

# Department of English



# A Literary Magazine

# Profiles Mahela Jayawardene, Kaladas Dehariya

Our Campus, Our People

Poetry, Fiction, Books, Cinema and more

AN INITIATIVE OF MA ENGLISH WITH COMMUNICATION STUDIES

### **EDITORIAL**

"Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider."

### Francis Bacon



It is critique that disturbs the tranquility of the still waters of life and can bring about a change for the better. Here at Quill's Will, an M.A English with Communication Studies initiative, we encourage and nurture creative and critical thought, pertaining not only to literature, but to other realms of education as well. Every year, the magazine has broadened the horizons with a fresh influx of talent. This edition continues to celebrate the original writings and poetry of the students. It is also rich with the photographs taken by the students themselves.

The journey of a hundred kilometers starts with a single step in this thought provoking way. With this enterprise, we hope to propagate critical thinking and independent reflection among the readers. As we compile this edition, we hope to enhance the heritage left by our predecessors. We thank those whose contributions we have been privileged to publish. We are indebted to Ms. Shobana P. Mathews and Mr. Joseph Edward Felix for their incessant encouragement and support. Last but not the least; we thank you, dear readers, for your continued support in our endeavour.

Ragesree Roy, 1 MENG

### Mahela Jayawardene: Sublimity Made Flesh

Santhosh S.R. 2 MENG







.....And God said "Let there be grace.....And there was Mahela Jayawardene".

Man, given to indulgence in activities and pursuits that are, without a shade of doubt, frivolous, has a predilection towards plumbing the almost endless depths of his being, almost always in the futile quest of that abstraction, that most mysterious and almost recklessly elusive of man's creations, the soul, the existence (or lack thereof) of which has baffled him and left him floundering in the endless morass of ignorance since almost the dawn of time. For aeons, man has tried to rationalise this dubious quest, the destination of which has been certain doom and yet, like the proverbial phoenix, he has been undeterred by his innumerable failures and persists in an exercise, which reeks, nay, stinks of futility. Obstacles, be they colossal or insignificant, have failed to deter man in his quest for that kindred spirit, which he is convinced holds the key, if not the answer itself, to solving the greatest riddle of them all: Purpose to human existence.

But, given man's obsession with empiricism and his obstinate and even irrational demand for proof, one can't help but ask how and why he has so relentlessly pursued that of whose existence he cannot even attest to. Ah, therein lies the allure of the quest. This elusive and inexplicable entity that man, for no apparent reason, calls 'soul', has, like a benevolent parasite, seen fit to remind him of its presence, albeit sporadically, by stirring from its deep slumber whenever he has experienced an epiphany. That the soul, which prefers to lay dormant and voluntarily suppresses its voice, finding solace in lethargy, for the better part of man's life, which, one will have to admit, loath though many may be to do so, is banal and dreary,

chooses to remind man of its being when he has the most arcane and esoteric of experiences attests to the mysterious essence that defines its very existence. That first gaze at the magnificence of the sun, the discovery of fire, the state of utter ecstasy that the act of love unfailingly brings along with it, these are among the many instance when man (and women) has sensed, deep within the fibres of his self, a fulfilment that has vindicated his seemingly meaningless quest. Those who have seen Mahela Jayawardene wield the willow on the 22-yard dust strip would argue, and most volubly so, that they have found in him, the reason to be.

In an era that has been marked by the use of brute force and little else, Jayawardene, whose batsmanship was foregrounded in economy of effort, provided not merely relief from the almost unpalatable use of muscle to play what was once known as the most leisurely game, but also served as the eternal reminder of the immiscibility of grace Where a push was needed, and strength. Jayawardene saw prudence in employing nothing more than a touch and where touch was warranted, he caressed, sending the spectators into paroxysms of unadulterated delight that can be brought upon only when one witnesses an artist, so deeply immersed in his craft, conjures that which is instantly recognisable as the product of a genius.

So delicately did Jayawardene clasp the willow that many feared it might escape his tender grasp and he might be left clutching no more than fistfuls of air when he attempted to meet the ball. This delicacy was in fact, Jayawardene's greatest hallmark. His batting, which revolved around the now endangered skill of timing, was governed by the implicit strength of his magical touch. Watching Jaywardene send ball after ball, racing to the boundary ropes, one couldn't help but wonder if

some deep conviction was manifesting itself in the form of strength in his arms. For that near ineffably small instant of time when Jayawardene's willow met the ball, it seemed as though the cosmic forces realigned themselves to allow the entire universe a glimpse of the greatest of synergies, the moment when artistry meets the artist. Even among his own contemporaries, there have been those who have titillated the senses of the spectators and have reigned supreme in their collective imagination, Ricky Ponting, VVS Laxman and Aravinda de Silva, to name but three of them, but it would be no fallacy to state that Jayawardene has been the most magical of magicians. It is one thing to ensnare the imagination but entirely another to create another parallel universe in one's mind and for all time, take refuge there. Such was the prowess of Jayawardene's wizardry.

While it is indescribably hard to put a finger on one aspect of Jayawardene's batting and state, unequivocally, that it was that which lent to his craft an almost surreal quality, it can be said, with not an insignificant degree of certitude, that amongst the multitude of those elements, one of

them, surely was his languidity. When, almost invisibly guided by his indolence, Jayawardene's willow made contact with the cherry, there was imparted to the stroke a mystical essence which made it less ordinary. Renowned and even revered for his unique ability to play the ball as late as was humanly possible, fittingly enough, the one stroke in the execution of which Jayawardene had no parallels was, the 'late cut', a shot wherein he literally stole the ball from the keeper's glove to guide it, inexorably, towards the boundary ropes. This almost intangible delay mingled with his natural lethargic streak, what was engendered was, well and truly, out-worldly.

As Jayawardene prepares for that long walk into the proverbial sunset, Jayawardene can seek solace in the fact that he has, apart from being the torchbearer for the likes of Kallicharan, Rohan Kanhai and Sunil Gavaskar in carrying forth the tradition of stylish batsmanship, been the source of near unbridled joy for nearly two generations of cricket fans. At a time when sport, all across the globe, is losing its hold on aesthetic values and finesse is being replaced by raw muscle power, cricket fans will do well to cherish the countless memories that Jayawardene gave them.

### Songs for Dark Times

Prashant Parvataneni, 2 MENG

Vinod Kumar Shukla, one of the great modern Hindi poets from Chhattisgarh begins a poem thus - 'duur se apna ghar dekhna chahiye' (we must look at our home from afar). This line came back to me with much force when I was reading the notes gathered by folks at maraa (a media and arts collective I was interning with), about a folk singer from Bhilai - Kaladas Deheriya. I had lived, for the first seventeen years of my life in Bhilai - a burgeoning town built around the famous Bhilai Steel Plant – and yet, had never heard of Kaladas or the various realties, often tragic and unjust, which form the pulsating core of his songs. I was oblivious to the charisma of Kaladas' mentor -Shankar Guha Niyogi - a man who fought relentlessly for the plight of contract workers in Bhilai Steel Plant, its ancillary industries, the mines surrounding Bhilai and the exploited farmers of neighbouring villages. One can imagine the veracity of Niyogi's struggle and also tremendous impact he exerted as the leader of the oppressed and the marginalised when the only way to stop him, was to put an end to his life itself violently. On a September morning in 1991, Niyogi was shot to death, while he lay on his cot, by an unidentified hired gunman, who fired through the window of the bedroom and fled on a motorbike.

I was born in Bhilai in the year 1992, grew up there, lived, loved, and lied there; went to school, went to movies, tried my hand at keyboard and cricket and failed miserably at both – seventeen years in the township of Bhilai and never once did I hear the name of Shankar Guha Niyogi. In the cushioned confines of the township built for the employees and executives of Bhilai Steel Plant (my father one of them), I was as blissfully unaware of the people at the margins of this safe haven as of their leader who died fighting for them.

Sitting in Bangalore, 5 years after I left the city of Bhilai to study literature and arts in this metropolis, I was looking back at 'home' as if it was a strange, inscrutable land. Parallel to my safe and happy childhood, were running currents of exploitation by the plant owners – both public and private and counter-currents of protest, even after Niyogi's murder, led by his unflinching comrades. One such sathi (companion) of Niyogi who is kept the struggle for worker rights alive, and continues

to do so, most interestingly through art and music is Kaladas Deheriya. A telephonic interview with Kaladas ji who as a raconteur is both enthusiastic and earnest, revealed not just his story but the possibility to push the contours of the city I call 'home'.

#### KALADAS DEHERIYA

"the fair one has left, and the dark coloniser has arrived;
the land of Chhattigarh,
the bowl of rice
he snatches
and devours it."

In January 1991, Kaladas Dehariya had his first encounter with the charismatic and potent trade union leader of Chhattisgarh Shankar Guha Niyogi. Niyogi's crusade for the working class, his deep sense of equality and justice, not just in theory and words, but in life and action deeply moved and inspired Kaladas. Kaladas had been singing songs since his school days and even then his songs reeked of anger against the injustice wrecked on the humble farmers and workers around him - land being grabbed away from the farmers, corruption in bureaucracy, dire poverty and inequality. With Niyogi, this restless anger found its meaningful direction. Nivogi inspired Kaladas to find a form of music that connects to the land and its people - a music that can become a cultural force of resistance.

Ghungroo (metallic anklet of bells) strapped around his feet and a daphli (tambourine) in his hands, he embraced the a form of street performance called 'nacha' popular among common folk of towns and villages of Chhattisgarh and started singing and performing songs that were born out of lived experiences. The plight of the oppressed rendered in a form replete with paris (angels, played by boys in drag) and jokers resonated with the people, stirring them into action.

"People are easily bored of tepid speeches. But they used to listen to our performances with rapt attention. They'd say 'this is ours".

He travelled with his songs in various forms and through various groups formed along the way in close connection with the people of various regions and backgrounds - farmers, urban poor, adivasis etc. Kaladas' music today is textured with the complex experience of working class. More than being a mere angry rant, it evokes the pain and tragedy of a worker's toil. For Kaladas, art is born out of this toil and his songs are a medium to echo that pain. Conscious never to abandon the language of the people he is singing for and about, he also strives to bring that voice into the mainstream. Having abandoned religious songs long ago out of disillusionment, he instead takes the tunes of religious jingles and infuses the poetry of the oppressed and their resistance into it.

"People believe that god graces these religious songs. So I told them, here's the song with the same tune; will your god grace this too?".

A man with deep belief in science and its potential, Kaladas has earnestly taken to technology and media. Apart from recording his songs, he has also started to resister his presence on platforms like facebook and watsapp. This Kaladas sees not as drifting away from roots, but as a way of reaching out to other progressive groups and their music.

"People's cultures are varied but the tools and patterns of exploitation are the same. The oppressors are uniting and the progressive forces are divided. Struggle cannot be isolated".

Kaladas actively works with various groups and unions under the vibrant umbrella of Shankar Guha Niyogi's iconic Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha which thwarted the divide between workers and farmers and also promoted gender equality and rejected caste and religious divisions. This organised struggle, maintains Kaladas, is impossible without art and culture. Through his music and a dialogue with other artists from across regions, Kaladas hopes to turn protest into a cultural aesthetic extending far beyond mere 'folk art'.

"Resistance has to be given a cultural form. There is no other way".

His tireless spirit has taken a toll on his body with repeated bouts of illness and yet this has only made him even more restless to bring out, with an immediate urgency, that dard – the pain of people, through his songs. Today, Kaladas embodies the message his mentor Shankar Guha Niyogi gave him on that fateful night of January '91 'singing in itself is a struggle'.

### Behind The Scenes

Ragesree Roy, 1 MENG





Manju, the gardner-in-charge with his favourite flower - Anthurium (L), Busy at work (R)

The idea that the school is the second home of a child pertains to us 'older kids' too. For us, the university is not merely an institutional space, but an integral and indispensable part of our lives. This 'life' is nourished and nurtured by different 'veins' spread across the vicinity of the sprawling campus.

The soul of the university does not solely reside within the confined walls of a classroom. The spirit of every laugh, every tear, and every sigh is embedded among the dew drops of the carefully trimmed leaves of the exquisite gardens. The essence of each lesson and every experience is embodied in the last dregs of an empty coffee cup, left in the corners of the canteen. These sights perhaps seem too common or too exclusive for the silent observer and the preoccupied eyes respectively. Yet, these are the moments which define the aura of a student's life.

With deep gratitude and reverence, we bring to your attention, the hard work and experience of two such people who have dedicated fruitful years of their lives to create a niche for every individual in this university. In their respective unique ways, they have embraced the shy newcomer and have been a pillar of comfort for the exhausted and the vexed soul. Coffee and campus do no alliterate just by chance. They encapsulate the fathomless emotions envisaged by every heart in Christ University.

Working with Christ University for the past nine years, Manju is probably one of the most difficult persons to get hold of for an interview. This interview was also conducted with me running with short quick steps to match his long strides while at work.

Manju's life was not a bed of roses akin to the ones he cultivates assiduously in the campus. With a family to take care of, his marriage was delayed. He is blessed with two children, Kaushik and Nakshatra, who are 4 years and 6 months old respectively. His tender love for his children is reflected in the utmost care with which he tends to his plants, which are as special to him as his own kids. He helps to re-create nature, nurturing and nourishing the tiny seedlings to grow into beautiful trees beneath which we seek shelter. He has no complaints with life or his job, which is a rare accomplishment in today's disgruntled world.

The lush green lawns and the beautiful gardens adorned with colourful flowers and unusual herbs are something that the university is famous for. Juxtaposed against the metropolitan din of

# OUR CAMPUS, OUR PEOPLE

Hossur Road, the resplendent campus stands unique. We thought it is something that the gardeners would take much pride in; the students surely do. However, Manju humbly says,

"I am just delighted with the happy smiles of the students when they look at my flowers".

All he expects in return are blessings for his children. His favourite flower is the Anthurium because it can bloom in various colours. Manju's garden is like the "Tree of Souls" in Avatar. The symbolism of The Sacred Tree is found at the heart of the cultural and spiritual traditions of all members of the Human Family. Similarly, the gardens of Christ University is a meeting ground for every being on the campus- a site where cultures mingle, opinions unify and ideas are born.

William, 72, joined the Christ University community in May 2015 at the Gourmet as a food distributor. A resident of Bangalore currently, William had spent 36 years in Ooty working at the Hindustan Photofilm Company." I moved to Bangalore a year ago to be with my son who is working with Tata Company. I fortunately found a job here at Christ University through a neighbour and have been here since."



William, 72. Food Distributor at Gourmet

When asked if he found the crowds here at Christ University overwhelming he says, "It took me about 15 days to adjust, but I have not really felt overwhelmed by the amount of work expected of me. My hardworking nature acquired during childhood days help me wherever I go. So, though the crowd seems unmanageable, I do handle it

well" he replies with a slow grin spreading across his face.

Creating a niche for oneself is an arduous task not only for the students but also other members of the university. William woefully recalls his initial days in Christ.

"When I first joined here, I used to feel embarrassed as no one recognized me. The security guards used to suspiciously ask who I was and what I was doing here."

He continues, "It took them a while to recognize me and identify me as one of Gourmet's food distributor."

Having never worked in the department of food distribution in any hotel, William was nervous in the beginning. "I had no idea that I would be serving such a large number of students. I did take my own time to do my job well", he admits modestly. "One of my tasks was to label the food boxes. I had to first practice writing the names of the food items to identify how each food item was named and written". Practice certainly did make William's hands deft and punctilious while doling out food to the ravenous crowds at Gourmet! Today, he is one of the most beloved people in the campus, with students flocking down to his stall, not only for a sumptuous lunch but also for the friendly stare, which promises help to every anguished heart and mind.

In a place that is teeming with youngsters from across the country, it is easy for those who run the show from the background to recede into oblivion. Each day in Christ University is a flourishing success, thanks to such amazing people who render their services with a steady determination and an encouraging smile.

### The Coffin in Gaza

Allwin K Joy, 1 MENG

"Sayyd, a woman and child..."

Hakim, a bespectacled 40-year-old coffin maker in Gaza looked through the sooty window and saw smoke rising in the north and sighed, "That would be a five, and a three feet... Plywood... 10 Shekels"

"But Sayyd", the boy started crying. Hardly eighteen, wearing a tattered denim jeans and an "I Love America" T-Shirt, the boy reeked of smoke and soot.

"Must be someone close...," thought Hakim. "Alright. . . Pay later. . Take the ones by that window . . . and do not shed a tear, be strong. Allah will send help soon" he comforted the boy.

"You will make me a lot of money that way," snorted the old man Ibrahim, flipping through the cash register, smoking hookah.

"What to do Haji? We cannot refuse him a coffin just because he is short of money. God gave us the gift of conscience..."

"Wondering when He is going to give a little of that to our enemies."

"Enemies." Hakim thought. "Who are the enemies? The ones who shower sulphur and the finned guided missiles from the sky to kill us? Or the cowards who say that Palestinians are born to be slaughtered, jannah awaits them, and then abandon our women and children to be blown to smithereens?"



"Have you heard that today is our Hamid's turn to get the Zion call?"

"It's just two blocks away!" Hakim gasped "Has he evacuated yet?"

"He took his wife and his little girls and fled this morning".

"Isn't it very weird to get a call from the enemy informing that they are going to blow up your house in another 6 hours?"

"It is funny, because they behave as if we stole their lands."

"I can't believe our beloved haji died for nothing," said Hakim with his eyes lowered in grief.

"It must be very hard for his bodyguards," said the old man looking at Hakim, "especially the captain!" Hakim stood by the doorway gazing at the sun through the rising smoke, lost in the memories of his younger days, as the captain of Yasser Arafat's security detail. "I pledged my life to protect you, but alas I couldn't save you from those traitors" Hakim's eyes welled up.

"I heard you joined the U.N afterwards. In all these days, you never told me what made you abandon the blue beret, and help me run this mournful business of coffin making."

"I joined the U.N, because I thought they were our last frontier of hope.I was last posted in Iraq to guard a U.N. school" Hakim gazed at a group of kids playing in the streets, "Then I saw something on Al Jazeera, about a U.N. school in Gaza that changed me into the person I am today."

## **SHORT STORY**

The old man got up, put his arms around Hakim in a warm embrace, and reassured him, "Allah is watching. He will send help soon!" "How is the work on the Sandalwood coffin going by the way?" asked Ibrahim reaching out for his hookah.

"It's almost done. It will be ready in another hour."

"8 feet sandalwood coffin... I wonder who is ever going to need that."

"Don't worry. It's already sold."

"Poor thing... he is not quite in there," thought Ibrahim as he took the hookah and walked home.

As Hakim was finishing his work, suddenly, a loud explosion tore the quiet evening. As Hamid's house came crumbling down like a stack of cards, Hakim gazed through the smoke and dust, and saw the Zionist tanks and troops swarming the area.

Within seconds, the streets were empty and no shop other than Hakim's was open. An Israeli soldier screamed at Hakim through a handheld loudspeaker, "Gazan! This is Israeli territory. Leave immediately or we will open fire!"

"I will leave, but not without my precious coffin!"

"Carry whatever you want to and flee right now, or we will get you inside that coffin, perforated", the soldier sneered at him.

With great effort, Hakim heaved the Sandalwood coffin out and pulled it along the street as the soldiers looked on jeering at him. With one last heave, he pulled the coffin before the pale and scrawny soldier holding the loudspeaker.

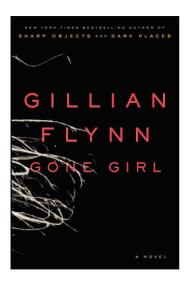
"Need some help, Sayyd?" the soldier mocked.

"You know, I have been working on this coffin for the last few months for this one day", Hakim told the soldier as he reached inside the coffin.

"Freeze!" yelled the soldier pointing his carbine at Hakim.

"Relax, soldier. It's just a parting gift" said Hakim pulling out a humble electrical switch wired to something inside the coffin, as the soldier looked on petrified. "You do not decide the fate of the Palestinians!" screamed Hakim, and he clicked the switch.

The first second of the deafening explosion was all Ibrahim could hear. With his ears ringing and partly deaf, he ran back towards his shop. All Ibrahim could see were some burning tanks all mangled up, and the bits and pieces of what used to be his shop. Ibrahim then sensed the faint smell of sandalwood that filled the air. He fell on his knees and wailed.



Author: Gillian Flynn
Publisher: Orion Publishing Group,
2012, 480 pages,
Rs.350

Every once in a while comes a book that "everyone is talking about." A thriller that your friend is begging you to read so they can discuss it with you. Then comes the news that it is being made into a Hollywood film. That is how Gone Girl landed in my lap, having given in to curiosity (although I would rather say, "I just wanted to see what the fuss was all about.")

Gillian Flynn's bestselling novel can be placed under the genre of suspense, crime and mystery with no difficulty as it is a perfect mixture of the three. Clubbing these genres around the theme of marriage, Flynn expertly weaves a complex plot, complete with ample twists and turns. Flynn writes with such fluidity and brutal honesty that she has your full attention throughout. Written from a dual perspective, Gone Girl tells the story of Nick Dunne and Amy Elliot Dunne who are going through a rough patch in their marriage. Both laid off their jobs during the recession, Nick borrows a huge sum from Amy to open a bar along with his sister Margo, which marks the beginning of the downfall of their marriage. They are forced to move to a humble neighbourhood in Missouri from their posh New York mansion to help Nick's ailing mother. On their fifth wedding anniversary, Amy goes missing. Nick becomes the immediate suspect as one damning evidence after another

emerges. The rest of the story unravels in a way a good suspense novel should. The narrative throughout the first half is deliberately slow, but not without the occasional twist just when you are about to yawn. And before you know it, you have reached the last page. The characters of Nick and Amy are portrayed in a powerful manner, educating the reader that a seemingly happy relationship may take dark turns due to darker circumstances. The atmosphere of Gone Girl is malevolent, leaving the reader uneasy at times. The book ends on an ominous note, making the reader wonder if there was a fourth genre it belonged to as well, a psychological thriller.

What makes Gillian Flynn's Gone Girl an absorbing read, is her style of writing, juggling skilfully between witty and sarcastic.

It also talks about the unsettling details of a failing marriage and how far the couple wants to go to save it. Gone Girl does what many stories do not dare; it finds an eerie, confused and troubling side to marriage and expresses it, in all its chilling glory.

Ganesh Krishna T R, 2 MENG

## FILM RECOMMENDATION





Movie: Lawrence of Arabia Director: Sir David Lean

In the year 1962, Sir David Lean created a masterpiece in the world of Cinema-a landmark that Modern Cinema would look for inspiration, a movie that is nothing short of a miracle in itself, *Lawrence of Arabia*. A work in the world of cinema that stands unrivaled to this very day for its sheer magnitude.

The life of an extraordinary man, T.E.Lawrence, told by the finest storytellers and portrayed by some of the greatest actors of all time. This is the story of a legend, a traitor, a hero, a narcissist, a thinker, a Bedouin and a British officer who goes by the name of T.E.Lawrence. Lawrence's life is nothing short of an adventure in itself, from fighting wars to daydreaming in the desert to being the poster boy for the war in the Middle-East, Lawrence would seem like a character out of a novel, too good to be true.

The movie follows this man's journey through the deserts of Arabia and the deserts of his mind. Lawrence can be seen as the identity crisis of a desert loving British Officer and a Bedouin, two roles he adorns in his life and to which he must be loyal to is what that forms the crisis.

# To draw parallels I would say Lawrence is to Cinema what Mona Lisa is to art.

Being the brainchild of David Lean, the movie has a life of its own. I can imagine no other filmmaker directing Lawrence. The movie's cinematography of the desert is breathtaking; with a white Arab clothed and blue eyed British Officer in the foreground. The mirage scene with Omar Sharif is beyond words.

Maurice Jarre's soundtrack brings memories of the desert and Lawrence's life. The music score evokes a strange sense of nostalgia for a place and time that doesn't exist anymore.

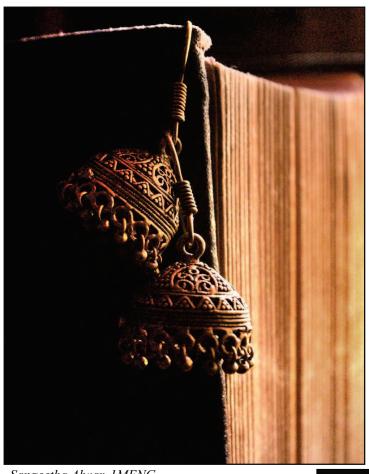
The movie features an ensemble cast with Peter O'Toole playing Lawrence, Alec Guinness as Prince Faisal, Omar Sharif as Sherif Ali, Anthony Quinn as Auda abu Tayi, Anthony Quaile as Colonel Brighton, Arthur Kennedy as Jackson Bentley, Jack Hawkins as General Allenby and Jose Ferrer as the Turkish Bey.

The screenplay has been regarded as one of the greatest ever written. The exchanges take the viewer to a higher level of thought, each of which is simply mesmerizing.

Spielberg considers the movie to be his all time favorite and so do I. To draw parallels I would say Lawrence is to Cinema what Mona Lisa is to art.

Aditya Sreekumar, 1 MENG

# PHOTOGRAPHY



Sangeetha Alwar, 1MENG

Oindrilla Brishti Das, 2MENG



# PHOTOGRAPHY



Pranav, 2MENG



Sangeetha Alwar, 1MENG

# PHOTOGRAPHY



Prerna Bidalia, 1 MENG



Pranav, 2MENG

# DISCUSSION To Read or Not to Read Shakespeare

"To read" or "not to read" Shakespeare is a question that has been plaguing the 21st century readership. Despite multitudinous research on and about him and his texts, the thinking mind desires to delve a little deeper, beyond the glossy surface of accepted popularity. Let's see what an informal discussion amongst some students (Vismitha, Fr.Vinod, Sohail, Midhun, Aditya, Sangeetha, Meghana and Ragesree) of the English Department led to.

Meghana: Many critics have called Shakespeare the greatest playwright. Our initiation into English Literature starts with Shakespeare. His plays have been Hollywoodized and Bollywoodized extensively. This could be because of the popularity he acquired for himself during his milieu because he caught the pulse of what the masses demanded in the name of entertainment and hence the theatre going audience were willing to pay his company to laugh and cry with his characters.

**Fr.Vinod** (nodding): Also, he wrote at the time when theatre was a popular means of entertainment and Shakespeare provided enough of that. (grins) Perhaps, it's the legacy of popularity which Shakespeare ensured for himself during the Elizabethan times that still continues today.

Aditya: Yes, he really did strike the right chord with the populace of theatre goers of his time. He appealed to the underlings. He was crass, crude and appealed to the base elements of the society and hence the general masses, who did not have the academic fecundity for high Elizabethan theatre, could relate to him. The upper strata would rather view a Latinized play by the University Wits such as Marlowe or ...(pauses)

Ragesree: Or Robert Greene, or say ,Thomas Kyd. Interestingly though, Shakespeare delineates royal characters on stage, like Macbeth, or King Lear. Yet, he shapes and portrays the characters in an effective manner that appeals to the sensibilities of the common man.

Meghana: Exactly! See, a very good contrivance which Shakespeare employed to retain the attention of the underlings were the side characters such as the porter in Macbeth and the fool in King Lear, which the theatre goers belonging to the lower rung of the social ladder could readily relate to.

Midhun: Now talking of Shakespeare's relevance today, the greatness of his plays lies in the fact that that it can be read through so many lenses and

adapted variously. There is a play called *Une Tempest* by Cesaire which is a very post-colonial take on his celebrated *Tempest* with Prospero being characterized as the colonizer, and Caliban as the colonized.

**Vismitha:** His repertoire resembled a cauldron of stories which had the potential of being turned into successful movies. He utilized tropes that were strikingly universal to the human condition. The popular theme of parents opposing a man and a woman in love — that's Romeo and Juliet...(*laughs*)

**Sangeetha:** So what you are trying to say is that Shakespeare provides a point of reference for present day artists...

**Vismitha:** Precisely! Look, we have Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are dead* in which he takes the two guards in *Hamlet* and creates an entire play around them. His stories have adhered to the popular imagination.

**Fr.Vinod:** Also, look at the number of plays he has written. Can we cite any other author or playwright of our time with such an extensive output?

Vismitha: Prolific is the word for him!

Aditya: I think the reason we keep referring back to Shakespeare is because of the colonial hangover. Authors like Lorca and Marquez might have written better stuff, but since we were colonized by the British, we tend to put him up on a pedestal.

**Midhun:** I believe that Shakespeare is relevant today, because he was able to capture the imagination of the people during his time. Also, one can read Shakespeare as a common man, as well as academician. His texts provide the fodder for both the faculties.

**Sohail:** How can we infer that Shakespeare had aimed for the masses as his target audience? He might have directed for popularity itself- like say, the Rohit Shetty of the Elizabethan era!

(Everyone laughs)

**Vismitha:** We may think it is easier to dismiss him because we have read, re-read, reconstructed and deconstructed every nuance possible in his texts. Shakespeare provides the starting line. His stories have stuck on.

**Ragesree:** Not to eulogize him, but he himself has provided us with lines to encapsulate his position in the literary waves across the periods.

"So long as men can breathe or eyes can see So long lives this and this gives life to thee."

### **Forgotten Walls**

Tarun Surya (2 MENG)

I went to the other side of town
To find things I'd rather forget
As I wound my way around the streets
I found myself thinking of you

Lanes and gullies are good places to forget Hide the past behind a loose brick Walk away after plastering a wall Sealing your memories with waterproof paint

But on my side of town, the paint peels With every rain of remembrance that lashes Unsettling that delicate forgotten event That is protected by nothing more than compact earth

The winding road ends and I find what I want Forgetting that I have come here to forget To hide my remembrances once again Till the time comes again to forget

I traveled to the other side of town to forget you But all the while I forgot to remember to forget.

#### **Different Souls, Aligned Goals**

Junaid P.I (2 JP ENG)

As he tread the vicious path of time,
Hopeless young boy seized by crime;
He craved for an alliance
Sighting for a concrete mind
Spot a preacher so kindAmidst this ambiguous ambience;
Pure amiability amplifying in his sense,
She was assiduousness defined
An entity of wisdom and knowledge combined.
Resume treading down this road
Darkness in motion cracking his code
How did he perceive? - An anomalous load
But behind the velvety wet vision lid
He sees the one who mirrors his eminence...

### The Stricken Today, The Grim Tomorrow.

Jasmine Gnanan John (1 BA CEP)

The Sky watches silently from above,
"Oh the agony I've witnessed."
"I can shelter no longer the earth,
and the treasures with which we're blessed."

The earth once full and lavish, now crackles in it's parched lands. The Sun bends down, merciless, and the snow mountains decline.

The human race, ignorant and guilty, are blinded by their foolishness.

They continue their ghastly criminal deeds, unaware of the Age of Darkness.

As for me, I am human too, guilty as much as you.

Like me, have others sung songs of nature, and the bounty that which it beheld.

Now these will remain mere words, ascribed on pieces of paper.
Until the spark of humanity, is finally lit together.

The posters and slogans, will do no good.
It's respect that nature needs.
Refill the bounty, save what's left, from which our children may feed.

#### Horror-Scope

Srinjoy Dey (1 English Honors)

Pale freckles on the palms, The safety of the lines, Oh, the nerves that it calms, of the uncalibrated fancy fiction future.

Men with bearded forests and rooty hair,

flying birds smaller than the drops of their holy lies in the brimming grail.

Come! Oh, Come!
Come buy your future on sale!!
You do not realize,
it's the foot of Lucifer upon which you hail.

Your tale is not the tail, of your destiny's destination. Its the way that you deal with your life's complications.

They are ready to mar, till your destiny bleeds as black as tar. Its a hypnotic lore, to lure you to listen to more of their make-believe trouble, till you are reduced to ashes and rubble.

A broken man with broken fate, A naive maiden used as bait.

We're fishes of a fishing pond, bound to fishermen's mercy bond. Façade crusaders of a past that haunts. The vices provoke the voice's taunts. Trapped in the middle of ocean, in a thermocol box of icy emotions.

#### I Wonder What You Dream Of

Namrata Murali (1 CEP)

I wonder what you dream of Do you dream of skyscrapers and stock exchanges? Or do you dream about the past, The rush, the hearts and the spades?

Maybe you dream of our forgotten plans, Somehow undone; the tags I left on those maps; And relive the things we loved, The memories we shared: The risks, the adrenaline, love and a life.

Or do you dream of your future-White collar job, a routine life with a fat paycheck? No sneaking out, no more rebelling without a cause.

Maybe you remember our battle scars? Scraped arms and bruised knees from Climbing over fences and gates?

I'm so wrong You never think of it at all.

You probably dream about yourself-Successful and accomplished With anything you could ever wish for And without everything you always needed.

Your laughter used to sound Like a wind-chime Tinkling sweet and clear. But the breeze is gone You shut the windows yourself.

It's better now, Since we've gone our separate ways; But sometimes, I wonder, If you dream of me.

## Activity Log

The English Department is a vibrant space, where a plethora of activities keep the students' minds occupied with creative engagements

Chatauqua, our informal poetry club that encourages the appreciation of poetry, entered its 4th year of existence this session, while Athena, our debate club, started off splendidly with the Department of English debating against the School of Law, the topic being the 'Imposition of the uniform civil code'.

The discussions at the **Research and Journal Forum** pertained to topics like Limits of Freedom of Speech, Indian economy and outsourcing and Female Identity in Mahabharata. The forum came up with an innovative idea of letting the presenters have three panelists to support and elucidate the article being presented, hereby increasing student involvement.

**Acropolis** staged a street play on the nuances of drug addiction. Also, the M.A first years thoroughly enjoyed themselves while presenting 5 tales from Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* for the Undergraduate students.

Coffee Hour had a great start with welcoming the first years. The Friday evenings were filled with good music, enriching speeches, the most memorable being an inspirational talk by ex Christite Chirag, and a healthy interaction between the faculty and the students.

**Talking Cinema** has to its credits the screening of a variety of films like *Waltz with Bashir* (animation), some amazing documentary films like *Century of the Self*, crime thrillers like *Un Prophete*, along with regional movies like *Kodiyettam* and *Superman of Malegaon*.

We are looking forward to the International Seminar on Gender Studies in January 2016. The inaugural of the website of the same was celebrated in the presence of Anita Nair.



Anita Nair speaking at the inauguration of the website for the conference

QUILL'S WILL is the MA English with Communication Studies Magazine - A platform for the students of Christ University across disciplines to showcase their creative expression and critical opinion.

### **FACULTY ADVISOR**

Shobana P Mathews

### TEAM QUILL'S WILL

Ragesree Roy, Aishwarya Falke, Sangeetha Alwar

Picture Courtesy: Sangeetha Alwar and Google Images

# MA ENGLISH WITH COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Co Curricular Activities

Chautauqua (Poetry out loud)

Research and Journal Forum (Reading and critquing relevant academics papers)

Coffee Hour (Informal student-faculty interactions)

Talking Cinema (Screening and analysis of films)

Athena (Formal parliamentary debates on critical issues)

Acropolis (Play readings and improvisations)

### **Supported By**

Department of English Christ University

#### **Vision Statement:**

Towards critically reading Self, Society and the Imagined

#### **Mission Statement:**

The Department of English aspires to promote an intellectual climate through artistic creation, critical mediation and innovative ideation in a culture of reciprocal transformation.

For Feedback, enquiries and submissions, write to us at - quills.will@gmail.com