

White Noise

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER 2019

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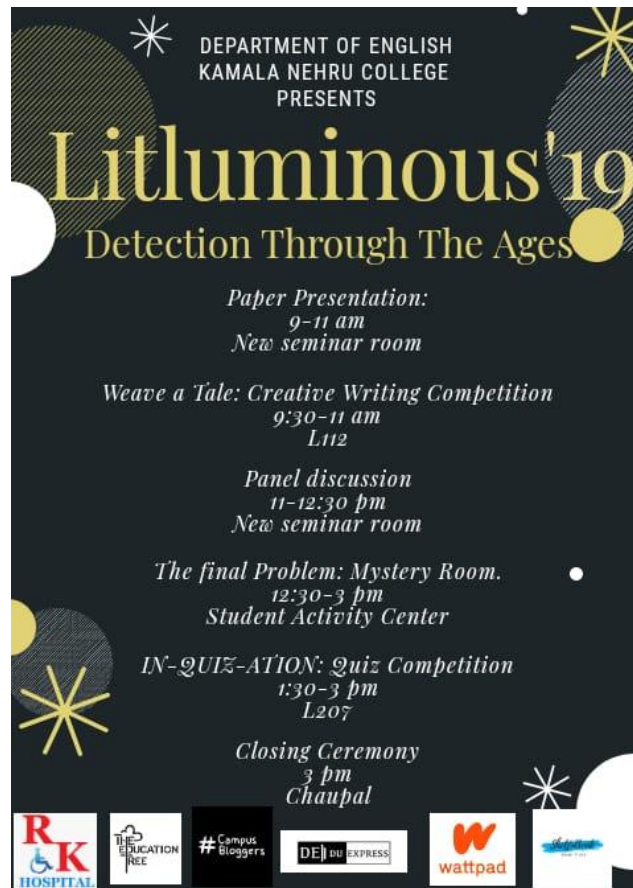
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LitLuminous'19

Detection Through the Ages



The English Department of Kamala Nehru College held its annual Literary fest on 15th February, 2019 with events and competitions centred around the theme '**Detection Through the Ages**'. Students from various colleges and courses participated in many engaging events of the fest that brought together a community of people that shared a love of literature; indulging in a day filled with fun, excitement, mystery and detection.

Litluminous'19 commenced with its first event, a Paper Presentation on the theme, 'Detection Through the Ages'. This event witnessed a vibrant and enthusiastic inter-college participation. While one student from Lady Shri Ram College presented a paper on 'English Country Houses as a character in detective novels', another student from Hansraj spoke about the parallels in the TV adaptation of Sherlock Holmes by Arthur Conan Doyle. Thereafter an

interactive session also took place where the audience asked questions and the participants responded to it, initiating a stirring discussion among the students. The event showcased the different ways of looking at detective novels and opened avenues for the audience to reflect and hence broaden their own perspectives.

The first position for this event was bagged by Avani Solanki from Lady Shri Ram College. Her paper which captivated the judges was assessed and appraised as well researched. The second position was awarded to Aditi Kumar from Dyal Singh College whose paper was elaborate and touched upon some crucial points within the genre of detective fiction.

Students from KNC and other Delhi University colleges wove compelling narratives, in poetry and prose, during the second event - Weave-A-Tale, the creative writing competition which was also based on the theme of mystery and/or detective fiction. To incite the participants' imagination, two visuals (scissors and bangles) as well as two audio prompts (sound of glass breaking and bells clanging, and the loud echo of an object hitting a smooth surface) were provided. A 50 minutes window of time yielded narratives mostly in prose, covering a melange of themes (such as suffocating relationships and explosive family dynamics) with mystery as the main underlying theme. Tamanya Dhupad from DCAC took home the first prize, followed by Deepika Gulati (English Honours) and Nakshatra Shah (Journalism Honours) from KNC.

The Panel Discussion was the third event of the day and was presided over by speakers Professor Christel Devadawson, Department of English, Delhi University, Maxwell Pereira, former Joint Commissioner of Delhi Police and Namita Paul, Department of English, Kamala Nehru College wherein they delineated the theme of the fest, "Detective through the Ages" with insightful and thought-provoking narratives.

Professor Devadawson shed light upon detective fiction as a literary genre, mapping it out through history to "The Golden Age". She bracketed the works of Anna Katherine Green, "the mother of detective fiction" who also invented the girl detective with that of Patricia Wentworth, who wrote in the classic whodunit style. From the nature of the game, *shikaarto* the changing narrative and historical truth, she led us into the Humdrum School through Agatha Christie.

Mr. Pereira, steered us into the discourse of detective nonfiction through his book, "The Tandoor Murder" which is a true account of how Sushil Sharma, a congress MLA killed his wife, chopped the body into pieces and burnt it in a tandoor to dispose the body.

He foregrounded how these narratives are sine qua non, and must be known to the public. Ms. Namita Paul shed light upon spy thrillers and their vogue in 21st century Bollywood. She elucidated upon how movies like Ektha Tiger, Madras Cafe, Raazi and many such movies rise to popularity during times of political crisis, brushing upon how they model warped nationalistic notion of jingoism in the audience. The symposium was followed by a Q&A session, ranging from ideas such as whether the quest of truth is compromised in detective fiction to how there's multiplicity of truth, contingent upon context.

A dimly lit common room found itself housing this marvel of Litluminous'19 in the midst of a Delhi University strike, hustle, bustle and various compounding tensions, (for organizers of the fest, the teacher's union, politicians and the mafia alike, the latter owing to their precarious lifestyle) to name a few. The central idea, or whatever of it that could be deciphered from the mosaic of chameleon coloured instructions being given out, was that a team of three, upon having stepped into this eye of the storm, would have to, by sheer intellect and their cognitive prowess, endeavour to escape it. This escape would be profoundly or limply (depending on the gentry's capability to interpret) aided by a strategically sequenced set of clues. The participants, subsequent to entering had to look for a clue sheet in the stack of playing cards which would show them the cards that they held in this quest. The next step was to find a map, an offer that you can't resist, stashed among the many books, this would inevitably lead to the participants having to find the passcode for a phone that they had been very courteously provided. This passcode held the key to all navigational secrets, once opened, this Pandora's box would unleash the challenge of having to find the key to the final problem. Which in an anti-climactic turn of events, was but a key to the other door of the common room which was in fact already open, despite a ceremonious lock being placed on it, the epitome of all unsatisfactory denouements. The common room in these few hours was not just the receptacle of clues and mysteries and all things detective, but it also shrined- for the lack of a better euphemism- a lot of stuff, that you are likely to find there even during non-mystery room days, this possibly non intentional move or planned mismanagement was a tour de force as it befuddled sense itself, making it more complicated for the unsuspecting participants to find clues, indisputably making them feel dumber than they already do on a regular basis owing to college (all English hon. students can feel at liberty to agree now). This serene reality is evidenced by the fact that there were only three teams out of the myriad that traversed the mystery room which eventually solved the

Sherlockian final problem, whether or not they had any external help is something I choose to remain silent on.

Kidding. They were all on their own in that solemn arena of mysteries. Just like they are in life.

The fact of the hour is that The Mystery room was incredibly well received and the cardinal point of attraction for all minds with a drive akin to that of a detective. Arushi from the first year went so far ahead as to say the mystery room was the “most thrilling thing” in her life at the moment, and that she regards her love for it higher than her love for Harry Styles and me. Kudos to Arushi. Ensnared in the environs of a delicately carved out themed space, this escape room was definitely something you would not have wanted to escape.

Another event that did not fail to captivate the students was In-Quiz-Ation: the Quiz competition. With questions ranging from the literary works of Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie to that of popular culture and visual medium with the likes of detective shows including Hannibal and Dexter. The quiz competition was a chance for all the detective nerds to show off their knowledge, therefore it was a great success with participants and was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The day required a perfect end and that was surely provided for. ‘The Rumoured Project’, the band of Kamala Nehru College, performed for the closing ceremony and what an enthralling performance they gave! A perfect amalgamation of upbeat popular music with some soul rendering slow melodies was just the most magical ending to a day full of sniffing ‘leads’ to reach ‘resolutions’ and ‘Conclusions’.

Poems

An Epistle to my Companion

Cold tiles under my feet

Eyes still weighed down by sleep

I look up, and around

The room is spotless, immaculate

You cleared up everything last night

I didn't even hear you do so.

I step out of the shower

My clothes are already laid out

I didn't even see you do so.

My food is warm on the dining table

Sitting beside are today's medicine

Did I need these? I didn't even know so.

I chew, tasting the expected

Sensing movement to my right

I glance over, listless.

Your compact stature supporting a face

Quite human except for the vacant gaze

Moving towards me, soundless.

A silicone hand fills my glass

Never shaking, never lax

Doing its job, flawless.

At my voice's command, windows slide open

Chirps of Canaries tinkle in, a trembling unison

A product of no programming.

I step forward, throw back the sheets

My vivid canvas stares back at me

A product of no codes.

I pick up the brush, wet my palette

Rush of creativity sparks in my brain

Product of nothing but my humanity.

You can be my ally, can provide me aid

You can help me do, but not create.

Because you've got your systems, but I've got my artistry

You've got no soul, only memory.

-Namira Khan

Delusional Reality

“Siri, would you like to go out with me sometime?”

Funnily enough, she’s with him every moment of his life.

“Could Frankenstein love his monster?” he wonders;

Maybe if he had eyes to see his heart;

to look past the supposed “grotesque”;

over the mist of convention.

He asks himself; as he looks at her,

“Can we replicate the human heart; a metallic yet beating heart?”

The illusion of Love because it’s not real is apparent to his sight;

But the human heart is blind.

He falls out of love, when he realizes she’s tailor- made for him;

but she pulls him back with his favorite tea and a blueberry muffin.

“Am I giving up on people?”

He can’t tell, she’s not real unless he touches her;

But the cold steel would be replaced with palpable warmth in a few years.

The Concepts of Upgrade and Update haven’t been more necessary ever before
in history: the neo-human runs as far away as possible from reality.

“Does the Truth really set us free?”

The will-o'-the-wisp in his hand is illusion;

But she takes him to his idyll, as close as he can get to Utopia;

He chooses to live in delusion.

-Prabhdeep Kaur

I sat there bathed in blood

As I searched for my last words.

I cried out for my parents,

The ones who brought me

To this dreadful world.

Don't cry father,
I have found what I was looking for
A peaceful life
Beyond this earth,
One they call paradise.

Slaughtered for my appearance,
My sweet indifference,
By mindless men
On baseless terms.
Sorry mother,
For wandering away.
If only I had known that I would die,
I would have stayed
To die in your arms.

-Tanushi Jindal

Touch Wood

“Touch wood”
Something about her continues to fascinate me-
colloquialisms, superstitions, beliefs.
Avoiding ladders, jumping on trees;
Piercing eyes, gnarly smiles,
Cutting through me.

“Touch wood”
“Knock on the door before you enter my room, please.”
“Why?”, “Do you hide?”
“Indeed.”

“Touch wood”

Sinister winds are blowing today,

Conversing with me.

Thunder, rain, and clouds, waiting at bay.

“Per my instructions, I see.”

“This you can foresee”

“Touch wood”

“Knock, knock, knock. Knock till you breathe.”

“Knock on the door. Knock on me”

“Knock till the end of days. Knock with the breeze.”

“Knock till the word ‘knock’ can’t be”

“Touch wood?”

Crack in the door. Open with a creak.

Blood on the floor. Blood on me.

What just happened?

Touch wood. We’ll see.

-Deepika Gulati

Alternate Universe

In our universe

We see a couple holding hands

A woman and a man

And it’s beautiful, two souls in love.

In our universe

We look at those of the opposite gender

Our pulse picks up and our hearts surrender

And it's lovely—, a teenage crush.

In our universe

We watch two women, laugh and stumble on the road

Clenching onto each other's hands, and not letting go

And it's strange, an uncomfortable image.

In our universe

Two men smile at each other and sit close

Hold each other's eyes for a moment too long

And it's unnatural, a stain.

In our universe

What you were born with, is who you are

Your genitals determine your identity, your nature

And it's proper, the only way for things to be.

In this universe

Don't step out of your assigned role

Cause it'll cause them discomfort

This discomfort will turn to fear,

Fear to anger, anger to hate

And they'll disguise this hate as discomfort again.

Or, maybe- you can change this universe

You've corrected the law, acknowledged the mistake

Let this amendment be a beginning

To fight the prejudice, to one day end the vicious cycle
of this mindless hate.

You are but one person? Can't do it on your own?

Someone has to start; someone will always be the first.

It starts from all of us, start it from your home

Won't it be enough? Won't you change their minds?

Then be patient, and one day you might.

Don't lose hope, because we deserve it

for the universe we can become—
Where this person, that person, every person
will be able to kiss and to love
And be exactly who they want to be
A universe we'll be proud of.
It's true that hate spreads
Fortunately, so does love.
Of all the things we're taught to apologise for,
Love should never be one.

-Namira



Paintbrush and Chalk Pastels

My neighbour is a woman,
pregnant and naive.
She has a body without a spine,
A mouth without a tongue.

My neighbour is a man,
who orders Chinese for lunch
and has metal for a hand.
His body is a flooding temple
and his fridge a heart attack.

My neighbour is a stripper,
wears lingerie for lunch
and spits crunchy strawberry seeds
at strangers.

I am my neighbour:
lousy and loud,
A hundred in number.
I am stuck in nylon threads
And ruffled blue in India ink.
I am sixty three people
and one fluttering heart,
tinkling on the insides of a glass bottle.

My house is a matchbox
by the sea.
The flats are a set of chalk pastels
in the moonlight.
Violent, virulent, violet
rhinestones in a bracelet.

Teeth of a rich man.

The neighbour had a daughter
who grew up and jumped
fifty-feet into love.

I whip the tale of
my white gown
And run over the freezing,
mosaic balcony floor.
Stop screaming in my ears,
even babel fish couldn't
Get me through to you.
It's a fifty-feet drop
and I'm finally in
The Centre of the Universe,
Tulsa.

-Aamna Siddiqui

Prose

6th September
2018, 11:05pm.

Dear Diary,

I'm sorry that I don't write to you very often. I'll try to be a better pen pal. Nonetheless, I knew I'd regret it if I didn't pen down, this day.

I woke up to a typically breezy, yet bright Delhi Monsoon morning, and mechanically got ready, in a jiffy for college. I boarded the metro, put on my headphones and browsed through my Spotify playlist to listen to the same songs that I listen to, every day.

I invariably listen to "Hey Jude" by The Beatles first, that it has wonderfully become a personal ritual now. But this time, McCartney's voice did not sound the same, somehow, it was much more euphonious than it had ever been; like the warmth of a cosy blanket on a winter night. I was grinning from ear to ear, through the entire song. I entered my college with a beaming face and a giddy gait, like a lover awaiting their beloved. I don't know what I was waiting for, but suddenly the concept of "the world is your oyster" seemed real.

And so I went onto attend my lectures, and by the end of my second last class; I was sapped of every bit of my prior pep. On my way to the last class, I unlocked my phone to check the room for the lecture from my timetable; but instead, my fingers clicked the facebook icon out of compulsive habit. Perhaps I was yielding to the virtual realm yet again, as an escape to the prosaic, vanilla reality of my life.

And truly so, I was spellbound. My eyes refused to believe what I had read, so I read all of it, again and again, to be certain. And as I read through more of the posts; it became more and more real. A pearly drop slid down my cheek.

My facebook feed had never been even as remotely beautiful, as it was today.

"Supreme Court rewrites History..."

"*SabkoSatrangiSalaam*, I'M CRYIN' QUEER TEARS OF JOYS! :)"

"Love won, Y'all!"

"FUCK OFF 377!"

“And the Lordship said, “It doesn't have to be Adam and Eve. It can be Adam and Steve”.”

“Can’t believe the judgement came in my lifetime!!!”

I dashed through my college’s corridors looking for someone, anyone to share this news with. I didn’t find anyone; so I sprinted through the passageway until I was at the threshold of my class, and announced at the top of my voice, “HAVE YOU GUYS HEARD THE NEWS?????”

The girls in the class smiled at me, accompanied by an incandescent twinkle in their eyes. Every atom in me was revived. It was a beautiful day; I could hear McCartney’s voice again, “...Hey, Jude, don't let me down

You have found her, now go and get her

Remember to let her into your heart

Then you can start to make it better...”

I stepped out of my college gate, looked up at the clear, azure sky and sparkling white clouds; and then closed my eyes tightly. When I opened them, I could see a rainbow painted across the entire sky as if the sunlight split into the seven hues only across the canvass of India, today.

All I could think about was, “I need to call Gauri!” but decided against it because I figured she must be in her tuition.

I boarded the metro homewards, and a few minutes after I reached home; I got a call from her. I darted across the room to where my phone was, picked up her call and yawped, “I WAS GOING TO CALL YOU! I IMAGINED THAT YOU’D BE CRYING; WHEN YOU WOULD’VE HEARD THE NEWS! GOD DAMMIT, IT IS SUCH A BEAUTIFUL DAY!”

And she didn’t say anything, not a single word. I couldn’t hear any sound over the pounding of my heart.

But then; I heard slow, heavy blows of breath.

I could hear snivelling.

I could hear warm pearly drops gliding down her cheek.

She took a deep breath, tried to speak, barely being able to hold it together,

“I can’t believe it..., I’ve been checking the newspaper almost every day on updates regarding the 377 verdicts; and now, it is here. It feels so unreal.

I’m no longer a criminal for simply loving.” and she took a few breaths again.

It was a fairytale; except it was real, very real.

I started singing,

“Is this the real life? Is this just fantasy? Caught in a landslide, no escape from reality...” and she chuckled, while she was still in tears. It was a most precious chuckle.

She told me how she had been wondering whether she should come out to her parents; she’d been reading posts about how people came out to their parents today. But she didn’t think she was ready. She had no idea if they’d accept her or not.

“Gauri! You don’t owe an explanation to anyone. It will take a little time for people to actually accept it, the verdict allows for a space of resolution, but it doesn’t take away the prejudices.

Just enjoy your day! Imagine telling about this to your nieces and nephews!”

She cackled, and we started discussing where we’d go to celebrate.

My heart hadn’t been this full, brimming with warmth and ardour in a long time.

I knew when this day started; there was something special about it.

Today, the dawn was tinted with a small rainbow which bloomed across the wide blue yonder, by dusk.

It was a beautiful day. A very beautiful day.

Love,

Prabhdeep Kaur

Tailormade Death

Jenny, fondly involved in her favourite activities of knitting and stitching, had a heart fashioned as beautifully as her brocading pieces of art, tall, lark, and dressed up in old-fashioned European charm. She could often be spotted sitting on the verandah of the Démeare mansion, soaked in her kind of art. Jennifer Démeare was the only child of David Démeare and his wife, Alba. And the amount of love they bestowed on her was simply beyond measure. Oh, how they adored their only kid, showered her with priceless ornaments, provided her with the best of outfits.

13th August 1998,

“I, Grace Paul, hereby take the responsibility of Jenny Démeare, in the light of the loss of her parents’ life, until her aunt and uncle are present in person and are passed on her custody.”

Jenny did not shed a single tear. They say that shock comes in extreme forms. A cataclysmic incident indeed thwarted Jenny's life. She had lost her parents, her only world. Jenny and I had been equally fond of each other. She was a little kid when Alba and David would leave her with me, and Jenny would run around the house, her laughter filled my days. “Grace Paul is a single woman, has no children, no pets,” that’s what the people of the neighbourhood will tell you when you interrogate about me. Alba and I had been good friends in our college years, and I do not hesitate in telling you the fact that David and I, were a thing in college days. Then David and Alba went into the publishing business, and our ways parted. I was into the fashion line, a merchandise designer, you could say.

14th August 1998,

Two days after David and Alba were found murdered in their bungalow; the police came here for investigation. They have charged me for the murder. The primary suspect is what they say it in better terms. Since David and I were in a previous relation and Alba’s daughter was fond of my company than her mother’s- they think that I might have murdered Alba, and then when David would have spotted me, I would have killed him as well in the spur of the moment. Jenny’s uncle and aunt have returned. I feel relieved, at least the 12-year-old is not all alone now. Secondly, my pair of scissors has been found as being the murder weapon. So probably that’s the story they have spun. But I am not the murderer. I had no grudges against either Alba or David.

As I sit in the jeep, on my way to the prison, I am reminded of the fact that Jenny borrowed the pair of scissors, from me, four days back. She told me, she was stitching a dress for her little Barbie. I had often heard Alba and Jenny in the midst of a brawl. Jenny wanted to be like me, and the end product of resistance was-

A tailor-made death with a pair of scissors.

Nakshatra Shah

BA(H) Journalism

Kamala Nehru College



It was nine when I reached home from work. I pulled out the keys from my bag to open the door, only to find it already open. Someone had broken in and probably was still there, inside, waiting for me. I had no enemies, I thought to myself, but neither did I have many friends. It was probably a burglar, waiting to escape and I had most certainly interrupted him in the important task he was doing. I was scared. Nonetheless, I went inside and heard no noise, much to my disappointment yet relief. Whoever had been inside had already left. I checked the cupboards and the drawers to check if anything had been taken and found everything intact. Not a single thing had been touched. I had left my cell phone for charging while I was at the job of checking for things. It was when I heard continuous beeps on the phone, that I checked it only to find out that I had forgotten to lock the door before leaving for work. The maid had tried to contact me but all in vain; my phone was dead and I had forgotten to carry my charger. Yes, I can be very careless. I broke into laughter and went on to do some chores. It was almost midnight. I was having dinner with my only friend in the world. I was narrating to her the silly incident that happened earlier in the day. She did not laugh or say a thing. She was not even eating anything. I asked her if she was not feeling well. She still did not respond. This had been going on for a few days. Her passive behaviour had started to irk me now. Only the other day, when I was telling her how humanity had been long dead, she didn't have an opinion which was strange. She always had something to say about everything. Dinner was over and we thought of retiring for the night. I did the dishes and still found her sitting in the chair. She had not moved even a bit. So, I took her by the shoulder, to carry her

to her room. Man, was she heavy! She had not been eating much since a week; only what I had been forcefully feeding into her mouth but she had been getting heavier as the days passed. I managed to carry her somehow and carefully put a blanket on her, kissed her goodnight, shut the door of the cupboard and finally locked it. She slept there, lifeless with still no reply.

-SonaliSamal

“Can I believe you say it with conviction when you say that we will always be together?” Vaani turns on her side to face Arun.

“Of course,” he replies with conviction, for one cannot help but say the truth from the position where they lay- on lush yellow-green grass as far as the eye can look. Their lush surrounding is bounded by small hills, and they live to lie under the soothing shade of a giant tree whose grey-green bark twists and turns more effortlessly than the pair of lovebirds has in any of their melancholic musings.

“If you say so,” she says, still dubious. Just for a moment, she turns her back to him, to rearrange the tears that broke down the barrier of self-control; and then again turns towards him. “You should know that I love you. I love you so much; you cannot know”, her voice breaks.

“I know Vaani. I wish I could tell you the many ways in which I can love you”, Arun solemnly replies. He hasn't turned to look at her.

“Ways?” Vaani asks because it strikes her as odd.

“Ways...many people and many souls...many ways” he replies.

She doesn't speak further, she understands no leads to elaborate upon. Her hand shoots out to tightly grasp his, and her eyes are singularly concentrated on dark pink flowers that line a patch on the hill in front of her. The mood is indolent, and her eyes cover themselves.

She wakes with a jerk when she hears sirens.

“Did you hear that?” she asks her partner. Like her, he went to sleep too. “Arun! Wake up!” she shakes him in vain. The siren becomes louder and louder. Frantic, she whips her head left and right to look for the source. It is found soon enough. A white van approaches them in its comfortable speed. She cannot believe that it found a path for it on the grass.

“Wake up, please!” she screams. She shakes and shakes him. The van parks near them and two men dressed in light grey-blue come out and pick Arun up. They put him on the small stretcher-like bed inside the van and then close the door. She runs raging towards them, banging the closed doors- thump thumpthumpthump- stronger, louder but they leave her alone in the meadows.

She breaks down crying. She lies on the grass, on her side, knees bent. She doesn't know how many moments pass like that before she feels a force shaking her. “Wake up Vaani, wake up,” it speaks in hushed, urgent whispers. “Wake up,” it becomes stronger.

Vaani opens her eyes and sits up straight. Her friend, Roma stands beside the bed, in worry. At once, the subject of her dream hits her, and she begins sobbing. “Roma I...I ...” she sobs. It brings tears also to the eyes of her friend, who has been taking care of Vaani for the past few months in her home.

“I don't want anything, just him, just him, just him!” Vaani screams. She clutches a framed picture of her partner and brings it close to her chest and sobs.

“Vaani ...Vaani, please drink water. I'll hold the frame. Just for a minute, please drink water,” Roma attempts to take the frame from her to hand her a glass of water, but in the skirmish, it falls. They hear crackles of glass breaking into pieces.

Roma gasps in terror.

“I...I...” she tries to speak, but words don't come out because space for sense is filled with shame. Surprised, she sees Vaani choke in a sob before almost mechanically her posture becomes rigid and she leaves the bed and walks towards the door.

“Vaani, I...” Roma begins, but Vaani leaves before she can complete. Roma tries walking behind her but stops as she realises the presence of glass that she must clean. Dejected, she walks back to the bed and kneels to pick up the large pieces.

She screams in terror when she picks up the upside down frame. There is no glass to be picked up. The frame is intact as if it had never fallen. And for some reason, Arun's smile seems larger in the photograph that she had ever seen in this constant companion of Vaani. She gulps and looks around the room, hoping to find a clue. Nothing moves.

Many ways.

-Tamanna Dhupad

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Delhi College of Arts and Commerce

Collective Rubbish: Revisioning Postcolonialism

For the oppressed, Martin Luther King once suggested that “discontent can be channeled into the creative outlet of nonviolent action”. Conceptual art has always been a powerful embodiment of such action, and the third exhibition by *Collective Rubbish* – titled ‘Revisioning Postcolonialism’ - was an attempt at voicing reactions to colonization through art. The exhibition held on the 11th of October 2018, dealt with various aspects of the psyche of the colonized people in the aftermath of colonization as well as decolonization.

The basic and lexical definition given to postcolonialism is “a theoretical approach in various disciplines that is concerned with the lasting impact of colonization in former colonies” (Encyclopaedia Britannica). It used to define the ongoing project to reclaim and rethink the history and agency of people subordinated under various forms of imperialism. While postcolonialism, in all its structural solidarity, primarily concerns itself with surveying the repercussions of the colonial regime, and identifying new forms of domination or subordination which can come in the wake of such changes, including new forms of a global empire, when transformed into conceptual art it reaches out to a relatively free realm in terms of understanding and comprehension. Conceptual art communicates the interpretation of the creator while inviting alternate perspectives from an engaged audience. It thus manages to avoid criticism, only if that were also true for examination answers!

Despite the multitude of interpretations, what was certain is that the exhibition echoed one of the most prominent questions raised within the body of postcolonial studies and the relationship between imperialism and identity.



This piece explored the identity crisis of the imperialized population, with a focus on their inaccessibility to their mother tongue. The artist's note spoke of her personal experience of alienation with her own native language Punjabi and the privilege (symbolized by the umbrella) accorded to those who are well versed in the language left behind by the colonizers – English. This is elucidated by making available to the people a Punjabi and an English version of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. What made this piece stand out from the others was the fact that it drew on the essence of being *felt*, as it was accompanied by the rendition of a Punjabi song which the viewer might not understand or know anything about. Hence, deftly making you, the viewer, experience everything that the piece stood for.”

Prabhdeep Kaur



This segment widened the horizon of what modes an art exhibition can tread on and shed light on the identity crisis of a young person in a former colony, and how the different voices and opinions confuse us enough already. Furthermore, the role of oppression, hidden to the naked eye, further complicates our ability to distinguish between who we are and who we are conditioned to be. The visual of the female protagonist taking off her blindfold, looking confused, gave expression to this idea. The piece in itself might confuse you and seem ambiguous, but it does invoke in the viewer a sense of questioning the reality we see and the reality that is.

Simran Agarwal



In light of section 377 being revoked, this piece focuses on the longstanding existence of homosexuality in Indian culture, referencing the Buddha (who was cursed to be homosexual because of being an illegitimate child), the Manusmriti and Arthshastra's prescription of punishments for the 'mistake' of homosexual relations among other examples. It questions whether we, the Indian people, use colonial laws as an excuse and shift the blame to Christian colonizers for our own problematic beliefs.

CheshtaSagar



This work seeks to demolish the Western notion that the colonized people are “anonymous masses” and celebrates postcolonial masses emerging as distinct individuals and moving away from colonial notions of them being a homogenous group. It depicts them burning these stereotypes in a bonfire and scattering the ashes (here that of an English newspaper) of these prejudiced ideas.

-Ankita, Heba, Ishita, Tanishka, and Muskaan



This piece depicts the state of India as a State deprived of freedom, and how it has not been able to entirely shake off the shackles of the colonial way of life. The artist uses tea as an example of a product popularized by the British but claimed by Indians as their *chai*. It's shown to be decreasing in quantity over time symbolized in descending order by a Coke bottle, a McDonald's paper cup, and a classic Starbucks cup. The decreasing value of *chai* represents the falling nativity which is just reduced to external spots on the Starbucks glass, symbolizing an italicized, almost unrecognizable form that it has taken.

-Rashim



A hat and a fruit bowl represent this artist's ideas in a simplistic yet thought-provoking piece. "The hat represents American colonialism and the fruits stand for the Hawaiian Islands and the plantations set up there during the period of American occupation", clarifies the artist. It projects the idea of imperialism invading and exploiting every niche of the colonized land, and the control over something as innocuous yet vital to the Hawaiians as fruits.

-Anushka Singh



This piece looks at the change in power dynamics before and after the independence of India. It depicts the change from pre-colonial period when the kings and queens held the Indian population, represented by the red chess pieces, in a dangerous chokehold, to independent India which has provided equal rights to its citizens in everything including governance, which helped the citizens succeed in various fields (as highlighted by the roll of newspaper articles attached).

-Apoorva Bansal



The idea explored here is how despite being citizens of an independent nation, our sense of identity is still distorted. The positive, negative, and ambiguous impact of colonialism is shown by the different colours of paint on the mirror. The artists asked the visitors to look in the mirror and express what they see and feel. “In that reflection there’s you, but also a part of them within you”, Nimisha explained. It also highlighted the suppression of the culture of the colonized country, the sense of loss of own culture, and the preference to the English way of life.

-Nimisha, Sanjeevani, Hiral, and Diva



This painting highlights the oppressor’s control of the oppressed and their superiority in their own identity. The oppressed people are independent but not completely free, and the shackles of imperial control follow them as they attempt to push past the obstacles they face in fully claiming their freedom. It also suggests globalization as both a way for the former colonies to liberate themselves and a tool for them to further remain tied to their oppressors.

-Somiwon A Shishak



This piece consists of clay structures representing the colonizer and the colonized. The white woman's stance and the silhouette are mimicked by the darker woman, and the focus here is on mimicry and the following of western practices by the colonized population. "Both the women have been kept faceless as this unconscious mimicry is a common experience among several colonies", the artist explained.

-Urvashi



An image from the Panel Discussion held on 15th February 2019 (Litluminous).





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