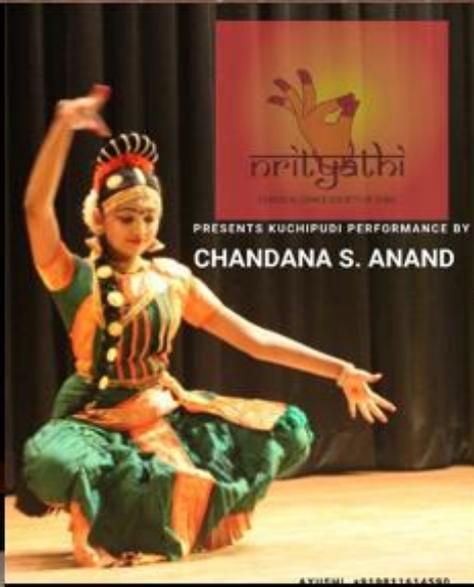


Rambler 2020



Zakir Husain Delhi College
University of Delhi



RAMBLER

2019-20



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PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Students,

Zakir Husain Delhi College has played a pioneering role in the promotion of educational endeavours in North India since its beginning as a madarsa in the closing years of the seventeenth-century. This historical institution has been the site of a thoughtful synthesis of the oriental with western intellectual traditions, particularly before the conflagration of 1857. While preserving the traditional system of learning, this College has always sought to develop

a spirit of scientific learning among its students by translating into Urdu books on Science, Mathematics, Astronomy, and Natural Philosophy. The distinctly diverse cultural ambience of this educational institution and its spirit of accommodation is demonstrated by the diverse religious and cultural background of its pupils. However, this symbol of syncretic culture has passed through many vicissitudes, including attacks by an incendiary mob following the bifurcation of India in 1947.



Since the theme of the 2020 issue of Rambler is 'Partition', I am emphasising the rich heritage of this three-hundred-year-old College to show its opposition to divisive forces. The relevance of this topic cannot be overstated. The legacy of Partition continues to haunt our present, and manifests itself in the recurrence of communal riots, posing a serious threat to the very idea of India. If the geographical bifurcation of our country occurred in 1947, its soul is being divided today by the imposition of a very reductive redefinition of patriotism, which belies the very foundations of our nation. I am pained to see the signs of a new partition in today's polarised environment. I am using the platform of this magazine as a concerned citizen of this country to deliver the message of peace and unity. "Live by love" is the motto of our College and it has been the flagbearer of unity.

I am sure the collection of literary responses in Rambler will look for more imaginative ways to exorcise the ghosts of Partition. I am certain that under Ms. Tanya Lahon Warjri's guidance and editorial scrutiny, students will display their imaginative splendours and produce an inimitable issue of Rambler.

Dr. Masroor Ahmad Beg
Principal, Zakir Husain Delhi College

Note from the Editors

“Writing is really a way of thinking--not just feeling but thinking about things that are disparate, unresolved, mysterious, problematic or just sweet.” Toni Morrison

This year’s theme for Rambler is Partition. In 1947, the Indian subcontinent was divided by its colonial rulers into two nation-states – India and Pakistan. The aftermath of the partition, while a whisper for generations now, an old forgotten story or an invocation of troubles by grandparents, is still a scar on the conscience of those who lived through it, felt its vitriolic heat and yet lived to tell its tale to those who would listen. Narratives of heroism, vistas of compassion and the depths of human depravity all intermingle to demonstrate the complexity that is the Partition.

The decision to work on this theme stemmed from a thirst to delve deeper into our past and is best mirrored by a quote from Frank Sonnenberg - “We can’t do anything to improve our past, but we can learn from it to improve our future”. In these trying times, we can look to our past for answers - though they may not be absolute. As our future is intrinsically linked to our collective past, while we individually negotiate the road ahead in our own distinct ways, we must find some middle ground to converge our contrasting paths, a space for reason and understanding.

For many, this space is reached by articulating their thoughts and feelings. *Writing becomes a source of strength and comfort.* When we hear of Partition narratives being told and retold, Toni Morrison’s thoughts stand uncompromised in their summation of writing as a way of thinking. Rambler encourages the students of Zakir Husain Delhi College to always explore, analyse and engage from a perspective of compassion.

This annual magazine is a reflection of the achievements, the spirit of all the students and teachers, the goals reached, and experiences gained. Furthermore, we hope this year’s edition takes our readers on a journey where the paths of compassion and humanity merge. The Rambler Team expresses its considerable appreciation to all authors and contributors who have devoted a generous amount of time and effort. This willingness to share knowledge, concerns and special insights has resulted in a magazine that allows our students to give shape to their creativity while learning the importance of being aware of the world around us. Our thoughts are always shaped by our ability to perceive, observe and participate. We take this opportunity to echo our Principal Dr. Masroor Ahmad Beg’s message to deliver peace and unity as we stand united and strive to manifest a more empathetic world.

The Rambler Team



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In Memoriam

A tribute to some of the prominent writers who left us this year

Toni Morrison (18th February, 1931 – 5th August, 2019)

Chloe Antony Wofford Morrison, known as Toni Morrison, was an extraordinary woman who was a writer, professor and an exemplary thinker. She was the recipient of prestigious awards like The Pulitzer Prize and Nobel Prize in Literature. Morrison revolutionised literature by using language in her own unique way and by bringing African-American women's struggles to the forefront. She made it possible to have discussions and dialogues on difficult topics - identity, sexism, racism, rights of the black community and racial tension to name a few. She was a relentless woman who contributed immensely towards the cannon of African Literature and whose works still continue to inspire many. *Beloved*, *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, along with various other essays and writings are her impactful works which left the world in awe of her craftsmanship.



"If there is a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, you must be the one to write it."

Krishna Sobti – (18th February, 1925 – 25th January, 2019)

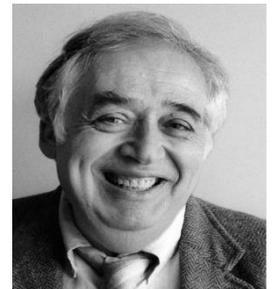
Krishna Sobti was a well-known fiction writer of Hindi and an essayist. She has many popular novels to her credit, including, *Mitro Marajani*, *Lama Nafisa* and *Zindaginama*, for which she was also awarded the Sahitya Academy Award in 1980. She experimented with language, gender and genre in her works. She did not restrict herself to write about issues related to feminine identity but also spoke about the significance of both feminine and masculine perspectives. She used to say that she loved Hindi for its *dhwani sansa*, Punjabi for its roughness, Urdu for its grace and Rajasthani for its rhythm and brevity, and thus her writings have the essence of all these languages. She was also the recipient of The Sahitya Academy Fellowship, The Shiromani Award, The Hindi Academy Award and the Jnanpith Award in 2017 for her commendable contribution to the cannon of Indian Literature.



“बच्चों, युग चार होते हैं: सीता हुआ कलयुग, छोड़ता हुआ द्वापर, खड़ा हुआ त्रेता और चलता हुआ सतयुग। “

Harold Bloom (11th July, 1930 – 14th October, 2019)

Harold Bloom, one of the most influential critics of the late 20th century, wrote more than 50 books in his literary career, over 20 of which were books on literary criticism. He was best known for his innovative interpretations of literary history and of the creation of literary canons, genres and literary works. Bloom claimed to have read everything, retained his passion for literature and believed in its supreme value throughout his life. He taught at Yale University, his alma mater and New York University till he became the founding patron of Ralston College.



"What we call a poem is mostly what is not there on the page. The strength of any poem is the poems that it has managed to exclude."

Girish Karnad (19th May, 1938 – 10th June, 2019)

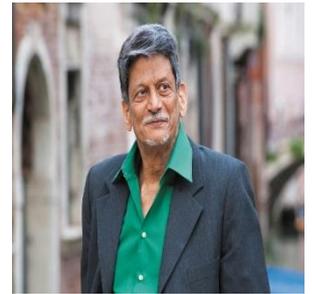
Born in Matheran, Maharashtra, Girish Karnad was exposed to travelling theatre groups and Yakshagana, a theatre form, at an early age. Karnad earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1958 and his Masters from Oxford as a Rhodes scholar in 1963. He penned his most-well known play, *Tughlaq*, in 1964. He used history and mythology as a lens in his plays to examine the present. Karnad was also an actor and screenwriter who worked in his fair share of films and television. Over the years, Karnad was awarded for his contributions to theatre in India with a Padma Shri (1974), Padma Bhushan (1992) and the Jnanapith Award in 1998.



“A man must commit a crime at least once in his life-time. Only then will his virtue be recognised.”

Kiran Nagarkar (2nd April, 1942 - 5th September, 2019)

Born in Bombay, Nagarkar was one of the most noteworthy writers of post-colonial India. His name is associated with the genres of the Indian novels, plays and screenwriting. He was a noted drama and film critic in the Indian media. His books are a target of ideological critique due to the hybridity in his version of post-colonialism. Nagarkar was distinguished with the H. N. Apte Award, the renowned Sahitya Award and the Dalmia Award for prompting communicative harmony through Literature. He received a Rockefeller Grant and was awarded a scholarship by the city of Munich. He tried to go against the prevailing myths of his time, advocating modernisation and sophisticated strategy.



“No amount of culture or civilisation can subdue or hide the wanton violence in man.”

Ernest J. Gaines (15th January, 1933 – 5th November, 2019)

Born in Louisiana, Ernest J. Gaines, was an American author whose work was rich in history. Storytelling and oral tradition were a powerful part of African-American life in the rural south, and young Ernest Gaines absorbed the stories of his family and neighbours, acquiring a sense of history and an ear for the rhythms of vernacular speech.

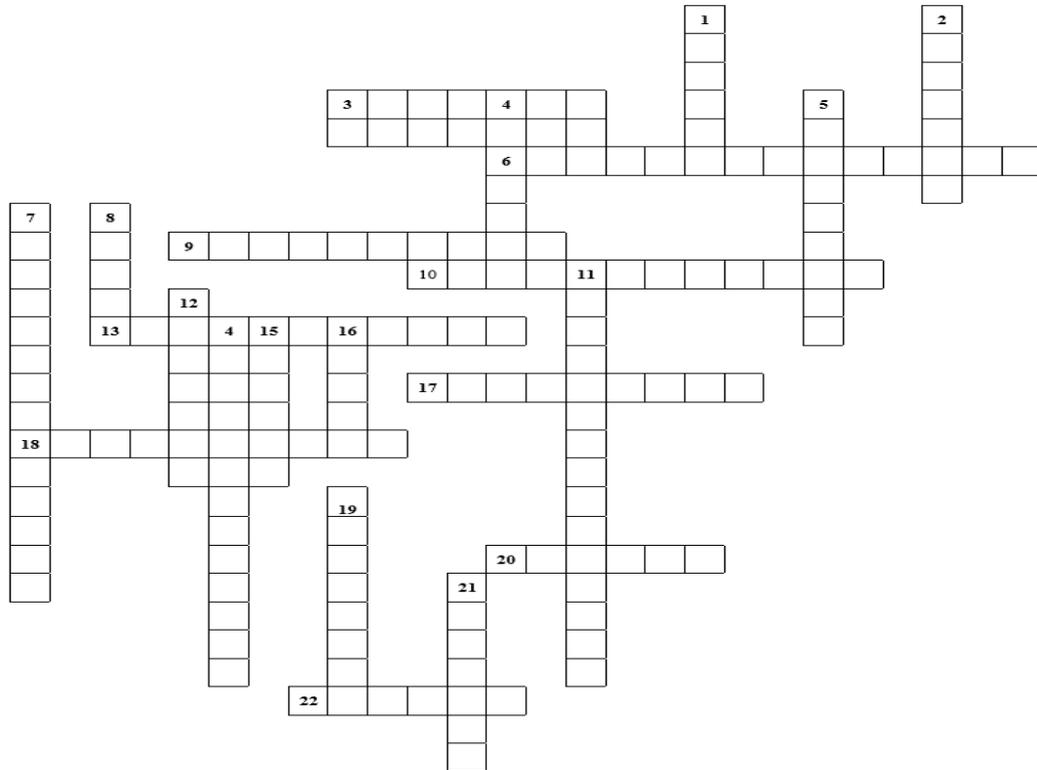
Gaines was the author of nine novels and several short-stories. Amongst Gaines’s most famous works are *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, *In My Father’s House*, and *A Lesson Before Dying*. Gaines was also a well-regarded essayist, much in demand as a public speaker, and commentator on American life. He was awarded the National Medal of Arts in 2013.



“Question everything. Every stripe, every star, every word spoken. Everything.”

CROSSWORD

Solve this crossword! Clues follow



CLUES

ACROSS

- 3) Author of the novel *Jhutha Sach*, whose scope and realism are often compared to Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (7)
- 6) The author of *The Other Side of Silence* (14)
- 9) The author of *Kitne Pakistan*, who later also became the screen writer for Hindi cinema (10)
- 10) A famous story which contains the muttering "Oper di gur gur di annexe di bay dhanian di mung daal di of di Pakistan government" (12)
- 13) *Cracking India* by Bapsi Sidwa was first published with this name (11)
- 17) Number of provinces British India held before Partition (9)
- 18) In Anita Desai's *Clear Light of the Day* the needle of this musical instrument breaks, creating a sense of nostalgia (10)
- 20) The name of the narrator's uncle in *The Shadow Lines* by Amitav Ghosh (6)
- 22) A 1950 novel by Amrita Pritam, also made into a Bollywood movie in 2003 (6)

DOWN

- 1) A 1998 movie based on Bapsi Sidwa's *Cracking India*. (5)
- 2) This was declared as the summer capital of British India from 1864 (6)
- 4) *A Bend in the Ganges* by Manohar Malgonkar ends with partition riots in this state. (6)
- 5) Intizar Husain's *Basti* begins in this mythical town (8)
- 7) *Freedom at Midnight* by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre ends with the funeral of this famous personality (14)
- 8) Famous work of Intizar Husain in which the protagonist Zakir reminisces his childhood memories (5)
- 11) Pamela Rooks wrote the screenplay of this movie based on Khushwant Singh's partition novel (15)
- 12) A 2013 Google advertisement about partition of India (7)
- 14) "A post-dated cheque drawn on a failing bank" Gandhi said this for (13)
- 15) The first name of the author of *Pity of Partition*, wherein Manto's life and work is used to probe the creative tension between literature and history (6)
- 16) Last name of the author who penned down *Train to India* (4)
- 19) The location of Rahi Masoom Raza's *Adha Gaon* is based in this village (8)
- 21) The protagonist of the novel *Difficult Daughters* by Manju Kapoor.

Seeking Refuge Within Alternative Cinematic Modes: An Exploration of the Representation of Refugee Experiences in Ritwik Ghatak's *Komal Gandhar* and *Subarnarekha*

The narrative around the history of Partition in India and Pakistan has been mostly constructed around the subject of gain or loss of land which has resulted in the erasure/forgetting of the lived experiences of the people for whom it was a highly traumatising experience. According to Anindya Raychaudhuri, the narrative of history “has been used, through different means, to justify the self-construction of the two new nation-states that Partition and Independence led to”. (1-2). As an artist who was socially and politically committed, Ritwik Ghatak refuses to be faithful to any such state sanctioned objective truth and instead endeavours to search for a cinematic idiom which will be able to represent the complex emotional and socio-political consequences of the refugees (known as Bangals) after Partition in newly Independent India.

For Ghatak, Partition remained a lifelong obsession which constantly informs the narrative in all of his films: “...The waters of the Ganga and the Padma flowed crimson with the blood of warring brothers. All this was part of the experience that happened around us...I have not been able to break loose from this theme in the films I have made recently. What I have found most urgent is to present to the public eye the crumbling appearance of a divided Bengal to awaken the Bengalis to an awareness of their state and a concern for their past and future”. (Ghatak cited in Raychaudhuri 3).

Komal Gandhar has been widely considered to be, along with being a portrayal of the ‘refugee condition’, a cinematic representation of the journey of Bengal IPTA (which influenced his cinematic vision to a large extent). The movie revolves around the relationship between Bhrigu and Anasuya (both refugees) while tracing the conflicted agendas of two theater groups - Niriksha (experimental in their approach) and Dakshinapath (conservative in their outlook). In the very first scene, we are confronted by a close shot of an old man (played by Bhrigu) who looks towards the camera and asks with anger in a Bangal accent, “Why should I go? Why? Why should I leave my beautiful country, my river Padma?” With this, the actor breaks the ‘fourth wall’ between the film and the audience at the very beginning, and thus warning the audience that they are not allowed to immerse themselves into the cinematic illusion but rather need to be aware of the ‘conditions of life’ (Benjamin cited in O’Donnell 5) which is reminiscent of Brechtian ‘alienation effect’. He manages to inform the audience that what they are witnessing is an imitation of a condition which has to be more carefully considered by interrupting their ‘willing suspension of disbelief’ attitude while witnessing a work of art. According to Dass, Ghatak’s films have an unsettling effect on the audience “emerged out of the fusion of theatrical and cinematic forms; or, more specifically, out of a productive friction between an aesthetic of distance traditionally associated with the stage and an aesthetic of intimacy predicated on the cinema’s ‘appeal of a presence and proximity’”. (5)

Ghatak’s cinematic strategy involved a hybrid practice of “incorporating elements from ‘several models ranging from the realist to the Brechtian to Bengal’s living folk and popular forms. In fact, the Brechtian emphasis on disrupting the verisimilitude of realist performance resonated with Ghatak’s keen interest in the ‘epic form’ of the indigenous folk traditions of performance such as the jatra, a traditional form of Bengali theatre particularly popular in rural areas.

In *Komal Gandhar*, when the troupe visit Lalgola (a West Bengal border town along the banks of Padma river), Bhrigu and Anasuya recall their memories of their lives on the ‘other side’. Their beloved Padma has now become the ‘border’ which separates the two Bengals. The same marriage song is played again in the background as both the characters stand at the end of a deserted railway track leaning on a barrier which marks the end of it with their backs towards the camera with the Padma in front of them. Suddenly, the audience is shifted to a surreal scene on the same spot where they are looking at the deserted railway track (Bhrigu and Anasuya are absent) beyond which lies erstwhile East Pakistan separated by the Padma. The camera starts leading us along the railway track towards the barrier and we hear the repeated chanting of ‘dohaiali’ (it was used by Bengali Muslim fishermen as an entreaty to God for protection from drowning) by a chorus of women which becomes louder as the camera progresses steadily along the railway track before eventually crashing against the barrier. The screen suddenly turns black and we hear the sound of the shattering sound of the camera suggesting that it might have been broken into pieces in the process. By referring to the experimental

approach undertaken by directors like Luis Bunuel, Vsevolod Pudovkin, Federico Fellini and Sergei Eisenstein, Ghatak says that it is “their concern for man that has given a lead to experimentation in the cinema. They throw men in a situation and go deep down to find how much they can realize. Their deep concern for humanity, for man and his society, is the primary reason for their creative activities in the experimental field.” (Ghatak 36) The scene reflects Ghatak’s deep concern for humanity as he endeavours to push the very limits of cinematic representation and also at the same time acknowledging the impossibility of representing the trauma that a refugee has to undergo. It is meant to smash the illusion of the birth of a prosperous new nation which is a refuge for every citizen irrespective of their differences. The audience is jolted into awareness about the extent of the loss and its ramifications on the lives of refugees whose lives have been abruptly turned upside-down before crashing down like the camera.

The very fact that Ghatak’s involvement in the sphere of drama shaped his cinematic sensibility to a large extent is pretty conspicuous in *Subarnarekha* when a drunken Ishwar decides to go to a prostitute and ironically finds himself in Sita’s room who has been forced into this profession after Abhiram’s unfortunate death leading to her committing suicide. Sita is surrounded by darkness while Ghatak employs the chiaroscuro effect on Ishwar emphasising his fallen state. This is followed by a close shot of Ishwar’s face and his blurred vision of Sita in the absence of his glasses referring to the previous scene in the bar where the glasses which got trampled upon by a waiter leading to the blurred (moral) vision. As he moves towards Sita, the theatrical practice of artificial lighting on the actor on the stage dramatises the sequence which is accompanied by close shots of Sita’s traumatised face and one of her eyes. While the camera focuses on the *boti* (a long, slightly curved blade used in Bengali households to cut vegetables) as her laboured breathing reaches our ears which serves almost as a prelude to Sita killing herself with the *boti*. After Sita kills herself off-screen, the camera pans around the entire room as if it is itself in a state of bewilderment. What is worth mentioning is that Ishwar’s blurred vision becomes clear only once in this scene in order to see his sister’s dead face. As Ishwar comes out of the room to the courtyard with the *boti* in his hand, we see him walking the same theatrical manner with the artificial light upon him as everything around him has been overshadowed by darkness. This sequence is characterised by medium shots from the front conveying the expression of inarticulate shock on his face (sometimes from a lower position) which is only possible in the film medium and long shots of his theatrical staggered way of walking from behind which interrupts the audience from sympathising with his plight as he falls to the ground wailing with a ray of light falling on him with the camera focusing on him from a distance.

The use of diegetic and non-diegetic sounds plays an important role in both the films as well. We are introduced to Komal Gandhar through a wedding song - “*aamtolayezamurzumur/ kola tawlaebiya/ aye lo shundorizamaye/ mukutmathaediya* (A stirring cool breeze in the Mango groove/ A wedding blessed by the auspicious green plantains all around/ comes now the groom for the beautiful bride/ wearing chivalry’s glorious crown). In fact, we come across other marriage songs as well throughout the film. For Ghatak, music was highly symbolic and behind its use lies a conscious pattern. He says, “The central theme for *Komal Gandhar* was the unification of the two Bengals: this accounts for the persistent use of old marriage songs; even during the scenes of pain and separation the music sings of marriage”. (Ghatak 39) This departure from naturalistic sounds disrupts the audience from being immersed within the illusion of the narrative. Through these non-diegetic sounds, Ghatak seems to convey an optimistic view about his Bangal protagonists finding a ‘new home’ amidst the cultural turmoil surrounding them.

This sense of optimism through non-diegetic sounds can also be found in *Subarnarekha*’s last scene as well when little Binu, who has lost both his father and mother, is leading his uncle Ishwar towards their ‘new home’ where “the blue hills have spread themselves out against the sky. And the river wanders past them... So many flowers, birds, butterflies, big rooms, and singing and music”. This description of a new home where peace and harmony reside symbolises the nation’s perpetual and yet false promise to all the people who sought shelter after partition. Throughout the movie, we find every almost every character seeking their ‘new home’ in one way or the other and eventually failing to do so. But, by employing the soundtrack of the Vedic chant ‘*charaiveti*’ (keep moving forward), Ghatak doesn’t seem to allow himself and the rootless Bangals to be pessimistic about the quest for a new sense of belonging in a new land.

For Ghatak who was himself a refugee, ‘art for art’s sake’ was simply not an option. He intends to “constantly jostle you [the spectator] around so that you understand that it is not an imaginary story and that I am not here to deliver cheap pleasures to you. I am going to hammer it into your head that you are watching an imagined

incident on the screen but do try to understand what I am trying to convey through this - my thesis, which is entirely true. I am going to keep on alienating you in order to draw your gaze to that truth. I would succeed as an artist only if you become aware and get involved in the task of challenging that social obstacle and injustice in the world outside after seeing the film, if I can transmit my protest to you". (Ghatak cited in Dass, 3) Through the exploration of his politics of representation which led him to push the limits of cinematic techniques, it can be said that Ghatak managed to provide us with a fresh perspective about the complex lived experiences of the refugees on the screen through his ingenious use of camerawork, lighting, music and editing which prevents a privileged spectator to feel pity for the plight of these 'unfortunate' people which would have created an asymmetric power relation between the viewer and the subject being represented. Instead, the audience is forced to reflect upon themselves and reconsider their own complicity in sustaining the very social, political and economic machinery which has led to the misfortune of their fellow human beings.

Subhadip Mukherjee

M.A. English (Prev.), Zakir Husain Delhi College

(Best Paper in B.A. and M.A. category at the National Students Seminar, "Partitions Revisited: Postmemory, History, Identity", 2020)



Partition in Society

There are different faces in society,
You, me, they,
Through the streets to home,
Finding their own way.

Different thinking,
Diversified lifestyles,
Some tramps of the situation,
Some willingly walking the miles.

When one travels on another road for once,
Their idea of survival may change,
From materialistic demands to the basic needs,
May vary the range.

What seems a necessity to one,
For another, maybe a fantasy,
Depends on the path one has taken,
Though all routes lie in the same galaxy.

Yesterday, I saw someone peeping,
In the direction where other parts of society lay,
It wasn't envious nor of sadness,

But, with hope making its way.

Her eyes were sparkling,
Without even a hint of greed,
They were yearning to be on that road,
Where dreams breed.

They don't have access to reach there, I guess,
Maybe, they can't take a detour,
But what if, they're already on the wrong road?
Unable to find the shore?

The maps are blurred,
The faces missing their glow,
Directions are not accurate,
The body asking the legs to be slow.

I wonder why are the faces different?
When the body is the same?
Or maybe, the expressions are different,

So as the routes they name.

Tishya Agrawal

B.A. (Hons.) English, II Year



A Letter from 1947 to 2020

A letter I can relate to...

“It was 1947, Muslims were migrating to Pakistan. They believed that Pakistan was their new home, not India. But I was against this belief, India was my home and I will stay here till my last breath. I loved my country. There were many Hindu families in my slum, and we were all like family. I was 25 when I started working in a factory. My boss was a Hindu, but yet he never differentiated among us based on our religion, until 1947. He was like my father and we had a relationship like that. I made many friends while working there: Ajmal, Ankush, Nabeel, and Shiva. We were very close to each other, almost like brothers. We used to spend our free time on the chai ki tapri and enjoyed and laughed together. But, one major political decision in 1947 destroyed everything.

In our slum, we heard rumours that people of both religions were killed in the riots. Hindus and Muslims were killing each other. Buses, houses, and markets, everything was on fire. My family was worried. They were not allowing me to go to work, as it was not safe out there. But I was confident, nothing like that can happen in our locality. It was rare at that time, but our slum was quite civilized. My wife, Naghma asked me to be careful. I never thought her worries will turn into reality.

I was on my way to the factory when I heard the news that Uncle Ram Prasad was lynched by a Muslim mob. I was sad after hearing this. I never differentiated between people based on their religion. But now people were killing each other just because the other person belonged to a different religion. But, leaving this behind, I continued.

I was about to enter the factory when suddenly someone grabbed my collar and I fell on the ground. I thought the Hindu mob caught me and I was frightened that it was my last day, but it was Ankush and Shiva. I looked up and thought that our friendship has been affected by our religion. I felt a sense of betrayal. I was hurt. I thought they will kill me as an act of revenge. But Shiva gave me a hand to stand up and ordered me to remain quiet. They had a stern look. I was still confused. They understood what was going on in my mind. So, Ankush asked me to peep into the factory through the window. When I looked inside, I was thunderstruck. My boss, who had been so kind to me, hired some goons and they were throwing all the Muslim workers one by one into the chopping machine. There were pieces of flesh scattered everywhere. Walls stained with blood. Workers were tied. Each one of them was waiting for their painful death. Blood was flowing in the drains like water. I was horrified. The next person to be thrown was Nabeel. I tried to shout but Shiva covered my mouth. We saw our friend's death but couldn't do anything. All three of us had the same pain. But we couldn't do anything. We were helpless. He was struggling and crying but they threw him inside the machine mercilessly. I felt like, I saw my soul being thrown in that machine. We cried and cried but were not able to do anything for Nabeel. Shiva dragged me from there as he knew it was not safe for me. They hid me in their room until everything was somewhat fine. Shiva told me that when they heard that our boss was killing Muslim workers, they ran to Nabeel's house as they knew Nabeel was the one who always reached the factory on time. They wanted to warn him, but unfortunately, they were late. They heard that Ajmal had already left with his family for Pakistan.

Even after so many years, I wasn't able to forget that scene when I saw Nabeel being cut into pieces. But that day I would have been at that same place if I wasn't saved by Shiva and Ankush. I am writing about this incident not to show what my boss did but I want to highlight what my friends did for me. They saved me. I want you to be like Shiva and Ankush. Never discriminate or judge anyone based on their religion."

Zara cried as she read this letter from her grandfather. She found that letter in the old documents kept in the storeroom. She could feel how her grandfather would have felt at that time. While hiding in that storeroom from the mob that entered her house that night, she hoped if any Shiva or Ankush will come and save her. She tried to control her sobbing as she remembered how her brother was killed in front of her own eyes in the street. She questioned herself if anything had changed from 1947 to 2020 in "Our India".

Safia Ismail

B.A. (Hons.) English, III Year



Cosmopolitanism and Intersection of 'Old' and 'New' Spaces in Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*

Introduction

"Once he is in the cell, they unshackle him and instruct him to strip. He takes off his grey winter coat with brisk efficiency and then as they watch, arms folded, his movement slows, his fingers tremble while opening the shirt buttons. They wait until he is completely naked before they gather up his clothes and leave. When he is dressed again, he suspects, he will be wearing an orange jumpsuit. The cold gleam of the steel bench makes his body shrivel. As long as it's possible, he will stand. How did it come to this, he wondered?" (Shamsie, 1)

The passage above reveals captivity, torture, and inhumanity of individuals in the name of nationalism, and draconian laws that often oppress those who already occupy the fringe position. The conflict described above also surpasses any differences of nation, nationality, ethnicity, or race and yet these differences very often alienate most humans from basic humanity and bind them to the chain of trauma and displacement. Kamila Shamsie, who has dealt with ethnic conflicts in many of her novels, unleashes the brutality of painful migrations, territorial divides, and strategic exclusion and othering in her novel *Burnt Shadows* (2009).

The novel spans a wide, temporal, and spatial narrative. It begins with the story of tyrannical detentions by America in Cuba and soon moves to Japan and goes on to encompass a wide history of colonial India, the Partition of India in 1947, political instability in Karachi, the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, the formation of Taliban, the 9/11 Twin-Tower attack and its aftermath, the war in Afghanistan and the ultimate nothingness and futility of everything in a small apartment in New York.

Cosmopolitanism offers a perspective beyond the binary opposition of Hindus vs Muslims, and India vs Pakistan, and allows us to reinterpret history surrounding the partition differently. In this context, the work of Kamila Shamsie, a Pakistani-British writer is pertinent, given the scope of postcolonial hybridity, ethnic conflict, and cosmopolitanism. Her novel *Burnt Shadows* explores the elements of cosmopolitanism vis-a-vis the epochal events of the world, such as the partition of India, the attacks in Japan, Russian invasion of Afghanistan, and 9/11 in America and its aftermath in Afghanistan. A common ground behind these attempts of invasions, mass-killings, and colonisations is a desperate attempt to homogenise societies and cultures by polarising them, and always viewing them in binary oppositions of 'us' vs 'other'.

Cosmopolitanism can broadly be defined as a willingness to interact with the potential 'other' by embracing cultural, ethnic, linguistic, or racial differences - to accept differences without inculcating a sense of exclusion or othering. This is not a recent concept; the ideals of cosmopolitanism go way back in history. Immanuel Kant, one of the foremost proponents of cosmopolitanism, defines it as "the matrix within which all the original capacities of the human race may develop" (Kant 1784).

Arjun Appadurai gives a more contemporary definition of cosmopolitanism when he speaks of the idea of "cosmopolitanism from below" from the vantage point of third world spaces like India. He calls this kind of cosmopolitanism, "the urge to expand one's current horizons of self and cultural identity and the wish to connect with a wider world in the name of values which, in principle, could belong to anyone and apply in any circumstance (Appadurai 2010).

This form of cosmopolitanism, what he alternatively calls "vernacular cosmopolitanism", also resists the boundaries of class, neighbourhood and mother tongue, but it does so without an abstract valuation of the idea of humanity or of the world as a generally known or knowable place" (ibid). Thus, the values of recognition, inclusion, and hospitality as part of the common human universe, therefore, remain at the heart of this cosmopolitan ideal.

Cosmopolitanism and the Politics of 'Othering' in *Burnt Shadows*

In *Burnt Shadows*, Hiroko Tanaka, initially a school teacher, ends up working in a munitions factory. Her father, an artist, is labelled a traitor for speaking against the emperor and the tyrannical regime of Kamikaze militarism in Japan. The novel thus begins with the second world war as its backdrop and soon explores the perils of going against dictatorship. Hiroko falls in love with Konrad Weiss, a German, who is in Japan to avoid witnessing the tyrannical Nazi regime in his country. But Konrad is killed when America bombs Nagasaki, and the tragedy gives Hiroko a permanent mark on her back.

At the end of the World War II, Germany, Japan, and America represent the beginning of a new world order that would establish rigid norms of nation and nationalism, and also the privilege and hierarchy of identities based on these. And some scars just like the one Hiroko has on her back remain forever.

Hiroko then travels to colonial Delhi, only to witness yet another divide and displacement in the other side of the world. India is under the British rule and on the brink of partition. Hiroko stays with Konrad's step-sister Isle and her husband James Burton. It is at their place that she is romantically drawn to Sajjad Ali Ashraf, their employee, who agrees to teach her Urdu. Given his position and identity --an Indian Muslim-- Sajjad is immediately dismissed as a potential predator. But, what actually unites both Hiroko and Sajjad is their common experience of geographical and psychological displacements that transforms the meaning of 'home' for them into perpetual longing.

After the partition of India, Sajjad is forced to move to Karachi and Delhi is forever lost to him, just like Nagasaki is lost to Hiroko. She finds the Hindu-Muslim biases and the politics that further fuels this divide not only baseless, but inhumane, unjust, and unethical. After beginning a new life in Karachi, both Sajjad and Hiroko remain in exile in their own ways --with Hiroko knowing and always contemplating about going beyond the constructed notions about nation and home, she occupies the position of a critical insider and also a critical outsider-- either way realising the narrowed perspectives on 'self' and the 'other' as the root cause of all biases. The staunch anti-West and anti-Hindu bias in Pakistan puts her at unease since her foreign identity fuel suspicions about her cultural beliefs. Hiroko believes all cultures to emerge from the common premise of basic humanity, and she finds the persistent tension after independence even more problematic.

Hiroko, thus, becomes the centre of fluidity that Shamsie intends to engage with in the novel. Her criticism of rigid national boundaries and cultures makes the idea of cosmopolitanism entangled with the concept of nativity, and brings out the futility of a uniform platform of labelling and dividing human beings. Her desire to expand the normativity of what home means is seen in terms of her foreignness and nativity, in a land where she is not born. This suspicion had also fuelled the political divide in India, that ultimately made the two-nation theory feasible.

The abrupt shift from colonial Delhi to the birth of Pakistan/ Karachi that Shamsie depicts is surreal even as fiction, but it was a lived reality that changed the course of history and the lives of millions of people. Decades later, the hostility between the two countries only confirms the bias and hatred interspersed with ignorance that still governs their politics. Another cosmopolitan element that Shamsie deals with in the novel is the acceptance of strange places and a sincere attempt to feel at home. Hiroko tries to feel at home in Karachi and she, for many years, calls that place her home despite the hostility she faces there. Home, in that sense, becomes an abstract idea to her - it becomes a constant struggle within herself and with the outside world to feel at home or even call Karachi her home.

Not only Hiroko but her only son Raza faces discrimination, first as a child of mixed parents and later as an ‘ethnic other’, since his features resemble the much-loathed Hazara community in Pakistan and Afghanistan. His hatred for ‘self’ soon transforms him to an extent that he ends up becoming part of a terrorist group. This shift further traumatizes Hiroko for she could not fathom the extent to which her son’s identity damaged him. His psychological displacement is not completely alien to her, but she is not able to measure the extent of it. The *mohalla* in Karachi where he lives all his life is always a strange place, for it is homogenous in population and Hiroko could never assimilate there.

Raza’s false confession of being a Hazara gives him some sense of grounding and self-worth in a desperate attempt to assimilate in the only society he has ever known. But it is these lies that turn him against the West, which is often seen as a threat to the ideals and values of the East. All of them, in one way or another, live in exile; the home is forever lost to them and the place they inhabit in is repulsive as well.

Homogenous rather than Cosmopolitan?

If we revisit the 1947 partition from today’s perspective and through Shamsie’s novel, it is not difficult to understand that it was based on a (false) assumption that India and Pakistan can sustain themselves only by religious homogenization. The ideals of cosmopolitanism were as alien in the entire process as much as the hatred for the ‘other’. Despite having lived together in peace for centuries, the Hindu and Muslim communities were manipulated by the colonizers into thinking that they could not live together. However, the homogenization failed miserably and both nations still reel under the destructive politics of othering.

The cosmopolitan, as a threat to homogenization, is what *Burnt Shadows* depicts—with an emphasis on the destructive consequences of all such attempts. The partition was a failure in the modern history of the Indian subcontinent. The birth of Bangladesh is a living example of this failure, alongside the communal and ethnic conflicts that these two countries still face time and again. The resistance against “vernacular cosmopolitanism” (Appadurai 2010), as Appadurai says, is very much a reality even as much as it was during the time of partition. Moreover, this desperate othering has led to further destruction as Shamsie depicts: homogenising societies for economic gains have also failed miserably. Whether it is the partition of India, Russian invasion of Afghanistan, 9/11 attack, and its aftermath that tore Afghanistan apart, the underlying inability to see beyond “us” and “other” remains constant. The order of the old world is replicated in the new world, creating more patterns of the “self” and the potential threat that is “other”. Shamsie’s novel is one of the most convincing narratives that exposes this.

Fathima M,

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(Best Paper in M.Phil & PhD category at the National Students Seminar, Partitions Revisited: Postmemory, History, Identity”, 2020)



A Second-Hand Bicycle

I had a catastrophic day in school and I was walking back home. Suddenly someone started honking. I turned, and it was my friend Madan riding a bicycle. He applied the brakes exactly at a point when he was at a distance of only 2 millimetres. My eyes widened so much that someone could put up a projector and play a film on the white screen of my eyeballs.

But, my friend Madan laughed and said, “How’s it?” and I asked, “What?” Then he pointed to his bicycle and I gave it a closer look. It was red and the name of its brand was written in white colour: “Hero”. It only took a couple of years for this brand to become one of the most famous ones in India. Owning a bicycle at that time was a big deal, but if you had a Hero bicycle, it was considered a huge achievement and a status symbol in Indian society. Madan belonged to a

rich family, whereas my father was just a plumber. After a lot of efforts, he managed to buy a bicycle for himself so that he could travel to the city. So, I wondered, "How will he manage to buy a bicycle for me". While all these thoughts were wandering in my mind, Madan honked again. And I said, "It's good", and walked away. But, I was preoccupied with only one thought, "I wish I could afford a bicycle". However, this catastrophic day came to an end and I went to sleep.

The next day, after school, when I reached home, I noticed something different in the veranda. Usually, there was only one bicycle parked there. But today there were two and one of them was smaller. I was amazed and shouted "Bapu?" He quickly came out and I asked, "Whose bicycle is this?" And he said, "Yours!" I couldn't believe my ears but it was true. Then he told me that it's a second-hand bicycle and he bought it from Rihaan Cyclewala. I knew that we could only afford a second-hand bicycle, and I was satisfied with it. On that day, I realised that my Bapu could go beyond his limits to fulfil my wishes.

The next day, I was paddling towards my school with a broad smile. On the way, everyone was amazed to see me riding a bicycle and I paddled my bicycle with pride like a prince driving a 50s Mercedes. All of a sudden, a boy of my age was blocking my way and I braked hard and it stopped exactly at a distance of 2 millimetres but he didn't have a single mark of fear on his face. Then he requested, "Can you please drop me to the nearby park?". And while taking a deep breath I said, "Yes, Why not!" He thanked me and mounted the backseat of my bicycle.

On the way to the park, I came to know that his name was Junaid and his father was a policeman. I shared my family background as well. Then, he mentioned that he also owned a bicycle like mine but due to certain reasons he wasn't able to bring it today. He also told me how, while learning to ride a bicycle, he fell and got that mark on his forehead. While we were conversing, we reached the park and I dropped him there. He thanked me again with a smile and I headed for school.

I reached school, attended all the classes as always but it was a special day for me because my bicycle became the talk of the school. Everyone was looking at me amazed and especially the girls who were willing to sit on the carrier of my bicycle, as if I was Dev Anand and they were my heroines.

When I reached the bicycle parking and took off the stand, I saw Junaid standing behind me. I was a bit frightened because a moment ago he wasn't there. And then, he again requested me to drop him at the place from where I picked him up that morning. I agreed and dropped him there. And soon, it became a routine to pick and drop Junaid and we became good friends. The only thing that annoyed me about him was the stories he kept narrating about his bicycle. One day, my mom asked me to bring an oil container from the shop across the fourth street from our house and gave me 20 paisa. Unfortunately, my bicycle punctured and I had to walk to the shop.

When I was coming back from the shop, I saw a man drinking tea on the tea stall. He looked around 52 or 53 years old. I felt like I knew him. I tried to remember and succeeded after a while. He looked similar to Junaid's description of his father, but about 10-12 years older. Out of curiosity, I decided to greet him. I saw him going towards the graveyard and I ran behind him. Even at the age of 50, he was walking fast and I couldn't match his speed.

When I reached there, I saw him praying in front of a grave. I walked slowly towards the grave because I didn't want to disturb his prayer. But by the time I reached the grave, he left. I was already tired and I had to run behind him. Then I cast a glance on the grave but couldn't understand anything written on the gravestone except the date, *15th August 1947*. I could not make sense of the epitaph written in Urdu. I observed that the size of the grave was very small. It seemed to be for a mere 10 years old kid. I was trying to understand whose grave was this and then I saw an old man passing by. I stopped him and asked, "Chacha, can you please tell me the name written on the gravestone?"

And he said, "It is the grave of Junaid Ansari". I was completely shaken and perplexed. I quickly ran to my home and left the oil container there. Then, I dragged my bicycle to Rihaan Cyclewala's shop to get its puncture repaired and gather information about the first owner.

While Rihaan Chacha was repairing, I tried to gather details about the first owner. He told me that the bicycle belonged to the son of Mr. Ansari who died years ago. He's a retired police officer and couldn't manage to earn sufficient money for his wife's treatment. Hence, he sold this bicycle to meet the expenses. Rihaan Chacha also mentioned that he was asking him to sell this bicycle for many years but every time Mr. Ansari refused saying that it was the last memory of his son. Before he could give me more information the puncture was repaired.

My questions had not ended. So, with a bit of courage, I decided to go to the place where Junaid usually asked for a lift. I paddled in a hurry and reached the spot, but he was nowhere to be seen. After thinking for a moment, I paddled again

and reached the park and started looking for him. I could not find him and started walking back. And then someone called my name, I turned around and looked, it was Junaid. He was sitting on the sand and looking towards the sky.

I walked quickly towards him and sat beside him. It found it difficult to ask him anything. It is easy to talk to a boy but extremely difficult to converse with a ghost. I was wondering how to start?

But then he said “13 years ago, when I was just 9 or maybe 10, I was going to my Abbu’s Chowki after school. Some unknown people were running here and there with swords in their hands. I stopped my bicycle there. Suddenly, one of them saw me and asked me my name. I said ‘Junaid’ The mere sound of my name seemed to have infuriated him. I could see wrath and hatred in his eyes. He rose his sword high, pierced it through my chest, and I died...”

I could see tears in his eyes yet he continued, “Can I ask you a for favour? Will you please return this bicycle to my Abbu? This bicycle makes me feel connected with him and Ammi.”

I had no words to say except “Yes”. He wiped off his tears and hugged me with a smile and soon faded into thin air. And, the very next day after this incident, I was walking towards my school.

**Shiva Sagar,
B.A. (Hons.) English I Year**



Different Horrors, Same Hell

Different horrors but same hell

witnessed by same, blood struck by the identical knell

pristine souls maligned by devilish powers

innocent pleas silenced by fetish voices

truth choking beneath the demonic towers

heads down south, feet to the north

the bodies lie swaying back and forth

bypassing the intoxicating fumes

the eyes search for safer rooms

the hands hold tight as balance becomes clumsy

the sinews of feet struggle, and the holds become flimsy

the deed eventually becomes a segment of history.

Mehak Burza

Department of English



Awaiting Dawn

Let's march, and get free from the chains of curfew,
Till every drop falls on the streets of blood,
Till each breath seizes and heaven wakes up to our
call.
In the crowded lanes,
I hear the unsung melodies of emancipation,
The koyal adds the music of freedom to it,
Deadly silence before the storm alarms,
And each wave of intifada rises up to the sky.
The frozen hearts witness the death of a million minds,
Like late winter, engulfs the warmth of life,
Summer beholds the coldness of nature.
Dusk carefully listens to the stories of twilight,
In every story, the hero dies unremembered.
Zoon wails, the moon shines,
Someone still pleading for his innocence,
The dynamic idea flows through the deep channels of
a poet,
So shall it be!
The garden where Sufi dances to ecstasy with each
swirl,
A wave of revolution, that is beyond the chains of
slavery.

You see the beloved, the unread letters covered
with dust and blood relate the desertedness of hefty
vale beyond those tattered mountains and beneath that
mournful sky.
Sit closer, besides and feel the numbness,
Hear the inner sobs of the incinerated soul.
Like brook makes its way through vast rocks,
So shall it be!
The whole story shall be revealed to the deaf world.
Look into those tearful eyes, the lost love won't
return...
I await none of your calls but a fresh breeze from my
homeland.
I see a thousand miles away some smoke rise,
Behind those tall withered mountains darkening the
whole earth,
I smell the aroma of freedom, the chains are broken
And the pigeons are independent from the cage.
All the thorns wither with time,
So shall their regime and the birds shall fly in the free
air.
Look how beautiful and soothing is the first sunbeam
of freedom,
A new life is blown in the vein of the shabby streets.

Khubaib Mujtada

BA (Hons) English III Year



Ghost of Partition

Ghost which still haunts
Stories which still revolt
Unhealed wound
becomes the doom.

Brothers turned into foes
Soil changed its colour
“blood trains” everywhere,
Melancholy and despair

Long time has elapsed
Still, there is unrest
Massacres takes place
Love fades

Tax of hatred we pay
But humanity finds way
Hate can't hold the power
Love will indeed showe

Pawan Kudia

M.A. English (Prev.)



Manto (2018): Movie Review

(A writer who was born as an Indian and died as a Pakistani)

Manto is an Indian biographical historical fiction and drama, written and directed by Nandita Das. It is based on the life of one of the finest and most controversial Urdu writer, playwright and author Saadat Hasan Manto. The setting of the movie is in Bombay and Lahore in the years between pre-independence and post-independence.

Cast: Nawazuddin Siddiqui (Manto), Rasika Dugal (Safia, Manto's Wife), Tahir Raj Bhasin (Shyam, Manto's friend), Rishi Kapoor, Ila Arun, Paresh Rawal, Gurdas Maan, Ranvir Shorey, Divya Dutta, Rajshri Deshpande, and Javed Akhtar, etc.

The movie begins with a montage of a short story of Manto which was based on teenage sex workers. In the beginning, it gave me deep hard-hitting thoughts but the ending of the montage gave me a sense of relief. With Manto's works, it is impossible to guess the ending and it never ends the way you think. His works are filled with deep meaning.

Throughout the movie, many realistic problems were touched upon. For example, on a minor level the issues of casting couch and the writers being paid much lower for their efforts are highlighted. Nevertheless, the focus is on how Manto is an expressive writer, but his realistic works, are considered as obscene by the court and some reputed people of society. Due to communal riots and the fear of death, the migration to Pakistan created a lot of chaos in his life. He wanted to go back to Bombay where his parents and firstborn reside but cannot because he decided to come to Pakistan. Stressed, Manto finds comfort in alcohol. He was not even able to open the letters he received from his friends from Bombay, namely Ismat Chughtai, Shyam Chadda, and Ashok Kumar because the memories of Bombay make him realise his mistake - that he chose to come to Pakistan.

In the climax of the movie, Manto reveals characters of an ideal family man, a father, and a husband. The realistic approach of Manto in the movie towards his situation and the issues that he is facing, instead of the approach of an ideal man, lends it a more convincing hue and this keeps the plot going.

If we observe the movie with a certain discernment, we'll see that the way Nawaz played Manto is beyond perfection and the way Rasika Dugal played Manto's wife is very poignant as she is able to make the audience sympathise with her. The thing that surprised me was that Manto's wife was a support to him throughout the movie except in one scene in which she says "Aapke likhne ke wajah se hi hum bhooke marenge" which means *we'll die starving because of your writings*.

The way the cinematography and production design are done by Kartik Vijay and Rita Ghosh respectively is impressive, to say the least. What caught my attention was the font used for the title and credits. The font shows feelings of unrest and displays the pain of being divided. The background music and visuals tend to give one goose-bumps. I was taken in by the noises in the background because if we listen carefully, they seem to be telling some untold stories. The dialogues are extremely impactful due to the way they are delivered. During the movie, I didn't once doubt the ability of the actors portraying the characters they were cast to play as all the actors played their roles gracefully.

The movie ends with the montage of another short story of Manto's which was based on the partition, pain of migration and national identity crisis.

What I realised after watching the movie is that Saadat Hasan Manto might not be an ideal man but he is an ideal writer.

Shiva Sagar
B.A. (Hons.) English I Year

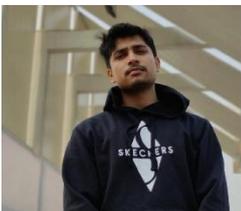
Broken Dreams

Broken dreams and fallen stars,
Dark seems the way, numb the heart.
Clouds suffocating the light of hope;
Results out, made dedication sob.
Dejected as hell sunk in my teary eyes,
Bright and Brewing sun, again I'll rise.
Doubt echoed "you are not good enough!"
Wait! Who said life will be fair to us?

Fallen I may but not broken;
"Learn from mistakes" that's God's token.
Is it the eclipse of wisdom?
Or outset of a new phantom.
Life is a marathon, so run,
Hard-work is stamina, you are never don

Bhupesh Singh Dhami

M.A. English (Prev.)



Helplessness!!!

My heart lost...
I felt it beating hard!!!

It is not that we cannot see what is happening,
It is just that we cannot do to what is happening!!!

It is not that we are not seeing people crying all over,

It is just that we cannot go and wipe their tears!!!

It is not that we are not seeing burning houses,
It is just that we cannot go and douse the fire!!!

It is not that we do not see dead bodies all over,
It is just that we cannot go and attend their last rites!!!

It is not that we don't know who the rioters are,
It is just that somehow they manage to escape!!!

It is not that we don't want to support the suffering
people,
It is just that we are surrounded by helplessness!!!

My heart lost.

Hold on...

People's minds are lost!!!

Pranjali Rai

B.A. (Prog.) I Year



The Story of a River

I am a river,
Dispersing my channels.
Hovering slightly,
Hoisting my flags.

I have seen the sorrow.
I have seen the gaps,
I have seen them making,
Brand new maps.

I have seen nature,
From my mother's lap.
I have seen the mountains,
Taking their nap.

I have seen the picture,
Of happy singing birds.
I have seen them wading,
Sleepy, creepy herds.

But the scene gets shifted,
When I am on the plains.
Like the land is lifted,
And, I had had complaints.

Screaming of machines,
Was always on my way.
They were rotting on the earth,
Because they have had a hay.

They used my energy,
They used her stones.
They drilled her skin,
Making big holes.

They comforted themselves,
They uprooted her hair.
And made big buildings,
For their own heirs.

I moved on with pain,
Headed towards the sea.
But the sight there was insane,
Because everything was in vain.

Buildings were shattered,
The streets were flooded.
The air was cloudy,
And the food was hoarded.

They wanted the heights,
But they felt deep inside.

The city was in hassle,
But it was too late to realise.

Akshi Sharma

B.A. (Hons.) English I Year



Inhumanity Incarnate - Machismo!

(Partition Point of View of a Woman)

When you were losing it,
I was losing too!
The only difference is...
You were losing humanity
And I lost my dignity!
You did it by your own will,
But I was forced to do it!
When you were running to kill,
I was running to save myself.
When you tore your country into two parts,
They tore my clothes to pieces.
You created bloodshed to satisfy your religion,
They made me bleed
To satisfy their desire...

You stole money and burnt the houses,
They stole my self-esteem and burnt my pride,
You left them dead,
And they left *my body* alive...
You covered your sins under your flag,
And they left me scarred under the sky...
You walked with pride
Having made thousands of orphans,
And for me, my every breath was filled with disgust...
When you were busy in your victory cheers,
My body was decaying with tears...
And my soul was dying with fears
Of inhumanity incarnate 'Machismo'!

Shiva Sagar

B.A. (Hons.) English I Year

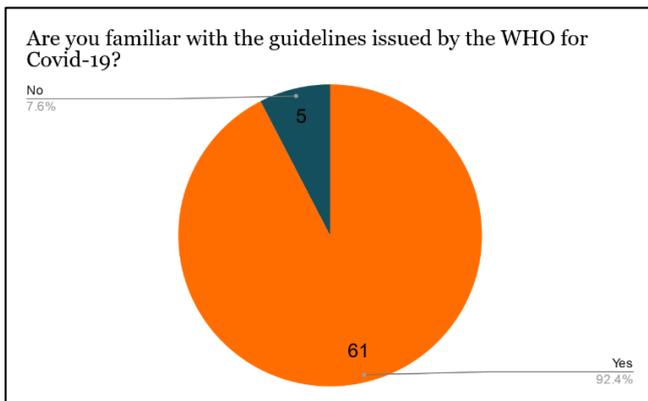
A FEW RAMBLERS MORE

RAMBLER 2020 Survey

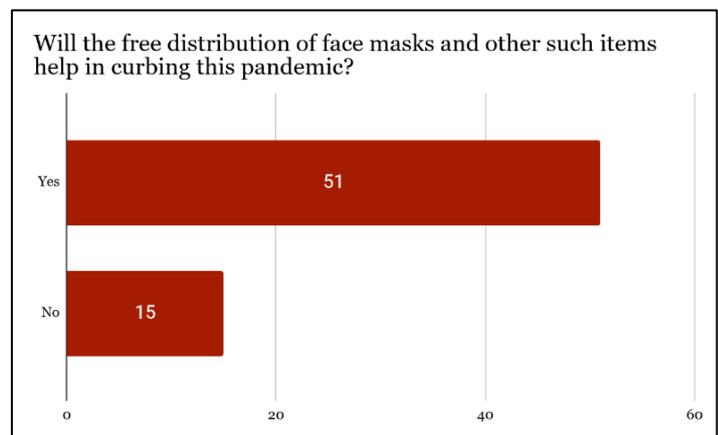
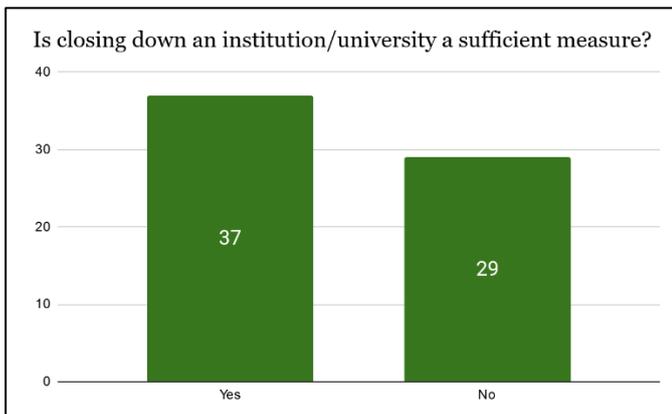
With Covid-19 in the air, this year's survey aimed to gauge the awareness of the students and how this pandemic has affected their outlook on hygiene and measures to deal with such situations. The students were also asked how they planned to create awareness about the virus in their surroundings.

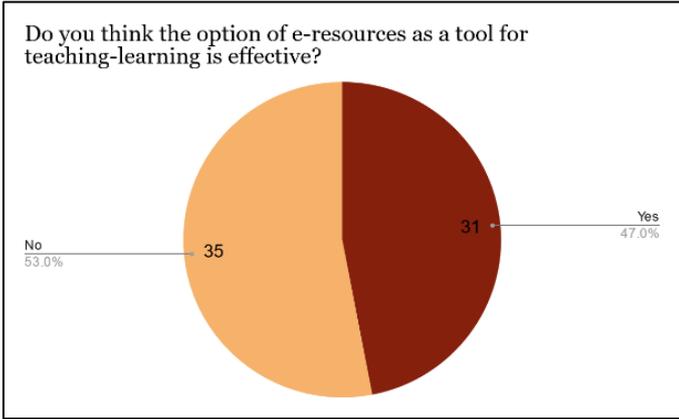
Here are the results: -

Sample size-66

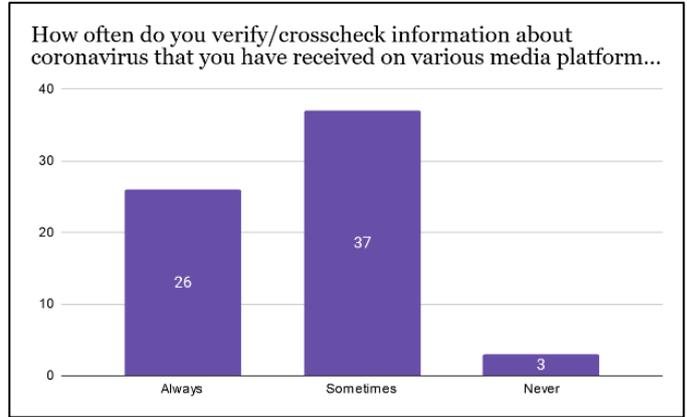
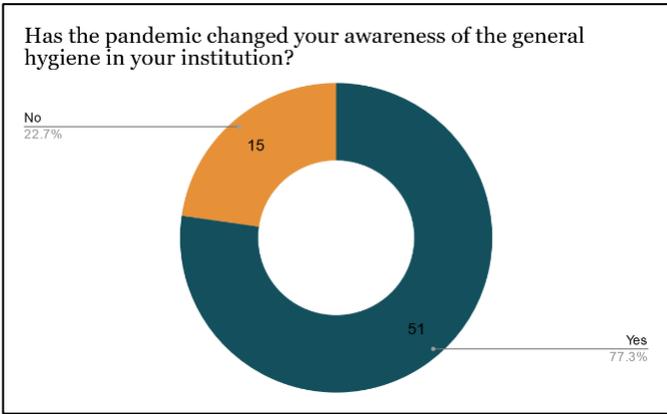


“Living in a society which easily gets influenced by WhatsApp, it becomes our responsibility to create awareness with facts and not through rumours. The guidelines issued by WHO have somewhat changed my hygiene pattern. I now wash my hands with soap every time I come from outside and this has created some awareness in my family. My younger siblings are discussing it with their friends because of everything I tell them. I also encourage them to limit social activities at the moment.”

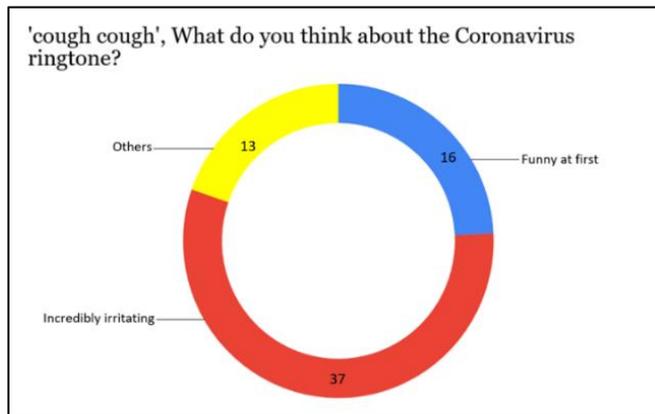




“I hope to do so by making others aware about what coronavirus is and how it spreads, what precautions we can take to protect ourselves and rumours related to Covid-19. I feel closing institutions is a good measure to contain this pandemic.”



“As it is break time, I usually check WHO updates and news from trusted resources and share it widely on my media walls. I plan to practice social distancing as it is recommended. I will be sharing information and convincing fellow beings about taking up proper hygiene habits.”



Gloom

The last ray of light,
breathing through the crimson sky welcomes the
gloomy darkness...
The wind gasps at this gloomy twilight
Stops dead in its tracks...

It beholds this darkness,
the silence of which crushes the contours of world...
And then, to lighten the leaden silence the wind
murmurs a song of memory, reminiscing the loved and
the lost...

Gaura Sharma

B.A. (Hons.) English I Year

Belonging

I don't belong to people or to places
Then where do I belong?
I belong to the trodden roads, the lone trips...
To the windy summer mornings

Or silent damp nights.
To the misted memories...foggy yet hopeful dreams.
The sky is not my limit; the earth cannot be called my
home. I drift among silences and float amidst dreams...
I am unreal yet serene.

Gaura Sharma

B.A. (Hons.) English I Year



Spaced Out

The drizzle made the narrow roads somewhat bearable. It would be an understatement to regard the view as a majestic chaos, but those are the only words that I could come up with at the moment. What did dozens of people in a staggering line outside one of the busiest metro stations in the city on a busy Monday morning had in common? The look of satisfaction as the gentle breeze swayed past them brushing some hair aside.

Don't get me wrong. I had all the intentions of being as cheerful as all those ahead and behind me, but the past few days hadn't been what someone would exactly call "cheerful". Anyway, with the notion of the usual "New Day New Beginning", I tried giving my unusually dull life a little kick-start in the morning of a new week. It's a strange thing; hope. It has a way of pulling you back no matter how distant it may seem. I personally had an even more twisted relationship with hope. Like a mountain and a sea, I being any one of those just not being able to catch hold of the other (weird example, but totally works since you get the idea). So, I carried my lazy bottom up the pavement and up the stairs as fast as the 50 feet queue allowed me to. Here's the thing, when you're as rugged up by life as me, a completely normal

pat on the back could trigger a response with a fascinating number of curses. Like any other struggling youth, I too had a thousand ways my life could have been positive down the trash, on a daily basis. Writing for an IT firm wasn't supposed to pay much, but a man has to flush his frustrations somewhere so I always had my company on my mind, for trash talking.

You have to give it to me. An ambitious writer writing blogs on technology was a long way down and there was no cushion to break the fall but the concrete floor made with a lack of money and resources. So, justifying my rage and frustration to myself, I moved on in the queue.

I checked my watch, just 12 minutes from being too late. Perfect. The baby steps weren't helping. As I swung my head in yet another bout of anger, I saw *her*. It was just a glance through my peripheral vision. I sensed beauty and my usually latent hormones were kicking in. I inched my neck to get a better view but it was excessively crowded because of the rain. I passed the security check, picked up my laptop and again turned to find my prize probably waiting for me to lay my eyes on her. I was good at it, calculating the time beautiful girls took in security check while busying myself in unnecessary things to time it perfectly. This time however my skills failed me. She wasn't there. Nor was she at the check in booth. "Damn!"

I climbed the escalators continuing the search for the lady. My heart hell bent on seeing that face. I made my way to the other end of the platform, the one which was supposed to be a bit light on the crowd if not for the god forsaken rain. No sign of her. My luck never shone bright, but this was a new low, even from my own standards.

"Screw this."

I managed my usual lethargic posture and stood behind the yellow line and resumed scrutinising the world with my dull face. She swept by again. My eyes flicked, and my head followed the flurry. There she was, the stoic magnificence. It was as if she was glowing, her hair flowed perfectly from her head and rested down her sides. Shoulders arched, head held high, hands held together at the front. She was a specimen of astonishment, a glorious beauty, an exquisite piece of artwork. And, I had my eyes on her like a collector. She was on the opposite platform, but right in front of me. She was busy staring at the metro coming from the other end.

She couldn't be more lost, as if in her own world. I gazed at her for what felt like an eternity.

And then it happened.

She straightened her spine and looked me straight in the eye. My stare fell immediately. "Shit", I had lingered for too long and now I had lost my cover.

"What does it matter, she isn't going to remember me anyway. The metro is almost here, better enjoy what's left." I looked up again. This time my eyes met hers. The woman had her eyes pinned on mine. I faltered at first but then her grace got the better of me. I stared back into those gleaming balls of white and brown (Could've been black, she was too far). Unlike mine, her stare was soft, her expression sober. Our little escapade was about to come to an end, the metro was almost there.

150 feet .

Her eyes still glued to mine. Searching for what not.

100 feet.

I took as much information as my mind could. Every detail. Every curve. Every crest.

50 feet.

She came closer. Finding me interesting, strangely enough. Hands still held together, crept forward a little more, lost in the space between me and her. Staring.

40 feet...

Staring.

30....20...

She had me fixed. My body couldn't move. Just staring blankly at her. It felt right. She did the same, without hesitation. Her beauty staring at me as hard as her eyes. Every fraction of the second making me more aware of her. She had to be special. This can't end here....

10 feet...

The time came to a stop. The drizzle slowed down, my heart pumped blood straight to every sense of my body. I was awake. Excited.

She smiled...

5 feet...

....and jumped.
to be continued....

Devesh Bisht

B.A. (Hons.) English III Year



My Dad has a Twisted Tongue

As inescapable as it can get,
my innocent dad's dialect.

'Berry good', he exclaims,
that has earned him a 'very' fame.

Well, in the figments of my rich 'memoory',
his deep green eyes shall always provide me with 'eerie'.
Memory is not 'memery' but 'memoory'
and mom asks him to switch sugar with jaggery.

Highly 'untrustborthy' is his notorious sleep,
by the way it's not 'weep' but 'beep'.
'Tamarrow' shall be the day of judgement
when he astonishes us with his English scent.

His 'bootiful' smile reflects his brilliance
and his soul shines like radiance.

Quite a mouse, he is
when he munches sweets to his bliss.

'Good Sot' he shouts
when badminton shots, we do not flout.

Always eager to watch films
when mom hurdles as an imp.

His senseless jokes, imbecilic sarcasm,
are just a part of his 'genteel' mannerisms.

His 'sirt' buttons are always 'embellised',
just the way James Bond cherishes.

Highly juggled up is his pronunciation,
Which kills King George's fascination!

No, he does not shy away from 'peepul'
and articulately voices his opinions, not like an extra-
terrestrial.

'Haloo' he aims
when mom starts the blame game.

I asked him one day, "What makes your lingo dear?"
He replied, "Daughter! I am an engineer."

The austerity in his coveted diction
is made up of sugar, spice and fiction.

The bite of the 'aeppel',
makes his tooth shrivel.

Just like the struggling bite,
the funny language has always ventured to seize the might.

As the white colour slowly gains momentum,
the fad of 'Michaels' and 'Edwards' procures a broad
spectrum.
No! the world isn't fair,
divided between the moderns and the glare.

Breaking the racial jargon,
my dad comes to the rescue as a 'dargon'.

Nayan Jain

B. A. (Hons.) Economics I Year



Smelling the words like freedom
is a dream like martyrdom.

"Your accent isn't correct, Rs should be soft."
My poor dad is in a dilemma, how's he supposed to
'craft' (R is emphasised).

As the pronunciation faces a glitch,
the upper class comes with a hitch.

Illiteracy, backwardness are profusely measured,
when the proper elocution doesn't sit on the tongue and
treasured.

The brain wasn't exactly biased towards the browns,
just the way uptown wasn't to the downtown.

Before my 'memoory' gets faded
this piece of advice shall be as wise as a trader.

Come on! Cherish the way you speak,
as the chances of Joey interrupting you to measure his pants
is bleak.

By the time the perfection blister runs over us,
The western butcher might chop our tongues over a fuss

Unfinished Graffiti

It was Twilight. Daksh was walking in the valley over the fallen leaves of autumn. Suddenly, he heard a commotion. The sound of dry autumn leaves crunching under his feet became fainter and fainter as he moved further towards it.

The crowd was standing near a Wall. It was the Wall surrounding and protecting the vacation house of the state's Chief Minister. Daksh moved forward, the matter of everyone's fancy was a graffiti made with bright colours on the pristine white wall of the CM's farmhouse. It was the third incident of wall-art in the last two weeks.

This graffiti was more scandalous than the last two. It showed two men kissing and an army man firing upon them.

The colours used were a combination of black and bright. The two lovers were painted in the rainbow colours of the LGBTQ flag and the world around them was dark, grayish and the soldier fully black, it seemed more like a shadow, lurking in the corner.

The white, sharp bullet fired by the army man pierced through the first lover and was shown almost hitting at the heart of the other one.

It was a piece of art, to say the least, but no one said it. That type of freedom of expression was illegal. And the depiction of a homosexual relationship in the graffiti was a taboo, no one even wanted to discuss. Admiration and sadness were visible in many eyes. Admiration for the brave artist and his braver art and sadness for they knew the graffiti will be wiped out by tomorrow morning, replaced by the white, boring paint.

Daksh, however, had only one thought in his mind; the soldier's rifle could've been made better.

Daksh looked around as if to gauge any unusual reaction or someone who may have the same thoughts about the rifle's shape because, after the first two times, he was well-acquainted with the common perception of such art and the reaction of the people towards it.

People kept on talking, discussing the art, identity of the artist, his courage, stupidity and his naivety. Daksh listened, there was nothing new in the old, haggard discussion of the anonymous artist. He got bored and started walking towards his home.

The moment he reached home, his brother jumped onto him asking if he heard about the newest graffiti at the CM's vacation house. Daksh nodded.

"Can we please go and see it? The neighbour says that this time it is two men kissing! Can you imagine two men kissing, how absurd!" He exclaimed, chuckling awkwardly.

Daksh sighed a little, mentally cringing at the prospect of him having to explain to his little brother, barely 17, the concept of homosexuality. He took another deep breath because he knew that it was going to take some time.

He removed his pink jacket which was a mutual property of his brother and him and put it on the chair, a paintbrush fell out of it and his brother gasped in horror.

"Were you painting again? You know dad will be angry with you." His little brother warned but Daksh just shrugged it off and went down to sit on the bed.

"Do you want to know about a man kissing another man, or go complaining to father?" Daksh asked his little brother knowing pretty well the choice he would make.

"Obviously, a man kissing another man. Why would a man kiss another man? There is no shortage of girls in this world." It was an expected reply.

"Okay, so look, not all men like women and neither do all women like men. Men can like men and women can like women. It is called homosexuality." Daksh tried to explain, feeling a burden he knew he was not ready to unburden yet.

"But isn't that a sin?" His brother asked innocently. Daksh wanted to laugh at his ignorance but he couldn't.

“No, it is not a sin. It is normal. It’s just people who made it look bad. You get it, now?” Daksh asked, eager to finish this uncomfortable discussion.

After sensing his discomfort, his brother replied, “I got it.” As his brother replied, Daksh knew somehow, he was able to convey what he wanted to.

The next two weeks went by normally. There was no new art form to arouse the fancy of people, no new graffiti to elicit new debates and discussions. The valley was again drowned with boredom with the wall of the CM’s vacation house restored to the boring white.

But, at the beginning of the third week, things started to stir up again. There was another graffiti, this one was at the entrance of Community Hall.

This graffiti was quite simple. It just showcased an empty palette of colours, which almost looked real. On top of it, it read: Stop trying to brainwash and control the younger generation. Let them have their own ideas; of whatever colour they want them to be.

People started to talk, interpret, understand and debate again about this new graffiti and the writing on it.

When the news of the new graffiti reached Daksh’s house, his brother was more than excited to go and see it since the Community Hall was very close to their apartment.

“Come on, let’s go and see what this new graffiti is all about!” He excitedly told Daksh, but Daksh refused.

“Are you still sad about father breaking your brushes and throwing your colours away?” His brother asked innocently, though he knew it was exactly what the matter was.

“Nah, it is fine. I gave up on painting anyway. It is better if I focus on engineering.” Daksh replied, dejection was clear in his voice. However, he got over his sulky mood quickly, he did not want to transfer it to his brother, “But it’s alright, painting has no career, anyway.”

“This anonymous artist is so lucky. He gets to do what he loves.”

“You’re talking mature stuff...” Daksh looked at his brother suspiciously, “But yes, indeed. He’s worth our admiration,” Daksh then added, “Come on, let’s go and have a look at his graffiti before it is removed.”

It was another new week, and another graffiti, but this one was different. It was incomplete. The latest gossip had it that last night a drunkard saw a man painting on the wall and hurried to click a picture of him. But since the flash was on, the anonymous graffiti artist was able to spot him and flew from there. Leaving behind him, a blurred picture of a man wearing a pink jacket and an incomplete drawing of what looked like a naked woman.

The image of breasts at the valley’s Wall of Democracy resulted in a huge outrage. Some couldn’t believe the obscenity of the art and others could not believe that such a masterpiece remained incomplete.

Some women were offended and thought the graffiti was meant to objectify women. Some men were angry because they realised they could not take their eyes off the art, revealing their true predatory natures.

The blurred picture of the man in the pink jacket was circulated and a prize of one lakh was announced for his capture because the valley did not need an activist artist calling out social issues they were happy to ignore otherwise. The government did not need another man to stand out in protest. They declared him a serial offender; and thus, an artist was branded a criminal.

That day Daksh’s childhood friend Vijay was visiting their house.

“I want to go, see that incomplete artwork.” Daksh’s brother whined.

“No, it is not for you. Sit at home quietly.” Daksh replied sharply.

“Let him go, why don’t you let him go and explore the art? He has a knack for it just like you.” Vijay knew that Daksh’s brother was a brilliant artist with a potential similar to his brother’s.

“Don’t be mad. People are outraged. The government is doing whatever it can do to kill the anonymous artist. I’d rather stay away from this thing. I don’t want to land myself or him in any trouble.” Daksh replied sulkily.

“Well, yes, agreed. When they can’t find the real culprit, they just find whoever to satisfy the public.” Vinay replied, looking worried. He then continued, “Oh, look, here is the picture of the artist!”

They saw the blurry picture on his phone. Daksh looked at both of them and shrugged. “It is a normal jacket. I have a similar one.” He said looking closely at the picture and spotting some paint spots at the back of the jacket.

“Do you think he will go back to complete it?” Daksh’s brother asked thoughtfully.

“No. No one is that mad.” Daksh replied adamantly and Vinay agreed.

“Yeah, but what’s art without madness?” His brother asked and Daksh looked worriedly in his direction.

He quickly changed the topic and putting an end to the argument by concluding that the artist will not complete his art.

Next morning, the valley was buzzing with gossip. The identity of the anonymous artist was finally revealed. People could not believe it. He came back last night to complete his art, as soon as the police stationed near the wall spotted a man in a hoodie with a spray can in his hand, they shot him.

After an hour, Daksh looked at the dead body of his little brother, laying near the unfinished graffiti, still clutching the rough sketch of the naked woman in his palm. The one Daksh had drawn.

Ruchika Verma

B.A. (Hons.) English III Year



Fantastic Characters & Where to Find Them

Dramatis Personae

The Geek

The Cynic

The Snob

The Oddball

Achilles

Dushyanta

Dushyanta’s Assistant

Julius Caesar

Yudhishtira

Krishna

Draupadi

Shakuntala

Helen of Troy

Kannagi

Disclaimer

This skit is purely a work of fiction. Any resemblance to actual teachers and students, living or dead or passed out is purely accidental.

Act 1, Scene 1

[Curtains. The group enters the stage. They have been released from class. They converse about how they will tackle the topic]

Enter THE GEEK, THE ODDBALL, THE SNOB and THE CYNIC

THE GEEK: (*from within*) ... so apart from all that (*on stage*) he said he would prepare a PowerPoint Presentation and asked us to dress up as the heroes.

THE CYNIC: (*scoffing*) A PPT for a presentation? That's something new! But why does he want us to dress up?

THE GEEK: Apparently (*looking at his notes*) "the use of visual indicators will be an effective tool to express the difference between oral and visual cultures, especially with respect to epics." (*Notices the error and scratches it out*)

THE CYNIC: Yeah, as if he is planning to do any of that sort. I would be surprised if he even shows up.

THE SNOB: He seems like a decent guy.

THE ODDBALL: Just because he pays for his own Netflix and only buys hard-bound books??

THE SNOB: Great! (*looking at The Geek & The Cynic*) Did you two pay attention during the introductions because I definitely didn't?

THE CYNIC: I wasn't there that day.

THE GEEK: I was reading up on the syllabus.

THE SNOB: (*jeering*) What a geek!

THE GEEK: Do you have anything to add or you are taking up this course just because you are terrible at Maths?

THE SNOB: Firstly, great burn (*gives a pat on Geek's shoulder*). Secondly, I do. In fact, I was thinking if we could study epics from a feminist perspective.

THE GEEK: But we don't do theory until third year!

THE ODDBALL: Oh, wait! wait!! Can we do it on Gilgamesh, from the Sumerian epic, but you might know him from Marvel.

THE GEEK: But, he is not in our syllabus.

THE CYNIC: Listen, let's not go overboard, this'll hardly matter down the road.

THE ODDBALL: Well, we can't take this lightly either. See, there's another group presenting before us. We can take notes on how they messed it up and try not to do that. Simple? For now, let's just meet tomorrow with an idea of which characters we like and why.

THE SNOB: That's lazy! Can we do it on Gilgamesh?

THE CYNIC: No, you cannot choose Gilly-milly or whatever. I am sure we can finalise something more interesting.

THE GEEK: Anyway, I'm getting late for class. See you guys later.

Exit THE GEEK

THE SNOB: Yeah me too. Can't imagine how difficult it must be for the teacher without me in class.

Exit THE SNOB,

Exit THE CYNIC, THE ODDBALL rolling eyes at THE SNOB

Act 1, Scene 2

(Students reconvene the next day to discuss the Topic further, with their own ideas. In media res..)

THE ODDBALL: Are we REALLLY not working on Gilgamesh? (*Looks at everyone else in a pleading manner.*)

THE SNOB: Of course not! I think Achilles from Homer's *Iliad* is the best for our project.

THE ODDBALL: (*looks at smudged writing on hand*): Sure bro, I love the *Iliad*. Hector, Ache-LESS (*mispronounces*) and Agememmmnon (*also mispronounces*)

THE SNOB: It is Achilles and not Ache-LESS.

THE CYNIC: Alright wannabe Hermione. What's in a name anyway.

THE GEEK: Ooh, Shakespeare! We have him in the syllabus!

Enter Achilles.

ACHILLES: I can be your hero baby... yeah (*Students are confused and taken aback*)

THE ODDBALL: Hello, this is the first year English Honours Class. Who are you?

ACHILLES: DUH! I am Achilles, girl. Can't you see (rolls eyes)

THE CYNIC: What is going on?

THE GEEK: Relax, we are in a play. So technically anything can happen. (Cynic shrugs. Oddball nods vehemently. Snob sighs and shirks)

ACHILLES (struts around like a diva): I AM THE SON OF THETIS, SLAYER OF HECTOR, POSSESSOR OF THE DIVINE SHIELD, I DEMAND ATTENTION (trips)

THE SNOB: Add 'Breaker of Heels' to that title.

(Everyone sniggers)

ACHILLES (wipes sweat, visibly embarrassed): You mere mortals! How DARE you mock me! I am the greatest hero from the Greek Epics!

(Enter Dushyanta with an assistant.)

(He comes to the spotlight and begins to chant a Sanskrit shloka in a dignified and regal manner. After he delivers the shloka, all the characters stare at him poker faced, as they are clueless.)

DUSHYANTA: *Pradeep jwala bhir....*

ASSISTANT: Sirji? Translation?

(Dushyanta now visibly nervous fumbles inside his pocket, searching amongst scraps of paper with English translations on them. Many pieces fall out. He finally manages to find the right piece and while stammering looking nervous and un-regal, translates the shloka into English.)

DUSHYANTA: Like a lamp....

ACHILLES: Who is this incoherent jabber? And what is he saying? It is all Greek to me.

ASSISTANT: Don't you know who he is? The progenitor of the great Bharata clan - Dushyanta!

ACHILLES: HAH! I AM SON OF THETIS....

DUSHYANTA (interrupting Achilles): Haan sunn lia, ab bas kar. Mere saamne tu tucch manav hai.

ACHILLES: Whatever! I bet you can't do this.

(Both start flexing their muscles. Achilles does one pose, Dushyanta does another)

DUSHYANTA (*challenging Achilles*): Tu bahar mil mujhe.

(both start to exit the stage)

THE GEEK: Tussi jaa rahey ho?

DUSHYANTA (phone rings, says "haan bhai matter ho gya Achilles se, ladkey le aao bhari aadmi hai !!!

(As Dushyanta is exiting, he bumps into JULIUS CAESAR and...)

JULIUS: Et tu Brute...

DUSHYANTA (exasperated): Tu rehne de bhai, tu high school ka syllabus hai.

(Dushyanta then drags him and they both exit)

(Enter Yudhishtira dressed like a boring office guy enters the stage carrying files.)

YUDHISHTRA (in a monotonous manner): Main Yudhishtira. Main woh hu jisey Jannat naseeb hua, baaki sab ko jahannum ki aag mili. Jannat ke safar me ek doggie mila, woh bhi pooraa saath nahi nibha paaya. Issey me aur lonely ho gya

THE CYNIC: I've never seen a sadder person in my life.

YUDHISHTRA (sighs, continues in a monotone): Main aur meri tanhai.

THE SNOB: Hello! Excuse me, we are supposed to speak in English.

YUDHISHTRA: AH, ANOTHER MISERY!

(Enter Krishna)

KRISHNA: VATS! This is all in your head, Vats. You need to loosen up a bit, man. I've got just the thing for you.

YUDHISHTRA (*interrupting him*): What are you talking about Krishna?

(Both EXIT stay on stage talking amongst themselves)

(Enter Draupadi wearing a saree)

DRAUPADI: FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE! All men want to do is go on their merry little adventures with their buddies. My husbands had to be exiled for taking me along for once.

THE SNOB: Well... technically...

DRAUPADI (*cutting in*): What technically? Huh? I'm Draupadi. God! What I wouldn't give for some more female perspective.

THE SNOB: Female perspective?

(The conversation fades when the spotlight falls on Shakuntala. She can be seen in some classical postures. Awestruck, Draupadi and Snob come closer)

THE SNOB: What poise

DRAUPADI: Truly, she is epitome of grace!

SHAKUNTALA: Draupadi! What are you doing here?

DRAUPADI: Ahh, nothing much, just talking about being stuck with these five bros.

SHAKUNTALA: But, those hermit girls were obsessed with my beauty and how good a bride I'll make but they were just that.

DRAUPADI: What are you getting at?

SHAKUNTALA: I'm talking about the Bechdel Test. It's a simple check to see if a text is able to represent women properly. If it features a conversation between two female characters that doesn't revolve around men, it passes the Bechdel test.

DRAUPADI: So even if two women talk about the Bechdel test, a text will pass the test?

SHAKUNTALA: Technically, yes. But, this (*pointing at the conversation between male characters on stage*) definitely doesn't pass the test.

DRAUPADI: Anyway...(LOOKING AT THE AUDIENCE) Friends! For long we have been marginalised and treated as ornaments within narratives. It is time for women to speak up! Anyone interested is welcome to join my organisation -- ASSOCIATION OF FEMALE CHARACTERS FROM THE EPICS.

SHAKUNTALA: Hey, count me in. And, what about that girl, Helen, I am sure she would be interested too.

(Enter Helen)

HELEN: For three thousand years, I have been stuck in the *Iliad*. Aaj peheli baar stage mila hai. (laughs at her own joke) I have heard that my face has launched a thousand ships. WONDER why didn't anyone ask me to come along? (*Aside*): acha khasa world tour bhi ho jata

(Enter Kannagi)

KANNAGI: Ahh dear friend, need any help in taking revenge for your missed-out world tour opportunities? (chuckles) Who better than me?

HELEN: Ermm. Revenge? You?

KANNAGI: For the love of God, it is 2019 and we are talking about ONLY burning bras? Whereas I, Kannagi, burnt the whole city down with the throw of my breasts. Naari Shakti Zindabad.

DRAUPADI: (looking at the audience) Indeed! Can't get better than this!

Act 1, Scene 3, FINALE

(Students reconvene to discuss further)

THE ODDBALL: That was a bit weird, even for me.

THE SNOB: But in all fairness, some valid points were raised.

THE GEEK: Yeah, I agree. Kannagi really spoke to me. She was not phony at all.

THE SNOB: Draupadi was equally powerful!

THE ODDBALL: Yeah. And, Helen really struck the right chord.

THE SNOB: Wow, how COME WE agree with each other?

THE CYNIC: Well, stranger things have happened! I am looking forward to the next three years and increase my vocabulary with words like 'bourgeoisie' and using them with contempt.

THE GEEK: Ha-ha! And, learning the definition of Tragedy. That should be fun.

This skit was performed as a part of the Fresher's Welcome of the Department of English

DIRECTORS OF THE SKIT

Ms. Shubra Dubey

Ms. Deeksha Yadav

Ms. Mehak Burza

Is it possible to have an Inclusive and Tolerant Society?



Tolerance is the ability or willingness to accept the existence and expression of opinions that one disagrees with. In earlier days, differences in religion led to persecution, differences in politics created bad blood, and differences in opinions ended in blows. This is intolerance, the refusal to be just and fair-minded. A whole community might be massacred in the name of God. Even today purges for political opinions are not unknown in modern societies. These myriad forms of intolerance originate from bigotry, narrowness and blind self-conceit. It is the result of dogmatism, a belief that there is only one attitude that is right.

India is a brilliant example of "Unity in Diversity". It is a country where people of different castes, creeds, religions, customs, cultures, traditions and practices have been living together for centuries without any disharmony. Citizens of India possess the quality of tolerance which is the basis of their mutual coexistence and communal harmony. A statement of a Bollywood actor about the growing climate of intolerance in India surprised everyone as India is a country where everyone has a proper understanding of each other's religion and ways of life.

Yes, it is possible to have an inclusive and tolerant society. Education is the best way to promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence. A learner enters the formal education system with the malleability of a child. However, as her world is widening, education contributes to a corresponding growth in her understanding of that world. The power of education helps her grapple with the complexity of the world around her. With the help of education, she is not afraid of confronting the new challenges but is charmed by this newness.

A good education system develops in students the quality of tolerance. The practice of tolerance must be instilled in children from the very beginning of their school education. They should be taught to accept differences in society and respect for diverse cultures. A good tolerant society can be created by a good education system. Tolerance is a mark of civilised societies and polite cultures. Tolerance enables people to live in the spirit of harmony with others.

But, tolerance and inclusion are inextricably linked. In order to have an inclusive society, complete change is required in the way the human mind works, that is to say, humans will have to stop separating, dividing and splitting. This is possible. But it requires a high level of awareness that has so far been achieved only by a handful of human beings.

Akshi Sharma

B.A. (Hons.) English I Year

Twilight



Anand was walking down the valley, treading over the fallen leaves of autumn. Suddenly, he saw a man under the apple tree who was staring directly at him. Anand had never seen that man in his village before and by the look on his face, he felt uneasy and terrified. He turned around to see if any of his friends were there but they had all gone to their houses. He looked back at the apple tree and saw the man limping towards him in a crooked manner. Anand wanted to run but his legs couldn't move, sweat was dripping down his forehead. He tried to recover from the situation. He ran towards his house as fast as he could. He reached home and slammed the door behind him, and called his Amma and sister, but no one was there. He turned to the door and kept staring at it and in no time the door came crashing down to the floor and the lights went off. He saw the shadow coming towards him with heavy footsteps and felt the man standing right in front of him breathing heavily and in no time they both vanished into thin air.

In the morning when Amma woke up and went into the kitchen to make breakfast. She called for Rani and Anand but only Rani came out of her room. "Where is Anand?", she asked. "I thought he was sleeping in your room with you", replied Rani. "Maybe he had slept over at one of his friends," replied Rani in a sleepy tone rubbing her eyes.

Amma felt uneasy and started searching for him in every part of the house but couldn't find him. She started panicking and Rani tried to calm her down but it didn't work. Amma ran out of the house and searched for him in every house in the neighbourhood. She searched for his friends and asked them about him. She asked his best friend Sagar if he knew anything about where Anand could be. Sagar told her that the last time he saw him was yesterday when they had finished playing *kabaddi* in the park and then all of them had left for their homes in the evening like they do every single day.

Amma returned to her home crestfallen and started crying sitting on the steps. Rani came rushing towards her mother to soothe her. "You are just making a big deal out of nothing, maybe he is messing around and will come home after we get tired of finding him." "No, you don't understand! I can feel it in my heart that something is wrong and he needs my help. He's trapped somewhere and I can feel it.", she replied, sobbingly. "Okay, if you say so, then we should go to the police station and file a missing complaint." "Yes, let's go!"

Days passed and the police was unable to find any clue of Anand's whereabouts. "This is a small village, what's taking you so long to find my little child. Did he fade into the sky or did the ground swallow him?", Amma said in a rage. "You have to stay calm, we are doing everything we can possibly do, just give us some more time.", replied the inspector and left the house.

Amma started losing faith in the police and started praying for her missing child. She dedicated herself totally towards God and did everything which the local Babas told her to do if she wanted her child back. In this process, she started losing all her money. She stopped working in the field and invested all of her time to get her son back. As she was getting help from different Babas, she came to hear of a famous sadhu named Gurusha from some old people of the village who claimed that he could solve anyone's problems but that you'd have to pay a huge price in return.

Gurusha became known to the village when people heard about the girl named Mani, who was in his possession and could deal with the supernatural. According to him, he created the girl out of fire and it took him a whole year to finish the whole process. But according to elders of the village, Mani was the daughter of Suresh and Yatri. When Yatri was giving her birth, bad omens were seen by people, like the screeching of an owl, lightning, and thunder. After giving birth when the child turned out to be a girl, Yatri's in-laws forced her to kill her immediately. Yatri could not kill her own child, she left her crying in front of a temple hoping that God will protect her. That's when Gurusha found her. He raised her for his own selfish motive because he knew that the girl possessed immortal powers. As she grew up and became a teenager, he started using her as his minion to deal with the supernatural.

At home, Amma collected each penny she was left with and even sold her last piece of gold ornament. She knew that she had to pay a huge price to get help from Gurusha. As Amma was reaching the place where Gurusha lived, Mani could feel the tension in the air. She knew what was coming for her and who she was going to deal with. Upon reaching Gurusha's place, Mani was the first one whom Amma encountered. "I know where your son is.", said Mani. "You know? How?", asked Amma, startled and confused. "You think he is kidnapped or lost but I can sense he's in a worse condition than you can imagine." "But where?! Can you help me find him? I'll do everything you'll ask for but please just bring my son back.", Amma said with tears running down her cheeks. Mani then told her everything she knew about his disappearance. There's no human involved in it. It's a devil, named Pishacha. He's formed out of man's vices and could transform into any living creature. He was on the hunt when he saw Anand walking alone in the evening and in no time he snatched him and took him to his world - the Upside Down world. It's a world similar to ours but made only for the devil. The gateway to that world had been opened in the past and it still exists but hidden from mortal eyes. She could bring Anand back from that world and knew where the gate had been.

Amma started losing hope that Anand was still alive. She asked Mani, and Mani told her that he was alive for now but his soul was in danger with the passage of time and they need to hurry to save him. Gurusha was sitting there all along and was listening to their conversation. He was the evil one and would do nothing without a heavy price. His permission was necessary for Mani to do anything otherwise she knew the consequences. Amma was ready to give him all the money she possessed but what he asked for was beyond the value of any monetary wealth. "I'll do it!", said Amma without any second thought because she had no other option left.

Mani took Amma to the place she was talking about where Anand had first seen Pishacha. Mani was able to spot the gateway right away and it was on that same apple tree he'd been hiding in. She used her full strength to go inside the gate and vanished crawling through the branches. Amma kept standing there staring at the tree with astonishment in her eyes because of what she'd just seen. As the sky around her started changing its colour from orange to dark, there was no movement there and it felt like that the air too had frozen around her. Suddenly, she heard the low echo of Anand's voice calling for her "Amma Amma!". His voice was weak. She started panicking as Anand was nowhere to be seen, only his voice was echoing in the valley. Then the voice grew louder and the words started becoming clear. She knelt down where the voice had been coming from and started calling back to Anand. She tried to go in through the branches and just then she saw Anand's hand coming out of it. She pulled his hand with all her strength and snatched him out of it. Amma balked when she saw Anand's face as it was so pale and patched as if the blood has been sucked from his body. He grabbed his mother and started crying on her lap. In the ecstasy of her son's return, she forgot that Mani was still in the Upside Down world and just then the gate closed with a shrill voice trailing, leaving the tree just like it was before.

Almas Malik

B.A. (Hons.) English III Year



DEPARTMENTAL & SOCIETY REPORTS

Arabic Society: Al-Nadi Al-Arabi (Department of Arabic)

Annual Report 2019 – 2020

The Arabic Society has been able to organize a number of events that can be attributed to the dedication and team spirit of the teachers of the department as well as the students.

The **Freshers' Welcome Party** was held on **7 August 2019**. On this occasion, a quiz competition was also organized, the winners of which were declared as Miss & Mr. Freshers.

A **lecture** on the topic "**Mudun Al-Milh**", a novel by **Abdul Rahman Munif** was delivered by Dr. Majeed, Assistant Professor, Farook College, University of Calicut, Kerala on **31/08/2019**.

The Arabic Society organized **Ghaziuddin Khan Lecture-5** on **14 November, 2019** which was delivered by Prof. M.A. Islahi, Former Dean and Chairperson, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Centre of Arabic and African Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University on the topic "Conversation and Its Role in Arabic Teaching".

A **General Knowledge Quiz** and **Hand-Writing Competitions** were held on **24 February, 2020**. The students participated in the competitions with great enthusiasm.

An **Oratory** and **Arabic Poetry Recitation Competition** was held on **7 March, 2020**. A number of Arabic students registered and participated in the event.

Mamlukul Ali Lecture-3 was held on **21st March (Saturday) 2020** on the topic "**Arabic Poetry**". The lecture was delivered by Dr. Shams Kamal Anjum, Associate Professor, Department of Arabic, School of Islamic Studies and Languages, Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Rajouri, J & K.

Two issues of **Wall Magazines** were published in each semester. The magazines contained Arabic short essays on current topics, translations of Arabic short stories and short articles. All the issues were put up on the Arabic notice board.

The **Farewell cum Annual Program** will be held in April 2020, wherein the certificates and trophies will be given to the students for their active participations in various programs held in the academic year 2019-20.

Dr. Md. Obaidullah

(Teacher in-charge)

Department of Arabic, Zakir Husain Delhi College

Arts and Culture Society, Zakir Husain Delhi College

Annual Report of the Academic Year 2019-2020

Convenor: **Abdul Hameed P. A. (Assistant Professor, Department of English)**

The new committee of Arts and Culture Society swung into action soon after it assumed office in May 2019. After getting the required budget approvals the Society appointed trainers for various teams under it and also put in motion the procedure for acquiring new instruments for providing state of the art facilities for its student members.

The Society organised **Orientation Day on 20 July 2019** for its student members to interact with the committee and share their concerns and requirements. On **09 August 2019** the Society organised **Independence Day Celebration** in the College auditorium along with a host of performances celebrating the diverse performative traditions of Indian republic. The event emphasised on how Zakir Husain Delhi College is a microcosm of India's national motto "unity in diversity". The event was concluded with NCC Salute and national anthem.

On **14 September 2019** three teams of the society – Fine Arts Society Suchitra, Indian Classical Dance Society Nrityathi and Indian Classical Music Society Dhwanik – participated in the cultural evening as part of **ITPO Delhi Book Fair 2019 as special invitees**. On **26 September 2019** the Fine Arts Society Suchitra presented **Art Exhibition as part of Gandhi Study Circle event** in the college. On **28 and 29 September 2019** Fine Arts Society Suchitra, Indian Classical Dance Society Nrityathi and Indian Classical Music Society Dhwanik participated in the **PROMDU Fest 2019 organised at DLF Promenade Mall, Vasant Kunj, Delhi as special invitees**. On **02 October 2019** the members of Arts and Culture Society participated in large numbers in the cleaning drive at **Yamuna Vihar "Swachata hi Seva", a project of the Ministry of Jal Shakti** under the supervision of the Convenor in association with Gandhi Study Circle of the college.

On **30 October 2019** the Society organised **Jashn-e-Adab: Hindustani Sahityotsav** in the college auditorium. Renowned scholars and artists participated in the event. Various teams of the Arts and Culture Society also showcased their talents as part of the event. Jashn-e-Qalam performing artists from Mumbai with their dramatic adaptations of Hindustani writers were the prime attraction of the event.

The Society began the winter semester with a significant event for addressing mental health issues among college students. In association with LiveJam Foundation New Delhi, the Society organised **Charcha Sessions and Open Mic: Let's Talk about Mental Health for students of the college on 29 January 2020**. The event included discussions and expert talk on mental health, Q&A sessions, Band Performance by LiveJam Band and Open Mic performances by various students and alumni of the college. The participants rated this event to be a life changing experience and need of the hour event organised by the Arts and Culture Society.

The signature event of the Arts and Culture Society, the newly introduced inter-college and inter-university Annual Fest, **Rhythm 2020** was held **from 24 to 26 February 2020** with the motto "**let's celebrate talents**" in three venues in the college with more than 3000 students participating in 16 competition items. The event also featured guest performances and Arts and Culture Alumni meet besides competitive events adjudicated by expert judges invited from various fields. The event was well attended by teachers, students, parents, alumni members and guests from various DU colleges. Rhythm 2020 is expected to travel a long road in the making of Brand ZHDC with the newly introduced **Rhythm Running Trophy** circulating among higher education institutions in the country. With Rhythm 2020 being rated as one of the biggest arts and culture festival in DU, the Society is planning to bring a bigger version of Rhythm in the next academic year to make it the biggest festival in any higher education institution in the country.

On **1 and 2 March 2020** the Society hosted **Gauhar-e-Urdu**, a celebration of Hindustani performance traditions in association with Dakhni – a collective of lovers of Hindustani Arts. The event featured Sufi music, Qawwali, Mushaira, etc.

The final event of the Arts and Culture Society in the academic year 2019-2020 - **Anjuman: The Annual Show of Talents** - meant for showcasing all winning performances of the society to the college audience **has been postponed**

from its original schedule of 30 March 2020 due to medical emergency in Delhi and is expected to be held in the month of April 2020.

The six sub-societies of Arts and Culture Society participated in various fests and competitive events held at various institutions in Delhi-NCR and outside and have won multiple accolades for the college.

Bengali Literary Society Report for the Academic Year 2019-20

Coordinator: Dr. Sharmistha Sen

Student Coordinator: Ms. Bedisha Sarkar and Ms. Mumtaz Parveen

The Bengali Literary Society of Zakir Husain Delhi College began the academic session with the Freshers' welcome event. Students of senior classes welcomed the juniors and performed a number of programmes for them. Mr. Samrat Hembram, who has joined the department in the current academic year, was also welcomed by the students. On the basis of their performances, Ms. Nargis and Mr. Akash were conferred the titles of Miss and Mr. Freshers.

The International Mother Language Day was also celebrated on 21st February by the students of the department. To celebrate this occasion, a cultural program was organized and a Bengali film made by students of B.A. (H) Bengali III year was screened under the supervision of Ms. Supriti Roy. The students and teachers worked together to organise the 8th Gopa Dey Memorial Lecture on 06 March 2020. Dr. Debjani Sengupta, Department of English, I.P. College for Women was invited to deliver the lecture titled "Simanto o Svadhinata: the partition literature of North-East India". Ms. Sunanda Bhattacharya, an author from the North-East of India, chaired the session.

The Society plans to hold an excursion trip outside Delhi at the end of March/April. The farewell function of the third-year students will be held on 20th April 2020.

The English Literary Society Report for the Academic Year 2019-20

Mohammed Afzal

The English Literary Society, Zakir Husain Delhi College organised a number of literary and academic activities in the year 2019-20. A series of talks were held on issues of social and literary importance. Dr. Megha Anwar, Assistant Professor, Honours College, Purdue University delivered a lecture titled "Terror, Photography and Prison-cities" on 7 August 2019. Discussing the ways in which the fear of Muslim men has led to a reconfiguration of the Western global-city, her talk examined the torture photographs of Abu Gharaib prison to investigate the relationship between the still form of photography and the role of stillness in the effects of torture. On 3 September 2019, Udyotna Kumar, an alumna of Zakir Husain Delhi College and M A student at Durham University, made a presentation on Hanif Kureishi's *My Beautiful Launderette*, a text taught to B. A. (H) English III year students as part of a Discipline Centric Elective paper. In preparation for this event, the movie *My Beautiful Launderette* was screened for third year students on 20 August 2019.

On 19 February 2020, the Society presented a symposium on “Mapping Partitions” as a prelude to One-day National Students’ Seminar on Partition. The symposium featured talks by distinguished scholars in the field of partition literature: Dr. Rakhshanda Jalil, a well-known writer and critic, Dr. Debjani Sengupta, Associate Professor, Indraprastha College for Women, and Bodh Prakash, Professor, Ambedkar University Delhi. Their presentations focussed on literary responses to Punjab and Bengal partitions.

The highlight of the academic session was annual National Students’ Seminar on the topic “Partitions Revisited: Postmemory, History, Identity”, held on 20 February 2020 in the college seminar hall. Dr. Sukrita Paul Kumar, a well-known scholar, delivered the key-note address titled “The Haunt of Partition”. There were three panels in the seminar: Partition and Cinema, Partition and Citizenship, and Narrativizing Partition. Students from the prestigious universities of India participated in the seminar and made excellent presentations. The quality of academic papers and enthusiasm of participants was praiseworthy. Ms. Fathima M from Jawaharlal Nehru University won the best paper award in the M Phil and PhD category for her paper “Cosmopolitanism and Intersections of Old and New Worlds in Kamla Shamsie’s *Burnt Shadows*”. Mr. Subhadip Mukherjee from Zakir Husain Delhi College bagged the best paper award in BA and MA category for his paper “Explorations of the representations of Refugee Experience in the Refugee Trilogy of Ritwik Ghatak”. An extensive discussion on various aspects of Partition literature in both the symposium and seminar helped students understand the basics of Partition Literature, a paper offered as Discipline Centric Elective to B. A. (H) English III year students. National Students’ Seminar contributes to the academic growth of our students by providing them exposure to new developments in the world of academia. By competing with the best students of the prestigious universities in India, our students become more competitive and prepared.

The English Literary Society plans to organise Rhapsody’20, the annual literary fest of English Department, in the month of April. The fest will feature a number of programmes on North-East India. The annual literary fest of English Department provides our students a platform to combine academic talents with their interpersonal skills. The event helps the students and teachers work together and hone the students’ networking and leadership skills.

Annual Report 2019-20: Department of Environmental Studies

The Department of Environmental Studies constituted its Departmental Society named “PARIMANDAL” this semester onwards.

The department in collaboration with Nature and Environment Society of the college organized a lecture on “Various Aspects of Urban Biodiversity” on the 14th October 2019. Dr. Monalisa, Program Coordinator (Biodiversity), ICLEI South Asia, was invited as the resource person for the lecture.

In the current semester, a two-day National conference on ‘Water Sustainability: Conservation, Policy, Ethics and Science’ was organized on 21st-22nd January 2020. The conference was organized in collaboration with the ‘Nature and Environment Society. Renowned environmentalists were invited as eminent speakers. Posters and oral presentations were made by the delegates during the conference.

Excursion trips were also organized to the ‘Aravalli Biodiversity Park’ and ‘Yamuna Biodiversity Park’ for the students of first and second semester.

The department also proposes to organise a seminar on 21st March 2020 on account of ‘Water Day’ and a workshop on 22nd April 2020 to celebrate ‘Earth day’ in the college.

Persian Society: Anjuman-e-Farsi (Department of Persian)

Annual Report 2019-20

The Persian Society of Zakir Husain Delhi College, Anjuman-e-Farsi, organized several events promoting Persian and other activities in the academic year 2019-20.

The Society organized a General quiz on 30 August, 2019. Another quiz was hosted on 3 October along with a group discussion on the topic of Women's Empowerment.

The Society screened a Persian movie on 26 December, 2019. A two-day National Seminar on the topic: "Contribution of Sufis in Indo-Persian Literature", was held on 26 and 27 February 2020 to much fervour

Dr. Jameel ur Rehman

Teacher In charge

Department of Persian, Zakir Husain Delhi College.

Annual Report of Monist Society, Department of Philosophy (2019-20)

Monist Society of the Department of Philosophy, Zakir Hussain Delhi College, with Dr. Divya Tiwari as the convener, has organized the following events during the academic session 2019-20:

The year commenced with the event – 'Ecclesia', organized on 18 October 2019, which involved a **debate** on 'Euthanasia' and 'Abortion', the two significant issues with ethical concerns that have the civil society divided. Besides, the event also included a **poster making competition**, requiring participants to capture the issues of 'gender equality', 'violence' and 'education', an **essay competition** on 'Ethics in Cyberspace' and 'Materialism in the Modern World' and a **quiz** testing the philosophical acumen.

Further, on 24 October 2019, a **seminar** was organized on 'ethical and legal aspects of surrogacy', wherein the talk on ethical issues was delivered by Dr. Divya Tiwari, associate professor, Department of Philosophy, ZHDC and the domain of legal issues was dealt with by Ms. Richa Tiwari, founder – 'Legal Fellow', advocates and consultants.

On 2 February 2020, Department of Philosophy organized a **lecture** on 'Man, Superman and Absent God: Nietzsche, the Atheist Existentialist', delivered by Dr. Hema Raghavan, former professor (Department of English) and Principal of Gargi college and the former Dean of Students' Welfare, University of Delhi.

Annual Report, Department of Psychology 2019-20

The Department of Psychology organised and participated in the following events during the academic year 2019-2020:

Ice breaker: This pre-fresher event was held to welcome the new students to the department and allow them to familiarise themselves with their seniors and batch mates. The attendees were grouped in teams of 2 or 3, with each participant belonging to a different year, to participate in activities like Relay Narration, Graffiti, Best out of Waste, Quiz, and Poster making. The event was a great success.

Karuna Ma'am's Farewell: The Psychology department bid adieu to their senior most teacher, Dr. Karuna Mehta this year on 30th August, 2019. A Zakirian herself, Dr. Karuna joined the department in 1976, and served a tenure of over 40 years. Her farewell was attended not only by the current students but also by various alumni. The students from all three years gave an address and expressed their gratitude. The department also had a small birthday celebration for Ma'am at the end.

Freshers' Party: This long-awaited event was held with great gusto under the theme "Dynamic Duo". It was a great opportunity for the freshers to introduce themselves to the department and the day was full of activities such as musical performances and games. The event was graced by the presence of our Principal, Dr. Masroor Ahmad Beg.

Talk by Mr Sopan Joshi: On 4th October 2019, the Department of Psychology jointly with the Department of Botany organised a talk by the Freelance Journalist and Author Mr. Sopan Joshi, on the topic "Are We Evolved Enough to Save The World". The listeners found the talk very informative and thought provoking. As the academic year draws to a close, the department now looks forward to their year-end fest "Psychedelics". This year's theme for the same is Psyche, Society and Peace.

Ms. Apoorva Khandelwal
3rd Year, Dept of Psychology

QUINTESSENCE Annual Report 2019-20

Quintessence, the Quizzing Society of Zakir Husain Delhi College, for nearly a decade now, has endeavoured to spot and nurture quizzing talent among students through an organized schedule of in-house knowledge sessions, intra and inter-collegiate quiz competitions and active collaborations with other societies and institutes.

The new members were welcomed into the ranks of the society after a written quiz and interview on 6th August 2019. In six weeks, the new team was ready with the first event of the society, **QUIZATHON**. On 24th & 25th September 2019, students across disciplines and courses participated in this intra college event which is new to fresh students both in content and format.

Quintessence has, for many years, been in active collaboration with Jaipuria League Quiz, a pan India quiz organized by the Jaipuria Institute of Management. This session it was hosted on 15th October 2019 for ZHDC students. Our students Ridhi and Aditi bagged the first prize while Rohit and Vishnu stood second and Anurag got the third prize.

Quintessence preserves its spirit of quizzing being a continuum by organizing **CONOSCENZA**, held on 21st October 2019, the annual interschool-college quiz competition where the passion for quizzing brings school and college quizzers together in a unique format.

The annual intercollegiate quiz festival, **CHAKRAVYUH**, meant to be held on the 17th and 18th March, 2020 **has been postponed from its original schedule** due to medical emergency in Delhi and is expected to be held in the month of April 2020. The annual quiz festival is awaited by many quizzers from various technical, professional and university colleges of the city. The packed two-day quiz festival is expected to bring well researched quizzes pertaining to India, Music, Literature, Entertainment, the Arts and Cricket on which the battle of the knowledge and wits will take place.

The society members keep the quizzing spirit on throughout the academic session by organizing weekly quiz sessions. These sessions are helpful to all members as they find them enriching. Budding quiz masters get an opportunity to further refine their hosting skills at these sessions.

Quintessence members regularly participate in quiz competitions in other colleges. Elvis Francis, Shiva Sagar, Rohit Lohan, Vishnu Sharan and Adarsh represented the college at various quizzes organised by different colleges of Delhi University, IIT Delhi, AIIMS, Law Faculty, among others and brought laurels to the college.

Quintessence members are ever ready to offer collaboration to other societies to host quizzes. Dolphin Thakuria hosted a mathematical quiz in collaboration with the Mathematics Department and Yash Bhardwaj hosted a general quiz in collaboration with the Enabling Unit of ZHDC. Deepshika Goel and Yash Bhardwaj hosted an inter-collegiate environment quiz with Srishti, the Nature and Environment society of Zakir Husain Delhi College.

Dr.Sangeeta Pandita
Convener, Quintessence

Nature and Environment Society: Srishti: Annual Report 2019-2020

The 'Nature and Environment Society' has taken the responsibility of educating the students about the importance of the environment and the ways to keep it healthy, clean and pollution free.

The society held various activities in September 2019 with great zeal and enthusiasm. It organized an orientation programme in association with the 'Chintan Environment Group' to spread awareness amongst students about the importance of waste segregation and the harmful effects of plastic through an interactive session. As an initiative to stop disposal of plastics coming back to us, the society's association with Chintan Environment Group ensured proper disposal of the plastic waste and E-waste. Every month Chintan picks up the plastic waste and E-waste from the college campus.

The society members also volunteered for the 'India Plog Run' on 2nd October 2019, organized by WWF in association with United Way. It was another opportunity to take the initiative forward and be responsible and concerned towards the use of plastic. It was a 3 km walk/run in which participants picked up plastic trash and brought it all the way to the finish line where collection agencies or recyclers were available to collect the plastic waste and then dispose it in the best way possible.

The activities were inaugurated by the society by organizing a lecture in collaboration with the Department of Environmental Studies on October 14, 2019. The inaugural lecture was given by Dr. Monalisa Sen, Program Coordinator (Biodiversity), ICLEI South Asia. Dr. Sen's lecture on 'Various Aspects of Urban Biodiversity' made the students aware of the various aspects of conservation of biodiversity. Moreover, it also gave an insight of how conservational aspects are connected to the service sectors.

An online poster making competition on 'Defeat Day Zero' was held in order to make the students realize the importance of water conservation and taught them the various ways to curb the wastage of water.

On Diwali, the society organized an 'Inter College Mono Acting Competition' on the topic 'Ill Effects of Diwali Due to Crackers.' It was an initiative to make people aware of the egregious effects of crackers and persuade them not to burn them. A collection drive for Plastic and E waste collection was organized to ensure its proper disposal by a tie up with Chintan Environmental group.

The society also performed a 'Nukkad Natak' titled "*Dilli teri Yamuna Maili*" at the awareness workshop on 'River Yamuna' at Delhi Secretariat, organised by Department of Environment, Government of NCT, Delhi to make people aware about the current scenario of the Yamuna.

The Nature and Environment society in association with Department of Environmental Studies also organized a 'National Conference on Water Sustainability: Conservation, Policy, Ethics and Science' from 20th-21st January 2020.

A lot of eminent environmentalists, scientists and academicians including Dr. Rajendra Singh (also known as the Waterman of India), Sh. Kalyan Singh Rawat and Professor Dinabandhu Sahu were invited. The conference was organized with the aim of apprising students about the impending threat of environmental challenges which are looming large and with the message that it is time to act rather than deliberate.

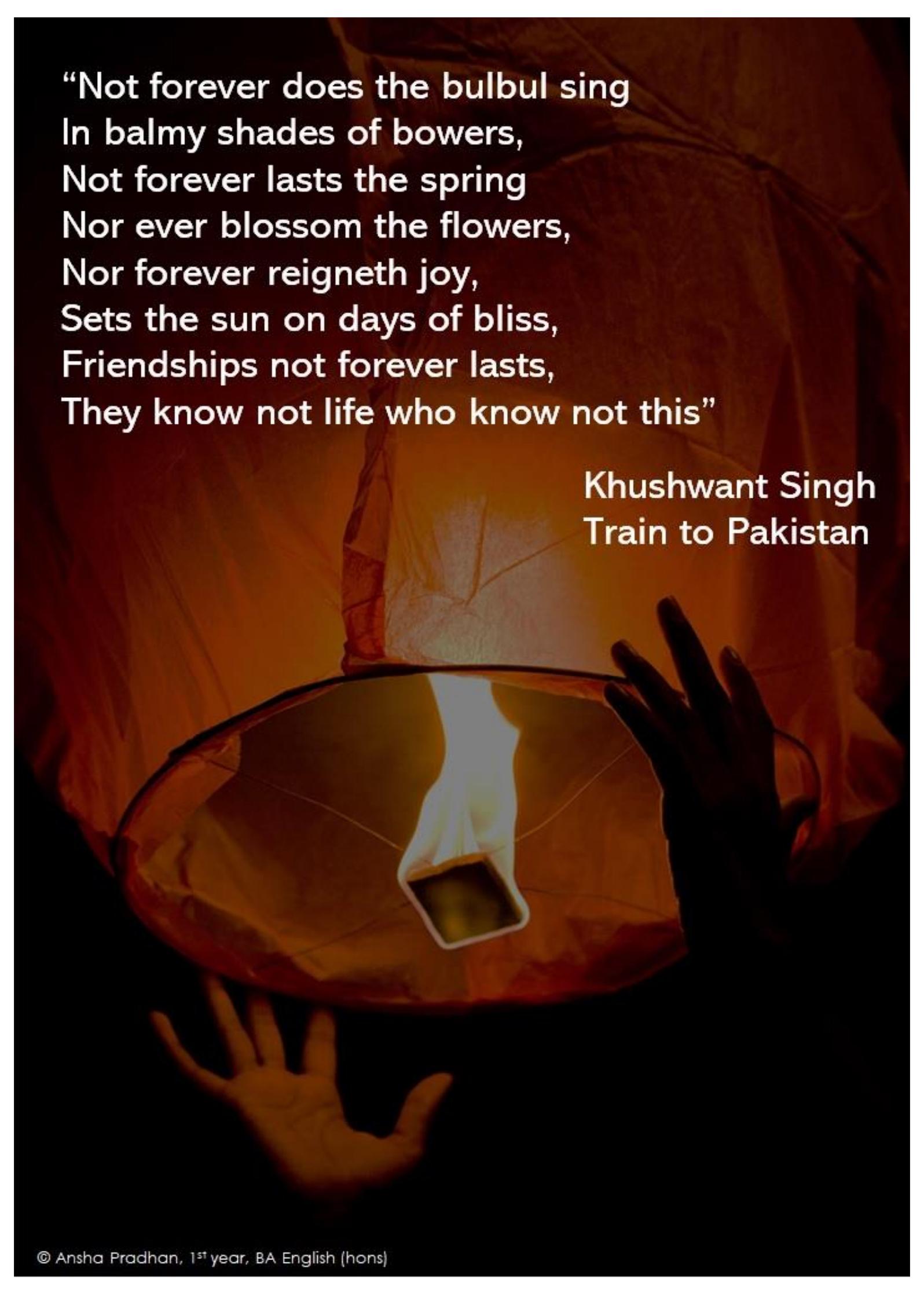
Students of the society attended the 'World Wetland Day' celebration event at Yamuna Biodiversity Park with great enthusiasm to understand the importance of wetlands and the need to conserve them. An intercollege Paper Reading Competition on the topic "Can the Environment be a Political Issue?" was organized on 20th February 2020. Members of our society also attended an event by 'Youth Clean Air Network (YCAN)' which aimed to engage young people in finding solutions for better air quality.

With these activities, we hope that the society has played a significant role in making the students wake up from their slumber and take steps to face the environmental challenges in front of us and contribute to the society.

Himanshi Gupta
B.Sc. (Hons) Botany III Year





A person is shown from the chest down, wearing a red, textured garment. They are holding a large, glowing, translucent orb with both hands. Inside the orb, a white tea bag is visible, and it appears to be emitting a warm, golden light. The background is dark, making the glowing orb the central focus.

“Not forever does the bulbul sing
In balmy shades of bowers,
Not forever lasts the spring
Nor ever blossom the flowers,
Nor forever reigneth joy,
Sets the sun on days of bliss,
Friendships not forever lasts,
They know not life who know not this”

Khushwant Singh
Train to Pakistan