



**LORETO COLLEGE**

**KOLKATA**

**MEDIA SOCIETY PRESENTS**

**LIVEWIRE 2014**

**VOLUME II**



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# Principal's Note . . . .

The Media Society of the College in the issue of 'Livewire 2014' has brought out articles revolving around youth and what interests them - the challenges they face as they emerge from adolescence to young adulthood, the awakening of intellectual curiosity to enable broadening of vision and knowledge; these form the warp to weft of the articles.

We commend the Staff advisors of the Media Society, Mr. S. Dutta and Ms. S. Choudhuri, the Society President Subhadrika Sen and Vice-President Mohini Gurung and the contributors of the articles in 'Livewire 2014' and we hope that their enthusiasm continues to fire those taking the baton forward, in the years to come.

Sr. Christine Coutinho  
Principal

# Editors' Note . . . .

“Like all technology, media is neutral but is best put to work in the service of building a better world” - Simon Mainwaring

Media has affected every sphere of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century lifestyle like never before. Information in every field – politics, sports, travel and entertainment, has found a voice to reach the public through various dimensions of media. LIVEWIRE 2014 brings to the audience a glimpse of the influence that media has had on the young minds. The second edition of this journal is a visual treat to the readers, filled with innovations in media, gossips and film and book appreciations.

We, the Media Society, would like to acknowledge the contributions of our Principal, Sr. Christine Coutinho; Staff Advisors, Ms. Sayoni Choudhuri and Mr. Soumya Dutta, without whose guidance and support the journal could never have found a concrete shape.

The Media Society 2014-2015

Subhadrika Sen

Mohini Gurung

Asmita Nandy

# Events Corner

The Media Society kick started its academic year 2014-2014 with a **Basic Photography workshop conducted by Mr. Anirban Saha**. This was attended by almost forty students of the institution. The workshop continued for two days 23<sup>rd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2014. The attendees got an insight to the basic manual mode of a DSLR and were also asked to shoot with various props provided to them.



The annual print advertisement competition –**AD IDEAS** saw the participation of budding ad makers. They were given general topics to convert them to illustrious and innovative advertisements. The final output was **judged by Ms. Sreeparna Dasgupta**, Assistant professor of Political Science Department, Loreto College.

**Oculus Populi** is the photography competition held as a part of the annual college fest-SAMAGAM .This year the theme was **Street photography**. Various colleges like JDBI (Main Campus), JDBI (Management), St Xavier's College, Scottish Church College and Indian Institute of Hotel Management along with the home team participated enthusiastically. The judge for the event was **Mr. Shiladitya Saha**, chief copy editor of the Times of India. Scottish Church College was declared as the best team while Loreto College and Scottish Church College secured 1<sup>st</sup> Place in black and white and coloured photography respectively.



*Media Bytes is an annual quiz that takes place during SAMAGAM. This year it was conducted by Mr. Arindam Basu, Director of Carpe Diem. Colleges like JDBI (Main Campus), JDBI (Management), St Xavier's College, Scottish Church College, Ashutosh College, Indian Institute of Hotel Management and Loreto College participated to make the event a success. It was a lively session which engaged the participants and the audiences alike for over two hours. Scottish Church College emerged as winners followed by Ashutosh College as runners up.*







# SELFIE: THE NEW ME!

“Mirror mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?” If, ‘selfies’ existed at the time of Snow White, perhaps the evil queen would not have to refer to the mirror all the time.

Cut to the present, a ‘selfie’ is the new way to announce ‘it’s me’. Typically, a ‘selfie’ is a type of self- photograph taken with a hand-held digital-camera or camera phone or even a digital single-lens reflex camera (DSLR). A peek into networking sites like Instagram will draw you in a deluge of selfies taken by all sorts of people. Casual in nature, the art of taking selfies is often practiced in front of mirrors.

Initially popular with young people, selfies gained wider popularity over time. By the end of 2012, the Times magazine considered selfie one of the "top 10 buzzwords" of that year. By 2013, the word "selfie" had become commonplace enough to be monitored for inclusion in the online version of Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford attributed the word to be of Australian origin and announced "selfie" to be the "word of the year" in November 2013.

Recent research on the subject has yielded that, 91% of the teens post their photos online. Celebrities like Miley Cyrus, Rihanna, and Justin Bieber are perpetual selfie posers. You know selfies are more than just a trend, even the Mars rover is programmed to be able to take photos of itself. They're here to stay

Dr. Amy Slater and Professor Marika Tiggemann of the School of Psychology at Flinders University in Australia studied the effects of Internet use on girls aging from about 12-16, and found that among 96% of girls who had some access to the Internet at home, 72.1% of them upload pictures of themselves. According to Psychologist Jill Weber says, there's a danger that an individual's self-esteem may start to be tied to the comments and likes one gets when they post a selfie, and they aren't based on who the person is but on what they look like. But with social networks, where it's easy to get quick hits of approval almost constantly, the way for teenagers to develop selfie thing can quickly go out- of- control. It may even start to feel like an addiction.

Girls are socialized toward seeing themselves as lovable and worthwhile only if others value them. Dr. Weber notes, "Selfie culture is a way for this tendency to go into overdrive." In extreme cases, like that of Danny Bowman, a 19-year-old Englishman, people tend to become extremely addicted. Bowman was so obsessed with ‘selfies’ that he took up to 200 photos of himself in a day. In such cases a person can develop severe psychological problems like obsessive-compulsive disorder.

While girls have a greater share of selfies, they tend to be popular among all genders. The appeal of selfies comes from how easy they are to create and share and the control they give self photographers as to how they present themselves. Overall opinions on selfies vary. It basically

means that it is up to an individual to decide whether he or she wants to carry the habit over to the future.

Deepsikha Majumdar

2<sup>nd</sup> Year English Honours

# DRUG ADDICTION: A CURSE

Drug Addiction has been defined as the “complex disorder characterized by compulsive drug use.”

Substance abuse or drug abuse, as it is commonly referred to, is one of the biggest problem most young people of the world are facing. There is no single age group of people more affected by alcohol and drugs than young people. More than 23 million people over the age of 12 are addicted to alcohol and other drugs. According to studies made, it was evident that the earlier drug use is initiated, the more likely it is for a person to develop drug problems later in life. Substance abuse in youth can lead to many other problems like the development of delinquent behavior, anti-social attitudes and health related issues. Drug related problems do not affect the child only, but rather the family and the community as well. What the youngsters fail to realize is the devastating consequences of drug dependence. At that point of time, what might seem normal and necessary might end up making life threatened. But under the influence of the drug, they're blind to the consequences.

Psychiatrists have said that the various reasons of drug abuse can be boredom, the need to try new things, curiosity, depression (which is increasing day by day amongst the young) and most importantly, peer pressure. It is said that one is known by the company one keeps. Research showed that children whose parents abuse drugs are more likely to get addicted to drugs. Such children may be 45% to 79% more likely to abuse drugs than children whose parents stay away from drugs. And sometime, youngsters get involved in something that might seem “cool” but is actually their cause of destruction. Why the youngsters become the victims of drug abuse more than anyone else? Because they are not mature enough or strong enough to resist the temptation of something that is “apparently harmless”.

Kurt Cobain said, “Drugs are a waste of time. They destroy your memory and your self- respect and everything that goes along with your self esteem”.

According to senior psychiatrist, Dr. David Basangwa, addicts are usually unable to control their dependence on drugs. Addicts are unable to stop using drugs because chemical changes take place in their bodies and cause them to crave drugs. When one is addicted to drugs, one cannot function without them. But with the earth being reduced to a global village because of the internet and other means of communication, the youngsters are becoming more and more aware of the causes and effects of substance abuse. Young people themselves recognize the problem. They know that drug use and drug addiction are some of the most important issues facing their generation today. However, knowing and doing something about it are two entirely different things.

It is heart breaking to see a young life, filled with joy and hope and liveliness, literally “snuffed out”. Adventure, fun, excitement, education, these are what we associate with youth, not negligence, ignorance, danger or suffering.

Jashodhara Mukherjee.

2<sup>nd</sup> year English Honour

# BLAMING POOR MONDAYS

Come Mondays and the first thing one gets to hear is the alarm bell ringing in the morning or for many their parents, mostly mothers ,shouting (read howling ) in shrill voices to get up and get ready for schools and colleges. Most of the youngsters have one reaction, they open one eye look around themselves and go back to sleep. Many of them place another pillow over their ears to block the noise from coming in. Some throw away their alarm clocks and many just switch off their mobile phone alarms in frustration.

Then comes the most interesting part-strategies adopted by elders to wake up these lazy ones. The traditional ways include switching on loud music, pouring water- hot or cold, pulling away their blankets till the time they ultimately get up or even switching off the fans in the hot summer mornings or switching them up in cold winter ones .



Photo Courtesy: Internet

Mondays being the first days of the week is the most lethargic. After having a gala time over the weekends especially on Sundays by hanging out with friends and going out for parties one just cannot start the day on time on a Monday. In fact invariably all school and college students are mostly late for their early morning classes on this particular day.

Many discussions and talks have been carried out to determine what has led to Mondays being the most boring and lethargic day of the week which is often synonymously termed as *Monday Morning Blues*. Here are some of the common reasons:

1. Saturdays, in many institutions are mostly half days. Sunday being a full holiday follows it. Thus for one and a half days a person gets to behave the way he/she wants to. People get to be their own boss and live life their ways beyond any rules and regulations. But come Mondays, everyone goes back to the same disciplined life which they had lost somewhere in the past few hours. Thus, the body takes time to adjust from the carefree attitude to the disciplined one which is one of the reasons for people getting gloomy and tired on Mondays.

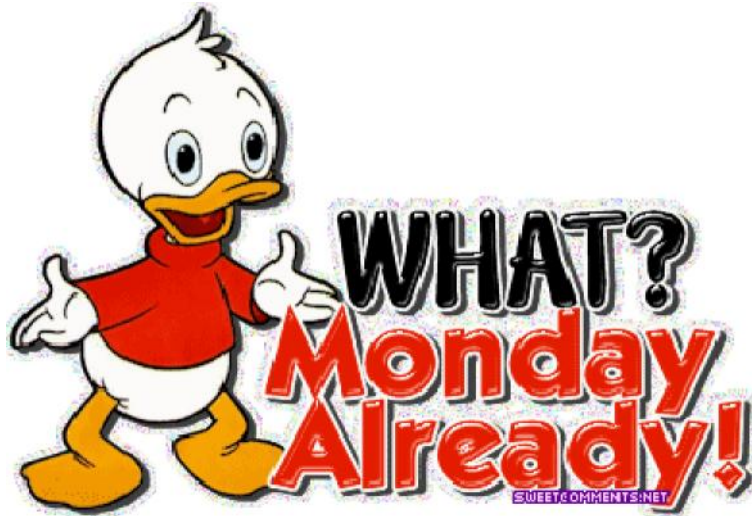


Photo courtesy: Internet

2. Most work deadlines are usually set on the date after the weekends which happens to be on a Monday. This makes a person hate this day even more because such deadlines do not permit a person to enjoy the weekends.



Photo Courtesy: Internet

3. Also, the thought that a person has to work and study for the next five days after enjoying a lot makes one behave in an irritating manner and accounts for occasional mood swings.



Photo Courtesy: Internet

4. Weekends are spent with people who one is really fond of. The love of the near and dear ones are often drowned when one gets into the company of their rivals, competitors or the people whom one is not so fond of on a Monday morning.
5. Most Mondays are spent by people crying and missing the weekend. Saturday seems to be like miles away from them when Monday arrives. Just the fact that one had a lot of fun on the weekends and that they have to wait for another five days- in between which they have piles of work to perform- makes Monday all the more gloomy and irritating.

Thus these are some of the most common and interesting reasons as to why poor Monday is mostly hated by everybody. In fact the contradiction here is that as Monday is the starting day of the week a person should be all freshened up and ever ready to try out new things but in most cases it is always the opposite.-Thanks to the unpredictable behaviour of human nature.

Subhadrika Sen

3<sup>rd</sup>Year Political Science Honours

# LIFE ON MARS

It still remains an open question till date that whether life exists on Mars. Scientists are continuously speculating on the fact that whether life ever existed on Mars and this is so because the red planet has many things in common with the Earth.

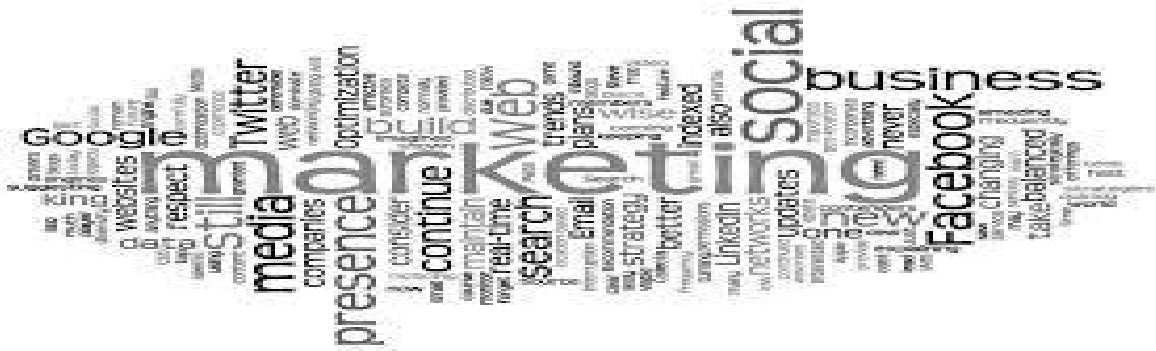
Scientists believe with certainty that water once flowed on Mars. The valleys and channels on Mars clearly demonstrate that water did once flow freely on the surface but gradually it might have evaporated to space or been frozen underground. Thus it is evidence that life may have existed there. According to many, primitive organisms may have existed on Mars during a period when life was forming on Earth.

Scientists are still negotiating between the views of existence of life on the red planet. On one hand Mars' meteorite does not prove life to exist while on the other hand it does not disapprove its existence. However scientists are still busy trying to figure out more evidences regarding the existence of life on Mars.

On January 24, 2014, NASA reported that current studies on the planet Mars by the Curiosity and Opportunity Rovers will now be looking for evidence of ancient life which includes a biosphere based on autotrophic and chemotropic microorganisms and ancient water that may have been habitable. Their chief objective is now the search of fossils and organic carbon.

Rudrani Ghosh

2<sup>nd</sup>English Honours



## Recent trends in Media





# **MEDIA TRENDS**

## **IN INDIA**

“Whoever controls the Media, controls the Mind.” -Jim Morrison

Media, in the 21st century has become the lifeline of a Nation. From its inception in the 18th century, it has evolved in leaps and bounds. It has gone onto become the fourth pillar of Democracy. The ever-expanding reach of the Media is beyond scrutiny. According to Thomas Jefferson, “If it were left on me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.” The root of a democratic setup lies in informed public opinion. Media provides a “free and unbiased” platform to not only disseminate information but also to encourage formation of public opinion. The influence of media is gradually percolating in various spheres of our day-to-day lives. Thus it has become more essential that the so-called ‘common man’ in a democratic country is adorned with objective, impartial and accurate information from across the globe.

India, being the largest democracy in the world has an extremely intrinsic network of media within and beyond the borders of the country. Modernization has transformed this into a communications network that sustains the pulse of a democracy of about 1.1 billion people. India's press is a metaphor for its advancement in the globalized world. The evolution of the Indian press can be divided into two broad categories – pre-colonial times and colonial (postindependence era). Patriotic movements grew in proportion with the colonial ruthlessness, and a vehicle of information dissemination became a tool for freedom struggle. In the struggle for freedom, journalists in the twentieth century performed a dual role as professionals and nationalists. The Bombay Herald, The Statesmen in Calcutta and the Madras Mail and The Hindu, along with many other rivals in Madras represented the metropolitan voice of India and its people. While Statesman voiced the English rulers' voice, The Hindu became the beacon of patriotism in the South. Powerful leaders like M.K. Gandhi used newspaper as the tool to spread awareness and thereby call his fellow Indians to fight an integrated battle for Independence. Newspapers, back then were known by the names of their editors. However, the post colonial India saw a new dimension in the ownership of media houses.

In 1976, the Registrar of Newspapers for India had recorded 875 papers; in 1995 there were 4,453. Robin Jeffrey comments: "Newspapers did not expand simply because the technology was available to make Indian scripts live as they had not been able to live before nor did newspaper grow simply because more people knew how to read and write. They grew because entrepreneurs detected a growing hunger for information among ever-widening sections of India's people, who

were potential consumers as well as newspaper readers. A race began to reach this audience advertising avenues were the prizes and these would come largely to newspapers that could convince advertisers that they had more readers than their rivals. Readers, meanwhile, were saying implicitly: "We will read newspapers that tell us about ourselves and reflect our concerns."

Free journalism has gradually been monopolized and corrupted by the big houses like Dalmias, Jains and the Goenkas. Twenty-one newspapers control two-thirds of all circulations, thereby resulting in a monopoly of opinions. The influx of cross media ownership has camouflaged the diversity and variation of views and ownership. Domination of the market both vertically (i.e. across different media such as print, radio, television and the internet) and horizontally (namely in particular geographical regions) is carried out by particular companies, groups or conglomerates.

Consolidation of viewpoints harms the democratic set up of India. Media houses in order to increase their economic supremacy try to suppress a story which does not cater to their interests thereby depriving the public of appropriate and accurate information. Thus, public is poorly informed and there is not much choice in gaining information from other media sources.

Channelized information has almost handicapped the conscience and the power of judgment in the common man. The growing dependency upon the media houses within the country and beyond has become a stark reality in today's world.

Asmita Nandy

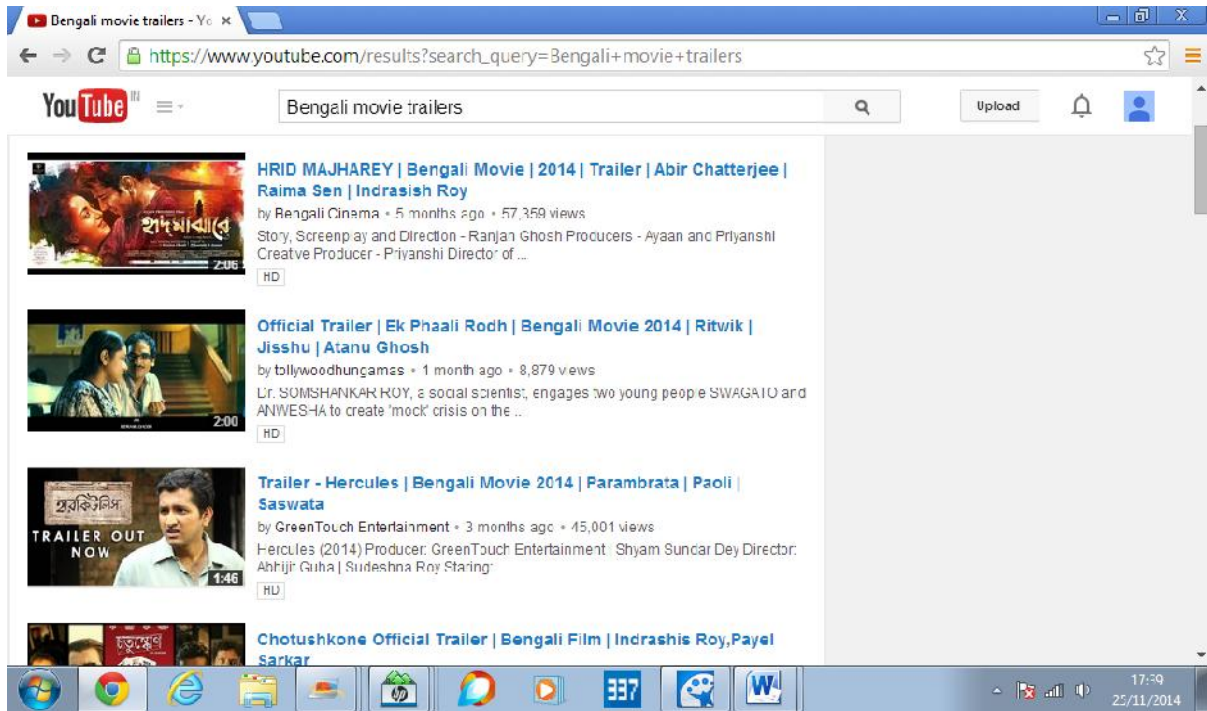
2<sup>nd</sup> Year Political Science Honours

# **SOCIAL MEDIA: A REVOLUTION IN BENGALI FILM PROMOTION**

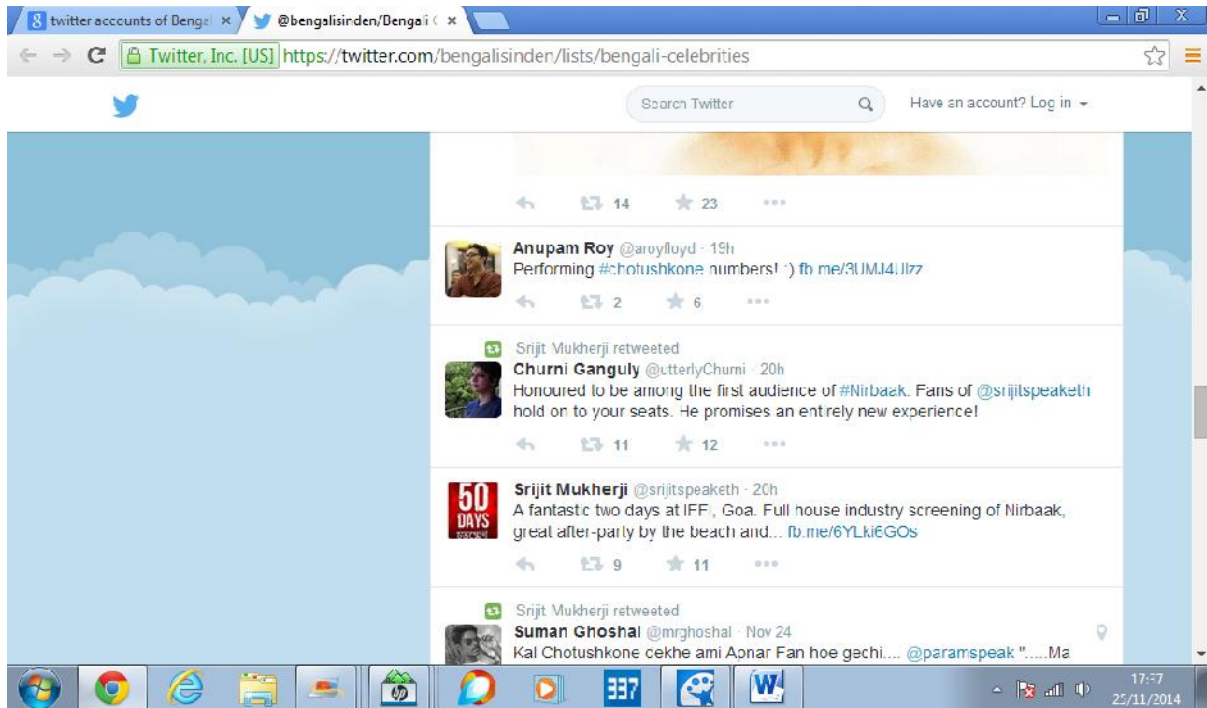
The emerging social media has revolutionized every aspect of modern lifestyle. Right from shopping to watching a movie or reading a book to connecting with friends, each of these activities today are exercised with the help of various social media platforms. Most importantly, this new form of media has been able to capture the audience's attention like no other. Hence, it is the most "in-thing" in contemporary world. This is exactly the reason why an already revolutionized Bengali film Industry took to the social media platform for further promotion of Bengali movies around the state.



Even before the trailers of Bengali movies are released on television, one gets to see their glimpses on YouTube and other social networking sites. The reason for such e-releases are that the amount of people who watch television have reduced in comparison to the amount of people who are glued to their computers, laptops and even high-tech mobile phones with YouTube facilities . In fact, it has been notified that movie trailers of Ramdhanu, HridMajhare and Bunohaash were released on YouTube prior to their official release through the television.



Twitter has become a very trending platform for regular updates of the celebrities. Thus, common people can actually read the comments and tweets posted by celebrities and get to know more about their personal lives, movie schedules, upcoming movies and the like. In fact mostly all Tollywood celebrities have their own twitter accounts and post regularly to update their fans of their whereabouts.





With a Skype and other such face to face chat options being available to the people, lot of conferences and face to face chat with fans are available. Google Hangout provides us the opportunity to directly converse with our favorite celebrities. It is off course, conditioned and only one in a thousand get the opportunity to really interact with the stars.

Facebook is also not too far behind in the race for becoming a platform of promotion. Almost each and every new movie that is about to release has its own Facebook page. Photos, behind the scenes news and videos are all uploaded in such pages. This attracts the viewer's more and more as they get to know about all sorts of gossips that they were till date unaware of.

Blogging has taken movie promotions to an entirely new level. In fact many movies keep blog promotions by inviting young bloggers so that the movie would have a platform to be promoted by the writings of the common man who also happen to be bloggers. Such bloggers cum star cast meets are also on the rise and have taken special places only next to the traditional press conferences. Kolkata bloggers an emerging blogger forum in Kolkata which has indexed about 150 young bloggers had in fact been invited to a promotional venture of the Bengali film BaariTaar Bangla and have helped in publicizing it by writing about the movie in their blogs which are read by hundreds across the globe.

Such strategies are resorted to reach the maximum number of people in a very short time. In fact it is seen that before the promotional strategies are worked out physically with the print media, the electronic media has already publicized it and is receiving reviews based on the publicizing. Many print media and electronic media channels and papers have taken a complete U-turn in their methods of promotion by maintaining websites and blogs owned by the base media.

With so many social media platforms emerging in contemporary time, it would not take very long for physical promotions, mall visits and the like to completely close down and the entire interaction be channelized towards e-promotions.

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Subhadrika Sen

3<sup>rd</sup> Year Political Science Honours.

# LIE DETECTOR FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

Five universities (Sheffield, Warwick, King's College London, Saarland in Germany and MODUL University Vienna in Austria) and four companies (ATOS in Spain, iHub in Kenya, Ontotext in Bulgaria and swissinfo.ch) have come together under a European Union-funded three-year project called "Pheme" to create a system that will test information exchanged on social networking websites to assess their veracity.

The system will categorize online rumors into four distinct categories: 1) Speculation (over such topics as interest rates); 2) Controversy (such as the one over the MMR vaccine); 3) Misinformation (the unwitting dissemination of untrue information); and 4) Disinformation (the dissemination of untrue information with malicious intent). The system will then retrieve the provenance of the information and divide them into categories according to their level of reliability. News outlets, individual journalists and potential eye witnesses of an event are among the information source categories. By tallying the number of sources substantiating or denying a piece of information, as well as tracking the history of conversation threads on social media websites, the system will assess whether the information in question is true or not. All of the analysis will take place in real time.

The data analyzed will include posts on Twitter, public comments on Facebook as well as comments in healthcare forums. The system will be evaluated in two real-world domains. The online counterpart of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation, swissinfo.chm will be handling the digital journalism, while the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College London will be looking at the healthcare information management. The healthcare management will look at identifying trends in new recreational drugs in online discussions to see how this triggers them featuring in patients' medical records and discussions with doctors.

The idea for such a system was triggered after the confusion that resulted during the London riots of 2011 when the rumor was spread that the animals of London Zoo had been set free. During emergency situations, such rumors can prove to be fatal as state administrations (such as governments and emergency services) try to maintain calm among civilians. Social media can also be used by rioters to organize potentially violent protests. On the other hand, social networking sites can also be tremendously helpful in providing information to the said state administrations.

The project was named 'Pheme' after the character from Greek mythology who was said to pry into the affairs of mortals and gods. She used to repeat all that she heard, beginning in a soft whisper, going up in volume each time she repeated it until everybody had heard it.

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Ratnottama A. Chaudhuri

3<sup>rd</sup> Year English Honours.



# WOMEN AND MEDIA

Media and its various forms are not only opening new links in connecting more and more people, but also in the establishments of new offices and diverse career opportunities. However, even in this vast array of opportunities, one finds low participation of women. A number of questions here shift the conversation to deeper analysis of the scenario surrounding women representation in the rise of media.

- *Are women incapable of being good reporters?*
- *Are women incapable of voicing strong opinions?*
- *Are women incapable of dealing with the harsh lives that media personnel's usually live?*
- *Are women suited only to writing soft news and featuring in page 3?*
- *Are age old traditions and social factors preventing them from becoming successful in modern times?*

With men and women essentially fighting neck to neck in all employment spheres one should never assume that women are made of weaker mettle and cannot compete with men. Reporting is a skill some are born with and some acquire it over time. Reporting like any other form of talent is gender neutral. Thus the statement that men are better reporters than women is a complete hoax. There are hundreds of women reporters all around the world covering various news reports and proving themselves to be equal to men if not better. In fact *Sarah Spain* a sports news anchor and sports reporter from Chicago completely proves this point when she went on to become a sports journalist after being told by a man "I can't stand hearing women talk about football". Thus attaching a gender to the activity of reporting would be immoral and impractical.

Coming to the fact that men are more opinionated than women regarding any issue has become completely unacceptable of late. Just because one does not picture women sitting in local *addas* over a cup of tea or coffee and a pack of cards discussing politics, sports or lifestyle, certainly does not mean that they do not have any opinion of their own regarding the same. Also, to add the thick and weighty voice of a man and his foremost nature of making everyone accept that what he says is true can sometimes overshadow a woman's opinions. But this certainly does not mean that a woman cannot debate and put forth her individual estimations in this male dominated society.

Most media personnel have a very harsh life. They have to stay away from home and families for days and even months at times. During wars and strikes special reporters are sent to the hotspots from all over the world, to live in such dangerous situations and give first hand reports of the

same. It is often considered that women are not suited to go on such reporting as they would neither be safe nor be able to deal with such situations calmly. Most often than not their physical weaknesses and emotional mind-sets are laid down as excuses for not making them play a major role in information dissemination during times of crisis. But that too does not falter the morale of strong women journalists like *Arwa Damon* from CNN, *Brankica Stankovic* from Serbian TV and *Solange Lusiku* from Congo, who despite getting life threats for their work never back down from it. They have also been honored at the 25th International Women Media Foundation's Courage in Journalism Awards.

It is often found that women are more inclined towards writing soft news and socializing in Page 3 parties. In fact most of the soft news, travel reporters, and futuristic writers are women in every newspaper organizations. This has earmarked the reporting sphere for women to be related only to soft stories. Surprisingly, especially in China one can see that the popular trend is that women themselves opt for human interest stories rather than going for hard news. In fact some of China's most successful women investigative journalists deal with social issues and HIV AIDS, food, and finance, but nothing beyond.

Women have always been seen to be focusing more on their family and children rather than making a career for themselves in society. But of late, they try and balance their work as mothers and wives at home and as professionals in their work field. However the age long patriarchal society does oppose this daring nature of women. That is particularly why many women journalists are threatened more than men. Men look at women entering in this field as a threat to their reputation and monopoly. Thus to scare women away men adopt to all sorts of tactics.

After answering all the above mentioned questions one can conclude that women in contemporary times are proving to be better journalists than even men at times. Thus, call it subordination or revival of patriarchy, she has to face more obstructions in establishing herself than men in the field of journalism.

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Subhadrika Sen

3<sup>rd</sup> Year Political Science Honours.

# STUDY ABROAD

"When you are a journalist, you need to understand the larger world around you...."

In Siyalala, South Africa, a student reports on township residents who hook up dangerous, illegal electric connections because they can't get legal electricity to their humble shacks.

In Rabat, Morocco, a Whitman College student interviews a lesbian couple who risks imprisonment for their hidden relationship in a land where their love ought to be prohibited by God.

As globalization becomes an increasingly important part of modern life, universities are launching study - abroad programs in even more remote and exotic destinations. Some of the most daring of these endeavors are sponsored by journalism and mass communication programs with an eye on preparing the next generation of foreign correspondents. As a subject, it has attracted a great deal of attention from students in every corner of the world. Due to its wide popularity, major universities from all over the world have taken the initiative to give proper training to the students who are eager to pursue a career in the field of journalism and mass communication.

Erna Smith, a professor of professional practice at the USC Annenberg for communication and journalism, has been taking groups of graduate students to Cape Town for the past five years. Students intern with local newspapers and radio and television stations, reporting on everything from World Cup soccer to protests against the government to the goings-on at South African Parliament.

"A lot of what makes these international programs great is not the techniques and skills the students learn - that's a given - but it is what happens to their character and their outlook in life. When you are a journalist, you need to understand that the world is not just your world; you have to understand the larger world around you..."

Study abroad by American students has more than tripled over the past two decades and journalism schools and departments have expanded the number, variety and scope of their offerings. The United Kingdom remains the leading destination for American students, followed by Italy, Spain, France and China. At Indiana University, one of the leaders in international education, more than half of all journalism students study abroad. James Kelly, an associate professor of journalism who has taken group of students to Kenya twice to report on HIV/AIDS, says, "Study abroad alters a student's perspective. Not only do they come to understand a foreign culture and its media, they forever see their own culture and system differently." Many of the large journalism schools offer a smorgasbord of travel study opportunities with options for

students who want to cover business, arts, sports, and politics. China in particular has become a hotspot for young journalists studying abroad. The University of Texas at Austin, Indiana University, New York University, the University of Missouri, Stony Brook University and Arizona State University are among schools that have sponsored journalism programs in China in recent years.

When some journalism study programs focus on media outlets and seeing the conventional tourist sites, more and more expect students to actually work as journalists, reporting on the communities they are living in. Students publish their work on websites and in magazines, newspapers and print-on-demand books. Some study-abroad programs include internships where students work at local media outlets.

In today's world journalism as a career is attracting many youths. The profession promises both prestige and power. Audio-visual mass media, print media and now the on line news portals offer variety of options to prospective students. Thus making study-abroad programs popular in today's world.

Shibapriya Saha.

2<sup>nd</sup> Year English Honours.

## Talking with the Stars



# INTERVIEW OF MRS. ALOKANANDA ROY

I got the opportunity to interact with Mrs. Alokanda Roy and being a part of Media Society, Loreto College, it was my privilege to interview Mrs. Alokanda Roy on 20th of March, 2014.

She started her journey from Children's Little Theatre (CLT) and now she owns a dance school, 'Chandalaloke'. She is also a social worker and did most of the work through her dance. She started the dance therapy which helped a number of people. Mrs. Roy was awarded a diploma in Rabindra Sangeet by Dakshinee, Calcutta, in 1968, and a Diploma in Pianoforte by Trinity College, London, in 1967. She has been a onetime winning candidate for the "Miss India" title. Though all her successes over the years, Alokanda Roy has remained an assiduous learner an artist who continuously enriches her skills and understanding at her art form.

## **1. How was your experience in Children's Little Theatre (CLT)?**

*I was quite young that time, only 3 years old. In CLT I learned to love my dance because there it was not a regimented training. We were kids that time and used to dance as kids do, there was no regimentation and I think that is one of the reasons why my love for dance grew so much. Maybe we used to do a few classical movements without even knowing that they were a part of classical dance. Everything was done in a playful manner and we enjoyed that.*

## **2. Tell us something about your dance school, 'Chandalaloke'.**

*Here mainly classical training for Odissi is given and along with it we also have Kathak and creative dance. The kids under playgroup are allowed to do anything they like to do without any compulsion like we used to do in CLT.*

## **3. What is dance therapy all about?**

*Dance therapy as you have heard I never started it as a therapy, it became a therapy. I started it as a workshop and that time I did not plan anything about it. Everything happened all of a sudden. Now that it has become a dance therapy it naturally reveals people's life and they get a relief from it. It has also changed their mindset and eventually people are transformed and that is why people call it dance therapy.*

## **4. What are your views about the 'Balmiki Pratibha Movement' since 2007?**

*'Balmiki Pratibha Movement' was something where I realized the present condition of the people. It was also made a public show where they got standing ovation. You know, something in them changed for the better. They sensed good and they realized that maybe they were punished in a wrong way. They are now rewarded for whatever good they did. They started changing from the Movement because it was their story of reformation.*

**5. You were talking about the conditions that breed "sinners", about the poverty that instigates it. How do you react to the much talked about "capital punishment" verdict of the Nirbhaya incident of 16th December, 2012?**

*I have not studied law, but as a human being I do not support Capital Punishment. I think it does not have a deterrent effect on the issue. Hanging people does not guarantee that crime would never be repeated; neither can it mend the condition of the victimized. Law can never transform men. It is all about the social idea of tolerance of being 'human beings' that must be put into effect and injected in our conscience. This is the panacea, if at all there is one. In the present day society, we see the victim's face blurred in every media! This is shame. It is never her fault, it is she who has been wronged. Many times they are abandoned by their families and banned from participating in any social functions. It is we who need to change. The root of this problem lies in the social structure, the tolerance and the mentality of the people. We need to change that first. A law can only punish people, but, as it stands it does not render a remedy to the society.*

**6. Many people are not aware of the conditions inside the prison. The film 'Mukhtodhara' gave many an insight into the world unknown. But Mr.Nigel Akara and many directly commented that they were disappointed with the way things have been shown. What is your word on the topic?**

*Actually it is a commercial movie. The story adapted from real life but, as you know it is tampered with at more than one place to serve its commercial agenda. Many off the instances shown in the film disappointed the inmates, the staff and others associated with the HOME. But again, it has put a focus on the lives of these inmates at times. The film has made Nigel, a popular face in the industry. He is now an entrepreneur and about 5-6 of my boys from the home are associated with him. The film tried to put forth the agenda of acceptability of the inmates outside their prison wall. You see, their life outside the prison walls is tough, the social acceptability of these convicts is terrible.*

**6. What advice do you have for the younger generations to help address these social issues?**

*As everything is easily available, I think sometimes people want more than what is required. Sometimes they don't realize the worth of what they get and there is no end of wanting more. So may be because of that they at times face some problems and there is such a tough competition. I think, nowadays children are having so much of psychological problems which we did not face much when we were young, everybody tries to excel in everything and that does not happen. I don't know maybe it is because of globalization. At times we also compel the children to do something, mostly because there is so much to choose from that they get lost in their choices. It's not about the good and the bad, but about what is good for that particular person. They have too many choices. During our time we did not have so many choices and because of that there was not much competition. When there are too many opportunities and choices, the needs, wants and competition eventually increases. So this becomes a sort of burden for the youngsters.*

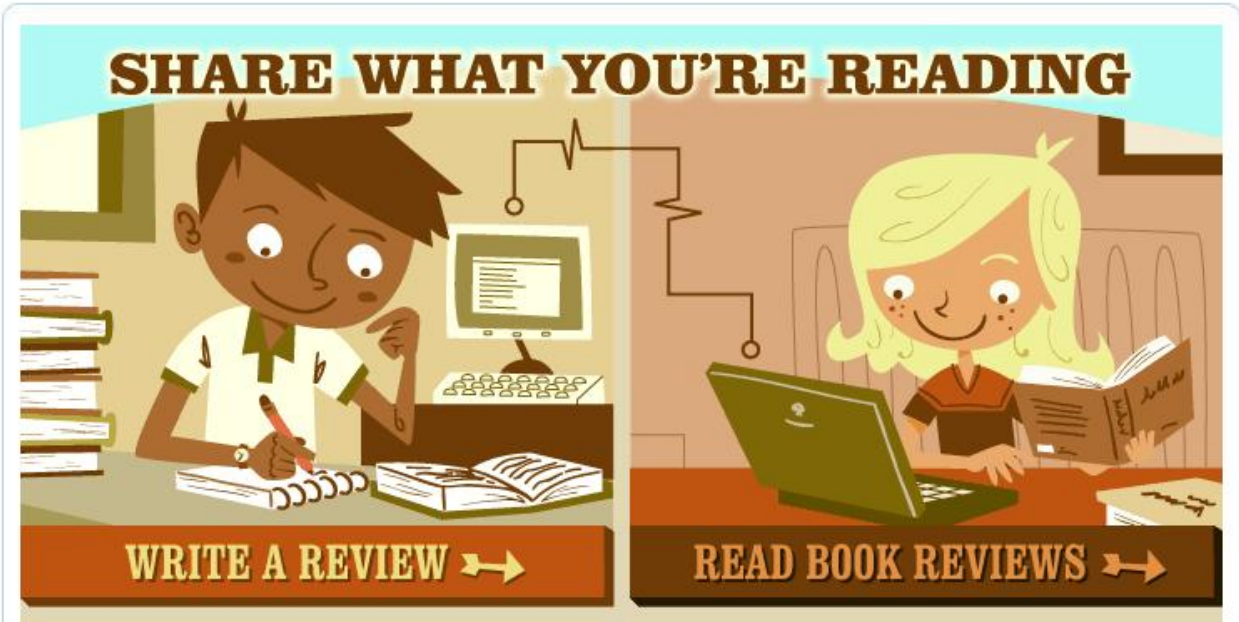
**8. Whom would you like to thank for your overwhelming lifetime success?**

*I have so many people. Personally, I don't think I am successful, it's my fulfillment. I have enjoyed dancing and whatever I have done I have done it through my dance. Yes, I owe a lot to my parents, my brother, my husband, my children who have always supported me right from their childhood. Naturally children are very demanding but in my case they have not been demanding. They have always encouraged me, even now they do so. And I will definitely thank the audience without whose support anything would not have been possible for me.*

Nilanjana Chowdhury

2<sup>nd</sup> Year English Honours.





## Bibliophilia



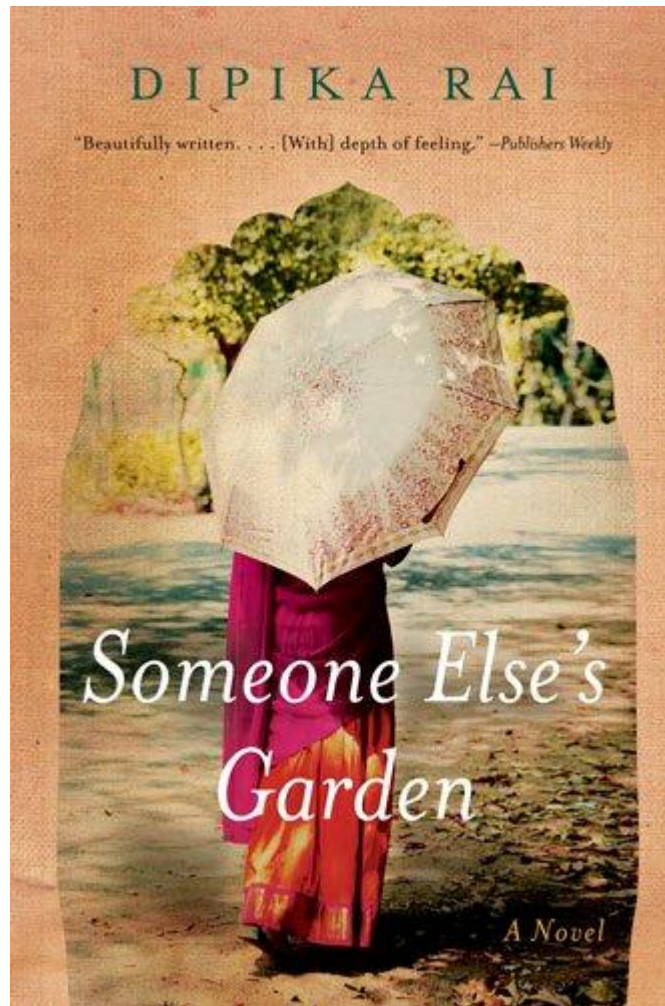
# *Someone Else's Garden*

Author- Dipika Rai

Published by: Harper Collins

Pages: 374

Price: Rs 350



[Photo courtesy: Internet]

*Someone Else's Garden* is the debut novel of author Dipika Rai. Judging the title at the first sight, one might feel it is monotonous and boring but in fact it is not so. *Someone Else's Garden* is the titular phrase which is repeatedly used a number of times in the novel and acts as a metaphor for a 'girl'.

The story is set around the deep-rooted traditions and values of a small village where even today girls are seen as the properties of their husbands and should serve them till death. The storyline follows the protagonist *Mamta* who is married off at the young age of twenty as she had become a burden to her family. Hereafter, she is depicted as a strong woman who sheds her inhibitions and the bonds of age long traditions only to make herself self-sufficient and independent and find a true husband in her long-time lover.

The novel intricately shows the struggle of a low-caste born woman in an intensely patriarchal society. In true sense one can call it a novel which speaks on the themes of injustice, changing relationships, repentance and freedom, finding true love and above all struggling to exist in the society despite being an outcaste.

The entire storyline revolves around various women whom Mamata meets. Herein, the different stories attached to these women give the viewers a diverse idea of how each woman is treated differently in the society. Whether it be the birth of her younger sister, or one of her aunts whose husband made her sit in the flesh market to gain more riches; all eventually reflect the way society sees and treats women.

The language is simple and easy to understand. In some junctions one can actually visualize the scenes and many scenes, especially those of domestic violence are vividly horrific to even imagine. The descriptions of the treatment towards a woman even today are of dreadful capacity and unthinkable in nature.

Another interesting and thought provoking aspect comes in the second recurring phrase “*Jai Ho Devi*” spoken by men and women alike in many instances throughout the novel. What is interesting is the fact that while men too worship the Goddess at all times, yet there is a distinctive nature in them to subordinate women in society. Also, when the ‘Goddess’ is welcome in every house, then why are the daughters of the same houses considered to be ‘*someone else’s garden*’?

Through this novel Dipika Rai tries to incorporate a very thought provoking issue in the minds of the people in the society- that of gender bias and its outcome. She shows the strong character of a woman who can fight against all odds and earn respect and success in the eyes of the society. It is a call for all the women in society to stand up for who they are and to live up to none but their own expectations.

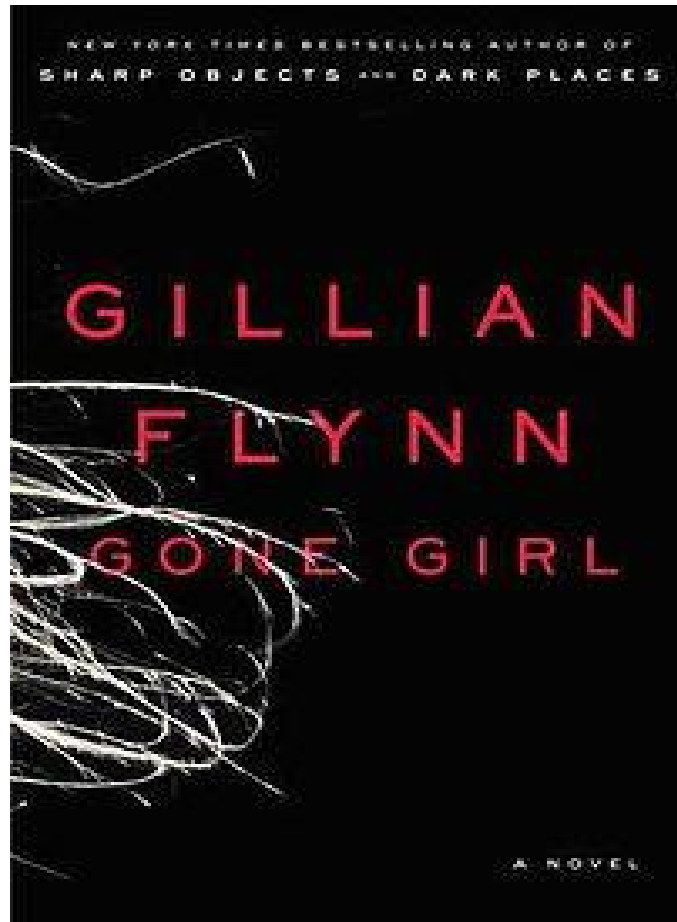
Subhadrika Sen

3<sup>rd</sup> Year, Political Science Honours

# *Gone Girl*

*Writer-* Gillian Flynn

*Publisher-* Crown Publishing Group



*“Hell at this point, I can’t imagine my story without Amy. She is my forever antagonist. We are one long frightening climax.”*

To call Gillian Flynn’s latest novel *Gone Girl* merely a thriller is to do grave injustice to both the story and its writer. While it certainly is a total page-turner that keeps you at the edge of your seat or whatever comfortable piece of furniture you have snuggled yourself in, it is also a biting portrait of marriages and today’s media culture, and Flynn shows all of this in such a way that is sure to boggle one’s mind.

The plot is fairly simple, apparently. On their fifth anniversary, Nick Dunne comes home to find his wife Amy missing. The police and media get involved and very soon Nick finds himself becoming the prime suspect in his wife's disappearance and possible murder. However, as both Nick and the readers find out, there is much more to the story than that meets the eye.

There are many elements to commend in *Gone Girl*. If one just looks at the protagonists, the Dunnes, we see a couple that makes the Macbeths look boring and timid. The book is narrated by both of them, in a manner of speaking, and we get a thorough insight into both of their dark minds. The fact that though both Amy and Nick are rather unpleasant people, the book is written in such a way that we end up rooting for both at different points, either against or with each other, is laudable.

There are other memorable characters in the book too, from the mockingly refined Desi Collings to the hot-headed host of 'The Ellen Abbott Show' Ellen Abbot. Through Abbott, one of the most telling themes of *Gone Girl* is explored- that of the power of sensationalizing in media. Flynn plays with the ideas of clichés and stereotypes and how our perception and judgment of people is moulded by the way they are presented to us in popular media. In the age of *CSI* and *Criminal Minds*, the book performs the dual function of surprising the readers and also subverting this mentality of the public being the investigators or the judges of a crime they think they understand because of all that they have seen or read. In one of the book's most resounding and bleak monologues in the book, Nick explains how we live in a time where we have seen everything through television or film or the internet and thus nothing, not even human emotions, are original to us anymore. It is from this angle that the mystery of the plot grows.

Flynn's main purpose of writing this story however was to illustrate the lies that make a marriage. It is a very unique examination of gender dynamics. The expectations that are put on women and men in this day and age, due to the aforementioned media clichés, leads them to put on a facade so as to meet these standards for each other and even their own selves. The book questions self-deception and if it is better to lie and be a good person or stay truthful to yourself, even if the real you might be someone malevolent. All of this is heightened by the clashing perfection of Nick's and Amy's personalities.

While all this makes the book sound very nihilistic, Flynn's writing is anything but. It is a joy to read, full of real-world analogies and darkly comedic responses that both Amy's and Nick's narrations are infused with. The combination of humor and ruthlessness works wonders and the book becomes a very enjoyable read.

*Gone Girl* has received widespread acclaim. It has topped many Bestseller lists and continues to win fans all over the world. It is being adapted into a film by Oscar-nominated director David Fincher and will star Ben Affleck, Rosamund Pike and Neil Patrick Harris. Flynn has written the screenplay herself and added a new ending to the movie, which is considered to be one of the most anticipated releases of 2014.

The term “one-sit read” seems almost ridiculous today, when we have so many distractions. However, *Gone Girl* is certainly one such book. It has many qualities that warrant this sort of devotion, some of which have been enumerated above. Yet, the ultimate thing that it has going for it is that it is a smart book- entertaining and challenging, and those of us who like that sort of thing will surely cherish it and all its twisted genius.

Nikhath Zahra

IIIrd year English Honours.

# *The Winds of Hastinapur*

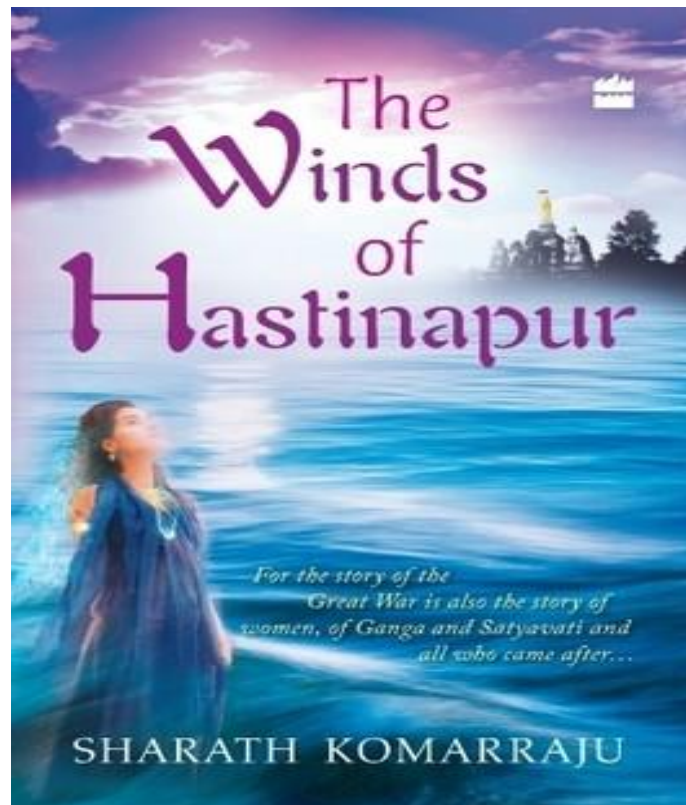
Author: Sharath Komarraju

Publisher/Year: Harper Collins/2013

Genre: Epic/ Mythology

Pages: 299

Price: Rs. 299



(Source: Internet)

*The Winds of Hastinapur* is a beautifully researched novel on the precursor to the Great Battle of Mahabharata. It provides an insight to the readers that the Great Battle was not only the narration of events which led to the five brothers fight a war against their cousins; but also the story of some strong women-with characters like Ganga, Satyawati. Gandhari, Kunti ,Amba and Draupadi, the epic could not have gotten any larger.

*The Winds of Hastinapur* is Komarraju's third novel after *Murder in Amravati* (2012) and *Banquet on Dead* (2012). The uniqueness of the novel is brought about by the way the author has treated two of the most forgotten characters in the epic- Ganga and Satyawati.

The novel is divided into two distinct parts. The first part narrated by Ganga and the latter by the fisher princess Satyawati. The feelings of Ganga as a young maiden, her curses, her marriage to king Shantanu and most importantly her giving birth to her sons have been elaborately described here. Also, the relationship with Devrath which had hardly been touched upon by generations of writers has been openly described in this novel. The feelings of a mother who knows that she would be separated from her son and yet tries to keep him all to herself is truly emotional. The story of Ganga, therefore is the story of a reluctant mother who gives up her only surviving son for the well being of the people on Earth.

Satyawati on the other hand is genuinely concerned for the people of her clan- the fishermen- and their upliftment. But this gives way to an attitude of over ambitiousness, lust and her marriage to king Shantanu, dethroning Devrath into a long life of celibacy and curses.

The two most important elements apart from the narration are that the novel provides an insight to the childhood days of Devrath and most importantly raises a question that if Satyawati had not been adamant on marrying Shantanu but Devrath, then what would have been the course of the Great War? The novel ends leaving a person wondering the answer to the just asked question but it seemed that the roots of *adharna* had been planted with the entry of Satyawati into the royal Kingdom.

Komarraju has thus been successful in pointing out to the readers that the story of the War is indeed the story of the mistakes and ambitions of women along with the men. This novel truly serves its purpose and becomes an unputdownable read for everyone who reads it.

Subhadrika Sen

3<sup>rd</sup> Year Political Science Honours





**View and Review**

# ***12 Year a Slave***

Directed by : Steve McQueen

Produced by : Brad Pitt

Cast : Solomon Northup, Lupita Nyong'o

"EVERYONE DESERVES NOT JUST TO SURVIVE BUT TO LIVE"

The most talked about film of this season directed by Steve McQueen went on to win most of the academy awards for several nominees. The film is well directed and truly stands out to serve its purpose to highlight the slavery and racism faced by the blacks because of the whites during the civilwar.

It depicts the white's horrendous treatment on the blacks which speaks volumes about the white and black discrimination which went on for a period of time in the 18th century. The protagonist of the film Solomon Northup portrayed and played by the talented Chiwetel Ejiofor, a resident of New York Saratoga in 1841 is a free man who is deceived and abducted into slavery for 12 tedious years. In his journey from New York to southeast America lies extremely depressing scenes of the ill treatment faced by the blacks because of the white Americans.

When it comes to acting the whole cast of the film has done justice to their respective characters. However the standout of the film is the character of "patsy" played by the young Lupita Nyong'o who is a young girl forced into slavery and molestation by her white master. This young brooding actress did get paid off for the excellent portrayal by winning the Oscars for best supporting actress and many more prestigious awards.

The scenes are horrid and heartwarming as it shows the heartless whites stripping and beating them for the tiniest of reasons. There arises rage in our hearts as we see the helplessness of these people. The film is very gripping and the audience not only get to witness betrayal and injustice but gets to feel the pain and anguish too. At the end of the movie we see the freedom of Solomon Northup after twelve years as a slave but the scene where patsy the little girl running after him and the look of the other helpless slaves keeps us gripped and wondering what they had to go through yet again. Yes we literally get stuck with them and their pain even after the movie ends. Solomon as we see is only a few of those who regained their freedom with their nightmarish past but more than those freed lies those who were still imprisoned. The order to call the whites "masters" leave us thinking why so much injustice and hate is spitted upon them and how they tend to ignore that the only master is above looking down and waiting for justice to fall.

Hardly do we get to see movies directed and nurtured with such sincerity and filled with so much awareness. We definitely can't help but adore the fresh new director Steve McQueen for his hardwork and numerous talents on direction and execution. A film with a strong message and a wonderful lesson on humanity is worth everyone's hours and definitely not worth the ignorance.

Mohini Gurung

3<sup>rd</sup> Year Political Science Honours

# One for All and All for One: Marvel's space smash, Guardians of the Galaxy

*Writers:* James Gunn and Nicole Perlman

*Director:* James Gunn

*Cinematographer:* Ben Davis

*Music:* Tyler Bates



(Picture courtesy: [www.metrokids.com](http://www.metrokids.com))

**Editors:** Craig Wood, Fred Raskin, Hughes Winborne

**Based on:** Guardians of the Galaxy by Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning

**Starring:** Chris Pratt, Zoe Saldana, Bradley Cooper, Vin Diesel, Dave Bautista, Lee Pace, Karen Gillan, Djimon Hounsou, John. C. Reilly, Michael Rooker, Glenn Close, Benicio Del Toro

**Producer:** Kevin Feige

Ever since Christopher Nolan's hugely and deservedly successful **The Dark Knight trilogy**, something very curious has been happening in the superhero movie genre. The bleak and realistic take on Batman has led to a zeitgeist of similar kinds of origin tales of our favourite superheroes and in all of this, much of the fun and the wonder of these movies has been lost. Lucky for us, Marvel's **Guardians of the Galaxy** has arrived not only to save our galaxy but superhero movies as well! James Gunn's hilarious, colorful, profane and yes, hugely enjoyable **Guardians** is a total romp that makes us remember why we fell in love with such heroes in the first place, even if they come from very unusual places in the universe.

In the film, we see the formation of the "guardians of the galaxy" who are a most unusual group of saviours- Peter Quill, a human who was abducted from Earth as a child and now travels the galaxy as an outlaw and who likes to call himself Star-Lord, Gamora, a green-skinned alien who is one of the most fearsome assassins in the universe, Rocket, a foul-mouthed genetically engineered racoon who is a bounty hunter, Groot, a humanoid tree who's Rocket's muscleman, and Drax the Destroyer, a powerful alien seeking revenge. All of them together fight the evil Ronan the Accuser and his vicious minion Nebula who want to destroy the galaxy.



While all of this may sound like a rehash of all the space adventure type movies we've seen before just with an added talking racoon, it is actually so much more. Sure, influences of films like **Star Wars**, **Galaxy Quest**, and maybe even a hint of something like the **Oceans trilogy** or Joss Whedon-helmed **Firefly** are obviously there *in Guardians*, it is still very much its own beast.

The area where **Guardians** stands out most from its dark and brooding peer group is its use of humour. As the famous and factually misquoted proverb goes, "*tragedy is easy, comedy is hard,*" so it is with this movie. This is because **Guardians** is not merely an extremely hilarious movie but rather, it works as a movie because of its humour. The film is full of punch-lines after punch-lines and though one-liners maybe a staple in action films, none of them have quite done it like our movie here. This is because the humour in this movie is a key to the characters themselves and it becomes an innate quality in them which helps us understand those characters and as a result root for them when they are in trouble. There is literally a character with just one line that it repeats over and over again in the movie which is obviously Groot's "*I am Groot.*" However, with just that one line, we actually feel for this dear creature, both in times of hilarity and pathos and it just goes to show what a smartly written script can do for a film. Gunn and Perlman have done a tremendous job with the writing of this film and making it so effectively funny. The language of the film borders on dirty at times but it only adds to the fun and also makes it a more enjoyable experience for adults.



(Picture courtesy: [www.aceshowbiz.com](http://www.aceshowbiz.com))

In terms of acting, this film is again aces because it requires a talented cast to pull off these jokes and these extreme personalities. At the head of all this, we have Chris Pratt as Quill. This along with **The Lego Movie** earlier this year is Pratt's breakout role and it is fair to say that in him, Hollywood has its next major star. The soundtrack will be discussed in greater detail below but from his dance moves to his bravery, Pratt creates a true hero out of this wanted criminal with a heart of gold. Next up, and who might be the true surprise of this film, is Rocket Raccoon voiced

exceptionally by Bradley Cooper. Many people thought that he will merely come off as a gimmick but with the help of the script and Cooper's frankly astonishing voice work, we end up having an acerbically hilarious and at the same time quite complex character who keeps defying expectations throughout the film. Rocket would be nothing without Groot and Vin Diesel, who voiced the lovable tree, makes an unforgettable character that has probably ended up being the most popular out of all the members of the team. Zoe Saldana plays Gamora and being no stranger to body paint, like her role in **Avatar**, or spaceships, since she's also Uhura in the new **Star Trek** films, she fits in comfortably in her role. She is very cool and her action scenes are quite remarkable. Rounding up the team is the wrestler Dave Bautista who plays Drax. One may not think someone like him would be able to stand his own ground in a film like this but he really does. His straight-faced delivery of many of the film's funniest lines is one of its many joys.

The film also has a strong line-up of supporting players. Right of the bat, John C. Reilly and Michael Rooker are perfect in their roles of Corpsman Dey and Yondu respectively. Others like Glenn Close, who has the most amazing up-do in her role as the Nova Prime, Peter Serafinowicz and number of secret cameos are very good too. If there is one area where the film falters, it is its antagonists. While Lee Pace (Ronan), Karen Gillan (Nebula), Djimon Hounsou (Korath) and Benicio Del Toro (The Collector) have obviously done the best with what they have been given, the film just chose to focus more on its band of misfit-heroes and how they teamed up together, and therefore the villains are not as memorable.



(Picture courtesy: [www.pagetopremiere.com](http://www.pagetopremiere.com))

Another aspect of the film that excels, and one that has been featured very heavily in its promotional work, is its marvellous (pun intended) soundtrack. No other mainstream superhero movie has relied so much on its soundtrack not only to add to the experience of the film but

within its context and story too. Like the humour, the songs used in the film actually propel it forward and are there right from the beginning to its main climax to its end, all in the form of Quill's favourite cassette tape entitled "The Awesome Mix Vol. 1". The choice of songs is also very commendable and Gunn is to thank for that as well.

As stated above, **Guardians** is unique among other superhero movies not only because it is such a riot but also because it is like a burst of colour and energy in terms of its look. Cinematographer Ben Davis has constructed such a beautiful backdrop to all the adventures that our heroes have. Space in this movie is not some black void but a place full of shades and hues and in all of that, we have colourful aliens flying brightly-coloured spaceships- due to all of this, **Guardians** also manages to be one of the best-looking films of the year.

The special effects are also very believable. We have a lot of space dogfights, once again invoking the spirit of Star Wars, and many other remarkably shot action sequences. However, the best use of special effects in the film is obviously with the characters of Rocket and Groot. Both of them, no matter how absurd they might appear on paper, become fully realized characters because of a perfect mixture of characterization, voice-work and CGI and it is no wonder why the public has taken such a liking to them.

Finally, the one man responsible for bringing together all of this must be acknowledged and that is, obviously, the director James Gunn. Producer Kevin Fiege has taken some interesting choices over the years in terms of the directors of the Marvel Cinematic Universe and Gunn is one bet that has paid off superbly. Known for his small indie movies like *Super*, Gunn brought his singular sense of humour to the project and really built something special out of it. Unlike Marvel's other movies, **Guardians** was a rather unknown commodity and there was great scepticism if the film will work or not, but luckily for all of us, it has and we have one of the best standalone films in the MCU and Gunn is the brains behind it.

The film has been a runaway success .It fills one up with wonder while also tickling their funny bone till they are tearing up with laughter. It has very universal and important values also like the power of love and friendship and how even the most apparently hostile individuals can join together for the sake of good. There will be a sequel that has been announced and it is already highly anticipated. One can only hope that like Nolan's films inspired others, so would something as joyous as **Guardians of the Galaxy**.

Nikhat Zahra

3<sup>rd</sup>Year English Honours



# *A Trip Worth Taking: Highway*

Year: 2014

Director: Imtiaz Ali

Imtiaz Ali's latest venture into romance and relationships takes the form of an unconventional road trip – *Highway*. The plot revolves around the kidnapping of Veera Tripathi (Alia Bhatt) – the daughter of a rich and powerful businessman – by a gang of contract criminals, headed by Mahabir Bhati (Randeep Hooda), four days before her wedding. Mahabir is dissuaded by his superiors on account of her family's connections with politicians and the police, but he is intent on deriving a profit from the abduction, even by selling the girl into prostitution if he is unable to obtain ransom. The film explores the bond that gradually develops between the two protagonists, as Veera realizes that she prefers her apparent captivity over returning home.

The impact of the film derives from the powerful performances of both the leads. Alia Bhatt, in a commendable leap from her debut in *Student of the Year*, is convincing in her vulnerability and her strength, in spite of the few moments where she falters. She manages to bring to life the stark reality of the demons gnawing beneath her carefree, bubbly self. Randeep Hooda redeems himself after a series of unsuccessful lead roles, playing the damaged criminal to perfection. Through sudden flashes, we get a glimpse into his childhood, and what went into the making of his present, deeply troubled psyche.

Anil Mehta's cinematography is another high point, at times almost breathtaking, as he takes the viewer through Kashmir, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi. The film experiments with innovative camera techniques, at times unnecessarily, but adding to the emotional impact in other sequences. The musical score by A R Rahman makes for a fitting counterpart to the visuals as it supports the protagonists' journey into the recesses of both the landscape and the heart.

*Highway* is not merely the Bollywood recreation of *Stockholm syndrome*. It explores themes of class identity, class divisions and their consequences, and the nature of freedom. It does not offer entirely convincing solutions to the issues raised and can at times be quite naive in its handling of character and situation. Yet, it possesses freshness and an honesty that carries the film through, making us believe, empathize and reflect.

Both Veera and Mahabir are scarred by dysfunctional systems, which form the basis for their unlikely attachment. At one level, it is a charming love story, but on others it is a portrayal of

complex and confused networks that give Veera and Mahabir their identity as captives. One might argue that the film is unrealistic at many levels, but the 133-minute journey is definitely one worth taking. As in his previous films, Ali explores communication and connection and how it changes lives. *Highway* is quite fanciful, but far too loaded to be dismissed as a simple romance.

AlliyaDagman

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# Acknowledgements

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## **Staff Advisors**

Miss Sayoni Choudhuri

Mr. Soumya Dutta

## **Special Thanks**

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