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2002 - 2003

The vibrant colours of flaming red and ochre on the cover page signify the power of the creative twin forces of Passion and Reason. The shadows reveal the image of the beloved foundress of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Blessed Mary of the Passion. Within the image, on the left, is represented the sail of a ship guided by the star of the sea. On the right, we see the figures of young women gazing into the horizons, confident and secure in the knowledge that the lode star that is their Alma Mater will always be there to guide them through life.

Cover Design : Ms. LAKSHMI PRIYA & Ms. PAYAL SHAH



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STELLA MARIS COLLEGE

(Autonomous)

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2002-2003

*Y*our reason and your passion are the rudder and the sails of your seafaring soul.

If either of your sails or your rudder be broken, you can but toss and drift, or else be held at a standstill in mid-seas.

For reason, ruling alone, is a force confining; and passion, unattended, is a flame that burns to its own destruction.

Therefore let your soul exalt your reason to the height of passion, that it may sing;

And let it direct your passion, with reason, that your passion may live through its own daily resurrection, and like the phoenix rise above its own ashes.' [...]

Among the hills when you rest in the cool shade of the white poplars sharing the peace and serenity of distant fields and meadows – then let your heart say in silence, “God rests in reason.”

And when the storm comes, and the mighty wind shakes the forest, and thunder and lightning proclaim the majesty of the sky — then let your heart say in awe, “God moves in passion.”

And since you are a breath of God's sphere and a leaf in God's forest you too should rest in reason and move in passion.'

KHALIL GIBRAN'S *THE PROPHET*

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Editorial

If passion is that which inspires us to seek what lies beyond the mountains and moves us to fly where eagles dare, then reason shows us the way-not to remove the mountains but to walk around them, thus discovering the wonders that lie on the other side.

Blessed Mary of the Passion, Foundress of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, is a perfect blend of Reason and Passion, one so consumed with love for Christ that she saw Him in every living creature she touched during her life on Earth. "Make of my heart and of the Institute burning fire that will set the earth ablaze," she said, and that she truly did as she fired the hearts and minds of countless young women the world over who follow in her footsteps.

The various writings featured here reflect the aspirations, the dreams, the disappointments, and the reality that we encounter every day, a reality that belongs to a world which, despite its darkness and disillusionment, is still a beautiful place to be alive in. There is still hope, in every act of will to go on, in every new word written in an

attempt to create, to preserve, and to immortalize. And this glow of hope is the flickering flame of an earthen lamp, which burns in the belief that the world has a future. It is but fitting that in the year of her beatification, we dedicate this volume to one who truly lived this.

These freshly printed pages reflect our attempt to weave the threads of Reason and Passion together and create a piece of tapestry that will epitomize for all eternity how glorious, vibrant and sensitive to life the Stella Marian spirit is. Our words become now an expression of our passion, rationalized by the reassuring solidity of language. When these pages are yellowed and stiffened with age, an as-yet-unborn Stella Marian may look with a twinge of something akin to nostalgia (and certainly some amusement) at life on campus in 2002-2003, and feel the spirit of Stella Maris infuse her with courage "when storms arise and day gives way to night," knowing that the same star that shone on the youthful hearts and minds of a past avatar of Stella Maris still shines upon her.

Editorial Board:

Student Members

Ms Nandini K, II BA English
Ms Poonam Mohan Ganglani, I BA English
Ms Payal Shah, I MA Fine Arts

Assisted by:

Ms Vaishnavi R, I BA English
Ms Priyanka Joseph, I BA English

Faculty Members

Ms Deepa Alexander, History
Ms Lakshmi Priya Daniel, Fine Arts
Ms Meghna Mudaliar, English
Ms Gita Balachandran, Librarian
Dr Chitra Krishnan, French

Prize Winners

The Editorial Board of the College Magazine ran a competition inviting entries from students in various categories including short stories, feature articles, photos, essays and poems. The faculty members of the Editorial Board made up the jury. The names of Student Prize Winners in the various categories are listed below:

English

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|-----------------|-----|---|
| Poetry | I | <i>Untitled</i> - Veena Kuruvilla, III B.Com. |
| | II | <i>My Tibetanness</i> - Tenzin Dolkar, I B.A. History |
| | III | <i>Tête à Tête with Mom</i> - Poonam Mohan Ganglani, I B.A. English |
| Short Story | I | <i>Feather and Leaf</i> - Priyanka Joseph, I B.A. English |
| | II | <i>The Weavers</i> - Srisrividhiya, II M.A. Fine Arts |
| | III | <i>The Sound of Memory</i> - Subiksha Krishniah, I B.A. English |
| Feature article | I | <i>You can't be Sirius!</i> - K. Nandini, II B.A. English |
| | II | <i>The Wonder that is</i> - Srisrividhiya, II M.A. Fine Arts |
| | III | <i>Paradise</i> - Ranjitha Gunasekaran, II B.A. English |

Hindi

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Poetry | <i>Meethi Parchaiyein</i> - Vandana Krishnan, II B.A. English |
| Prose | <i>Vinyapannon Ki Shikaar</i> - Debashree, I B.A. Economics |

Tamil

- | | |
|------|---|
| Poem | <i>Kallam Ponaanethe</i> (Poem) - L Priscilla Sandra, I B.Sc. Maths |
|------|---|

- | | |
|--------|---|
| French | <i>Les Commissions de Maman</i> - Poonam Mohan Ganglani, I B.A. English |
|--------|---|



Dr. Nalinakshi Madhavamurthy, Head, Postgraduate Department of Mathematics, is retiring after 25 years of service. Her quiet and methodical demeanour belies the wealth of knowledge and intellectual acumen she possesses.

Dr. Prema Bhat, faculty, Department of Psychology, has contributed richly to the growth of the department over the last 26 years. Generations of students have benefited from her expertise as counsellor and Dean of Students. She has been the director of the research project - University and Community Development through Sangamam, the service centre of the college at Royapuram.

We are immensely grateful to our retiring faculty for their loyalty and committed service to this institution.

The college has had its share of sad moments. Recently, we bade farewell to our student, Ms. Sharlote Pereira of I year MSW, who died in a tragic road accident. A diligent and caring student, she will be missed by all of us.

The advent of the new millennium has seen institutions of higher education throwing open their portals to international universities

and organizations, both private and governmental, through collaborative ventures, thus expanding the realm of knowledge.

I would like to place before you the contribution of the college to higher education and our achievements at the international, national and state level, this past year.

At the international level, the college has been in the limelight through the conference which was organised by the Departments of Arts and Commerce - 'Women in Asia: Issues and Concerns' in December 2002. The conference brought together eminent academicians, women's rights activists and others from across Asia. The seminar focused on victimhood, advocacy and agency, rights and privileges, and offered possibilities of networking among like-minded men and women in facing challenges. This was an enriching experience for faculty and students alike and the media paid rich tributes to the organisers.

The internationalisation of higher education was highlighted further by the participation of several of our faculty in workshops and conferences. I represented the college at the 'International Conference on Globalisation and Catholic Higher Education - Hopes and Challenges,' held at Vatican City in



December 2002, organised by the International Federation of Catholic Universities.

Some of our faculty members have presented papers at International Conferences.

Dr. Sundari Krishnamurthy on 'Probing beyond Paradigms: Empowerment of Women through the use of Internet Booths in Villages of South India' at the International Sociological Association, in Brisbane, Australia, in June 2002.

Dr. Neeraja Rao on 'Victimisation of Women - A Case of Dowry Harassment in India' at a conference organised by the Metropolitan Police of London and John Jay College of New York, at London, in June 2002.

Sr. Jacintha Quadras on 'Embeddings of Cycles with Arbitrary Trees,' at the International Arab Conference on Information Technology at the University of Qatar, Doha in December 2002.

Dr. Usha Krishnan, Dr. Ordetta Mendoza and Ms. Mary George have been enriched through the Bioinformatics courses they attended at Katholieke University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands. The college has been invited to expand this collaboration with the University of Nijmegen through programmes offered by the Dutch Government.

The United Board for Christian Higher Education has been a source of financial support for faculty development and other programmes of the college. Under the faculty development program, Ms. Agnes Rozario, Department of Commerce, attended and delivered guest lectures at the University of Illinois and Boston University during June-July 2002. Ms. Bernadine Joseph, Department of

English, is currently attending a program at Valparaiso University, Indiana.

The UBCHEA has also supported the college in networking with St. Mary's College, Shirva, Karnataka, and training their faculty in Computer Applications. A National Seminar on 'Empowerment of Women' sponsored by the UBCHEA, was organised by the Women's Studies Cell of Stella Maris College.

The International Partnership for Service Learning (IPSL), which has a collaboration with the college, organised a conference on Service Learning in Asia: 'Creating Networks and Curriculum in Higher Education' at the International Christian University, Tokyo, Japan. Ms. Prabha Nair, Program Officer NSS, and Ms. Punitha, Dept. of Economics attended the conference. As part of the IPSL Summer Program, S. Nirmala, III B.Sc. Maths, participated in a six-week program held at Trinity College, Quezon City, Philippines, during July - August, 2002.

Sr. Lourdu Mary, Lecturer, Dept. of Social Work, is a consultant to the International Labour Organisation for the Integrated Program on Elimination of Child Labour.

Dr. Crystal David, Dept. of Economics, has been awarded the Lutheran World Federation Scholarship for a study programme in Chicago for a period of 10 weeks in April - June 2003.

Dr. V. Padma was the key-note speaker at the International Conference on 'Theatre and Tamil Diaspora', held in Switzerland in September 2002.

Several academicians from around the globe have also contributed to the growth and development of the college - Dr. Raman, Dept. of Rural Management, University of Sydney,

conducted a workshop for the faculty on formulating Research Proposals, Dr. Catherine Meyers, Fulbright Scholar and artist taught at the Department of Fine Arts. The Executive Members of the UBCHEA visited the college to review the projects and programmes of the college.

I would also like to take this opportunity to felicitate Mrs. Kausalya Appa Rao Jaganmohan, Dept. of French, who has been appointed the Honorary Consul of France in Chennai.

At the national level, the college has contributed to the process of higher education in a large measure through the active participation of the faculty and students in several programmes. The University Grants Commission and the Ministry of HRD recognised the college as an institution of national eminence and continue to sponsor academic programmes.

Dr. Geetha Swaminathan and Ms. Mary George, Dept. of Chemistry, conducted a State Level Training Programme for NGOs on 'The Detection and Prevention of Food Adulteration,' organised by the Madhya Pradesh State Council of Science and Technology at Bhopal.

The Department of Hindi organised a national level seminar on 'Teaching Hindi in the IT era.' Dr. Madhu Dhawan, the author of several novels, has been awarded the 'Bharat Excellence Award' from the Friendship Forum, New Delhi, for her outstanding services and achievements in the Hindi literary field.

Dr. Rukmani Srinivasan was awarded the Best Chemistry Teacher Award by the Chemical Research Society of India and Dr. Geetha Swaminathan was awarded the Chevalier Sivaji

Award by the Social and Cultural Academy, for her contribution to society.

The support extended to the faculty for research is another attempt by the college to enhance the quality of education, and it has paid rich dividends, with six of them receiving their doctoral degrees this year - Dr. Thilagavathi Joseph, Department of English, Dr. Rajini Rabindranath, Department of Physics, Dr. Poppy Kannan, Department of Social Work, Dr. Geradette Davey, Department of Botany, Dr. Chitra Krishnan, Department of French, and Dr. Alice Joseph, Department of Tamil. Eleven members of the faculty have been selected through the UGC's Faculty Improvement Program to complete their doctorates.

Introduction of the M.A. International Studies, M.Sc. Bioinformatics and M.Phil in Mathematics has enriched academic life on campus. We are proud to state that Stella Maris College was instrumental in introducing the two Postgraduate programmes at the University of Madras.

Fifteen years of experience as an autonomous college and five years under the credit based system of education, has afforded the faculty the expertise to be consultants for other institutions seeking autonomy and introduction of the credit-based system. Several Principals and faculty of colleges from Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala have visited the college to study its functioning as an autonomous college. Faculty from the college have also served as resource persons at workshops on the introduction of autonomy in other states.

As part of the educational process Stella Maris reaches out to the economically weaker sections of society too. Dr. Poppy Kannan and

Ms. Prabha Nair conducted a Life Skills Training Program for children of sanitation workers, sponsored by TAHDCO, with the objective of giving the participants an exposure to a different environment and developing their personality.

Sangamam, a service extension centre of the college, has been active in the Royapuram area since 1994. In December 2002, when a fire destroyed the homes of 400 families in this area, the college organised a fête and generated funds to buy household articles for these families, as well as to help the patients of Cancer Hospital, Adyar.

Another activity that has helped students face social realities is the Functional Literacy Programme at Padappai village. Along with Sr. Mercy and faculty co-ordinators, the 120 student volunteers emphasised the need for functional literacy, health and hygiene, skills development and environment conservation.

The Department of Fine Arts, as part of the Social Awareness Programme and in collaboration with Apparao Galleries, organised a programme 'Outreach' which brought together students, artists and physically challenged persons in interactive sessions with leading contemporary artists and designers.

The Department of Religion and Value Education has been inculcating sound values in students and continues to strengthen their faith formation through several meaningful programmes.

My focus now shifts to the role of Stella Maris in developing the talents of our students. They display an astounding potential for activities far removed from academics and it has been a rewarding experience for the

faculty to support student ventures. Seminars such as 'Human Rights and Dalits' organised by Unnathi, the Social Work Students Forum, and the Union Seminar, 'Dakshin 2003,' a tribute to the southern arts, were learning experiences.

The annual college play *Arsenic and Old Lace* by Joseph Kesselring, directed by the students and assisted by Yog Japee, was a resounding success.

Programmes organised to better student prospects are on the rise. The ISTD Cell of the college has conducted several programmes to enhance the managerial skills of the students.

The Career Guidance Cell of the college, run by the Alumnae Association, has initiated several programmes for the final year students. Executives from several companies have also visited the college for campus recruitments.

The Students Union has enthusiastically organised interdepartmental and inter-collegiate cultural programmes. Our students have emerged overall winners at the intercollegiate culturals held at Ethiraj College, Anna Adarsh, WCC, JBAS and MCC. They were Runners up at Saarang 2003 at IIT and MOP Vaishnav College. They also played a leading role in organising the 'March for Aid' campaign at the IIT, Chennai.

There are other events that merit special mention. In September 2002, the Department of English organised a Writers Meet where regional writers were invited for an interactive session. Ms. Shashi Deshpande, eminent novelist, delivered the keynote address at a two-day inter-collegiate seminar on Contemporary Indian Literature. After the

dramatisation of an excerpt from her work of fiction, the students had the opportunity to interact with Ms. Deshpande.

The Department of Fine Arts organised a two-day Artists' Camp in February in which eight internationally acclaimed artists participated, painted and held interactive sessions with students. An exhibition of their works will be displayed at the Lalit Kala Academy in the last week of March 2003.

Every department had a unique inter-collegiate event, which was both colourful and imaginative. The History Department's 'BC to AD - Samjauta'; the Sociology Department's 'Samagama'; the Economics Department's 'Ecocentric'; the Commerce Department's 'Combat 2003'; the Computer Science Department's 'WIZIT2003'; the Maths Department's 'Mathzoom 2003'; the Physics Department's 'Blitzkrieg'; the Chemistry Department's 'Reactions 2003'; the Botany Department's 'Udhvidotsav' and the Zoology Department's 'Synapse 2003', drew enthusiastic participation from various colleges.

Co-curricular activities take centre stage when it comes to training and competition.

The Stella Maris NCC Company has won several laurels this year. Cadets attended the National Integration Camps held at Assam, Orissa and Rajasthan, the Army Attachment Camp and the Basic Sailing Course. Cdt. Sony Maria was part of the Republic Day Celebrations Contingent. The cadets won the overall banner at the 'Cadofest 2003' organised by DG Vaishnav College, and were runners up at 'Cadoutsav 2003', organised by Loyola College.

Our students have excelled in the arena of sports and games as well. Activities include

Aerobics, Yoga, Karate and training for Red Cross and First Aid. They have represented the Madras University in the All India Inter University Tournaments in Basket Ball, Hockey, Cricket and Swimming and in many national and state level tournaments in Cricket, Shuttle Badminton, Lawn Tennis, Table Tennis, Volley Ball, Hockey and Athletics. In the Inter Collegiate Tournaments, our teams were winners in Basket Ball, Lawn Tennis and Table Tennis. S. Subashini represented Tamilnadu in the Senior National Championship held at Hyderabad while Suganthi Anbu, M.Semma, D. Indumathi and Jyotsna John were adjudged best players in several tournaments.

The NSS unit, with 309 volunteers, worked in twenty-one centres including those for the physically challenged, homes for senior citizens and deprived children. A ten-day camp was held at Padappai. Two students were selected to attend the 10-day NSS Pre-Republic Day Parade Camp at Thiruvanathapuram.

I would like to now acknowledge with gratitude, the services rendered to the college by our benefactors, well-wishers and friends. To each member of the Stella Marian family, both immediate and extended, who has contributed to the growth and progress of this institution, I express my profound gratitude.

The fascinating story of Blessed Mary of the Passion will be unveiled this evening through a multimedia presentation specially prepared by our faculty and students. Inspired by her vision and charism, we continue to forge ahead to empower young women with courage and commitment to face the challenges of life and to be builders of a humane and just society.

Thank you and God bless!



BLESSED MARY OF THE PASSION

(Hélène de Chappotin)

May 21, 1839 - November 15, 1904

FOUNDRESS

Franciscan Missionaries of Mary

BEATIFIED

October 20, 2002

"I am consecrated to God. My end is Love."

-Mary of the Passion



“An extraordinary woman, marked by a boundless love for the Absolute, strong in times of trial and suffering, always serene, easily forgiving and generous, and outstanding for her indefatigable zeal. She was endowed with nobility of heart, with a superior intelligence, and with a tenacious will, surrendering herself entirely to God by her offering of herself to Him and dedicated to the salvation of souls. She occupied an important position in the Church, and in the evolution of missionary spirituality, and distinguished herself by her renowned holiness, sincerity, and uprightness.”

(From the decree, issued in Rome on January 1, 1979, on the occasion of the introduction of the cause of Beatification of Mary of the Passion)

“Mary of the Passion let herself be seized by God, who was able to satisfy the thirst for truth that motivated her. Founding the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, she burned to communicate the torrents of love that sprang up in her and wished to extend them over the world. At the heart of the missionary commitment she placed prayer and the Eucharist, because for her, adoration and mission blended to become the same work. Drawing on Scripture and the Fathers of the Church, combining a mystical and active vocation, passionate and intrepid, she gave herself with an intuitive and daring readiness to the universal mission of the Church. Dear Sisters, learn from your foundress, in profound communion with the Church, and welcome the invitation to live, with renewed fidelity, the intuitions of your founding charism, so that the number of those who discover Jesus, who makes us enter into the mystery of the love that is God, may be more abundant.”

(Homily of October 20, 2002, on the occasion of the Beatification of Mary of the Passion)

The Flame of Passion

On June 28, 1999, the Sovereign Pontiff John Paul II solemnly promulgated the Decree on the heroicity of the virtues of Mother Mary of the Passion foundress of the Society of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. On March 5, 2002, the healing of a religious, suffering from pulmonary and vertebral TBC, Pott's Disease, was recognized as a miracle granted by God through the intercession of the Venerable Mary of the Passion. On April 23, 2003, in the presence of the Sovereign Pontiff John Paul II, the Decree for the Beatification of the Venerable Servant of God was promulgated.

To celebrate the life and charism of Mother Mary of the Passion the faculty and students of Stella Maris College created a multimedia presentation entitled:

THE HANDMAIDEN'S MESSAGE

On the evening of March 15, 2003, we unveiled through an extraordinary pageantry of song dance and narration, the life of one who lived over a hundred years ago and whose life was inexplicably transformed, touched as she was by the spirit of one, who over 2000 years ago, was born into a lowly carpenter's family and was recognized as the Son of God and hailed as the Messiah.



We thus traced the life of H el ene de Chappotin who first took the name of Mary Victim of Jesus and of Jesus Crucified and later Mary of the Passion.

This is a life like no other, marked as it was with rainbow-hued experiences but from which the essence of pure white unadulterated shimmering faith was distilled - a faith that pervaded every pore of her being and wafted outwards to fill the world and every one she touched. This was artistically represented on a huge, magnificent cross painted by Anne Singh (faculty, Fine Arts) for the occasion. The concept was developed by Dr Sr Annamma Philip, Principal, while the presentation was



scripted by Dr Chitra Krishnan who was also the creative director of the show.

To capture the indomitable spirit, the bubbling effervescence, the profound faith, the agonising tribulations and the unflagging hope, we used a narrative style illustrated with aptly and tastefully worked video presentations (created by Ms Gita Balachandran) and interspersed with dance and music. The choice of dance and music was made in keeping with the lofty spiritual subject and the mood of quiet celebration of the life of one who has been and continues to be a source of inspiration to countless men and women the world over.

The music for the dances was specially composed for the occasion by well-known composer Rajesh Vaidya. The nine short dance pieces, each time with the dancers clad in one of the seven rainbow hues, were choreographed by the talented artiste Jayanthi, to capture the various facets of the life of Mary of the Passion:

- (i) The mood of prayer (invocation dance with flowers and dancers clad in all seven colours of the rainbow)
- (ii) Breaking the temporal bonds in a quest for spiritual solace
- (iii) The power of faith that fills and transforms the individual
- (iv) The resurgence of the divine spark which



The representation of the cross with the image of Mary of the Passion in the centre also incorporates the theme of the seven colours of the rainbow - from the starlit indigo of the night sky to the yellow radiance of the sun, from the verdant green of the foliage to the deep blue of the ocean depths.



like nature regenerates after a storm (v) The violence of rejection and the healing power of acceptance (vi) The light of hope of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary spreading across the globe (vii) The violence of martyrdom and spiritual renewal (viii) The various stages of the river of the life of Mary of the Passion from the singing brook to the deep quiet stream flowing on for all eternity (ix) Thillana which brought together at the end all the dancers in their various multihued costumes. The wide range of



dances put up by our talented dancers included the Classical Bharatha Natyam, Contemporary, Western and Folk.

The Western music background pieces were classical recordings and live pieces. The gifted choir trained and led by Augustine Paul and the talented soloist Nina Menezes performed original compositions as well as well known classics. The songs included the *Ode to Joy*, *Via Dolorosa*, *Lift thine Eyes*, *Ave Maria*, *The Lord's Prayer*, *Make me a Channel of Your Peace*, *Abide with Me*, *Voices of Challenge*, *Old Rugged Cross*, *Magnificate* and the *Hallelujah Chorus* (from Handel's *Messiah*).



The almost magical aura of the presentation of the life of one who stated, "I feel as it were waves of love churning up within me, longing to pour themselves out on the world" (April, 1883) kept the audience glued to their seats and appreciative feed back was received from innumerable sources. "Make of my heart and of the Institute a burning fire that will set the earth ablaze!" said Mary of the Passion. This is an occasion of which Stella Maris can be truly proud as the spirit of Mary of the Passion inspired the performers to set the evening ablaze with their talent and achieve heights of excellence which she had achieved and surpassed in her own life.

The Great Missionary of the Institute is Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament exposed and adored. The power of the Eucharist has not been sufficiently understood, nor has prayer joined to action for the transformation of the peoples.

I see God within me in an irresistible way.

- Mary of the Passion

The College Day Experience

Deepali Gupta, III BA Literature

This year's College Day was a special one for both the college and its participants. On March 5th, I started out on a journey, during which I was to make some very good friends and live a few of the best moments of my life. The grand and unique celebration centered around the theme 'Mary of the Passion', since we were celebrating the beatification of our foundress this year. The theme was presented by depicting the seven colours of the rainbow on stage, and showing how they merged to form one 'pure white light,' reflecting the charism of Mary of the Passion.

Since I joined late, I initially had some catching up to do. Believe me, it wasn't easy. Although the rehearsals seemed laid back, it was hardly so. Every minute of practice was scrutinized, and sometimes we had to do our parts over and over till we got it right. Every time we were near exasperation, it was enough to see the dancers, singers and video-clips to

remind us of the responsibility we bore. It was true that we were linking one thing to the other, and if we were unable to hold the audience's, attention the program would crumble like an old tobacco leaf.

It was heartwarming to see some of the most senior members of the faculty staying with us until late in the evening, to help us with our endeavour. There were indeed some anxious moments, as there are in every performance of such magnitude. On the day of the show, when I looked at the audience there was a sense of worship in the air. Immediately after the show, as I walked to meet my parents, I was moved by the number of people who told me that they enjoyed the program. At the end of the day, as I stood singing the college song, I felt a sense of pride towards my college, towards what I had become in the college, and towards the work we had together accomplished.

*Wise men are instructed by reason; men of less understanding, by experience;
the most ignorant, by necessity; and beasts by nature.*

- Cicero

The lights come on, and the first angelic strains of ‘Ode to Joy’ begin. Immediately, all the frustrated and anxious whispers backstage end, as everyone strains their ears to hear the music, and their eyes to catch the reaction of the audience. It had begun—the one night which we had been told was the most important event in Stella Maris that we would ever be a part of. And as the evening progressed, even the most cynical of us fatigued participants realized that this was true, simply because the energy in the atmosphere all around us was electric.

On the night of March 15, all of us who felt we were never going to do our parts correctly—whether it was forgetting a line of narration, or a note of music, or a beat of the dance—suddenly realized what long hours of endless practice finally does for a performance. One after the other, like riding waves of some great sea, performers came and went off stage, leaving the audience stunned every time. Whether it be the exuberant rhythm of the ‘Thilliana,’ or the soulful strains of ‘Via Dolorosa,’ or the overwhelming ‘Halleluiah’



chorus, all of us waiting for our cue to enter, were powered by everything we saw on stage, to go up when it was our turn, and do everything we could to make this our best performance ever. And that was exactly what happened.

It was truly an evening where everything was perfect. After being a part of the rehearsals for this show, and the main event itself; having seen performers push themselves to give their best; having seen faculty-in-charge go out of their way to make the memory of each rehearsal a pleasant one; having seen the backstage crew run around like whirling sandstorms to make sure everything went smoothly—having seen all this, believe me, I am in quite a justified position to say that the evening of ‘The Handmaiden’s Message—the Life and Charism of Mary of the Passion,’ was nothing short of a miracle. This is not to imply that we needed divine help to post a good performance, but only that it was a miracle of life. Not in the category of the parting of the seas and the bringing of the dead back to life. It was a gentler, more binding version: that of



human miracles, which happen in each one of our lives, almost everyday.

I call this evening a miracle, because it was an example of what the world should have today: a deep mutual respect, and an ability to work together to produce the best results. Different people came together, of different ages, disciplines, beliefs and attitudes to life, to perform various different forms of art and express through their combined and sometimes individual talent, an idea of what a gift the life of Mary of the Passion was. In doing so, they also gave everyone a vision of the great possibilities of working together, setting aside all differences.

It isn't all lofty idealism. It's just something all of us could see and feel. The team that worked together for this evening, worked in perfect rhythm with each other, and several people who saw our rehearsals and the show commented upon it. If we could do this one evening of sound, light and inspiration so wonderfully, might it not be possible to do things in the outer world too? People who had

never heard of Mary of the Passion before, being outsiders to the FMM, were touched by all they heard and saw. This in itself was a gift given to all performers: the moment that the expression of art is registered with the audience, it becomes a chorus of halleluiahs that we hear inside each one of us; we could feel it in the smiles of our co-participants and their whispered "good luck!" It was a general feeling of being happy to be there, at that time and place, doing what each of us was best at, and giving of our best.

Thus, the evening of 'The Handmaiden's Message—The Life and Charism of Mary of the Passion,' was a memorable event that brought the entire college together, and it is to the credit of all of us, that it was a good experience for everyone who participated as well as those who watched the show. It is this positive feeling that gave all participants a reason to sing a second ode to joy. I sometimes think that this was another miracle of Heaven and our founding mother: that in a world of strife, it is still possible to work in peace, no matter what. A beautiful lesson.

*I see where Mary is leading me.
I am to offer my life for the triumph of true power.*

- Mary of the Passion

Convocation Address, Feb 15, 2003

Dr. P.T. Manoharan

*Fomer Vice Chancellor, University of Madras
Professor Emeritus, IIT, Madras*

Principal Dr. Sr. Annamma Philip, members of the teaching faculty, graduates of the year from this wonderful jewel of a college from the University of Madras, ladies and gentlemen,

I am most delighted to be here on this great and memorable day for all the graduates of this great institution, for which I do have a soft corner because of its standing for excellence and quality. It is also a day of reckoning and gratification for those parents and teachers who helped mould these graduates into what they are today. The parents, teachers and the educational administrators are here to share this proud moment of happiness and achievements by the graduates, as a mark of their individual contribution to their knowledge and intellectual capability- building exercise. I am even more delighted when I feel that I have come here to greet all women graduates for whom a greater role is waiting in what are conventionally male dominated areas and jobs.



I am sure that the educational scenario at Stella Maris College, steeped in excellence, a constituent college of the famous University of Madras, has taken you to this so rightfully proud moment. Let me have the pleasure of congratulating all the graduates of today and those who have won laurels in their examinations and extra curricular activities. It is my bounden duty to also extend my sincere greetings to my colleagues in the teaching community. The synergy between the duties of the parents and of their wards gets fulfilled today.

On an occasion like this we should ponder over a few important issues relevant to the individual graduates and the society as a whole. When you go out seeking a career or higher education, you will find women having already made inroads and have been successful even in the conventionally man dominated industries and other areas such as education, science, technology, politics, administration, business, police and even armed forces! This



is all due to the simple fact that you are well-armed with the power of higher education. The very welcome opportunities for equality and their advancement and entrepreneurship are the norms of the day, despite the much talked about gender-fixation, absence of constitutionally guaranteed reservation and sexual harassment against women in the working places. Hence, all that you need is self confidence, conviction and courage, and you should not be bogged down by outmoded concept of 'weaker sex'. I already see women getting their due share especially in areas like science, administration and entrepreneurship, the number is rising by the day. A mixed bag of opportunities, challenges, a sense of fear and, may be even frustration, can be simultaneously placed before you when your next step happens to be either advanced education and training or career. Whatever step you take will affect you, as an individual, and the society as a whole. The sum total contribution that one would make in the future depends on their own commitment to causes as well as their own depth of knowledge and the wisdom that accompanies its usage. 'All graduates assembled here being women' has a great significance. I am among those that are immensely happy with the educational spread

and opportunities for women in all walks of life. They have every part to play in the development of this country. Being a woman is no longer a disadvantage, though there may still be obstacles to surmount.

There is no other country in the world with such great potentials and challenges as in India, and at the same time, with as many problems as in India, a country highly rich in material and intellectual resources. This country is also known repeated for misusing and under-utilizing them. We are all excessively proud of the fact that in the year 2000, the co-founder of Sun Microsystems, the creator of Pentium Chip, Current President of AT and T Bell, founder of creator of Hotmail, the GM of Hewlett Packard, the Director of Windows 2000, the Chief Executive Officer of Lucent Technologies Inc., GM Dynamics, Motorola, US Airways and a lot of American Companies were all Indians. In addition, in the US, 38% of Doctors, 12% Scientists, 36% of NASA employees, 28% of IBM employees, 17% of Intel and 13% of Xerox employees are Indians or Indian born Americans. While we are proud of this fact and more unsaid achievements, most people forget the net loss of this country running into hundreds of billions of dollars in the non-utilization of their rich intellectual base created in this country and donated out for a meager return. This is the country, which built huge temples, created excellent irrigation systems and the art of Navigation and produced dependable and non-invasive medical systems such as ayurveda and sidha. Even today, we do make missiles, nuclear bombs, ships and aircrafts purely on the basis of knowledge acquired in this country. Our nation has an internally built-in strength. But I am afraid

that instead of nurturing and developing our strength, some internal cancer is eating the very vitals of this great nation. Hence in this millennium at least, we should wake up from complacency, estimate the damage done to our systems and institutions by our own connivance with wrong policy makers and stand up to make remedial measures. The only correctional path available to us is to refocus, sharpen and enrich our intellectual base to the ultimate realization of the goals enshrined in the constitution of our country. Everyone among you has a part to play in it!

The non- or underutilization of the existing intellectuals resources apart, the reports on our style of running the higher education will have drastic consequences on our ability to govern the country in the highly competitive global scene. Now more serious threats have come to our University systems mostly from outsiders who care little either for law and order, or for the wise counsels of knowledge which feeds every facet of the societal activity, which should be preserved safe and enriched continuously and which should not be allowed to be polluted in the name of self financing and such act! Excellence and equity must be simultaneously nurtured. In this country, the words of a foreigner find greater respect than the words of wisdom from a local! The President of the World Bank, Dr. James Wolfenson says, "Higher Education is essential to creation of opportunities to help eradicate poverty. Well educated people from developing nations can be a powerful force for change." The World Bank has also expressed its concern at the inadequate and falling levels of higher education in the developing nations and called for a swift action, without which

they will be unable to compete in the present and future world's knowledge economy. Though India is not as bad as most other developing nations because of its inherent intellectual capability built over centuries, it has in the past three decades been experiencing definite and serious stresses and strains. What is most depressing is the steep decline in the quality content of tertiary education, the effect of which is already being felt in all areas, as witnessed by the lack of high quality human capital, particularly so inside the temples of learning.

The problems to be attended to are too many, since the decline has overtaken us due to our own complacency, and most importantly, there is total lack of academic accountability. There is, at present, no meeting point between what the visionaries want and what the ground realities in the Universities are. Hence our Universities, instead of earning the right to moral and intellectual leadership, have become home to moral cowardice, intellectual slavery, and shallowness.

Hence, more than ever before in Indian history, we should realize that the wealth of a nation in this globalized world is directly proportional to the quality of higher education, and hence, people like you, coming out of the portals of the Universities with a larger reservoir of skills and greater capacity for more learning, constitute the quality of human intellectual capacity of this country. You therefore have a greater responsibility towards the improvement of the quality of life of all citizens. In order to make it possible, it is imperative to recognize the different roles for different groups involved in higher education, viz, high-quality faculty and institutional

management, committed and well-prepared students, and a good and intelligent Government. Quoting from a World bank document on higher education, let me say that "The government should develop a new role as supervisors, rather than directors of higher education"; they should provide "clear supervision, allowing sufficient but real autonomy" and should concentrate on establishing parameters within which, success can be achieved, while allowing specific solutions to emerge from the creativity of higher educational professionals.

Having provided a part of these objectives, you should now seriously ponder over the problems of this country. As far as I am concerned, each one of us should contribute to achieve education for all, realize zero population growth at the earliest future to stabilize the national need, reduce the pollution level by multiple approach, including greening, i.e. raising our forest coverage, foster brotherhood among us Indians, help in the fight against casteism, which is the single most curse of this country, get back the rights that we have surrendered to harmful forces, and show compassion to fellow human beings. I am not trying to be idealistic here, but only mentioning the humanly possible practices. If

you have the will, you will find a way to contribute to at least one or two of these ideals.

Finally, in order to succeed in life, you must have a vision and use your talent and skill to motivate yourself and update your knowledge continuously. I am sure that you would make use of the good opportunities this country provides by making your own positive moves and by following a suitable dictum-"we should not only work to live but also live to work"-so that you can contribute your might to the national prosperity. You can convert your knowledge into wealth. This would be possible only if you can continuously update your knowledge base. Knowledge is dynamic but wisdom is permanent.

It will be worthwhile to end with a quote of I.Ching: "After a time of decay comes the turning point. The powerful light that has been banished returns. There is movement, but it is not brought by force... The movement is natural, arising spontaneously. For this reason the transformation of the old becomes easy. The old is discarded and the new is introduced. Both measures accord with the same time; therefore, no harm results."

I wish you all good luck!

*The golden rule is to test everything in the light of reason and experience,
no matter from whom it comes.*

- Mohandas Karamchand (Mahatma) Gandhi

Elderberry Wine, Anyone?

A theatre several 1000 years old has never produced anything quite like *Arsenic and Old Lace*, “a play that doesn’t drown you in the complexities of the universe you live in. Joseph Kesselring’s *Arsenic and Old Lace* is a maniacal piece of writing. It is delightful, wholesome and hopelessly irresponsible. And yet, it is saved from becoming a meaningless farce by its superb literary qualities. Using the association of ideas and juxtaposition, preposterous scenes spin in and out of its script.” There have never been two more disarmingly sweet and charitable characters on stage than the Brewster sisters of Joseph Kesselring’s murder charade. Beaming with benevolence, they go about their charitable duties of giving elderberry wine laced with arsenic, and ‘just a pinch of cyanide’ to ‘lonely old men’ with all the grace and innocent pleasure of holding a church tea.

“The Stella Maris College production of *Arsenic and Old Lace*, which went on the boards at the Sivagami Pethachi Auditorium on the 3rd and 4th of March, proceeded without a hitch. Overcoming the constraints of



academic scheduling they slapped the play into shape in just three weeks. Guiding them once again this year was Yog Japee who believes that college plays should be wholly a student effort and a learning experience for them and an opportunity to draw out their creative talent. He stepped back and encouraged them to come up with their own ideas and designs. He also made sure it would remain a low-budget, in-house student activity.

The sets were basic and functional single units of windows and frames and a segment of staircase that defined the spaces. The furniture was old and solid and rough and created a sense of time. The lights were sensitive and well designed and executed with dexterity. The costumes were charming and showed character. And the cast projected their voices well and revealed a sense of timing particularly with tricky moves. In that respect the production rose above the average student production.”

Joseph Kesselring (1902-1967) was born in New York. At the age of 20, he joined as faculty in Bethel College, Kansas. During the next eight years, he wrote, produced and acted



in vaudeville sketches and also turned out a number of short stories and poems. *Arsenic and Old Lace* made its debut in New York on January 10, 1941 and ran for 1441 performances.

[All quotes taken from 'Delightfully Maniacal' by Elizabeth Roy, featured in the Friday Review, The Hindu, 7th March, 2003.]

ARSENIC AND OLD LACE

THE CAST

Abby Brewster: Shanas K.S
Martha Brewster: Deepali Gupta
Mortimer Brewster: Susheel Gandhi
Jonathan Brewster: Priyanka Joseph
Elaine Harper: Rose Alapatt
Dr. Einstein: Nayana Jayarajan
Teddy: Mithra Suresh
Lieutenant Rooney: Simi Susan Santosh
Officer O'Hara: Doorba Krishna Iyer
Officer Brophy: Merin Jose
Rev. Harper: Nayana Jayarajan



Mr. Gibbs: Doorba Krishna Iyer
Mr. Witherspoon: Nandini K.

THE CREW

Sets: Dhanya M., Maya Anand K., Pooja, Prabha,
and Heeral Gandhi
Lights: Nina, Althea
Sound: Neha and Puja Bhalla
Costume and Make-up: Shilpa, Fatema Tyebhoy,
Divya and Aruna Rakhee
Student Directors: Thushanti Selvarajah &
Batool Aliakbar Lehry



International Seminar: Women in Asia – A Report

The International Seminar on *Women in Asia: Issues and Concerns*, organized by the Department of Humanities, (History, Sociology, Economics, English, Fine Arts, Commerce, Languages, Social Work, & International Studies) Stella Maris College, Chennai, from December 11 - 13, 2002, sought to reaffirm the dignity of women and reinforce the principles of truth and equity. Through this seminar the college brought together people from Asia to establish an intercultural dialogue that initiated discourses so essential for development.

FOCUS OF THE SEMINAR

The focus of this seminar was on issues pertaining to women in Asia. The seminar aimed at promoting understanding between communities, while offering insight into the problems and difficulties that women confront on a day basis at the personal level, in the domain of public life, and in the areas of policy making.

THE AREAS IDENTIFIED THAT WERE RELEVANT TO THE SEMINAR ARE:



- Health, Education, Poverty
- Participatory development and Leadership
- Entrepreneurship, Trade and Commerce
- Law, Labour, Human Rights
- Communication, Literature, Art (Fine Arts, Cinema, Media, Performing Arts)

OBJECTIVES :

- To explore and confront issues and concerns relating to gender and power, both common and specific to women in the region.
- To establish a basis for networking and collaboration at the local, national and international level.
- To identify feasible models for development.
- To carry the message across boundaries through the publication of the proceedings.

In order to gain a regional perspective of women in Asia, the seminar brought in Resource Persons and Paper Presenters from all over India, Bangladesh, Canada, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. A few others were unable to attend due to technical problems. The seminar was thrown open to academicians, researchers, writers, activists, social workers, entrepreneurs, journalists and persons from the media and the corporate sector.

The Resource Persons included:

- Subhashini Sahgal Ali, President, All India Democratic Women's Association
- Urvashi Butalia, co-founder of Kali for Women, New Delhi



- Vanaja Dhruvarajan, University of Winnipeg, Canada
- Bishaka Dutta, documentary filmmaker, Director, Point of View, Mumbai
- Elangovan, SIA college of the Arts, Singapore, poet-playwright - director
- Josefa (GiGi) Francisco, Executive Director Women And Gender Institute, Manila, Philippines
- Tasqeen Macchiwala, Sub- Programme Coordinator, Decent Employment for Women in India, Bangalore
- Tejdeep Kaur Menon, IG Police, Special Protection Force, Hyderabad
- Deep Ranjani Rai, International Coordinator, Global Alliance against Trafficking in Women, Thailand
- Kalpana Sharma, Deputy Editor of The Hindu, New Delhi
- Gayatri Sinha, art critic, The Hindu, New Delhi.

Distributed over three days (11 sessions) the programme consisted of Plenary Sessions, Group Discussions, Panel Discussion and Parallel Sessions. Resource Persons spoke on subjects ranging from women and entrepreneurship, women and crime and violence, women and education, gender discrimination, etc.

The six parallel sessions were moderated by well-known figures in the fields of industry and public service.

With grateful thanks to *The Hindu*, dated 17 December 2002, we reproduce here portions of a comprehensive report by Kausalya Santhanam that assess the seminar and its far reaching effects.



The level of interaction between the audience and the speakers also helped make the event stimulating. From rights to challenges, discrimination to violence, perceptions to perpetuation of myths, much ground was covered. The dictum “No question is too trivial or obvious to be asked,” followed by some of the speakers, had the students come out with some of the issues bothering them. “Why do some colleges insist on a dress code only for the women students?”; “How does one deal with the pressure exerted by the visual media through its constant depiction of on how an ideal Indian woman should be?”, “How can one make sure of obtaining justice in a rape case?” These were among the many questions that were asked by the students. The one on the dress code took up a disproportionate length of time for discussion.

Unfortunately, for a seminar so comprehensive, there were very few men in the audience and the few present on the first day seemed to melt away on the next.

Seminars such as these organised so professionally by some colleges in the city, help bring the students into contact with social



realities around them. Apart from the awareness created, the importance of which cannot be discounted, they will also hopefully set in motion more concrete action.

The Principal of Stella Maris College, Sr. Annamma Philip, welcomed the gathering on December 11, after which the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Madras, Rev. Ignacimuthu, in his inaugural address, succinctly stated the many problems that women face throughout Asia.

Subhashini Sahgal Ali, President, All India Democratic Women’s Association, outlined the factors that have led to the increasing exploitation of women such as globalisation, growth of consumerism and the revamping of the Public Distribution System.

Jayshree Venkatraman, Director, Tafe Access Ltd., spoke of the qualities required for women to succeed in the corporate sector and how the corporate world can help its women workers.

In the next session, Bishakha Datta, documentary filmmaker, spoke on ‘Rights and Wrongs’ (victimhood, agency, women’s rights and survival).

Josefa Francisco, Executive Director of the Women and Gender Institute, Philippines, dealt with 'Feminism and Challenges to Development.' She focussed on two disciplines – economics and political science – and argued that there is a need to bring the work of academicians, researchers and teachers in these two areas closer to each other in order to effectively respond to women's issues.

Kalpna Sharma, Deputy Editor, *The Hindu*, touched on a range of women's issues including violence against women and traced the change in the media's role in reporting women's issues.

In the plenary session on race and discrimination, Elangovan, playwright from Singapore, spoke on 'Negotiations of Space, Tensions and Discriminations.' He said that in his plays, he explored the existential tensions and issues that arise out of different peoples – Chinese, Malays and Indians – living in a multi ethnic society, the tensions that exist behind the gloss and veneer of a safe, clean and non-corrupt country, a tourist's paradise.

Pratima Majumdar, research fellow, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Bangladesh, could not attend the seminar, but her paper was read by Gita Sridharan. It dealt with the mental health of women workers in factories in Bangladesh. The stress caused by the hazards of the workplace, by family and by societal attitudes and the manner in which it can be eliminated were analysed.

The parallel sessions covered women and entrepreneurship, education, health, socio-

cultural issues, gender discrimination, crime and violence.

Urvashi Butalia, co-founder of Kali, India's first and only feminist publishing house, spoke on women and violence and how difficult it is to address the issue.

In her paper, 'Decent Work and Women in the Informal Sector', Tasqeen Macchiwalla, sub-programme coordinator of an International Labour Organisation (ILO) project in India, said that women had been forced by the process of globalisation to work as casual labourers in the informal sector and settle for low wages.

Deep Ranjani Rai, international coordinator, Global Alliance against Trafficking in Women, Thailand, in 'Rebuilding Lives' examined the myths and assumptions about trafficking in women, which far exceeds the trafficking in drugs or arms in number.

'Addressing Common Sense Sexism' by Vanaja Dhruvarajan, sociologist from Canada, looked at the condition of women today and said that as new oppressive structures are built on old, colonial patriarchal inequalities, their lot had worsened.

Art historian, Gayatri Sinha, interpreted the depiction of the Goddess, through art, during certain historical periods in the country.

The gender violence that women experience in the country from even before birth to death, was spelled out by Tejdeep Kaur Menon, Inspector General of Police, Special Protection Force, Hyderabad. There is no better evidence of how and why the



empowerment of women in India is poorer than the revealing statistics of Crime against Women(CAW), she said.

A group discussion concluded the seminar, which attracted a large number of participants,

students, activists, academicians and research scholars.

Bishakha Datta's sensitively made film on prostitution, *In the Flesh*, was screened during the event.

Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies - for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text - as into the world and into history - by her own movement.

The Laugh of Medusa, Hélèn Sizoux

In Appreciation

Dr. Prema Bhat

Dr. Prema Bhat, Head of the Department of Psychology, retires after 26 years of committed service to Stella Maris College.



Dr. Bhat has had a brilliant academic career. With her unquenchable thirst for knowledge, she has constantly introduced innovations in her teaching methodology. Her expertise is not limited to psychology and this has led her to teach courses in the Departments of Economics, Sociology, Public Relations, Value Education and English Literature. Dr. Bhat has held a number of responsible posts in the college, including Programme Officer, NSS Coordinator, Coordinator of Leadership Training Services, Dean of Students and Coordinator, Counselling Services.

Dr. Prema Bhat's outstanding contribution has been her involvement in the Research Project on 'Culture and Drug Abuse in Asian Setting.' From 1998 onwards, she has been the Director of the University and Community Development Project at Royapuram, Chennai, funded by IFCU Paris.

A member of various professional organizations, she was selected as a visiting scholar to the US by the UBCHEA in 1996 and has presented papers at various international conferences and seminars.

An excellent and effective teacher, Dr. Bhat has inspired and motivated generations of students and has specially reached out to a

large number of students on campus through counselling.

Dr. Nalinakshi Madhavamurthy

Dr. Nalinakshi Madhavamurthy, Head of the PG Department of Mathematics, retires after a long span of twenty-five years of dedicated service at Stella Maris College. Her association with the college began even earlier, when she joined the PG Course in Mathematics in 1966.



Dr. Nalinakshi Madhavamurthy belongs to a select group of international researchers in Complex Analysis and Univalent Functions and has published a number of articles in reputed international journals. She is also a Fellow of the Forum d'Analystes, a prestigious international body of mathematicians.

Dr. Madhavamurthy has served on various Committees and was the Coordinator of the Committee that prepared the Report for the National Council for Assessment and Accreditation.

Dr. Madhavamurthy was the Head of the PG Department of Mathematics in the year 2000-2001 and she was instrumental in introducing the M.Phil Degree programme in Mathematics. Under her able leadership, the Department organized the first inter-collegiate Math Festival and 'Math Zoom 2000', in December, 2000.

Organized, systematic and meticulous in her work, her simplicity and soft-spoken nature have endeared her to all her students and her colleagues. She leaves behind a legacy of excellence for the Department to emulate.

Dr. Evelyn Chandrasekaran

Dr. Evelyn Chandrasekaran retires as Head of the Post-Graduate Department of Mathematics and as the Vice Principal of Stella Maris College after a professional career that spans thirty-three years.



A life member at the Indian Mathematical Society, as well as at the Indian Society of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics, Dr. Chandrasekaran has also been a research guide for M. Phil students. A born academician, Dr. Chandrasekaran is a scholar and teacher par excellence and has always striven to develop the intellectual curiosity in students, and awaken them to their potential.

An enduring trait apart from her integrity and her meticulous attention to detail in all that she undertook, is her deep and abiding faith in God - a faith that gave her the strength and fortitude to withstand the tragedies that befell her with dignity and courage. Her abiding loyalty to the institution will serve as a source of inspiration to us all.

She has been an immense support to the functioning of the various activities of the college. Besides her high scientific temper, Dr. Chandrasekaran is an excellent writer and an articulate speaker. Her thought provoking

morning assemblies have inspired many of us to begin the day with a positive outlook.

Sr. P.V. Mercy fmm

Sr. Mercy, fmm, member of the Stella Marian family from 1984 when she joined the faculty of the Department of Sociology retires as Vice Principal of the college.



Devoted to the students, Sr. Mercy steadily groomed them to take up social responsibilities. In fact, she contributed immensely to the development of the Functional Literacy Programme in Stella Maris College.

It has been Sr. Mercy's passion to strive to reach and touch people in need thereby being true to the word of God. She is also strongly committed to women's issues. These aspects, she presented at international forums during her visit to Community colleges across the US on a faculty exchange programme, as well as at the "Visioning Conference in the Philippines." The success of the recently held "International Seminar on Women in Asia - Issues and Concerns" at Stella Maris College of which she was one of the coordinators, brought to the fore her organisational abilities and her warm interpersonal skills.

The wonderful gardens at Stella Maris College are a testimony to the care and skill lavished by Sr. Mercy on every tree, plant, flower and even blade of grass. As an instrument in service of God's chosen path, no task was too humble nor too great for Sr. Mercy.

We at Stella Maris shall continue to remember you all Dr Prema Bhat, Dr. Nalinakshi Madhavamurthy, Dr. Evelyn Chandrasekaran and Sr. P.V.Mercy fmm very warmly. We hope and pray that you are blessed every day with peace, good health and a joyfully long retired life.

In Memoriam

REMEMBERING MOTHER MAGDALENE, fmm
(*Sr Patricia Kingham*)
DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS
1950-1973

Mother Magdalene came to Stella Maris in 1951, as one of the founding mothers of *the Cloisters* at Palace Road, Mylapore, where Stella Maris started in 1947. Her first mission was to teach English to the sisters who came from Italy, France, Spain, Canada, Hungary and Austria.

She was the Foundress and the first Head of the Department of Mathematics, which started in 1951. In 1964, she upgraded the department to a postgraduate one. She showed keen interest in all the activities of the college, guided the students and staff, inculcated in them the spirit of service to the needy and learned the local language Tamil to communicate with the supportive staff. As finance was one of the most important factors to meet the various needs of the college, she planned programmes for fund-raising with a creative mind and inspiring enthusiasm.

One such unforgettable endeavour was to put up a "Circus" with a menagerie of wild animals - elephants, monkeys, camels, giraffes, tigers - made with newspapers, plywood and paint. The staff and students held a great show for the public with entry fee tickets. Mother Magdalene was the manager of the entire show. Needless to add, it was an astounding success.

Twenty-three years of her youthful life were dedicated to the service of the college and Mother endeared herself to the staff, students and parents. Mother was a linguist,



being fluent in French, Latin and German, apart from English. She carried the motto of the college "Truth and Charity" and transmitted it to all.

Mother Magdalene later went to Stella Maris College, Vijaywada, Andhra Pradesh, in 1973, then served at Kerala as superior of the Palayam convent, and from there she went to Hong Kong and thereafter to England. She continued to devote herself to the poor and needy in Asia and Africa and was associated with a group that sought to raise money for those suffering from leprosy.

Mother Magdalene was in London, and was ailing for the last two years. She peacefully went to her heavenly abode on 24th March 2003 at 10 a.m. We, her old students of Stella Maris, along with staff members who worked with her and her friends held a memorial prayer service on 9th April 2003 in college. The number of people who attended the prayer service and shared the beautiful experiences they had

had with her was testimony to the lives that she touched. May the fire of love that urged her to reach out to many thousands of people continue to burn in all of us.

Sr. Juliana fmm
Head, Department of Mathematics (Retd.)
Stella Maris College

RECOLLECTIONS ON MOTHER MAGDALENE

Mother Magdalene is a very special teacher who made an everlasting imprint in my mind, as my Professor and Head of the Department of Mathematics in my student days. She lived with Christ in her heart, music in her lips and dance on her feet. All her students would remember her Astronomy classes for the music and rhythm that they had. While teaching those dry theory subjects, she would start singing the concepts suddenly in a high-pitched voice, waking up the sleeping ones and singing a lullaby for the others. In the summer of 1970, we developed a sundial for the college and got it installed in the lawn in front of the college. For more than a decade, it stood testimony to the astronomical skills that were inculcated in us by the Great Teacher. The sundial is not there today, but I'm sure that the human values she instilled in me and in all her students will remain with us for all eternity.

Dr. Rajeshwari Thyagarajan
Director, Department of Computer Applications
Stella Maris College

Homage to my Teacher

"I salute the guru who opened my eyes blinded through the darkness of ignorance using a splinter dipped in the ointment of knowledge."

My recollections of my teacher, Mother

Magdalene, (as she was known then) date back to the 1950s. I was a student of the Intermediate Class in Stella Maris College, then housed in the present Rosary Matriculation School building on Palace Road, Santhome, during the years 1954-56. Sr. Magdalene was my Math teacher for both the years. Though we were over ninety students in the class, Sister managed to endear herself to the entire class with her tremendous capacity to reach out to everyone, her ever smiling face, her pleasant temperament, sense of humour and sparkling eyes, full of life and radiating joy. In 1966, I had a call from Sister, asking me to join the faculty there. Thus, I had the good fortune and the privilege to work under my own teacher. As a faculty member, I could admire Sr. Magdalene's qualities as an administrator. She could get everything organised for the department with ease and always had an excellent rapport with the students, faculty members, parents, University authorities and well wishers of the department.

I pay my fervent homage to my great teacher.

May her soul rest in peace.

Dr. Meena N. Swami
Former Head, Dept of Mathematics &
Former Vice Principal
Stella Maris College

With a deep sense of gratitude, I recall my association with Sr. Magdalene, as a lecturer in the Mathematics department of Stella Maris College. I had the privilege of working under her for more than six years before she left the college and the country. She was a rare combination of simplicity, shrewd leadership and delightful humour. Her cheerful face and gentle temperament were a source of strength

and comfort to all of us in the department. Her swift walk, friendly smile and kind words elated the spirit of everyone who encountered her. Under her guidance, we were able to work as a dedicated team for the allround development of our students.

Age did not take her youthful smile away. As a great teacher of Astronomy, she had learnt

The mood of the patient stars;
Who climb each night the ancient sky,
Leaving on space no shade, no scars,
No trace of age, no fear to die

The Lord in His great mercy has willed to take her soul soon after the vernal equinox, to keep her in the Everlasting Spring of His Holy Abode.

Dr. J. Thangamani

*Head of the P.G Dept of Mathematics (Retd.)
Stella Maris College*

Mother Magdalene was a very lively and jovial person, whom we, her students were very close to and extremely fond of. Thanks to her characteristic methods of combining serious teaching with fun and humour, abstract and dry subjects like differential geometry became enjoyable, and serious subjects like astronomy seemed easy and interesting. Her inimitable style of dramatising concepts made a deep impression on us, more powerful than could ever be achieved by a sophisticated teaching aid or equipment. She was a truly great educator. In her death, I have lost my mentor. There will never be such another. However, she remains a memory etched in my heart, never to be erased.

May God grant eternal rest and peace to that great soul.

Dr. Evelyn Chandrasekharan

*Former Vice Principal
Stella Maris College*



*Mrs. K.N. Shantha
Former Head
Department of Physics*

Mrs. K.N. Shantha retired as Head, Department of Physics in 1979 after 30 years of dedicated service. In fact, she served as its

first Head of the Department. Under Mrs. Shantha's able guidance, the department took shape and a fully equipped laboratory was set up. She was a shining example of integrity and dedication to the vocation of teaching. A very thorough and excellent teacher, she motivated several of her students to pursue the study of physics. Gracious, unassuming, warm and caring, Mrs. Shantha enthused her colleagues in the department to emulate her. Though Mrs. Shantha passed away on June 8, 2003, she will always remain the guiding light of the department.



ANNIE RUBY PRAXY

Annie Ruby Praxy was a student of the Department of History from 2000 to 2003. Gentle and unassuming she was a friend to all in her class. Her good natured approach to life endured her not only to her close friends but also to the faculty who taught her during the three years that she studied at Stella Maris. We bid her a tearful adieu.



SHARLOTE PEREIRA

Sharlotte Pereira was a student of the Department of Social Work from June 2000 until her tragic demise on 2nd January 2003. A first generation learner she was the 'child' in whom the family fostered the dream of success. A person of integrity and commitment Sharlotte was highly motivated and involved herself fully in the cause of social work. A person of few words, poetry formed a vital avenue of expression of all her concerns, fears, hopes and dreams. God knows best and Sharlotte was chosen to "bloom forever in the Masters Bouquet".

The NCC is an established avenue for channelling the physical resources of the youth of our land. Since its establishment in 1984, the Stella Maris NCC Company has always been one of the most active units. This year too the cadets have kept the flag of Stella Maris flying high.

The year began with six cadets attending a funfilled and exciting All India Girls Trekking Expedition in the Nilgiris. The first combined annual training camp was held before the commencement of the academic year and 22 cadets participated. The Stella Maris NCC Company emerged Runners Up. The cadets won the first place in Solo Song, Group Song and Group Dance. In the TSC Competition, Cdt. Goldie S.P.Chandramouli was adjudged the best TSC. Ten cadets participated in the Anti-Plastics Rally in July.

The freshmen were enrolled in July 2002 and were initiated into the NCC activities at the Annual Inaugural Camp held on August 2-3 at the Besant Camping Site, Adyar. The camp was a two-day workshop, consisting of Quiz, Line Area, Flag Area and a host of cultural



activities like Solo Song, Solo Dance, Group Song, Group Dance along with variety entertainment programme. It was an exposure for the first year cadets giving them a taste of camp life and bringing out the enthusiasm in them as they worked along with their seniors. The Chief Guest was Col. Selvaraj, Group Commander, Madras Group 'A'. He judged the flag area and line area along with Ms. Deepa Ashwin, All India Best Cadet, YEP Canada 1994.

Two of the Naval cadets attended their preliminary Naval selection camp and Cdt. Sony Maria Joseph emerged the Best Cadet.

Five cadets were selected for the state level Thal Sainik Inter Group competitions, held in August and Cdt. Lavanya represented the group in firing.

Ten Army cadets representing Madras 'A' were selected for the Republic Day Intergroup competitions held at Trichy. Three cadets of the Air Wing and two Naval cadets also attended the same camp. F/Cdt. Sreyassy P.V. represented Madras in the Best Cadet Event.



Cdt. Thyne Priscilla attended a National Integration Camp at Orissa in September. Cdt. Poornima and Cdt. Sujatha attended a high profile NIC Camp at Missamuri, Guwahati. FL. Cdt. Lakshmi attended a NIC Camp at Rajasthan. Cdt. Lakshmi attended a NIC camp held at Guwahati in September. CUO Pramila Toppo and CUO Jasline Francis attended the Army Attachment Camp, Officers' Training Academy, Chennai, from September 29 - October 12, 2002.



and GSK. Alpha Company emerged the overall winners and were judged the Best Company for the year 2002-2003. Delta Company were the runners up.

Five cadets participated in the hearing of the National Youth Commission on January 7-8, 2003.

The Stella Maris NCC Company won the overall banner at 'Cadofest 2003', an inter-collegiate competition conducted by D.G. Vaishnav College. In the Best Cadets event for First Years, Cdt. Gayathri Krishnamurthy and Cdt. Jamieanne were placed First and Third respectively. Cdt. Diya Shivani was adjudged the Best Maitrai. Cdt. Poornima was adjudged the Best MC. The company also won the flag area, signals, first aid, individual drill, best



Cdt. Jegadeswari was selected to represent the Tamilnadu, Pondicherry and Andaman Directorate at the TSC camp and leading Cdt. Sony Maria was part of the RDC Contingent this year. Leading Cdt. Divya P. participated in the Basic Sailing Course at Goa in October 2002. Thirty cadets participated in the Tree Plantation Ceremony on October 22, held at Island Grounds, Chennai.

The Intercompany competitions were conducted among the four companies-Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Delta-on December 12-13, 2002. The various competitions included contingent drill, individual drill, cross country, signals, First Aid and Home Nursing, Map reading, best cadet, best TSC cadet and GK



cadet banner, Maitri banner and the cultural banner. The college unit won the best senior wing shield.

At. 'Cadoutsav 2003' hosted by Loyola College, Stella Maris emerged overall runners-up. Cdt. Senior Under Officer Priya T. was adjudged the Third year Best Cadet and won the Achilles Trophy. In the First Year Best Cadet Events, Cdt. Gayathri Krishnamurthy and Aarthi Raghuram were placed 1st and 2nd respectively. We also won the signals banner, first aid and home nursing, cross country and

map reading. Stella Maris emerged second in GK, GSK banner and also won the overall cultural banner.

Twenty two cadets of the second year and eleven cadets of the third year appeared for the 'B' certificate and 'C' certificate examinations. Preparations were then made for the celebration of NCC Day.

The NCC Unit of Stella Maris looks forward to yet another year of challenges and achievements in 2003-2004.

*Men spend their lives in the service of their passions, instead of
employing their passions in the service of their life.*

- Sir Richard Steele

*The only praiseworthy indifference is an acquired one; we must feel
as well as control our passions.*

- Jean Paul Richter

National Service Scheme – A Report

The NSS unit of Stella Maris College entered its thirty-fourth year at the start of the academic year 2002-2003. The enrolment figures were 294 and the total number of placements numbered 21, where 14 were for the physically and mentally challenged, 6 for less privileged normal children, and one for senior citizens. The volunteers were placed for their regular project work in these agencies.

The NSS student volunteers were involved in participating and organising programmes that helped to enhance their own personality and develop leadership skills. Throughout the academic year they had numerous opportunities to participate in programmes of unique importance.

Highlights of events of 2002-2003:

Students were involved in a 'Life Skills Training Programme' for dependents of sanitation workers, jointly organised by TAHDCO, Chennai, Social Work Department and the NSS unit, Stella Maris College. The five-day training was held from June 3-7, 2002 on our campus.



The NSS orientation programme for the incoming first year undergraduate students was conducted with the aim of creating awareness about the importance of social service and volunteer work. The objectives of the scheme were effectively communicated through a combination of street plays, mime, and sharing of experiences by senior volunteers. This orientation in June 2002 was followed by 'Interactions' in August for the enrolled volunteers, to enable them to function effectively and understand the spirit of sharing and caring.

The 'Red Ribbon Club,' under the auspices of the NSS, conducted several sessions in college to create awareness of the problem of AIDS. Two hundred and fifty students were initiated into this programme conducted throughout the year, from August to February 2003. Funded by APAC, VHS, through the Department of Adult and Continuing Education, University of Madras, the Red Ribbon Club paved the way for volunteers to be trained as 'Peer Educators'. Technical sessions, seminars and training programmes were the core activities of the club during the year 2002-2003.



The NSS volunteers participated in a number of inter-collegiate programmes. At the culturals held at Dr. MGR Janaki College in August 2002, the students of Stella Maris were placed second in the Light Music Competition.

At 'Caveat Emptor', a consumer awareness programme held at Kumara Rani Meena Muthiah College in September 2002, the NSS volunteers won the first place in the case study presentation.

The Corporation of Chennai conducted an inter-collegiate Street Play / Skit Competition in connection with World AIDS Day in November 2002. Nine NSS volunteers staged a street play and won the third prize.

The NSS volunteers participated in Seminars on 'Conservation of Water Resources' and Consumer Awareness organised in other colleges.

During this academic year the NSS unit played host to a number of programmes organised at the college:

The State level function for the NSS awards was held at Stella Maris in September 2002 and 600 students and officials representing the University, NSS Regional Centre, State Education

Department and other dignitaries participated.

- On request from the Joint Director of Collegiate Education, Chennai, inter collegiate competitions in Elocution and Essay Writing were held at Stella Maris College by the NSS unit in September 2002.
- Talent 2002, a district level competition for the physically challenged, was conducted by the Trinity Welfare Trust and the NSS unit jointly in November 2002. The four hundred participants disproved their disability by participating enthusiastically and winning trophies.
- A one-day training programme on First Aid was jointly conducted in December 2002 by the St. John's Ambulance, and the Police Department (Teynampet Station) for 88 NSS volunteers and certificates were issued to them.
- The NSS volunteers extended their services in helping to organise two sales within the campus. The first held in connection with Christmas Celebrations involved the entire college community, and the proceeds of the sale were

distributed among the cancer patients and the fire affected families at Royapuram. The second sale held in February by SIPA displayed products made by self help groups.

World Blood Donation Day on October 1, 2002, was marked by a two wheeler rally from the Marina Beach to Anna University, organised by the Association of Voluntary Blood Donors, the Tamilnadu State AIDS Cell, and the NSS, University of Madras. Six NSS volunteers from the college participated.

World Elders Day on October 1, 2002, was celebrated at Raja Annamalai Mandram by the Senior Citizens Bureau, Chennai, and 25 NSS volunteers helped at the programme in which 500 elders of the city participated.

Gandhi Jayanthi Celebrations held annually at Gandhi Mandapam, Chennai, had 15 NSS volunteers presenting a song and dance programme. Several schools and colleges participated in the function organised by the Government of Tamilnadu.

A ten days Special Camping Programme was conducted at Srimathur villege, Padappai, Kancheepuram dist, from December 27 - January 5, 2003. The theme of the camp was 'Jal Samvardhan'. Fifty seven student volunteers and one Programme Officer participated in the camp. The NSS unit coordinated with the Block and District officials and the activities and programmes were in tune with the theme benefiting both students and the community.

A 'Special Olympics' was organised by the Lions Club at YMCA Grounds in January 2003 for the differently abled. Thirty student

volunteers contributed their energies to this enriching experience. Fifteen volunteers were actively involved in helping the Little Flower Convent School for the Deaf and Blind during their annual Sports Day.

Fun Day, a fest for the physically challenged, was organised by the Lions Club International at Sri Kuchalambal Kalyana Mahal in January 2003 and fifteen students volunteered their efforts.

Students also volunteered at the HandiPark 2003, a programme organised by the Leo Club of Park Town in February 2003. Fifteen students helped in organising the events for the physically disabled and mentally retarded children from various institutions in the city.

International Women's Day organised by Nesakaram, Chennai at Valluvar Kottam in March 2003, brought together 800 women from different walks of life. Ten NSS volunteers extended their support for the event. A human chain was formed as part of the programme.

Again to mark International Women's Day a programme was organised by the Womens' Welfare Organisation, Office of the Accountant General, Tamilnadu, at the AG's Office Complex, Teynampet. Fifteen volunteers staged songs, skits and a mime show to highlight women's empowerment. The performance was well appreciated and applauded.

A voluntary blood donation camp was conducted in the college campus by the NSS unit in February 2003. The camp was coordinated by the Madras Voluntary Blood Bank and the blood collected by the Government Kilpauk Medical College and Hospital. There were a total number of 100

donors from among the faculty and students. Voluntary blood donation camps have become an annual feature of the NSS unit at Stella Maris College. Certificates of Merit, Appreciation and trophies have been awarded by the Madras Voluntary Blood Bank through the years.

Two of the third year volunteers, R. Preetha (III B.Sc. Maths) and C. Abineya (III B.Com) were selected to participate in the ten days NSS Pre Republic Day Parade Camp held at Trivandrum in November 2002. The same volunteers attended the IV State Level NSS Motivational cum Cultural Festival 'Koodal Murugu' at Vel's College of Sciences, Pallavaram, in December 2002.

The year's activities culminated in the NSS Day Programme organised for the entire college community at the campus in March

2003. Four hundred participants from the various institutions where the students are placed, were invited for the programme. The theme was 'Education, Exposure, Experience and Empowerment.' The Chief Guest was Mrs. Beulah Azariah, South Regional Coordinator for IWID (Initiatives for Women in Development), Chennai. As an alumna of the college the chief guest was honoured to be present at a function that displayed the abilities and talents of the participants and the student volunteers through the cultural show. Various stalls were also set up by the participating institutions and other self help groups to highlight the day's programme and the theme.

The NSS Day was well received and appreciated by all present and left a lasting impression on those present. It brought to a fruitful end the year's events.

The passions are the winds that fill the sails of the vessel. They sink it at times; but without them it would be impossible to make way. Many things that are dangerous here below, are still necessary.

- Voltaire (Francois Marie Arouet)

It is the passions of men that both do and undo everything. They are the winds that are necessary to put every thing in motion, though they often cause storms.

- Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle

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Games and Sports - A Report

During the academic year 2002-2003, many of our students brought home laurels after having participated in games with great enthusiasm and vigour and in a spirit of healthy competition. In the Inter Collegiate tournaments, our teams were the winners in Basket Ball, Lawn Tennis, Table Tennis and runners up in Chess. Several of our students have represented Madras University South Division in the following major games and athletics.

- Basket ball - S. Subashini, III B.Com
 I. Suganthi Anbu, III B.Com
 M. Vaijyanthi, III B.Com
 Nithya Narayanan, III B.C.A
 Melinda Mathew, III B.Com
 Jyotsna John, M.Sc. IT.
 Indra Priyadarshini I BCA
 Ruvita Chacko II B.Com
 M. Seema I B.Com
 P. Sathya I B.Com
 D. Indumathi I Maths
 Indupriya I Zoology
 Edel Pushpa Aruna II B.A. Lit
 Eyrey Susan Mathew I B.A. FA



- Cricket - Melissa Fowler III B.A. Lit
 Bairavi Mani, II B.C.A.
- Shuttle Badminton - Rashmi, I B.Com
 Shalini II BCA
- Lawn Tennis - Kaavya K I B.Sc. CH
 Seema, II B.A. FA
 Rupha Ramans, I. B.A. (Lit)
 Purnima, I B.A. (FA)
- Table Tennis - S. Nirupama, II B.Com
 Saraswathy, II BCA
- Volley Ball - Rebecca, I B.Com
- Hockey - A. Santhoshi, I B.Com
 N. Deepa Rekha I B.Com
 J Deepa Arasi I B.Com
- Athletics - Mary Sherin Jose, I B.Com

Some of our students represented Madras University and participated in the All India Inter University Tournaments in the following games.

- Basket ball - S. Subashini, III B.Com
 I. Suganthi Anbu, III B.Com
- Hockey - A. Santhoshi, I B.Com
 J Deepa Arasi I B.Com
 N. Deepa Rekha I B.Com



Cricket - Melissa Fowler III B.A. Lit
Bairavi Mani, III B.C.A.

Swimming - Lisa Aruliah, II BCA

Some of our students represented the Tamil Nadu State in the following games.

Cricket - Melissa Fowler III B.A. Lit
Bairavi Mani, II B.C.A.

Shuttle - Rashmi, I B.Com
Badminton - Shalini, II BCA

Lawn Tennis - Kaavya K., I B.Sc. CH
Seema, II B.A. FA
Rupha Ramans, I. B.A. (Lit)
Purnima, I B.A. (FA)

Table Tennis - S. Nirupama, II B.Com
Saraswathy, II BCA

Volley Ball - Rebecca, I B.Com

Hockey - A. Santhoshi, I B.Com
N. Deepa Rekha, I B.Com
J Deepa Arasi, I B.Com

Athletics - Mary Sherin Jose, I B.Com

S. Subashini of III B.Com was selected for Tamil Nadu State for Senior National Championship held at Hyderabad secured Third place.

This year our college Basket ball team participated in several State and All India Intercollegiate and open tournaments and secured Runners-up in several Tournaments. I Suganthi Anbu, M. Semma , D. Indhumathi, Jyotsna John were awarded best players in several tournaments.

Melissa Fowler of III B.A. represented Tamilnadu State in Cricket and Semma III BCA represented Tamilnadu State in Snooker.

A. Santhoshi, N. Deepa Rekha and J. Deepa Arasi I B.com represented Tamilnadu State in Hockey.

Lisa Aruliah of II BCA represented Tamil Nadu State in Aquatics Championship and got the Individual. Championship Shield.

Mary Sherin Jose I B.Com represented Tamilnadu State open Athletic Championship held at Nagercoil and bagged third place in 100 metres hurdles.

The athletes and sportswomen of Stella Maris look forward to yet another year of achievements and laurels in 2003-2004.

Another important cultural event that took place was the interdepartmental culturals 2002 *In the Spotlight*. The departments of Literature, Sociology and Zoology won this event held in July to encourage greater participation amongst students.

The biggest and the most eagerly awaited intra-collegiate activity is the interyear culturals. Interyears 2002 named 'Kalotsav'-A Festival of Arts was held on the 12th, 13th and the 14th of September including around 48 events. The Second Years were declared overall winners.

Mélange our inter-collegiate festival was held on the 11th of October and a total of 10 city colleges participated in this event. MOP Vaishnav College for Women took home the overall winners trophy.

Stella Maris participated in several inter-collegiate cultural competitions conducted by city colleges and came out as the overall winners in six of the culturals. They were also the runners up in two of the competitions. Apart from these achievements we also won awards for Best Director, Best Technical Excellence and Judges Special Mention for Acting at 'Natak' - an inter-collegiate theatre festival organised by Masquerade.

Special mention must also be made of the various clubs on campus that played an active role in organising all the student activities, open-air assemblies and workshops.

A year, in which we have lived our dreams, unearthed hidden talent, nurtured our god given gifts. "An eventful journey!"- This year has indeed been that and so much more.



Executive members of the Students Union with the Principal, Vice Principals and Deans of Student Affairs

Justice in education requires equalisation of educational opportunities by attending to the specific needs of those who are denied equality so far. One of the objectives of Stella Maris is to cater to the educational needs of the disadvantaged as a special group. They come to college for having their dreams of higher education realised in order to seek openings with remunerative occupation. In this task they have to compete with others coming from socially privileged homes to meet the "standardised quality" set by the educational system.

To enable these students to discover and develop their hidden potentials, the college had organised programmes on 'life skills' for two groups of thirty-five students each, drawn from all the departments.

The objective of the programme was to facilitate students to identify their own potential and develop their learning and leadership skills. The programme also aimed at building self-confidence and self-esteem. Special focus was given to the position and status of women in India, thus initiating their own self-empowerment.

These objectives were fulfilled through various inputs on self-awareness, self-confidence, physical well being, learning skills, time management, positive thinking, creativity, communication skills, spoken English, and the empowerment of women.

A variety of methodology with emphasis on participation was adopted such as lectures, group discussions, role plays, use of audio-visual aids, exercises etc.

Sr. Christine Antony co-ordinated the programme. The resource persons were

predominantly drawn from the faculty of the college, senior NSS volunteers and guest speakers who gave their time generously to the students. The faculty approached the students with respect for the hidden intellectual and other potentials and with sympathetic understanding of the weakness of the students. They were helped to overcome their inferiority and to realise that they possess great potential and are capable of overcoming their social and psychological handicaps.

Following are some of the feedback given by the participants:

"... I learnt to think. I came to know myself and how to relate to others. I also learnt to set goals for myself and manage time effectively. I am able to get rid of my fears. I also learnt to speak before a group". Venetia (II B.A Economics)

"... I am very happy with the summer training programme. It helped me to improve my English vocabulary. I have learnt breathing exercise, which I have started doing daily. I came to know how to be a strong woman. Now I feel more confident to face life".

"... Before attending the course I always thought things are 'impossible for me'. But now I have changed. I will use the phrase 'it is possible for me'. I have learnt the skills to deal with day to day problems. The programme should be continued". Vinothini (I BSc Chemistry)

The request for the programme to continue during the year has been unanimous with the suggestion that it be given also to the incoming students.

*Ms. Sarala Vasu, Dept. of Economics, '76.
Executive Member of the Stella Maris College
Alumnae Association.*

"When the going gets tough, the tough get going," is how the famous cliché goes. Well it's a cliché only because it is so true! In the 21st century things are as tough for young students as they have been in many years. The economic slowdown has meant that jobs that which were once available at the drop of a hat are now harder to come by. Even high quality education is not a guarantee to success these days. To make things a little easier for students, the Stella Maris College Alumnae Association proposed to set up a Comprehensive Career Guidance Cell. Who better to help out the young minds of today than the alumnae of the college who have already faced many of the challenges and difficulties that the youngsters will come up against? Apart from a thorough knowledge of the skills and techniques needed, it is an ability to be a leader, to take the initiative that makes the difference. After a lot of preliminary meetings and deliberations a core group was formed. This core group consisting of Ms. Sarala Vasu, Ms. Radha Durairajan, Ms. Mary Victor, Ms. Usha Sridhar and Ms. Sharada functions on the campus, with advisory inputs from Sr. Christine Antony and Dr. Sundari Krishnamurthy. A CD on Career Planning - "Career Help" by Ms. Sheela Balasubramaniam- was brought out, and is also available on tape. Dr. Sr. Annamma Phillip inaugurated the Cell in August 2002.

The days when the responsibility of a college ended with delivering high quality lectures to its students, preparing them for

examinations and arming them with degrees are long since over. To succeed in an increasingly competitive market place it is vital that students focus on their career from an early age. A quick frame at the dictionary informs us that the word 'career' encompasses "profession, work, vocation, calling, employment, walk of life." The first example cited is apt. "Florence Nightingale made nursing her life's career," says the dictionary. Well, not everyone can reach the high standards set by Dame Nightingale, but the importance of taking a career seriously cannot be understood better.

The first step in resolving a situation or solving a problem is awareness. Every individual must be clearly aware of her strengths and weakness, and where this would lead her to in the world. In this light, the Career Guidance Cell aims to create awareness in the avenues of employment available for both undergraduates and post graduates. It would be providing comprehensive quality career development, internship and employment programmes that will help a diverse student body face the challenges in the community.

The cell proposes to make available easy access to reliable and relevant information on the jobs, positions and opportunities that are open to students. This would help the student make vital decisions on which path to take. It will conduct workshops, seminars, interfacing with industry, talks, and training programmes on employable skills, which will help the young

ones in planning their future. After all, without a proper plan in place it is extremely difficult to reach one's goal. Naturally, nothing in this day and age can happen without technology. The Cell is acutely sensitive to this and will seek to enhance its services through innovative technology, programme development and continuous updating of resources through research and analysis, and inputs from the Industry.

One must also address those cases where a student matches all these criterion and yet finds it difficult to come up with the finance and resources needed to make a beginning. The Cell wants to prepare for this eventuality too and will attempt to mobilize resources

that are needed for needy students to apply for jobs and get the jump-start that they need.

In the first year of the working of the Cell, many campus recruitments were organised. A good number of students were recruited. However the need for adequate training in employable skills was felt. In coming years, a lot more emphasis will be given to this.

It is indeed a sizeable task that the Cell proposes to achieve but certainly one that is within the realm of possibility if we the Alumnae work together with the right spirit and dedication. This is what the Stella Maris College Alumnae Association has stood for and will strive to uphold in the coming years with more fresh initiatives.

If we would guide by the light of reason, we must let our minds be bold.

- Louis Dembitz Brandeis

It is good sense, reason that produces everything: virtue, genius, wit, talent, and tast. What is virtue? reason in practice. Talent? reason enveloped in glory. Wit? reason which is chastely expressed. Taste is nothing else than good sense delicately put in force, and genius is reason in its most sublime form.

- Marie Joseph de Chenier

"Yes, Sir, I have been waiting here for the past three days," I replied. He asked about the IPSL and I explained it to him. He then jotted something down on my application and asked me to furnish the details required by the embassy direct from the IPSL authorities. Thanks to the efforts and support of the Vice Principal, I received my visa a few days later. My experience at the embassy taught me the famous lesson the spider taught King Robert Bruce, as it tried to reach its destination even after several falls.

I boarded the flight for Manila on 20.7.02 and on reaching there, I went to Trinity College, where the programme was scheduled to be held. Forty students from several countries including China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Taiwan, Thailand, Korea, Philippines, The United States of America and Vietnam.

We had classes on religion and philosophy of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and contemporary social issues by eminent personalities. The lecture on religion shaped our minds towards the "oneness of God", His abundant blessing revealed in nature and uniqueness of human creation, love towards all beings and eternity on earth itself.

In the interactive session on contemporary social issues, I spoke about the secondary position held by women in India, the dowry system, infanticide and the illiteracy rate of women in India. Participants from Thailand spoke about child labour, the ones from Philippines about poverty, those from Korea spoke about the unequal status of women. This sharing helped me to see the similarity of the problems of the human race the world over.

Service Learning:

Serving to learn and learning to serve is an appropriate term for the programme. In the Philippines, there are numerous agents, both privately owned and trusts, to take care of infants and abandoned children. Infants are abandoned either due to poverty or illegitimate birth. There are many day care centres for children below six years of age with working parents.

We were deputed to such centres. One was the Association de Damaas de Filipinas, which housed nearly forty children. Although they were looked after well with modern amenities, I saw in them a search for love and affection. Though language was a barrier between us and the children, we were able to show them our compassion.

On our introduction to the children, we were greeted as "Ate Ate" which means "big sister" in Filipino. We talked, dined and danced with them for five days. During the day of departure, some children hugged my legs to stop me from leaving them. I lifted them up, kissed and consoled them. My heart was filled with sorrow. Unable to control myself, I felt tears roll down my cheeks as I returned to my Camp at Manila. My mind recollected some words that I had once read in a magazine - "Children are the gifts of God." No child is born an orphan. Behind their happy and hopeful faces of today are terrible histories. Children are born in this world without their will, some are subjected to poverty, desperation, suffering and abuse for no fault of their own. My heart prayed with reverence for those who have taken up the care of the abandoned. They remind the world that humanism should be the guiding factor behind every activity in life.

Field Trips:

Field trips in and around the capital Manila were also organised. Nature's bounty was to be seen everywhere in abundance. The mountains, the sea, the lanes, the people - everything attracts a person visiting the Philippines. We had seen Baguio, a hilly region and Zambales, a tribal village. The tribals gave us a warm welcome with smiles on their faces and enacted a drama and folk dance for us. They further proved their hospitality by offering us a delicious drink.

During the last week of our course, cultural programme of the respective countries were organised. Participants felt no barrier of country, caste, creed or religion. Everyone participated with enthusiasm. During my stay with them, I was able to see the care and affection shown by my roommates and all my friends, especially our guardian, Mon Espie.

One friend asked me, "in your country, how do boys and girls get married without

knowing each other well in advance?" and I replied, "they will love each other after their wedding, it is our culture."

Nevertheless in my inner heart there was a voice that said whether it be prior to marriage or after, there should be love. There should be truth in every kind of love. Mother Teresa was once asked by a dignified visitor, "Mother, how are you able to touch and wash the hands and the body of a leper?" She immediately replied, "I see the face of Christ in him, I love Christ."

On the last day of our course, we exchanged small gifts so that we could cherish our memories of the experience. We wondered whether such opportunities and experiences would ever come our way again. We left to our various countries.

I convey my gratitude to the Henry Luce foundation, our principal Dr. Sr. Annamma Philip, our vice principal, Sr. Mercy and the others who gave me this wonderful opportunity.

Reason is the triumph of the intellect, faith of the heart; and whether the one or the other shall best illumine the dark mysteries of our being, they only are to be despaired of who care not to explore.

- James Schouler

True virtue is life under the direction of reason.

- Baruch (Benedict) Spinoza

Artists' Camp – A Report

In an attempt to broaden the exposure to art the Department of Fine Arts organized an Artists' Camp on February 27th and 28th 2003. Inaugurated by the Principal, Dr. (Sr.) Annamma Philip amidst a gathering of art personalities the camp was a first in terms of the activities of the Department of Fine Arts. Eight Prominent Chennai-based artists - Achuthan Kudallur, Alphonso Arul Doss, Asma Menon, C. Douglas, P. Gopinath, K.V. Haridasan, A.V. Ilango and K. Muralidharan gave of their time and experience to a rapt audience of young art students.

Their paintings were inspired and created within an ambience of learning, surrounded by students eager to gain knowledge from these reputed artists, to understand their works, appreciate their distinct styles and individualistic techniques and to benefit from their expertise. These works were later placed on display to the public at the Forum Art Gallery; Adyar until March 29th, 2003.

Achuthan's pursuit of colour to the exclusion of all vestiges of form is manifest in his spirited yet curiously serene paintings. His abstraction comes from within himself, not



deriving from the natural world, but rather existing purely in colour. While Achuthan dwells entirely on colour, Gopinath adds formal structure to the equation. Colour also forms the crux of Gopinath's paintings where it adopts a magnetic quality, drawing the viewer towards it with the play of pure plastic forms and scattered scripts/. In spite of being meticulously calculated, his paintings have a mesmerising spontaneity. Plastic form may be expressed in varied measures and Haridasan's neo-tantric paintings are emblematic, based on the traditional, religious and mystical tantric symbols. Here form and colour unite in precision to suggest profound connotations.

Multi-layered in conception, Asma Menon's paintings sport motifs from Nature and Fantasy, which are caught within a labyrinthine maze of lines and enmeshed within a host of narratives. Her startling and striking use of colour against the hard black surface creates textural depth, which is supported by the numerous stories being told on a single plane. Another artist who harbours a fascination for the fantastic is Muralidharan, suffused with



the influence of the surreal and images from religious mythology, his paintings personify the fusion of elements, man and animals. There is energy in his uniquely naive expression, which is richly decorative in terms of colour and form.

The intensely sombre paintings by Douglas allow for comprehension on diverse levels, and may be perceived as an exploitation of varied metaphors. Meanings are suggested through different objects from everyday life, but they may also be read with an entirely novel inference. The principal theme of Alphonso's art is the human figure along with which he uses a range of symbols to accommodate the human narrative into his paintings. The faceted

planes, the stark light and the unusual use of colour, all combine to create a rational rendition that serves to tell a tale. In Ilango's paintings, the human figure epitomises his sure draughtsmanship and easy style. Flat colours are boldly enclosed within robust lines creating powerful visual imagery of a common premise, the female figure.

The Artists' Camp proved to be a genuinely stimulating event, the students being treated to a multitude of styles and techniques, exposed to wide-ranging approaches and allowed to infuse the character of creativity in contemporary art in Chennai.

"The main power behind what is called 'modern' art is its rediscovery of design as something more purposeful, intense and incisive than compositions. Since design involves structure meaningful to the spatial concept of the picture, it naturally cannot always express realism."

- C. Gopinath

"The thin line that separates one colour from another keeps on changing; Sometimes it becomes necessary to specify certain areas for colour by the whisper of a line into it."

- Achuthan Kudallur

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The English Department conducted a seminar on Contemporary Indian Literature in English on September 19 and 20, 2002. Faculty and students valued the experience, that included interactive sessions with Shashi Deshpande, “Face to Face” between Deshpande and Tamil writers, and dramatised excerpts from her most recent novel *Small Remedies*.

Deshpande’s keynote address focused on translation as a viable solution to the impasse of linguistic prejudice. There are two extreme reactions to the issues surrounding Indian literature in English; on the one hand, our language literatures tend to be extremely hostile towards English. On the other hand, we have Salman Rushdie’s statement that the best literature in India is written in English. It is a form of linguistic chauvinism, Deshpande suggested, that gives rise to such diametrically opposed points of view, and prevents us from knowing, or desiring to know, literature that

is written in languages other than our own. However, she highlighted the fact that although translation may be a means of overcoming linguistic chauvinism, it is highly problematic to translate a text with the intention of making it known to the world: “when we speak of translating a text with the intention of making it known to the world what a great literature we have, we are making a few presumptions that worry me.”

The literature that is remembered and appreciated is always that which gives the reader the pleasure of reading. If a book or author is admired, it’s not because it focuses on an issue concerning gender, for example, or politics - it’s because it’s a good read. “Yes, it is a global world and as a writer I would like my books to be read through the world,” Deshpande said in conclusion. “But not as a bit of exotica, not as ‘Indian’ books, not as books about women. I’d like them to be read purely as novels.”

The Golden Years – The Alumnae Association in Action

Ms. Thara Mohan Rao
 Executive Member, Alumnae Association



at Stella Maris



at Madurai

Golden jubilees always bring in jubilation and help reap lasting consequences too. Stella Maris is no exception to this golden rule. Our Alma Mater celebrated its golden jubilee in August 1997 and revived in the process the august body, its Alumnae Association, with courage (of conviction) and might (can you hear the college song echoing in the background - *“love ruling all, our courage and our might”?*) The Association has now become a force to reckon with and is right royally progressing in its onward march with the management’s gentle and advisory organisation, our Vice-President Sr. Christine’s affectionate and sisterly guidance, our staff co-ordinator, Dr. Poppy Kannan’s wise and practical management and the office bearers’ diligent administration.

To begin with, a loving contribution to the golden jubilee block was as significant as the great number of old students from far and near who were brought within the mother’s fold. Our life members now exceed thousand. Projects we can pride ourselves on include the golden jubilee scholarships, career

counselling carried on in full swing (enabling good placements following campus interviews) and the Bridge Course to help students communicate easily in English and join the mainstream. The motto here is *“as one lamp lights another nor grows dim, so in the world nobleness enkindleth nobleness”* - in short, *lighted to lighten*. Service-minded alumnae give more than their mite in time, energy and skills. Another feather in our cap is the website created and the complete processing of all relevant data. Outstation chapters inaugurated include the one in Kerala that is functioning quietly against the backdrop of the tranquil backwaters, the Karnataka circle growing excitedly amidst the rustle of the Mysore silks trailing sandalwood perfumed memories and the overseas Singapore chapter where the old students come pouring in as you sing nostalgically *“proudly we bear thy crest aloft and hail thee, star of our lives and guide of our way...”* The Madurai circle has just been launched where Madurai Meenakshi holds her sway rightfully by the empowered Stella Marians amidst jasmine-bedecked women speaking chaste Tamil.



at Toronto



at Baltimore

A website Alumnae Directory and Alumnae Room further established 'identity'. Elections are held peacefully (unlike in the political arena) and the General Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer, Editor and Sub-editor are elected. The Principal is the ex-officio President.

The Alumnae newsletter, titled *Stella News*, is released every quarter and all its activities are reported in light or serious styles as the occasion may demand. These are released during the General Body Meetings, where we make it a point to invite (and show off, as it were) our well-placed, illustrious alumnae to release and accept the first copy. Ms. Sheila Priya (IAS), Ms. Sushila Ravindranath of the corporate world, Dr. Rathi Jhaffer of the British Council, famed artiste Alarmel Valli, ophthalmologist Dr. Mary Abraham (who never

fails to see eye to eye with us!) are amongst the brightest stars of Stella Maris. In order to get to know each other better and to be able to work in greater harmony and fellowship, the executive committee members meet on other interesting occasions like Diwali Mela, Christmas Party or just a casual party in someone's house or a picnic.

Cheering up the sick and affording comfort to the bereaved find top priority amongst our projects. Plans are also afoot to support our Alma Mater in all her projects and forge lasting fellowship among Stella Marians to help those in need. We never hesitate to turn to the star of the sea for succour of any sort. If Stella Maris has for its motto 'Truth and Charity', we past pupils have adopted as our attitude "true charity" in thought, word and deed now and for evermore.



at Kerala



at Kuala Lumpur

Words From The Past...

VOICES FROM THE ALUMNAE

Ajitha Srinivasan, Dept. of Physics, '96.

Seems like yesterday that I walked across the grand, green campus of Stella Maris, with a sense of ownership and belonging. January 2003, I visited my alma mater again- change is inevitable; new faces, new paint on the buildings, new facilities, yet the ambience remains. The aura of freedom and happiness, transformed the timid girl- me- with a shy smile in extra large clothes to -ME- the one looking her best by just being level-headed, confident, laughing out loud and being oneself.

The umpteen opportunities allowed me to not only express myself, but also to explore hidden talents. The wide gamut of versatility and the capabilities of my friends around me taught me to appreciate and applaud. I knew when I was stepping out I was ready to challenge myself to make a difference to the world.

I traced an unconventional path from a Bachelors in Physics at our H Block (when youth of my period thought of MCA, MBA or IIT Madras as the in thing) to a masters in Biophysics (although I did not know the B of Biology then) at Madras University. I have now completed my second Masters in applied Biosciences (bioinformatics as my specialization) and Management at Keck Graduate Institute, California, U.S.A.

Travel to the other side of the world taught me much more than education itself. The culture shock of just seeing people of

multiple races owing to the international population in the U.S is unimaginable. There is a constant tug to remind yourself of your home and your roots (you are shrouded by people here, all the time, taking care of you, worrying for every small fuss you make). This is constant and trying to merge, and learn the best from other people and their cultures (you are alone and feel exposed), and remembering this is like walking a tightrope. You have to literally break open your shell and be born again. However, the final triumph lies in holding the values you have learnt close to your heart, and yet breaking unnecessary barriers and rising beyond.

I am right now working as a research associate on a project for my professors in collaboration with a pharmaceutical concern, learning and using new technologies. Once again at crossroads, waiting to find an appropriate job, I am eager to face interviews and traverse new roads. As I stepped into my business suit, glad to take on this challenge, I was asked to write a letter to my alma mater, and I was reminded of those formative years. I was reminded of the professors, friends, and the 'Star of the Sea' who taught me to hold my head just high enough to look confident and throw my shoulders back, and this has made a world of difference to my personality. I also remember a beloved mentor at my alma mater, telling me I should serve my country, and I would like to tell her I have made a promise to myself that I will keep a few years down the lane.

THE FORCE THAT SHAPED MY DREAM

NAFEES SULTANA

Dept. of Sociology (1992- 1995)

Dept. of Social Work (1995 - 1997)

DUBAI AUTISM CENTER

P.O BOX 9229, DUBAI, UAE

"My child hugged me for the first time and said 'Mama' in 8 long years," said Sheena's mother at Dubai Autism Center where I am working as a Special Educator. It was truly the biggest day of my life. To say I was deeply moved would be an understatement. I was touched so profoundly by the emotions of Sheena's mother that a tear slid down my cheek. I remember that I felt so proud, so good about myself to know beyond the shadow of doubt that I had the information, the approach, the principles, the philosophies and the skills in bringing about the most unbelievable change in a persons life, the change they desired most! And I owe it all to my college and my family.

I remember my experience on the first day of college, which is still so fresh in my mind. New place, new faces, new atmosphere and a new beginning. I had felt tremendously fearful and apprehensive. What is it that I will take back with me? I was asking myself. The department of Sociology played a very significant role in helping me find answers to these questions and to believe in myself. The highest standard of input, the comfort and the confidence that I received from the department empowered me to face all life's challenges and realize my dreams.

At an early age I developed a belief that we are all here to contribute something unique. One way to make a difference in the lives of people is to dedicate ourselves to those born onto an underprivileged environment. This was further nourished and nurtured by the department of Social Work, where I learnt that the resources we needed to turn our dreams into reality lie within us. We all have dreams...We all want to believe deep down in our souls that we have a special gift, that we can make a difference, that we can touch other in a special way and that we can make the world a better place. For many of us those dreams have become shrouded in the frustrations and routines of daily life that we no longer even make an effort to accomplish them. My life was no exception. My college and family have reassured me in so many ways that I am much more than I could be.

Working with children with special needs has given me the ability to look at life differently, has made me a better human being in totality. I believe that one of life's major lessons is learning to understand what makes us do what we do, and go ahead in achieving it.

"We are what and where we are because we have imagined it."

- Donald Curtis

Working for autistic children is my dream come true. What's yours?

Art and the Expression of Passion

Meghna Mudaliar
M.Phil., English, 2000-2001

"I wonder if we shall ever be put into songs or tales. We're in one, of course; but I mean: put into words, you know, told by the fireside, or read out of a great big book with red and black letters, years and years afterwards. And people will say: 'Let's hear about Frodo and the Ring!' And they'll say: 'Yes, that's one of my favourite stories. Frodo was very brave, wasn't he, dad?' "

(Sam Gamgee in JRR Tolkien's *The Two Towers*)

Sometimes passion, like art, can seem like an ideal. We fashion our ideals in terms of changing feelings, fleeting ideas that we can only dimly grasp, our minds intent on forgetting what we don't like about what makes us human. If energy is eternal delight, passion seems its highest form. If only we could live our lives on a never-ending high; if only we could identify what turned us on. Moments of clarity are very very rare, moments when the universe is not a heap of little things but a unified, synthesized whole, full of beauty and terror and indifference and a million other things.

We are cursed with freedom, with flux rather than stasis, with the inability to draw the threads of our worlds into a patterned web, with the necessity to synthesize. Is there a common denominator to each of our lives? Is it reasonable to assume that I can share my own private mythology with another human being? Are there constants, things that will never change? Can ideas be renewed? Will my words seem as relevant to those who hear

them, as they seem to me right now? Will they seem as relevant after a decade - or tomorrow - even to me? If I look at the universe through the prism of individual experience, dare I assume that my words will represent more than paranoid, solipsistic ravings when I speak my mind? How do I ensure that this state of mind and being becomes something I can preserve for future reference? How do I make it tangible? An image that encapsulates an idea is a message in a bottle, an attempt to reach out and touch, to establish a connection: a connection that lasts. Sunflowers belong to Van Gogh, and daffodils to Wordsworth.

What do we look for in art? Does an artist have a motive other than, or beyond, the expression of passion? "We hate poetry," Keats says fervently, "that has a palpable design upon us." A fifteen year old's response to Blake's 'The Tyger' was to suggest that when Blake asks "Did he who made the lamb make thee?" he really did want to know if the same creator had made both the tiger and the lamb. There was no question of rhetoric at all. It was a question of pure, simple curiosity. What do we look for in art? Viggo Mortensen, who plays Aragorn in Peter Jackson's movie trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*, when asked in an interview about the translation of a classic text into film, observes that watching a movie and reading a book may be different experiences, but they have something in common. "There can be millions of identical copies of any book," as Mortensen says, "and yet the copy you hold and read is your personal doorway. It

is the same when you go to the movie theatre: you and the movie have a secret... you could walk out with this little secret - or a big secret - inside you: a discovery that might stay with you for a day, for a month or two, even years. In those secrets we touch myth and confront universal issues, perhaps even draw new strength for own lives.”

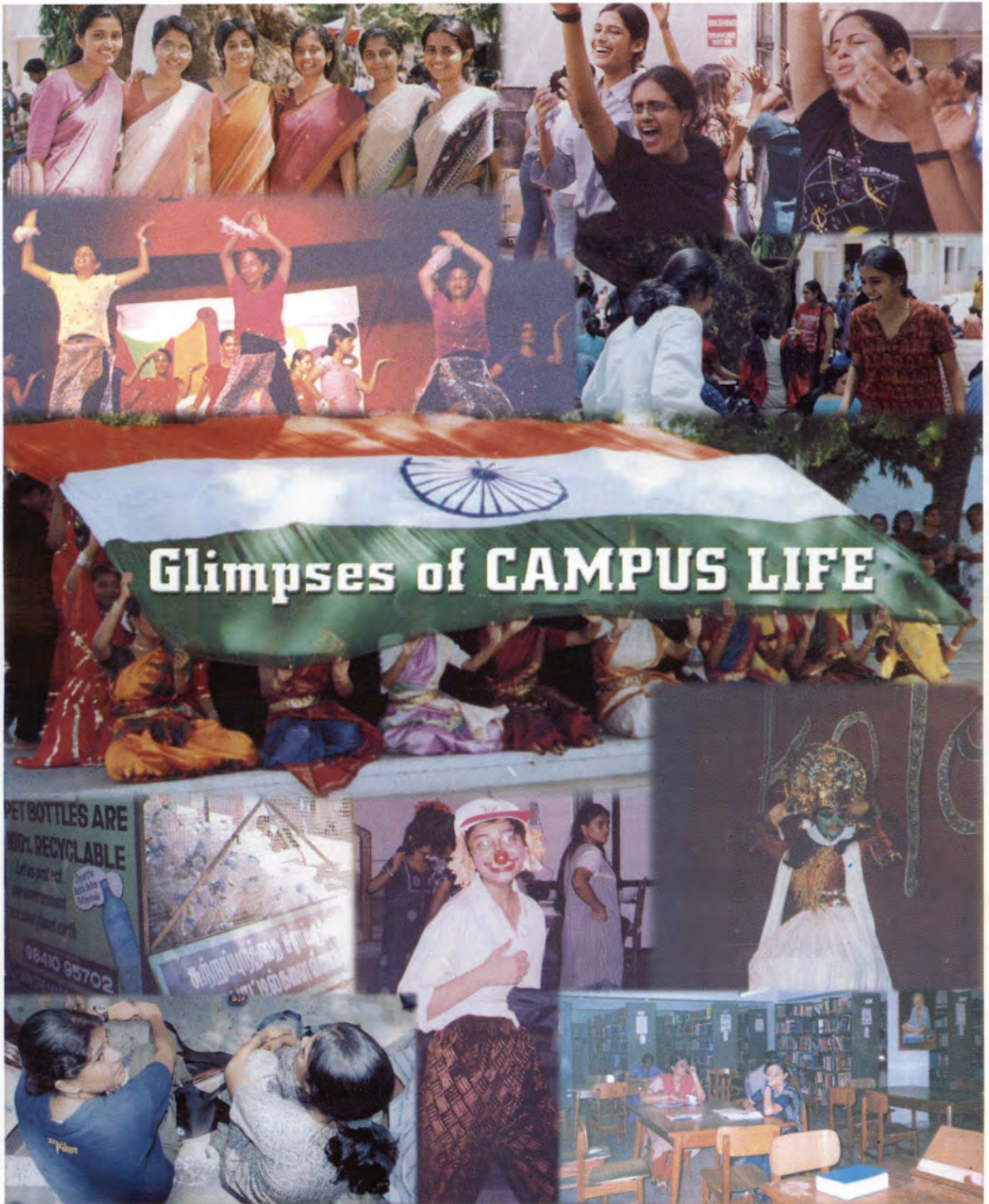
Art that isn't an expression of passion isn't art at all. To feel passionately angry, or to despair passionately, are consuming emotions that are eventually spent, burnt out. Sometimes, if we are fortunate, we can harness the energy emitted by the passions we feel, and channelize them into creative expression before they exhaust themselves, and us. Great characters and memorable moments in literature are expressions of passion, playing out a huge range of human emotions in which we recognize ourselves in our strengths as well as our depravities. Tolkien's Aragorn loves passionately, battles like a maniac for what is right, and practically radiates ripples of energy through the pages of his book and into his reader's hands. Marlowe's Mephistopheles, who carries hell with him wherever he goes - "Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it" - Eliot's Prufrock, for whom the mermaids will not sing - Marquez's Sierva Maria, who drives the monk deputed to exorcise her into distraction - these

are characters we encounter who rise above and beyond their textual contexts, penetrate one's mind and force their way into one's consciousness, never to leave. They share subtexts, forming a collective unconscious of sorts, a zone that may be accessed by every person who reads a particular book, or hears that song, or views that painting.

Stories and songs and paintings are secrets told in public, and not all of us can decipher all of them. But the ones that we do decode create bonds of understanding that weave themselves through experienced passion, a passion felt by the artist a decade ago, or maybe a millennium ago, that expressed itself in an artifact and found its way to you now, and to strangers far away from you in space and time. If, as an individual, I find an evocative echo of myself in an artifact, part of me feels an intimate connection with the artist - a connection stronger than the ones I feel with many of the people who may be physically around me. And the people who become our friends are, perhaps, those people who share these connections with us. We all feel passion - and art, as an expression of it, helps us recognize what matters the most to us about ourselves; about how we live, and how we would want to live.

"We don't need lists of rights and wrongs, tables of do's and don'ts: we need books, time and silence. 'Thou shalt not' is soon forgotten, but 'Once upon a time' lasts forever."

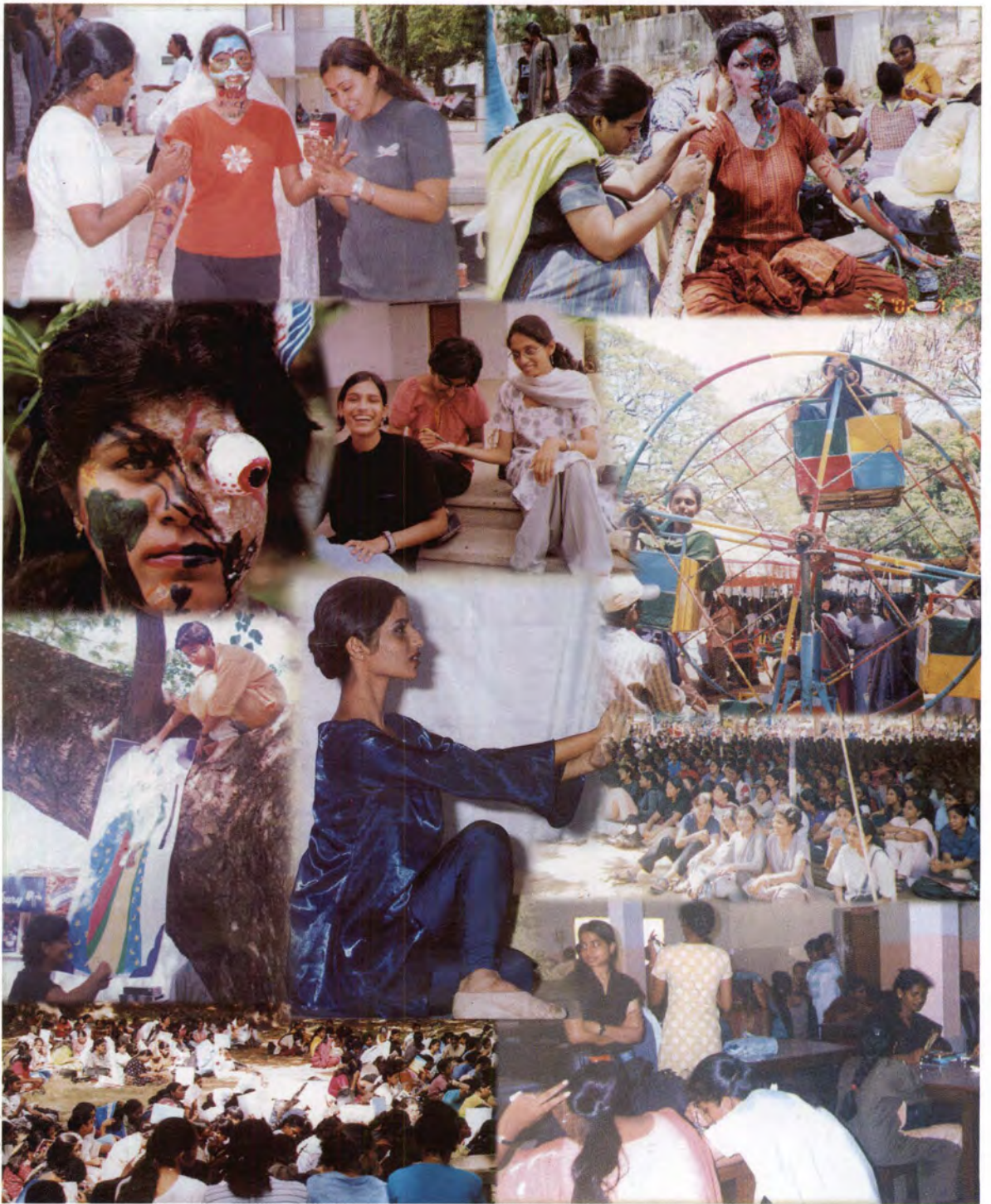
Philip Pullman



Glimpses of CAMPUS LIFE

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RECYCLABLE
Let us protect
our environment
and save planet earth.
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A great visionary, an ideologue, a pioneer in the establishment of the Madras Movement and a theoretician, his single minded pursuit led to a definition of the southern region within the pan Indian milieu. An eminent artist of international fame, Paniker born in Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) on 30th May 1911, had his early education in Kerala and for some time studied at the Madras Christian College. In 1936, he joined the Madras School of Arts and Crafts (the name was changed to Government College of Arts and Crafts in 1963) in the third year and graduated with a diploma in Fine Arts in 1940. But as early as 1922, Paniker had taken to painting in watercolours and was showing regularly at the All India Exhibitions of the Madras Fine Arts Society from 1928 onwards. His contemporaries in the School of Arts were, Gopal Ghose, Paritosh Sen, E. Kothandaram, S. Dhanapal, H.V. Ram Gopal, Sultan Ali and Sreenivasulu, who today are well established national names. In 1941 Paniker joined the teaching faculty with the heavyweight D.P. Roy Chowdhary as the head of the institution.

He undoubtedly was a brilliant, intelligent, sensitive and an achievement oriented artist. The personal and modernist approach to art education that he introduced unsettled the situation within the campus of School of Arts. Says Paniker, “from my childhood days, what has haunted my imagination throughout was a sense of some deficiency, and a sense of inferiority had yet another awareness: that if I had been alone, if there were no one to see what I was doing, I would be able to do something beyond the capacity of most”. Ironically the whole Indian art world watched his performance as he passionately devoted his artistic life to sort out painterly problems within the contemporary Indian milieu.

In 1940 when Paniker graduated with hardly any job opportunities, his sensibilities both as a man and an artist had undergone a devastating change. Pressures of a world in which an artist was not in the least appreciated, often made him sour, depressed and unsure of his creative ability. To his very close friend Sushil Mukherjee he had confided, “You know Sushil my works are merely



competent sketches without any substance. They seem more as academic technical jugglery, and I'm not even a competent academic painter, seems absolutely meaningless after looking at the works of these French chaps" (the Impressionists and Post impressionists artists of the 19th century). These psychic depressions had their physical repercussions, as he developed a tremor in his right hand, incapacitating him from holding a brush, let alone painting. But his stubbornness and single-minded dedication to overcome any physical handicap made him bring his left hand into service. Initially it was a difficult exercise when he would stand with brush in his left hand in front of the canvas and would murmur to himself, "steady lad, steady" and make valiant efforts to paint - both a mental and physical strain. His unyielding perseverance paid dividends and he activated his proficiency to the left hand. Typical of an artist he was sensitive to the point of being neurotic, but then he was driven by a strong will power to be successful.

Paniker's appointment as a painting instructor in 1941 was the fulfillment of securing a job as an 'artist'. This is an important marker since jobs for 'artist as artist' were almost non-existent. Except for a very few successful, established names like D.P. Roy Chowdhary or Abanindranath Tagore who left a trace of their creativity, other artists who graduated from art institutions were considered marginal in society. This is particularly true of a conservative stronghold like Madras. Hence anchored in job security, Paniker was able to carry forth his experimental and daring new vision, through his art teaching. The teaching thus became a springboard, which carried him

to great heights more so when he became Principal in 1957.

From his student days, Paniker dreamt of innovative aesthetic approaches that would astound the Indian art world. He had an experimental vision and restlessness to explore modern formulae that became familiar through reproductions. Western art values were disseminated through print media, tourism, cultural exchanges and exhibition catalogues. His teaching assignment provided the forum from which he could embolden his students to a greater modern reality. His innovative pedagogy had far reaching implications when he gently nudged his students to be different in their perceptions. In drawing classes he would advise his students that the eye and hand need not perfectly co-ordinate to produce a life-like image, rather an attempt should be made to distort it so that it bore the marks of student's creative process.

Meanwhile Paniker highly conscious of his position within the national mainstream was simultaneously exploring and experimenting through his art. He reacted sensitively to the post-independence milieu and created works that were pointers to the historical moments of post-partition blood bath as well as a plea for national integration on humanistic grounds. (His painting - the "Peacemakers") The seminal influence of Jamini Roy, the Bengal painter on his visual language was to bring about radical changes in his artistic vocabulary. He began the reductionist process in his picture making whereby it was the surface with its two dimensionality that was privileged as in his 'GARDEN SERIES' This implies that Paniker gradually was axing the illusion of third dimensional space or of viewing painting as

though 'through a window' in the renaissance tradition. This gradually led to a breakthrough resulting in his celebrated "WORDS AND SYMBOLS SERIES" in 1963. This series of works inspired from the pages of a school boy's mathematics book with formulae, signs and symbols of geometry and algebra instigated him to press the ubiquitous line into a different mode and perception. It became converted into pictography of figures, birds and animals. The works fundamentally were abstract in character and not easy to relate to. Paniker with enthusiastic passion became engrossed into the creation of this new method of picture making, only to realize that he hardly had an audience that could comprehend what was being structured intellectually on the canvas. Nevertheless he struggled with his vision until his canvases were accepted as radically different in their abstraction not only within the country's milieu but also internationally.

Paniker also realized the travails of the community of artists. The artist requires: physical space to work in (*Studio*), time to evolve new ideas and a habitat where he could concentrate on his art without having to worry about mundane needs such as earning his bread and butter. Thus it was that in the mid 60s Paniker's sensitivity towards this need and the support received from artists, an innovative concept evolved leading to the establishment of an artists' commune known as the CHOLAMANDAL ARTISTS VILLAGE on the road to the historic site of Mamallapuram. The nebulous idæa became a reality in April 1966 when on an eight acre land the artists moved in, constructing temporary studios of thatched palm leaves to shelter themselves. As P. Gopinath recounts, "every monsoon the

cyclonic storms would flatten the studios to the ground and we would have to rebuild it." Nevertheless through these travails they still continued to paint and create. The fundamental concept valorized by Paniker was that the artists can extend their art to craft, whereby an artist can spend two hours of the day to this craft creation and then devote his time to solving and negotiating his artistic problems. 'The Artists' Handicrafts Association' founded in 1963, mediated as a body to allow for the sale of these articles crafted by the artists. 'The Art Gallery' one of the first to be constructed allowed for the showcasing of the craft works for sale as well displayed painted, sculpted or graphic works of the artists.

In an ambience that evoked marked impressions of devotion and enthusiastic efforts the artistic community became well knit and integrated with evenings devoted and dedicated towards discussions on art. At these crucial meetings and get togethers many an aspiring artists listened and contributed to the debates, discussions and arguments that were beginning to foment on the fresh and vibrant Madras art scene. And Paniker achieved this single handedly gathering around him a core group that largely allowed the dissemination of ideas on art developing a tract that would have its own richness and authentic character namely the Madras Art Movement.

Says K.G. Subramanyan an eminent artist, art critic and art historian, "Paniker's role in the art world of Madras was a decisive one. He was the first person who contributed much to bring the South Indian artist out of his crisis of self-confidence. He helped them, organized them, and fought their cause on national forums to the chagrin of many. But his role in

the Indian art world is even more illustrious; he led a generation of young artists to look into themselves and their surroundings. He made them think about art in a larger perspective". Paniker's administrative skills in complicity with his passionate zeal were responsible for the founding of many associations. The first association was the 'South Indian Society of Painters and Sculptors' 1943. 'Progressive Painters Association' founded in 1944 was responsible for publishing the art journal known as *Art Trends* in 1961, a 'quarterly bulletin on contemporary art, mainly

Indian.' This association was formed to take care of collection, exhibition and sale of their output of painting and sculpture.

Today Paniker's efforts are memorialized in the Art Movement and the Cholamandal Artists Village. At the time of his untimely death in 1977, he was almost a one-man institution, who with his vision, single mindedly pursued and working against all odds with determined effort, left a legacy for the Madras artists, while making a mark both on the national and international scene.

"We in India must develop a reformed aesthetic vision, free from the severely restricted early nineteenth century concept. The aesthetic impulse of an Indian artist has to be Indian, but he should not get bogged down by any narrow nationalistic idea of recreating our great cultural and artistic heritage".

- K.C.S. Paniker

Was there any particular reason for you to choose fiction over other genres, such as drama, which has gained so much momentum in Indian Writing recently?

One does not choose a genre. Your need to say something finds its own form - and this is the form that seems to be best suited to you and to your material. For me, my need to express myself found itself in the form of the short story initially and the novel later. But a writer may choose a particular genre at times when she feels the need to go against the grain of her urge for a particular and strong reason. For instance, when I want to say something straight - like my ideas on an issue, perhaps - I choose non-fiction. And there was a time when I wrote a short story which seemed somehow not quite right to me. I then realised it was the material for a novel. And so I embarked on the novel - which is what suits me best. As for drama, I have not felt the need to try out that genre. For one thing, like I said, I prefer the novel best. I like to go into the interior of people's minds and emotions. And drama gives you no space for that. Everything has to come through conversation, action. Secondly I have always felt that to write plays in English does call for a very strong suspension of disbelief - I mean, reading about a person who knows no English conversing in that language is one thing. But to 'see' the person speaking English is something I don't feel comfortable about. (I know that writers are getting over this hurdle and there is suddenly a lot of drama in English. But it is still in its infancy and needs to go a long way. And most of it is very very amateur stuff.) But basically I enjoy the space of the



novel, the chance it gives me for a variety of things - narrative, dialogue, thoughts, exploring ideas etc.

Do you believe that writing can make a change in the world? Is it an effective mode of fighting injustice? If so, to what extent?

I don't think that writing can change the world. One never writes to 'change the world'. One writes because one is disturbed by something, and it is out of this turmoil that the writing emerges. But as for changing the world, no, it never happens. If only one could change the world so easily! What writing can do, and does, is to create an awareness of certain things which the writer brings out in the writing, to raise questions, make the reader doubtful about things s/he had never thought about. It is like setting the reader off on a journey which might lead to some answers or to a changed perspective. The writers may be protesting about injustice, but if it is creative writing, this protest can never be loud or strident. It comes through all the complexities and the ambiguities of human beings and their lives. If it is loud, it will fail as a work of art and therefore have no effect at all. Of course

people do write books which are pure statements of their thinking - these can make more of an impact directly. But creative writing cannot and does not work this way.

You have often said that you are a feminist, but not a feminist writer. However, several women's issues are raised in your novels. So is what you said a protest to the fact that any book written by a woman is classified as "Women's Writing"? Could you elaborate?

My rejection of the label of 'feminist writer' is not a 'reaction' to anything. It comes out of my knowledge that when you classify a writer in this way, you make sure that you blank out everything but what pertains to feminism in that writer's works. I write of human beings and no human can live according to an 'ism'. Our relationships and our need to keep them alive can create a very complex and confused picture. By calling me a feminist writer you are missing everything that shows this complex picture. The other hazard is that one is also then judged by a feminist standards, so to say. Questions are asked, like: have I, in my book, retained the feminist values? Why have the women not acted according to these? Now, this is an absolutely distorted way of looking at my novels. I write novels about human beings. Read it as a novel and not as a feminist tract. Of course, my ideas about women and their place in the world does provide a kind of sub-text to what is being said. But it is not something I declare to be the 'moral of the story'. I write about people and I know that there are many forces acting on people - and, often, most, or many of them, at the same time - apart from an 'ism'. I would like the world to be a different place, specially where women are concerned. But I write of the world as it is and of the desires,

the needs, the joys, the suffering and the anguish of people in such a world.

When you write fiction, do you usually write with an objective in mind, or do you consider the storyline to be equally important? In other words, would you say art is a medium for expression, or something that stands on its own?

No I never write with an objective in mind. Nor is the storyline the most important thing for me. What is important are the people. It is the characters who come to me first and make me write their story. They work out their fates according to who and what they are. My novels are about people. It is through people and their lives that I try to seek some kind of an understanding of life. About art being a medium of expression or standing on its own - that's a strange question! Of course art is a medium of expression - whether it is music or painting or writing or whatever. But how can it stand on its own? Without this self-expression, it does not exist. But each art form has its rules - rules which the artist discovers in the course of her working. These rules, which one could very generally call the rules of the aesthetics of the art form, do need to be kept in mind, even if not always consciously. Like for me, my ear tells me when the language is not quite all right, my eye tells me when the structure is wrong. This aesthetic need has however to be balanced with what one is saying. What is the use of something which is beautifully put if it does not say anything? If at the end of a beautiful piece of writing, the reader is not aware of anything having been conveyed, apart from the aesthetics, the writing is a failure. So too when something is said but put so crudely that the reader does not get exactly

what the writer was trying to say. Sometimes the raw emotions seem to push everything aside, but even in this, the writer works towards the right effect. The most successful writing is that which does not show the effort put into making it good art. Any art which fails in its aesthetics also fails then to express adequately what the author wants to say. And if it is pleasing but says nothing, it is equally a failure. The truth is that one has to get the right balance.

The renowned children's writer, Philip Pullman, says, "*Thou shalt not* is soon forgotten, but *Once upon a time* lasts forever." As a writer, would you agree with this philosophy?

I agree that stories are forever. Our fascination with stories is eternal. But I don't see that the 'thou shalt not' is something distinct and apart from stories, or contrary to them. In fact, the 'thou shalt not' is an important ingredient of stories. Without these taboos - and we always need these taboos - and without the human weakness which makes us succumb to temptation and the moral voice (or the conscience) within which one has to struggle against there is no conflict and without conflict there can be no story. So the taboos and the struggle against the need to break these taboos are an integral part of any story. Without this there can be no story at all.

On the subject of children's fiction, how do you think your children's fiction compares to your other work?

I wrote children's fiction mainly because I saw that my children read Enid Blytons which were so alien to what they saw of life around them. I had no problems about their reading these books - I grew up on wonderful books

like *Alice in Wonderland*, *Treasure Island*, *Heidi* etc myself. But I felt it would be so good for them to have books to which they could relate intimately, about a world they would find familiar. Children eating puri-bhaji, for example, instead of scones and muffins. I wrote, I must say, books that were very imitative of Enid Blyton. Not excellent but quite readable. The last children's book I wrote *The Narayanpur Incident* was original though. But I stopped writing after that and have never gone back to it. I don't know if I could have improved if I had continued. A purely theoretical question now.

Growing up in India, with our rich heritage of myths and our diverse collection of vernacular and English literature, and as a woman writing in a tradition of woman writers, it must have been nearly impossible to escape influences. Which a) mythical figure b) Indian writer c) woman writer or feminist would you say inspired you the most?

I can combine all the three categories you have mentioned into one. It was Iravati Karve *Yuganta* which made a great impact on me. This book which deals with the characters of the *Mahabharata* made me see things completely differently. Writing as a scholar and as a woman she showed these people, whom I had seen in a particular way, so differently, that, for me, it was like things suddenly falling into place. Much that had disturbed me and made me uneasy was made clear. I found, so to say, my own vision. Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, which I read a little later, completed the picture for me. I would never see things the same way again. But there was no woman writer who influenced me otherwise. If any writer did influence me it was Jane

Austen with her clear-sighted vision of people and life, her unpretentiousness and her moral view. I am sure I never thought that I wanted to write like Jane Austen, though I have always admired her and enjoyed her greatly. If any of her qualities have crept into my writing, even a peppercorn of it, I would be proud and grateful.

You have often portrayed a woman as part of an intricate network of family bonds. While men have featured in your stories, why is it that you have never attempted to get into their psyche? Why is the story told from the woman's perspective?

I always say that no writer should be asked a question beginning with a 'why?' This is the way I write- take it or leave it. See whether I have done it well. But don't ask me to write in any other way but my own. I'd like to quote Fay Weldon here:

'Writers are not so rational about the writing of their books, you see, as students of English Literature like to think. They write what they write and if it was different it would be a different book and have a different title, so fault-finding is futile.'

This apart, how can you say that I have never 'attempted' to get into the psyche of men? I may not have succeeded - though, this too I would question - but you can't say I have not tried. Mohan in *That Long Silence*, Bhaskar in *The Binding Vine*, Gopal in *A Matter of Time*, Tony, Joe, Som, Hari in *Small Remedies* - these are men I was able to understand almost as much as I understood the women. It is just that, not being the protagonists, I could not give them more space. And if you ask why I make women the protagonists of my novels, can I ask why is it that men are never

asked why they do not make women the protagonists of their stories? Let's not talk of Anna Karenina - the one book that is always referred to in these arguments. For one Anna Karenina there are innumerable books with male views/protagonists. So why are men not asked this question? Is it because writing about men is considered normal and right and writing about women an aberration? Don't forget women constitute one half of the human race; they are not a minor species or a sub-species. I know that for my generation this generally accepted vision of women as 'the other' was something we had to struggle to get rid of, but that your generation still has the same blinkers makes me sad. Don't you see that by asking such questions you are falling into a trap of regarding women as a minor part of the human race?

Do your characters come into your head fully formed, and itching to write their own stories, or do you construct them? How much control would you say a writer has over his or her characters?

Characters never come fully formed. I always think of them as friends. We meet someone, we know just a little bit about them, mostly the physical aspect and some very obvious traits. As our acquaintanceship goes on and we interact more with me, we learn more about them. We continue sometimes to be surprised by traits we never imagined they had in them. The characters I write about are like that. They come to me and slowly, in course of time, I get to know them. But I never begin writing until I feel I know them well enough. Even then, they can surprise me sometimes. Of course this is with the main characters. I do not construct them. They slowly reveal themselves.

As for control, to some extent the author has to have control. But the characters are not puppets who dance to your tune. It is a strange combination of both of us having control at different times. I cannot let the characters have complete control, nor can they let themselves be puppets. Somehow we go along - they need me to tell their stories and I want to know them well enough to tell their stories. Strangely though once you have finished writing, our companionship ends.

How important do you think humour is in fiction? Do you think it is subject-specific, or do you believe any subject can be treated with humour?

Humour has its place like many other things. But I think you need to be a very good writer to be able to handle humour, specially when you are dealing with what is considered a serious subject and make it humourous. I think this requires enormous skill - not impossible but extremely difficult.

As a polyglot, have you ever tried your hand at translation? Would you call it creative writing when a writer translates his or her own work into another language, or is it only the skill at translation that comes into play? How comfortable are you with the fact that your texts have been translated into other languages by other people?

I am no polygot. I may have three languages I call my own, but I can write only English. I have tried translation. In fact, the first thing I ever wrote was a translation - a translation of a short story by a well-known

Kannada writer Shantinath Desai. (I think it was a fairly good translation, but it was never published and is now lost.) Some years back I translated a small portion of my father's autobiography and subsequently a play of his. I learnt much about translation through this actual translating exercise. I think it is almost as creative as original writing, but slightly different because you have to get into the mind of the original writer and ask yourself: what is s/he trying to say? Once you know this, you have to find the language to put it in - which is the creative part. Therefore when a writer is translating her/his own work, it would become re-creation. When translating your own work, it is possible to move away from the original and say the thing in another way in the interests of translation. This is not possible for the translator. And so the task is in a way much easier when you are doing your own translation - it could also become rewriting. In which case, the same amount of skill is not called for.

The point about my work being translated into other languages is that I cannot read those translation. I have to rely on others telling me whether it is good or bad. But since I get distanced from my own work once it is complete, I don't get too bothered by these things. I feel detached from the work and therefore am neither excited about the fact that it is translated, nor do I agonise over the quality. If I know that it is a bad translation, I will withhold my permission for publication - like I did once. But all writers like to have more readers and so do I. I welcome translation, but it is not my immediate concern.

Pensieve on Potter

"So, Harry," said Dumbledore, "before you got lost in my thoughts you wanted to tell me something..."

Midsummer midnight 2003 and the Phoenix rose ending three years of a condition termed 'Harry Potter deprivation' suffered by millions of the boy-wizard's worldwide fans. Rowling had held up once again, the Mirror of Erised to a world of muggles. Reviewers have made caustic comments about the Potter Effect and the mother of all hypes whereby Rowling writes another brick-sized book and the world of commerce creates a commodity, a brand, a marketing triumph. *The Business Standard* saw it as modern-day alchemy - like the venerable Nicholas Flamel, Rowling had found a formula. One might add it is no mean achievement to convert the base metal of low-status children's fiction into gold. Her royalties make her quite literally the queen of fantasy but it is simply not enough to say that Rowling wants to write "big books so she can write big cheques." These works are reserved in advance and sold out the day they arrive on the shelves - what makes them so entrancing?

Rowling's plots are enthralling. Children and most readers of popular fiction seem to be Aristotelians at heart; they enjoy style, pattern and effective characterization, but will read even when these are weak if the author can spin a story; and Rowling is a gifted storyteller. The first three novels have a clean economy and a faultless structure. Incident and character dovetail neatly, the red herrings and carefully concealed clues are in place, suspense builds up to a crescendo at the

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conclusion. Rowling understands fear; it figures as a major theme in her novels as well as a device she uses to manipulate reader involvement. Dementors and boggarts are signs in *The Prisoner of Azkaban* that lead inward to a confrontation with secret terror; *The Order of the Phoenix* explores isolation and the vulnerability of caring; but also the attrition of the nerves as one waits in a state of ever-increasing anxiety for the loved one.

A famous writer of children's fiction explained that his works appealed to his audience because he avoided writing the parts that readers skip. Rowling too, keeps description to a minimum; the novels maintain a relentless flow of action and witty, contemporary dialogue. Serious fantasy when not used for satiric purposes usually avoids humour like the plague; Tolkien's dialogue, for instance, is carefully distanced from the colloquial to convey a sense of the otherworldly. Rowling, however, places magic in a world of living speech. This from *The Prisoner of Azkaban*: 'I'd hate to see what the Ministry would do to me if I blew up an aunt. Mind you, they'd have to dig me up first, because Mum would've killed me.'

Rowling is the first writer of children's fiction since A.A. Milne to add expressions that seem destined to last to the English language. Potterspeak is trendy today among muggles, adults as well as children. It is possible that with sales unprecedented in the world of publishing, two record breaking films and translations into 55 languages that those who cannot recognize 'quidditch' 'sorting hat'

'Dementor' 'Slytherin' 'Voldemort' etc may be in a minority in the literate world. Rowling's enormous verbal inventiveness, as much as her popularity has ensured this. Rowling's onomastics, her vivid and suggestive names (Nymphadora Tonks!), with innumerable instances of puns 'Diagon Alley' 'Knockturn Alley' (diagonally and nocturnally), the delightfully titled books 'Men who Love Dragons too much' 'Broken Balls: When Fortunes Turn Foul' and journals 'Which Broomstick' 'The Quibbler' are all part of her intricate comic artifice.

It's easy to get lost in Potter. Kids who report that they finished *Phoenix* in 8 hours flat seem not so exceptional. It's easy to sink into the elemental pleasures of narrative and the pull of the incredibly detailed world that Rowling provides; one with its own space, species, peoples, history, flora and fauna, education, politics, communication, commerce, clothing, sport, medicine, transport, weapons, food, books, occupations, heroes and villains. The world is derivative; the debt to mythology, predecessors in British fantasy and western traditions of the occult is obvious enough. So is the fact that she writes, as Philip Pullman is supposed to have disparagingly remarked, nice school stories. (Good children and bad, good teachers and bad, the bully, the joker, the freak, the moron; sport and study, exams and holidays, trick and treat, family, friend and enemy, competition and rivalry, the slow attainment of maturity and the unwritten code of the school.) This matters little. The delight of the uncanny and the *verfremdungseffekt* that fantasy offers are inevitably grounded upon the familiar. This world is coherent, though assembled from disparate sources; it is

radically different from the worlds of both reader and author and has a perspective that casts ironic sidelights on the latter. In Rowling's latest Harry wants to know whether the witches and wizards in charge at St. Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies are doctors. 'Doctors?' said Ron looking startled. 'Those Muggle nutters that cut people up? Nah, they're Healers.'

Rowling's daughter Jessica apparently encountered Potter first not through reading her mother's books but through peer group discussions that forced her mother to decide that her child was, after all old enough to enjoy the novels. Rowling has received extravagant praise for rekindling an interest in reading in children but her works do not exist tidily between their Bloomsbury covers-children are responding to the 'texts' through attending book releases at the witching hour, taking the 'Harry Potter tour', seeing the films, learning about the actors and actresses, watching the author and everyone connected with the books or films on TV, playing board as well as interactive computer games, visiting the official website and 'joining Hogwarts,' 'getting sorted,' 'fleeing from the Dursleys,' etc; visiting numerous other unofficial discussion sites to speculate on what will be in the books to come, attending theme parties and fancy dress competitions, sporting the logos on innumerable objects of clothing and common use, playing with specialized toys such as wands, brooms, the snitch, etc; taking quizzes, composing reviews, enacting the novels, eating chocolate frogs and Bertie Botts' All-flavour Beans, writing to the author, having a go at quidditch- over and above reading the novels. Though other children's texts have fashioned some of this earlier, it is Rowling's novels that best illustrate today the

overflowing nature of writing and its transgressive erasure of the borders between literature and 'life.'

Magic is anyway about transgression; it assumes the laws of nature can be flouted. Rowling goes further; in her novels, the act of challenging the boundaries between two species, two human bodies, people and animals, living things and objects becomes an important theme foregrounded through the use of borrowings from myth such as centaurs, werewolves, hippogriffs (compounded creatures) the animagus (a human being who can transform into an animal) people like Hagrid (part giant, part human) polyjuice potion(which allows one human being to take on the appearance of another) Transfiguration (which teaches students to change objects, animals people), to name few of the more obvious devices)

The Order of the Phoenix, with an appeal that cuts across generation, gender, racial, linguistic, cultural divides, is appropriately enough, a liminal text. This is the book that bridges the gap between the child Harry and the adult to come. One can believe the children are growing up when Harry conducts Defence against Dark Arts classes and Hermione Granger manages to fix 'sneak' on Marietta's face in purple pustules that refuse to be banished even by Madame Pomfrey - till the previous work, an infallible source of instant healing. On the flip side Harry is implicated as never before, in the ongoing battle between good and evil. As several children point out in website discussions, he is squarely to blame for the death of Sirius. It is Harry's tragedy that he seizes the initiative in an assertive demonstration of power, when the situation demands from him trust and meticulous

obedience. He responds with anger where he needs to bring understanding, with defiance where he needs caution. He recognizes with shock the former arrogance of his father but cannot realize even with the prompting of Hermione and the taunting of Snape, that his own heroic stances indicate a fatal similarity. He disobeys every trusted adult and peer and fails to learn the one vital skill - occlumency. He is unable to master his dislike of Snape - resuming lessons would mean an apology, if not for his father's merciless bullying in the past, at least for Harry's own unpardonable invasion of privacy in peeping into Snape's memories (Voldemort's successful invasion of Harry's mind is in many ways an appropriate punishment.) The lapse of memory by which, in the concluding crisis, Harry 'forgets' that Snape, the only reliable adult left, is still available, parallels the complete erasure in his mind of the importance of Sirius's mirror. Moral error becomes indistinguishable from intellectual errors of judgment. It is no consolation, of course that Sirius is doomed from the start, by his own craving for action, innate recklessness, longing for the lost James, neglect of Kreacher and the unhealed quarrel with Snape. One or two reviews have pointed out that Voldemort has precious little to do in this novel. As the ancients knew "in tragic life God wot, no villain need be/ Passions spin the plot/ We are destroyed by what is false within."

Phoenix is a flawed work, with its long-winded opening and proliferating strands of plot, but the middle sections provide a terrifying picture of a society divided against itself, as a totalitarian regime is put in place and liberties that are recognizable as precious only when they are lost, are forfeited one by

one. One thinks of France under German occupation, during World War II. A scared majority, a small but valiant Resistance, the torture and persecution of the good and brave, the suppression and distortion of facts, the targeting of racial minorities, the perversion of democratic systems, the abuse of power by quislings and informers - *Phoenix* is really not so much about magic as the politics of repression. This reviewer found Umbridge scary - You Know Who is a baby's bogeyman by comparison.

These are the things Rowling does best. It is necessary to add that there are some things she simply cannot do at all. The moral, social and political dimensions, all find a place in her work. It is however, blind to the numinous. The writer is stuck with a conviction that the spirit is mortal. Thus, Dumbledore. 'You think the dead we have loved ever truly leave us?..Your father is alive in you, Harry...' (i.e., in no other way.) The accusation by crank fundamentalist groups that her books incite children to evil and witchcraft is, of course a hilarious misreading of Rowling's ethical concerns. However, to a reader who approaches her from a culture that has not yet forfeited belief, the absence of the spiritual dimension in Rowling's work is the equivalent of a missing faculty. If one is writing a realistic novel one could conceivably get by without, but... fantasy?

One has only to read Ursula Le Guin or C.S. Lewis or Tolkien to know the magnitude of the loss. In spite of the pathetic letters that Rowling sometimes receives from children who want to be admitted to Hogwarts, it is the rare child reader who could come away from a reading of Rowling with the idea that magic exists or is even possible. Children are

attracted to Hogwarts knowing it is make-believe, though they might certainly wish it existed. But there exists one class of people, who are unlikely to become Rowling readers and who apart from mystics or shamans, are perhaps the only non-Muggles in the world. In a perceptive essay Chesterton once pointed out that babies are excited by reality, they find the ordinary world magic. A child of say seven, would be thrilled by thoughts of a giant squid and merpeople in a world of water, but a baby is excited by just water, that it is wet, that it flows. Chesterton points out that fairy stories say that the river flowed with gold to capture the incredible wonder of that forgotten moment when we realized it flowed with water. Le Guin's Earthsea quartet is suffused with a spiritual reverence for the magic in nature, a wonder lying at the heart of ordinary life. The greatest wizards of Earthsea use magic only in direst need. The world is too precious to be lightly altered. Works of fantasy that do not go this far, often end nevertheless, with a Prospero-like abstention from magic; they lovingly return the reader to the magic of existence as in Paul Gallico's *The Man who was Magic*. In a world full of magicians who are no more than good stage performers of magic tricks, there arrives a man who is really magic. He drives everyone crazy because they cannot figure out how his 'tricks' are executed. At the end of the novel the man leaves, after imparting to children the knowledge that there is magic in the unfolding of a flower, the growing of grass.

Tolkien sees fantasy as providing escape, recovery and consolation; escape in particular from the dreary ugliness of industrial society and the fear of death. Rowling writes fantasy but it is also possible to see the genre as

determining what she writes. So strong is the need to defy death in fantasy that Rowling's texts set about establishing survival in the face of their own overt disbelief. Harry has lost his parents forever, but photos smile, wave, respond, react. People in portraits converse, move and exhibit emotion consistent with the characters they had when alive. Pensieves and magic diaries provide cinematic reels of the past. Voldemort's wand disgorges shadows of the people it had murdered and these figures look, talk and act exactly as they might be expected to do in life.

And of course, ghosts people Hogwarts. So can Sirius be lost to Harry forever? *Phoenix* makes a feeble attempt to get over the logical inconsistency (perhaps children have pointed it out earlier?) by blaming the poor ghosts for their 'choice' of a half-life. The real explanation is that the texts choose to use ghosts to provide comedy without committing themselves to their ontological reality. A left brain vision is operating within a right brain genre. Hermione Granger has everything except the inner eye, and so will clear every subject with 310%, except Divination, which she has given up. But it is that 'old fraud' Sybil Trelawney who has uttered the prophecy that Voldemort would give lives to possess.

Some people *cannot* see thestrals, animals which have a metonymic relation to this liminal text. Their experience has not included a confrontation with that ultimate margin, death. Interestingly, *Phoenix* shows Rowling, for the first time, conscious that this is a failure of insight, attempting to assign value to those who belong to the visionary company (e.g., Luna Lovegood) however 'loony' and freaky they may seem, and hesitantly inching towards

suggesting the possibility of a life beyond the arch and veil of death.

It is Rowling's wordplay that at times carries her work into another dimension; Sirius' treacherous house elf is 'Kreacher' (creature) a term that captures his enslavement and his less than human status. He is a muttering version of his dead, screeching, mistress; like her portrait, he is a simulacrum, residue and trace. He refuses to be erased, he cannot be released and he is not to be wished away. Ultimately he exists in his rage and hate with an irreducible humanity, though also as a social product; as Dumbledore puts it 'Kreacher is what he has been made by wizards.'

Another haunting Rowling word. A pensieve is a device by which thoughts are taken out of the head and placed in a basin, separating past from present, making it 'easier to spot patterns and links' and of course (though that is not the purpose of a pensieve), allowing them to be accessible to others in the 'absence' of the 'originator'. A little like the act of writing. The pen enables expression but acts also as a sieve, filtering and selecting, permitting a certain clarity unavailable to either thought or speech. In the process inner substance has become at one level an object, over which the subject (author) has lost control, a text which can suck in other subjects (readers.) At another level the text penetrates new subjects, restructuring what it encounters and changing what will be said. Entering Snape's pensieve will mean that Harry's consciousness is forever altered as his father no longer looks the same. Pensieves tempt you to look in and be absorbed; if you will pay the price and suffer alteration. It is to Rowling's credit that so many are willing.

The fifth book of the Harry Potter series was probably one of the most awaited ones of all time. However, *The Order of the Phoenix*, has, at best, been a disappointment to hardcore Potter fans, while it has afforded a grim satisfaction to those who look at it askance, as a plagiarised compilation of some of the most iconic works of fantasy. It would take another essay to explore the similarities between this book and Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy, the most obvious parallel being between the *patronus* and *daemon*, and something of a thesis to find links to J.R.R. Tolkien's immortal classic *The Lord of the Rings*. Gandalf - Dumbledore, Sauron - Voldemort, Frodo - Harry, Sam - Ron, Gollum - house-elves, Saruman - Fudge, Fangorn Forest - Forbidden Forest, Ringwraiths - Dementors... you name it. Die-hard Tolkien fans could not have overlooked the fact that the warrior-body-of-sorts *The Order of the Phoenix* is remarkably like *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

While there is quite a number of inconsistencies in *The Order of the Phoenix*, and one feels the editors could have made it a lot more compact, one of them rears its head above the others as the most prominent. Harry Potter's transition from timid kid to feisty brat and the fact that he broke his godfather's last gift to him in fury, may be overlooked; Neville Longbottom leaving behind his father's wand in the *Department of Mysteries*, while he'd saved up every one of the bubblegum wrappers his mother gave him in her disturbed

mental state, may be overlooked; the fact that Sirius and Harry went hunting for each other through fires and furnaces when they could easily have communicated with a mirror may be overlooked; Luna Lovegood's mystic half-explanations may be overlooked; the fact that Harry could see the *Thestrals* only after he had seen Cedric Diggory die, although he had earlier witnessed his parents' death, may be overlooked; but J.K. Rowling's treatment of Sirius Black cannot.

We first saw Sirius in what is considered by far the best book of the series, *The Prisoner of Azkaban*. The character seemed to be the strongest thus far in the series, and the least stereotypical. The sense of power radiating from the character was tangible, and what with the fact that he had played a role in Harry's life right from the start - it was on his motorbike that Hagrid carried the infant Harry to safety immediately after the Potters' death - it seemed destined for him to play a major role in the rest of the series. To everyone's surprise, he appeared only in his letters in the fourth book. In the fifth, one sees a wildly fluctuating temperament in Sirius. One would hardly expect the smooth, handsome, languid cool-dude-in-school teenager Sirius to one day burst out singing, "God rest ye, merry hippogriffs" on Christmas Eve. The clever, restless wizard could hardly be the enormous dog that chases its own tail and licks everyone in sight, and gambols along with the train for all to see when the strictest secrecy is required. Nor would someone who has endured

twelve years of imprisonment sulk petulantly at not being allowed to go out in public for a few months. The character mutilation was complete when the valiant fighter turns around to laugh and jeer like a schoolboy at his cousin Bellatrix Lestrange's poor aim, only to be killed immediately.

So why wasn't Sirius Black given a hero's death? Why did he play such an insignificant role in the series (assuming, of course, that he doesn't pull a Sherlock Holmes and come back from the dead in the next book)? Why was he relegated to the role of Harry's Agony Aunt, whom Harry plans to ask for "advice about girls"?

One wonders, while looking at the spectrum of literature, where characters come from...why some characters come to life and others don't...why we identify with some and don't with others. Perhaps - just perhaps - characters of literature exist in another dimension, in a parallel universe into which writers foray to find their characters. *Find* and not *choose*, because this meeting between the writer and the character could be serendipity. It may be an accident that a character finds himself or herself in a particular book or series. The most powerful characters are those who get into the right books. Raskolnikov of *Crime and Punishment* influenced millions of people the world over because for most of the book, he seemed to have grabbed the pen from Fyodor Dostoevsky and written his own story. Dostoevsky struggled to make him go through a process of self-realisation and repentance. Ivan Turgenev's character Evgenii Ivanitch Bazarov of *Fathers and Sons* made the book what it was by steering its course till he could bear it no

more. At one point, Bazarov knows that the only thing that makes his doting parents tolerant of, if not immune to, his irresponsiveness, is the conviction that he will be great and famous one day. Though he never doubts that this will happen, a deep angst weighs heavily on him, and his characteristic disdain and jauntiness are replaced by brooding melancholy and dissatisfaction. He feels he is dreaming an impossible dream and is not sure what he wants to materialise. The hero of the book cannot break down under this constant suffering and there is no solution for his angst. So Turgenev does what has become inevitable - he kills him. This comes across as the service Turgenev does to Bazarov, to liberate him from the mental turmoil and unbearable torment he is under. In these brilliant classics, the authors and characters seem to have embraced each other with a natural ease that stems from the fact that they were destined to make each other's books.

Moving on to fantasy, Tolkien established his copyright over Frodo and Aragorn by making them supreme heroes who could only belong to his Middle Earth. Pullman's Lyra, Will, Lord Asriel and Mrs. Coulter can only be his, because he understood them just as well as Tolkien understood his characters. However, there seems to be a friction between Sirius and J.K. Rowling. He is not her character in the way Harry, Ron, Hermione, Dumbledore, Hagrid, Minerva McGonagall and the others are. Quite simply, he does not seem to belong in the Harry Potter series. Having been placed in a series that was, perhaps, not his own, he has no role to play and nothing to offer. He can only be killed.

One wonders what could have happened

if some other writer had found this irresistibly magnetic character and truly understood him. Could he have been the hero of some other series? Could he have been the best-loved and most popular children's hero ever? Could he have catered to the tastes of a more universal audience, to all age groups? What if he had played guardian to some other boy-hero? Could

he have been a legendary father figure? Could he have sacrificed his life for a more worthy cause? One may take off on flights of fancy along this stream of thought. But the biggest tragedy in the fifth book is not that Sirius is dead - it is the tragedy of the revelation that Sirius Black was completely wasted in the Harry Potter series.

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Potter on Celluloid

Aishwarya Mahesh

If one were looking for the perfect recipe to wreck a world-class best seller and make it into a second rate movie, one just has to watch "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets". No doubt, enormous effort has been put into the construction of the sets and the selection of cast, but the screenplay spoils it all. What the director fails to realize is that the book by itself is rich with characters and places that keep you hooked and needs little alteration to increase its mass appeal.

To a person stepping into the world of Harry Potter for the first time, the movie is quite a treat though Rowling's magical terminology is a little difficult to follow (watching the prequel can be a big help if you are not into the books). But for the teeming millions who worship Potter, the film falls short of expectations by a long way. Staunch Potter fans have raised strong objections against the appalling number of deviations from the book. A number of scenes such as the one where Harry almost falls out of the flying car are clearly figments of the director's imagination.

And the climax sequence in which Professor Lockhart holds on to Fawkes, the phoenix is quite the limit (in the book, its Harry who holds the bird's tail feathers of the bird, with Ginny, Ron and Lockhart tagging behind). Such seemingly trivial flaws make an enormous difference and one wonders how Rowling authorized the mutilation of her prized publication.

On a brighter note, the movie is definitely a vent to the imaginations of children and adults the world over who are dying to see what a basilisk (the monster in the chamber of secrets) looks like and the house-elf Dobby is truly a special effect wonder. It would have been nicer if the "quidditch" sequences had been a little longer but hell, the scenes were impressive.

If you don't know what to do on a boring Sunday afternoon, and in the mood for some low budget magic and butter popcorn, go watch the movie. But if you fall in the category of Harry Potter freaks, don't even bother borrowing the VCD.

On Harry Potter: *"Harry just strolled in to my head fully formed." "The idea that we could have a child who escapes from the confines of the adult world and goes someplace where he has power, both literally and metaphorically, really appealed to me."*

On Inspiration: *"I was very low, and I had to achieve something. Without the challenge, I would have gone raving mad."*

On Money (from one who has an income reportedly higher than that of the Queen of England) : *"Only someone who's been as broke as I was could appreciate how happy I am, ... I appreciate every day not having to worry about money."*

On her first book : *"Rabbit". "I was about six, and I haven't stopped scribbling since."*

Rowling on Rowling: *When asked what mommy does, Rowling's daughter says without hesitation, "Mommy write!"*

On Parallels between having a baby and producing a book- *"Yes, there are parallels...The difference is that I just look at David and think that he's absolutely perfect, whereas you look at the finished book and you think, 'Oh, damn it I should have changed that.' You're never happy. Whereas with a baby, you're just grateful."*

Rowling Trivia : The books have been translated into 55 languages and distributed in over 200 countries. "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix" has sold more than 200 million copies world wide, and even briefly became France's first English language No.1 best seller.

The single mother who nine years ago was scribbling away in Edinburgh coffee shops while her baby daughter slept, now has in a rambling two-story stone Victorian house, a free standing office in which two assistants handle the thousands of mail she gets a week.

An unknown fact about Rowling is her talent for sketching. She draws everything she writes about. She sketches on paper every character and every place she writes about.

"We did not deserve this.

We recoil at the way we have been treated.

We did not expect that people we trusted

Would turn against us."

I am a Tibetan and Buddhist by birth. I do not belong to this country, yet I was born here. You can see my country from the top of the Himalayas - with its lush green grass, the cold weather with fog and mist everywhere, the animals...everything, surrounded by love and care of the elders for its younger and the respect of children for the elders.

When I was born, my mother told me, "You are a Refugee." On my forehead and between my eyebrows there is an "R" embossed. My dear country Tibet has been under the illegal rule of China for the past forty years. Due to the extreme torture of my people by the Chinese, thousands of Tibetans fled from Tibet and settled in India as a second homeland. Though I belong to Tibet, I have never been there. Yet I dream of dying there.

Tibet is a big country and there are almost six million people living there. Half the people are in India and a third of the Tibetan population is distributed all over the world. We worship Buddha and as Buddhists, we believe in non-violence and peace. So we follow our political spiritual leader, H.H. THE DALAI LAMA - "an apple of our eyes and the home of our heart." Due to his kindness and greatness, we are rich in luxury and comfort. He personally finances almost all Tibetan students.

Our ancestor used to say:

"Kill my Dalai Lama
that I can believe no more.

Bury my heard

beat it

disrobe me

chain it.

But don't let me free

Within the prison

this body is yours

But within the body

my belief is only mine."

"Long live H.H. THE DALAI LAMA."

But I should say:

"Many plants crept in through the window,
our vase seems to have grown roots,
the fences have grown into a jungle
Now how can I tell my children
Where we came from?"

It was every moment, every second, every day, every month of every year and sometimes to everyone's life Chinese plays. People here in India, launch different activities and demonstrations for the cause of the people in Tibet who suffer more than we do. For example, here in Chennai, there is an Association called the TSAM - Tibetan Student Association of Madras - with almost 110 Tibetan Boys and 4 Tibetan girls. Every year, we launch different activities like distribution of pamphlets, boycott movements and hunger strikes. The students are from different colleges in Chennai - Stella Maris, Ethiraj, WCC, Meenakshi Loyola, Vivekananda and MCC.

Though we launch different activities throughout the year, whether it is major or minor, we are always supported by our "Aunty" Asha Reddy and her family every year. Due to this, throughout India, when people say TSAM from Chennai, no one leads like WE do. In India, we are the most activist student association, and due to this, we have a great name. For the past year, we have organized some major activities in and around Chennai.

- In 1998 - first ever rock concert
- In 1999 - Tibetan food festival
- In 2000 - Grand cultural show
- In 2001 - Cycle rally from Chennai to Kanyakumari
- In 2002 - Hunger strike for peace march from Chennai to Pondicherry

We struggle every year for the cause of Tibet

and Tibetan people who suffer more than we do.

May they see the world and all its suffering,
With their compassionate eyes and hope
Courage, love and generosity
With a sincere desire to help

Let them never close their hearts to the cry of
the poor,

And the pains of the oppressed
And the agony of powerless victims.

So help us and start right now.

Help us, we need your support.

We are still in India - for how long? We are not going to forget what H.H. The Dalai Lama said - "No matter how hard the wind of evil way may blow, it will never extinguish the flame of truth."

Nothing splendid has ever been achieved except by those who dared believe that something inside them was superior to circumstances.

Bruce Barton

A Call for Ahimsa

Bernie Manu N.
I B.Sc. Maths

The fact that Mahatmaji achieved his goal through 'Satyagraha' is truly amazing. Many successful politicians like Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King and Suu Kyi have used Gandhiji as their moral teacher. Gandhiji preached what he practiced. He preached the most basic feeling—Love—as Lord Buddha, Mohammed Nabhi and Jesus Christ did. From Gandhiji's love for mankind arose the concepts of truth and non-violence—'Ahimsa', as means to achieve an end. These were never new to us. These had been latent in our own tradition.

The present world faces a major challenge, namely, 'terrorism'. The very word terrifies every heart, because this is the most brutal revelation of human delirium. It not only buries the economy, politics and culture of a country, but also destroys our moral values. What is most sorrowful is that religion

is now considered the base of terrorism though no religion has ever prescribed this heinous force. Every religion preaches ways to live a simple, contended life.

As human beings, let us forget all variations among us, and strive hard for the propaganda of 'love' across nations, for even the person who practices 'Ahimsa' will be exploited, if love is not reciprocated.

Terrorism should be destroyed because it is aimless or revengeful. It weakens the society and retards the growth of the nation. Our president, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, has requested us to transform our religion into a spiritual force. This is the only mental and spiritual state with which we can abolish terrorism. So please do ponder over this, because 'it takes just one' to make a difference.

I feel that the greatest reward for doing is the opportunity to do more.

Jonas Salk

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

- Saleem Hamed - *Kashmiri house owner, 52, grizzled but sturdy.*
Hameeda - *His wife, late 40's, mature, but not old.*
Amina Hamed - *Saleem's sister, a schizophrenic, who looks much older than her 41 years.*
Faizal Hamed - *Saleem's youngest son, & a Mujahadeen sympathizer, of 35 yrs*
Captain Ajit Manoharan - *Depressed young Indian soldier, 32.*
Giaz - *Hizbul Mujahadeen follower, 32.*
Reporter (voice)

Setting: *Center stage back, stand a wall, which once was a part of a house - Saleem's house to be exact. Rubble in the form of bricks & stone lie around, with thorny bushes interspersed. The hour is that of dusk. Saleem is seen squatted on a rock, puffing at a hookah, wrapped up to keep out the cold on this October night. Hameeda stirs a pot over some glowing coals. A few woven blankets are seen, frayed & weathered. A kerosene lamp is seen unlit, next to her. There are the sounds of crickets & an owl. The stage is in partial darkness, so the light of the coals is predominant. There is the sound of distant shelling.*

SALEEM: You had better light that lamp, its quite dark already. *(Puffs at his pipe)*

[HAMEEDA lights the lamp, has some difficulty trimming it, but it is done]

Do you need my help for that?

[The lamp is lit & footlights come on throwing the wall & bushes into relief, the faces of the man & woman are illuminated. His with the expression of wanting to find something to do, hers with the concentration of tiredness & the need to follow the routine exactly]

HAMEEDA: *(calmly)* I have lit this lamp through the past 32 winters, leave it to me. *(stirs & holds out the ladle to him)*

SALEEM: *(ruffling)* I have never doubted you could light it, its just that Amina is still out among the bushes & she needs to be able to see her way back *(tastes the gravy)*. Good but it needs more salt.

HAMEEDA: She can see her way back-its not her eyes that have a problem. And the only way to any salt is for the tears of widows to crystallize in this cold.

SALEEM: *(reprimanding)* Well, no need to get dramatic about it. I'm just saying, with a little more salt it would taste just the way my aunt made it. The way my aunt could cook-Hameeda, do you remember the feasting that went on in this house, at least what's left of this house...

[HAMEEDA blows on the coals, stirs the pot & nods curtly]

HAMEEDA: you have reminded me before...

SALEEM(*carries on enthusiastically*): Of course you remember! 3 days before uncle's birthday, my brothers and I would bring up the cherries, plums & peaches from the Shikaras on the lake, 20 kms away...then came the lights, the music, the family & aunt's cooking: Khubani aur kabargah, Chaman...that delicacy of flavour!

HAMEEDA: Yes, the delicacy of flavour...before the shrapnel dust entered our kitchens, our food & ourselves.

SALEEM: (*restlessly, getting up & flapping his shawl*) The fighting, yes...meaningless, it's all so meaningless. Religion has nothing to do with it. It's all fear. Both sides think that whoever owns Kashmir has the greater strength. The jokes on them, fighting over this graveyard. The family is gone, the land is gone-but this wall and I will stand (*shakes his fist at the audience*) always! Always!

HAMEEDA: (*quietly*) Now who's being dramatic? Sit down. Eat your dinner.

[Saleem sits down, taking a plate. As he sits, AMINA enters, bedraggled & shuffling.]

AMINA: The land is gone.

SALEEM:(*goes to her and brings her to the fire*)Amina, I was about to come looking for you.

AMINA: The land is gone, the sun is gone...

SALEEM: Ah, so you heard me. But there's no use crying over spilt milk, as I always say.

HAMEEDA: Yes,*always*.

AMINA: The land has gone, the family is gone, the light is gone...(sits down & starts rocking back & forth)

SALEEM: (*standing, with obvious grandiose manner*)Yes, but one day I Saleem Hameed will send for them, & there will be feasting & rejoicing, like a wedding...(his face contracts for a moment leaving his face blank, eyes unseeing. He then shakes his head, recovering, and in normal speech) No. Not like a wedding, like uncle's birthday... *[A particularly loud distant "Boom" makes Amina whimper & shake]*

SALEEM: Where's that boy, Faizal? He's supposed to be taking care of his aunt. Faizal! FAIZAL! *[Enter FAIZAL, stage left, standing with a distance between his father & himself.]* FAIZAL: (*sullenly*) I was only looking for any of those damned Indian patrols.

SALEEM: (*angrily*) You are supposed to be looking after your aunt. You know how she gets when she sees the sun set. *[FAIZAL mutters]*

You can keep all of that for when you cavort with those riff-raff friends of yours. You give me respect, boy!

HAMEEDA: (*quietly but smoothly*) Why don't you tell her one of your stories? *[Faizal stares at Saleem dangerously for a few seconds-puts his gun down, sits down next To Amina stroking her hair.]*

FAIZAL: (*voice normal at first, then takes on a distant quality*) Story time, aunt...(sits down next to her, stroking her hair) ...hmm... it was bright cold February morning. I was 16 then, eager, with my nose open to adventure. I was out on reconnaissance with Hafiz. Suddenly footsteps sounded a little away (*points*) from us. Hafiz told me to wait, while

he went. I crouched down (*does so*) waiting; my blood singing in my ears & pumping in my guts, with birds singing overhead. Hafiz came back and pointed to where the soldier stood. It would be a good kill- the dog was a captain as far as Hafiz could tell. I was to kill him- my first kill. I crept up behind & tapped him on his shoulder. The fool was surprised, his mouth an (*laughs*). Then I shot him - quick & clean. Slowly he sank to the ground, on his knees. I kneeled with him, like we were praying (*grins, but then kneels and, with one hand on his knee, peers intently in front of him, with a strange look on his face*). In silence, I watched the surprise leave his face, leaving nothing but...quiet emptiness. And then the birds started singing (*is standing by now, looking over the heads of the audience as if at a vision*)

SALEEM: (*clapping ironically*) Wah, wah; my son has the soul of a poet & the mind of a killer.

[**FAIZAL** shoots him a look]

SALEEM: (*continuing unperturbed*) Even as a child you loved killing butterflies, didn't you?

[*The moment passes, FAIZAL grins, takes the plate of food HAMEEDA is holding out for him silently, and squats*]

FAIZAL: yes, but not as much as my uncle liked beating the goatherd, whether he was late or not.

SALEEM: (*laughing*) Yes, Akbar always was the strange one. Ah, well, its part of the family I suppose. But do you remember the day...

[*The scene at the moment is strangely warm & cosy, with a very family-like*

atmosphere: the feeling that there does exist human relationships even at this far point at the edge of disaster is comforting. But suddenly a rustling is heard in the bushes, stage left]

FAIZAL: shut up, quiet!-

[*Listens intently for a moment, then gets up & leaves with his gun*]

[*The others sit in silence. Sudden sounds are heard- yelling & the sound of 2 shots fired. SALEEM jumps to his feet, HAMEEDA peers into the dark, & AMINA sits whimpering & shivering. A pause. Enter CAPT. AJIT MANOHARAN dragging FAIZAL, who is cursing him in Urdu & who has a gunshot in his guts. He brings him close to the fire & eases him down, then stands a little away, gasping, unsteady & unsure how to react.]*
AMINA: (*slowly uncurling & walks around him*) going, going, going...(then begins to wail, her hands clamped to her side)

SALEEM: Hameeda, keep her quiet.

[*Takes blankets & wraps it around FAIZAL & gives him some water to drink. FAIZAL takes some feebly, coughs & lies back, cursing the soldier. The CAPT. sees his father examining him and takes a shaky breath, enters the play]*

CAPT: I shot him in his gut...without medical aid, he'll die in four, may be five hours- slowly & painfully.

FAIZAL: Damn you to hell! My brothers, my *real* brothers will avenge my death..(*coughs & shuts up*)

SALEEM: (*lighting his hookah & sitting down, sadly and in a tired fashion*) Why can't you be less violent, my son...

FAIZAL: There's nothing to justify, *father (with emphasis)*. I am violent because the world is violent. Blood for blood...*(fades, now with a tone of curiosity)* but you could never understand, could you? Saleem Hamed, the son of Hamed. Nothing exists for you other than this rubble pile & the family you think about everyday...your dead family...

SALEEM:*(dangerously, between his teeth)* You shut your mouth. You young fanatics run around, getting yourselves killed for a cause. I am trying to remember,

to keep something of a normal life. Who is right? *(shouting)* and they are not dead!

FAIZAL:*(quietly, calmly, with a small smile)*: No- they are not dead...just smoke...fog vanishing with the sunlight. *(quietly holds his father's hand briefly)* Ammi...

[HAMEEDA comes quietly to his side, resting his head in her lap, while SALEEM walks away]

FAIZAL: Mother, I have fought...

HAMEEDA: Fought & fought well, my son.

FAIZAL: Then you understand...why I could not stay with you when the fighting first started.

HAMEEDA: I know why. Be quiet. *(makes as if to soothe his forehead, but Faizal takes her hand & holds it against his chest.)*

FAIZAL: I remember, whenever I hurt myself when I was a boy, you would always sing me to sleep, to take the pain away, with that...that...sorry, I can't remember which song...

HAMEEDA: This - *(starts singing softly)*

FAIZAL: Yes. That one. *(heaves a deep breath)*. Mother...*(they both look into each other's eyes)* it is finished.

[Hameeda looks at him for a moment, then curtly nods]

HAMEEDA: *(with a glance at her husband, then looks at the Capt.)* you- help me move him to that clearing in the bushes, so...*(hesitates, then continues)*..so he can see the stars shine down on him, as I sing to him...that's how he always liked it...*(brusquely)* quickly!

[The CAPT. is dumbfounded, but helps her move FAIZAL backstage, then comes back. SALEEM walks of to stand next to AMINA. The soldier is left awkwardly in the middle, out of place. He sits down by the fire, tries lighting a cigarette, but his fingers are shaking. He holds his head in his hands, rocking back & forth. HAMEEDA'S singing is heard. The singing fades. HAMEEDA quietly gets up, comes out, takes FAIZAL'S gun, and goes backstage. The noise of a shot fired is heard. SALEEM stands, eyes closed, with one hand reassuringly clamped on AMINA'S shoulder, who is shaking, with sobs. The CAPT. jumps up, his gun cocked, a reflex action. HAMEEDA re-enters, puts the gun down, sits, pauses for a few seconds, then resumes some mending.]

CAPT: *(throwing down his gun, explosively)*: You just killed your son!!

HAMEEDA: *(quietly)*: No - you killed my son; I made his pain go away. *(in a faraway voice)* He never could stand any pain of his own...*(recovering)* this is our way, soldier.

SALEEM: *(like he's making weekend plans)* His comrades should come on their weekly

patrol in a few hours. Let them bury him with their dead, that's the way he'd have wanted it. Hameeda- take those blankets & cover him.

[*HAMEEDA exits with the blankets & re-enters*]

CAPT: (musingly): You don't want to bury your own son...

SALEEM: (*fiercely*): He was never my son! His brothers, my other sons, ate like pigs, beat their women, haggled in the market place & went to sleep at dawn, drunk as monkeys - but they were men who lived as their father & great-grandfather lived! Faizal wanted an end too soon; wanted to stop life. As if it was his to stop...(*smiles cynically*) that's pride for you. He only lived so he could die some day, with *his people*, not his family. Now he is gone.

[*The soldier is stumped. HAMEEDA attends to AMINA who is muttering "Faizal is gone, Faizal is gone..."*]

SALEEM: (*easily*) So tell me soldier, what did you come here for, other than to kill my so- (stops himself grimacing, then continues) to kill?

CAPT: (*explosively*) I did not want to kill your son. And say "my son", not as if the very words are a curse! At least he died for what he believed in! ...he ran at me, out of the bushes...I just reacted...

SALEEM: (*calmly*) So it was an accident. May heaven pardon you, then. And I live for what I believe in, young man. Now why did you come here? Lost your way?

CAPT: No, I ...(*pulls himself together*) I wanted your wall. To jump off. It looked high enough from far away...(sheepishly)

SALEEM: Yes, that's because it's the only thing left standing in this area. (*sardonically*) To jump, you said. Couldn't you find a nice hill? (*lightly*)

CAPT: No, because...because if my CO saw me before I jumped, I'd be sent home disgraced. And that's not honorable (*realizes how lame it sounds, breaks off weakly*)

SALEEM: Ah, he's a proud man, he is. So it's true that pride does come before a fall, whether to *my son* or an Indian soldier (*lightly said till now, then explodes, leaping into a crouching position*) who gave you the right?

CAPT: What...?

SALEEM: Who gave you the right, no, the luxury! To choose how and when to die? That's a luxury, and if it belongs to anyone, it belongs to us, *we who live here*. Tell me, what have you seen? (*creeps closer*)

CAPT: (*feeling threatened, picks up his gun*): Stay away, old man.

SALEEM: What have you seen, boy - to justify this selfishness? What- what?? (*shoves at him*)

[*The Capt. who is quiet till now, suddenly flares up*]

CAPT: (*screaming*): Damn you, you don't know what I've seen! (*sobs*)

SALEEM: (*calmly*): so tell me.

CAPT: (*Stands up, looking at the ground, then up over the heads of the audience with a blank gaze*): One year on patrol & I've seen more deaths than all my other years in service. (*lights a cigarette with shaking hands, then puffs*) 6 men go out on patrol - only 4 come back. Every other day, standing in the

cemetery grounds again, watching the flames rise high, then die down, leaving nothing but *(flicks his cigarette, squats and crumbles the ash)* ash. All along the patrol routes, little temples and mosques, and everybody stops, even the atheist, and begs for life. Pleads to be able to go back to their wives & children. But you die anyway- in the snow, or among the trees, till there's nothing left but bones & rusted guns. Nothing...nothing...

[Amina walks over, she's been listening to him intently, and then sits next to him, crooning & saying]

AMINA: gone...

CAPT: nothing...

AMINA: life is gone...

CAPT: nothing... & then, there's the darkness.

HAMEEDA: *(quickly looking up):* You've seen the darkness?

CAPT: Even in broad daylight, with the birds singing, you see it...in the eyes of the jawans...you feel it prickle at the back of your neck. And you have to keep moving, because if you stop even for a moment, it drowns you, washes you away...

SALEEM: *(looks up from where he has sat down, and says) shh...listen... (they look at him blankly) exactly; the shelling has stopped...(footsteps and rustling is heard, approaching) what's that now- (frustrated) is everybody out for a night stroll?? (gets up, and turns towards the sound of the footsteps, while the Capt. sits down by the fire huddled up)*

[the sound of footsteps & the entrance of GIAZ, a Hizbul Mujahadeen fighter, walking

in with a deliberate, easy stride, like he's been walking a long distance.. but with a curious lack of determination]

GIAZ: A-Salaam Walekum...*[the CAPT. stands up quickly, half-scared, you can see the fear in his eyes, but you can still feel his exhaustion] (sees Capt. Ajit, aims his rifle at him) Don't move!*

SALEEM: *(hands up reassuringly, standing in front of the Capt.):* Come, now - no need to shoot anybody...he's lost- he just deserted his regiment... and we don't need this. My sister is scared of gunshots.*(points to Amina, who is shivering)*

GIAZ: *(looks around, then puts his rifle down)Well it doesn't matter anyway. My leader has told me that India & Pakistan have finally declared nuclear war on each other, & the bombing will commence within the hour. I'm here for the fireworks - this will be the first place to be hit...Finally, the war everybody wants- Kaboom!!*

HAMEEDA *(quickly):* Are you sure?

GIAZ: Yes, the announcement was made at the camp

CAPT: *(angrily and in disgust, but in a low voice) Shouldn't you be hiding in some hole, like the rat you are?*

[GIAZ whips out a blade, in 2 strides pushes SALEEM out of the way & holds it against the soldiers throat, who he has in an arm lock]

GIAZ: *(amused) I told you I'm here for the fireworks. My work is done anyway. And my friend, I like the idea of both of us going up in flames together, like some ancient*

sacrifice. (*dangerously*) But don't think I won't slit your throat before the bombing starts if I feel like it.

[HAMEEDA, who has been peering out into the dark comes back & placing one hand on GIAZ'S shoulder makes him turn around]

HAMEEDA: (*eagerly*): And so it will end, in another hour?

GIAZ: (*laughing, taking his knife away, and holding her hands in his, facing her*): No, mother, no - It will just begin. The war to decide who will get Kashmir.

AMINA: (*flatly*) But then Kashmir will be gone.

SALEEM: (*genuinely upset*) Now the house will never be rebuilt.

CAPT: At least I don't have to jump off the wall now. And why are you so goddamned happy? (*to Hameeda*)

HAMEEDA: (*whirls around to face him*): Because - it means a final end. The fear, & the slow, creeping living is over! Its freedom...

AMINA: (*softly*) Death is not freedom; it is escape.

HAMEEDA: Well, escape then. (*sits down with her*)

[*At this time, we see AMINA acting less psychotic & more intelligent. SALEEM sits down again, puffing at his pipe. AMINA walks away to the side and lies down. HAMEEDA bustles around with energy, lifting pots and folding blankets*]

GIAZ: (*yawns & stretches his arms above his head & sits down at one end of the wall*): Well, I'm going to die, but I won't let your

sorry face be the last thing I see before going to hell. You sit over there (*points to the other side*).

CAPT: Fine...(*sits down in a huff, then bursts out, throwing Giaz a glance, but for the most staring ahead*) Aren't you supposed to be a killer who chooses a valiant death, to glorify your God?

GIAZ: (*between his teeth dangerously*) and aren't you supposed to be a dignified soldier, leading your men to protect the freedom of "Bharat Desh"... you find exceptions everywhere. (*tiny pause, and now in a lighter tone*) So what's your name, Sweetheart?

CAPT: Capt. Ajit Manoharan, of the 15th Armed Regiment, Sir!

GIAZ: (*parodying him*): "Capt. Ajit Manoharan". Why can't you just say your name, man?

CAPT: Its what I was taught. And who are you?

GIAZ: (*with sarcasm*) I'm called Giaz, nothing *more*, nothing less.

CAPT: Tell me something, I'm serious this time - why aren't you with the rest of your comrades?

GIAZ: Why did you desert your patrol? Same reason.... because being there... doesn't matter (*a pause*)

CAPT: Any family?

GIAZ: A wife, who lives with my mother now. Ahh - its better this way. I'd be a bad husband - I don't know how to be respectable, and it's too hard to learn (*grins*). Anyway - die

here, now, or with her later, it's all the same thing. This way, I don't have to worry about her safety.

CAPT: So- It's because you're too finicky a man to watch your wife die and be able to do nothing about it.. you're scared aren't you...the fear of being helpless.

GIAZ: Everyone is scared up here, my friend: it's the lifeblood of every Hindu, Muslim and lost angrazi tourist here- though there haven't been many of those lately, have they? (*laughs good humouredly*) Its fear that brought you here too- (*gestures*)- Fear of the unseen death; you hear a shot, feel a searing pain in your neck, and then- nothing. Pouf! (*snaps his fingers*) you're gone. (*looks at Ajit*) Yes, I'm scared, my friend...(change to a lighter tone) My wife is beautiful, though.

CAPT: Really? Well, everybody says that here.

GIAZ: No, really. She looks like Madhuri Dixit.

CAPT: No!! (*overpronounced amused surprise*)

GIAZ: (*nonchalantly*) She does, see- (*fumbles in his pockets, after a few seconds pulls out a photograph*)

[*All this time, HAMEEDA & SALEEM have been gathering blankets, putting off the lamp, basically preparations of a family before they leave their home on a long journey. SALEEM then sits down next to the fire, pokes the coals, puts it out. Dawn is breaking, noticed by the change of lighting. GIAZ & the CAPT who have sitting at opposite ends of the wall now have moved closer with every exchange, till they are sitting together, side by side*]

CAPT: She actually does look a lot like her...

GIAZ: (*sighs*) The way Madhuri can dance...

CAPT: And sing!!! You remember Tezaab:

[*Starts singing,"ek do theen"; Saleem clearing his throat with intent interrupts them*]

umm, Bhaba- Doesn't Giaz's wife look like Madhuri?

SALEEM: (*softly, considering the photo he's holding in his hands*) She is very pretty... she looks like... our own daughter Zamira... her eyes (*enthusiastically*) ..and that smile!... (*joyfully*) She does! She looks like our daughter Zamira.

CAPT: (*swinging around, with a little good-humoured insinuation*) Really? Where is she?

SALEEM: (*suddenly still, with a strange voice*) She was married some years ago... she's with her uncles- my brothers- and their families now...they all left.... a long, long time ago...

GIAZ: So where are they now?

SALEEM: (*in a dreamy voice*) Far away...far away...

CAPT: (*energetically*) that's the problem with this goddamned war-

GIAZ: (*interrupting sardonically*) You mean "god-damned aggression", my friend. Officially its not a war- well, it wasn't till now. (*grins*) We move forwards and backwards...

CAPT: Tactical positions, deployment of troops, again and again, burying our dead...

SALEEM: (*bitterly*) While the land goes dry.

GIAZ: And families are broken up into nothing but pieces of memory.

SALEEM: (*with meaning*) Like broken glass.... we Kashmiris, we don't want any of this. We have no problems with each other. My best friends were two Kashmiri pundit families: But they have now gone to Delhi and Bombay...they speak Hindi and Punjabi now... no more Kashmiri. They are fading away, while we- we cling to our walls and die, one by one...

CAPT: (*passionately*) All this dying, for nothing. This fighting is mindless.

GIAZ: (*lazily*) All fighting is mindless, Capt. Ajit, Sir(*salutes*)

CAPT: (*turning on him*) So what, Giaz, you think its justified, this blood-letting and misery?

GIAZ: (*with cutting clearness*) I think nothing. This war, this life is meaningless... Before you're born, your choices are made by some faceless man who thinks he's God...before you die, you only know that you will go to hell, because blood is blood, no matter how holy the cause. And everything is meaningless, my friend. Meaningless!!! (*twirls around as if dancing and says lightly*) only a few minutes left...

CAPT: (*stands still for a moment, looking down, then looks up at Giaz with a calm, intent expression*) But suppose you could choose, Giaz...suppose you could....

GIAZ: (*smiles*) Then, I would choose to live in a far off, mythological land, with my wife, who would dance out of pure joy

everyday, and four squabbling brats, and a title of my own, instead of plain old Giaz. That's what I would choose, *Capt. Aj-...*

CAPT: (*vehemently*) Shut up! ...A title means nothing, except that you die sooner in the battle than your men behind you.....(*quieter*) ..God...look at us, Giaz... A cynical supposed fanatic who has abandoned his wife, and an enthusiastic Capt. of the Indian army who has deserted his country and his principles, both earnestly discussing the need for peace, with a bomb about to drop on our heads...(*bangs his head against the wall*)

GIAZ: I don't think you deserted your principles, I think you just found them...

[*they stand facing each other*]

[*the transistor begins playing again*]

CAPT: (*pettishly*)I wish I had just shot myself and got it over with, instead of coming here.

GIAZ: Oh, you wanted to kill yourself?

SALEEM: Yes- wanted to jump off the wall.

GIAZ: (*starts to laugh, then guffaw*) what, this wall? (*laughs harder*)

CAPT (*petulantly*): well, it looked higher from where I saw it. (*hearing him laugh, starts to grin as well, but in mock anger, asks*) So, how would you choose to die, brave warrior?

GIAZ: (*wiping tears from his eyes, and gasping*) If you must know, Capt. ji, I would choose to run into the nearest enemy I could find, and take the shot in my chest. You go faster that way. (*a pause*)

CAPT: I wish I had met you sooner...

GIAZ: (shortly) me too....(curtly, with annoyance, referring to the transistor)...damn that stupid thing!

[they turn away, move apart to avoid the emotion.]

CAPT: (changed tone, more upbeat) so what now?

GIAZ: (slowly) I was thinking ...maybe we should fix Saleem's wall, Capt. ...even if we cant build his house for him...

CAPT: (grunts in acceptance of the idea) Saleem, we're going to fix your wall...(looks at Giaz) ..

GIAZ: (small nod) together.

SALEEM: no, wait-

HAMEEDA: (looks up with an eager happiness) It is time.

CAPT: (looks at his watch) she's right. Well, it was good while it lasted...(pause) funny, but I don't want to die now.

GIAZ: No one really wants to die. There's a difference between looking over the edge and jumping off. Death is never welcome....

HAMEEDA: I welcome it gladly, with open arms...(pulls off her headdress & stands, hair loose, hands raised to the sky) Feel that sun, hear those birds... Faizal's birds, Saleem... he knows we're coming..

GIAZ: (to CAPT) who's Faizal?

CAPT: Her dead son.(takes a breath) I shot him.

GIAZ: (shoots him a look) Oh.

CAPT: yes. (Giaz shrugs. Ajit offers him a cigarette, lights it for him, he exhales deeply)

SALEEM: (taking a breath) This is it then- I can never send for my brothers. The house will remain unbuilt...I will be dust...ash

CAPT: Goodbye Giaz.

GIAZ: Yes- Till next time.

CAPT:damn birds!! don't they know...

SALEEM: nothing

HAMEEDA: A glorious end.

[silence for a few seconds. Nature sounds heard- voice over radio]

"This is a nationwide announcement. The nuclear war between India and Pakistan has been averted, thanks to the diplomatic intervention of the united states of America. A third round of bilateral discussions will take place between the respective heads of state. The armies of both nations have been pulled back to status quo positions as per February of this year. I repeat, this is a nationwide announcement. The war..." [fades]

[They all stare at each other, blankly, wide-eyed in shock]

GIAZ: (slowly) Its all so quiet.

HAMEEDA: (frenzied) no...no...no!! It's not true, its not true(faces Saleem, screaming into his face, shaking him by his shoulders. He catches her by her wrists, and holds her, but she breaks free, and faces the audience) All I wanted... was just a little death, a final end, for myself. I took care of my family, gave you (looks up at the sky) my son...just a little death; why didn't it happen?? why!!! (tears her headcloth, sobbing)

[AMINA & SALEEM comfort her; she sits down, sobbing, wailing, rocking back and forth]

AMINA: shhh...shhhh...its alright...

CAPT: *(we can make out he is highly strung here, he says, in a shrill voice) ...Sahib, at least now we can rebuild your whole house for you...(starts walking towards the pile of rubble, stage right)*

SALEEM: *(fiercely)* No. Don't touch anything. That is for my family to do.

CAPT: alright then- Send for them, now.

SALEEM: No...not so soon.

GIAZ: *(bitterly)*The fighting will continue forever, old man. If you want to build your god-forsaken house, build it now. Send them a message. I'll carry it for you...the devil knows I have nothing else to do with my.. *(smirks)* life. What's the address?

SALEEM: *(faltering)* I don't ...I don't know

GIAZ: Of course you know.

SALEEM: *(yelling now)* I tell you I don't know! I don't know! Stay away from my wall! Its all I have left...Its mine! mine!! *(crouches by it, digging his fingers into its crevices, shivering and muttering)*

CAPT: *(curiously)* what's wrong with him?

AMINA: *(gets up from Hameeda's side who is still sobbing, and taking some water from a pot in a tumbler, pauses and says quietly)* 7 years ago, his daughter, my niece Zamira, got married. It was a big wedding: Saleem's whole family was here, and there was feasting, music and laughter. We -Saleem, Hameeda and I- went ahead of the wedding party... but the rest of the family followed after some time...and we couldn't warn them in time...some say it was the Indian army, others say it was Pakistani insurgents... whoever it

was, ended our family in a shower of blood and bullets...while the birds were singing in the trees above. We found them, on the way back from the village, scattered...they had tried running away....Saleem hasn't accepted it; he feels they all just left...went away... he cant send for them, because he doesn't know where they are...*(gives the water to Hameeda and helps her drink)*

CAPT: Well..but...aren't you supposed to be..

AMINA: *(small smile)* mad? I think everyone is, a little: how do you know the difference? For me, it comes and goes....like night and day...you can either wait for the darkness, or enter into it...at least, then you know what to expect- nothing....though *(strange tone)*...the birds still sing though, always....*(turns back to Hameeda)*

[**GIAZ & the CAPT** take a deep breath, look at each other, walk around and then look out together over the heads of the audience]

CAPT: Another day, then....my patrol will start in another 15mins; If they find you-

GIAZ: *(squats, looking at the ground)* I told you it was over for me a long time ago.

CAPT: So what do we do now? work for world peace?

GIAZ: *(runs his fingers through the mud, then stands up, dusting his hands on his kurta, and says slowly)* No- we rebuild the old man's wall.

[**CAPT** salutes **GIAZ** formally. Then they both start carrying stones]

[exeunt players, except for the **CAPT**.
LIGHTS fade- **VOICE OVER**]

"Indian troops this morning encountered a strange aftermath to the threat of nuclear war which hung over the nation yesterday. On a routine patrol, the troops of the 15th regiment found a man who is believed to have been a Hizbul Mujahadeen fighter, in the company of three Kashmiri civilians, and Capt. Ajit Manoharan of the same regiment, who was reported missing the previous night. Cpt. Manoharan is to be court-martialed, and is being charged with desertion and leaking information to jihadi camps. The civilians have been identified as 3 escaped inmates of a nearby psychiatric ward, who were reported missing some months ago. The Defense Ministry has made no comment. However, the Srinagar police are downplaying the incident, by attributing it wholly to the obvious mental depression of the Captain, who is being questioned by the CBI here today. *(pause)* For

these people here in Kashmir, a solution to the wall of violence cutting them off from the rest of the world is needed, and soon. In Srinagar, this is Nandita Varma, reporting for the Doordarshan network..*(fade off, last words, then silence)*

[The stage in complete darkness, the CAPT. is seen with his hands cuffed in front of him, his eyes blank and dull, being questioned. Only he is seen, standing in front of the wall, the spotlight highlighting the starkness of the moment.]

CAPT: *(his voice empty, and faraway, as if continuing a dialogue)* ...it wasn't treason...Giaz would think that was too much trouble. Its simple. I don't have a title anymore. And we weren't doing anything...just trying to fix a wall.

CURTAIN.

Loyalty to petrified opinion never yet broke a chain or freed a human soul.

Mark Twain

“... With our hearts let us see,
With our minds let us break every chain
Then indeed, shall we know
A better and nobler humanity.”

- Helen Keller

This is a story about achievements; a story about success; a story about service. But a story about two people who have achieved, succeeded and are serving in the face of adversity, trials and tribulations.

Mahema was at the wheel when a lorry driver who was teasing her by trying to overtake her, pushed the car to the kerb of the road; it overturned, opening the driver's door, and Mahema was thrown on to the mushy

*Dr. Sujata Ramanathan
Faculty, Department of Sociology*

ground. She could hear her six-year-old daughter but could not respond. The spinal injuries she suffered paralysed her. Her visits to the hospital began. Recovery was slow and minimal movement came after intense physiotherapy. Mahema's motor nerves were injured, rendering her a quadriplegic - she is confined to a wheelchair with no movement below her neck.

Mahema's busy life came to a rude halt. She was with her husband in America, taking on the office of the Director of the Indian House, in which all Asian students lived. She arranged special programmes and organized many shows. Mahema loved to cook and bake



and catering was an important part of these occasions.

Manohar Devadoss is her husband. He has a degenerative problem called retinitis pigmentosa. He lost his vision in one eye in 1975. In the other eye there is minimal vision, after a cataract surgery in 1983. In the next few years, he faced total loss of sight. His appreciation of beauty is reflected in his oil paintings. Today, however, his eye problem has forced him to concentrate on black and white ink drawing. He is famous for his exquisite ink sketches, especially of temples, which he now draws with special equipment, which includes magnifying lenses, high focus lamps and other low vision aids that are provided by his daughter and son-in-law.

Manohar is a delightful person. He has a great sense of humour always full of beans, he has a stream of anecdotes to relate, especially about his boyhood. Mahema reads

to him while he is busy at his drawing. The couple entertain a great deal and Mahema takes a lot of pride in keeping her house well.

Manohar and Mahema are a happy couple. Of course, they depend heavily on domestic help and one of the nightmares they face is the breakdown of that backup. Their lives are spent not in burden or battle but in humour and cheer. The proceeds of Manohar's drawings go to charitable institutions. Mahema and Manohar have accepted their condition as God's gift, though they admit that acceptance came to them only gradually.

They have not let their disabilities come in the way of achieving excellence; they have set standards for others to follow, inspired others and made a difference.

You are left with an incredible sense of wonder at their passion for and positive attitude to life.

Mahema Devadoss was a student of the Department of English and President of the Student Union 1959-1960. Her daughter Sujatha Devadoss was also a student of the English Department.

*"...That which we are, we are;
Our equal temper of heroic hearts
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield."*

Ulysses, Tennyson

Saying Goodbye

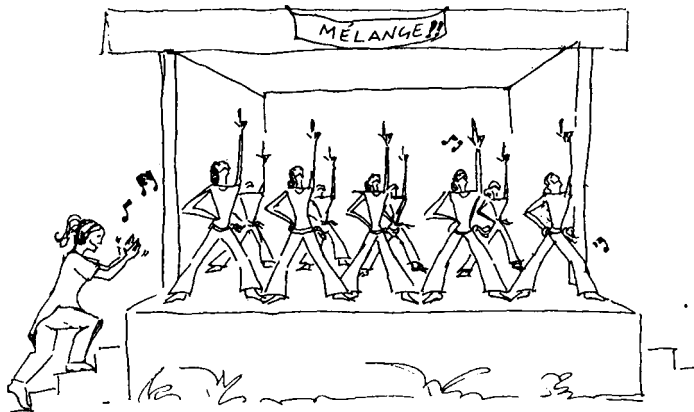
Sushma S. Iyengar
III B.Sc. Zoology

It's 4:00 PM and quite the end of another college day. Yet I find myself roaming the campus endlessly in search of something... something tugging at me... some invisible hands...can't quite place it... nostalgia pours over me, filling me up with what are very likely tears in my eyes. Today begins my last week of college and even though I'm excited and anxious about my future, it feels like a part of me is fading. I want to remain a student here forever; cocooned in the warmth I've felt these three memorable years. Never will I walk down these hallways again. Deserted and empty though they are, they seem so alive. Never will the overstuffed and worn out shelves of the library filled with books beg for my attention again. Never will the sound of music and dancing feet practicing endlessly for another cultural event wash over my ears. Emptiness weighs down upon me as I picture all the smiling faces of two hours ago making a beeline for the gates. But they will be here again tomorrow. Who knows where my path

will take me? I reach down to break off a blade of grass, hoping that this one souvenir will be enough to capture and store the memories of my heart...knowing that it is not enough. So I resume my endless search smiling fondly at the large NCC grounds, witness to the many OATs I have participated in, the canteen (sweet torture of my thoughts at 8 AM, 9 AM, 10 AM, 11 AM... oh hell! All day!), the F-Block, the Main Block...trying to satisfy the insane drive in me to swallow the whole vision up so that I'll never have to let go.

Dear teachers, juniors and friends...parting is such a sweet sorrow. I look forward to my future, torn by the knowledge that this is really goodbye. You have all left an indelible impression on my mind. My teachers...my guides, my idols. Your endless encouragement and energy will influence my beliefs and confidence to the last.

Thank you Stella Maris and Goodbye!



“So this is your life....,” a friend of mine said to me, on seeing Stella Maris for the first time at sunset. As orange tinged the sky, evening settled around us into its nest of stillness. I replied, “Yes, this my life...”

College campus at 6 PM is the closest thing to heaven for me. But then when you are a hostelite, so far away from home, your ideas of heaven alter dramatically. Heaven for me (and all other hostelites) is home, mother’s cooking and non-stop television. But where would that leave golden evenings, green-carpeted grounds, trees like green-golden elves, dancing in the wind, and the feeling of living in a world within a world, comfortable, secluded, and breathtakingly beautiful? Walking around the college campus hours after classes are over gives one a sense of a few stolen moments in one’s own personal paradise...though it might be difficult for anyone to associate college with paradise, as it is a symbol of everyone’s most hated task—

studying. There have been times when I’ve been asked how I manage to live on college campus, my bed less than three minutes away from my class. But I think that one would have to live my life to know how interesting it can be. After all, when you live in a hostel, you gain a fresh perspective on home, heaven, and life—for home becomes heaven, and how we manage without it is our life. So perhaps we look at campus as paradise for the sake of sheer survival—survival against constant company (which is one of the best and worst aspects of hostel life), against a sense of boredom, against homesickness, and of course, against the absence of home-cooked meals. Paradise is a refuge, a wide world of peace and quiet, and when the golden evening melts into the black-blue night, a world of revealed secrets and truths, confronted. Above all, a walk in the dark in the college campus offers us a chamber of seclusion, the corridor to ourselves, an escape from reality just a morning away...



I have an ancient memory of my mother taking me severely to task one day for an offence which absolutely justified it. I had crossed the road with my eyes steadfastly fixed on the pages of my book. The memory does shock me. I smile as I relive the incident. The years have notched up my responsibility levels but they have not reduced my love for reading.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'reading' as "(n.) literary knowledge, scholarship". A rather cold definition of what can be a richly rewarding, passionate experience, I think. Reading is almost like living out virtual reality. It is gaining rare knowledge about people and relationships and attitudes. Reading, for me, is often therapeutic because one can forget sordid realities and petty woes and for the span of time it takes to read one book one can stop pretending about who one is and be transported into another realm.

Books have been one of my best earthly companions ever since I learned that those little black hieroglyphics on white paper were actually words with meanings. I would feel well provided for, even if I were locked up in solitude, if only I had a pile of books by my side for company. Some of my books have grown into friends. Early favourites like *Jane Eyre* and *Hatter's Castle* have well-thumbed pages, yellowed with age. Yet there are occasions when my mother finds them by my pillow when she comes to wake me. I suppose books are to me what Cleopatra was to Enobarbus:

*"Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety."*

As Bacon wrote, *"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested."* Some, I would add, are chewed, digested and brought back for a repetition of the wonderful experience much like a ruminating cow does its food. There are many books that fall into that category, although I have had the space and time to name just a couple.

Reading is one of my greatest joys. To delve into the secrets of another person's heart and mind, to sympathise, to recognize a kindred spirit, to find opinions that concur and particularly to sometimes find the germ of my idea having taken root and grown in someone else's mind - these are life's regular gifts.

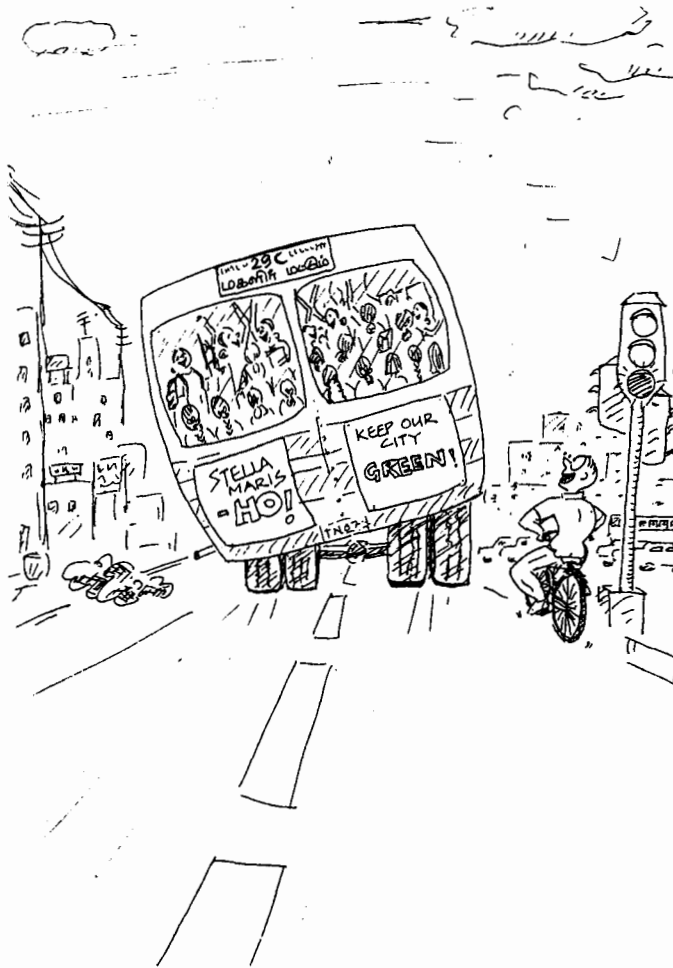
I owe a good portion of what I know of other members of my kind to reading. Books enrich my comprehension of myself, as well, and thereby sharpen my perception of human nature. Books have often been my guides to judging character. Perhaps this is because good writers write themselves into their works.

*"O let my books be then the eloquence
And dumb presages of my leaking breast,"*

Shakespeare wrote - and he was, undoubtedly, one of the best. Most writers do hold that prayer. Therefore, if writing is the expression of oneself, it is the expression of humanity. Reading such writing is then a

learning experience in itself. Moreover there are books of ancient lore, of human wisdom, of comfort. The Bible has always been a source of divine refuge, healing and infinite inspiration. I have learned about life, and God and so much else in reading it. Thus there are books of varied calibre. I have read a fair share of each and each has played some part in building the person I am.

Therefore, books are indispensable to human development. Being such a passionate advocate of reading, I cannot fathom how some people find it a distasteful task. I am thankful to God that I had the opportunity to learn to love it as early as I did. Reading has always been my forte and books have been too closely, too long and too well-woven into my existence for that thread to be unravelled.



Positive Thinking

Ann Mary K
II B.Sc. Physics

For all the negative things we say to ourselves, God has a positive answer.

We say: It's impossible

God says: All things are possible. (Luke 18:27)

We say: I'm too tired.

God says: I will give you rest.
(Matthew 11:28-30)

We say: Nobody really loves me.

God says: I love you.
(John 3:16 and John 13:34)

We say: I can't go on.

God says: My grace is sufficient.
(II Corinthians 12:9; Psalm 91:15)

We say: I can't figure things out.

God says: I will direct your steps. (Proverbs)

We say: I am not able

God says: I am able. (II Corinthians 9:8)

We say: It's not worth it

God says: It will be worth it. (Roman 8:28)

We say: I can't forgive myself.

God says: I forgive you.
(I John 1:9 ; Romans 8:1)

We say: I can't manage

God says: I will supply all your needs.
(Phillipians 4:19)

We say: I'm afraid

God says: I have not given you a spirit of fear.
(I Timothy 1:7)

We say: I'm always worried and frustrated.

God says: Cast all your cares on me.
(I Peter 5:7)

We say: I don't have enough faith

God says: I've given everyone a measure of faith. (Romans 12:3)

We say: I'm not smart enough.

God says: I give you wisdom.
(I Corinthians 1:30)

We say: I feel all alone.

God says: I will never leave you or forsake you.. (Hebrews 13:5)

(published in a youth magazine)

CASE: Kids 'grow up' to become adults.

Whoops of laughter. Mischievous grins that make approaching people wary. Faces that strive to look innocent....these are things that make everyday life seem more interesting... more joyful... more alive!

Whoever said that leprechauns and elves existed only in fairytales? I'm willing to bet that whoever said that has never really looked at kids. And I am not talking only about the ones who scrape their knees, and have to look up a long way to see their parents faces. Look closely at people around you, look at the mirror on the wall and you'll notice that beneath all that mock-fierceness, there's a kid in each one of us.

I have never really understood what qualities distinguish a kid from an adult. They say that kids are quick to show their emotions—be it happiness or anger. Does anyone remember our cricket matches as being emotionally sterile? Kids are much more genuine—they will tell your neighbour next door that she is one fat lady and will leave you to face the music. So do adults, the difference

being that we might just tell the neighbour's neighbour!

Kids shuffle their feet when reminded about not tracking mud onto the floor, or about closing the door. We, as adults, are supposed to be more responsible and committed. Yeah right—how many of us will jump at the opportunity to do more work?

Kids love chocolates. It's supposed to be their birthright—one they learn to curb as they grow up. Ha! My grandpa still loves Cadburys.

Parents and their children rediscover the kids in themselves when they laugh together. A father may thump his son on the back and do the victory dance if India wins the match. A mother might giggle endlessly with her daughter, when they see the bully on the block have an argument with the wall and come off second best. How then would one differentiate between children and adults?

They say children cry when they are really sad. How many of our eyes were dry when planes met towers and spaceships rocketed people to being legends? And they say kids 'grow up' to be adults.

Case dismissed.

The Sound of Memory

Subiksha Krishniah
I BA English

I remember lying against my mother - in her arms, on her stomach. Her heart beats very regularly, comfortably: sometimes I can hear the fluid moving through her body, down her stomach. I was amused, wondering.

Funny how some impressions stay etched on your mind, intact, vivid, fresh. It may not be the significant ones. But little things that just seem to catch your mind momentarily. One experiences life through these odd, inconsequential moments. I think. Like the sound of a fan, the clinging of a wet pen tip to the paper, words in the air. the feeling of a smile, words in the air...

I remember growing up. It was a certain point in time, a moment when I realized that I was growing up. That something new was beginning. We were playing out on the sand in school at lunchtime. It was a very warm day, not unusually, and the sand was warm too, and dry. It left a layer of dust on our hands. Fine dust that was not easily wiped away. The play became more energetic and as we ran after each other we were getting more sweaty and, no doubt, grimy as well although we couldn't have seen it. We were absorbed in the game. It had taken us a little distance from where we started. We had come near the hostel and there was a tap fixed on the wall not too far off. It was a beautiful place, this. Clustering pink bougainvilleas hung all over the cracked wall. It was not a very high wall but thick and ancient.

It did not take long for the hosepipe that was attached to the spout to attract our wandering attention, spoiling as we were for something to do. It lay white and coiled on

the grey cement and the sun made it gleam with added fervour. It was a natural instinct we obeyed then when some friends and I picked it up and turned on the water full force. We shrieked as we sprayed water on each other; playing with the jets of water making them dance between the dodging girls, directing the briny water straight at laughing faces - playing, yelling, laughing high and loud. At twelve and thirteen, some of us were big girls. I was big too but fast thinning. "Angular, awkward" - that is what they call most girls of that age in books. I may have been angular. I do not know. But certainly none of us were really awkward. It was not precisely "grace" we had either but "ease". That bounding, thoughtless, active ease of children. Children. Many of us were still in our childhood. And as we monkeyed around, I don't see how people could have thought otherwise.

The riot did not last for much over two minutes. We had just enough time to close the tap and partly put the hosepipe back before the approaching teacher had covered the playground and stood within a few feet of the bunch of dishevelled, giggling girls. Stern-faced. Strait-laced. Unbending, she seemed. She led us to the classroom. We could scarcely keep up with her angry pace, despite the energy simmering in us. Unsure. we walked to our desks without a syllable. But I think we said a great deal more in the furious glances we telegraphed in all directions in that large classroom.

Apparently - we had not even noticed - a few boys on the street had peeked over the low wall. We were not soaked. A few of us

were hardly wet. I had little water on me except on my forearms for it had taken me some time to renounce my early monopoly of the hosepipe. It was the potential danger we had been blind to that worried her, she said. But that was not the worst of our faux-pas, that afternoon. We had forayed into protected territory, and had been inconsiderate in the bargain. We had left more water on the ground than on ourselves. And this at a time when there was a scarcity in the city and the girls in the hostel were trying to conserve the precious little they had. It had been a delightful sensation - flopping around in water on the warm cement. But she was right. And the knowledge of it killed the excitement of breaking rules. Words and phrases washed around me - "Ashamed of yourselves. More responsibility. Disappointed. Grow up" She punctuated her speech with emphatic bangs of her wooden ruler on the table. I was not truly listening, although I was a little ashamed. I stared determinedly at the pot- holed wood of my desk.

I looked up when another teacher entered. She had something to tell us as well. "This one" - as her nickname seems to have been, judging from the whispers I hear from decades ago - "she is nice, kind." I remember she scolded less, and twinkled more.

She looked amused. She told us we had to be more careful. Think more. "You must learn to look further than now. Learn not to live only to enjoy the present moment." But oh. I wish she had not said that. I wish instead she had told that wide-eyed group of thirty girls or more "Car pe Diem." It would have made sense now. For at times it almost seems like things have fallen obediently into the pattern of her counsel.

Then she said something else. Something that did not impact me then as it did later.

Either I had heard the words and they had stunned my comprehension, or they had not yet completely penetrated my consciousness - quite probably my reaction was exaggerated, much like the whole situation, but I know I did not hear anything else after that for a long while. I remember the blue out the wide and sturdy black windows turning to grey. My neighbour spills a bit of ink on herself. The bell rings for longer than usual.

A final clatter of 'byes and packing books. The last thing I observe before I leave is the colourfully decorated quote at the head of the blackboard. "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." I have worked out its meaning before, but just now I am not sure. I know I will understand; but I cannot try at this moment. I am too full - of what, I do not know.

I remember I was relatively silent for the latter part of the day. I was sadder too. I did my homework, ate my dinner. Then at night, as I lay against my mother's side - and this, this is the most vivid, real part of that day - the sound of the teacher's words suddenly hit my thoughts. "You have the rest of your life before you." And I lay grappling with the sense of them. It appeared as if they had been suspended in the heavy atmosphere of the evening waiting to cut through my dimness with startling keenness. "The rest." So a part was gone? Over? The sadness threatened to choke me and then, as unexpectedly as it came, it left. Displaced by other words. Words that I picked from the air. Words I remembered reading. Displaced by vague hope. "Humble yourselves like this child..." and "... put away childish things." Inexplicably. I was as quiet inside as I had been outwardly through the day - and I fell asleep to the sound of my mother's regular breathing.

There are big wonders and small wonders in life. Big wonders don't come our way so easily, and so, cannot be experienced like the small wonders. Are you wondering what these small wonders are? Well, read on.

Doesn't seeing a multi-coloured rainbow or cotton clouds or splashing sunrise, or serene sunset make you gape at life so enchanting? There are so many more that I could list, like the tumbling waterfall, the wavy sea, the placid lake, a fluttering butterfly... it makes you want to freeze time for that one beautiful moment. But the best part of a small wonder is that you can enjoy it as often as you can, one way or the other. There are so many small wonders...like the delicious feeling of getting wet in the rain....feeling the rain soak through your clothes creates a bond between you and the rain. I have so often heard people say that they 'love water'. Do you know what this love is all about? It's a very special feeling...so comfortable and exciting.

Have you ever tried flying a kite? When it soars high in the sky, your joy too touches the sky. That rush of feeling as the kite kisses the breeze and tugs at your fingers is indeed special. Then suddenly, the thread may break loose and the kite flies higher to the clouds. "Oh no!", you scream, your eyes tracing the kite till it vanishes into a dot. Nevertheless, you are content. If you have the true adventurous spirit, you may start on another kite. Similar feelings can be experienced when cycling, dancing, swinging, riding a giant wheel...

One of my all-time favourite small wonders has been to stare deep into my dog's eyes. It is so funny and loving, and no matter

where I am, and what I think of, that look in his eyes always brings a smile to my face. Animals may inspire small wonders. Like the other day, I saw a cat, which could actually tap its paw to some dance moves. I almost clapped my hands in glee! Animal cubs also have the ability to make everyone smile. Being playful and mischievous makes them so charming.

There are many other small wonders that I have experienced, that I simply must share....exchanging a smile with a stranger can make you feel quite elated. The mantra is: the wider you smile, the more joy you shall receive. Have you tried running with your arms spread? You will relish the feeling, a sense of freedom. It's even better if you try it near the sea. Then you can also feel the breeze smack your hair and your cheek. I am sure most of us test our vocals in the bathroom. It doesn't matter how cacophonous we may sound, it just feels so good to sing aloud. It only makes you want to sing louder if someone else dislikes your mellifluous voice.

A small wonder is, in many ways, like discovering the child in you. It is retaining a sense of mystery about things. We, as adults, often hide being expressive. Children on the other hand react easily to what they see, touch and feel. I have never understood why people want to grow up and be mature, when being child-like represents an innocent and clean mind and heart. The metamorphosis of a child into an adult is not only physical, but makes one lose some important qualities.

So you see, small wonders are a part of life and make life beautiful. Just round the corner, small wonders wait to be discovered...

In this modern and highly competitive and technological world, I have often heard people say that logical reasoning is the key to solving most problems. Any kind of deviation is regarded as a display of one's eccentricity! Many people have misunderstood logic as a definite and clichéd way of thinking and are hence afraid to think differently. I would like to mention here that Einstein was not considered as a normal person by many of his neighbours and counterparts because he thought differently. If he hadn't imagined that there was time in space, he wouldn't have come up with the theory of relativity and there would have been no physics today! But to many of us, time in space might seem like the most bizarre imagining. Students who ask 'unrelated' doubts in class are often subdued and sometimes even mocked by other students.

Imagination is an art! When I say this, my friends look at me as if I have lost my mind, and my parents scoff, saying it's a waste of time. I don't know how many of you after reading this article will be thinking that I've reached the highest level of insanity, but I strongly believe that—

"If you let your mind stray
You never know what you will discover along the way!"

One Tuesday morning, I was getting ready for college and I had just enough time to get a glimpse of myself in the long mirror fixed onto my cupboard. This time, I stared at myself longer than usual. I saw a person before me who looked just like me. But wait! How did I know the person in front looked exactly like me? I have seen this girl several times before, but why didn't I ever feel the urge or need to talk to her, or feel her? Was she real? Somehow the physics of reflection didn't really convince me! I saw a whole new world out there, on the other side! I wanted to explore it. I

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wondered, if she could look like me, then would she think of me? I wanted to talk to her. When I opened my mouth to say 'hello,' she too did the same, but I couldn't hear her. The whole thing was slightly enigmatic, but I couldn't take my eyes off her. I wondered if she was also thinking what I was thinking. It spooked me out when I thought that there was actually someone else out there who could read my thoughts and think my thoughts. I realized that she was also wearing the same purple dress as me. I was shocked and slightly irritated that she even had the same taste as me in colours and clothes! I saw a frown on her face, and thought she had read my mind. It was dangerous to be standing there before the girl who could read my mind. Nevertheless, I stood there, frozen and staring daggers at her for having intruded into my thoughts. I was no more fascinated by this girl but started to develop a strong dislike for her. I could see the disgust in her face and I understood that the feelings were mutual. Suddenly, it seemed like I had lost my identity and individuality. I still couldn't bring myself to leave the place. There was something more that I wanted to know about her. There was something about her that was very intriguing. In a strange way, I realized that I discovered a lot about myself, in the process of getting to know this girl better! I was then rudely interrupted by my mother, who is always paranoid about me going late to college. I could see the panicky look on the girl's face and wondered if she had heard my mother. Then, as if on cue, she waved a quick goodbye when I also waved her goodbye. As I whirled around and hurriedly walked out of the room, out of the corner of my eye, I saw her turning as well, and walking away quickly, and also looking to see if I was looking at her. I smiled to myself and made a mental promise to explore her territory later!

Computer Gender

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A language instructor was explaining to her class that in French, nouns, unlike their English counterparts, are grammatically designed as masculine or feminine - for example, 'house' in French is 'la maison' (feminine) and 'pencil' is 'le crayon' (masculine).

One puzzled student asked his teacher what the gender of the computer was. The teacher did not know and it was not in the French dictionary. So, for fun, she split the class into two groups, appropriately enough by gender, and asked them to decide whether the computer should be a masculine or feminine. Both groups were required to give four reasons.

The boys decided that the computer is definitely of the feminine gender because:

- i. No one but their creator understand their internal logic
- ii. The native language they use to communicate with the other computers are incomprehensible to everyone else

- iii. Even the smallest mistake is stored in the long-term memory, which is used as revenge in future.
- iv. As soon as you make a commitment to one, you find yourself spending on accessories for it.

The girls decided that the computer is definitely masculine because:

- i. In order for it to do anything, you must turn them on
- ii. They have a lot of data but they can't think for themselves
- iii. They are supposed to help you to solve problems but half the time, they are the problem
- iv. As soon as you make a commitment to one, you realise that if you had waited a little longer, you could have got a better model

THE WOMEN WON!

Ponder a While

A.J. Hilda
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If a child lives...

With criticism,

He learns to condemn.

With hostility,

He learns to fight.

With ridicule

He learns to be shy.

With shame,

He learns to be guilty.

With encouragement,

He learns to be confident.

With praise,

He learns to appreciate.

With fairness,

He learns justice.

With security,

He learns to have faith.

With approval,

He learns to like himself.

With acceptance and friendship,

He learns to find love in the world.

We have seen the devastating effects that globalisation can have on developing countries, especially the poorer of them. I believe that globalisation - the removal of barriers to free trade and closer integration of national economies - can be a force for good and that it has potential to enrich everyone in the world, particularly the poor. But I also believe that if this is to be the case, the way globalisation has been managed, including the international trade agreements that have played such a huge role in removing those barriers and the policies that have been imposed on developing countries in the process of globalisation, need to be radically reconsidered.

Globalisation has, overwhelmingly, been an urbanising phenomenon and it is creating inequalities both within cities and between cities and their hinterlands. And this is placing enormous economic and social strains on the world's cities as they try to outbid each other to attract increasingly mobile investment funds.

Besides, what impact are global media and communications having on culture? Some argue that globalisation is a threat to local cultures. Others believe that we are witnessing an increasing hybridisation of cultures. Are local cultures robust and adaptive?

Many developing countries see globalisation and new technology as opening up new economic opportunities. But, in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis and economic instability in other engaging markets, a growing band of critics argue that the

pressure to compete in globalised markets can lead to "a race to the bottom" in terms of wages, conditions and the environment.

The West - acting through the IMF and WTO - has seriously mismanaged the process of privatisation, liberalisation and stabilisation, and by following its advice, many developing countries and former Communist countries are actually worse off now than they were before.

India cannot take a simplistic pro- or anti-globalisation stance. We cannot approach it from a narrow ideological platform. It has many dimensions. We are confronted with the difficult realities of the world. We have to see what the market can be trusted to do and which responsibilities the government must not hand over to it. The way this is accomplished will make a great deal of difference.

Development is about transforming societies, improving the lives of the poor, enabling everyone to have a chance at success and access to healthcare and education. Being able to buy Gucci handbags in Delhi departmental stores does not mean that the country has become a market economy.

International trade has been the biggest force for prosperity and today it is growing at a tremendous rate. Our foreign exchange reserve has crossed \$60 billion; it has been growing at a steady pace to record an impressive 25% increase in the last twelve months. Our conservative policy-making ensures that we do not attract "hot currency". We are successful in building a robust and resilient economy that can comfortably

withstand the pressures of drought, war and escalation in oil prices!

The process of globalisation implies opportunities and risks. The question is not how to stop or avail it. Rather, it should be how to take full advantage of the benefits of globalisation, while working to minimise its negative effects. Ensuring that global markets benefit ordinary people will accomplish this.

The potential for the Indian economy in globalisation is very exciting as we know from our experiences that enterprises can and do transform themselves into world-class performers. Moving forward, we are more enthused than ever about establishing a sustainable, equitable and democratic process of transformation from a social economy to a market economy.



The shrill scream of the telephone cut through the morning sounds and drowned the voices inside my head. Not now. Not just now. I was struggling to negotiate the folds of my saree. Ten minutes more. I could miss my bus and then have to indulge in the extravagance of an auto... I could still be late to the office and then have to suffer the summons of that drooling, womanizing jerk, that man who kept his wife locked up at home. But now, the telephone. Damn it. My desperation was mounting. Finally, I ran towards the telephone, clumsily clutching the pleats of my pallu. Damn its atrocious persistence. "Hello?" I spat out the words with a piercing irritation. It was Uma. She worked with me at the office. Anxiety mounting. What could she want? She had news. "Office will remain closed today." I let go of my saree folds and sank into a chair. Joy, Joy, Heavenly Joy. Then, faking interest, "What's the matter?" I asked. A communal riot in the north of the town last night. Four people dead already. The police have declared a precautionary curfew throughout the district. Nothing registered in my mind. I was thinking of faraway things. "Malar." Uma's voice dispersed my thoughts. "Do you know who's rioting?" Suddenly, realization dawned. "Who?" I asked, but I almost knew. The Dalits. Of course, who else could it be? Either the Dalits or the Thevars. A long-standing rivalry. Ancient roots. But there had never been a riot in this district, as far as I could remember. That's why we had moved here, Rajan and I. Uma explained that a Thevar man had raped a Dalit girl. They were out

now for revenge. A long pause. Then suddenly, "Tell Rajan to be careful!" Silence once again. "He always stays out of trouble", I said. But from the other end, "His caste is reason enough to kill him". I fell into thought—anxious, fearful thoughts gathering all around. I did not know when Uma had hung up.

I heard a noise and started. It was Rajan in the kitchen. He came into the sitting room with his coffee and settled on the sofa. I thought he hadn't noticed me, but he spoke suddenly. "Hasn't the newspaper come yet?" I shook my head in negation. He went back to his coffee. Wasn't he even curious about why I was sitting at home and not at work? I wondered how long it had been since we spoke to each other about anything other than the groceries. He switched on the TV, and watched the news. I watched too, expectantly. The headlines flashed, and nothing about our riots. But much later in the regional news segment, there was a two-minute report on it. I looked at Rajan as he watched the report. The muscles in his face stiffened a little, but he remained expressionless. He let out a little grunt on hearing that the offices were closed for the day. But otherwise, nothing. After the news, he went back to bed.

He behaved as though I did not exist. But he had not always been like this. Rajan and I had gone to the same college. He fell in love with me. I was touched by his child-like trust and devotion. He asked me to marry him and I agreed, but I suggested that we wait till we found ourselves a job each. Everything was

fine. I kept dreaming of "happily ever afters.". But hardly a week after his proposal, he started acting strangely. He seemed distracted when he was with me. He sometimes lied about having classes, when I asked him to come out with me. At first, I thought that he probably needed some space just then, and that he would soon be all right. But even after graduating from college and finding a job, he still seemed distant and vague. I had to keep asking him about the wedding. It took him quite a while to make up his mind. But once he did that, everything happened very fast. Soon, we were disowned by our families, married and living in another district. Our parents must have cared for us even then, for they kept the news from relatives as long as possible—time enough for us to flee the town.. If not, there would've been a huge quarrel, maybe even a riot. They could not do much once we moved out of the district, or so we thought. But with each day we spent together, Raj seemed more distant and I seemed to grow more invisible. He never got angry with me or spoke harshly, but his unreadable silences tormented me. What was wrong?

What was wrong? The question plagued me more that morning as never before. But I could only answer myself with a sigh. I was now afraid of the words beyond the silences. Maybe the silences are much better. I decided to do some housework. Maybe wash clothes. There were a few dirty clothes, mostly Raj's, lying about in the bedroom. I went inside to fetch them. Softly, soundlessly, Raj must be asleep. But he was at his desk reading a letter. No, he wasn't reading it, he was rather staring at it, blankly. Once again, unreadable. When he became aware of my presence, he quickly

pushed the letter aside and pretended to read something else. I moved away, pressing my lips tightly together, lest the questions welling up in me spill out. In the next hour, I found him with the letter twice, when he thought I was not looking.

Something seemed to trouble him. I longed to ask him what it was, to hold him, to tell him it would be all right. But whenever I tried to reach out to him, he kept shrinking away. That evening, he grew even more restless. I heard him pacing up and down the house and bumping into things. Suddenly, he called from the doorway— "I'm going outside." Before I could reach the front door, he was on the street. I tried to resume my work, but I could do nothing. I began quivering with agitation. What's wrong? What's wrong? Now the question kept ringing inside my head, louder than any telephone bell. Then in a flash, I thought of the letter. Maybe it'd help me read meanings into his moods.

I went stealthily to his desk. A criminal in my own house. The letter was not where I last saw it. But I found it hidden deep under his colossal pile of files. I picked it up, my hand heavy with guilt. A burglar, trying to steal the secrets of my husband's heart. Guilt was slowing me down. But I opened it, and read. The letter was unmistakably in Raj's handwriting, and it was addressed to his father.

As I read on, I realized that these were the words that I had feared would lie beyond the silences. Now, here they were, down in paper, in my husband's clear and bold script. Here, the facts I had failed to see were staring right up at me. (Raj's handwriting, like his face, is expressionless). Many past scenes flashed in my mind as I read the letter. I had

thought of them before. But then, it had all been vague, like watching a movie in a strange language. But now, I had Rajan's words like subtitles to help me.

In the letter, Rajan begged his father to forgive him, with a humility that I never thought he was capable of. He wrote that he had made a mistake. He regretted it, but could do nothing about it. He was sorry for the disgrace he had caused the family by marrying a Dalit (yes, I'm a Dalit, an untouchable). He wrote that he had not known that I was a Dalit when he had proposed to me. (He had mistaken me for a Nadar). Otherwise, he would never have approached me. Only a week later did he find out who I was (the untouchable). But then it was too late. Tongues began wagging. He himself had heard someone call me names because I went out with him. He wanted to call off the wedding, but he was bound to me by his sense of duty and honour. "How can a Thevar go back on his word? Didn't you teach me that?" he questioned his father. I know you also told me that nay self-respecting Thevar would stay away from a Dalit. But...but...his words faltered...he had fallen in love with me long before he came to know of my caste. He loved me enough to defile himself by marrying me. He wrote that he did not wish to return and contaminate his ancestral home. (Yes, contaminated by the untouchable).

Then the words became blurred because of small splashed of water like fallen tears. I read no more of the heroic account of self-righteous decisions. I thought of him, mortally pained, shrinking with disgust every time he touched me, touched the untouchable. Feeling defiled while making love to me, solemnly, duty-bound, with a sense of righteousness. But

he had compensated by not letting me touch him mentally or spiritually. He had cleaned his defiled soul of the grime of my love with a sense of justice.

I kept staring at the letter just as he had done. (Perhaps unsure whether he should post it or not) It was dark now, and I hadn't switched on the lights. I stood there in the private darkness of my home, feeling like an untouchable for the first time in my life, marked out by the only man who had ever touched my heart.

Just then, I heard as if from a great distance, the door open. Raj rushed in and locked the door. I heard him panting noisily as if he had been running at great speed. But I could not notice these things just then. He collapsed into a chair next to me, and looked up. He saw the letter in my hand. I did not see his face then. I just left the letter on his desk and went to the kitchen to do my work, wifely duties. He came up behind me. He had called my name after a long time. "They are after me— the Dalits. They spotted me out at the tea stall. I didn't think they'd know. They abused me for..." Silently, I waited for the stranded sentence to move on. But he said, "They'll be here soon." Silence gripped me once again. "For God's sake, say something!" He was getting louder.

I just went on cleaning the dirty vessels. Scrub, scrub, scrub till they are squeaky clean. "We must buy Pril next time. They say it cleans better than Vim. It's even supposed to kill bacteria." But then some things never get cleaner. "God damn it!" he swore and kicked the kitchen door. I hear him lock the bedroom door and call the police. I go on—scrub, scrub, scrub till they're squeaky clean.

In a few minutes, there were loud thuds at my front door. They were calling out for him. I opened the window next to my front door. They saw me and yelled out louder. I spoke up loudly, boldly. "Iyah, please listen to me. I'm a Dalit. Why would you want to kill your own people?" "Oh, we know all about you", someone spoke. "Ask that bastard of a Thevar, Rajan to come out. We have a score to settle." This time, I drained of all feelings, tried feebly to make an emotional appeal. "If you lay your hands on my husband, I'll kill myself. Will you let that happen to any of your daughters?" "If I had a daughter who ran away with a Thevar, I would kill her with my own hands."—The slurred speech of an old man, his tongue thickened with arrack. "Enough, now send him out, you run-away whore. We'll show him who's Raja here," another shouted.

Now I saw a police van stop at the roadside. Uniformed men rushed out. Evidently, someone had answered Rajan's call. I watched as the five drunk men were lathi charged, kicked, beaten, and bundled into the police van, bleeding and cursing alike, profusely.

I turned around and found Rajan standing close to me. "It's safe now," he said lamely. Silences had stunted him too. He had the letter in his hand. I tried to move away, but he wouldn't let me. I didn't see his face as he tore the letter and let the bits fly all over. I quickly went in, brought out the broom and swept away the mess made by the torn letter. Rajan watched me without a word.

When I looked up, I saw that his face wore an expression of pain and regret. In all this time, he had never once let emotions contort the muscles of his face, even to the slightest degree. His face looked ugly and creased as he tried to express his emotions for the first time. Suddenly, I was exultant. Rajan the unreadable had suddenly become exposed, vulnerable, readable.

There was silence once again. The silent exhilaration of discovery. Truth is not very complicated after all. There were no questions...no answers...no voices in the head...just silence. The pain would come later with the words, the reasons, and the meanings. But for now, the silence, and nothing beyond.



Passion - how far does it go into us? Perhaps as far as a footstep on the beach sands. It would seem frivolous to compare passion to footsteps on the beach, but perhaps it is passion itself that is capable of making such a comparison; a deep passion for life, for living. Footsteps, something that we never realise we are leaving behind, something that is in contact with the living, throbbing, breathing space of the earth, something that is of the nature of a journey, an association, a breath. Footsteps on the beach are very special - the moment your feet touch the sands, you are in touch with an elemental force of life, with its love for travel, for conversation and relationship. Water, wind, earth, sky and fire...everything is in touch with you and you in touch with everything. It is one of the most beautiful conversations that awaken the senses to a totally new world, to the passion for life and to watch the footstep reintegrate into the energy of the universe, is perhaps the magic of life. Passion is just that one intense moment when we are with ourselves watching our relationship with the uni-verse, one eternal song. And it is not just the sea, but the very space that extends from within ourselves to the vacant spaces of the earth that perhaps keeps us in a passionate throbbing, vital movement of life. Perhaps this very space of reading, the space between your mind and mine, between my worlds and your associations is that passion for relationship, for sharing. If I were to tell you...

Perhaps it was this tree, or perhaps the deep silence of the earth. There were small ripples forever arising and merging into that pond. The fields stretched far beyond leaving the open skies to fill them. The light was strange, perhaps liquefying itself. The roots of

the tree moved out spreading and the trunk reflected itself among the little leaves. It was an ancient neem intertwined with the peepal and the fluttering leaves of the peepal merged with the silence. The sudden twittering and chirruping of birds and their unexpected moments of flight across the sky and their light landing on the pond were throbs of this great movement and yet they disturbed not the silence of this place.

To sit on this beautiful tree and play with the light and dancing shadows, to listen as part of it to the rustles and the abstracted music of the earth and the human breath.

What is the movement of the love here and what is it in the crowded bustle of the city? Here, where you can pause, watch, wonder and feel at one with the tremendous intensity of the earth. Here the sensuality lies in this extreme quiet and the rhythmic waves of the wind, the moving waters, the deep shadows. Ah! What wonder! Where on this beautiful earth will you find a place bestowed with this strangeness, this quiet, this abstraction?

Yet there is a joyous celebration that lives as part of the very quietness and is not a contrast.

...you would know that we were conversing about all this while and that we were partaking of the waters of life, the passion we have for meeting a friend, a journeyman, a wanderer and ourselves. It would be a moment of great sharing between us because what you were reading is what I watched and what I planned was the movement of passions rising and flowing through me, unexpected, unplanned, a heightened sensitivity to life and to living.

Feather and Leaf

Priyanka Joseph
I BA English

The smell is what you will always remember. The heavy-scented incense sticks, the agarbati, which always burnt at times of death. I can almost see those grey soldiers from the wars this country always had *will always have, forever, amen? One despairing, begs to differ* leaving their mud selves, the funeral smoke their last memory.... yes, always the incense. I'm trying to not breathe in the fumes; you learn to hate it, because you only see those slow curling black sticks when there is wailing, and crying, and terrible hard, harsh music: music to keep the unrelenting evil spirits away- *how do we know they're evil? Floating, flying, inquisitive...not evil, surely-* and death. Always death.

I walked out quickly, the soles of my feet being brushed by the light, silken folds of my sari *used to like that feeling*. The same shame-faced, unnatural smile on all the faces I pass, all saying the same thing. It's supposed to be one of sympathy, accompanied by polite noises and *that smell. Always that smell. Why?* "Your mother was a beautiful person, so cheerful, so patient with the pain, right till the end." *Mother. Don't you dare talk about her. You weren't her daughter.* I smile, painfully: it's not that difficult to do now. I got out finally though, and stood on the cold stone porch, staring into the neem tree in front of me, letting the tiny puffs of wind blow strands of my hair across my face- *so, green is a calming colour...hmm* Why do they have to say anything? Funerals should be made of silence. In this, my land, my country *my home? No.*

Not that... funerals are about noise and smell: agarbati and jasmine, and then the pipes and drums. But how can they be so sure the noise keeps the spirits away? Maybe the spirits like the noise. At least, that would explain why my old grandaunt keeps shuffling around the house muttering something about seven years of bad luck. I smiled at that, feeling my eyebrows ease out of a tight frown. Others would die. My grandaunt was immortal. At the end of days, when people of all religions would be praying or cursing, with fire and earthquakes everywhere, she would be standing over a pot of her simmering rasam, stirring and yelling at everyone around, just the way she yelled at all her children and their children's children, to keep away, at least till lunch was done. They live forever, old Indian women. They're stronger than rock...in fact, they are rock. *I've been broken too many times. Hardness must break sometime, and then what? pick up the pieces, or try living with the confused, doubting human softness underneath?* But sometimes they die. My mother is dead.

Her last memory, of fire and agarbati. I looked up, squinting in the sunlight. Something had fluttered in the tree in front of me. A crow...no. It was a raven. My sarees' folds got caught in the rough coir mat on the floor. I stooped to untangle it. *Deja vu. Grandfather. Ravens flying, circling, cawing... the old man is dead.*

I remembered now. 15 years ago, when I was a girl in my father's house. My silken skirt,

my pavadai, had got stuck in the door. As I had tugged to loosen it, the cawing had started. Shrieking, talking, laughing, crying in hoarse, hard voices. I had been scared. But our old man servant had told me it was just my ancestors come back as ravens to take my grandfather's spirit with them to the spirit world. "Is appupa with them?". "Yes, now he is". I had run out under that black circling cloud, calling out, "come back, come back appupa.... come back". The old man carried me back into the house, while I struggled to get free. I had heard appupa call back to me. My cries faded into the house, faded into the smell of incense, while the ravens outside shrieked and laughed and cried...maybe the old man said goodbye then. But I couldn't hear him.

A Raven. The natives of this place *why can't I say my people?* Fear them, and keep away from the black birds. Anything black in this country is associated with death. But those glossy, charcoal black feathers, and shining eyes. Cruel maybe, but evil? I never thought so anyway. *Thought. Hugin, Odin's raven...Hugin, who brought thought, ideas to men whom Odin blessed.* Mythology was all people had these days to remind them of who they were: people with a past, people of an ancient land. Mythology and traditions. The black smoke, the noise, the rituals of ghee and flowers. It gave them an identity. *What did it give me? A need to look beyond this life, this world.* So I collected ideas, and stories of the places I travelled, things I saw. *Like mother used to collect shells whenever the family visited the beach.* And I wrote the things I heard and saw. Maybe, somewhere in all of this writing, I can find that one thought-

a singularity- that I'm looking for, which will finally get rid of that pain I feel at night, when I lie awake. People call it fear or stress. *Maybe it's an evil spirit. Maybe it's grandfather. That bird is looking at me, I can feel it.*

The woman sat down suddenly on the stone, cooled now by the monsoon wind now rushing by in cold streams of wet air. Voices from inside shouted, laughed and chatted, while the odour of just-steamed white rice and fried mango cooked in a tantalizing curry of coconut, chilli and tamarind^ wafted out to the courtyard outside. Funerals, like weddings are social events: after the dead are sent on their way, the living have to be fed. People do get hungry, and grief cannot stop life, however heavy its hold. The girl still sat there, even as the clouds cast heavy shadows over the waiting, heated earth, staring at the raven in the neem tree.

Mmm... maang kutan. Smells just like mum's. She never forgot her recipes, and they always came out perfect. I could never remember them. Bad memory, she always said with a smile. Who needs memories to think about, when you can have ideas and words and music and thought....Munin, Odin's raven for memory. Interesting people, the Vikings. Warriors. They would die rather than show pain...

It's always interesting to note how people all over the world differ in the tiniest of ideas and beliefs. Natives of India fear the big black birds, but the Vikings respected and honoured them. The birds stood for victory and inspiration. In India? Souls of the dead....spectators, sometimes messengers. *So maybe this is mother come to tell me*

something. Maybe goodbye. Will she stay? When we had done the ceremonious feeding of the crows in my father's house to satisfy the spirits of our ancestors, everyone had noticed the one raven that had just sat and watched the others finish the boiled rice, and had muttered secret prayers. Quirky superstition. *I had known it was appupa and of course he wouldn't eat. When did my grandfather ever eat a meal without a generous sprinkling of salt on his rice? But nobody listened.*

My memory is quite bad, you know. People I met at weddings, and cousins I am supposed to have have faces which I can never recall, and their relationships to me are even more blurred in my head. Even at Grandfather's funeral, when my mother had tried introducing me to out-of-town relatives, I remember (wonder of wonders) that all I kept asking her constantly was, "but where did appupa go?" I got an angry answer. *And then my mother's racking sobs, me tasting her salty tears on my face as she had held me close. Maybe she had never wanted to let go. Well, I can. Grieving is such a waste of strength. Mum's gone, but everybody goes someday. I'm not showing any pain. I have no tears. I can be rational about this..*

But I do remember certain things. The way my grandfather would fall asleep, the sound of his snores gently crashing through the stillness of his room. The way my mother would stand damp and dishevelled, concentrating while stirring a curry or two...concentrating while reading my first attempts at poetry. You see, there was a Dylan Thomas phase, and that coupled with my love for Khalil Gibran *why not? one only loves life,*

and colour and beauty that much when one is fourteen set me off on some rather startling imagery. But mother was always patient- Always a good cook. And a good mother. What was I then? Mum always called me her "kuruvi" or sparrow. But I never could agree. What sparrow could sit awake through midnight and till dawn on the lonely terrace of our house, wondering at the stars and the pyramids *and the Vikings. Warriors, forever fighting, sailing, dying.* I love the night. It's quiet and there's a warm darkness, like the many evenings we spent in silence- the family and me watching the candles burn lower whenever the electricity failed. Silent living, appupa called it. You don't get that much these days, simply because the electricity fails rarely now. *GE, we bring good things to life.* Yes, I loved the darkness. I could be a night bird then, smoothly winging across a purple night sky, a shadow against the stars. Maybe a raven...

That raven- It must be mother. Why else would it sit here so long? But what does it mean? If you've come as a messenger, then tell me what I must understand. .

Mother always loved the stories I told her about my travels. She listened to them with as much quiet attention as she gave the twenty-three minute conversation I had with her long distance, three years ago when I told her that my husband and I were going to be divorced. I had not cried then, but later...it wasn't her sympathy but her strength, which had unmanned me *perhaps unwomanned? connotations in the English language need work.* She had told me to never forget that the neem tree stands, whether scorched by lightning or aged by time. Even after its time of waking life, till its whole existence is nothing

more than a memory of sunrises, sunsets and people who have come, been refreshed by its shade, and left, never to be seen again. Everything comes and goes, but the tree stands. Till God wills it to fall. But she was now gone.

The old watchman swivelled towards the sound of the sob he heard issuing from the woman. So she was finally crying. But he looked up immediately, as a drop fell on his head, then another and another. The monsoon had begun. He sighed happily, knowing he would get his hot meal now, and turned to look at the woman. His eyes slowly widened as he looked hurriedly towards the door. For there she stood, laughing at a big black wet crow in the neem tree, as the rain fell around her,

merging with the salt tears running off her nose and chin.

I couldn't help myself. I realise now, it could only happen this way. Mum always had a sense of humour. The raven was still there. It hadn't flown away. And you couldn't smell the incense anymore, in all this glorious wet. *I cannot reflect the Icelandic frozen whiteness some Olaf or Ragnarsson could. I am a leaf of a tree that has stood long ages, a leaf that dances in the wind, that burns in the sun then falls to earth dry, to break and die. Then to be reborn, and fly in the watches of the night into a final unending light, where dark wings are not feared, but all fly.* The rain drenched me, and the street was empty, but the raven was still there.

Winner of III Place in Class A in the Commonwealth Essay Competition organised by the Royal Commonwealth Society, London. This entry was one of 5000 sent in from 1200 institutions around the world.



Goodbye to Arms

Bharati Naik
I M.Sc. IT

The result of a fight between the clouds and the sun as they claim attention of the expanse of blue is something as enchanting and rare as the rainbow. The sun blazes its heat. The clouds precipitate rain. What happens next is probably one of nature's best creations. A true masterpiece. In one careful stroke of seven colours, God mediates between the sun and the rain. Borne of water and heat, the rainbow calls for attention, wonder and sublime serenity.

A moment lost in time, I try and imagine something as beautiful as the rainbow during war. War. The word expands in my mind, threatening to entangle and engulf everything that comes its way. War, of countries, of human beings, of religion, of sect and so on and so forth. I try to picture...and so often do I ask myself, 'Is it possible?' Something like celebration with men hugging each other, enough food, water and a smile of tranquility that is radiated. On the whole, a celebration of humanity, a bond of understanding. Do I dismiss this as an absurd thought typical to a child's mind?

The reality of war is quite sad; the result, drastic; and the call for peace, louder than ever before. Hunger, blood, bones, death...could we be more callous even if we tried hard? How strange that we turn against our own kind in such an inexplicable way. What if we had conquered the land! What if we had killed the men! Don't we all know and understand that it's the law of Nature, that one day, all of friends and enemies will return

back to the soil from where we emerged? These lines that I had once read are so true:

Like waves beating against the shingle
Go back and in the ocean mingle
So from God come all things under the sun
And to God return when their race is done."

Our moments of glory or defeat shall die with us or remain lifeless in the pages of history. I salute Thomas Gray for understanding and having written 'Paths of glory lead but to the grave.' Maybe he had an insight which all of us have somewhere, somehow lost.

Today when war clouds loom large and loud in the world, threatening to disturb once again, the strata of the human mind, I cannot help but remember the beautiful 'rainbow' thought that had once come to my mind and continues to linger in the shadow. Even through my imagination, I realize that it is not as simple as it may sound. Abstract ideas often soothe an aching, restive mind, and I have many times sought refuge in the same.

The phenomenon of war requires digging into the human mind, which in itself is enigmatic. I believe we have all evolved and continue to evolve as complex human beings. This complexity of the human psyche is such that it separates nations, people, religions, languages, and the like, consciously or unconsciously. There is an increasing state of unrest that is slowly emerging. The different forces at work behind the human mind seem to be creating problems not foreseen or forethought. The issue of war is deeper than

just a melee involving two parties. It is rather confusing at times; countries and people who want to showcase strength also yearn for peace. But it is this confusion that I am glad of. It somehow restores faith that peace shall rein but at what cost, I am not really sure. Instead of connecting, we seem to be dividing. This divide comes of the wall we build among ourselves. These walls further extend to the various spheres of life creating a rigid a mindset. A mindset which we may disdain but find difficult to shrug off.

I have often thought over Tagore's line - 'Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls.' What walls was Tagore talking about? Where do these walls come from? Why do we need walls? As I ponder further over these lines, I feel myself delve deeper into the human psyche. Walls have always been in existence. What I am scared of is that they seem to be gaining momentum with time. Tagore on a broader perspective wrote about the world. But the 'wall' issue is relevant even at a more basic level, like when Robert Frost wrote in his poem ' Mending Wall':

'Before I build a wall, I'd ask to know what I am walling in or walling out.'

The neighbours in Frost's poem did not go to war, but the wall sure did make one feel safe from the other.

If we can defend countries in the name of patriotism, why can't we defend humanity in the name of humanism? How can we know, yet not practice that the earth is not ours to take, people are not ours to kill, resources are not ours to plunder and that destruction can only be detrimental? War is an outdated, narrow-minded concept, that needs to die an immediate death, most of all, in our minds.

The poet Jose Garcia Villa wrote:

God said, I made man out of clay

But so bright he, he spun himself to brightest day.

I leave it to the reader to interpret these lines....

It is complexity that is leading us to our dooms day. Let us continue as God made us, simple.

Come join hands together, and bid farewell to arms and complexity.

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep
But I have promises to keep
And miles to go before I sleep
And miles to go before I sleep.*

- Robert Frost, 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening'

They were a strange people living all by themselves in the forest and their houses were made of trees and plants, and it was amidst such growing architecture that they had their looms and threads. What they wove was strange and brilliant and their weaving was an art unknown to the world. The cloth they wove had the flow of life itself, and many gazed at it as if forever. But what they wove was only a gift. It was never sold in the market. It was never priced; never hiked. Many were afraid to receive it as a gift because they were afraid it was magic or perhaps the work of gods. They were afraid that they could not do anything wrong because it would be a witness. Such was the power and mystery of the woven material. But there were a few who took it with great joy and rebuilt their homes in order to blend their living with that extra quality which the cloth seemed to have.

There was one man who was silent and walked through the streets untouched by their piety and their fears. He often used to pause when he saw one of the woven clothes and it was as if he had got reconnected with some unknown past. It was strange, but the gifts never found a way to him. He sometimes wondered if he did not deserve it...

One day as he walked by the river, he saw a little boy, weaving unto himself. It was a strange sight, for what the boy wove seemed to emerge from the light of the flowing waters. His hands moved in a strange way as one would move in the womb. The man watched him intently and followed him into the forest...and he saw the weavers at work, each of them with an exquisite thread. They wove immensely beautiful patterns that one could not even conceive of. Then slowly his eyes moved, and he saw near each of them one little secret of

nature. Near one of them was a spider, and in the pattern he wove, there indeed was the living quality of a spider. Near another was a leaf, and indeed he found on the woven cloth, a little droplet shimmering in the light. As he stood watching, moved by what he was seeing, a voice hailed him, "How long you have taken, son. Come join us, the waiting has been long and this day is special." The man walked forward and with each step, he understood a facet of his life. He remembered all his struggles, sorrows, pain...and with each, they had fallen off.

No memory remained and he embraced with love the old man who had spoken. The moment was intense, and the old man gave him the threads to weave.

"To weave thread is to weave out of nothingness, out of joy and out of oneness; to weave thread is to weave oneself with the world; to weave thread is to weave understanding with love; to weave thread is to weave the inner and the outer; to weave thread is a journey of great affection. To weave is that moment of creative thrust when you keep aside your weaving and find that all the distances between the inner and the outer have vanished. A strange immensity moves over your being and it is that very immensity that you weave."

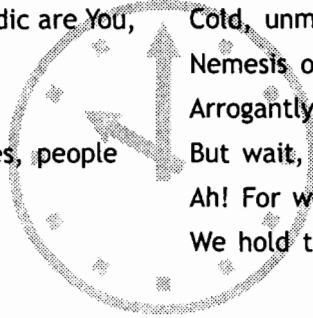
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There was a young boy with wonder in his eyes and joy in his hands and he had left a world behind him. There was no regret, no shame, no fear and the boy held the threads with great care and affection. He sat by the stream weaving unto himself. The man woke up. He walked into a city, as one would move in the womb.

The Realm of the Temporal

Archana Baliga
I BA English

Transitional, restless, almost nomadic are You,
Watching Your hands we move,
You witness
Fall of civilizations, cultures, races, people
Stand testimony,
To the fall of the disorganized
Stand impassive, a dictator,



Cold, unmoving, cruel
Nemesis of mortal labourers
Arrogantly smiling at our incompetence,
But wait, why have You stopped?
Ah! For we hold the reason for Your tyranny,
We hold the batteries controlling Time.

Unlified

Veena Kuruvilla
III B.Com.

boarded a train yesterday
second leg of journey
hunt for my seat
took a lil while
for a stranger sat
resting his behind, there
in place of mine
an enquiry only generated
blank stares my way
my gesticulations he followed
moving inwards a lil
occupation of resultant space
for me to decide
after placing my back-pack
i eased into space

soon i smelt it
earthy sweat of his
and then i noticed
his clothes, shabby, torn
his appearance, dishevelled, grubby
i held my divide
too tight, too close
and then it pricked
the realisation of odour
i can never disguise
the realisation of dirt
i can't rid off
for its too deep
this comfortable divide

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The Will of Simon

My last Will and Testament:
Geez, that's a good opening.
A proper gentleman's words-
(Am I the proper gentleman?)
"Being in a sound state of mind"
I sit, slow sun glow and dust
Through the window
Burn my eyes, till 'will' and 'mind' like spiders
Run n' scatter.
The words are good and big:
Testament. My Testament. Simon's last
Testament
To the life he's lived.
I don't got much, but hey-
Pauli'll get the Chevy he wanted,
And there's the insurance for Marge.

Priyanka Joseph
I BA English

Testament. New? Old?
I could die, this paper would stay.
New paper, crisp, proper gentleman's paper.
Paper the lawyer-woman gave me.
Nah, it's not new. I'll lay bricks till
My back breaks
And
I die. Sleep in a hole.
My last Will? Hell no, a man's will
Is all he gots for himself.
Will makes him walk straight
Talk straight
Die straight
Tho' they kick you closer to the hole everyday.
I need my sleep.
Trains go by, rocking like my mother's arms.
Here's my Testament, Ma. Simon lived.

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Beyond the Territory

Laugh, make merry, and pretend
Conclude, converse, and love
Speak of the spiral and walk in the circle
But just fix the territory.

K. Srisrividhiya
II MA Fine Arts

Life is real beyond the territory
And life is serious fact
And life is exotic laughter
But that's beyond the territory.

At Paro's Gates

Vandana Krishnan
II BA English

He lies on the scarlet earth
Dusty hair and glazed eyes
He sees in a blur
A white-saree-clad figure
With silken yards of an ever-growing pallu
And hair streaming behind her,
Running towards him.
He murmurs her name
His ears echoing with her cries

But the merciless gates close
She falls against them
Letting out a merciless cry.
His parched lips round to complete her name
His last inhalation is her cry.
Devdas drifts into eternal sleep
As he promised
At Paro's gates.

All I Wanted Was a Moment of Silence

Vaishnavi R.
I BA English

The noise, the pain had reached the horizon,
That horizon was my destiny once.
Peace, harmony and silence were my loved
companions,
Did I ask for the unreachable?
Did I want something that never belonged to
me?
No, it is said to be universal, one thing nobody
fights over,
I would fight and scream out louder,
For what is silence? I always wonder.
In that turmoil and high waves, I tried to sweep
everything away,
I was the God of myself, and wanted the
perfect kingdom that all dreamt of,
Though my own creation was stained by all,
I stood there alone to make the last call,
The noise, restlessness, within me recall,
I want to change nothing but all.

I was once told to reach for perfection and I
would land in excellence
Excellence being the ultimate pretence,
And hypocrisy is just on other instance.
I wanted to be the wave and wash away this
prudence,
For all I wanted was just a little silence.
Was it too much to ask?
Yes, or else nobody would turn to me with a
mask,
The mask of fear and worry,
That hid all but me.
I think I am the only one that can't see,
That the fault lies within me.
I was being a pretence myself, asking for
something like silence..
Nothing like that ever exists.
You ask for it, you are foolish,
No questions, no answers,
Just that my idea, dream were the passers,
And all I wanted was a moment of silence!

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Haiku

Sounds of whispering
Thinking minds busy at work
A haiku is born.

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Tête à tête with Mom

One day as we sat down to tea
My mother suddenly turned to me
'Dear', she began, her tone filled with doubt
and already I knew what it was about.
'You're already 22" my mother said,
'And you must remember, you are soon to wed.
A nice handsome guy, I shall get for you,
but dear, you have to make some changes too.
Firstly, it's time you put down your books,
And give some consideration to your looks.
You're always so slovenly, always a mess
And by that my dear, no man is impressed.
How cluttered your things are, dumped on the
shelf,
However will you manage the house by
yourself?
In the kitchen, you're sloppy, and can make
only egg and bread
I shudder to think how the poor man will be
ill-fed!
Can't you be more like your cousin Prani?
She's pretty, neat and cooks chicken biryani!
You have to change dear, it's now or never,
Otherwise, you'll be in your mama's house
forever!'

*Bhavya Srinivasan
I BA Economics*

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Summer

Tongues swiping up drops
That slide down the wafer cones
As the sun shines on.

*Neetha Jayanth
I BA Economics*

*Poonam Mohan Ganglani
I BA English*

I heaved a heavy sigh, and put down my tea,
'Mama,' I began, 'I'm afraid I don't agree.
Whether it be a Sahil, a Siddharth or Dhiren,
He should know that beyond this face, I also
have a brain!
I myself don't want some macho man, whose
books are all dusty,
No narcissist idiot, whose GK's all rusty.
If you think my room's dirty and a horrible
visual
I'll clean it and change my ways, to become
a better individual
I'm untidy in the kitchen, no expert in action,
But I'll get better, not for a man, but for my
own satisfaction.
I know that Prani can cook, an expert with the
chopping knife
But mama, you tell me, is that the most
important thing in life?
I know what I want, and I'll find that man
For whom I don't have to change the very
person I am.
You laugh now, you think I'm dreaming, but
he's out there for me
I'll bring him home one day, just wait and
see!

My Tibetanness

Tenzin Dolkar
I BA History

Thirty-nine years in exile
Yet no nation supports us.
Not a single bloody nation!

We are refugees here.
People of a lost country.
Citizens to no nation.

Tibetans: the world's sympathy stock.
Serene masks and bubbly traditionalists;
One lakh and several thousand odd,
Nicely mixed, stepped
in various assimilating cultural hegemonies.

At every check post and office,
I am an "Indian-Tibetan,"

My registration certificate,
I renew every year, with a salaam
A foreigner born in India.

I am more of an Indian.
Except for my chink Tibetan face.
"Nepali?" "Thai?" "Japanese?"
"Chinese?" "Naga?" "Manipuri?"
But never the question - "Tibetan?"

I am a Tibetan.
But I am not from Tibet.
Never been there.
Yet I dream
Of dying there.

In dreams

Roopa Palanivel
III B.Com.

I often wander through my dreams
Like drift woods on the flowing streams.
'the twists and turns they take me through
A haze of white and tender blue.
The sounds so faint., I long to hear
The shadowy whispers so very near.
Faceless forms, like an unravelled mystery
Enshroud themselves and hide from me
And as I travel to and fro within this twisting
maze
I wonder if I'm forever lost in this endless
moving space

Suddenly, the stream it races
I see the changing of the faces
The sounds are loud and very clear
Awakening screams of ghostly fear.
Drift woods in the stream no longer flow
And so I sink to the world below.
And there I lie, my eyes open wide
My dreams forgotten in awakened mind
And when the mind it sleeps once more
And my thoughts are lost as before
Once again will I wander through my dreams
Like driftwood on the flowing streams

Unforgiven

And then all beauty was forgotten
As the world succumbed to an unconquerable
force;
The power of seven.

Greed is thy name.
Thy ravenous appetite is conferred to man,
And his desirous being is unending.
He looks to thine eyes
For a freedom he doesn't command
An impetus for his yearning.

Lust is thy name.
Thy covetous eye is bestowed upon man,
And makes him a salacious creature.
His burning eroticism,
His every sigh, a tool in thy hand,
Fabricated an undying fire.

Envy is thy name.
Thy invidious nature envenoms man's heart,
And his life becomes filled with iniquity.
Thy function was complete
When malice overcame his every part,
And took away his purity.
Wrath is thy name.
Thy presence in man's fiery soul
Has kindled even the faintest fire.

Innocence

Baby brown eyes
Feet untouched by earth,
Unblemished skin, unconscious laughter
Involuntary transparence
Minds unaware of time.

*Ketaki
I B.Com.*

Disabled in thy arms
By a fury he couldn't control,
Man lit his own pyre.

Gluttony is thy name.
Thy insatiable hunger makes a man crave
And with each mouthful, the world, he devours.
His appetite is weakening
For with every bite he becomes frail,
While the universe counts the lethal hours.

Pride is thy name.
The ego personified in humankind
Can destroy both man and beasts.
His self-righteousness and his narcissism
Play a sanctimonious game in his mind,
And thy powerful massacre is unleashed.

Sloth is thy name.
Thy inert movements in man's flesh
Kills the effervescence in his spirit.
Paralyzed by thy lassitude,
His numbness forces him to relinquish
His own life, the biggest sin he could ever
commit.

And thus the story goes and thus it ends,
Of how man's life began at one and ended at
seven.

*Vandana Krishnan
II BA Literature*

Experience like ink shot through crystallised
water
Like graffiti on a virgin white wall
Like scribbings on a wet-cemented platform
Something irretrievable
Innocence.

வாழ நினைத்தால் வாழலாம்

இறைவன் படைத்த

இனிய படைப்பு மனிதன்!

கடமையும் கம்பீரமும்

கால் முளைத்த இனிய சொத்து

மானுட வாழ்வில்!

மலர்கள் வண்ணங்களில்

வாழ்வது போல்

மானுடன் எண்ணங்களால்

வாழ்கிறான்!

முட்டி மோதி மனித

ஆற்றல்கள், முயற்சியில்

கட்டப்படுகிறது!

பொங்கும் புதுவெள்ளம் போல்!

மனித உள்ளங்கள்

செயல்படத் துணிந்து

விட்ட காலம் இது!

உயரங்களை நோக்கிச் சென்ற

மனிதர்கள் வாழ்வில் சந்தித்தது

துயரங்கள் மட்டுமே!

துன்பமான சூழ்நிலை

என்றும் வீண்போவதில்லை!

துணிந்தவனுக்குத்

துயரம் இல்லை!

சந்தேகப்பட்டவர்க்கு

சந்தோஷம் இல்லை!

வெள்ளை உள்ளம்

கொண்டவர்க்கு,

வாழ்வு கொண்டாட்டம் தான்!

காலம் கருத்தரித்து, வரும்!

காட்டாற்று வெள்ளத்தால்

உலகில் குளிர்ச்சி தான்!

உள்ளத்தில் எழுச்சியும் எழுத்தில் வளர்ச்சியும்

இருந்திட்டால்! வாழ்வு என்றும் உயர்ச்சியே!

பேராசிரியர். முனைவர். உலகநாயகி பழனி,
தமிழ்த்துறை



கனவு மெய்ப்படல் வேண்டும்

அனைத்துக் கல்லூரி மாணவர்களுக்காகத் தமிழ்த்துறை நடத்திய விடியல் 2002 என்ற கலை விழாவில் நடத்தப்பட்ட பேச்சுப்போட்டியில் நடுவராகப் பணியாற்றிய பேராசிரியர். டாக்டர். ருக்மணி ஸ்ரீதரன் மாணவர்களுக்காக ஆற்றிய எழுச்சி மிகு உரைச் சித்திரத்திலிருந்து ஒரு பகுதி.

ஒரு மனிதன் வாழ்க்கையில் கொண்டிருக்கும் பிடிப்பு அவனது உணர்ச்சிகளை ஊடுருவிக் கொண்டிருக்கும் எதிர்காலக் கனவுகளினால் தான் மெய்ப்பட வழிவகை தோன்றும். இந்த வண்ணக் கனவுகள் ஒவ்வொருவருக்கும் ஒரு குறிக்கோள் அல்லது இலட்சிய நோக்கு என்பதுடன் பின்னிப் பிணைந்திருக்க வேண்டும். குறிக்கோள் என்பது ஆசை மட்டும் அன்று. ஆசையை விட ஒரு படி மேலானதாகும். குறிக்கோள் இல்லாத வாழ்வு முகவரி இல்லாத கடிதம் என்பார். நீருக்குள் மூழ்குவான் வெளியே வர எவ்வாறு துடிக்கிறானோ அவ்வாறு நாமும் நம் குறிக்கோளை நிறைவேற்ற ஒவ்வொரு நிமிடமும் துடிப்போடு இருக்க வேண்டும். இதற்குத் தேவை முன்னேறும் மனம். ஏனெனில் வாழ்வின் இலட்சியத்தை உருவாக்குவது மனம். தேவையான துடிப்பையும் தூண்டுதலையும் தருவது மனம், ஆக, மனதை, தன் வயப்படுத்தினால் வாழ்க்கை வயப்படும். அதுவே சுயக்கட்டுப்பாடு. உங்கள் அனுமதி இல்லாமல் யாரும் உங்களை மாற்றி விட முடியாது. நீங்கள் கெட்டுப்போக முடியாது. இதற்கு ஒரு கதை இருக்கிறது.

ஒரு வண்ணத்துப்பூச்சியைப் பார்த்து, தட்டான் பூச்சி கேட்கிறது. நானும் உன்னைப் போல பூச்சி தானே? எனக்கு மாத்திரம் ஏன்? வண்ணச் சிறகுகள் இல்லை. காரணம் சிறகடித்துப் பறக்கும் வண்ணத்துப்பூச்சியின் அழகு ஊட்டிய மயக்கமும், அதன் அழகிய சிறகுகள் தனக்கு இல்லையே என்ற ஏக்கமும் ஆதங்கமும் தான் இத்தகைய கேள்வியைக் கேட்கத் தூண்டியது. அதற்கு அந்த வண்ணத்துப்பூச்சி, புன்னகை செய்த வாறே பதில் தருகிறது. நான் என்னைக் கூட்டுப் புழுவாகக்

குறுக்கி, எனக்குள்ளேயே சுயக் கட்டுப்பாட்டுடன் பல நாட்கள் உணவின்றி எதிர் காலக் கனவு கண்டு கொண்டிருந்தேன். அதனால் தான் எனக்கு வண்ணச் சிறகு முளைத்தது. எத்தனை உண்மையான வார்த்தை, சுயக்கட்டுப்பாட்டுக்கு இதை விட நல்ல உதாரணம் இல்லை.

கற்பனைக் கோட்டைகள் கவிஞர்களுக்கும், எழுத்தாளர்களுக்கும் சொந்தமானவை. சாதனையாளர்களுக்கு உரிய கோட்டை செயல்திட்டம். சாதனை என்பது குறிப்பாத்து எறியப்படுகிற கல், தேர்வு செய்கிற மரத்தின் கனிதான் உங்களது குறிக்கோள். சரியான இலக்கில் எறியப்படுகிற சிந்தனை தான் திட்ட மிடல். இவ்வாறு சுயக்கட்டுப்பாட்டுடனும், நல்ல செயல் திட்டத்துடனும் செயல்படும் பொழுது தவிர்க்க வேண்டியவை சினம், பொறாமை, அச்சம், தாழ்வு மனப்பான்மை. மேற்கொள்ள வேண்டியவை தன்னம்பிக்கை, விடாமுயற்சி.

உங்கள் கனவுகள் மெய்ப்பட நீங்கள் நல்ல குறிக்கோளை நோக்கி, எண்ணத்தில் உறுதி, அஞ்சாத மனம், இடைவிடாத உழைப்பு, ஆகியவற்றை மனத்தில் கொண்டால் உங்கள் கனவு மெய்ப்படும். உங்கள் கனவுகள் மெய்ப்பட எனது மனமாந்த வாழ்த்துக்கள்

பேராசிரியர். முனைவர். ருக்மணி ஸ்ரீதரன்,
கணிதத்துறை



‘மனிதப் பிறவியின்’ அர்த்தம்!

இறைவனின் வாடா மலரே!
மனிதரின் குணமலரே!
பிரான்ஸ் நாட்டுக் குடிமகனே!
இந்தியாவின் சேவைச் சுடரே!
18 - ஆம் நூற்றாண்டின் பிறப்பு மலரே!
21 - ஆம் நூற்றாண்டின் சிறப்பு மலரே!
'ஹெலன்மேரி பிலிப்பைனாகிய' நீர்
இறைவன் அருளிய
'பாடுகளின் மேரி' என்ற

பெயரைப் பெற்றீரே!
'புனித பிரான்சிஸ் அசிசியைப்' போன்று
உலகச் செல்வத்தை வெறுத்து
உன்னதச் செல்வத்தை நாடினீரே!
உடல் நோய் வருத்திடினும்
உள்ள உறுதி குன்றாதவரே!
தாயன்பு நிறைந்த தாயே!
தூய ஆவியின் ஆலயமே!
சீனாவின் வேதசாட்சிகளாம்
ஏழு கன்னியரின் தியாகத்தை
நீர் உலகிற்கு உரைக்க
அவர்களும்
புனிதர் பேறு பெற்றனரே!
இந்தியாவின் தூத்துக்குடிக்கு
இறைத் தூதாக வந்து
முதல் வார்த்தைப் பாட்டிலே
முதன்மைப் பதவியைப் பெற்றீரே!
அன்பை வாழ்வின்
அடித்தளம் ஆக்கினீர்!
உண்மையும் அறமும்
உள்ள உறுதியும் ஓயா உழைப்பும்
தீராக்கியாகமும் திண்ணமும்
'மரியாளின் பிரான்சிஸ்கன் மறை பரப்புச் சபையை'
இன்றளவு
78-தேசம் சார்ந்த
7712 கன்னியர்களால்
76- நாடுகளில்
ஏற்றமுறச் செய்தனவே!
உம்மால் புதுமைகள் நிகழ
நீரும் அக்டோபர் 20, 2002 - இல்
முத்திப் பேறு பெற்றீர்!
மனிதப் பிறவிக்கும்
ஓர் அர்த்தம் உண்டென்றால்
உம்மால் மட்டுமே
அர்த்தமும் அர்த்தமுள்ளதாகும்!
வாழ்க நீர்!
வளர்க் நின்
சபையின் தொண்டு!

பேராசிரியர். முனைவர். ஆல்ஸ் ஜோசப்,
தமிழ்த்துறை



வளமான பெண்மைக்கு வித்து

வாழ்க்கையில் மேம்படவே கல்வியை நீ தேடு!
வளமான மகிழ்வுக்குப் பண்பாட்டை நாடு!
தாழ்வில்லா மனத்தோடு சுறுசுறுப்பாய் ஒடு!
தரமான எண்ணத்தால் பீடு நடைபோடு!
எண்ணம் சொல் செயலினிலே இருக்க

வேண்டும் செம்மை!
எழிலான வளர்ச்சிக்கு அதுவேண்டும் உண்மை!
மண்ணில் நீர் படைக்க வேண்டும்
அறிவியலின் புதுமை!
மாணவிகள் கையில் தான் இருக்கிறது வலிமை!

உறுதியான கொள்கையைக் கடைபிடிக்க
வேண்டும்
ஊக்கமோடு ஆக்கமாக செயல்படவும் வேண்டும்!
பொறுமையாய் முடிவெடுத்து வெற்றிகாண
வேண்டும்!
பெயர்சொல்லும் பெண்ணாக வாழ்ந்திடவும்
வேண்டும்!

கல்லூரிப் பருவம்தான் உங்களுக்கு வித்து
கல்வியோடு சேர்த்திடுவீர் ஒழுக்கமெனும் சத்து!
நல்லோர்கள் நல்லுரையை மனத்தினிலே
சேர்த்து!
நல்லொழுக்கப்பண்பாடே நிலைத்திருக்கும்
சொத்து.
பேராசிரியர் முனைவர். விஜயலக்ஷ்மி இராமசாமி
தமிழ்த்துறை

இறைவன்

எண்ணுதற்கு ஏற்றவனே - என்
எண்ணங்களுக்குக் காரணமானவனே!
தேனினும் இனிமையானவனே!
பூவிதழின் புன்னகையானவனே!
உயிருக்குள் வாழ்பவன் நீ! - என்
உணர்வில் கலந்திருப்பவன் நீ!
உன்னைப் பாட ஆயிரம் வார்த்தைகள் இருந்தும்

வார்த்தைகளுக்குள் அடங்கிப் போகாதவன் நீ!
வாக்கியங்களில் உன்னைத் தேடச்
சரணடைகிறேன்.

காற்றுக்குள் அகப்பட்ட சிறு துரும்பாக!!!
கே. அன்னமேரி,
இரண்டாமாண்டு, இயற்பியல்



இயற்கை அழகு

சூரியனுக்கு மஞ்சள் அழகு,
கடலுக்கு நீலம் அழகு,
மரத்திற்குப் பச்சை அழகு,
எரிமலைக்குச் சிவப்பு அழகு,
மேகத்திற்கு வெள்ளை அழகு,
இந்த நிறம் எல்லாம்
வானவில் வருவதற்கு
கருமேகம் அழகு.

ல. மார்கரேட் கிரேசி,
முதலாமாண்டு, கணிதவியல்



அழகு

அன்பிற்கு அழகு அறிவு
அறிவிற்கு அழகு கல்வி
கல்விக்கு அழகு ஒழுக்கம்
ஒழுக்கத்திற்கு அழகு படிப்பு
படிப்புக்கு அழகு பட்டம்
பட்டத்திற்கு அழகு வேலை
வேலைக்கு அழகு கடமை
கடமைக்கு அழகு நேர்மை
நேர்மைக்கு அழகு உண்மை
உண்மைக்கு அழகு உழைப்பு
உழைப்புக்கு அழகு ஊதியம்
ஊதியத்திற்கு அழகு சிக்கனம்

சிக்கனத்திற்கு அழகு ஈகை
ஈகைக்கு அழகு கருணை
கருணைக்கு அழகு இரக்கம்
இரக்கத்திற்கு அழகு அமைதி
அமைதிக்கு அழகு ஆண்டவன்
ஆண்டவனுக்கு அழகு அருள்
அருளுக்கு அழகு பக்தி,
பக்திக்கு அழகு அன்பு.

ஜி. பிரபாவதி,
முதலாமாண்டு, கணிதவியல்



நிலவு

மார்கழித் திங்களில்
மங்கையரின் கனவில்
உலாவரும் வெள்ளி நிலவே
உன் முகம் பார்த்துப் பசி தீர்க்கும்
மழலையர் எத்தனையோ!
உன் சவடுகளின் நினைவில்
குளிர் காயும் அமாவாசையாக
நான் இருக்க ஆசைப்படுகிறேன்!!

கே. ஃபெமினா ஃபெர்னான்டோ,
மூன்றாமாண்டு, வணிகவியல்



உயிர் எழுத்துக்களில் எம் கல்லூரி

அன்பையும் அறிவியலையும்
ஆன்மீகத்தையும் ஆற்றிவையும்
கற்றுக் கொடுப்பது எம் கல்லூரி.
இன்பத்திலே இனிமை காணவும்
ஈகையை ஈன்றெடுத்த தாய்போல்
கற்றுக் கொடுப்பது எம் கல்லூரி,

உண்மையை உள்ளத்தில் உணரவும்
ஊக்கத்துடன் ஊருடன் இணைந்து வாழவும்
கற்றுக்கொடுப்பது எம் கல்லூரி
எண்ணையும் எழுத்தையும் போற்றி வாழவும்
ஏணியாய் ஏற்றமுடன் உயர்ந்து நிற்கவும்
கற்றுக் கொடுப்பது எம் கல்லூரி
ஐயத்தை ஐயமுற அகற்றவும்
ஒழுக்கத்துடன் ஒவ்வொரு நாளும் வாழவும்
கற்றுக் கொடுப்பது எம் கல்லூரி
ஓயாமல் ஒதி உணர்ந்து
ஒளவையார் போலவும் ஒளடதம் போலவும் வாழ
அஃதை ஆக்கத்தோடு ஊக்கத்தோடும்
கற்றுக் கொடுப்பது எம் கல்லூரி.
இஃதே இக் கல்லூரியின் வெற்றி இரகசியம்!!

ஜே. இ. மனோ,
முதலாமாண்டு - வரலாற்றியல்



மறந்தேன்! இழந்தேன்!

சூரியனை மறந்தேன்
ஒளியை இழந்தேன்!
உழுவனை மறந்தேன்
உணவை இழந்தேன்
மழையை மறந்தேன்
தண்ணீரை இழந்தேன்!
படிப்பை மறந்தேன்
வாழ்க்கையை இழந்தேன்!
இறைவனை மறந்தேன்
எல்லாவற்றையும் இழந்தேன்!!

எம். மேரி பிரேலா லின்டோ,
முதலாமாண்டு - கணிதவியல்



தோழியே! நீ காதல் செய்வாய்!

தோழியே!

ஒரு புண்ணியம் செய்துவிடத்

தயக்கம் ஏனடி?

வெற்றி மானிகைக்கு அனுமதிக்கும்

வாசலே காதல்.

உழைப்பின் இரவுகளுக்கு ஊக்கம் தரும்

வெண்ணிலவே காதல்!

சாதனை மரத்தைத் தாங்கிடும்

ஆணிவேரே காதல்!

இப்படி எங்கும் எதிலும்

அடிப்படை காதல் தான். எனவே

தோழியே!

நீ, பக்தியுடன் காதலி, எதைத் தெரியுமா?

உன்னையும், உன் இலட்சியங்களையும்...

அ. சபர்மதி,

முதுநிலை - கணிதவியல் இரண்டாமாண்டு



வறுமை

அடுத்தடுத்து

உற்பத்தி செய்யும்

நெசவாளியின்

ஓயாமல் வரும்

மகளின்

கிழிசல்

தாவணியின் நினைவு.

ஜி. அருள் ஜோதி,

இரண்டாமாண்டு - வேதியியல்



காலம் பொன்னானது

ஓர் ஆண்டின் அருமையைப் பற்றித் தெரிந்து
கொள்ளவேண்டுமா?

ஆண்டு தோறும் பட்ஜெட் தாக்கல் செய்யும்
நிதியமைச்சரைக் கேளுங்கள்

ஒரு மாதத்தின் அருமையைப் பற்றித் தெரிந்து
கொள்ள வேண்டுமா?

மாத நாவல் பிரசுரிக்கும் பதிப்பாசிரியரைக்
கேளுங்கள்.

ஒரு வாரத்தின் அருமையைப் புரிந்து கொள்ள
வேண்டுமா?

வாரப் பத்திரிகையில் தொடர் எழுதும்
எழுத்தாளரைக் கேளுங்கள்.

ஒரு மணி நேரத்தின் அருமையைப் பற்றித்
தெரிந்து கொள்ள வேண்டுமா?

அருமை ஆசிரியரின் வகுப்பை இழந்த
மாணவரைக் கேளுங்கள்.

ஒரு நிமிடத்தின் அருமையைப் பற்றித் தெரிந்து
கொள்ள வேண்டுமா?

கடைசி நிமிடத்தில் இரயிலைத் தவற விட்ட
பயணியைக் கேளுங்கள்.

ஒரு நொடியின் அருமையைப் பற்றித் தெரிந்து
கொள்ள வேண்டுமா?

மயிரிழையில் பதக்கம் வெல்லும் வாய்ப்பைத் தவற
விட்ட ஒட்டப்பந்தய வீரரைக் கேளுங்கள்.

எல். பிரிசில்லா சான்ட்ரா,
முதலாமாண்டு - கணிதவியல்



உழைப்புக்கு ஒரு வந்தனம்

நாளாம்! நாளாம்! திருநாளாம் உழைப்பின் உயர்வை
உணர்த்தும் இந்நாள் ஒரு பொன்நாளாம்! இ
செய்யும் தொழிலே தெய்வம் என்ற வாசகத்தை

நாங்கள் படித்துத் தெரிந்து கொண்டதை விட உங்கள் உழைப்பைப் பார்த்துப் புரிந்து கொண்டது தான் அதிகம்.

சிரித்த முகத்துடன் பாராட்டுக்குரிய எத்தனை செயல்கள், தொழிலின் வெளிப்பாடு எதுவாயினும் தோற்றமும் தூண்டுதலும் உழைப்புத்தானே!

ஒரு பிடி மண்ணையும் மாற்றான் எடுத்துச் செல்ல அனுமதிக்காத வீர மறவர் பரம்பரை எங்கள் கல்லூரிக் காவலர். இதற்குச் சளைத்தவர்களா எங்கள் வரவேற்பாளர்கள்! பூவாக இருப்பவர்கள் தான் இவர்கள். ஆனால், காலை எட்டு மணியிலிருந்து எட்டே கால் வரை புயலாக மாறி ஒரு திருவிழாக் கூட்டத்தையே சமாளித்து வெற்றிக்கரமாகச் செயல்படுகிறார்கள்.

தொலைத்ததைத் தேடி, துன்பத்துடன் சென்றாலும் அன்புடன் பேசி, பொருட்களை உரியவர்களிடம் சேர்ப்பதில் வல்லவர்கள்.

கூறாமை நோக்கிக் குறிப்பறிவான் எஞ்ஞான்றும் மாறாதீர் வையக்கு அணி

என்ற குறள் சொல்வது போல தேவையைச் சொல்லாமலே எங்கள் பேராசிரியர்களின் முகக் குறிப்பை அறிந்து சேவை செய்யும் எங்கள் பணியாளர்கள். இவர்கள் இல்லாத செயல்முறை வகுப்புகளை நினைப்பதற்கே இடமில்லை. ஒவ்வொருவரின் வேண்டுகோளுக்கும் தவறாமல் தலைசாய்த்துச் சிரித்த முகத்துடன் உதவும் நீங்கள் எங்கள் இதயங்களில் என்றும் நிலைத்திருப்பீர்கள். இந்தக் கல்லூரியில் பூத்திருக்கும் மலர்களைப்

பார்த்திருக்கிறோம். ஆனால் அவை வாடி விழுந்து கிடப்பதைப் பார்த்ததே இல்லை. பச்சைப் பசேல் இலைகள் காய்ந்து விழுந்தாலும் தரையில் சில மணி நேரத்திற்கு மேல் பார்த்ததில்லை. பசுமைப் பூங்காவாக மட்டுமின்றி தூய்மைப் பூங்காவாகவும் செயல்பட வியர்வையைச் சிந்தி உழைப்பின் உயர்வை எடுத்துரைக்கும் உங்களுக்கு நன்றி சொல்லக் கடமைப் பட்டுள்ளோம். அவனின்றி ஓர் அணுவும் அசையாது என்று இறைவனைப் போற்றி இருக்கிறோம். இவர்களின்றி ஒரு காரியமும் நடக்காது என்பதுதான் உண்மை. இந்த வேளையில் உழைப்பாளரின் ஆக்கத்தை உலகிற்கு நாம் எடுத்துக்காட்ட வேண்டியவர்களாக உள்ளோம்.

பூக்களின் அழகை இந்த உலகம் பாராட்டலாம். கவிஞர்கள் கவி பாடலாம். ஆனால், பூக்களே ஒரு பாராட்டுரை எழுதுமானால் அது நிச்சயமாக மண்ணுக்குள் மறைந்திருந்து இந்தப் பூவைப் பூக்க வைத்த வேர்களைப் பற்றித்தானே இருக்கும். தீபச் சுடரைப் பாராட்டி, அதன் அழகை வருணித்துக் கவிதை பாடும் இந்த உலகம். ஆனால், அந்தச் சுடர் ஒரு பாராட்டுக் கவிதை எழுதுமானால் அது நிச்சயமாகத் தனக்காக எரிந்து கரைந்து போன, திரியைப்பற்றித் தான் இருக்கும். வேரையும் திரியையும் போல எங்களைப் பூக்க வைத்துப் பிரகாசிக்க வைத்த உங்களை வரவேற்பதில் பெருமை கொண்டு நன்றியோடு போற்றுகிறோம். வாழ்க உழைப்பென்னும் நறுந்தேன்.

எஸ். கோமதி பிரியா,
மூன்றாமாண்டு, விலங்கியல்

मीठी परछाड़ियाँ

माँ चली गई। अब मैं उसे कभी देख नहीं सकूँगी। पर वह छोड़ गई है अपनी यादें। आँखें बंद करती हूँ तो सुनाई देती है उसकी लाल काँच की चूड़ियों की खनक। इतनी चूड़ियाँ थी माँ के पास। लाल, हरी, नीली, काली। जब मैं निराश होती तो माँ अपने हाथ मेरे सिर पर रखती। क्या जादू था उन हाथों में, मुझे आज भी नहीं पता। पता नहीं मुझे इससे क्या शक्ति मिलती। मैं अपनी आँखें बन्द करती, उन चूड़ियों की खनक को सुनती....शांति।

माँ साँवली थी। माथे पर सिंदूर लगाया करती। उसकी आँखें रात से भी काली थी। काजल लगाती थी वह। आँखों में तारों-सी चमक आ जाती थी। वह अपनी आँखों से बोलती थी। उसकी एक झलक मुझे चुप कर देती थी। उन आँखों में एक अजीब शक्ति थी। आज भी मुझे वह दिन याद है, जिस दिन मैंने मंच पर एक गीत गाया। डर से मैं गीत के बोल भूल रही थी। तब दुनिया की सबसे शक्तिशाली आँखों से नज़र मिलाई। माँ की आँखें। सारा डर दूर हो गया। गाने के अंत में मैंने उसे फिर देखा। आँखों में गर्व के आँसू थे। माँ का नाम दुर्गा था। दुर्गा-सी शक्तिशाली माँ।

मुझे याद है जब मेरी कहानी अखबार में छपी, तब सबने मेरी प्रशंसा की। मैंने माँ को प्रश्नसूचक निगाहों से देखा। माँ की आँखें गर्व और खुशी से भरी थी। उसने बिना कुछ कहे सब कुछ कह दिया।

मेरी खिड़की के पास एक बहुत बड़ा आम का पेड़ है जिसका बीज माँ ने बोया था। उसकी छाया में बैठने पर ऐसा लगता जैसे माँ की गोद में लेटी हूँ।

माँ चली गई। छोड़ गई अपनी रंगीली चूड़ियाँ, काजल और वह आम का पेड़। माँ जब मुझे तुम्हारी शक्ति की जरूरत पड़ेगी तब मैं किसकी आँखों में झाँकूँगी ?

मैं आज माँ बनी हूँ। मेरे हाथों में मेरी दस घंटों की आयु वाली बेटी है।

“बहुत सुन्दर है।” नरेश ने मेरे कानों में कहा।

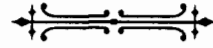
“मुझ पर गई है।” मैंने कहा। “क्या नाम रखें ?”

“दुर्गा”

“दुर्गा...” मैंने अपनी सोती बच्ची को बुलाया।

उसने अपनी आँखें खोली मैंने फिर से दुनिया की सबसे सुन्दर, काली आँखों में झाँका।

वन्दना कृष्णन, 01/EL/39



केवल प्यार

सारे निर्णयों का श्रेय तो
ले जाते हैं पिता
माँ को तो
मात्र
मिलता है अवसर
जननी बनने का।

धमाके
चाहे जहाँ भी हो
सहमा जाती है
कोख।

किसी भी माँ के पास
नहीं होता
आडंबर का मुकुट
अभिमान का सिंहासन
उसके पास तो
होता है
एक हृदय
बसता है जिसमें
केवल मातृत्व।

सोनाली पाल, 00/BT/38

जिन्दगी में जो कुछ है महान...

जिन्दगी में जो कुछ है महान
नहीं है बंगला, गाड़ी या सामान
पैसा है जीने के लिए जरूरी
पर मत बनाना अपनी कमजोरी।
जिन्दगी में जो कुछ है महान
नहीं है ख्याति या शान
वह है आत्मसम्मान
जो मिलता नहीं आसान
हर क्षण चाहिए मान-सम्मान
हर मनुष्य का यही है प्राण.....।

नलिना गोपाल, 01/HS/05



उफ़ ! यह शादी...।

शादी है एक खूबसूरत बला
जिस पर लोग देते हैं मुफ्त सलाह
कि कर ले शादी होगा भला
खूबसूरत बीवी आएगी
साथ बहुत माल लाएगी
करेगी खूब पति सेवा
रोज खिलाएगी उसे मेवा
पर बाद में पता चलेगा
कि यह तो है सब जंजाल
जब बज जायेगी ताल
उड़ जायेंगे सर के बाल
और हम देखेंगे
आप रहे हैं बच्चे पाल।
सिर्फ लड़कों का ही नहीं,
लड़कियों का भी यही होता है हाल।
बड़े कहते हैं लड़का है बहुत होशियार

घर में है सबसे समझदार
करेंगे तुझे बहुत प्यार
रुपयों का लगाएगा अंबार
गहने बहुत गड़ायेगा।
पेरिस-स्विटज़रलैंड घुमायेगा
पर असल में होता है क्या ?
शादी होते ही लड़की जाती है गृहस्थी में फंस
सब का दिल रखने में, कट जाता है दिन बस
काम से फुरसत नहीं उसे सुबह पाँच से लेकर रात
दस
शादी के बाद शरीर जाता है फूल और आँखें जाती
है धंस
पेरिस-स्विटज़रलैंड तो बहुत दूर की बात।
पिक्चर देखे बिना कट जाते कई माह
पर जैसा भी हो ये काम
पास करनी पड़ेगी ये परीक्षा
चाहे लगे ये कड़वा करेला
या बंबई का हापुस आम
बस अब मैं ज्यादा नहीं करूँगी शादी को बदनाम।

शिल्पा चौधरी, 01/FA/33



कम्प्यूटरी बुधवार

लगता है पापा !
हमारे कम्प्यूटर को,
हो गया है कुछ...?
“क्या हो गया है?”
सुना है
वायरस फीवर हो गया
वायरस फीवर???
इंसान को वायरस फीवर तो होता है
ये तो हमें मालूम है
किन्तु होता है
निर्जीव वस्तुओं को भी ?

यह हमें मालूम न था।
मेरी मेहनत मेरी फाइलें
खा गई कूर वाइरस
यह सदमे की बात है।
लाख सावधानी बरती फिर भी
कम्प्यूटर वाइरस का हुआ
शिकार
दिन भर जो स्क्रीन
रहता था रंग बिरंगा
आज चुप्पी साधे मायूस पड़ा है
हाय !
क्या उसे फ्लू है
बड़ा कमजोर हो गया है।
कभी खेलता था मेरे संग
क्रिकेट और चेंस
देखते थे हम
सीडी से पिकचरें संग-संग

मरियम, 01/CA/61



बाल मज़दूरी

महिला सभा में 'बाल मज़दूरी' के सम्बन्ध में हुए एक सेमिनार की मुख्य अतिथि प्रमिला थापर ने कहा, "कल की दुनिया आज के बच्चों के हाथों में हैं। हमारा कर्तव्य है कि हम सभी बच्चों को जीने की उमंग, विश्वास और शिक्षा दें।" लोगों ने वाह-वाह की। उस शाम प्रमिला ने अपनी नौकरानी को जो दस वर्ष की बालिका थी आदेश दिया, "सीमा मैं बहुत थक गई हूँ। तुरंत चाय बनाकर लाओ।"

ऐश्वर्या के, 01/EL/61



ऐसी वाणी बोलिए, मन का आपा खोए।
औरन को शीतल करै, आपु ही शीतल होय।।-कबीर

विज्ञापनों के शिकार

दादा जी को डेटॉल से अत्यन्त प्रेम था। उनका विश्वास था कि यह हर बीमारी का इलाज है। चाहे हमें छोटी-सी चोट लगे या माँ का हाथ थोड़ा जल जाए वे आधी से ज्यादा शीशी उढ़ेल देते थे। हमारे बाथरूम की अलमारी में सदैव ही तीन चार शीशियाँ पड़ी रहती थी। दादी उन्हें चिड़ाने के लिए कहती, "अरे ! थोड़ा-सा डेटॉल चाय में भी डाल लो तुम्हें इसका स्वाद जो इतना पसंद है।"

दादा जी स्वर्ग में अवश्य ही प्रसन्न हो रहे होंगे क्योंकि इस वर्ष इकोनोमिक टाइम्स ब्रैंड इक्विटी निरीक्षण के अनुसार डेटॉल भारत का सबसे भरोसे मंद ब्रैंड घोषित किया गया। इस सूची में ब्रिटानिया, कोलगेट, टाटा नमक, लक्स, कोका-कोला, पेप्सोडेन्ट, पॉन्डस, पेप्सी तथा थम्स अप भी क्रमशः शामिल थे।

मूलतः मुझे ब्रैंड, प्रोडक्ट जैसे शब्द बिल्कुल पसंद नहीं खासकर कि जब वे किसी पत्र, पत्रिका आदि की परिभाषा के लिए प्रयोग हो। आजकल अनगिनत ब्रैंडज बाज़ार में प्रचलित हैं। वे हर जगह हैं—टी.वी. पर, रेडियो पर, रास्तों के होर्डिंग पर, पत्र, पत्रिकाओं में और पता नहीं कहाँ कहाँ। दस साल पहले तक भी इतने ब्रैंड नहीं निकले थे। परन्तु पिछले दशक में विज्ञापन तथा प्रतियोगिता के कारण अनगिनत उपकरणों का निर्माण हुआ।

पहले शीतल पेय पदार्थ भारत में ही बनते थे परन्तु आज कई विदेशी कम्पनियों ने बाज़ार पर कब्ज़ा कर लिया है और एक दूसरे को नीचा दिखाने तथा कोई न कोई आरोप लगाकर उसे सिद्ध करने में करोड़ों रुपये खर्च कर रहे हैं। कल केवल दो या अधिकतम तीन दातून होते थे परन्तु आज साल में रोज़ एक नए पेस्ट से हम दाँत माँज सकते हैं और रोज़ एक नए साबुन से नहा सकते हैं।

कुछ सालों पूर्व विज्ञापन होते थे परन्तु रेडियो पर और कभी-कभी टी.वी. पर परन्तु आज कल टी.वी. पर कार्यक्रम कम और विज्ञापन ज्यादा हैं जिससे चिड़कर हम कभी कभी वस्तु खरीदते ही नहीं। परन्तु वहीं दूसरी

ओर हम ब्रैन्ड नेम देखकर ही आँखें बंद कर कीमती से कीमती चीज़ खरीद लेते हैं जो केवल रूपों की बरबादी है। आजकल तो अभिनेता और खिलाड़ी भी विज्ञापन में दिखाई देते हैं। ज़रा सोचिए कि क्रिकेटर सी.आर. रंगाचारी और एम.जे.गोपालन एक कोक हाथ में लिए कैसे लगते ?

देवश्री, 01/EC/33



मिलेनियम की भारतीय नारी

यह सही है 21वीं सदी 'इनफोटेक' यानी कि सूचना तकनीक से ही संचालित होगी। यह भी सही है कि ग्लोबलाइजेशन से विश्व परिवार-सा बन गया है लेकिन समृद्ध और गरीब देशों में दूरियाँ बढ़ती जाएंगी। दोनों में ज्ञान के भंडार में भी बहुत फर्क होगा। जिन देशों में जीवन की गति तेज होगी वही अपना अस्तित्व बचा पायेंगे। भारत के संदर्भ में इसके विविध पक्षों में सर्वोपरि पक्ष है नारी की स्वप्निल अवस्था....

नई सहस्राब्दी में वैज्ञानिक खोज मुख्य रूप से दो दिशाओं में हो रही है। एक ओर विशाल अंतरिक्ष के गूढ़तम रहस्यों का उद्घाटन किया जा रहा है, सौर मंडल तथा विशाल ब्रह्मांड की सच्चाई उजागर की जा रही है तो दूसरी तरफ मानव-जीवन शैली में बदलाव लाया जा रहा है। भारत में पारिवारिक दृष्टिकोणों पर अध्ययन करने वाले शोध संगठनों ने नई सहस्राब्दी सर्वेक्षण में इस तथ्य को पाया है कि विकास की गति में तीव्रता तभी संभव है जब नारी भी सही अनुपात में अपनी भूमिका निभाएगी।

नारी ही नर की निर्माता है इसलिए नारी को "आधी दुनिया" कहा जाता है। ऐसी दुनिया जो पग-पग पर पुरुष द्वारा अनुशासित, पारिभाषित एवं संचालित होती रही है। जिस प्रकार हाथी के चार भिन्न अंगों को छूकर चार अंधों ने हाथी के विषय में सम्पूर्ण मानस-चित्र बनाया और उसकी प्रामाणिकता को लेकर हठपूर्वक परस्पर लड़ते रहे, ठीक उसी प्रकार सदियों से दार्शनिक विचार और साहित्यकार अपनी दृष्टि विशेष से नारी को एक साथ

देवी, भोग्या, माया, शक्ति, श्रद्धा और ताड़न की अधिकारी समझते हैं। क्या ये संज्ञाएं नारी को पारिभाषित कर सकती हैं ? नारी का स्वरूप ब्रह्म की तरह सूक्ष्म, व्यापक, गहन, गूढ़, अखंड, अनंत एवं आलौकिक नहीं जो जाना न जा सके। नर की तरह नारी भी संवेदनशील प्राणी है। सृष्टि योजना में नारी का स्थान जल तथा पृथ्वी की तरह है नारी भले ही पुरुष की तुलना में गौण रही हो किंतु सृष्टि के निर्माण में सृष्टि के आविर्भाव से ही प्रधान है।

भारतीय समाज में प्रारम्भ से ही हर व्यवस्था सुचारू रूप से की गयी थी। समय की माँग के अनुसार भारतीय पुरुष घर के बाहर के कार्यों का उत्तरदायी तथा प्रबन्धक रहा और नारी घर-गृहस्थी की अधिकारिणी गृह-लक्ष्मी रही। भारतीय समाज में परिवार को सुचारू रूप से चलाने का दायित्व नारी को ही निभाना पड़ता है। यहाँ का यह सिद्धान्त रहा—नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवता। जहाँ स्त्रियों का सम्मान होता है वहाँ देवता रहते हैं। इसी प्रकार जीवन के विषय में भी कहा गया है—“दिन नष्टं कुभोजनं जन्म कुभार्याम्” अर्थात् जीवन की योग्यता स्त्रियों की योग्यता पर निर्भर करती है। मानव-समाज में देश काल के अनुसार नर-नारी के आदर्शों में परिवर्तन होता रहता है। आज नई सहस्राब्दी की माँग है कि भारतीय परिवेश की माँग के अनुरूप घर से निकलें और काम करें। यहाँ मैं कहना चाहूँगी आधुनिक शब्द का अर्थ समझते हुए एवं अपने संस्कारों को भी समझते हुए आगे बढ़ें। हमें आज न तो दूसरों की नकल करनी है क्योंकि नकल करने से अकल की कमी होने से शकल बिगड़ जाती है। आज की बिगड़ी शकल का परिणाम अंधानुकरण भी है। हमें अपनी दशा को देखते हुए दिशा निर्धारित करनी है।

हमारे समाज में पर्दा प्रथा का प्रचलन है। इतिहास कहता है किन कारणों से पर्दा प्रथा का प्रचलन हुआ था, किन्तु आज हम स्वतंत्र हैं। अपने भारत की बागडोर संभालें हैं फिर आज तक पर्दा क्यों....? नारी पर्दा लिये अपने दायित्वों के प्रति विमुख हैं। हमें पर्दा उठाकर अपने परिवारों को ऊँचा उठाना है। पढ़ी-लिखी नारी घर गृहस्थी को ज्यादा अच्छा संभाल सकती है। मेरे अनुभव ये कहते

हैं कि नारी को नर से ज्यादा पढ़ा लिखा होना चाहिए। वह संयम से समयानुसार अपने बच्चों की भावनाओं को समझ सकती है जिससे बच्चे गुमराह और आवारा नहीं होते। नारी की कमज़ोरियों के चलते ही परिवार में कलह-क्लेश पैदा होता है। पारिवारिक जीवन को संतुलित करने की कला का अभाव रहता है तो पुरुष भी दफ्तर में काम करने में असमर्थ रहता है। आज ही नहीं युगयुगान्तर से नारी को बहुआयामी प्रेरणा का स्रोत माना गया है। नारी विहीन क्षेत्र ढूँढ के समान है। भले ही पुरुष नारी को अपने आगे देखना नहीं चाहता किन्तु नारी की प्रबलता, शक्तता को नकार भी नहीं सकता। वाल्मीकि रामायण में नारी-भूमिका पर कहा गया है—

*कार्येषु मंत्री, करणेषु दासी, भोज्येषु माता, रमणेषु रम्भा।
धर्मानुकूलता क्षमया धरित्री, भार्या च षड्गुणवतीह दुर्लभा।।*

काम काज में मंत्री की तरह सलाह देने वाली, सेवादि में दासी की तरह काम करने वाली, माता के समान सुन्दर भोजन कराने वाली, शयन के समय रम्भा के समान सुख देने वाली, धर्म के अनुकूल कार्य करने वाली, पृथ्वी के समान स्थिर रहने वाली, ऐसे छह गुणों वाली पत्नी दुर्लभ होती है। नारी पत्नी के रूप में परिवार की धुरी है—श्री समृद्धि, वंशवृद्धि की नींव है। नर के कामातुर जीवन का पूर्ण विराम है। नारी परिवार में स्नेह सौजन्य की ऊर्जा है।

माता के रूप में नारी की भूमिका सर्वोपरि है। “भारत देश वीरों का देश रहा है।” इस उक्ति के पीछे माता की सशक्त भूमिका का परिचय प्राप्त होता है। शिशु के पालन-पोषण करने से माता के सम्मान में कहा गया है— सब देवी-देवता एक ओर ऐ माँ मेरी तू एक ओर....।” मनुष्य वैसा ही बनता है जैसे माता उसे बनाती है। माता ही निर्माता है। समाज की विकृति की जिम्मेदार नारी ही है। आज उसे आँखें खोलनी चाहिए क्योंकि भाग्य दो प्रकार का ही होता है—अच्छा या बुरा। यदि सशक्त सुन्दर वातावरण का निर्माण करना है तो नारी को कमरकस कर घर और बाहर दोनों को संतुलित कर योजनाबद्ध रूप से कार्य करना होगा।

नई सहस्राब्दी की नारी को बाल्यकाल में संतान की

शिक्षा-दीक्षा की पूर्ति के साथ दूध भरे कटोरों में संस्कार के साथ-साथ समसामयिक ज्ञान घोलकर पिलाना होगा। इसके लिए उसे स्वयं पहले अपना बहुमुखी विकास करना होगा।

शादी के उपरांत घर के भीतर नारी की स्थिति जड़ से उखाड़कर अन्यत्र रोपे गए पौधे के समान होती है। वह बहू, भाभी, देवरानी, जिठानी, पत्नी के रूप में बहुपक्षीय भूमिका निभाते हुए सभी सदस्यों की अपेक्षाएँ पूरी करती है। सहयोग या सद्भावना की अपेक्षा किए बिना प्रतिकूलताओं को झेलते हुए कोल्हू के बैल की तरह लगी रहती है। अब सवाल यह उठता है कि वह जब इतना सह सकती है तो घर से बाहर निकल अन्य कार्यों में सहयोग क्यों नहीं देती ? नारी की क्षमता का अनुमान नारी स्वयं लगाने में असमर्थ है। डॉ. उषा वारानसी प्रथम महिला हैं जिन्हें कनाडा की “नेशनल मरीन फिशरीज सर्विसेज” की प्रथम महिला निर्देशिका नियुक्त किया गया। पहली बार इस सेंटर में नारी की नियुक्ति हुई और वह भी भारतीय नारी की। भारतीय नारी की क्षमता का एक यह नमूना ही काफी है।

आज हम नारियों को घर और बाहर दोनों की स्थितियों का विश्लेषण करना होगा और माँग के अनुरूप आगे बढ़ना होगा। आज की नारी की भूमिका व्यापक हो गयी है। आज की तेजस्विनी नारी को समस्त क्षेत्रों में काम करते हुए देश की रक्षा सैनिक बनकर करनी होगी।

नारी को अपनी अस्मिता एवं अस्तित्व को पहचानना होगा। जब नारी में पृथ्वी की-सी सहिष्णुता, समुद्र-सी समृद्धता, फूल-सी कोमलता एवं हिमालय की उच्चता, आकाश-सी विशालता, जल की जीवन दायिनी शक्ति हैं फिर उसे बाहर आने में संकोच क्यों...? घर और बाहर दोनों जगह काम करने वाली नारी ज्यादा व्यावहारिक, तार्किक, समय की महत्ता एवं माँग को जान लेती है और अपने घर परिवार को सुखी बनाती है।

आज कामकाजी नारी के प्रति सम्मान के भाव बढ़ते जा रहे हैं क्योंकि वह यँ ही चुहलबाजी में समय बर्बाद नहीं करती। आज यह विचार भी पुराना, रूढ़िवादी,

संकीर्ण एवं अपरिपक्व ही माना जाएगा कि नारी के काम करने से मर्यादा नष्ट होगी और साथ ही यह भी कि कामकाजी नारी संतान का पालन-पोषण नहीं कर सकेगी। यह धारणा भी उचित नहीं है। बच्चा अपना काम तथा अपना ख्याल करना स्वयं ही सीख जायेगा तो हम जिस सूत्र को युगों से दोहराते आ रहे हैं—‘स्वावलम्ब की एक झलक पर न्यौछावर कुबेर का धन वह पूरी तरह साकार सार्थकता ग्रहण नहीं कर लेगा...? आज हमें नई सहस्राब्दी यही करने की प्रेरणा दे रही है।

आज नारी को समाज की मांग के अनुरूप नवीनतम व्यावहारिक ढाँचा बनाना होगा। भारत की उन्नति तभी शत-प्रतिशत होगी अन्यथा देश की नई पीढ़ी भौतिकवादी महत्वाकांक्षा की आड़ में पतन की गर्त में गिर जायेगी।

डॉ. मधु धवन



आर या पार...

जिन्दगी की दो राहें
 कहीं खुशियाँ
 तो कहीं दुख भरी आहें
 एक ओर फूलों-सी खुशबू
 दूसरी ओर कांटों का दर्द है
 एक ओर हमसफर का साथ
 तो दूसरी राह पर मुसाफिर
 गुमसुम अकेला जा रहा है
 एक ओर सुख का घरौंदा
 दूसरी ओर दुख का सागर।
 कोई इस ओर तो
 कोई उस ओर
 कौन जाने
 कब क्या, कहाँ, कैसे
 जीवन पथ बदले
 पर सदा रहे मुस्कान अधरों पर
 चेहरा खिला-खिला
 ज्यों स्नेह-सागर हो इठलाता।

नूपुर सिंह, 02/FA/08

आत्मशक्ति

मनुष्य की जिंदगी कई रंगों से भरपूर है। कभी सुनहरे फूल खिलते हैं तो कभी तूफान आ पड़ता है। हर मोड़ में हमें अपने आपको संभालना चाहिए। इसके लिए आत्मशक्ति की जरूरत है। जिन मनुष्यों के अंदर यह भावना है वह पहाड़ जैसी मुश्किल को भी हल कर सकता है डर आत्मशक्ति की भावना को कम करती है। एक बार कह कर तो देखो, “कि मुझसे होगा” जिंदगी में सौंदर्य आ जाएगा। तनहाई से मत डरना, उससे प्यार करना सीखो और देखोगे कि तुम दिन-ब-दिन ताकतवर बनती जाओगी। इसकी कोई सीमा नहीं होती इसलिए तुम भी कभी सीमा मत बनाना। बढ़ती जाओ अपने कदमों को, तमन्नाओं को बढ़ाओ, और यह देखोगी कि मंजिल तुम्हारे करीब है। अगर जिंदगी में तूफान एक बार भी नहीं आएगा तो अपने आप से लड़ना सीख नहीं पाओगे, अपने मन की शक्ति को पहचान नहीं पाओगे।

मत रहना तुम चुप
 आवाज़ उठाओ अपनी
 पाओगे हर मोड़ पर तुम
 मंजिल अपनी।
 डरना नहीं किसी हाल में
 जब शक्ति है तुम्हारी
 सत्य निष्ठा का देना साथ
 मंजिल तुम्हारी
 तुम पाओगी अपने आप....।

यह शब्द छोटा जरूर है मगर इसका अर्थ सबकी मदद करती है। झाँक के देखो अपने अंदर, बढ़ाओ इस शक्ति को क्योंकि तुम, सिर्फ तुम अपनी प्रेरणा हो। हेलन जी बहुत प्रसिद्ध हैं। इतिहास के पन्नों में उनका नाम स्वर्ण अक्षरों से लिखा है क्यों—इसलिए क्योंकि वे अंधी थीं दुनियावाले के लिए मगर अपने आत्मशक्ति की वजह से वह पढ़ी और बहुत प्रसिद्ध भी हुई। हम कई लोगों के बारे में जानते हैं जो हाथ, पैर या देखने, सुनने, बोलने की शक्ति खो चुके होते हैं मगर अपनी आत्मशक्ति की

वजह से तैरते हुए वे उस मुकाम तक पहुँच चुके हैं जहाँ से कोई भी उन्हें ढकेल नहीं सकता सिर्फ उनकी प्रशंसा कर सकता है। जगाओ अपने अंदर इस उमंग को और कुछ कर दिखाओ।

तुम्हारी सहेली,
एस. हरिणी, 02/CH/30

पढ़ाई का महत्व

पढ़-लिखकर कोई माता-पिता पर,
करता नहीं उपकार,
पढ़ने-लिखने वाले का ही,
होता बेड़ा पार।
बेरोजगारी आज है जो,
जनसंख्या का उपकार,
पढ़ने-लिखने वाले का ही,
होता सपना साकार।
कोई बनता है डॉक्टर,
तो कोई बने इंजीनियर।
उनका कुछ नहीं हो सकता है,
जो हैं अभी फेलियर।
पढ़ने से तुम सब लोगों,
करना नहीं इन्कार।
क्योंकि, पढ़ने-लिखने वाले का ही,
होता बेड़ा पार।

मोहनजीत कौर, 01/SC/16

बड़प्पन

राघव और रमा पति-पत्नी थे। एक बार उनके बीच में कहा-सुनी हो गई। बात इस कदर बढ़ गई कि राघव ने रमा के पिता के बारे में कुछ बुरा-भला कह दिया। इसे सुनते ही रमा को गुस्सा आ गया और उसने राघव से कहा—“आप मुझे कुछ भी कहिए लेकिन मेरे मायके

के बारे में कुछ न कहिए।” तब राघव ने रमा को मायके के बारे में और ज्यादा कहना शुरू कर दिया। रमा सह नहीं सकी और वह अपने मायके चली गयी।

दो दिन बाद राघव रमा को बुलाने रमा के मायके गया। रमा के घर के बाहर पहुँचते ही उसे रमा का स्वर सुनाई पड़ा, “पिताजी आप मुझे जो कुछ कहना चाहते हैं कहिए लेकिन मेरे पति के बारे में मैं कुछ भी सुनना पसन्द नहीं करूँगी।” इसे सुनते ही राघव के मन में पत्नी के प्रति प्रतिष्ठा एवं सम्मान भर आया। उसने सोचा—“स्त्री-मानस” कितना धन्य है। उसका हृदय कितना स्नेहपूर्ण है।

डी. डायना

स्वर्ग और नरक-असली मित्रता

एक आदमी भगवान से स्वर्ग और नरक की बात कर रहा था। भगवान ने आदमी से कहा, “आओ ! मैं तुम्हें नरक दिखाता हूँ। दोनों एक कमरे के अन्दर गये जहाँ पर बहुत सारे लोग, चावल के बड़े बरतन के चारों ओर बैठे थे। सभी भूखे मर रहे थे। हर आदमी के पास एक चम्मच था जो बर्तन तक पहुँच सकता था। पर चम्मच का मूठ, उनके बाँहों से बहुत ज्यादा लम्बा था, इसलिए चावल उनके मुँह तक नहीं पहुँच सकता था। उन लोगों की हालत बहुत बुरी थी।

“अब मैं तुम्हें स्वर्ग दिखाता हूँ” भगवान ने कुछ देर के बाद कहा। फिर दोनों, दूसरे कमरे के अन्दर गये, जो एकदम पहले कमरे की तरह था। वही चावल का बरतन, वही लोग, वही चम्मच। पर यहाँ सब लोग खुश और स्वस्थ दिख रहे थे।

आदमी ने कहा, “मैं कुछ नहीं समझा ! जब सब कुछ एक समान है, तब वे एक जगह पर खुश और दूसरी जगह पर दुखी कैसे थे?” भगवान ने मुस्कुराकर कहा, “ओह ! यह तो बहुत आसान है। स्वर्ग में लोगों ने एक दूसरे को खिलाना सीख लिया है।”

(पंचतंत्र से) रेशमा घोटाला, 01/SC/39

जीवन-हिंडोला

संध्या के समय में
गोधुली उड़ रही है
लोरियों को तरसी
रात जग रही है
मुझे आज घर जाना है
माँ के हाथ से खाना है
पिता का प्यार पाना है
चुपके-से सो जाना है
आज फिर घर याद आ रहा है
यादों के किवाड़ खोल रहा है
हँसा-रूलाकर सता रहा है
केवल तड़पा रहा है
अकेले बैठी सोच रही हूँ
यादों से छली जा रही हूँ
पुराने धुनों में स्वयं को पिरो
शून्य में खोई जा रही हूँ
हाँ ! मैं भी घर जाऊँगी
अपनों में समा जाऊँगी
पर पहले अस्तित्व बनाऊँगी
अपनी मंजिल मैं पाऊँगी।

गौरी मोहन गुप्ते, 01/BT/16



मरती क्या न करती

तुम फफक-फफक कर क्यों रो रही हो ?

सीमा ! हाय...बेचारी अंजलि...।

‘क्यों...क्या हुआ ? बेचारी क्यों ? सीता ने पूछा।

उसका पति क्षेमेन्द्र पागल हो गया है...अब अपनी
पत्नी अंजलि को पहचानता तक नहीं....

‘तो अब...।’

‘अब वह एक शादी शुदा नारी जिसके दो छोटे-छोटे
बच्चे हैं...उसके घर पड़ा रहता है..और वह दिन रात
जो नाच नचाता है; उसे नाचना पड़ता है..।’

‘अब...?’

‘अब उसे उन सबको अपने घर लाना पड़ गया
है....बेचारी...मरती क्या न करती....।’

जे. धनलक्ष्मी, 01/BT/41



मेरी बिल्ली मुझे ही म्याऊँ

पिताजी झुंझलाते हुए बोले, ‘यह नारी मुक्ति
आन्दोलन का नारा लगाने वाली नारियाँ न जाने अपने
आपको क्या समझती हैं? जब देखो नारे लगाती रहती
हैं।’ नीलू ने तुरन्त उत्तर दिया, ‘पिताजी ऐसा नहीं है।
हम नारियाँ सिर्फ अपने प्रति हो रहे अन्याय से लड़ रही
हैं। हम भी इन्सान हैं, हमें भी समाज में सम्मान मिलना
चाहिए। यह सिर्फ कुछ गिनी-चुनी नारियाँ होती हैं जो
हमारे इस आन्दोलन का मतलब ही बदल देती हैं।
अनावश्यक मुद्दों पर चर्चा कर तिल का ताड़ बना देती
हैं। इसका मतलब यह तो नहीं कि नारी मुक्ति आन्दोलन
का समस्त उद्देश्य गलत हो?’

‘हाँ...हाँ...पता है...’ पिताजी ने चिढ़ते हुए कहा।

‘क्या पता है...’ कहते हुए माँ बीच में आ गयी थी।

‘यही कि तुम सब एक ही थैली के चट्टे बट्टे हो।’

नीलू छटपटा उठी और चीखती-सी बोली—‘क्या आप
वह दिन भूल गए जब दीदी को दहेज के चलते जला
दिया था तब आपने ही तो हमें नारी मुक्ति आन्दोलन
का मार्ग दिखाया था....।’

‘तो अब क्यों चिढ़ रहे हैं ?’ पत्नी ने कहा।

क्योंकि मुझे गर्मागर्म भोजन की बजाय, दोपहर को
दूकान पर ही टिफिन खाने को मिलता है। घर आने
का मौका ही नहीं मिलता। मैं ने दिखाया है तो मुझे
ही झेलना पड़ेगा?’

‘तो क्या यह सब मार्ग दर्शन दूसरों के लिए था?’
‘उफ्.... मेरी बिल्ली मुझे ही म्याऊँ...?’

डॉ. मधुधवन

"Réveille-toi! Réveille-toi!" Mon sommeil a été perturbé par la voix perçante de ma mère. C'était comme un réveil qu'on ne peut pas arrêter.

"Réveille-toi, flémarde ! Il est déjà 11h30 et je dois faire ton lit !"

"Oh Maman ! Deux minutes de plus!"

Mais c'était une bataille que je ne pouvais pas gagner. Maman a tiré la couverture, la moutarde lui montant au nez.

"Réveille-toi maintenant, sinon..."

J'ai lentement ouvert les yeux. J'avais l'impression de voir un monstre atroce, avec d'énormes yeux, et la mâchoire qui bougeait sans arrêt... mon cœur pétrifié par la peur a suffi pour me faire lever.

"Ca y est ! Ca y est, maman ! ", J'ai pensé en moi-même. "Je ne peux plus entendre ton rugissement terrible !"

En une heure, j'étais prête à faire face à un nouveau jour. Mais c'était un de ces jours où il faisait un temps pénible, avec un soleil brûlant impitoyablement. J'avais envie de ne rien faire. Je me suis avachie sur le canapé devant la télé dans la salle de séjour climatisée. Ah ...le paradis. Je cherchais quelque chose d'intéressant à voir. Mais c'était en vain. Rien que des répétitions. J'ai pensé à nettoyer ma chambre. Mais, un regard jeté sur mon bazar m'a poussé rapidement à ôter cette pensée de ma tête. Soudain, la voix de ma mère m'a interrompue.

"Tu gaspilles tes vacances ! Tu ne fais rien ! Si tu es si libre, tu peux aller poster mes lettres."

"A la poste ? Mais mon Poney Mécanique est en panne ! " Poney Mécanique c'était ce que j'appelle mon petit scooter.

"Et alors ? Tu peux y aller à pied, n'est-ce pas ? Un mois de vacances, et tu es déjà devenue—"

—"A pied ? Impossible Maman ! Regarde le soleil aveuglant ! Je vais mourir de chaud !"

"N'exagère pas...un peu de chaleur ne te fera pas de mal, hein !"

"D'accord, d'accord", j'ai dit, d'un ton résigné. "Donne-moi tes lettres stupides. "

"Quoi ? "

"Rien, maman, rien", j'ai répondu. Elle m'a donné deux enveloppes très lourdes.

"Tu as écrit des épopées ou quoi ? ", lui ai-je demandé.

"Pas de commentaires, s'il te plaît. Voilà, 100 roupies aussi pour acheter du fromage et du beurre au supermarché."

"Mais enfin maman ! Tu m'as dit seulement la poste ! Maintenant le supermarché aussi ? Ce n'est pas juste !"

"Mais tu y passeras, non ? Alors, vas-y, ne perds pas de temps ! "

J'ai pris l'argent. "C'est vrai ce qu'on dit...Qui vole un œuf, vole un bœuf ! " Et sur ce, je suis sortie de la maison.

* * *

A partir du moment où j'ai franchi le seuil de la maison j'ai eu l'impression d'être trempée dans une marmite d'eau bouillante

comme en enfer. J'ai levé la tête pour voir le soleil, riant malicieusement comme Satan, avec ses rayons aux cornes menaçantes.

"Bienvenue, chère victime ! Bienvenue aux feux de l'enfer ! " J'étais convaincue qu'il me disait cela. En le regardant, j'avais la gorge sèche comme un désert. Je me suis éventée avec les lettres. "Un jus ..." j'ai chuchoté en moi-même. "Il me faut un jus avant de continuer. " J'ai cherché autour de moi un kiosque, et comme en réponse à ma prière, jetée sur moi par mon Seigneur, j'en ai vu un. J'ai acheté un jus en carton, et je l'ai avalé tout de suite, comme un ivrogne qui n'a pas bu d'alcool pendant un mois. J'ai léché mes lèvres, savourant le goût sucré du jus, en avançant quelques pas. Après quelques minutes, j'étais devant le cinéma, regardant les affiches d'un film anglais, dont toutes mes amies m'ont parlé. Il s'agit d'une fille grecque qui tombe amoureuse d'un américain. Toutes mes amies se pâmaient pour le héros, et j'ai voulu le voir aussi. Et en plus, la salle de cinéma climatisée serait une bonne évasion de la chaleur horrible. "Je peux poster les lettres après le film, " je me suis rassurée. Alors, j'étais en proie à la tentation, et j'ai acheté un billet. Pendant deux heures, j'étais dans la salle de cinéma, j'ai ri fortement comme une hyène jusqu'au moment où j'ai eu mal au ventre. J'étais transportée dans des îles grecques mais quand le cinéma s'alluma à la fin de la séance, j'ai trainé en pensant à mon ami le soleil qui m'attendait. Mais une autre chaleur, celle d'amitié retrouvée m'attendait.

– Danielle ! Quelle surprise ! Je viens de voir le film dont tu m'as parlé. C'était–"

"–super, n'est-ce pas ? Surtout l'acteur ! Il me fait fondre, ouh la la ! Et l'héroïne, elle était...."

* * *

De retour quelques heures plus tard, j'ai hurlé fortement, " Maman ! Me voilà ! Est-ce que le déjeuner est prêt ? J'ai une faim de loup ! "

"Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé avec toi ? " , m'a-t-elle demandé, sortant de la cuisine. "J'étais pleine de souci ! Trois heures juste pour aller à la poste et au supermarché ! Mon Dieu ! "

Je l'ai regardée, muette, ahurie. Les lettres ! Le supermarché ! Je les ai complètement oubliés ! Ah Non !

"Pourquoi es-tu choquée ? ", maman m'a demandé. "Qu'est-ce qu'il y a–" Ses mots furent coupés par la vue de ses lettres, qui sortaient un peu de mon sac.

"Tu es sortie pendant trois heures, et tu n'as pas même fait les commissions ? Qu'est-ce que tu faisais alors ? Rends-moi les 100 roupies que je t'ai donnés ! "

C'est juste à ce moment-là qu'elle a perdu son sang froid ; quand je lui ai expliqué (avec beaucoup de trac) comment j'ai dépensé l'argent, elle a commencé à voir rouge.

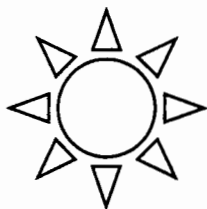
"Folle fille ! " elle a crié. "Demain matin, tu dois sortir encore pour faire les commissions ! Et pas un mot de plainte, compris ? "

Oh Non ! C'était le pire des supplices possibles...de sortir encore une fois au grand soleil, enveloppée par la chaleur insupportable...mais je n'ai osé rien dire. J'ai vu le soleil derrière la fenêtre...riant malicieusement encore, comme un roi méprisable qui vient de gagner pas seulement une bataille, mais la guerre entière !

L'album de presse coloré

Neetha Jayanth
I BA Economics

Elles m'ont visité comme
Le printemps en hiver.
Elles ont éclairé ma vie
Comme la lune dans la nuit !



Au début, le jaune brillant
D'un soleil souriant
Ensuite le rose pétillant
Du cœur d'un amant !

Le blanc innocent de l'enfant qui jouait,
Le gris des nuages prêts à pleurer,
Le rouge de la colère qui mijotait
Le vert de la jalousie qui rongeaient...



Ainsi les années se sont écoulées,
Et les rides qui, les yeux ,ont embrassés.
Ternissaient les teints de porcelaine
Et le bleu clair se transformait en bleu marine.



Ainsi du ciel agité à l'océan endormi,
De l'ombre à la lumière,
De la vie à la mort,
Du rêve à la réalité...

Les couleurs myriades
créaient
L'album de ma vie !

Est-il Possible de Conjuguer Bébé et Boulot?

Janani Ramachandran
I BA Economics

De nos jours, la polémique suscitée au moment de la naissance d'un bébé prend une dimension socio-psychologique alors qu'auparavant celui-ci était lié plutôt aux ennuis matériels. Etant donné que la poursuite du bonheur individuel est de rigueur dans la société contemporaine, chaque membre de la famille doit l'atteindre tout en conservant l'harmonie dans la vie familiale. Cependant, la réalité n'est pas rose, à cause des congés parentaux insuffisants. Selon les experts, la présence prolongée de la mère est indispensable pour le développement affectif de l'enfant. C'est pourquoi les femmes doivent choisir entre le travail et l'enfant. Mais la mère est forcément piégée. Car, quoi qu'elle choisisse—rester à la maison ou travailler—elle perd quelque chose. A l'exception de quelques femmes heureuses de leur statut de mère au

foyer, la majorité des mamans vivent péniblement le choix qu'elles ont à faire entre leur rôle de mère et leur vie professionnelle.

Que faut-il faire en face de ce dilemme ? Il n'y pas de recettes miracles ; en plus, il ne faut pas chercher à en trouver. Un bon conseil aux parents est de partager leurs expériences avec d'autres. Ces discussions ouvertes et franches permettent de déculpabiliser les parents et de leur montrer que tous ont des limites.

S'il y a un message à retenir de cet énoncé, c'est que la vie n'est faite ni de recettes ni de conseils. Les gens doivent se prendre en main et s'ils n'y parviennent pas toujours tout seuls, il y a des personnes compétentes prêtes à les aider.

« Il arrive souvent qu'une image survive, même quand les noms sont oubliés. »

James Salter

Il est toujours facile de ne pas se mêler de ce qui ne nous regarde pas ou bien de feindre de ne pas voir le mal autour de nous, ou mieux encore, de se dire qu'on n'y pouvait rien. Voici, une réflexion du pasteur Martin Niémoller : « Lorsque les Nazis vinrent chercher les communistes, je me suis tu : je n'étais pas communiste. Lorsque ils ont enfermé les socio-démocrates, je me suis tu : je n'étais pas socio-démocrate. Lorsque'ils sont venus chercher les catholiques, je me suis tu : je n'étais pas catholique. Lorsqu'ils sont venus me chercher, il n'y avait plus personne pour protester. » C'est toujours notre passivité qui fait le lit des dictateurs petits et grands, locaux ou nationaux ; et fin des fins, cette passivité n'affecte pas seulement ceux autour de nous ou bien nos ennemis— nous finissons par être impliqués dans l'étendue du mal. Alors, si on le veut ou pas, quand on préfère garder le silence, ne croyons pas qu'en fermant les yeux (ou la bouche), le mal s'en ira. Il suffit de les ré-ouvrir, pour voir que le mal est toujours là, « en chair et en os » comme l'on dit. Au contraire, c'est en faisant face à lui qu'on pourra totalement le supprimer.

La passivité est l'attitude la plus répandue, mais c'est aussi l'attitude la plus basse parce qu'elle fait de nous des sous-hommes. Devant le mal, on devient responsable. Ne rien faire fait de nous des complices et des piliers de ce mal. Par conséquent, rester passif et silencieux nous situe dans le camp des malfaiteurs. Celui qui

accepte passivement le mal est tout aussi responsable que celui qui le commet. Celui qui voit le mal et ne proteste pas, aide à faire le mal.

On peut alors se demander pourquoi nous sommes passifs plus particulièrement devant une injustice. Est-ce que c'est réellement parce qu'on ne veut pas s'occuper des affaires des autres, ou est-ce que c'est parce qu'on en a peur ? Est-ce par paresse ou par intérêt ? Regardons autour de nous. Nous voyons des abus de toute sorte toujours, mais nous ne sommes pas concernés. Peut-on dire qu'on n'a jamais vu des vols commis dans les autobus, aussi petits soient-ils ? Bien sûr, on n'a rien fait. (Et si tu dis « eh moi, je n'ai rien vu de la sorte », c'est que tu as choisi de regarder ailleurs.) N'avons-nous pas laissé nos parents gronder notre domestique pour des délits que nous-mêmes avons fait ? Combien de fois avons-nous fait le geste pour dire « Non, c'est ma faute » ? Si on est passif dans des petites choses, comment espérons-nous devenir responsables dans de plus grands engagements ?

Alors de bon cœur, reconnaissons le fait que nous ne deviendrons jamais les Mahatma aussi longtemps que même la possibilité de l'imiter nous échappe. Mais essayons au moins d'ouvrir les yeux et montrer notre souci de surmonter le mal. N'oublions jamais que chaque fois qu'on se laisse entraîner par la passivité, on devient le partenaire du mal.

la maris college SMC stella maris college
la m Down the Ages: rris college
la maris college SMC stella maris college



Stella Maris in Santhome...



At College Sports Day - 1950

1948-1955



The Laboratory of Yore...



Mother LILLIAN, fmm
PRINCIPAL



Sr. Celine Françoise,
Sr. Peter Damien
FMMs in
Administration - 1952



College Day
Santhome Campus - 1955



Sr. Thecla - Foundress,
Social Work Dept. - 1953

Down the Ages...



Sports in the Fifties



Graduates of 1956

1955-1961



College Day - 1960



Mother PROINCAS, fmm
PRINCIPAL



Faculty Members - 1958



The campus as we know it
under construction - 1960



Prize winners on
College Day - 1958

Down the Ages...



Music group in the sixties...



Reverend Mother General,
 St. Agnes, fmm visits SMC -1964



Music department
 in the sixties...

1961-1966



Mother CARLA ROSA, fmm
 PRINCIPAL



A visit to the Chemistry
 Laboratory - 1964



Inauguration of the
 Social Service Centre - 1964

1966-1968



Sr. SHEILA O'NEILL, fmm
 PRINCIPAL



Tete-a-tete with the
 hostelites - 1968



College Day - 1968

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Down the Ages...



Sports in the seventies...



Stella Marians at the flood relief camp - Cuddalore - 1973

1968-1978



Inauguration of the bank on campus - IOB - 1978



Sr. IRENE MATHIAS, fmm
PRINCIPAL



Silver Jubilee Block -
 New Library Inaugurated - 1974



NSS at work -
 SS Puram Slum, Chennai - 1975



College Silver Jubilee Celebrations
 1972 - Botany Dept.



The students union in action....



St. Francis Hall - 1986

1978-1990



H.E. The Governor, Dr. Alexander
 on Campus - College Day - 1990



Dr. Sr. HELEN VINCENT, fmm
 PRINCIPAL



The cadets in action...
 NCC Day - 1989



History renewed...
 200 year old Bonaventure
 Block gets a face lift



Reaching out...
 Students from the Semester
 Around The World Programme
 on Campus - 1989



St Clare Centre - to mark
 the Golden jubilee of
 Stella Maris - 1997



Music legend K.J. Jesudoss
 released the Audio Cassette
 produced and prepared
 by our College-1994

1990 ...



The glowing gold of
 convocation robes - 2000



Dr. Sr. ANNAMMA PHILIP, fmm
 PRINCIPAL



The Library also surfs-
 Internet Room inaugurated - 1998



Alumnae Association-
 growing from
 strength to strength



Computers are here
 to stay -1999



Celebrating the Beatification of Mary of the Passion -
 Foundress of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary

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