

# EDITORS

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL



There is a lot that can be said about our English Department but first and foremost, I think it is necessary to acknowledge how important it is to have a good command over the English language which seems to be getting diluted with the use of shorthand via text messages and the arbitrary use of slang words. Yet, I have observed that our students understand the importance of communicating effectively and it is all thanks to the commendable work done by the English Department. They organize very interesting activities which challenge our students, and I personally look forward to all of them because they provide a good platform for encouraging and honing new talents.

Although I was not an Arts student, I have been an avid reader from a very early age. Perhaps, since I was a science student, I had an active spirit of enquiry and had no preconceived notions about what I should, or should not, read. To this day, I have no inhibitions towards reading what other people recommend, be it classical literature like Jane Austen, philosophical books by Ayn Rand or even young-adult fiction like Harry Potter. Some of my favourite works of literature are by P.G Wodehouse, W. Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* and Richard Bach's *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*. I personally recommend the latter for anyone who isn't a voracious reader but who would like to get into the habit of reading. This is one habit that people are fast letting go of because of the popularity of e-books, etc. but it's heartening to see that the English Department puts in great effort to encourage students to read. Their annual Book & Bake Sale is a very clever idea as the students' home-made baked goods provide a big incentive for people to buy books as well.

I notice that there are a number of new media in which people can express themselves. While these are gaining more popularity day by day, in my opinion, none of these quite compare to the experience of reading a book. At the end of the day, all I really wish for is an armchair and a good book to read! Literature and writing as an art form will never die, no matter what the changing trends and fancies of the youth may be.

I do have a lot of praise for the Department and all our students but I believe that there is always some room for improvement. I often observe that most of the students who actively participate in debates or public speaking are the usual veterans of the stage. It's important that all our students have the confidence to be able to speak their mind and hence, I propose mentoring not just from the teachers, but also amongst peers.

I would like to conclude by saying that at the end of the day, human relationships can be intricate and complicated; but, if we put aside our differences and work together, we can be a harmonious and efficient unit. Good luck!

*-Dr. Ashok Wadia*

## FROM THE DESK OF THE HEAD,

### DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

#### *The Gift of Freedom*

Engaged as I currently am with a project on the problem of forced exile of the Tibetan community, and the tragedy of three generations who have been born in exile and never seen their homeland, it struck me how carelessly we accept our freedom, taking it completely for granted.

Young Tibetans are keen to know their history, where they come from, and strengthen their ties with the motherland. They live with real and material loss every day, knowing they may never see their homeland or their loved ones left behind in Tibet. The angst, the pain and heartache are poured out in their poetry, a favourite genre for expression in the Tibetan culture.



‘Ah my beloved country,  
Will I see you ever?  
Occupied by Red Chinese  
Distorting you,  
Exploiting you,  
Tibet, your name will not die,  
However hard they try,  
You will rise again,  
Surpassing all hurdles.  
How sad I am,  
Yet I wear a fake smile.  
My love for you, my country,  
Will never die.’

- Tenzin Tashi Argyatsang

Should we not value and cherish what we have, instead of taking it for granted? Should we not use our freedom in a constructive and positive way, channelizing our energies towards a healthy, vibrant, secular society rather than misusing it, just because we can? Let us remember, that our freedom came at a price that was paid for by our forefathers before we were born, and that we have a duty to cherish and protect it, lest it be taken away from us.

On another note, the Department of English has had a wonderfully active and busy year, beginning with the Book and Bake Sale that gets better each year, the student Seminar, and a new addition, a brainwave from our TYBAs, a Literary Festival that proved to be a great success in its very first year.

A big thank you to the student secretaries of the English association, Sanaea Bubber and Deeksha Bhushan. They have had the distinction of being EA secretaries for two consecutive years, 2013 – 15 and carried out their work with efficiency and enthusiasm.

We were privileged to have Tenzin Tsundue, the celebrated Tibetan activist visit us, and speak to our students about the Tibetan movement to win back their homeland. It was an impassioned talk that touched all who heard it.

In collaboration with the American Centre, we had Prof Valerie Miner from Stanford University visit us and speak on ‘Sometimes You Make Music,’ which was very well received by the students, judging from the enthusiastic Q&A session which followed. Reports of all these activities are in the magazine.

We welcome the latest addition to the department, Ms. Deepna Rao who has joined in place of Dr. Prachi Khandeparkar.

Finally, we have a new Editor, Ms Divya Bhatnagar, Dept of English, a new team, and a brand new look!  
Well done Team!

*-Dr. Kamal Jadhav*

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

In the past few years, the Departments of English at various universities have rechristened themselves as the Department of English and Culture Studies or Department of English and Comparative Literature. This is indicative of a shift in our understanding of what constitutes English Literature today. The forces of globalization, decolonization, democratization of education and the English language in particular, over the past few decades have broadened the definition of English Literature and dismantled the canon. In more recent times, the growth of technology and the increase in the consumption of digital media has enabled an unprecedented number of people to express themselves on public fora. There is a profusion of writings, both fiction and non-fiction on social networking sites, blogs, websites. Fan-fiction, microfiction, reviews and write - ups on a variety of topics on discussion fora are commonplace.



It has taken the departments of English a while to open our eyes and acknowledge translation literatures, post-colonial writings, diasporic literature, and writings by marginalized groups as legitimate works of literature. Such works are worthy of being counted in the league of Shakespeare, Tennyson or Austen. We have become more inclusive; we do not turn up our noses at a James Bond novel or the latest collection of short stories by Rushdie, a novel by Mahfouz or Shafak or even a translated version of Manto's writings. In fact, we even teach these texts across universities under courses that are ambitiously titled Popular Culture or Indian Literature, or World Literatures. While we teach literature from around the world, we don't always encourage are students to go and read a novel written in English by a Turkish author. It is not English enough.

This gap between high and low literature has further widened with the recent burst in writings over the internet. There is now, more than ever, a need to broaden our understanding of literature, to realign our sensibilities, to erase boundaries. We need to acknowledge writings online and accord them the same kind of respect that we accord to a book. We need to be more inclusive in order to remain relevant and we need to embrace newer forms of writing, and appreciate cultures from across the world to be able to survive. An English Department that is not cognizant of the importance of culture studies or comparative literatures is soon going to become redundant. Literature is not dying

because people choose to read e-books or write on blogs, it is just turning a new leaf and we need to change too.

It is in keeping with this rationale that the Department organized a Popular Culture Fest this year. It is for this reason that we have included diverse kinds of writings in the magazine. The works experiment with form and content. We have included a piece of fan fiction, an essay on a comparative study of two well known poets, a study on art during the First World War, some free verse, a couple of remarkable short stories and a few experimental pieces.

As the Staff Editor of this magazine, it gives me immense pleasure to finally hand over our labour of love to our readers. Putting the magazine together has been an incredible journey and it has been a very pleasant learning experience. We have been lucky to have received some excellent entries and choosing the best out of them all has been a daunting task. I was blessed to have a very enthusiastic, creative and immensely talented editorial team. I can't thank Varun Gwalani enough for choosing to work on the editorial board while his TY semester exams were on. Zohra Malik and Manvi Ranghar have been an absolute delight to work with. Their zeal and their commitment was infectious. We would never have been able to print this magazine but for all their help. Komal Chandwani deserves a special mention for designing the magazine. I must also thank the co-secretaries of the English Association, Deeksha Bhushan and Sanaea Bubber, for all the assistance.

I must thank our Principal, Dr. Ashok Wadia, for his support and encouragement, especially for the time he spent interacting with the editorial team. Our Head of the Department, Dr. Kamal Jadhav, has been a source of inspiration for us all. We might just have missed the deadline for the release of the magazine had it not been for her. In addition, I wish to place on record our gratitude to the Union Bank of India for assisting us in our endeavor by sponsoring our magazine.

I hope the readers would enjoy reading the magazine as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

*Divya Bhatnagar*  
*Assistant Professor*  
*Department of English*

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

2014-2015

“For last year’s words belong to last year’s language,

And next year’s words await another voice.

And to make an end is to make a beginning.”

-T.S. Eliot

The language of the English Association during the year has not only been one of hard work, but also of fun and activity. We take pride in our events, big or small, and leave for home every evening, feeling satisfied that these events brought to us, not just entertainment and a knowledge of literature, but awareness, and a sense of responsibility.

This year, The English Association has had a short, but busy calendar of events. As is now tradition, we began our year with the Bake and Book Sale, Gourmands & Book Lovers Round III to give everyone a “taste” of the upcoming events! (Sorry for the bad pun!) The enthusiasm of the bakers and contributors was evident from the effort they put in, in preparing their superlative spread which, we are proud to announce, sold out as soon as it was set up!

A new event, introduced by The English Association, was the Literature Fest – our tip-of-the-hat to the “fandoms” in new media and popular fiction. The Fest was an entirely student-run initiative, which was directed to raise funds for the English Association’s activities, through a variety of stalls, ranging from quizzes to games to merchandise and even a photobooth equipped with an array of props! The entire Third Year class played an especially enthusiastic and active role in the planning and execution of this event, ably led by Richa Gupta and Varun Gwalani.

The Annual Students’ Seminar for the Academic Year 2014-15 was our attempt to commemorate a century to the beginning of the Great War by bringing into focus, the literature from, or about that era, under the title “Literature and The Great War”. As part of the Seminar, students from the First, Second and Third Years of the BA class formed five groups, each presenting a paper on a different genre of War Literature, namely, Poetry, Short Stories, Novels, Drama and Cinema.

While we deeply regret the fact that because of the Semester V exams of the TYBA class, The English Association was unable to present its crowning jewel, The Annual English

Play, we were overjoyed at the opportunity to bring to the students the knowledge and experience of a great set of eminent speakers. Our team was happy to welcome Tibetan author-revolutionary Tenzin Tsundue, who discussed his works in detail with an inquisitive audience that wanted to learn more about his experiences as a writer and an activist raising awareness for the freedom of Tibet. Talking with him had an intense impact on the audience, who lined up to receive a copy of his book of poetry, *Kora*.

In the second term, the Aeroplane Poetry Movement started by Shantanu Anand and Nandini Varma, and established in four major cities in India landed in Jai Hind College for a fun interactive workshop and a Mini Poetry Slam. Through three vibrant and energetic lectures, it encouraged the students of the Department to let go of their inhibitions and perform several original poems. Another enlightening experience came in the form of a talk organized by the Department of English in collaboration with the American Consulate Library. The talk titled “Sometimes You Make Music: Attention and Observation”, was presented by Valerie Miner, Professor of Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Stanford University. It was followed by an interactive session with her audience in which she addressed questions about her writing process, and suggested tips for aspiring writers among the audience.

This year has been memorable for us, as Co-Secretaries, being that it is our final year as students of Jai Hind College. We’ve made new friends in our fresh team of volunteers, and the volunteers that returned, went on to put in all their effort and dedication in organizing the events. The English Association worked in close harmony with the Literary and Debating Society during the year, each providing the other with the necessary support and encouragement. We will always be grateful to the Faculty of the English Department, led by Dr. Kamal Jadhav, also Chairperson of the English Association, for their unending patience, motivation and guidance over the two years that we have stood as Co-Secretaries. A special mention of Dr. Kamal Jadhav because, but for faith her in us, we would not have had the opportunity to lead the cultural wing of the Department; for that we will always remain grateful to her. A shout out to Ms. Divya Bhatnagar, also Staff Editor of this magazine, for patiently allowing us to take our time with the fumbles and stumbles along the way, and always being there, regardless of the time, to support us when we needed it! This journey has been unforgettable and so have the people that we met along the way.

In our final sign-off to you as Co-Secretaries of The English Association,

*Sanaea Bubber*

*Deeksha Bhushan*



**Deeksha** is a YouTube-crazy, perfectionist, willing to gush to everyone who will listen about the latest BuzzFeed video or Shondaland episode. A teensy bit starstruck, she will publicly deny and defend her secret obsession with the romances of Bollywood and Jane Austen, respectively till she is blue in the face. Deeksha lives for food, and swears there is no better feeling than seeing someone relish a meal she enjoyed and suggested. Her only goal in life is to pack up and travel the world; stopping only to eat, sleep and shower, in that order.



**Sanaea Bubber**, a multifaceted and multi-talented student of the prestigious Jai Hind College is currently in the third year, pursuing her Bachelor of Arts in English. The animal-lover is appreciated for her talents in Singing, Drama, Photography, and, for her organizing skills and is the Co-Secretary of the English Association at Jai Hind College.

## POEMS

### *A Gathering*

Dazzling atmosphere, cold shoulders  
Clouded faces, easy movements  
Subtle dresses and sparkling eyes  
Dripping diamonds, refusing to smile

Polka dots and shimmering silk  
Entangling bracelets, elegant cuff-links  
Low collars, high shoes  
Bold colours, all hues

Trilling voices complaining loud  
Humoring are the deep baritones  
Two arguments about the tenderness of  
the meat  
Hid behind shrugging shoulders and  
blinding teeth

High-end laughter, people swaying  
Some with the music, some with the  
liquor  
Windows to the soul  
Refusing to open their door

Advices poring over all matters in life  
Slipping of a ring inside an anonymous  
pocket  
Hunched postures restraining tiny,  
bouncing steps

Flashing pearly whites to intoxicated  
breaths  
Sensing the fragrance, observing the  
nerves  
Exploiting targets and bagging  
incentives  
Upturned noses dug in silver-ware  
Generous waists with longing stares

Eyelashes brushing the colouring cheeks  
Flitting eyes linger when they are met  
Attempts to steal the limelight and due  
attention

Punch lines and tragedies, spiced with  
exasperation

Gesturing hands and wet backs  
Fidgeting fingers fisted into pockets  
Disinterested looks and busy airs  
Hoping to lure to a few admiring stares

A warm smile to the unceasingly twisted  
necklace

Thudding pulse points, twitching limbs  
Bait for co-relations, confirmations and  
contradictions

The unfolding memories, thoughts and  
hallucinations

Reckless footsteps steadied by a hand's  
touch

Measured expressions disrupted by a sly  
curve

An aimless, lost soul wandered  
Found its other half laughing,  
surrendered

Chipper invitations, parting baubles  
Entered lovers, parted strangers  
An old friend met, coiffed hair let down  
In a corner, reverberated their joyous  
sound.

*-Bindiya Vaid*

## *Fame*

The rambling noises now so familiar,  
An air of survival hangs loosely,  
Over the roots that run deep,  
For the attention did I beg profusely,

But all these tremors terrify,  
So I shall never sleep,  
For the night is dark,  
And the woods run deep.

*-Abhishek Lamba*

## *They Ripped Her Belly*

*In memory of all those who died in the barbaric Gujarat riots of 2002.*

They ripped her belly, as she sat staring at them with anguished eyes.  
They discarded her baby because the tender Jasmine bud jarred their thick Marigold fields.

They ripped her belly, as she sat staring at them with horrified eyes.  
They penetrated into her further and further because they only regarded the bright crimson of their *tikkas*  
Not the screaming crimson from her vagina.

They ripped her belly, as she sat staring at them with pleading eyes.  
They sprinkled her with gasoline because she had to be shown her place in the blazing orange of the *yajna*.

They ripped her belly, as she sat staring at them with accusing eyes.  
They mocked her piercing jade trauma because the white house of Justice didn't recognise her suffering colour.

They had ripped her belly; she stared at them with blank dead eyes.  
They were being worshipped in saffron robes because her papery grey ashes had concealed their crime.

*-Payal Mohta*

## *Untitled*

The long dead whisper to one another  
Hissing secrets in shimmers  
Of the past, the forgotten, the unimportant  
To the shackled mortal that looks above  
But exchanged with a fervour every night  
Bathing those below with gentle light.

He who gazes shall listen  
But shall he understand?  
Few persist- read the tales of their ancestors  
The rest crumble to unimaginative order  
To think, to query is to stray from the herd  
Conform, and you die, delayed but joyless  
Wonder, and you live, each moment, each word.

This wisdom is ours but lost in translation  
Condemning us to the search for elation  
And so you run the wheels of time, you shall do so forever  
Come, let us comprehend; you and me together.

Are you listening hard enough?  
Do you look or do you see?  
The stars have your eyes but are you willing to believe?  
The dead are distant but their words are near  
They shine from afar but they envelop you here.

There is fire in the sky  
Look how bright it burns  
Infinitely shattered but together  
Quenched by the morn, yet sure in its return  
It burns away the dark, burns away your ignorance.

The flames are humble but great secrets they speak  
Of the present, the overlooked, the important  
To the unshackled mortal that sees above  
And beyond, to him who seeks  
The wisdom of the ages, the ways of the old  
The truths of the world are his to behold.

The stars remain suspended in the ignorance of the earth  
And so the dead whisper, yearning to be heard.

- *Aayush Asthana*

## *At Ease*

Breeze never felt so real.  
As I lay, eyes shut, virtual locks tickled  
my back  
Surreal.  
Been a long bitter battle, this disease  
But today my mind feels at ease.  
Day in and day out I stare at this wall  
Now nears my favourite season,  
Much too appropriate for my last  
chapter; Fall.

My window was only slightly open  
Breeze pushed dried leaves and flowers  
in.  
One leaf suddenly came alive  
Circled the room, then froze on my foot  
after the last dive.  
I squinted at the leaf  
The leaf stared back at me.  
A butterfly, I breathed  
It flapped in accordance with me.

I envied its freedom, that butterfly  
Who for some reason, I think,  
understood why.  
Our eyes locked; wonder. The butterfly  
came closer,  
I shut my eyes for a moment  
Imagined myself in a colourful garden  
This time, I am a butterfly  
Flying free and high.

I was suddenly brought back to reality  
My monitor started screaming loudly.  
A few nurses rushed in  
My mother clutched my hand but I felt  
nothing.  
I stared blankly into her eyes  
Thinking only of that butterfly.  
So I shut my eyes to sleep my longest  
sleep

Never to wake again.

But here I am, a butterfly  
Sitting on the hand of this girl I don't  
know  
Staring at the startling resemblance of  
what she is and what I was  
As she sat there staring at just a butterfly  
I felt her wanting to soar, and I  
understood why.

*-Shyamoli Chatterjee*

## *Glass Houses*

There's a big house on the end of this street  
The front half is made entirely of glass  
You can see the kitchen, giant staircase dining room  
And living room walls lined with pictures of the past.  
When you drive by you can see  
The family of five sitting happily  
Eating a grand meal  
And smiling, making history.  
Would you be able to tell  
That the youngest has an eating disorder?  
Or the father is having an affair?  
The oldest daughter will leave forever  
The middle son just couldn't care  
The mother seems delusional  
Playing along with the rest  
But she is the wisest of them all  
Forgiving all mistakes  
And working hardest to forget.  
This family has everything  
Shiny cars, the latest gadgets and a big house  
That's so open with nothing to hide  
But they're the most humble people you'll ever meet  
Because there's a different story inside.  
Why do people have glass houses?  
Maybe it's because you have never lied.  
It may even be the incurable pride  
Because they believe that it will be alright  
And if someone does throw a stone  
It'll bounce away harmlessly into the night.

- *Maanvi Jalota*

## *The Fall*

A hundred thousand above in the sky  
Descending like the menacing grapple of a giant wronged  
Roaring with the fury of bloodlust  
They blot out the sun  
They blot out the light

You see it, you fear it, you know it is done  
It has begun, it will be if it must  
The paralyzing wait of a steady, downward fall  
Each a fragment of destruction, constituting the prophetic all  
Eyes transfixed; terrified elation  
Relaxing surrender of anticipation  
The cloud of death approaching the curtain of life  
But this was to happen, it was told and signed  
Look at them come- beauty in motion  
The moving poetry of destruction to befall  
It magnifies, it spreads, it envelops  
And then it hits  
The final memory of beauty and terror made immortal  
The lingering moments of life linger forever  
Why fathom what you cannot know?  
They blot out the sun, they blot out the light  
Now they blot out the life  
The wreaking of such vengeance demands reason  
Lifetimes upon lifetimes spent pondering  
A foretelling shared by all  
A prophecy of introspection, of knowing pain  
And the pain of knowing  
The Inevitable  
Believe what you will, your faith is yours  
Think what you will, your death is yours  
Acceptance, for it is coming  
The End.

- *Aayush Asthana*

## PROSE

### *Ruby*

The people I see every day are just so unhappy. Even when they're laughing, I can hear their sadness, their soul-clenching agony. And boy, do I want to help them. Because I'm happy, see. I smile all the time, and you can only ever do that if you're happy. Pearly-white crocodile grins.

I'm sure there are other happy people out there, and I do know some. But my happiness is my own. Because nobody—none of those grief-stricken, miserable fools can understand what it's like when my mind is screaming—out of pure joy—and there's electricity in my arteries, and my consciousness bursts with the desire to be free, to run, run, run. That's how happy I feel. A heart-stopping cloudburst of euphoria that sends shockwaves into my pores, and when my fingers dig deep into my arms, it's to keep calm, because it would be so silly to start jumping with joy in a crowded room.

The Oscars haven't heard of me yet, but I'm a good actor. With my affliction—too much excitement, too much happiness—it takes a façade to keep me grounded. People would be a little overwhelmed if they found out how truly cheerful I am. Most people aren't like that; it scares them away. So I mask my happiness with a smile, a soft, faraway smile. It's a tiring expression, because it isn't my usual toothy, face-splitting grin. But people like that, so I like it too.

Like most happy people, I find it impossible to concentrate on the present. My mind is chaos! Like confetti bursting from a balloon, or an explosion blowing a building halfway to hell. But it's a good feeling, especially the thoughts that trigger such thunderstorms of joy from me, that it's almost painful.

I also have a placid side to me, because happiness has two faces, and I enjoy both thoroughly. There are times when I stare at the ceiling, soft blankets and cold air, sunlight streaming through broken glass windows, and I count my lucky stars—whatever that even means—because one person doesn't deserve so much joy.

It's funny, but even when I'm sad, I'm happy. It's looming above me, coated behind my sadness. I can't cry, see. I've tried, but I'm not very good at it. But that's because I'm so overwhelmingly cheerful all the time. It's like I don't even know how to be upset. I'm very fortunate.

People like to celebrate their happiness by going out drinking with their friends, but I don't like alcohol. So I prefer drawing butterflies on my arms. Although I don't draw butterflies, because making straight lines is easier. I use a special red ink pen. That calms my happiness down to something more bearable. When my mind is quiet, when I'm not thinking so much, there's a sort of melancholy that flits by, like the moon peeking in from behind a cloud. I'm so happy; I don't even know what sadness feels like. But this takes me as close as I can go.

Red ink, I do love that dye. I feel in red. It's a happy colour. Rubies, roses, strawberries. Red is for art, and I have vision. I like to paint myself red sometimes, and pretend I'm sad. It's a strange feeling, because I know I'm not. I'm not sad, like everyone else is. I'm happy. I'm just so happy.

So when I look at someone crying, I think, *lucky you*. Because I have lost the ability to cry, and instead, I laugh and laugh and laugh until I'm empty of sadness and my skin is dripping with paint, and my mind is calm, not *electricconfusedchaos*, and I can breathe. While the world looks black and white, all I'm feeling is blood red happiness.

-Damini Kane

### *Girl*

She lived Someplace Urban. Coloured in hues of yellow, grey, black and dismal sadness overlooked in lieu of hurry. She wanted to be a dancer, or a sculptress or a creative enterprise that had its inverse, commercially aesthetic appeal such that when out in fairy light bars set in Brooklyn brickstone, she might offhandedly let cascade a career of perfectly significant, self-gratifying obscurity that gave profound meaning and superiority to her life in contrast with the milieu of office goers, pantsuit owners. Childlike are the dreams of the ones who need to be loved but then, no one has grown up in a few centuries. To crystallize the appearance of this intelligence and endless creative drive she needs, naturally, to have the perfect wardrobe. The presence of such visible validity of said bohemian (post structural, post-postmodern, self-indulgently isolated) 21st century life runs far in Urban Someplace. Her clothes needed perfect curation, bought at the vaguest street corners in colours nature casts aside for being dull. Her knowledge of the arts and of literature need convince the mildly educated youngster, the susceptibly awed by said clothing, the post collegiate pseudo-cerebral, and the office goer's pants and owners. Finally a day or two could be set aside for the consumption of such famous creatures as Flaubert, Kafka, Camus, and, for the Maya of a wider soul, some waste landing Eliot with a splattering of obscure third-world metaphysical poets. In so referencing famous writers the lesser are afraid to read, in waving slowly, with grace from said writer's pedestal ethereal stature, She found her coffee-creased teeth widening alone. But crucially, was this not all alright? Whilst elementally convincing the world of her life's really real lie, she began to live it. As the circles widened, as the pseudo read enough to have no one see their pseudonym, as the news of her life spread in passing words to friends of friends and his girlfriend's friend with the blackwork tattoos, she became herself.

-Manvi Ranghar

## *Give Bob Painkillers*

Bob's left arm didn't look like a left arm. It looked like a branch wrenched off its parent tree with sauce in the spaces between the bark. In place of the hand that should have been on the head of the arm was a stump with a Panda Puppet from Toys 'R Us. The Panda is ruffled up and bloodied. It looks unwell.

Bob is at his Chemist's store. His arm is cleverly hidden behind the counter, out of the view of the Chemist, for the effect of surprise.

"Painkillers", says Bob. "Give me some", he says.

The Chemist says no.

Bob brings his arm up from behind the counter and waves it at the Chemist's face. The Panda tries to form the words for an angry greeting, but only makes the noise of an animal being slaughtered.

The Chemist brings out his shotgun and fingers its safety.

"I want painkillers." says Bob.

The Chemist says no.

"Give Bob the painkillers," screams the Panda. Bob's lips are moving.

The Chemist says no.

The Panda swears profusely and both leave the store. The Chemist puts down the shotgun and brings out his inhaler. He inhales deeply. He wipes the sweat off his brow. And he inhales.

Bob returns to the store in two-and-a-half hours. With him is a large machine. This machine is a combination of a chainsaw and a typewriter. It looks like a large pencil sharpener, except instead of a large sharpener blade there are several rotating saw sprockets. The body of the machine has a pretty green clover design. At the rear of the machine is a big red button. The button does not say *Do Not Press*.

Bob grabs the Chemist's left hand with his right and with surprising strength, drives it into the machine. The machine makes a spluttering noise and the Chemist makes the noise of an animal being slaughtered. Bob lets go of the Chemist's hand and steps back. He looks at the Chemist with an expression that says *I told you it was fun!*

The Chemist is horrified. He attempts to pick up his inhaler with the stump on the head of his arm that should have been a hand, but his stump refuses to co-operate. The Chemist falls on the floor, writhing.

Bob picks up 20 stacks of 500mg Propofol and exits the store. Before leaving, he pulls out a Tiger Puppet from Toys 'R Us out of his large trench coat pocket and places it on the counter.

*-Kalash Pandiya*

### *Untitled*

My counsellor always asked the right questions. I am quite certain because I've seen what it's like in the movies. All that was missing was a couch for me to lie on. That was one moment where my life played out like a movie. Sans the couch. Almost like a movie.

I don't remember what her name was. All I do remember is that she was quite pretty.

"So, your mother says you need to talk to someone. Is that why you're here?"

"No I'm here because my mother asked me to be."

"Are you angry at her for suggesting you see a psychologist?"

"Not anymore."

"And why is that?"

"Well, you're quite pretty and I'm quite superficial. I like looking at pretty women."

She giggles. It could just be my imagination but I sense nervousness in her giggle. I almost want to tell her to not blush. I also want to point out to her how easy that was.

"Well, thank you. You're very pretty too!"

"I'm sure you would have berated me for saying that had I been a boy named Shamsheer."

"Not necessarily. Why Shamsheer?"

I wanted to ask what she meant by not necessarily. Does that mean she makes exceptions for certain boys? Or was it just certain boys called Shamsheer? Would she tell me who? Did I know any of them? This just got a lot more interesting.

"That would be my name had I been a boy. I'm glad I have no brothers. It's a tough life for any kid named Shamsheer."

"I wouldn't know."

Maybe the name, Shamsheer isn't a turn on for her. What a pity.

"Let's get back to you, though. Your comment about you being superficial and enjoying looking at pretty women suggests a lot. Do you like girls? In a more than platonic way?"

"I like one in particular. I made her up. She follows my script."

"Tell me about her."

"She's incredibly pretty. She has mischievous eyes and long hair that cascades down her chest and forms little ringlets which I love. We go for long walks and read in bed."

"Go on. What else?"

"She asks a lot of questions. I usually have a tough time answering them. But then she sees me struggle with words and she says that it's okay. She smiles at me. It's a warm smile. Like the way my mother smiled at me when I got back home from school on my own for the first time. I hate her for that."

"And then?"

"And then I remember that hate is a passionate feeling so the fact that I could feel passionate hate for her, even if for a moment, means that I am capable of feeling that degree of passion. After which I promptly turn into a puddle of soup ready to serve myself to her."

"Why puddle of soup?"

"Puddle of soup because only soup could possibly be as hot as her."

"Have you had sexual fantasies about her?"

"I almost do but I don't want to."

"Why not?"

"Too meta. Besides it would be anti-climactic."

"Do you think about her often?"

"Oh, I hardly think about her at all. I don't want to wear out the novelty of her."

- *Zohra Malik*

## *Chasing The High*

There were several items on the clean table, amongst which lay a spoon, a syringe, a ball of cotton, and that wonderful white powder.

Several minutes later the needle was in my vein, pulling back blood that floated in the distilled water and the drug, which I then proceeded to push into my arm. A few seconds later, it hit me.

It was sheer ecstasy. A tingling spread through my body, as if I could feel it spreading. I was euphoric. My entire body relaxed, as if I was invincible and nothing could harm me. The best part, though? There was no pain. No matter what I thought of, no matter what I saw, I could feel no pain.

It was the high.

But that's only how it was at first. After a time, the pain started coming through. I carried around with me the memory of that perfection, that high and how I craved it. I wanted to be that invincible again, able to bask in bliss, but not have to do anything for it.

I stood up blearily and walked slowly to get my coat. On the way, I bumped into an open cupboard door and managed to spill a whole bunch of papers. I bent down and picked them up slowly, and it was only after a few seconds that I registered what they were.

They were pages from my novel (which I thought were quite good), chapters and chapters that told the story of a man who had escaped from prison through persistence and determination. I had never tried to get it published.

I remembered the way I used to dream about being a writer, about receiving adoration and love, about my book being so popular that it was made into a movie and I could see my name on the big screen. I had loved spending time dreaming about it.

But I couldn't think about it now. The slight pain in the back of my mind turned into a dull ache and I lethargically pushed the papers into the cupboard, put on my jacket and left the house.

I shuffled along down the street, only vaguely aware of where I was going. The world was a haze, a blurry kaleidoscope that I was quite content with. Clarity only showed you the obstacles; it kept making things harder to accomplish. It was a few minutes before I saw her.

She was walking holding hands with another man. She was an angelic beauty with flawless skin, raven-black hair and mahogany eyes. I had never had the courage to talk to her, so I didn't exactly know what she was like, but I'm sure she was kind and generous and sweet and everything you could want in a woman. I had had perfectly acceptable girlfriends, a few of whom were actually quite lovely, but none of them compared to her. None of them possibly could.

I looked away from her and the ugly troll she was with, whom she had probably just taken pity on. After she had crossed the street and looked up, I found that the dull ache had become a sharper pain. I couldn't cope with this pain. I needed my high.

I walked in the darkening evening towards my dealer. As I walked, I passed a man unlocking the door to a restaurant. He eyed me and said, "Hello there. How's it going?"

I stopped and looked at him. "Goin' pretty well, thanks." I mumbled and made to move on.

"Your mouth seems pretty dry. Would you like a glass of water?"

I licked my chapped lips, which was becoming a regular condition for me, and nodded. He went inside to fetch it. I looked at the name of the restaurant for the first time. It was one I had often passed, but never really noticed. The name was *La Douleur Exquise*.

My brain had unfortunately reacquired a small sense of awareness and curiosity by now and so I asked the man what the name meant.

"It's French, as you can imagine. It refers to the exquisite pain that comes with loving someone unattainable. It's quite an interesting story of why I chose this phrase. Would you like to hear it?" And without waiting for my reply, he continued. "There was this girl I loved. She was beautiful, magnificent. However, she was definitely not the kind who would fall for me. So I wallowed in that stew for a while, in that...ah, exquisite pain. But then I realised that focusing and revelling in my pain and my fantasy for perfection was the easy way out.

"I decided to work. The thing I knew how to do best was cook, and so I did. Every day I experimented with new recipes, secretly found out her favourite meals, and made them. I would often anonymously send it to her with little handmade cards inside. It was then; making lunches as well as I could for her that I developed the passion for cooking that I still have with me today. She eventually found out it was me, and we got talking. Today she's my wife.

"She wasn't everything I thought she would be. She had flaws. Keeping our relationship steady wasn't easy either. But getting there after all the hard work made it sweeter than anything I could have ever imagined in my dreams of perfection. And so I chose that phrase, to remind myself that whenever I dream of achieving the unattainable and that exquisite pain hits me again, I should use it as fuel to work towards achieving as much as I can; rather than being addicted to that pain by finding new avenues to be stuck in that illusion of perfection."

He smiled sadly at me as he finished, as if he knew. I handed him back his glass, vaguely registering the scars on his arm as I trudged on. His words didn't really hit me until a few blocks later where a strange, long-forgotten voice in my head said, "Turn back."

Then the thought of that perfect high entered my head once more and it drove me until I reached my dealer. He nodded at me and asked, "Same as last time?"

I hesitated, and then said, “More of the same. And something stronger.”

He nodded and handed it to me as I paid him hastily, practically salivating at the thought of shooting up. I hurried home.

Later that night, I overdosed. But I died very close to my perfect high, so it’s alright.

### *Living Down Low*

I stood in front of the grave of my twin brother, flowers in hand. They had just buried his body and placed the headstone. No one else had come to mourn him. He was as alone in death as he had been in life. I shook my head. I had cautioned him against the kind of lifestyle he had been leading. The drugs *did* get to him in the end, like I had said they would. I knew it was wrong to feel a certain reassurance that I had been right, but I felt that way all the same.

I shuddered at the thought of overdosing and decided to go to a meeting just to be safe. I placed the flowers on my brother’s grave and walked quickly to a Narcotics Anonymous meeting around the corner. I sat at the back and listening intently to the stories told by others.

I had never used, of course. That would be terribly unsafe. No, I just came to these meetings whenever I found myself thinking of drugs or whenever I met my brother, just to make sure that I wasn’t even remotely tempted to partake. I checked the list of meetings in my area weekly.

I left the meeting feeling a little more secure in my sobriety. I headed home to pick up some papers for work. My boss had offered me a day off when he had heard of my brother’s death, but I had decided that it wasn’t worth the risk of missing some important memo or work directive or rule that might result in me getting in trouble later on.

My wife was waiting for me at home. She asked me how I was and I said I was fine. I had told my wife that she didn’t need to come, especially since she had not interacted much with my brother during his lifetime (which was intentional on my part, I did not want her exposed to him and form any idea that I was capable of the kind of debauchery that was so prevalent in the man who was essentially supposed to be my other half).

My wife was a homely, if plain, woman. She had been a long-time acquaintance of mine who had seemed interested in me, so I had finally married her when I had decided it was time to settle down. She had a part-time job that contributed to the family income, and my plan was that within a few years we would have a child.

While I was gathering up the papers from my neatly organised cupboard, I caught sight of my book. I picked it up and allowed myself a small smile. After deciding not to risk getting rejected by publishers, I had self-published this small story about an ordinary man

who gets mistaken for a spy, but manages to escape in the end when things get too dangerous. I had given it only to a few friends, who didn't generally read, but had claimed to have read this and liked it.

I quickly put it down before my wife came in, lest she think I was being proud. I took my lunch from her, kissed her perfunctorily on the cheek and left for work.

I caught the train and finally found an empty compartment. A few minutes later, a woman walked into the compartment. She was beautiful, with unblemished skin, dark hair and reddish-brown eyes. I looked away because I didn't want to be seen as some sort of creep staring at her, and because I knew her.

After a little while, she asked, "Don't I know you?"

I somewhat reluctantly turned back. I nodded, introduced myself and told her that I had seen her around working in the same firm as me, albeit in a different department.

"That's right," she said, her eyes lighting up. "Hey, weren't you supposed to transfer to my department?"

I nodded. "I was; there was supposed to be more 'opportunity'. But, well, I didn't want to risk all the progress I had already made and my plan for that."

"Your plan?" she asked, cocking her head to one side. "What's that?"

"Well, I'm going to get a promotion in two years, a child in three, and two more promotions till I retire and live off my pension. I have it all planned out."

"I...see," She said, looking half-amused, half-concerned. "How can you be sure that life will take the course you want it to?"

"I take precautions. I live in reality. I manage myself so that I'm prepared in every eventuality." I saw her sceptical look so I raised my somewhat bulky briefcase and opened it. I pointed out the items inside as I listed them. "In here I have my papers, systematically organised, pepper spray, scissors, glue, Post-its, spare pens, notepads, a popular magazine to read, a day planner and miscellaneous other items. So, as you can see, I am somewhat more prepared than others."

She was looking at me, amazed. "Do you have a list in there that tells you all the items that in there?"

I nodded and pointed to the list taped to the briefcase. She shook her head, probably marvelling at me. I had a vague fear that she would feel like I was showing off too much and so stayed in anxious silence for a few minutes before she asked, "Is this your usual time to go to work? I'm sure I would have seen you on the train before."

I shook my head and said that I had just come from my brother's memorial service.

“Oh, I’m so sorry to hear that! You must be devastated,” she exclaimed, putting her hand on my shoulder and letting it linger there.

“We weren’t that close,” I muttered, not wanting to get into the reason for his death.

“You must probably be going to work to avoid being all alone at home today,” she continued, as if she hadn’t heard me. “Why don’t you have lunch with me? There’s a small cafe not too far from work near that French restaurant.”

I knew what the place she was talking about, “Lah Dollar something”. I didn’t say the name incorrectly out loud, of course. I gestured towards my lunch. “I always have lunch by myself. It’s nutritional and homemade. I try to avoid unhealthy junk food.”

“So you never go out at all?”

“Well, of course I do. I go out with my wife and some friends of ours once a week. I have two beers; we sometimes watch the latest movie that everyone recommends and I allow myself to indulge in one or two items of unhealthy food then.”

It was at this moment that she looked at me in a way that I hadn’t really seen before. It was a look of pity, yet one with a lot of genuine caring and warmth. “Look, I understand that you have your own way of doing things. But life doesn’t have to be schedules and plans and control. It’s so much more than that. Break your routine, come have lunch with me today and I’ll show you.”

I looked at her and saw...a different possibility. I saw a chance at a different kind of friendship that would grow deeper, bloom into love, maybe an affair, me leaving my wife, maybe changing departments, rising up. Anything was possible in that moment.

But I was not my twin. I had clarity. I saw the obstacles in all those possibilities, all the endless ways things could go wrong.

I just muttered that I would think about it and then we stayed silent till we reached our stop and then silent till we reached work.

Time dragged on wearily, as it always did for me. And then it was lunch break. I looked at my bag for a few moments. Then I got up, grabbed it and my briefcase, and walked unhesitatingly past the wastebasket and down to the park nearby where I usually sat to eat.

I sat in a secluded corner of the park where I always sat; eating with my co-workers might involve me in office gossip which I would rather steer clear of. A few minutes later everything was neatly unwrapped on the table there and I had started eating. Halfway through the meal, a piece of food was wedged in my throat. In a few moments I was coughing and thumping on the table. My calm shattered, I tried to grab wildly for the bottle of water which I knocked over. My hands were then flailing around, knocking over my briefcase, which spilled its contents onto the table and the grass.

My head was soon on the table, coughing, sputtering with wide eyes and tongue lolling out of my mouth. My day planner lay open in front of me. I didn't see dying as part of my schedule for the day. I had loved reality, and this was its final joke on me.

I suddenly had a vision of my funeral. There *were* people there, but there was no one there I really *knew*, because nobody there really knew me. I realised that I was going to be as alone in death as my brother was.

And that led me to my final thought before I died, a question:  
Who had lived and died more ignobly: Me or my twin?

*-Varun Gwalani*

### ***Sinking Beliefs***

In that moment, I was God.

I walked on oceans that reflected the sky. Granted wishes with a grace that could not be measured, and in this ecstasy built out of laughter and confidence I walked out so far at sea that I could no longer see the shore. I could no longer see the reason of my existence, just the supreme belief that I was God.

But when the storm blew in, all those boats that could have once saved me from myself were long gone for safer harbors. I was no God.

I was a mere shell of a human being, trapped in a storm in the middle of the raging sea. Then they came, slowing sinking their teeth into the soles of my feet, ripping my foundation to shreds, taking pieces that I had never meant to give, taking more than what I owed them. Yet they were not satisfied and no matter how loudly I shouted at them, trying vainly to make them realize that the choices were mine, that I was salvation, they could not hear, they could not understand that I was God.

All they knew was how to gnaw at the pieces of flesh that stubbornly clung to my bones. Months passed as I stood still waiting for the agony to end, but the realization of pain as an eternal existence seeped into my organs. Memory faded; eyes dimmed till I could no longer see the shore. And then what was left of my carcass sank slowly to the bottom of the sea and I faded out of existence just like every other God whose usefulness had run dry.

*-Rhea Bajaj*

## *The Man Who Went To Marine Drive*

14<sup>th</sup> December, 2037

As strong and silent winds hit Delhi on one of its typical wintry nights, the scarcely filled 727 Green line bus dropped Gulfam Sahib off near the Subroto Park Air Force Station. He tidied himself, wiping off the slimy salt on the back of his neck as he approached the guard room. His identity card was given an approving nod and a salute from the Air Force policeman on duty, who further offered to escort him, if need be. Gulfam Sahib kindly refused and strolled along Arjan Path, the main street alongside the once monumental Air Force Station. He jumped over the small gates of the Air Force Golden Jubilee School, and entered the lobby as the doors, triggered by his touch, were automatically unlocked. Running his fingertips over a specific pattern of the floor, he found the entrance to a tunnel, leading himself in to what lay beyond.

“Oh Gulfi! I thought you would never come. Oh God! You will never know the troubles I've seen!” Cried Captain Bhaskaran, his baggy checkered sweater, accentuating his spindly frame.

“Troubles haven't been absent on my end either, Sabby”, replied Gulfam Sahib, a hint of frustration apparent in his voice.

“Really? Well, what kept you away so long?”

“I had to attend to my new secretary ... she had some terribly difficult questions to ask.”

“You don't think she'll know what you're up to, do you?” A note of anxiety ran through Bhaskaran's voice.

“Not anymore, she won't.” Gulfam Sahib sighed.

He looked around and realized that the place had undergone a drastic change. No water dripped, and no walls stank; instead there was a warm presence of machines and kashmiri carpets, all of which gave him a sense of security and warmth.

“What had happened to the last one?” Bhaskaran asked in a casual tone.

“Disappeared; like most youths today do. They found her a few days later in the salt dumps of Pitampura. Don't know where this one will turn up”, remarked Gulfam Sahib, running his hands over the slimy salt on his neck and smiling sinisterly.

“Tragic. Very tragic.” Bhaskaran shook his head, “but absolutely necessary I believe...” “Blood will flow, where it needs to be shed.” Gulfam sounded adamant. “Now, I believe we have readied our travel arrangements?”

“We sure have. Our man in the land will be waiting for you.” Bhaskaran assured. Gulfam nodded. “Sounds good.”

Leading Gulfam into a dark chamber, Bhaskaran bid his friend goodbye.

“What is the first thing you want to do, when you come back?”

“Drive down to that South - Ex pub that I love, and drink like a man.”

Smiling heartily and shaking his firm hand, Bhaskaran left Gulfam, who then closed his eyes, waiting for the inevitable. Surely, a few seconds later, he felt the familiar red light wash over himself and all his senses began to dull.

A vision of familiar buildings met him as he felt the concrete of marine tetrapods hit his body. He had been here before, yes, but it had been a very different time then. The sea sprayed indiscriminately around him as he weakly climbed over and ended up on Bombay's famous tourist spot, Marine Drive. Dripping slightly, he ignored baffled onlookers, taking a cab to Princess Street nearby.

“Are you the owner - Mr. Rajan?” inquired Gulfam, as he entered a dingy little shop called Crystal Mechanics.

“Oh yes, I've been expecting you!” answered the short, middle aged chap behind the counter, standing up and shaking his visitor's hand enthusiastically.

“I'm Gulfam Pathan, Senior Director for the Prevention of Crimes Against the Government, Research And Analysis Wing, Delhi. Unofficially however, I'm also a part of RAW's classified Z division, as I am sure you are aware.”

“I am aware sir. Welcome to 1954.” Cried the portly man with enthusiasm.

“Thank you. Now, am I to understand that you have been briefed about division Z? ” Gulfam asked with professional interest.

“Yes sir!”

“Then can you tell me what division Z is, Mr Rajan?” Gulfam went on, mysteriously.

“It is the revolution sir”, whispered Mr Rajan. “The revolution of the future.”

“Quite right Mr Rajan.” Gulfam Sahib beamed, “So, let us begin.”

*-Monal Thaar*

## *An Interview with Myself*

Me: What would you like to achieve by the end of this?

Priyanka Banerjee: I'm not really sure. I guess I would like people to know me better. Preferably, know themselves better.

Me: Aren't you being a little presumptuous about your own profundity...

Priyanka Banerjee: No! Gosh, no. I don't mean to say that I will help them understand themselves better. Please don't put words in my mouth.

Me: I'm afraid that's inevitable. I will have to put words in your mouth in order to have words in mine.

Priyanka Banerjee: Alright, alright, could you please be a little more understanding? I'm fumbling, I'm nervous. I've never had such a public interview. Or, such a private one, for that matter.

Me: Shall we begin?

Priyanka Banerjee: Yes.

Me: Why is your name Priyanka? You can't help your surname I guess, but why Priyanka?

Priyanka Banerjee: I couldn't help my first name either. Priyanka means beloved. Mom liked it, I guess.

Me: Are you not sure?

Priyanka Banerjee: About what?

Me: You say "I guess" a lot. It's quite unnecessary, I think. Do you think it makes you disconnected from that decision? Like somehow by saying "I guess" you have escaped from the consequence of that name?

Priyanka Banerjee: Calm down. "I guess" didn't mean anything.

Me: Then why say it?

Priyanka Banerjee: It's just the way I speak! It's the way everyone speaks! You are impossible. I have never had a more taxing conversation in my life.

Me: I don't like Priyanka, so I'm going to call you Ashutosh from now on. Will you accept this new name?

Priyanka Banerjee: I gues- No, no, I mean yes! Yes! I can be Ashutosh. Sure. I can still *be* Priyanka though, right? I am Priyanka with the name Ashutosh. Right?

Me: I didn't say anything about changing who you are. Why did you bring it up? Wait. I can see now that our familiarity has completely ruined the formality of these proceedings. Interviewers are supposed to be the objective type. So, Ashutosh, is there anything you hate?

Ashutosh Banerjee: Yes- Wait. I feel like you are addressing someone else. I don't know how to *be* Ashutosh. I don't know what he would say. I don't know what he hates. Could we switch back to Priyanka? Interviewers are also supposed to be half-decent to their interviewees, you know.

Me: Why did you say "I guess" then? If being called Priyanka matters so much, to the extent that it obstructs your ability to answer a simple question, why say, "I guess"? Why treat it with such disrespect?

Ashutosh Banerjee: You are *crazy!* Why in the world are you still raving about that? I really, genuinely, honestly, actually, truly, *guessed* that my mother liked the name, which is probably, possibly, maybe, why she called me Priyanka. No ulterior motive, no hidden insecurity, no complexity. Stop trying to teach me who I am. Also, I feel suffocated, could we please call me Priyanka again?

Me: Now only because I gave you the opportunity to perform that dramatic monologue, a bunch of hare-brained chaps will presume you have an argument. You don't. You only have justifications. Everything you do is a justification. You are so busy waiting to respond that you'll never understand. You want Priyanka? Take her back. Do what you want with her. So, is there anything you hate, Miss Priyanka?

Priyanka Banerjee: I don't know.

Me: Don't you dare sulk with me.

Priyanka Banerjee: I hate specific details. I hate the right answer. I hate the person that knows the right answer. I could kill that person and his answer with my bare hands. You know the tiny, infinitesimal, labyrinthine space? The space between intelligence and wisdom? The space between synonyms? The space between maybe and yes? Better and best? That space that cannot be defined but we all recognize? The space between us right now. I love that space.

Me: I asked you what you hate—

Priyanka Banerjee: I hate you and what you represent. You are the right answer. But, you are so, so wrong. And most of all, I hate that you exist with all your righteousness, so close to me. Is that a satisfactory response? Are you happy now that we are waging war against each other? Can't you let a single day go by without it?

Me: I guess.

- *Priyanka Banerjee*

*Inspired by Tennessee Williams' "An Interview with Myself".*

## ***Battle of the Trident***

*This is a Game of Thrones fanfiction written in the spirit of the Popular Culture Literature Festival this year.*

The velvet strumming of Rhaegar's harp broke the silence. His fingers danced over his coveted instrument, bringing to life a song both melodious and mournful. Unopposed, the music seeped into every corner of the tent. The debate became a fading concern as Rhaegar's song slowly charmed the assembled lords and knights into silence.

The Prince stared at the royal fire, immersed in musical contemplation. His fingers moved of their own accord, a subconscious extension of his thought.

Slowly, the pace dropped. The notes faded away. The song was at an end.

Yet, he did not speak.

His bannermen exchanged furtive looks. The renewed silence was disquieting.

Finally, Barristan Selmy assumed the mantle of garnering a response. "Your Grace," the white knight ventured, "The Rebel requires a response."

Instantly, the dispute was resurrected.

"What response?" Mayes Hightower protested. "There is no consideration to be made!"

"None, indeed!" Petyr Dayne agreed. "Robert Baratheon dares challenge The Dragon Prince to single combat? What gives him the right to ask such a privilege?"

"This must be done!" protested Symon Darry. "His Grace has a chance to end this right here! No more of our soldiers need die."

"And what if the Rebel should prevail through some treachery?"

"You dare entertain such a concern, my lord?"

"It would be folly not to."

"My lords," the Prince broke in suddenly.

The squabbling instantly came to an end. His subjects leaned forward to hear the first words he had spoken since the arrival of the messenger.

"I have made my decision," announced Rhaegar Targaryen. "I shall meet Baratheon's challenge. And, I shall kill him."

His sudden proclamation took his subjects by surprise. Cheers and objections were voiced in equal measure.

Rhaegar stood up and put aside his harp. “Thank you for your counsel, my lords and sers. I have considered your words and I have made up my mind. I give you leave to go.”

The royal authority could not be questioned. Between bows, the council dispersed.

“Jon, fetch my armour. Pip, ready my horse for battle,” Rhaegar directed his squires.

Barristan Selmy remained.

The white knight tried to gather his thoughts in an attempt to dissuade the Prince. He stood mutely as two of the royal squires proceeded to dress up Rhaegar for war.

“Your Grace, have you thought this through?” Selmy said at last. He was never one for words. Communication with arms had always been easier for him.

“Of course, Ser Barristan,” was the soft reply.

“Is this the best course of action, my prince? If... If you shall fail, our cause is doomed.”

Rhaegar adjusted his magnificent breastplate. “I shall not fail.”

“Robert Baratheon has the reputation of being a fearsome warrior, Your Grace.”

The Prince regarded him with a controlled expression. “As do I. I shall return victorious, ser. Rejoice the fall of the Rebel.”

Armoured in his iconic gear with helm in hand, he strode out of the royal tent, his long white hair streaming behind him.

Barristan cursed his skills as a wordsmith. *Damn it, Rhaegar. This is an unnecessary wager. We have all stood by your love for Lyanna. We have all died for it. And now you may too? I will not be able to live with myself.*

He hurried out of the tent and caught the prince mounting his war-horse.

Rhaegar's lilac eyes smiled reassurance at the knight through his helm. Leaving behind unspoken words, the Prince galloped off to meet his challenger.

He approached the crossing of the Green Fork. The fighting had ceased. His soldiers stood to either side of his passage, forming a crude guard of honour. Somewhere, someone had started beating a drum. The battle had come to a standstill to allow this engagement.

The rebel troops stood motionless at the opposite side of the river's crossing. At their head was a hulking figure, mounted on a destrier. He was glimmering in full body armour and wielded a fearsome warhammer. Robert Baratheon.

On seeing the Prince approach, Robert Baratheon nudged his mount forward and yelled in a booming voice. "I, Robert of House Baratheon, do challenge you, Rhaegar Targaryen to single combat! We shall fight to the death!"

Somewhere, another drum started beating. The tension in the air grew more palpable as the gathered warriors anticipated a response.

Rhaegar regarded his opponent for a minute. His foe had decided to wield his famous hammer and an oaken shield for the duel. He had himself opted for his castle-forged sword and trusty shield. Rhaegar glanced at the antlered helm on Robert's head and at his shield bearing the Baratheon sigil- a black stag on a yellow background. His mount, too, was wearing the Baratheon colors. It made for an impressive sight. Robert radiated might as a warrior.

"I accept your challenge," the Dragon Prince announced loudly and clearly.

On either side of the crossing, trumpets were blown. The battle for Lyanna Stark commenced. With a savage war cry, Robert Baratheon charged. Rhaegar Targaryen galloped to meet him.

They met in the middle of the crossing. With another exclamation, the Rebel swung his warhammer. Rhaegar raised his shield to block a blow which otherwise would have caved his head in. His whole arm trembled from the impact of the ferocious blow. For a fleeting second, the Prince of Dragonstone was apprehensive.

He answered immediately with an upward slash. His foe dodged the attack.

"Where is she?" Robert Baratheon growled venomously.

Rhaegar made no response.

"Where. Have. You. Kept. HER?!" The Rebel roared in between blows.

The Prince quietly deflected the attacks and remained intensely focused on the incoming assault by Robert's warhammer.

*His strength was no exaggeration.* Rhaegar cursed.

"You don't need to know," he replied coldly, in the hope of distracting the anger-charged rebel.

Robert's unforgiving hammer landed on the head of his enemy's horse. The powerful hit crushed the animal's skull despite the armour. Rhaegar's mount collapsed beneath him. Cursing, he got off the dead horse and landed in the river crossing. Although the water was only ankle deep, the restricted motion could prove fatal against a mounted foe.

“Let it not be said that the Dragon Prince died without a fight,” spat Robert Baratheon vehemently. Much to Rhaegar's surprise, his enemy dismounted.

He seized the opportunity and lunged forward. His thrust was batted aside. Roaring, he stabbed yet again, looking for an opening. Denied. He tried once more, to no avail.

Again and again.

The battle had become a flurry of sword and hammer. The combatants danced to a deadly tune, each looking for blood. Amidst the bloodthirsty grunts and shouts, the stream flowed serenely, unaffected by the chaotic swirl that was this momentous battle.

“Why? Why did you take her?” hissed Robert Baratheon, his black eyes smouldering with rage.

“Because I love her,” answered Rhaegar Targaryen, his own exotic eyes clad in steely resolve. “And because she loves me.”

“LIAR!” The blows thundered like his voice. In his rage, the Rebel finally penetrated the Prince's defence and landed his weapon on Rhaegar's knee.

With a cry of pain, the Prince buckled to one leg. The Dragon's blood seeped out through his damaged armour and started colouring the stream an eerie shade.

His wound fuelled his anger- the next strike was fast and true. A deep gash appeared on the side of Robert's abdomen.

Wincing with pain, the Dragon Prince pushed himself upright. His black and red armour shimmered in the light, giving him an otherworldly look. A three headed dragon, the sigil of his house, wrought entirely out of rubies adorned his breastplate. The tall, handsome warrior launched an aggressive attack. With the speed and majesty of a dragon, his heritage, he dispatched blows with his longsword. After his focus had waned, Robert was left injured in several places and bleeding profusely.

“This is how it has to be,” Rhaegar muttered softly.

Robert Baratheon lurched up suddenly at these words. Breathing heavily, he advanced towards his enemy slowly, contemptuously.

“This is how it has to be?” he repeated disgustedly. “You steal my betrothed... nay, my beloved. You spirit her away. And you dare... you dare...!”

The Baratheon warhammer had transformed into an unstoppable entity. Engulfed in wordless fury, the Lord of Storm's End rained blows upon the Prince of Dragonstone. A particularly vicious strike snapped Rhaegar's sword cleanly in two. Fighting a sense of doom, he blocked further hits by grasping his shield with both his hands.

*He has to tire. He must be reaching exhaustion now.*

Robert roared and pressed on. "LYANNA!"

Boom. Boom. Boom. The sounds of hammer on shield reverberated all around.

*He can't possibly go on much longer.*

Rhaegar's shield was starting to fall apart. It was too battered to withstand the Baratheon fury anymore. Chunks of it were flying around with every hit.

Robert's eyes were a swirling pit of hate and fury. But Rhaegar saw something else too. He saw fear.

*He does not fear for himself. He fears for Lyanna.*

This realization dawned upon the Dragon Prince. But it was too late. The shield he was clutching was now a useless scrap of wood.

The next swing of the hammer caught Rhaegar Targaryen square in the chest.

A splatter of red caught the light, blood and rubies alike in the air. The dismembered ruby dragon glittered in the sun before diving into the water. Rhaegar was thrown back with brute force. His breastplate crushed, he struggled to breathe. With herculean effort, he picked himself up. This was not agreeable to Robert Baratheon.

The next blow of the warhammer cleanly knocked off all remaining rubies from the Targaryen breastplate. Its owner collapsed- this time for good. Rhaegar's chest had caved in. His lungs were punctured. He was suffocating slowly.

The Lord of Storm's End stood above him, looking down in condemnation. Rhaegar's life slowly ebbed away. On the outskirts of mortality, he noticed Robert raise his hammer once again.

*I'm sorry that you'll never understand. All I did was for love.*

Barely conscious, the Prince waited for the last words he would ever hear.

Robert Baratheon brought down the hammer.

*-Aayush Asthana*

## *Of Love and Beloveds*

Gifted with acute sensitivity and exceptional articulation, poets give voice to the pain and sufferings of mankind in general. Yet, there are some poets who consciously and deliberately choose to be the spokespersons of the experiences of their nation. Pablo Neruda and Faiz Ahmad Faiz are two such poets who gave voice to, and immortalized the trauma and anguish that the people of their respective countries suffered from.

Pablo Neruda, the famous Chilean poet, is one of the most widely translated poets in the English language. A recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature, the themes of his poetry include erotic love, epic poetry, and even mundane day- to-day events. He came into the limelight for his explicit and descriptive surrealistic poetry and was the first one to receive public acceptance for it. He was sent as a diplomat to Spain during the Spanish Civil War. The death of another poet, Federico Garcia Lorca, who was a friend, greatly affected Neruda and he eventually joined the Republican Movement. Hereafter, there was an abrupt shift in his poetry and he started writing for a greater cause. He wanted a larger number of people to read his poetry and get influenced by it and his style of writing became a lot simpler and easier to relate to. He publicly denounced his earlier poetry and declared himself an anarchist, who solely wanted to write revolutionary poetry. Just like him, Faiz Ahmad Faiz was another poet who got immense respect and recognition for his writings. A hard core Marxist, he was born in the then undivided India, now Pakistan and is credited with writing poetry in Urdu as well as in English. Because of his revolutionary ideals, he was accused of the Rawalpindi conspiracy case and jailed for four years. His experiences in prison are included in his *Naqsh-e-faryadi*, *Dast-e-saba* and *Zindan Nama*. Faiz received the Lenin Peace Prize in 1962. Faiz's poetry mainly concentrates on romantic love at first but as he starts to grow more and more politically aware, his poetry focuses on the issues that concern society at large. His poetry is a mixture of both tradition and experiment.

It is fascinating to see that cultural and spatial boundaries don't constrain human imagination. Although Faiz and Neruda belonged to entirely different cultures and lived in different social environments, their experiences and writing have a striking resemblance. They are considered to be masters, skillful at artistically expressing their opinions and thoughts. Both of them actively participated in the struggle for freedom and through their writings, encouraged other people to do the same. This is evident in one of Faiz's most famous poems called "*Bol Ke lab azaad hai tere*" (speak up): "*Bol ye thoda waqt bohat hai/jism o zaban kee maut se pehle/bol ke sach zinda hai ab tak*" Advising his fellowmen to speak up against the atrocities while they still can, this couplet is one of Faiz's best. He wants people to revolt before their bodies and tongues give way and while they are still capable of expression and action. Herein lies the paradox. He is saying that the little time they have is enough. Both Faiz and Neruda, encourage their fellow men not to remain mute spectators but to break the chains of injustice with the fire of passion. Both of them have sympathy for the oppressed and the downtrodden. Their poetry is a symbol of hope and commitment. They wanted to release their fellowmen from tyranny and subjugation and wanted them to stand for their rights and fight.

Another aspect we notice in the works of both these poets is that even though their poems are burdened with strong revolutionary ideas, they still retain their poetic beauty. Both of them were imprisoned for the rebellious nature of their works and lived in exile for many years. Faiz's poetry written during his time in exile is considered to be his best. Both poets used poetry as a means of resistance against the oppression of their tyrannical masters. Their early poetry also has a resemblance - it is very descriptive and focuses on the physical aspects of the beloved. Neruda writes

*"I crave your mouth, your voice, your hair.  
Silent and starving, I prowl through the streets.  
Bread does not nourish me, dawn disrupts me, all day  
I hunt for the liquid measure of your steps."*

Similarly Faiz writes, "*Dasht-e-tanhai mai aye jaanejahan/ larza hai teri awaaz ke saaye, tere hontho ke sarab*".

Both of them emphasize the beauty of their beloved and how the lips and eyes of the beloved intoxicate and consume them.

Another striking similarity that draws our attention to the poems of both these poets is how the definition of the "beloved" changes course during their careers. In one of Faiz's verses he writes,

*Tum aye ho nashab e intezaar guzri hai/ talaash mein hai sahar, baar baar guzri hai*

*(Neither have you come nor has ended the long night of wait/ even the breeze has whisked about, time and again, seeking you).*

The "tum"(you) in the couplet is very ambiguous- it could either be a reference to the poet's beloved or it could be a metaphor for the other thing that he longs for – freedom. Most of Faiz's poems have this ambiguity where it is difficult for the reader to identify the object of his longing and desire. In other poems, he clearly states that he no more cares for his beloved and that his concern is solely fighting against oppression. The desire for freedom replaces the beloved. In "*Mujse Pehli see mohabbat*" he writes,

*"Aur bhi gham hai zamane mein mohabbat ke siva*

*Raahatien aur bhi hain vasl kee rahat ke siva*

and

*"laut jaati hai udhar ko bhi nazar kya kijiye*

*Ab bhi dilkash hai tera husn magar kya kijiye"*

He tells his beloved that the gory blood stained streets and the dead bodies cause him to look away from her and fight for them. He says that there are other sorrows in the world as opposed to love and other joys than meeting with the beloved. He is drawn in by her beauty, but to him the pain of the people is more alluring. He is helpless but still chooses

the latter since for him there are other things worthy of attention. One can clearly see the journey of Faiz's poetic maturity from where he gives up the notion of romantic love and moves towards wanting to relieve the destitute and the oppressed of their pain. He gives up his personal happiness for a greater good.

One of his couplets: "*tu agar meri bhi ho jaye/ duniya ke gham toh yoon hi rahengay*". A similar sentiment is expressed by Neruda. In one of his celebrated poems, "*I Am Explaining a Few Things*" he says,

*"And you'll ask: why doesn't his poetry  
speak of dreams and leaves  
and the great volcanoes of his native land?  
Come and see the blood in the streets.  
Come and see  
The blood in the streets.  
Come and see the blood  
In the streets! -*

Here, Neruda emphasizes that he is unable to write about the beauty of his own native country, Chile. He is rendered helpless and is tormented by the brutalities of that he witnesses during the Spanish Civil War; that the war is all that he can write about. The beautiful houses and flowers do not inspire him anymore. All he can think about is the cruelties suffered by the people of Spain and how their blood is flowing on the streets.

Both Faiz and Neruda had immense love for their country and were extremely patriotic. Faiz writes "*Nisaar main teri galiyon ke ai watan*" while Neruda says, "*Because I love my country, I claim you, essential brother.*" The intensity of the love they felt for their countries can be easily seen in all these poems. In one of Faiz's poems called "*Do Ishq*'(Two Loves), he writes, "*Chaha hai isi rang mein laila-e-watan ko/ tadapa hai isi taur se dil iski lagan mein*"(Just so have I craved for my other laila, my land/so has my heart fluttered with the same longing).

It is a little known fact that both the poets were intimate friends. Also, it is interesting to note that Faiz had read translations of Neruda and was very inspired by his thoughts and ideals. In his tribute to Neruda, Faiz called him "a great voice of our time" and a "true representative of the masses." He felt that Neruda's message was significant not just to his people, but it held meaning for all those people across the world who were subjugated or unjustly treated. Edward W, one of the greatest intellectuals and theorists said, "In a world so long might is right, the powerful in the global politics want the perpetuation of their control through handpicked cronies and lackeys in different countries, we will need poets like Faiz and Neruda to expose them and give us courage to fight against them."

Truly, it is poets like these who voice the collective aspirations of the people and rouse sentiments of revolution in them. They inspire people to fight against the injustices meted out to them. Faiz and Neruda's writings are relevant to this day. They are cherished as symbols of courage and resilience and their legacy is eternal and everlasting.

-By *Qurat ul ain*

## *Movie Review: The Lives of Others*

“The Lives of Others” also known as *Das Leben Der Anderen* is a 2006 German drama film directed by Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck. The film is noted for its depiction of the ruthlessness of the German Secret Police, colloquially known as “The Stasi”. Set in 1984 East Germany, it marks the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent end of the socialist state.

The film is shot from the perspective of Captain Gerd Weisler (Muehe), a staunch, driven official, devoted to his cause and notorious for successfully interrogating prisoners. A task that he conducts with the same tenacity as that of a bloodhound pursuing its prey.

Initially what appears to be a story heavily laden with propaganda eventually spins into a tale laced with tension, deceit and desperation.

The plot opens with Weisler and his superior, Anton Grubitz (Ulrich Tukur) going to the theater to watch a play written by Georg Dreyman (Sebastian Koch), a person of interest considering his past education in the West but who is still loyal to his own state and appears to invest a lot more belief in socialist Germany than Weisler or Anton themselves.

Driven by suspicion due to the lack of a subversive or rebellious response from the young playwright, Weisler resolves to have his home closely monitored, install hidden cameras, microphones and so on. A strategy that his boss Minister Bruno Hempf (Thomas Thienne) zealously supports but not for the same reasons as those of our idealistic protagonist.

In the course of spying on Georg and his girlfriend Christa-Marie Seiland (Martina Gedeck), Weisler discovers the Minister’s real objective behind the investigation and that is to eliminate Georg so he can have the beautiful Christa all to himself. After finding no inconsistencies with Georg’s claim of loyalty to the Party and the state, Weisler is pressurized into digging deeper in order to find something plausible and controversial that could be pinned onto him.

Christa-Marie Seiland is a beautiful and talented actress but lacks volition and is haunted by her own ghosts of self-inadequacy as a result of which she submits to the Minister who uses these weaknesses as pressure points and forces himself onto her. Georg, who finds out about the brief affair tries to convince Christa of her talent and begs her to not go back to him, stating that she doesn’t need him or his influence. However, Christa argues that all artists are unable to unleash their full potential in an environment where a network of influential men like the Minister are in power. She is obligated to adhere to a system and be dependent on the gatekeepers of that system for the sake of her career.

After this stirring speech, Weisler is left contemplating the purpose of the Stasi. Their motto goes, “We are the sword and shield of the party” but recent events have led him to question whether they defend the party for its influential members or for the values that it stands for.

These thoughts and questions are constantly at the forefront of his mind especially since he has no life of his own and has internalized that of Georg and Christa’s. Each night Weisler goes back to his bare, bleak-looking apartment but has no one to talk to. The camera offers us a bird’s eye view of the town at night, specifically the route he takes which is around a circular garden and then the other way back. It draws attention to the uni-dimensional way of his life. He has been going round and round in concentric circles all these years and he’s finally reached an end where he can be at the center of it all. He no longer wishes to continue looking into “the lives of others”.

Though it may seem like Weisler has reached a predictable stage where he isn’t sure of which side he should be on, the viewer knows that on a deeper level Weisler was always on the “right” side. There is no internal monologue to confirm this and his training as an interrogator does not allow him to reflect any emotion with his face. However, a distinct point in the film that marks his transformation is when Georg plays “A Sonata for a Good Man” and Weisler is reduced to tears. It is a beautiful and heart-rending musical composition at the end of which Georg, unknowingly, pays a tribute to Weisler by asking out loud, “Can someone who has heard this music, I mean truly heard it, really be a bad person?” A pertinent question, as this musical composition is the last straw which drives Weisler to let go of his German ruthlessness and stoic pragmatism, values which we assumed had been drilled into the very core of his existence.

“The Lives of Others” is an incredibly powerful film and is absolutely relevant to this day. Our communication and research on the internet is still recorded, torturous interrogations based on insufficient proof are still carried out in the name of acts such as AFSPA and POTA which trigger the fury of the public rather than introducing the fear of an omniscient being.

This film is a good introduction to the minimalist German cinema and is highly nuanced, with infinite subtleties contained in its manner of storytelling.

*-Zohra Malik*

## *Art and the Great War*

The First World War broke out in a largely innocent world, a world that still associated warfare with glorious cavalry and the noble pursuit of heroic ideals. Propaganda posters often urged men to enlist in the army by appealing to their notions of heroism and patriotism, convincing men that they should be proud to protect their country with their strength, emphasizing a sense of masculinity and bravery, and glorifying the army life; thereby making those who did not enlist feel cowardly. These vivid and cunningly executed posters relied on a viewer's positive response to the idealized image of healthy soldiers in uniform or emblems of their nation, and in doing so, obscured the realistic aspects of combat. The original posters relied simply on text to get their message across, but as the war progressed, posters become increasingly sophisticated, with artists using striking images to convey pro-war messages. Wartime posters, however, were not solely used to recruit men and promote patriotism; they were also attempts at justifying the war, raising money, procuring resources and promoting accepted standards of behaviour.



The patriotic fervour that initially compelled young men to enlist in 1914 collapsed into cynicism and anger by 1916. The gruesome reality of The Great War led many people to realize the reality of war; that it was no longer a "Dulce et Decorum Est" idea. As counter-action to propaganda art, many artists accompanied troops to the front-lines, making spontaneous sketches and watercolours of soldiers as they engaged with the enemy en masse. In doing so, a section of the art world offered up a grotesquely realistic visual depiction of the death and destruction of war.



Christopher Nevinson – *Paths of Glory* (1917)

A young artist, Christopher Nevinson experienced the war in all its horror when confronted by hundreds of dead and dying soldiers in the makeshift casualty clearing stations behind battlefields. Nevinson's 1917 painting 'Paths of Glory' stands as its stark artistic manifestation. The title quotes a line from Thomas Gray's poem 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard': "The paths of glory lead but to the grave". One cannot identify with the soldiers; their faces are overturned and their bodies merge with the murky earth, suggesting the loss of identity and the waste of young lives. The brownish grey mud threatens almost, to rise up and swallow the entire scene. The painting was banned from an exhibition in 1918. Nevinson refused to take it down and covered it with brown paper, on which he wrote "Censored". This gesture earned him a reprimand from the War Office, for it was forbidden either to show reality or to denounce censorship. Nevinson had only painted what every soldier had seen dozens of times; comrades who had fallen under fire during pointless assaults.



Otto Dix -*Triptychon Der Krieg (War Triptych)*

Otto Dix produced one of the most important paintings to come out of the Great War; a triptych composed according to the canons of the old German masters. The central panel is a reworking of *The Trench*. It is a horrific vision where a soldier, his face covered by a gas mask, is left the sole survivor in a collapsed trench near an overturned dugout. Corpses are in their final stages of decomposition, with a skeleton still hanging from the branch of a tree. The side panels depict two men leaving for the front and two wounded men returning. In the foreground, laid out under tent canvases are some men asleep, or maybe they are dead. The triptych takes illusion to intolerable levels of morbidity with putrefied flesh, worms and gangrene. The space is brimming with corpses, debris, and maimed forms, and run through with spiked vertical lines. Everything about this painting is disturbing, including the sky with its swirling reddish clouds, the sign of a catastrophe that has extended its empire over the whole of nature.



Paul Nash -*The Menin Road* (1917)

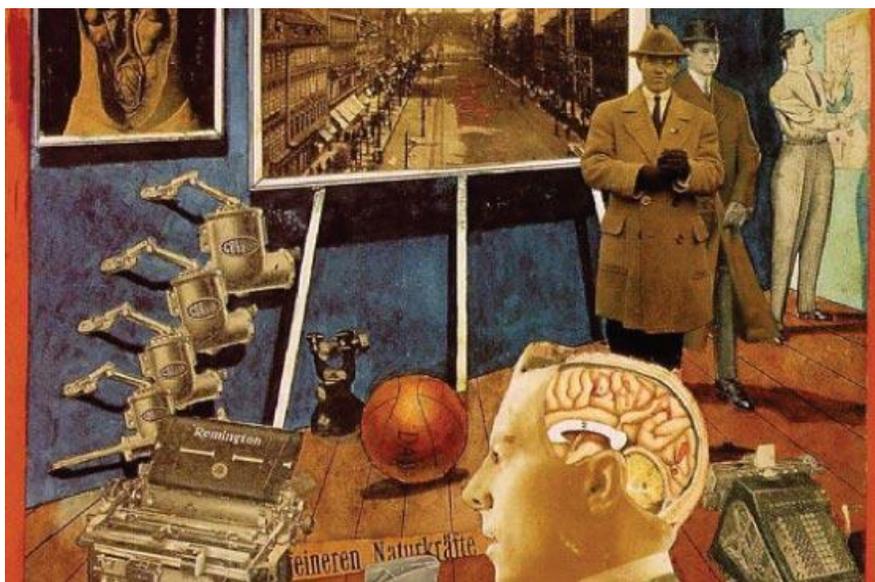
Paul Nash's *The Menin Road* depicts a ruined Belgian landscape; a maze of flooded trenches, shell craters and dead tree trunks in a wasteland. The very title of this painting is ironic, as no road can be detected. The tree, a traditional symbol of strength and regeneration, has been transformed to black and burned victims of destruction. Rays of light breaking through clouds are a traditional element of Romantic landscape painting, however, Nash transforms the element in a way that signifies an additional threat to the last soldiers scattered in the rugged landscape. The rays of light in the painting are ambivalent and may not only show the sun's rays but could also originate from searchlights. Heaven and earth are only connected by destructive rays and poisonous clouds. Consequently, the soldiers flee from the light instead of seeking it. The surface of the water is lifeless, without motion and regenerative power. The empty helmet lying in the brackish water suggests the death of a soldier. The blocks of concrete do not form a consistent whole, but are fragmented.

With war as a backdrop, European artists fled to neutral Switzerland and contributed to an artistic and literary movement that came to be known as 'Dada'. It arose as a reaction to an insane spectacle of collective homicide; the artists were utterly revolted by the butchery of the Great War. They called it 'Dada', a word found at random in a French-German dictionary. The word is French for "hobby horse" and it satisfied the Dadaist desire for something irrational and nonsensical. Dada was more of a mindset or attitude than a singular identifiable style. The Dadaists believed reason and logic to responsible for the unmitigated disaster of the war and they concluded that the only route to salvation was through political anarchy, the irrational and the intuitive. Thus the element of absurdity is the cornerstone of Dada. It was influenced by ideas and innovations from the early avant-garde styles of Cubism, Futurism, Constructivism, and Expressionism, and its output was wildly diverse, ranging from performance art to poetry, photography, sculpture, painting and collage. The Dadaist aesthetic, or rather, anti-aesthetic was marked by its mockery of materialism and nationalism. The pessimism and disgust of these artists surfaced in their disdain for convention and tradition, characterized by a sustained attempt to undermine cherished notions and assumptions about art.



Marcel Duchamp - *Fountain*

Marcel Duchamp remains the most significant artist to be associated with Dadaism. He was known for his visual puns and mild obscenities which were popular in the movement. The artists within this movement were against anything rational or materialistic. Duchamp succeeded at expressing these beliefs in the piece 'Fountain'. His sculpture exhibits an ordinary urinal as a masterpiece, which makes little sense and denies conventional ideas of aesthetics.

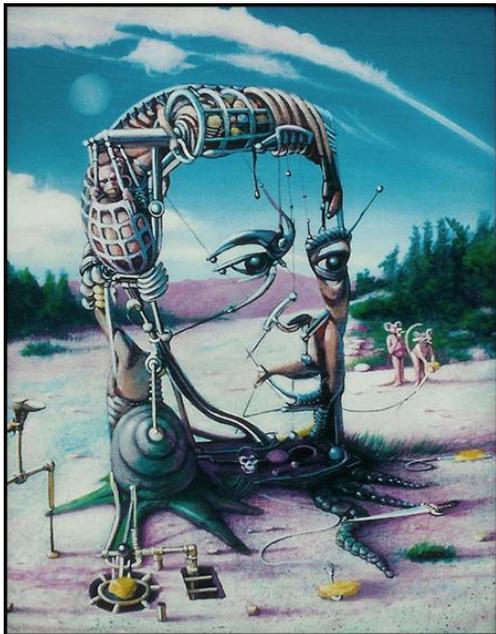


Raoul Hausmann – *Dada Siegt*

The Dada artists were angry at modern European society for allowing the war to happen and decided that art, like the war, should not make sense. Raoul Hausmann, a versatile and prominent artist of the early Dada period, exhibits this non-sense belief system in the piece 'Dada Siegt'. His use of oddly juxtaposed images, shown in a seemingly unreasonable order, portrays Dada characteristics.

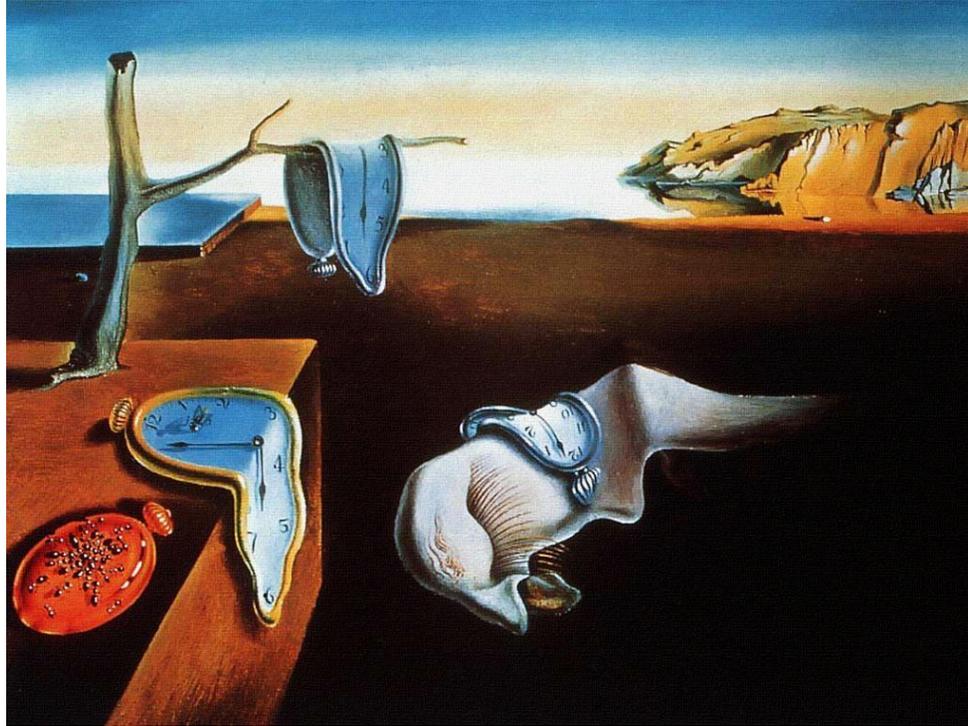
“Dada is a state of mind. That is why it transforms itself according to races and events. Dada applies itself to everything, and yet it is nothing, it is the point where the yes and the no and all the opposites meet, not solemnly in the castles of human philosophies, but very simply at street corners, like dogs and grasshoppers.” - Tristan Tzara, poet and tirelessly energetic propagandist of Dada.

Surrealism, one of the longest-lived movements in modern art, had its roots in Dada but arose from artists' determination to make something constructive out of Dada's nihilism. Founded by the French artist and poet André Breton in 1924, Surrealism was based on the premise that another more significant reality lay just beyond the experience of everyday life and that the access to this higher reality was through the unconscious mind. Surrealist art tended toward one of two principle directions. The first was more abstract, emphasizing the process of Automatism; the act of letting one's brush or pencil wander freely across a given surface in the belief that images released by the unconscious would emerge. The other technique used outdated academic techniques to render bizarre and astonishing visions as they might appear if actually glimpsed. Surrealism was a means of reuniting conscious and unconscious realms of experience so completely that the world of dream and fantasy would be joined to the everyday rational world in “an absolute reality, a surreality.”



Andre Breton- *Manifesto of Surrealism*

The painting was titled 'Manifesto of Surrealism' by the founder of surrealism, Andre Breton. The painting was completed after World War One and it is known to be a reaction to the widespread atrocities during the war. Breton discovered the surrealist movement by trying to escape the real, everyday life that was directly in front of his eyes. By painting unrealistic, dreamlike images, the horrors of the war were able to be escaped.



Salvador Dalí- *The Persistence of Memory*

In 'Persistence of Memory' Salvador Dalí illustrates how useless, irrelevant, and arbitrary our normal concept of time is inside the dream state. We are always rushed and busy in our daily lives, trying to get all of our work done on time. Many art scholars debate over whether these timepieces are clocks or in fact pocket watches, a very popular accessory in the 1920's and 30's. The Surrealists laughed at most things society takes seriously, that include the importance we place on things like pocket watches that mark the passage of time. The fantasy scene is placed over a very realistic, lifelike setting; the ocean, which is one characteristic of the painting that draws the unrealistic world of dreams into real life. The painting portrays the ideal Surrealist message.

The years preceding the Great War are generally referred to as the "belle époque", a cultural and economic golden age. However, the four year struggle shook the world and seemed to mark the end of a whole phase of European civilization. Deep psychological wounds were caused in the minds of the survivors and a physical and metaphysical wasteland was created throughout Europe. This desolation was greatly reflected in the art following these years. Modernism in art had gathered momentum well before the war broke out but its eruption ended many social and cultural traditions and made clear the modern mechanized world we were entering; a world where Victorian forms no longer seemed adequate or appropriate in the face of the period's upheavals, the devastation to bodies, landscape and to culture itself.

- Gigi Sarah D'cruz

ANNUAL  
SEMINAR  
PAPERS

*Literature of the Great War*

## *Short Stories of the Great War*

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Independent Paper

### *Introduction*

War's graphic reality pervaded every facet of early 20th century human life. We stand now, a hundred years later, a generation physically detached from a war we spent our lives and history books dissecting. Alive in our intellect yet far from our hearts, we hope to turn then to art, to the written word, and the short stories as a medium in particular, to evoke the humane, the personal and the poignant in an attempt to fit ourselves into the First World War's self-destructive shoes.

## **INDIVIDUAL**

### ***A Natural History of the Dead***

*A Natural History of the Dead* (Pub. 1913) is Ernest Hemingway's cynical recollection of his time on the Italian front in World War I. Peppered with liberal doses of descriptions of extreme violence; this story is replete with themes of death and pain.

The story starts with the tale of a man who wishes to experience all aspects of death. While recounting the death he has thus encountered, he additionally informs the reader of the death yet to come.

Hemingway describes a range of death, from the moment of death to the effects of decay on the body; intimately describing these experiences from a naturalistic viewpoint.

Hemingway relates two successively more gruesome events: The aftermath of an explosion at a munitions building and the Austrian offensive in June 1918. He conveys horror through the smallest of details, from the length of the hair of dead females to the incredible amount of paper that is strewn among the multitude of decomposing bodies; and in a completely matter-of-fact style.

The duality in the narrative of tiny, insignificant details and horrid gore suggests that the narrator is unaffected by the brutality of the war. Hemingway thus symbolises through this nonchalant attitude the disassociation and desensitization that war causes. This sense of desensitization can also be experienced in the last section of the story, where a doctor refuses to euthanize a man with a fatal wound, despite seeing him suffering gravely, because it would go against the principle of saving lives, which the war all around him has given him very little opportunity to.

### *The Tale*

Joseph Conrad's *The Tale*, written in 1917, was his only story on the Great War. With the fervour of the Great War almost behind them, Conrad sought to fictionalize, explain and understand his own deep sense of the moral annihilation of the world. His own dilapidating faith in humanity came forth in a quote by him, "all the past was gone, and there was no future, whatever happened; no road which did not seem to lead to moral annihilation". *The Tale* then stands testament to a shifting world view, from an era of relatively clear cut values to a time of change, uncertainty, fear and the beginnings of an existential sense.

The story's leading man is the Commanding Officer, known of course by his title and nothing else for war demands a certain identity shift and dissociation from the humanity of the ultimately irrelevant soldier, whose life is spent being on the lookout for signs of threat, all the while not being quite certain of what threat looks like. When a thick white fog descends over the ocean and hides from everything from view, they dock at a cove which they assumed was empty, but actually has a small ship docked near its entrance. On thorough investigation, the Commanding Officer is made aware of the Northman on the ship's alleged state of affairs, how he is lost, how he is headed to the English docks, how he does in fact have all his papers. All of this seemed 'plausible enough from a strictly professional point of view' and yet as intangible fear and doubt that functioned on emotion over proof crept into his heart, growing stronger until conviction of this earnest man's guilt filled him with a certainty of his threat. The Commanding Officer orders the Northman to leave the cove and gives him directions to safety, directions that lead him to death on a deadly ledge of rocks.

In a startling twist, narratives collide and the narrator is revealed to be the Commanding Officer tells the reader several truths. It reveals the truth of the narrator and the climax to his tale. From a psychological perspective it tells us the extent of his guilt, but also of the extent to which this episode of inhumanity now controls him, for when told to make up a story about another world, he chooses one autobiographical. He will never know of the Northman's guilt or innocence and the reality of this unhinges him.

And so as a reader we are provided with a basis for not just the atmosphere of war, but its repercussions on the atmosphere of the mind, constantly on the lookout for something that will destroy itself, only to realize it knows not what to look for. The juxtaposition of the visible and the invisible, light and darkness, the evident and the implied or construed, truth and falsehood perpetuate the story, keeping it afloat the way a ship might balance on water.

### *An Indiscreet Journey*

Katherine Mansfield's *An Indiscreet Journey* (written in 1915) paints a vivid and descriptive picture as she takes us to the French frontline during the First World War. It is the story of an English woman's journey to 'X' to see her lover, the 'Little Corporal'. She is masquerading as an English woman who is going to meet her supposed aunt and

uncle. She encounters two women on her train journey, one is kind but the second woman's cunning, perceptive questions and intense probing manage to terrify the narrator.

The story is a fictionalised account of Katherine Mansfield's trip to France to visit her lover Francis Corco. In her journal Mansfield describes this meeting with him, it occurs in 1915 and as a young Frenchman he is inevitably in the army. Mansfield had to venture into the army zone where women were not allowed. Katherine Mansfield did not take an active role in the war but it affected her very deeply. Mansfield and her brother had discussed her writing the stories of their past during his army training in England. Devastated and possibly suicidal after her brother's death, Mansfield was determined that she would live only to fulfil this wish.

The narrator poses as a mediator through whom the unconnected experiences of a group of individuals are strung together. It is the backdrop of the war that gives Mansfield the space to do this effectively. There is a sense of anarchy which reinforces the notion that war could be a dangerously liberating experience for women. Through the images Mansfield adds further dimensions to her text, introducing other languages (French) endowing each minimal event recorded by the narrator with layers of unexpected significance.

She shows us what it feels like for the narrator to see death and horror among the young men and natural beauty. The wounded soldiers are depicted almost as if they are parts of a painting rather than real men who may never see the light of the next day. It is as if we are seeing things through the eyes of a spectator who intentionally stops short of her full version to avoid the pain. Mansfield portrays the social consequences of war in an overwhelming attempt to extract whatever beauty one can from the mundane and increasingly difficult experience.

### *Soldier's Home*

Questions of identity post war found expression in writers, philosophers, academicians, artists and musicians. An eminent contributor to the field was Ernest Hemingway, who with his short story *Soldier's Home* raised questions of normalcy after war and the idea of patriotism.

In 1918, Ernest Hemingway enlisted (in the Ambulance Corps and left for the Italian front.) After being severely wounded, he returned home and used his wartime experiences for the basis of his collection of short stories, "In Our Time". *Soldier's Home*, (a story from this collection,) revolves around Harold Krebs' tumultuous state of mind after the war and his inability to reconcile his present self with his childhood home.

Krebs initially resisted talking about the war and when he did begin to talk about it, no one cared for his "version". It was clear that the war wasn't an experience that Krebs was proud to have survived and his society's reaction to it greatly diminished the value of that experience.

One observed, throughout the story, Krebs crumbling under society's demand to conform, to settle back into the mundane, day-to-day trenches of adult existence and the inner turmoil caused by the psychological alienation from his childhood home. It was synonymous with Hemingway's own sentiments of being an outsider. The only solace a soldier can have after returning from the war is that he returns to the safety of the known i.e. his home. A feeling of belonging was no longer a privilege our young protagonist had. Therefore the concept of a 'soldier's home' comes to the forefront.

Krebs soon ceased to be an active participant and took on, instead, the role of an observer. Normal aspects of his hometown now confounded him. He realized that while people had moved on from the war, society still remained stagnant. Nothing has changed. Krebs' view of his world is lifeless and flat. Hemingway's terse and short sentences, which are in accordance with his Iceberg Style of writing, show us that aspect effectively. This style also complements the open-endedness of the story.

Towards the end, like most people who feel isolated and go through life aimlessly, Krebs resigned himself to his mother's wishes for his marriage. The ending, while open-ended, left us with the possibility that Krebs may have decided to re-integrate himself back into society or led to a tragic end by taking his own life. One is left contemplating the uncertain consequences of a soldier's sacrifices in a bid to preserve his national identity and the ironical, subsequent isolation from that same society which he fought for, making one question any so-called need or necessity for war.

*Soldier's Home* gives us an account of a soldier's psychological state of mind after the war, whereas the next story, Luigi Pirandello's story focused on the impact and the effect that it had on the parents during it.

## **FAMILY**

### **War**

"War" starts with a couple getting on to a train to Rome on their way to say goodbye to their son who's been called for the war. The wife seems incredibly disturbed and is dressed in deep mourning. The husband narrates to the other passengers, their grave misfortune. Surprisingly, they are met with no sympathy or empathy from the fellow passengers, but rather their tales of sorrow and how their own misfortunes are exponentially more tragic. Pirandello mocks the way human beings are always trying to one-up or best each other especially when it comes to their own children. Another aspect of war that this story sheds light on is that war leaves no room for empathy. Individuals are only concerned with their own loss or their own grief.

Another character that is present on the same train has lost his son to the war. He starts to remind the others of their own priorities when they were the same age as their children. He talks about how the only 'decent' option is to defend their country because, 'a Country is a natural necessity' that one must defend. "Isn't it natural that at their age

they should consider the love for their Country (I am speaking of decent boys, of course) even greater than the love for us? .... And our sons go, when they are twenty, and they don't want tears, because if they die, they die inflamed and happy (I am speaking of course, of decent boys). Now if one dies young and happy, without having the ugly sides of life, the boredom of it, the pettiness, the bitterness of disillusion... what more can we ask for him?"

Through this, the character not only sets a standard for a 'decent' citizen but also suggests that one ought to feel pride if one dies at a young age for the sake of their country and misses out on the grueling, monotonous routines. For the latter is of little to no significance as compared to the former.

At the end of 'War', we realize that 'the man who could so stoically speak of his child's death' is in fact putting up a facade. It is almost as if reality comes crashing down on him, that his son is indeed dead.

Luigi Pirandello's son was captured during the war, and this story can be seen as a way of expressing his grief, the different facets of grief as well as expressing his worst fears about war. These fears are also expressed in a way through the next story by Rudyard Kipling.

### *Mary Postgate*

*Mary Postgate*, referred to as "the wickedest story ever" by Oliver Baldwin<sup>1</sup>, was a highly controversial short story written by Rudyard Kipling, published in *Nash's and Pall Mall Magazine* in September 1915.

To briefly summarise, the story is about an exceedingly "ordinary" woman named Mary who is caretaker for a woman named Miss Fowler and governess to her nephew, Wynn. Wynn bullied Mary relentlessly, though it is unclear whether he was doing it playfully, and she used to devote all her attention to looking after him. Soon after Wynn gets a job, he volunteers for the war. During training, Mary constantly makes clothes for him and studies charts she cannot understand in an effort to keep up with Wynn. Wynn then dies during a trial flight. A funeral is held but neither of the two women can express grief; Miss Fowler is too incapacitated to even attend. They start making arrangements almost immediately to give away Wynn's clothes and burn the rest of his possessions. While Mary is on an errand at this point, she is nearby when a bomb kills a little girl. The death of this little girl is covered up as an accident, and instead blamed on a falling shed. When Mary is burning Wynn's possessions, she comes across a wounded soldier. She watches the soldier die while pointing a pistol at him. She clearly draws pleasure from his suffering and she is suffused with excitement, for the first time in the story, listening to and watching the man die.

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<sup>1</sup> Ricketts, Harry: *The Unforgiving Minute - A Life of Rudyard Kipling* (1999)

It is this ending which has sparked so much debate and controversy. There is a multitude of ways in which to interpret the ending.

While burning the items, she notices the wounded soldier at the base of the tree in the field beyond and for the first time in the story she becomes animated and her emotions come into force. She goes to the soldier and revels in his death, watching him die closely.

This final scene can and has been read in several ways. It is a fair conclusion that Mary had been in love with Wynn, and this was a way of getting her revenge on this soldier. She uses Wynn's words and insults when shouting at the soldier; she uses Wynn's gun and is glad at the thought that he would be proud of her using it. Mary never had a life besides Wynn, and she never pursued him, so this is seen as a way of her achieving sexual gratification from this act of revenge as well. This is further evidenced by the fact that the entire section after the soldier's death is described in terms of an orgasm. Another dimension of perverseness is added to this entire scene when afterwards Miss Fowler suddenly describes Mary as "quite handsome" when Mary in the entire story had been described as the complete antithesis of that.

One forceful point of view that Kipling wanted to convey to us is the grotesqueness and savagery of war, often in the minds of ordinary men and women; that haunt them forever.

## **SPIES**

*His Last Bow*, published in September 1917, is one of 56 short stories about Sherlock Holmes written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It was first published in Strand Magazine, and, amongst six other stories, was collected in an anthology titled *His Last Bow*, also called *Reminiscences of Mr. Sherlock Holmes*.

The narration is in the third person, not, as usual, by Dr. Watson, and it is a spy story, rather than a murder mystery. Due to its portrayal of British and German spies, its publication during the First World War and its patriotic themes, the story has been interpreted as a propaganda tool intended to boost morale for British readers.

The short story, sharing the same name as the title of the compilation, is an epilogue, and ties the knot on the British propagandist theme of the book. With Holmes, already viewed as a national hero, albeit he was fictional, Doyle uses Holmes' popularity to bring to mind the issues of patriotism and nationalism through this espionage thriller.

An important point to note is that Holmes is retired and this is his last case, which forces him to come out of retirement. This aspect of Doyle's story brings forth a sense of nationalism, in which a renowned detective such as Holmes, who has earned a life of relaxation and solace, puts himself back in the mix of a political cat and mouse game, with his life on the line, only for the service of his nation. Doyle enforces a spirit of enthusiastic patriotic loyalty for the motherland.

Doyle also infuses the narrative with plot holes, that have been criticized upon later inspection, the biggest being Holmes' revealing his identity, thereby defeating the

purpose of his hard earned secret identity, simply for Doyle's pompous display of nationalism, which seems to overcome the very nature of espionage.

This is the final nail in the coffin of this propagandist work. This short story, at that time, was a jolt of motivation and nationalist enthusiasm, in which a celebrated fictional hero, outsmarts the cunning enemy using his own means, and after being victorious, prophesizes the supremacy of the British.

*Ashenden* by William Somerset Maugham recounts the third person story of a writer, during the First World War, recruited by the Intelligence Department to go to neutral Switzerland, run Intelligence Operations, trap agents working for Germany, and later to travel to Russia on the eve of the Revolution, to prevent the Russian Revolution and to keep Russia engaged in the war on the Allied side. The book consists of short chapters in which our hero, urbane and observant, plays the espionage game with Bond like suavity.

*Ashenden or, The British Agent* consists of sixteen stories and sketches bound by the central character, an authorial persona. *Ashenden's* experiences are based on W. Somerset Maugham's work with MI6 during 1915-1917. Maugham is noted for introducing the life of the workaday spy or intelligence officer, a hero who is neither heroic nor idealistic.

*Ashenden* was one of the first 'realistic' spy novels, taking a cynical view of espionage and its human consequences. *Ashenden's* portrayal of the 'villains', unlike in other spy novels is humane and sympathetic. The whole business of spying, in the novel, is portrayed as bizarre and cruel, with spies used as pawns and morality a weakness. Spying is seen as a tough-minded game, played to be won using whichever underhand methods are necessary by being unbiased and emotionally detached.

Somerset Maugham was asked not to include several other stories in the novel as they revealed too much about the methods and activities of Britain's spies. It may explain why the book is, in the end, a little disjointed. There are hints and references *in the novel to other events and people, presumably ones who appeared in the censored stories*. The remaining stories seem like glimpses at the remains of a longer novel. The final Russian section in particular feels like it is building up to a climax, but then just cuts out as the revolution starts.

## **RETROSPECTIVE**

### **Garden of Forking Paths**

The contrived labyrinth of the universe and its effective portrayal in literature, often by deep forms of allusion, meta-metaphors, and heightened self awareness fused with creeping existentialism and irony is the mason-stone of the post modern movement. A pioneer was South American author and short story writer Jorge Luis Borges. Borges' particular articulation of an entire universal system in the condensed brick of a page worth tale leads the reader down a path in understanding existence whose vagueness is

art's job to personify. One hopes to theorize the Great War's place in the beginning of existential thought

The short story is a fragment of a letter found in a book on the history of the First World War that the author reads. The narrative is paled by both a historical perspective and its presence in a fragmented letter of the protagonist. Dr. Yu Tsun's life as a German spy in the British system is revealed in his account of the (supposed) last hours of his life, when he realizes he's been discovered by Captain Madden and flees. On accidentally finding his ancestors concentric labyrinth he enters a swarming abstract understanding of time and existence, "Your ancestor did not believe in a uniform, absolute time. He believed in an infinite series of times, in a growing, dizzying net of divergent, convergent and parallels times.", "time forks perpetually towards innumerable futures". Replete with rhetoric and word games, we are taken down a surrealist conception of the world by sinologist Stephen Albert. Breaking the illusion or returning to his "future that already exists", Tsun is faced with two possible choices, two worlds of belief to live within. He picks the wars. In his indecision of reality, in the spark of thought that turned Albert into Madden, Tsun is reminded of reality. In choosing then, the path of war, in killing Albert and having that be his signal to the German Government, Tsun returns to 'the truth', a concept Borges attempts to turn in on itself. The duality complete, one sees the presence of a third theme, the underlying humanity of the protagonist, seen in his descriptions of nature or at the end where "he does not know (no one can know) my innumerable contrition and weariness". The story is about choice; about a future we may choose if we please, for every differing decision is simultaneously played out in its own line of time. War loses that choice, his future; his death stands tall and inevitable. The tale ends with him condemned to the gallows.

However its significance is not just in the short story but in the literary tradition of Borges as a writer, the irony, cynicism, stylistic overuse of puzzles, illusions and rhetoric are founding principles of post-modernism, which aims to make either a mockery or serious comment on the void in man and portraying art's increasing introspection. The war holds blame to this unnerving, grey, yet logical, playful and clever shift in art's conception of humanity.

### ***Conclusion***

To conclude, the underlying message that we extracted from these short stories was that the Great War sent ripples throughout the world, affecting both the conscious and unconscious minds of not only those participating in the war as well as those off the battlefield. In these stories of the Great War, we found the root of desensitization and isolation that has not dissipated even until today.

## ***World War I Drama***

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Guided by: Ms. June Dias

### **Introduction**

Drama as a literary and artistic medium is perhaps the most nuanced form of creative expression due to its combination of pithy writing and a live stage. Dramatic works performed around or about World War I employed those nuances and had a fundamental impact on how the modern world viewed the Great War.

One of the renowned observers of attitudes and emotions adopted at the various stages of the war by the public throughout Europe was Sigmund Freud. According to him, the attitudes can be divided into two phases: elation in the beginning, and disillusionment during and after.

Civilians met the beginning of the Great War in 1914 with jubilation across Europe. But as the war went on for longer than anyone had foreseen, the continuous exposure to active warfare and destruction of life led to a state of mental anguish in people. Their perception of war transformed from an act of noble stature to that of an act of oppression, cruelty and hypocrisy.

Having adopted a similar line of thought for our paper, we looked into certain plays written and performed during the war that didn't directly correspond to it, and those written after the war that were based on the war itself. We have attempted to explore the social and psychological impact these plays had on their viewers and how their themes were reflective of the time they were staged in.

### ***Trifles: Susan Glaspell***

Susan Glaspell (1876–1948) plays an important role in 20th century American literature, particularly due to her plays and theatre. Usually considered a realistic playwright, Glaspell is good at using the prairie and the flatness of the Midwest as the setting of her works.

In the play *Trifles*, a county sheriff and an attorney arrive with the witnesses at a murder victim's house. The men continually disparage the women present for worrying over trifles instead of the case. The men cannot find the evidence or a motive. Meanwhile, due to female bonding and sympathy, the two women becoming detectives, successfully find the truth and hide the evidence from the men.

The play tackled one of the important issues of the period; that of the feminist perspective. The evolution of the women's relationships illustrates the female ethos. The

play's moral dilemma highlights the innate differences between male adherence to theoretical principles of morality and female empathic sense that considers moral problems as problems of possibility in relationships. Glaspell uses gender conflict, setting and symbolism to expose the prejudices of society and the solidarity that rebellion inspires. Gender conflict, revealed through the dialogue, highlights the superior and rigid attitudes of the men. "Well, women are used to worrying over trifles," exclaims a character, setting the stage for the atmosphere of dismissive behaviour exhibited by the men. Glaspell's *Trifles* provides a solution to many of the inherent problems the feminist scholars bring to light. She also plays with the duality of notion of woman by constructing a character that could be seen as the angel or the devil.

According to C. W. E Bigsby, the play is a "well observed study of male arrogance and insensitivity; one which works by understatement. The melodrama inherent in the scene is rigorously excluded." Arthur H. Quinn explains that one of the effects of the Great War was a searching scrutiny that resulted drama in an examination of the institution of marriage and the relations of the individual to society. Though these were no new themes, the novelty has come in the method of approach. Helen Keysar says, "the feminist drama became increasingly rare once the vote was won in the United States in 1919 and suffragette plays disappeared."

By writing and performing plays that exposed social inequalities, Glaspell helped to usher in changes that positively affected the times she lived in. The women's suffrage movement was gaining momentum. Dramatic works often helped to further causes by forcing people to acknowledge issues they might not feel qualified to address. Feminist critics have taught us to reread 19th century women's fiction as the embodiment of how domestic ideology articulated itself as a means to effect social and political reform from the private sphere. Family life in American literature is consequently presented as separated from and purged of the vices infecting the public sphere. Women become the sole guardians of this sacred private space, predestined to keep it as a peaceful order in contrast with the disorder outside. Susan Glaspell helped found the modern movement in American drama with this one act play, whose structural restrictions enhance its tensions and meaning. *Trifles* unveils distinctive and complicated value structures that could constructively alter social relations.

### ***Right You Are (If You Think So!): Luigi Pirandello***

Luigi Pirandello was an Italian dramatist, novelist, poet and short story writer. Pirandello's works include novels, hundreds of short stories and about 40 plays.

Pirandello's tragic farces are often seen as forerunners of the Theatre of the Absurd, which is a designation for particular plays of Absurdist fiction written primarily by a number of European playwrights. Their work expresses what happens when human existence has no meaning or purpose and therefore all communications breaks down, alerting their audience to pursue the opposite logical construction and argument gives way to irrational and illogical speech and to its ultimate conclusion, silence.

Pirandello has the ability to create farcical tragedies that pit reality against appearance in such a way that the “objective” truth is never revealed. Pirandello’s central themes like the ambiguity of truth and reality have been compared to explorations of Ibsen and Strindberg. *Right You Are (If you think so!)* premiered on 18th June, 1917, in Milan during the course of World War One. It is a tale of a mysterious woman who could be one of the two different people. The entire plot doesn’t make sense. In the plot Lady Frola claims her son inlaw Ponza went insane after her daughter and his wife dies in an earthquake, whereas Ponza says Lady Frola went insane for the very same reason. It was suspected that Ponza remarried but no one ever saw his wife. In the last act when Lady Frola and Ponza’s wife come together, she proclaims that she is both the daughter of Lady Frola and second wife of Ponza. The truth remains a mystery, the curtain falls and the play ends.

*Right You Are* is an expressionistic parable in the sense that it is not about a specific person. It illustrates the theme that truth is relative.

On another level, the play also addresses the moral, Pirandello’s corollary to the principle of relativism, to respect people’s privacy for if there is no absolute truth we have no right to judge others according to our truths.

The play raises fundamental questions with the most salient being the interplay between Absolutism and Relativism. Absolutists assert that there is an unqualified truth that offers meaningful moral guidance; on the other hand Relativists say that the truth is ticklish and is dependent upon one’s social perspective.

Commentaries of Bentley and Esslin state that Pirandello, more than any other playwright, has been responsible for a revolution in men’s attitudes to the world that is comparable to the revolution caused by Einstein’s discovery of the concept of Relativity in Physics: Pirandello has transformed our attitude to human personality and the whole concept of reality in human relations by showing that the personality character in stage terms is not a fixed entity but an infinitely fluid, blurred and relative concept. The lesson driven home in the end is that truth is slippery, elusive and highly relative.

These plays were not about the war and acted as a form of distraction during the course of the war. Some other prominent plays of the 20th Century were those that weren’t written during the Great War, but the war was crucial to the story. The second half of this paper talks about war dramas based on WWI that were written after the events of the actual war. The important themes discussed include class division, futility of war, loss and greed amongst people, and the effects of the war.

### ***The Old Lady Shows Her Medals: J. M. Barrie***

*The Old Lady Shows Her Medals* is a play written by J. M. Barrie of the Peter Pan fame. This play tells us the story of an old woman who claims to have a son fighting on the war front. But in reality there is no existence of such a relation. The war is shown to have a great effect on people.

Mrs. Dowey is ashamed in of not having a son or a husband fighting on the war front. Such ladies were not looked up with respect. The others who had a family believed that no woman could understand the suffering of the war unless she has a husband, brother or son actively fighting in it.

Initially, the lady seems desperate or seriously mentally ill. But upon careful scrutiny, all viewers are left with is the grief of not having a family.

When her so called son confronts her, the lady explains that she never wanted to hurt anyone's sentiments, only that she wanted it to be her war too and to feel what others felt. She wished for her heart to swell with pride when people would know that her son was fighting on the war front. She wanted to comfort herself by telling that someone is out there fighting for her safety.

Some people might call such a behavior as obsession, but we can sympathize with her. Some might even pity her. But we weren't in her place. We cannot really judge her condition. We cannot blame her for wanting a family. Family is the only life support one has during the war. The son in the play, Kenneth, talks about how there is no glory in killing the enemy. When in the trenches, soldiers simply desire good baths and clean sheets.

Over time we see that that the son's anger and sternness gradually turn into enjoyment and at last takes the form of filial love. He no longer feels pity and sadness for the old lady and before going back to the war he asks Mrs. Dowey to be his mother. A mixture of emotions flash across the lady's face she is delighted that the boy accepts her as his mother even though there is no blood relation. At the same time her heart aches because he has to go away. She knows in her heart that Kenneth will make her proud. It is a bittersweet moment that tends to bring tears to the eyes of audiences.

The last part of the play skips to two months after Kenneth's death where the old lady is shown looking at Kenneth's important possessions, like his medals, her war saving certificates as next of kin and a champagne cork from a dinner they had. She kisses the letters, puts them back in the drawer and gets back to her daily routine.

Mrs. Dowey now feels satisfaction coursing through her veins. The death of her son was a loss, but not really hers. The old lady never moaned for her son's death. She was just proud to have a dead son who fought on the war front and died serving the country. The lady just needed a taste of motherhood that she got through the emotional bond with her

son. This play was a ringing statement of just how intrinsic the war had become in people's lives.

### ***For Services Rendered: Somerset Maugham***

*For Services Rendered* is a play by Somerset Maugham. First performed in London in 1932, the play is about the effects of World War 1 on an English family. When the play opened at the Globe Theatre in London in 1932, Somerset Maugham had been proclaimed the most successful playwright in England. This play, however, closed after just seventy-eight performances because the audiences were not prepared for its antiwar focus. Now, *For Services Rendered* is acclaimed as one of Maugham's best plays. As Maugham chronicles the damaged lives of each member of the Ardsley family and their friends, he presents a scathing indictment of the war and the governments that convince young men to sacrifice their lives in the name of glory.

The play is about the well-to-do Ardsley family and takes place in their country home over a few days. Over three tightly plotted acts, we learn of the individual conflicts that each character struggles with, and therefore the family must go through a seismic shift in order to survive.

It is a sad, somewhat cynical play about the disorientation left in these people's lives by the disruption caused by the First World War. The play ends with a character singing 'God Save the King', which Maugham obviously intends us to regard as ironic, just like the title. *For Services Rendered* is a splendid example of Maugham's mastery of the 'well made play'. Its succession of well crafted scenes introducing characters and complications leading to crises and resolutions is a pleasure to read and act. It has a clear pattern of conflict, climax and resolution, focusing on secrets that are eventually revealed by the end of the play.

Maugham reveals the hypocrisy of governments that recruit young men to fight wars for the honour and glory of their country. Sydney explains how Englishmen initially believed that "every sacrifice was worth it," but were ultimately "sacrificed to their vanity, their greed, and their stupidity. The play is an indictment of a whole nation. Somerset Maugham exposes the patriots and promise makers; the apostles of a better world as "rogues and hypocrites." Blinded in the war, our protagonist Sydney is confined to his home and must depend on his family's kindness and care, since the government has turned its back on him.

Simultaneously applauded by the critics with glowing reviews and berated by others as malevolent propaganda, this controversial work divided the literary world in two.

### ***Journey's End: R.C Sherriff***

R.C Sherriff's *Journey's End* written in 1928 is a three act play on war that was the first to chronicle firsthand experiences of the trench wars in World War 1 on stage. The play was written from Sherriff's personal experience of having served as a Captain in the

British Army. Sherriff created *Journey's End* in 1928 as part of a fundraising event, and it became his first and most successful professional production.

Set in the trenches near Saint Quentin, Aisne towards the end of the First World War, *Journey's End* gives a glimpse into the experiences of the officers of a British Army infantry company in World War I. The entire story plays out in the officers' dugout over four days from 18 March 1918 to 21 March 1918 on the eve of the great German offensive, during the run up to the real life events of Operation Michael. Each character in the play is a creation of Sherriff's own emotions and predicaments he experienced as a captain.

Sherriff had a tough time getting the play on stage with the subject matter being considered too harsh, and the added apprehension of having no female lead character in the play. It was only after an intervention by George Bernard Shaw, who hailed it as "useful [corrective] to the romantic conception of war", was the play put up. The setting of the play in a claustrophobic dugout room brought out the feel of living in trench dugout fields. The play, with its hard hitting honesty, appealed to the youth who were recruited with promise of laurels and fed with propagandist literature, old veterans, critics and the common masses who mainly went to the theatre to escape their socioeconomic conditions.

British critic W.A Darlington wrote, "The curtain rose and instantly I was taken back into the very atmosphere of the trenches". The play gave the audience an insight into the seldom captured side of the war: the anxiety of waiting. Each section in *Journey's End* brings out the larger text and the uneasy sense of anticipation of doom.

*Journey's End* toys with the psychological effect of the war on each characters gives a haunting sense of the horrors of the war. The overwhelming sense of calm before the storms, and the unsaid acceptance to endure despite rings throughout the play. The urgency and

crippling hopelessness voiced by Sherriff through his characters stirred the masses at large to the petty games played by the colonizers in their thirst for power and the disillusionment and alienation felt by the people living through the war.

### ***Oh! What a Lovely War: Charles Chilton***

Our final play is the 1963 phenomenon *Oh! What A Lovely War*. A musical adapted originally from a radio play, it is perhaps the best known stage play attacking the Great War. *Oh! What a Lovely War* is based around the songs that were sung by ordinary British soldiers during the war, revamped and parodied.

The radio play contrasted the songs of soldiers on the Western Front with those sung at home. Joan Littlewood, one of the founders of the East London based Theatre Workshop group,

took up the concept and transformed it into the stage production it became. It was first performed at the Theatre Royal, Stratford, on 19 March 1963. The final form of this production was Littlewood's idea: a show put on by a band of clowns in tin hats with a musical routine added to Chilton's more realistic script.

The most hard-hitting premise of the play is the recurring concept of presenting upbeat songs and dancing with a background of disturbing scenes from the trenches and the war front. Indeed at the time of conceptualizing the play, Littlewood actively sought to create high drama with her narrative. To this effect, she rejected all ideas that presented the war in a realistic manner.

One has to keep in mind that the entire living populace of the 1910's was affected by the war. Never before had an event in human history demanded so much from its time physically, economically and psychologically. Europe, after having been ravaged by two wars of unprecedented magnitude, had this play reinforce its beliefs that the war was caused by accident, led by incompetent, sadistic, or hypocritical generals and politicians, and fought by deluded soldiers who endured unrelenting hardships only to die disillusioned.

The particular timing of this play at the height of the Cold War served another purpose as well: it was a warning to the world about a catastrophic nuclear war. If the Great War was anything to go by, surely the callous men in charge could cause greater devastation with this advanced weaponry in hand?

As Mr. Nichols points out, the gaiety in the play is certainly felt, but through all the buffoonery, dancing and slapstick, the poignancy is hard to miss. And that fact is perhaps what makes this drama a masterpiece.

### ***Conclusion***

2014 is a year for commemorating WWI across the world, and this has led to a renewed interest in war literature. However, to paraphrase Percy Shelley when revival comes, can criticism be far behind? Former Education Minister in the UK Michael Gove holds up most of these antiwar plays as examples of a leftwing attempt to peddle unpatriotic myths. This is interesting because even a hundred years after the war, governments are not ready to acknowledge their mistakes; and why should they be? Each of them likes to create a version of history that portrays them as righteous. However, the playwrights in these countries didn't necessarily subscribe to this blindly patriotic idea, and so when penning these heartfelt works, they wrote from the outside, looking in.

Therefore officials may ask that focus be shifted away from reports of inhuman conditions in the trenches and the high rates of attrition, but their arguments seem like pleas to remember Britannica's once daunting military supremacy. This political statement lets slip how close to the chest the powerful like to keep their cards exactly the viewpoint war dramas decry.

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## ***World War I Novels***

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Guided by: Ms. Divya Bhatnagar

“War was return of the earth to ugly earth,  
War was foundering of sublimities,  
Extinction of each happy art and faith,  
By which the world had still kept head in air.”

-Robert Graves

This paper focuses on the novels set against the backdrop of the First World War. A common subject for these novels was the effects of the war including shell-shock and the resulting changes in society. In this paper we'll be looking at seven novels – *A Farewell to Arms* and *Fiesta: The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway, *All Quiet on the Western Front* by E.M. Remarque, *The Return of the Soldier* by Rebecca West, *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf, *Parade's End* by Ford Madox Ford, and *Goodbye to All That* by Robert Graves. *Goodbye to All That* is an autobiographical account of life in the war while the other six novels are fictional stories about the war.

The Great War now officially belongs to history, but it may be more accurate to say that it belongs to literature. Since the great wave of war books around 1930, the literature of the First World War has been the subject of intensive interest on the part of the general reading public and of critics alike. As the war recedes into history, the literary aspects of that great body of modern fiction which directly reflects it are assuming greater importance than they could have done when the war was still too real and too close. The last fifteen years have witnessed an astonishing revival in critical interest in the subject especially in Britain, France, and America.

The period of World War I was characterized by a complex tangle of diplomacy, change in power equations and political maneuvering. The loss of life worldwide surpassed forty million. Also, this was the time when technological and industrial advancements were taking place in Europe. This was the beginning of a new era, as far as the development of new weaponry and war techniques were concerned. Thus, a horrible war using these weapons was inevitable. Tanks, airplanes, submarines changed the way wars were fought. Chemical warfare was also used on a large scale for the first time during WWI. The number of countries engaged, the range of the battles, the duration of continuous fighting, the technology employed resulting in a mechanization of killing, the hardships and suffering of the common man and above all, 'mobilization' of nations.: there were many

factors that made this war different from the wars preceding it, made it the First World War or the Great War.

The hallmarks of First World War literature are its vast bulk and its strong commitment: both results of the unprecedented character of the war. The war entailed a massive involvement of intellectuals. Moreover, a link emerged between war and literature hitherto unknown, since thousands of established and potential writers were directly engaged in the fighting. Thus the literature of the First World War mostly represents the response of civilians – as befits a war that was essentially fought by civilians who had temporarily been turned into soldiers.

First World War novels are a vehicle for sustained reflection on the event long after it had taken place. A common subject of these novels was the effect of the war, including the description of the lives of soldiers who returned shell shocked from the war and the huge social changes caused by the war. Taken together, the huge variety of First World War literature reflects the diversity of the war experience – from the comradeship to the horror, from the heroism to the boredom, the disillusionment, the hypocrisy, disorder, degeneration, the futility of the war and its impact on relationships and gender roles.

Prominent World War novelists include Ernest Hemingway, Ford Madox Ford, Sebastian Faulks, E.M. Remarque, Richard Aldington, Robert Graves, Rebecca West, Virginia Woolf, Bat Parker, John Dos Passos, Henri Barbusse and E. E. Cummings.

The war was a life changing experience for one and all. Most civilians were just pushed into the war in the name of duty and patriotism. They had to live a difficult life in the trenches. They lived under constant fear, stress and tension. The monotony of battles, the threat of bombardments, the struggle to find food and the constant impending possibility of injury and death was all that their life was about. They had to kill men without actually knowing the reason for doing so.

Robert Graves' *Goodbye to All That* is considered to be one of the most insightful and honest accounts of life in the trenches. This autobiography is a largely dispassionate, clear eyed, and fascinating view of what it was actually like to live day to day in the trenches. Besides describing the fear, discomfort and the horror of the war, the novel also highlights the camaraderie and humour that made survival amidst the inhumanity of the war possible. Graves only aims to provide a true picture of the war to his readers: the First World War as it was. There is no effort to sentimentalize the war or question the meaning of the war. His inability to analyze his feelings was probably a survival technique to protect himself from the horror of what he experienced for four long, terrible years. His attitude is actually a reflection of what the war did to him.

It was a horrific, life changing experience. He had no choice but to get involved in the war. Similarly the protagonist of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Paul is urged to join the war by his school teacher. Remarque said about the book that “it will try simply to tell a generation of men who, even though may have escaped (its) shells, were destroyed by the war.” The book does not concentrate on the heroic stories of the soldiers. Paul and his comrades have lost hope in life. He feels disconnected with his hometown and his people. He does not wish to talk about anything related to the war but his father continues to

question him about his experiences. He is devastated when he kills a man for the first time. The only way he can deal with this trauma is by telling himself that it was his duty and he did it out of love for his country, both of which are abstract ideas. Even though the war is nearing its end, it has already put an end to his dreams and hope in life. His friend Kat dies in the war and he feels all alone. He dies at the end of the novel on a day when there is very little fighting and the newspaper frontline states, "All Quiet on the Western Front," symbolizing the insignificance of one individual's death during the war. The value of one death was nothing compared to the millions who had died.

The life of the 'returned soldier' is a common theme in world war novels. The term "shell shock" came into use to explain the effects of explosions from artillery shells on soldiers engaged in battle. Initially thought to be a physical injury, an alternative view developed that described it as an emotional injury. The number of shell shock cases grew during 1915 and 1916 and about sixty to eighty percent of the soldiers were found to be suffering from it. Even after returning from the war soldiers hardly recovered from shell shock. They found it difficult to adjust in society even after returning home. The warriors were no heroes – they had become madmen.

Rebecca West's debut novel, *The Return of the Soldier* is the first deliberate evocation of the returned soldier in literature. Captain Chris Baldry has been dispatched from the Western Front when he is diagnosed with amnesia. The subsequent trauma and incapability to adjust to society are narrated by his cousin Jenny. The distance created from the war is very similar to the distance created in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. There is no actual warfare taking place in *Mrs. Dalloway*. It has already been five years since the war ended but the scars remain. Those who survived, live in the dark shadow of the war. Septimus Smith, the soldier in *Mrs. Dalloway* is deeply disturbed after seeing his friend die in the war. He is also disillusioned to see the English society that he fought for, in shambles. On the face of it, post-war life in England seemed to be going on normally- there were parties and celebrations. The war was championed as a way to uphold British ideals and a way to turn boys into men. However the reality was very different. The war had a damaging impact on the psychological health of the soldiers. Septimus is one such soldier who is driven mad by the war. But no one seems to acknowledge the fact. Septimus's shell shocked state represents how soldiers returned as madmen, and not as heroes. He represents those young men who were dragged into the war and were fighting for the ideals of duty and patriotism.

Although both the novels deal with the life of shell shocked soldiers after the war, the endings are different. Septimus kills himself while Rebecca West's novel ends on an optimistic note where Chris is cured through psychotherapy.

The war resulted in the passing of the old world order in the sense that it affected society as a whole. There was a rise in feminism. Women were forced to work and consequently became more self sufficient and in the absence of men, were in a position to make their own decisions. They started questioning the patriarchal norms that bound them. People had no option but to accept the change. Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End* focuses on these themes. His protagonist Tietjens is a man who must experience the disruptive present as he represents the order and stability of another age. He is a man committed to the Edwardian principles of honour while his wife Sylvia is a complete antithesis of these

values. She plans deceitful plots and has extramarital affairs. But, he refuses to compromise his marriage vows even though he is in love with Valentine Wannop. With the war, the idealistic world of Tietjens starts to erode. He has no choice but to accept the change and adapt to the new world. He successfully moves into the future with Valentine and their unborn child. Thus, through Tietjens's character, Ford suggests that come what may, humanity will survive political and social upheaval.

The war led to a radical re-evaluation of what it meant to be masculine. The pre-war ideal of the brave, stoic soldier had little relevance in the context of brutal trench warfare that characterized the Great War. Traditional notions of what it meant to be a man were undermined by the realities of the war.

Jake, the protagonist of Hemingway's *Fiesta* embodies these cultural changes. In the novel it is implied that he was injured in a manner which made him impotent. Therefore, throughout the novel, Jake's masculinity is under question. His impotence is also the reason Brett does not enter into a relationship with Jake.

All the veterans feel insecure about their masculinity. Hemingway does not state this fact directly, but rather shows it in the way Jake and his veteran friends react to Cohn. They target Cohn in particular, when they see him engaging in "unmanly" behavior like following Brett around. They cope with their fears of being weak and emasculated by criticizing the weakness they see in him. Hemingway further presents this theme in his portrayal of Brett. In many ways, she is more "manly" than the men in the book. She refers to herself as a "chap," she has a short, masculine haircut and a masculine name, and she is strong and independent. She embodies traditionally masculine characteristics, while Jake, Mike, and Bill are to varying degrees uncertain of their masculinity. The novel investigates the changing gender dynamics that emerged in the post war era.

The idea of heroism associated with the war was transformed into boredom as the battle stretched on and on. The war was pointless for the soldiers. Their life had turned upside down. Many soldiers wished to run away from the war and live a life away from all the stress of the battlefield. Hemingway's Frederic Henry does exactly that in *A Farewell to Arms*. He removes himself from the war and leaves it behind. Hemingway offers a mournful meditation on the nature of love. Henry wants to escape the talk of the war and Catherine wants to overcome her fiancé's death. Their love outweighs any consideration for the emptiness of abstract ideals such as honour. They plan an idyllic life together away from the war. They find a perfect place to achieve physical, emotional and psychological healing in the Swiss mountains. However, the tragedy is that their love goes unrewarded when Catherine dies after giving birth to a stillborn child and Henry is left all alone. While Hemingway seems to not favour war, this novel cannot be treated as a complete love story too. Life is unrewarding just like both love and war in the novel are unrewarding.

All the works discussed earlier share certain common tropes. The writers have showcased the causes, consequences and tragedies that arose from the war; the intricacies, the very essence of what the common man went through after the world stopped waging war against itself. The novels explore the diversity of war experience. Hemingway's *Fiesta* challenges established gender roles and questions the authority of "masculinity". Ford's

*Parade's End* depicts morals being at war with the heart, traditional vows crossing swords with a better future and a better life. West's and Woolf's works attempt to expose the psychological distress faced by the soldiers and the ones close to them. Hemingway's *Frederic Henry* leaves us with a parallel being drawn between love and war, suggesting that both are fruitless. The authors have used all the weapons at their disposal to showcase how one lost everything- family, relations, love, honour, hope, the very will to live just because following orders of a mechanical command was believed to be more rewarding. To quote Lee Camp: "Ninety nine percent of us are good hearted people who respect others, and want peace. The other one percent, rule the world, and tell us we are at war."

No attempt is made by these novelists to justify the war or uphold the ideals of bravery, chivalry and patriotism. The war experience in fact is laid bare in all its goriness and the futility of the entire exercise highlighted and most effectively criticized. These novelists do not glorify the war or the soldier, but in fact, bring out the hypocrisy of society as a whole. The valorization of the soldier as a hero is a social construct and these novels debunk the notion every step of the way. The novels expose the downright inhumanity and barbarism of the war in the most candid and horrific terms. Hemmingway writes in *A Farewell to Arms*, "There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity. Abstract words such as glory, honour, courage or hallow were obscene." Their works take our souls from sympathy towards these martyrs to heartfelt empathy for their loss. We must all stop and think for a moment and ask ourselves if heroism is more valuable than the life of millions.

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## *Poetry of the First World War*

Nikita Sharma, Yashi Singh, Sakina Sitabkhan, Devanshi Shah, Jijivisha Ghosh, Aarushi Agrawal, Nidhi Shetty, Vidhi Mehra

Guided by: Dr. Kamal Jadhav

The centenary of World War One means the work of the British war poets has been much quoted of late. But the reputation of writers critical of the war, such as Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, grew mainly after 1918.

In the early months of the war, newspapers printed stirringly patriotic verse on a daily basis. That work has almost disappeared from view - but is it entirely worthless?

A century ago it was still common for magazines and newspapers to publish poems inspired by great public occasions.

Britain declared war on Germany on 4th August 1914. The very next day the Times carried the poem *The Vigil* by Sir Henry Newbolt:

England: where the sacred flame  
Burns before the inmost shrine,  
Where the lips that love thy name  
Consecrate their hopes and thine,  
Where the banners of thy dead  
Weave their shadows overhead,  
Watch beside thine arms to-night,  
Pray that God defend the Right.

The poems were written within days or, in some cases, hours of the outbreak of war. These poems tell us something about history. Large numbers of people in Britain thought the nation had just set out on what was basically a naval war. Some of the poems invoked religious beliefs to encourage people to support the war.

In our paper, we have thrown light on a wide range of voices: some widely celebrated, some much less well-known; some from Britain, some from Germany and elsewhere; some men and some women; some speaking from the trenches, some from behind the lines or at home; some describing the heat of the battle, some reflecting on the conflict later in the century.

### **AUSTRIA-HUNGARY**

In Austria-Hungary, you had individuals writing in various languages with Austrian-German being the most commonly used language. The works of poets like Franz Werfel, Georg Trakl and others were not readily available to readers outside of their home countries. Even now, there are only a few translations of only a handful of poems of these poets.

## GEORG TRAKL (1877 – 1914)

Georg Trakl is both the most famous Austrian Great War poet and the most difficult to read. Trakl was born in Salzburg and was of Slav descent, with his family belonging to Hungary. He led a tormented life from the very beginning. He was pathologically shy and subject to fits of rage from childhood. Since a very young age, he was given to suicidal acts such as throwing himself in front of a moving train and walking into a pond until he disappeared into it, leaving only his hat to mark the place for his rescuers. His father was often indifferent and insensitive to him and his siblings, while his mother (whom he hated and once said that he would have liked to murder), was uncaring and a drug-addict. Ridiculed by his family for his fondness for writing, Trakl only grew more distant and introverted. After school, he trained as a dispensing chemist, a path that possibly fuelled his growing drug addiction.

He volunteered for the war in 1914 and was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Medical Corps of the Austrian Army. From this point on, his life began to fall apart. At the battle of Godrek, he was left in charge of nearly 100 serious casualties in a barn, without any proper training or medical facilities. This nightmarish scene was exacerbated by the display of corpses of soldiers hung for desertion. Inevitably suffering a breakdown, Trakl was diagnosed for schizophrenia and shifted to a hospital. Locked within for observation, Trakl sent a letter to a friend that contained a copy of his last two poems, *Grodek* and *Klage (Lament)*. In early November 1914, at the age of 27, he committed suicide by taking an overdose of cocaine.

### *Grodek*

At evening the woods of autumn are full of the sound  
Of the weapons of death, golden fields  
And blue lakes, over which the darkening sun  
Rolls down; night gathers in  
Dying recruits, the wild lament  
Of their burst mouths.  
Yet a red cloud, in which a furious god,  
The spilled blood itself, has its home, silently  
Gathers, a moonlike coolness in the willow bottoms;  
All the roads spread out into the black mold.  
Under the gold branches of the night and stars  
The sister's shadow falters through the diminishing  
grove,  
To greet the ghosts of the heroes, bleeding heads;  
And from the reeds the sound of the dark flutes of  
autumn rises.  
O prouder grief! you bronze altars,  
The hot flame of the spirit is fed today by a more  
monstrous pain,  
The unborn grandchildren.

(Translated by James Wright and Robert Bly)

*Grodek*, his last work, is considered to be his best and most intense poem. In a very general sense, the poem is an apocalyptic vision of war and death, which describes the Battle of Grodek. It begins with romantic images and goes on to show the excruciating realities of the battlefield.

The speechlessness of the soldiers and the images of the silent night as a force engulfing the “dying recruits” emphasize the muteness brought about by death.

One single explanation cannot suffice Trakl’s work nor can one ever arrive at a conclusion. His is the poetry of simple words, silence, and varied interpretations.

## **RUSSIA**

The Revolution, their defeat in the war against Japan, and the World War had caused death and destruction on a large scale in Russia. This is reflected in their literature. Some common themes of the time were suffering as a form of redemption, Christianity and religious symbolism and a “description of unsuccessful love affairs”, as described by Shklovsky.

## **ANNA ANDREYEVNA GORENKO (PEN NAME ANNA AKHMATOVA)**

She was a modernist poet famed for her original style of writing. Her style conveyed emotional restraint and a strong female voice. Her works were disliked and censored by the Stalinist regime. Besides writing about the difficulties of living and writing under the shadow of Stalinism, she also wrote about the passage of time and the role of memories.

### *Solitude*

So many stones have been thrown at me,  
That I'm not frightened of them anymore,  
And the pit has become a solid tower,  
Tall among tall towers.

I thank the builders,  
May care and sadness pass them by.  
From here I'll see the sunrise earlier,  
Here the sun's last ray rejoices  
And into the windows of my room  
The northern breezes often fly.

And from my hand a dove eats grains of wheat...  
As for my unfinished page,  
The Muse's tawny hand, divinely calm  
And delicate, will finish it.

This poem is a monologue, brief and intimate, composed in the classic meter. It shows the psychological state and the struggle of a person living in Russia through the war and the revolutions. They grow fearless – they grow hard. She isn't bitter though; she's thankful to the enemy. Her poetic imagery, in this poem a dove eating from her hand, signifies a spiritual or psychological state. The title "Solitude" signifies that only when she is alone, is she allowed to embrace her thoughts, since war and hate were still very much a part of her environment.

## **GERMANY**

There have been several poets from Germany writing during WWI, all of them in German. The poems have been translated by Peter Appelbaum. Out of all the poets writing during that time, only some were popular, and were able to instill hope in the youth.

## **ALFRED LICHTENSTEIN**

He was a German expressionist writer who grew up in Berlin. His was first recognized for publishing poems and short stories in the grotesque style.

He wrote about the industrialized world he knew, and about city life and its darker aspects. The realistic gloom his poems invoked was often salted with irony and grim wit. The war began before he had completed his year of compulsory military service, and his regiment was sent to the western front line immediately. He was only 25 years old when he died in September 1914, from injuries sustained during combat.

### *Prayer before Battle*

The soldiers pray fervently, every man for himself:  
God, protect me from bad luck.  
Father, son and holy ghost,  
Please don't let any shells hit me,  
Or those scoundrels, our enemies  
Imprison or shoot me,  
Don't let me kick the bucket like a dog  
For the dear Fatherland.  
See, I would like to still live  
Milk cows, bang girls,  
And beat up that rascal, Sepp.  
And get boozed up many times  
Before I meet my holy end.  
See, I'll pray well and willingly  
Say seven rosaries daily,  
If, God, in your mercy, You kill my friends Huber or Meier  
But spare me.  
But if I've got to take it  
Let me not be wounded too heavily.  
Send me a light leg-wound,

A small arm injury,  
So that I return home as a hero  
Who can tell many a story.

This poem acts like Lichtenstein's personal prayer to God, but at the same time, it serves as the common prayer for every youth who was enrolled in the Army. His poetry is gory and melancholic, though not to the extreme.

## FRANCE

The War inspired a large number of poets and soldiers in France to write poetry about the War, most of which is remembered till date. Poets like Guillaume Apollinaire and Albert-Paul Granier, Pierre-Jean Jouve, and Jean Cocteau have contributed widely to World War Literature.

## GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE

Wilhelm Kostrowitzky, famously known as Guillaume Apollinaire is one among the foremost poets of the early 20th century. He is credited with coining the term 'surrealism' and was associated with other movements such as Futurism and Symbolism. During the war, he wrote the Caligrammes between the years 1913-1916, which was published after his death. These were a collection of poems written in free verse, many a verse written in the shape of its subject. The poem chosen from this collection is *Umbra*.

### *Umbra*

You there anew close to me  
Memories of my companions dead at the war  
Olive of time  
Memories which make no more than one  
Like a hundred furs make not than one coat  
Like these thousand wounds make not than one article in the journal  
Appearance impalpable and sombre who have comprised  
The form changing of my umbra  
An Indian at the lookout during eternity  
Umbra you crawl close to me  
But you attend me no more  
You will know no more the poems divine that I chant  
Whereas me I attend you I see you once more  
Destinies  
Umbra multiple that the sun guards you  
You who love me enough in order never to quit me  
And who dance at the sun without making dust  
Umbra ink of the sun  
Text of my light

Caisson of regret  
A god who humiliates himself

In this poem, Apollinaire presents his shadow, or umbra, as his innermost self. He incorporates the shades of his dead comrades into his own shadow, thus gathering the identities of all those men who preceded him. He sees himself as the collective of all those men who shed their blood for their country and goes on to compare the memories of his dead companions with an olive, the fruit that requires a lot of time to grow. These memories are sharp and pungent, like the taste of an olive. His comrades are now powerless in death, but he tries to keep them alive through his poetry.

### ENGLAND

The First World War played a vital role in British cultural life. The war produced several poems written by several known and unknown men and women who either served in the war in various capacities or experienced its effects at home. There are currently, about twenty-two anthologies of British war poetry in print, more than those on any other subject, containing works of several well-known poets such as Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Charles Sorely, and so on.

### SIEGFRIED LORRAINE SASSOON (1886-1967)

Siegfried Sassoon was the first war poet to volunteer on 3rd August 1914. While recovering from a shoulder wound in 1917, he made his famous protest about the war. As a result of this he was sent to Craiglockhart Hospital where he met Wilfred Owen and encouraged him to write poetry. Feeling guilty about not fighting alongside his comrades, he returned to active service in November 1917.

#### *Survivors*

No doubt they'll soon get well; the shock and strain  
Have caused their stammering, disconnected talk.  
Of course they're 'longing to go out again,'—  
These boys with old, scared faces, learning to walk.  
They'll soon forget their haunted nights; their cowed  
Subjection to the ghosts of friends who died,—  
Their dreams that drip with murder; and they'll be proud  
Of glorious war that shatter'd all their pride...  
Men who went out to battle, grim and glad;  
Children, with eyes that hate you, broken and mad.

-Craiglockart. October, 1917

*Survivors* provides a satirical and paradoxical take on war and its effects on its combatants. It is especially powerful as an auto-biographical poem, written during Sassoon's forced stay at the hospital.

The poem begins on a reassuring note that the surviving soldiers will "soon get well" only to be followed by a scathing description of the symptoms of shell-shock. The title itself is ironic as it questions what it means to survive; when in the end, you are reduced to speak in a disconnected and incoherent manner, to suffer from survivor's guilt, to dream of your dead friends who beckon you to join them and to be haunted by the images of the enemies you killed in the name of your country. Sassoon not only condemns the war, but also the government and the politicians who send out young men as sacrificial lambs.

## **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

The First World War (1914-18) had a profound impact on the development of American literature. Although the American Civil War (1861-65) and the Second World War (1939-45) exercise a stronger hold on the American imagination, and are more frequently dramatized in contemporary film and fiction, the Great War, arguably, influenced the nature and scope of American writing to a greater degree.

## **ALAN SEEGER**

Alan Seeger was born on 22nd June 1888 in New York City. On 24th August 1914, Seeger volunteered as a private in the Foreign Legion, French Army. He was killed in action on 4th July 1916 during the Somme Offensive, and is reported to have sung a patriotic song to urge his comrades on as he bled to death. His poem, *I Have a Rendezvous with Death* was the most popular and widely-quoted American poem from the war.

### ***I Have a Rendezvous with Death***

I have a rendezvous with Death  
At some disputed barricade,  
When Spring comes back with rustling shade  
And apple-blossoms fill the air—  
I have a rendezvous with Death  
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.  
It may be he shall take my hand  
And lead me into his dark land  
And close my eyes and quench my breath—  
It may be I shall pass him still.  
I have a rendezvous with Death  
On some scarred slope of battered hill,  
When Spring comes round again this year  
And the first meadow-flowers appear.  
God knows 'twere better to be deep  
Pillowed in silk and scented down,

Where love throbs out in blissful sleep,  
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,  
Where hushed awakenings are dear . . .  
    But I've a rendezvous with Death  
    At midnight in some flaming town,  
When Spring trips north again this year,  
And I to my pledged word am true,

I shall not fail that rendezvous.

In the poem, Seeger uses diction, repetition, personification and even rhyme scheme to convey to his reader that, though unpredictable, death is not inevitable. It is something to be feared, but to be calmly accepted.

Death is personified in the piece. The whole premise of the “rendezvous” is based on the narrator meeting this personage of death as if he were to meet any other man. With this poem, Seeger encouraged many young American boys to join the army.

### ***Conclusion***

In conclusion, we have observed that even when based on the same theme, the points of view of different poets and their treatment of the subject can be very different. Depending on how the poem is written, it can portray a very distinct image that sets it apart from other poems. It does appear that as the war continued, it led many poets like Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon to expose the futility of the conflict and to present a realistic perspective of the war; instead of delivering propagandist messages that intensified nationalism and glorified war. Thus, we can say that taken all together, these poems present the war as a devastating moment in history, an event both heartening and humbling, and remind us that its resonances never cease.

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## *Cinema and the Great War*

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Guided by Dr. Seema Sharma

“No war was as violent, pointless, and as miserable as the First World War. With eight-and-a-half million dead, and twenty million injured, it was a disaster unparalleled in human history. There was nothing great about the Great War, except the scale of despair and destruction.”

These are the words of Andrew Kelly, as written in the introduction of his book, *Cinema and the Great War* (2014) marks the centennial of the Great War’s outbreak, an event whose legacy has been debated, misunderstood, and problematically forgotten, soon relegated to mere “prequel” status to the even greater cataclysm that erupted some 25 years later with World War II. But today’s political map reflects the legacy of the First World War – including many ongoing international conflicts. Cinematic treatments of WWI are rich and varied, ranging from classic silent films, which were depicting very recent events, to more current films, whose treatment of the period is imbued with historical metaphor reflecting the moment in which these films were made.

The First World War as represented in popular cinema provides fresh insight into the role of film as a historical and cultural tool. Through a comparative approach, contributors from Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States of America enrich our understanding of cinematic depictions of the Great War in particular, and combat in general.

In tracking the dearth of World War I films released over the last hundred years, we begin to see a surprising pattern; an inordinate amount of them are superlative movies. While the trenches lack the grandiosity of besieged beaches and nuclear wastelands, they provide an intimate opportunity for esprit de corps among the men fighting and a healthy degree of situational unease. The clash of classes, and the cross-national bonds inherent among nobility spice up the narrative and the sparring forces of good versus evil are concealed, providing a subtlety and grey area that can’t be felt in the often black and white skirmishes of World War II.

This paper is being presented, among the many others, to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of World War I for it was a time when cinema, still in its infancy, proved to be an effective tool for documentation. The cinematic representations of the War we have chosen to study are, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930), *Paths of Glory* (1957), *War Horse* (2011), and a collection of documentaries that speak of the women in wartime. We identify, in these films, the “doomed adventure”, as a manifestation of postwar societal disillusionment around the world, wherein a protagonist’s once-promising journey wrought by tragic circumstance, leads to the character’s dissatisfaction with the adventure. Along the way, we also attempt to bring to the attention of the reader the changing role of women during this time, through the documentaries that represented them.

### **All Quiet on the Western Front:**

*All Quiet on the Western Front* is a 1930 American film directed by Lewis Milestone that narrates the harrowing life of German soldiers who engaged in trench warfare at the Western Front during the First World War.

Though based on Enrich Remarque's novel of the same name, the film is not a passive rendition because it uses the full potential of celluloid to resurrect the horrors of the war.

In an early sequence, the camera pans into a classroom where the teacher is delivering a passionate speech about honour and the fulfillment of one's duty towards the nation. The sequence ends with the whole class leaving the room, joyfully chanting, to volunteer for the front. The ardour displayed in the images is intensified by the pace of the editing. While the pupils jump to their feet, one after the other declaring their personal entry into the war, the camera keeps switching faster and faster between close ups of the pupils and the teacher, seeming to frantically lose itself in the ecstasy of the moment. This camera technique suggests fanatic nationalism which will soon be disillusioned by the war.

In another iconic shot, an enemy soldier is shown, one moment struggling over a barbed wire fence, and the next, obliterated by a grenade; his two amputated hands are all that are left clinging to the fence. The use of such symbolism not only adds to the aesthetic value of the film, but allows the viewer myriad perspectives into the complex nature of war.

In an extremely sensitive scene, the protagonist Paul Baumer and his friends are seen in the company of three French girls. Though the boys are tough soldiers, they are overwhelmed when the girls offer them warm feminine comfort. The juxtaposition of quiet scenes like this one with those of blood and bullets conveys what is part of the film's opening credits – This story will simply try to tell of a generation of men who, even though may have escaped death's shells, were destroyed by the war.

Unlike its contemporaries like *West-front 1918* (1930), *The Other Side* (1931), and *No Man's land* (1931), *All Quiet On The Western Front* was the only one that offended the sentiments of militants to such a degree that it was banned in Germany between the 1930s and 1940s, in Australia till 1941, in Italy till 1956, and in France till 1963. This was primarily because *All Quiet on the Western Front* shattered every myth that glorified war, humanised all enemies and explicitly condemned the masters of war.

One of the first reviews on *All Quiet on the Western Front*, soon after its release, read that the audience "most of the time was held to silence by its realistic scenes". Nearly eight and half decades later, it continues to have the same effect on audiences the world over because above all, it fleshes out the human tragedy lost in the politics of war.

### **Paths of Glory:**

General Broulard asks, "Wherein have I done wrong?"

Colonel Dax replies, "Because you don't know the answer to that question, I pity you."

Just one of the many powerful dialogues from *Paths of Glory*. Originally a book written by Humphrey Cobb in 1935, but adapted into a movie directed by Stanley Kubrick in 1957, this is a movie about a General who, blinded by the promise of another star on his uniform, is persuaded to send his soldiers on a suicidal mission. After the inevitable failure, the General thinks of a cruel way to save face: put all 8,000 soldiers on trial for cowardice. Colonel Dax, seemingly the only man with a conscience in the film, argues against this. The General is convinced, but only to reduce the number to three. One of the men chosen to be executed is an officer who argued with his superior for trivializing the death of a fellow soldier. The other two are chosen randomly. These three men are found guilty in a fraud court martial. They are driven to insanity by the painful lack of reason and are eventually executed.

The film is a cinematic experience that moves the viewer to the core, all the while doing complete justice to the story in every respect. World War I was ruthless, gory, and absolutely unnecessary. This film ensures that its viewers know this, and remember it.

It captures something that was lost amid the loud cries of cannons, guns, grenades, and the unhealthy need for power – basic human emotions. The cinematography gives us those emotions through marvelously lit portraits. The camera gives us close-ups of the characters which flesh out the melancholy we feel while watching them.

Our ears think it appropriate for a movie about the army to have military drums and grand victorious themes playing in the background. But towards the end of the film, the music slyly turns condescending as does the title. The title of the film is a quotation from a poem called ‘Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard’ that says: “Paths of glory lead but to the grave.”

This film is a source for so much that one can learn about the First World War and its intricacies, but its most important and overarching theme is that of the irony of its title; *Paths of Glory*. What is glory? Glory in the military is land conquered, prisoners captured, and status-quo upheld. But in maintaining this glory, the life of an individual is often ignored. A century after the First World War, a small, but true, story is still relevant. ‘Paths of Glory’ still do lead to the grave. Colonel Dax, the voice of reason in this story knows that while it would be nice to live in a Utopian world without a military, it is not a possibility. He carries on with his duties. All the same, he knows that it is essential that individuals in the military let themselves feel simple human emotions, once a while.

*Paths of Glory*, in its clear-cut, concise and precise manner, tells the viewer of the suffering that the War caused to the individual, but it also teaches one a lesson; the consequences of greed for glory.

### **War Horse:**

As it begins, *War Horse* depicts the ultimate pastoral scene – farmlands over farmlands are spread on the sprawling countryside of what we learn to be Devon, and in the distance, a young man watches the birthing of a colt with admiration and fascination. This opening sequence sets the tone for a major part of the film. Its temperate portrayal of

wartime gives the film the freedom to breathe into its story a sharp emotional thread that is held strong by the presence of the narrator, Joey, our Bay Thoroughbred horse-hero.

*War Horse* is bold, unafraid of sentiment, and lets out all the stops in magnificently staged action sequences. Its characters are clearly defined and strongly played by charismatic actors. Its message is a universal one, about the horror of war in which men and animals suffer and die, but for the animals there is no reason: They have cast their lot with men who have betrayed them.

Joey meets a series of masters along his journey, all from different sides of the war, but all men with a sense of respect and admiration for horses. His interactions with these men in the many scenes, whether along the Salisbury Fields, the German bases in France, or even the trenches on the warfront, paint a picture of a grey area – one where neither side fell into good or bad. This is quite similar to the war in general. Nobody understood why it was happening – which side was truly “in the wrong”, quite unlike the Second World War, where there existed a greatly pronounced sense of wrong and right, black and white.

But this movie also teaches us that war is no place for sentiment. An officer explains in one of the sequences with a sense of brutal realism, that the horse was a weapon, to be used or destroyed. It shows the absolute stupidity of the military, believing that charging forward fast would mean a surefire victory; and not being able to come to terms with the fact that the world was now moving ahead of Edwardian war techniques, and the chivalry of a gentlemanly battle, into the realm of technology, trench warfare and modern weaponry. What these brave army officers would also go on to forget was that horses couldn't be put up against machine guns!

In this picaresque tale of misery, where the characters are nearly all archetypes of youth, wisdom, duty and so on, we eventually arrive in the hellish trenches, with rival mass armies dug into field of mud and barbed wire, with long tracking shots and overhead views giving us the complete effect. Surely some of the best footage Spielberg has ever directed involves Joey running wild outside trenches, galloping in a panic through barbed wire lines and dragging wire and posts after him, as his flesh is cruelly torn. This leads to the scene where, in an attempt to save the animal and free him from the barbed wire, soldiers from both sides meet in the No Man's Land under a temporary truce, and share wire cutters to cut the barbed wire holding Joey down. Perhaps no one but Spielberg could have filmed something like this, and this uncharacteristic burst of intensity against the slow-moving, temperate tone of the film, brings a sense of warmth to the viewer over the fact there was a positive end in sight; that a truce, a friendship, could still be formed, and there was still hope. The film can be seen, objectively, as the complete film – one with elements of familial love, a little lightness and humor infused by the young French farm girl and her time with the horses, and then, the horrors and weariness of the war. It puts into perspective the huge loss incurred during the war – not only that of human life and property, but of animal life and the beast that most overlook as weaponry.

## Women in World War One: Through Documentaries

Women entered the work force en masse during the Great War, as men headed out to war, sacrifice, and death; moving from their previously domestic lives tied largely to their homes into the world of industry and raw labour.

To fill the gap left by a generation of fighting men, more than a million women took the chance to join the workforce between 1914 and 1918. A sudden influx of women was seen in unusual occupations such as bank clerks, ticket sellers, elevator operators, chauffeurs, street car conductors, railroad trackwalkers, section hands, locomotive wipers and oilers, locomotive dispatchers, block operators, draw bridge attendants; women were seen working in machine shops, steel mills, powder and ammunition factories, airplane works, boot blacking, and farming.

Four major documentaries are taken into account when attempting to understand the place of these women in society during the Great War. These documentaries are, *The Great War* (1964), *And We Knew How to Dance* (1994), *The First World War* (2003), and *World War in Colour* (2009). A fictional motion picture might construe the facts to fit in a dramatic mould of expression but a documentary remains true to its factual reality. The documentaries that portray the stories of these women in the grand scheme of the war remain respectful of the facts and the opinions in a balanced manner.

The two most important and talked about professions of women during wartime were that of Ammunitions factory workers, and nurses. These women would put themselves through long, stressful days of rough – manly – work, for the sole purpose of acting, either in memory of, or with the desire to be in aid of, the soldiers on the battlefield; their sweethearts, husbands, family members.

Lloyd George's ammunitions and armament scheme created potential for employment among the women because every day, more and more munitions were needed on the war front. The documentaries mention, time and time again, the role of these women, the ammunition workers. In one of BBC's mini documentaries, one can find accounts from women that worked in these factories during wartime. Their words stir in the viewer a sense of sympathy and pride. Sympathy for their suffering, their loss; pride for their effort, their hard work and their sheer dedication. So dedicated were these women to their work, they would find ways to entertain themselves while working so as to keep their focus from drifting. As stated by a Canadian woman in the documentary *And We Knew How to Dance* (1994), the girls would often whistle or sing as they worked to keep spirits up. However, that was not the only reason for them to be christened with the nickname of "Canaries". Due to prolonged exposure to sulfur from the TNT, their arms would turn yellow, so giving them this nickname seemed the appropriate thing to do; to give a somewhat pretty title to an ugly job.

The movie *War Nurse* (1930) displayed the way many women joined the Red Cross aiming to meet admirable soldiers or with the intention to actually help the wounded. Young women volunteered to join the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) and First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY). The volunteer nurses came from a variety of backgrounds: cooks, domestic servants, laundry workers, etc. Their medical training was basic, but the

fact that they went to the war zone meant that they could help badly wounded soldiers and give them basic medical treatment. Those who joined the FANY's had a less thrilling time as they had to drive ambulances and run soup kitchens for the soldiers. They helped organize baths for those soldiers given some time off from the front line. Volunteering brought them out of the house and into the public. Women had no trouble filling the gaps left by men who went to war. The nurses tried their best to comfort the men; holding their hands and taking up the role of ad hoc mothers or whatever sort of caregiver the soldiers required, especially in their darkest of moments or at the bridge that connected life to nothingness.

Movies like *All Quiet on The Western Front* (1979) showcase beds upon beds of the ailing and the wounded, most of them traumatized and wanting relief, so much so that men who had a missing limb – if not fatally wounded – were considered lucky as they got to go home. But anyone who received medically facilitated and/or honorary leave were changed so drastically, so traumatically, that they craved danger, and such disorders ruined their life. They would never be the same again. Returning soldiers had a difficult time adjusting to civilian life and grasping the concept of ‘relatively safe’.

Any survivors and the fully healed would opt for heading back into the line of fire either in order to redeem themselves or due to suicidal tendencies that prevailed over human nature after seeing gory death in action at the trenches.

The wounded would be piling up outside the doors of the Red Cross nurses. Pain, loss, and waste of youth triumphed over all. Sentences like “next year (they will send us soldiers) right out the cradle” captured a lot of attention because so much human life went to waste that soldiers were being made out of children. Several nurses found the end of their life while helping the wounded and the distressed.

It was the best and worst of times for women. They were granted economic independence, but at the same time, were exploited for being the weaker sex. The First World War gave a new dimension to gender roles and created history by liberating women from the domestic sphere.

***Conclusion:***

After the war, as memory began to fade, cinema continued to shape the war’s legacy, and eventually to determine the ways in which all warfare is imagined. One hopes that this paper will supplement the vast array of literature on the subject, and will perhaps help us to better understand why, as Roger Cohen recently wrote in *The New York Times*, “The war haunts us still.”



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TYBA FAREWELL CLASS of 2014



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## LITERATURE FESTIVAL 2014-2015



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## BOOK & BAKE SALE 2014-2015



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## ANNUAL STUDENTS' SEMINAR



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**LEARNING THE LANGUAGE OF DISSENT WITH TIBETAN  
ACTIVIST AND WRITER, TENZIN TSUNDUE**



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ALL ABOUT MAKING MUSIC AND THE ART OF  
CREATING LITERATURE - PROF. MINER'S TALK ON THE  
CREATIVE PROCESSES

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS



### **Bindiya Vaid**

Alongside reading and writing, I'm also interested in the performing arts, sports and furry four-legged creatures. Live for beaches. Usually found in dessert-ed places. (Yes, dessert with a double 's')

Sir **Abhishek Lamba** could not be reached for comment. He was last seen orbiting a black hole.



### **Payal Mohta**

Until she started feasting on Satyajit Ray's films, and living by Bob Dylan's songs, Payal wanted to be a heart surgeon. (Now she's pretty sure she belongs anywhere but the ER!) With her limited knowledge and interest in pop culture (with the exception of Honey Singh, of course!), she often qualifies as an alien in social circles or worse, wait for it-"you're like my mom"! So when she's not running for theatre rehearsals, planning her outfits for the week or pretending to be a panda, she takes time out to write.

**Shyamoli Chatterjee** wants to be a psych major like the rest of the 119 in her class of 120. Her elixir is south Indian food and she worships music. Her dogs name is Bacon and she says he aspires to be a Pussycat Doll when he grows up. She has a message for all the Jai Hindites out there, "believe in yourselves, chill out on the crop tops and don't buy the iPhone 6. Long live Chinese Bhel Frankie. Peace.



### **Aayush Asthana**

#Aayush. I am the universe. If you can read this, you are too.

**Priyanka Banerjee** is an FYBA student passionate about storytelling of any medium, be it theatre, cinema or books. Through running her theatre production house, "Leogirl Productions", she hopes to professionally participate and contribute to each of these mediums in her career.



**Damini Kane** is an SYBA student who spends way too much time writing, watching anime and trying to converse with her pet Labradors. She enjoys unhealthy food, foreign music and animated movies. She dislikes tomatoes, bad books and slow internet connections.



**Rhea Bajaj**

I don't necessarily enjoy writing. I do it anyway. I like humans, pigs in cups and words. I do not appreciate clowns; their physical presence makes me rather uncomfortable. Complex carbohydrates are my greatest nemesis.

**Monal Thaakar** is a First year BA student at Jai Hind. A proud Air Force Brat, he has grown up and traveled across India, living in different cultures and inheriting a bit of each. He believes in bending conventional literary genres and methods of storytelling, and is particularly fascinated with time travel and stories set in the past or the future. An aspiring writer, director and actor, he aims to attend the National School of Drama in Delhi.



**Qurat ul ain**

First year Arts Student. Quiet and unapproachable till you get to know her. Avid Reader. Occasional writer. Loves Urdu poetry, especially that of Ghalib and Faiz. Loves cooking and all things old: be it Books, Hindi songs or Ghazals. Worships FRIENDS (yes, the TV show, of course).

**Gigi Sarah D'cruz** is an art enthusiast, the paintings of Monet hold a special place in her heart. She loves birds, flowers, seashells, clouds, the ocean, wine, everything old fashioned and everything French. Gigi loves to dream and believes - Il n'est rien de réel que le rêve et l'amour (Nothing is real but dreams and love). Gigi loves.



# THE TEAM

## Editors:



**Varun Gwalani** is a published author and experimental short story writer at [ohmynatis.wordpress.com](http://ohmynatis.wordpress.com); and was a panelist at Literature Live. Between writing and being passionate about stuff no one has ever heard of, like Community, Interactive Fiction and Meta devices, he is a TYBA English major. He also likes referring to himself in third person.

## **Manvi Ranghar**

They named me Manvi. Deeply lost, deeply controlled by her ego and knows it. Loves books, philosophy; pretentiously well read, blues purist, film enthusiast; paints, hates writing such self synopsis; nature loving trash picking self proclaimed hippie. Searching for something, don't know what. Aren't we all?



## **Zohra Malik**

Called Zohra or Shamsheer depending on the kind of shoes she's wearing. Compulsive bibliophile and in love with Morrissey. She will shamelessly claim to suffer from alexithymia till she finds her own medium.

## Designer:

**Komal Chandwani** is a SYBA student and aspires to major in English. She is an avid reader who welcomes solitude, books and coffee at any and all times. She enjoys writing in the peace of the night, when she lets her imagination take a course of its own. This girl believes herself to be a nyctophilic.

