



August ,2023

ALPAS

-Freedom from the shackles of mundane norms

BISHOP COTTON WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

#19, 3rd Cross, Mission Road, C. S. I. Compound, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560027.

NEWSLETTER FROM THE PG DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

On behalf of the P.G. Department of English Studies, I am glad to present the 3rd Weekly Wall Journal "Alpas," a Filipino phrase which means to be free from the shackles of monotony. It is the ability to get away, to feel a sense of freedom, and escape the mundane. The journal for this week is based on the theme "The Image of Women in Indian Literature." The journal attempts to explore and record various themes within the field of English Studies. We could reach this stage through the constant support of the faculty and intellectual generosity of the authors and scholars we encounter in our syllabus.

One of the objectives of this journal is to encourage its students and faculty to publish scholarly articles, creative writing, and enriching reviews to further the discourse on the weekly themes. Readers can notice the progression of ideas made through book and film reviews, which emerge as an important section of this journal. The book review section this time features "Indulekha" by Oyyarathu Chandu Menon put together by Ms. Neha, student of the I MA. The film "Lihaaf" is reviewed by Ms. Nafisa, student of II MA. We also provide a platform for creative writing and critical thinking, towards which Mrs. Shwetha Ravi, guest faculty has authored a flash fiction "My Grandmother's Paradise (Namma Aji Mane)." Ms. Precilla, of the II MA, puts her thoughts on the theme in the form of a poem. The importance of the happenings in our society is put forth under the "Current Issues" section, to bring awareness and to encourage voicing out opinions and expanding spheres of one's intellect. This section in our journal for this week is collated by Ms. Anusha, of the I MA. The academic section presents to the reader, activities, conference, lectures, and book clubs the Department of English Studies had conducted or participated in through the week.

The MA English weekly wall journal encourages students from other disciplines to contribute in the areas of creative writing and critical thinking. We would be greatly pleased to have them published in our future editions.

Sharon Christy
STUDENT EDITOR

ALPAS

Editorial Team

Chief Editor: Dr. Amitha Santiago

Faculty Editors: Ms. Samantha Christopher, Ms. Shwetha M.

Student Editor: Ms. Sharon Christy

Alpas

*- Freedom from the shackles of
mundane norms.*

THE IMAGE OF WOMEN IN INDIAN LITERATURE

**A woman with a
book and a pen
has the power to
move nations.
A woman with a
mind and a voice
has the power to
change the world.**

-- Shasha Temerte





My Grandmother's Paradise

Namma Ajji Mane

Oiling our hair and combing it, Ajji always reminded us that if she were to pass away, there would be no one to nurture us like she did. And now Ajji is no longer with us, but her memories continue to live on. My Grandmother's house, which I refer to as Namma Ajji mane, holds a very special place in my heart. The chapters of memories we made together are something I even now cherish.

I am transported to a whole new world filled with warmth and joy. Her home was always a place of welcoming and joy for everyone. I have learned many life lessons from her, which continue to guide me to this day. Her greatest courage was revealed after her husband abandoned her and their 4 children a few years after marriage. It is no wonder that Ajji was named Kamala, so akin to that of a lotus flower, there couldn't have been a more fitting name for my grandmother, for she bloomed like the lotus, beautiful and worthy of admiration in spite of emerging from waters that were murky. Ajji's house was paradise, where we would start our day with her delicious coffee and spend our time in the living room, watching her impress us with her culinary skills. We would share stories, laugh and cry when they were narrated. Grandma and I shared a lot of interests, like stitching, handicraft, and mirror work. We were avid readers and I followed in her footsteps of reading books. She even stitched my marriage clothes and was the first person to hold my daughter when she was born.

Her home may now be empty, but the nostalgic memories of our time together will forever live in my heart.

Mrs. Shwetha Ravi, Faculty.

Unchained Wings

*The male gaze,
a daily chore*

Made me ponder like never before

"Why does only the body attract and never my mind?"

*Should I focus on looks,
or beautify my thoughts?*

*My heart ached for the voiceless,
their unheard cries*

For once, I too was one among their guise

My mind filled with questions on marriage, I did ask

Was it my sole purpose, society's ultimate task?

All the books I read talked about women being victims

No one realized we too could be heroes

to ourselves and villains to the Other,

I take my pen and write words now,

Give voice to the unheard.

While I work towards my goal,

Obstacles in numbers I encountered,

My husband, family, the list goes on and on,

Fuelling my will to expose what one calls SOCIAL NORMS.

Rani was my name, but it seemed to fade

Lost in the sea of expectations and trade

Freedom and love, within marriage, does it exist?

Or was it just one cup of coffee,

and dinner on the list?

He sips his coffee to refresh his mind

But I inhale the breath of freedom while I write,

Questions of society no longer control me

I live for me, and that's what sets me free.

Lihaaf

Genre: Drama

Release Date: 19th July 2019

Produced: Rahat Khazmi, Tariq Khan, Namita Lal, Zeba Sajid, Ashish Wagh, Umesh Shukla.

Director: Rahat Kazmi

Cast: Sonal Sehgal, Anushka Sen, Rahat Kazmi, Mir Sarwar, Virendra Saxena, Tariq Hana, Tanshitta Chattererijee, Shoib Shah.

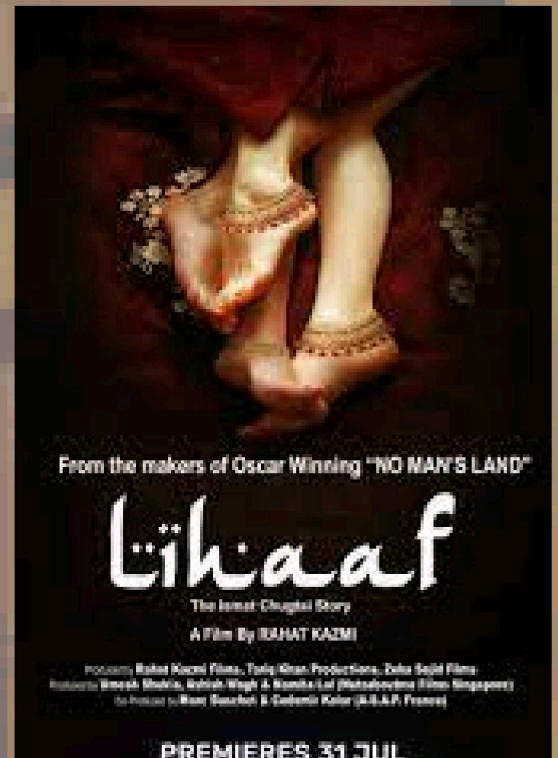
Rating: 2.5/5

“Lihaaf”, is based on a short story written by one of the most prominent Urdu writers, Ismat Chughtai. The short story was adapted into a film directed by Rahat Kazmi. It runs in two parallel tracks: One features the author Ismat Chughtai's court trial for vulgarity in Lahore for writing “Lihaaf”, while the latter features the short story's dramatized version of same-sex love, proffering themes on homosexuality.

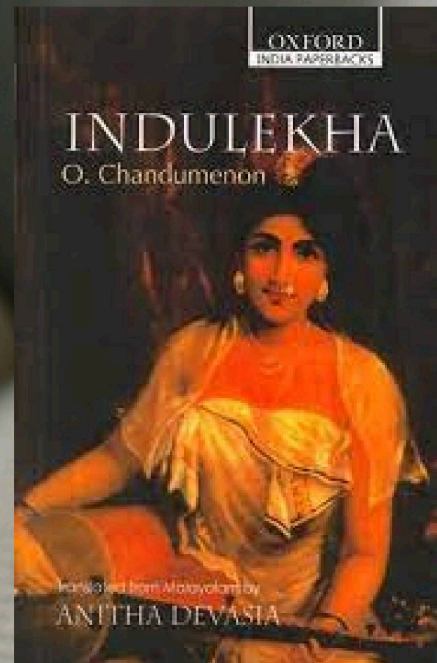
In the opening scene, Chughtai receives a court summons from Lahore. She is accompanied by her husband Shahid throughout the trial. She is expected to apologize and cease writing content that portrayed explicit sexual imagery and is accused of obscenity. The narrative is based on true-to-life encounters that she had during her teenage years. The story revolves around a child who is abused, and the protagonist's perspective is central to the theme of same-sex love. Lihaaf has shed light on how women seek delight in the company of other women out of pure neglect as a result of the action of wealthy landowners who pursue male-centric pleasures. Women were confined within the four walls whereas men were allowed to keep male concubines. The story is about a woman who is denied to consummate her marriage and seeks comfort in the company of a masseuse.

Ismat Chughtai opens up her thoughts on the real suffering of women in society. Her trial demonstrates the oppression often imposed by patriarchal societies, where legislation dictates what is considered obscene in writing and seeks to suppress the stories of women who revolt against the repressive society. The marriage becomes a prison for Begumjan, her sexual desire is fulfilled with Rabbu. Nawab Sahab keeps patriarchy intact by presenting himself as respectable and normative. His cowardice and deceit does not allow Begumjan to live the life she wants to.

The movie shows the difficulties encountered between the socio-cultural norms and the defines of the same. It opens this door to understanding the plight of young ladies suppressing their desires for a full and free life under the veil in a traditional Muslim aristocratic society. “Lihaaf” is widely criticized for its openly sexual content, but the story is centered on the life of a neglected wife through the eyes of a child.



Title of the Book: Indulekha
Author: O. Chandumenon
Year of publication: 2005
Publication house: Publication in India
by Oxford University Press.
Place of publication : New Delhi.



Indulekha was originally written in Malayalam by the author Oyyarathu Chandu Menon in 1889 and was translated to English in 2005 by Professor Anitha Devasia from the University of Kochi. The protagonist Indulekha is a beautiful nair lady who is musically inclined, progressive-minded and was given an education by her uncle Kochu Krishna Menon. She studied among other things, the English language. Her lover Madhavan was a scholar from the then University of Madras, who was well-read in English and head over heels in love with Indulekha.

The relationship between Indulekha and Madhavan develops from childhood games to long conversations and reciting various slokas to each other. Their feelings for each other remain unexpressed for a long while. This is because Madhavan is afraid that someone much richer and worthier than himself will snatch her away whilst Indulekha just wants him to concentrate on his studies.

The novel does a great job of asserting women's rights by making the female lead an educated, talented young woman who lived in an independent quarters of her own, spending her days reading, and playing her veena. The character of Indulekha unlike many of her time was a strong and bold lady who when proposed to by a boastful Namboothiri, rejects him directly.

The last part of the novel, although inconsequential to the plot, is the most important part of the novel and has been removed from the print edition. The last couple of pages of the novel talk about the need for educating girl children. During the mid-1950s, this part was axed from the book. The novel also clearly shows the class and caste distinctions prevalent at the time. This is done through the Madhavan's first feud with Panju Menon is over-educating a boy from a lower class. The novel was written in the style of the English's novel form and is the first significant attempt of fictional writing in this mode, in India.

Neha, I MA

EVENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT

Critical Enquiry and Research Methodology Paper Research Writing and Critical and Creative Thinking Skills Workshop

A research writing workshop was conducted on the 25th of February for the I and II year MA English students. The students were introduced to academic and research writing. They were given passages and asked to attempt an academic essay. They were also given guidelines to write an abstract for their dissertations and were asked to present the same before the class. The students made their presentations and constructive feedback was given to them by both the students and the faculty. The aim was to enable students to critically evaluate their own writing and attempt to edit their work constructively using relevant feedback.

The students found the session helpful and were able to successfully incorporate the feedback given in the coming days.



Current Affairs

March 2023



KIRTANA KUMAR'S 'BANGALORE BLUES' GIVES READERS A LOOK AT WHAT THE CITY USED TO BE

Bangalore Blues was launched on February 11 at Blossom Book House, Church Street at 5.30pm by Rajyotsava awardee Chiranjiv Singh, Priya Chetty-Rajagopal, founder of Heritage Beku and fashion curator Prasad Bidapa. Bangalore Blues comprises 33 stories and one essay about the city between the 1960s to a certain dystopia. The book is about characters and human beings who usually don't get written about; people don't remember them and they just fall through the cracks.

MY BIGGEST CRITIC IS MYSELF: SAYS SHEETAL OHRI, AUTHOR, THE CUSTODIAL BATTLE

Sheetal Ohri who is a successful and experienced entrepreneur, an accomplished communicator gives an insight in her writing journey. She talks about the book, her inspiration, work life balance and a lot more. "My biggest critic is myself. It took me a long time to finalize the book for publishing as I was never sure if the book was completed to give understanding and guidance to other immigrant's and provide them resources via my book", says Sheetal Ohri.



AN ELEGY TO A PLURALISTIC, POLYGLOT INDIA WINS READERS AND CRITICS IN THE WEST

Geetanjali Shree's prizewinning novel "Tomb of Sand" pushed the boundaries of experimental writing in Hindi and spotlighted the wealth of Indian literature in languages other than English. A fixture of the Indian literary landscape for more than three decades, with five novels to her name, Shree had never reached a global audience. That changed last year, when the English-language edition of "Tomb of Sand," translated by Daisy Rockwell, received the 2022 International Booker Prize, becoming the first translation from a South Asian language to win. Rights to the novel have now sold in a dozen languages, and a U.S. edition was published by HarperCollins last month.