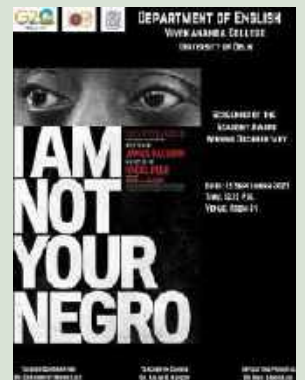
1. Slogan Writing Competition

The Department of English under the banner of Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav organised a Slogan Writing Competition to celebrate 76th Year of India's Independence on 3 July 2023, Monday. Students had to write a slogan on the theme "India: Embracing World, Enriching Humanity". The winners of the competition were: Priyanshi Patel (B.A. (H) History), Yojna (B.A. (P)) and Shalini Verma (B.A. (H) English).



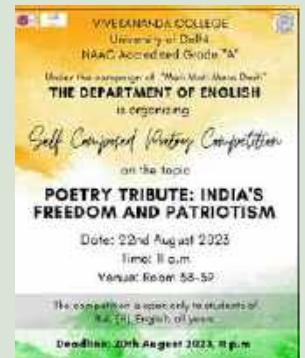
2. Documentary screening: "I Am Not Your Negro"

The Department of English, Vivekananda College, University of Delhi, organised a Documentary Screening of the academy award nominated documentary *I Am Not Your Negro* on 13 September 2023, Wednesday. Students of B.A. (H) English, as well as, a few students from other departments attended the screening. It was followed by a discussion and interactive session, moderated by Dr. Chaandreyi Mukherjee.



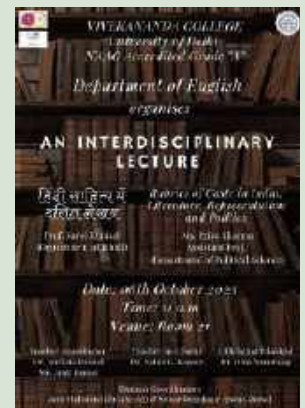
3. Poetry Competition

The Department of English, Vivekananda College, University of Delhi, organised "Poetry Tribute: India's Freedom and Patriotism" - a Self Composed Poetry Competition under the campaign "Meri Mati Mera Desh". The event was conducted on 22 August 2023, Tuesday. The winners were as follows, First Prize: Simardeep Kaur (B.A. (H) English), Second Prize: Divya Srivastava (B.A. (H) English), Third Prize: Priya Jain (B.A. (H) English).



4. An Interdisciplinary Lecture

The Department of English, Vivekananda College, University of Delhi, organised an interdisciplinary lecture on 6 October 2023. Dr. Anchala Paliwal was the teacher coordinator and the two speakers and their topics were: हिंदी साहित्य में दलित लेखन by Prof. Saroj Kumari (Department of Hindi) and Rubrics of Caste in India: Literature, Representation and Politics by Ms. Priya Sharma (Assistant Prof. in Department of Political Science)



5. Literary Fest

The Department of English, Vivekananda College, University of Delhi, organised a literary fest, "Dastaan" which included a short-story writing competition, poetry competition as well as a speaker session with Prof. Raj Kumar on "The Stepchild", A Dalit Gujrati novel by Joseph Marwan on 25 April 2024, in Sharda Hall. Mr. Amit Kumar was the teacher coordinator. The winners for the short story writing competition were as follows, First Prize: Devishi Sutradhar (B.A. (H) English), Second Prize: Varsha Kumari (B.A. (H) App. Psychology), Third Prize: Alina (B.A. (H) App. Psychology). The winners for the poetry competition were as follows, First Prize: Mudit Sharma (B.A. (P), Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University), Second Prize: Anushka Choudhary (B.A. (H) English), Third Prize: Puja Sarmah (B.A. (H) English).





In Memoriam

JYOTI GUPTA (1949-2023)



MRS. APARNA RAJESH

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH (RETIRED)

What can I write in the memory of a person who was my friend for over half a century? It is difficult to put pen to paper when your eyes are brimming with tears in the memory of a friend whose last moments I could not witness. Jyoti Gupta was a product of Miranda House. Initially Jyoti and I used to teach English to B.A. (Prog) students as our college only had the Pass Course; B.A (Honours) in English was introduced much later. Jyoti used to teach Romantic Poetry though later we all interchanged papers as new teachers joined the Department. Dancing was Jyoti's passion as she had trained in Kathak and Indian Dance was her expertise. Jyoti had a keen and discerning eye for cultural activities and used to coordinate them effortlessly. In 1984 she had a life-shattering brush with death. She came out alive and though her spirit was left intact, she developed lifelong and irreversible health problems and could only walk with the support of a stick. We were lifelong companions and colleagues, in fact Jyoti and I both retired in 2014.

DR. JYOTIKA ELHANCE

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

Joie de vivre!!! That is the attribute that best suits our dear Jyoti Gupta a.k.a. Joey to her friends! It is indeed rare to come across a person with such boundless energy, positivity, cheerfulness and verve.

Impish to the core and always taking things light, she laughed her way out of all the challenges that life threw at her. A dancer par excellence and a sensitive soul, Jyoti had a very endearing way of expressing herself through her verses. Despite countless health challenges and a life-altering accident which put her on the crutch, she had the 'never say die' attitude which made her stand tall amidst all. The positivity and warmth that she exuded were simply unparalleled. Jyoti, we salute your indomitable spirit and unwavering strength of character that refused to be defined or categorised. You have been and would always remain a cherished friend, and a trusted mentor, who has touched our lives dearly. You may no longer walk amongst us today, but your spirit will continue to inspire us and guide us through life's challenges with the same grace and fortitude that you embodied. Rest in peace, my dear friend.

DR. SOPHIA PDE

TEACHER-IN-CHARGE AND ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

I first met late Mrs. Jyoti Gupta in the staffroom of Vivekananda College way back in 2011. What attracted me instantly to her was her irrepressible laughter and positive attitude. She was one of the senior most Professors of the Department of English and gave new teachers like me useful advice on how to assimilate oneself and feel at home in a new environment. Her ribald jokes, her booming laughter, and her infectious positivity is what made my initial years in Vivekananda College very memorable. We, as a Department, bid Mrs. Jyoti Gupta farewell, and mourn the irreparable loss of a teacher who served our college for over four decades. I know she is still laughing in her heavenly abode.





**ARTWORK BY
AYUSHI PATEL**



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

CELEBRATING OUR GRADUATES

TRAVAILS OF BEING A TEACHER

*JENUSHA IS PGT ENGLISH AT ASHOK HALL, GIRL'S RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL,
NAINITAL (BATCH OF 2018)*



Every time I delve into this ubiquitous thought, I somewhere traverse along unexplored territories in my head. There have been numerous personalities who have gone ahead and given their own interpretation of what an "ideal" teacher is supposed to be. The very essence of being a teacher can be hitherto summarised as someone who can be a mentor, a protector, a defender and more often than not "a Jack of all trades". There is a great responsibility that is divested onto the shoulders of teachers. These responsibilities, unfortunately do not come with an expiry date, they are for life. The society has a surplus amount of expectation from this profession; expectations that are difficult to meet, expectations that seem unreal and sometimes non-materialistic.

My trials as a teacher are not archaic, rather they are quite newfangled. Handling students with different learning abilities, different pursuits and different temperaments is not a child's play. You are divested with a responsibility that is beyond the realm of human abilities. This painstaking job is at most times trivialised, undermined and mostly scoffed at. It is not a walkaway to be able to drain yourself both mentally as well as physically regularly. It requires a great amount of determination and dedication. I believe that a profession that has been continuously experimented upon and that has been taken very casually is the teaching profession. Teaching is akin to moving boulders and creating a remarkable difference every single day; which I am very sure we as human beings can easily falter at. However, there is also a brighter side. The joy of bringing a smile to the young faces is beyond gratifying. Such accolades and admirations are only a characteristic trait of this profession. One of the valuable teachings that I have been bestowed with is to go ahead along the path with zero expectations and not to get emotionally invested in the paraphernalia around the profession. With this one magic mantra in mind, you can climb the highest of mountains and cross the deepest of oceans.

LIFE IN A FRENCH PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Harshita Singh, Teaching Assistant at Lycée Jules Fil, Batch of 2023

I'm working as an English language assistant in a French public high school in Carcassonne, in the region Occitanie. It's a vocational high school, so there is a professional as well as general section, along with technical education for superior levels. I work mostly with the former. Certainly, it's the first time I'm working on-site, and being treated as an adult and a colleague. There's plenty for me to learn from not only the teachers I work with but the entire staff and even the students. Usually, I have a small group of students in a different room where I make small talk or discuss the topic shared by the principal teacher I'm working with. The education is completely free for these students and most of them don't seem to realise the privilege. Some even wait for a blank sheet to be handed out by the teacher to start working since they forgot to bring their own and rant about the uniforms that are about to become mandatory in schools. I suppose this is the outcome of truly free-of-cost and accessible education, a functioning online portal for resources, well-equipped labs and libraries with welcoming staff and functional wi-fi zones across the campus. While there is a difference in infrastructure and budget, I have realised in the past six months that the students are the same everywhere. There are few who make a lot of effort, some who are effortlessly good, others are curious and enthusiastic (about their favourite restaurants in the town) even if they get off-topic. Quite a lot of them have surprisingly little information about the locations of most countries on the map, many are absolutely disinterested and all of them are scandalised to hear that I used to get home from school at 2 P.M. while they have classes till 6 P.M.

My favourite day so far has been the day of departmental debate competition. We had organised a debate club and selected a few students, some of them on my recommendations since the principal teacher had not witnessed these debates. There were five schools and each team had students from at least four schools. We had our school's t-shirt (a dream of mine that had remained unfulfilled in university) and I was on jury for all debates. It was exhilarating to watch the students participate so actively in each debate. I got to interact with other English Language assistants, teachers, students and also the language inspector of Academy of Montpellier. Of course, not having to worry about winning or losing took away the anxiety from the whole experience, and even though it was a tiring day, it was worth it when I saw the students cheer for their teammates when the results were declared. On days like these, I'm glad I am getting to work in an entirely different education system which has its problems but is nothing short of an adventure for me.

EMPOWER YOURSELF

HARNESSING THE POWER OF SKILL BASED LEARNING

"TELL ME AND I FORGET. TEACH ME AND I REMEMBER. INVOLVE ME AND I LEARN." - BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

In today's educational landscape, especially with the NEP 2020, the emphasis is shifting towards a more hands-on approach to learning. Skill-based education is gaining recognition for its effectiveness in preparing students for the challenges they'll face beyond the classroom. As Benjamin Franklin wisely stated, true learning occurs through active involvement, rather than passive observation. To simply understand, 'Skill-based learning' goes beyond rote memorisation; it focuses on practical abilities that students can apply in real-world scenarios. By engaging in activities that require problem-solving, critical thinking, and hands-on experience, students gain a deeper understanding of the material and develop skills that are essential for success in various fields.

As a facilitator, one can highly recommend the importance of skill acquisition. It is observed that the degree course that a student undergoes, generally, does not serve the purpose of employability. Hence, locating an interesting skill and then acquiring it, is the need of the hour. Of course, one might have to go extra miles and sometimes against the clock to acquire it, but this can be fruitful in the long run. Furthermore, it is important to understand the 21st century skills that the world demands. Sustainable development goal number four quotes the competencies one needs to thrive in today's rapidly changing world.

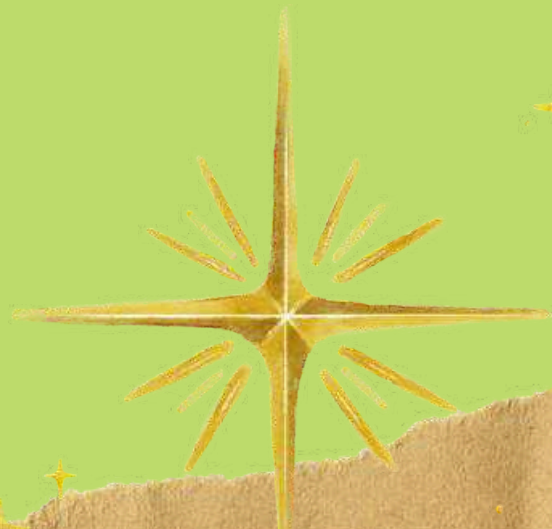
Hence, incorporating skill-based learning into the curriculum not only enhances students' academic achievements but also fosters their motivation to be ready for the pragmatic world. When students see the direct relevance of what they are learning to their lives and future careers, they become more invested in the learning process. Surveys suggest that there is not one fixed formula for success, but acquisition of skills can give a quick start to career.

Moreover, skill-based learning encourages creativity and innovation. By providing opportunities for students to explore their interests and develop their strengths, educators can help them unleash their full potential. This approach nurtures a mindset of lifelong learning, where students are eager to explore new ideas and tackle challenges head-on.

Furthermore, skill-based learning fosters adaptability and resilience. In today's rapidly evolving job market, individuals must be able to navigate change and embrace new opportunities. By developing skills such as communication, collaboration, and problem-solving, students become better equipped to flourish in dynamic environments. Additionally, skill-based learning promotes equity and inclusion. Traditional educational models often favour certain learning styles or abilities, leaving some students behind. Skill-based learning values diverse talents and experiences, providing opportunities for all students to shine. Whether through project-based assignments, internships, or apprenticeships, students can showcase their strengths and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

In conclusion, skill-based learning is not just a trend; it's a necessity in today's world. By embracing this approach, educators can prepare students not only for academic success but also for personal fulfilment and professional achievement. As a facilitator, I would highly recommend one to explore the countless interesting skills and diverse options that the market requires today. As we continue to adapt to the changing needs of society, skill-based learning remains a cornerstone of effective education, empowering students to thrive in an ever-evolving world. Remember, an early start is the best start!

**MEHAK CHUTTANI IS
TGT ENGLISH, SRDAV PUBLIC SCHOOL
(BATCH OF 2018)**



**ZEENAT KHAN IS POET, GUEST LECTURER AT SRCC
AND PHD STUDENT AT DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH,
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI (BATCH OF 2021)**

Palmistry

*This war is old of tyrants and mankind
Their ways not new, nor ours**

It simply begins with an inverted finger
of index sailing forward across cr-
eased map &
paths fall down at the end
the earth is flat
of human
hands
until a fist
or many - locks
with each other to raise
in rage
many a time
the fingers have been lifted to-
ward the neck-
freezing halos
—remember
each
time how
people struggle out
of closed lines of white
pitiless lights for the eyes lapse
on the verge of blindness many a time
rotating
mouths of gust have fisted
this language-
seasleepsoils in-
to breaking
of dawn
islands of water will be fisted
by waking
leaves
again
listen!
the fallings of...
the rains claiming on the hands,
“انا الحق”

** Faiz Ahmed Faiz in For Your Lanes, My Country
* انا الحق : ana-al-haq, I'm the Truth, I'm the God*