

the objective REALITY

A L I T E R A R Y M A G A Z I N E



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“

A novel examines not reality but existence. And existence is not what has occurred, existence is the realm of human possibilities, everything that man can become, everything he's capable of. Novelists draw up the map of existence by discovering this or that human possibility. But again, to exist mean: 'being-in-the-world.' Thus, both the character and his world must be understood as possibilities.

-MILAN KUNDERA // 'THE ART OF THE NOVEL'



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Dear reader,

For centuries, great artists have captured their visual experiences through painting. Yet, their portrayals often mirrored what the common eye beheld. In 1984, Gertrude Stein wrote a little book titled *Picasso*. Stein generously supported Pablo Picasso throughout the years and the renowned camaraderie between these two towering figures of early twentieth-century art has been widely acknowledged. However, the reason I bring up Stein's book is due to an intriguing observation she made about Picasso's perception of the world.

Various artistic representations of the world as it truly is are distinguished by the fusion of intense emotions evoked within the artist through the ordinary, as well as the artist's interpretation translated onto the canvas. However, Stein never believed that to be the case with Picasso. He painted what he saw, and what he saw was so indescribably distinctive that it required no interpretation in his artwork. When he gazed upon a face, he saw a single eye, and in that moment, everything else ceased to exist for him, including the other eye.

Did everything else, then, truly fade away for Arjuna when he aimed his arrow at the eye of the bird perched atop the distant tree? If so, then Arjuna's tale speaks to something far deeper than cultivated focus. It may better exemplify a profound mastery over the senses.

The question remains unanswered, however, as to whether perceiving what no one else sees is purely an inherent talent, or is it a skill that can be developed through arduous practice. One could always try, I suppose.

Enclosed herein is a collection of literary work that attempts to hone in on such artistic precision. I present to you, dear reader, the third quarterly issue of *The Objective Reality's* second volume. Here's hoping that these pieces bedazzle you as much as they did us!

NANDITA
Editor-in-chief

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a museum's lament

BY ANKIT SRIVASTAV



I thought it was a lonely fate,
To be a museum's personification,
Watching people wander through my gates,
Capturing my pain with their fascination.

I wondered if I was grand and bright,
Aesthetically pleasing in their sight,
But they'd soon move on to the next delight,
Leaving me with emptiness and night.

But then one day, a soul did stay,
Sat by my side and didn't sway,
Tilted their head and looked my way,
And laughed and cried and screamed, to my surprise.

They wrote down their feelings, day by day,
And kept returning, as time would say,
Inviting me to see their own display,
And in their halls, I found my way.

Now I have learned that being a museum,
Is not just to entertain and consume,
But to be vulnerable, to make room,
For my scars to show, and say "this is me".

So if you have the time, come and see,
The beauty in my scars, the pain and glee,
And maybe you'll stay, like the soul before,
And find in me, a love you've never seen before.

The Genius of Satyajit Ray and “Two” (1964)

by Ayush Kurundwad

and have dominated the Indian cinema since the inception of “Bollywood” itself, Ray was one of his kind whose contributions to the sonic, literary, and graphic elements of cinema has been incalculable. As Shyam Benegal, a pioneer of Indian filmmaking, once stated, “I locate Indian cinema as before Ray and after Ray.”

Two: A Film Fable, a silent short film, arrived in 1964, during a violent peak of the American war in Vietnam, and has been preserved by the Academy of Motion Pictures since 2006. The black and white film running just over 10 minutes portrays two children, roughly the same age but vastly different in almost every other sense. The ingenuity and generosity with which the metaphors representing various social issues have been scattered across the film is a true testament to Ray’s scholarly abilities. The story follows the two children (dubbed the “Rich Kid” and the “Street Kid”) as they engage in a friendly show off of their inventory of playthings, and eventually escalates into an ego-contest with the “Rich Kid” constantly bringing out expensive toys to “defeat” the “Street Kid’s” displays.

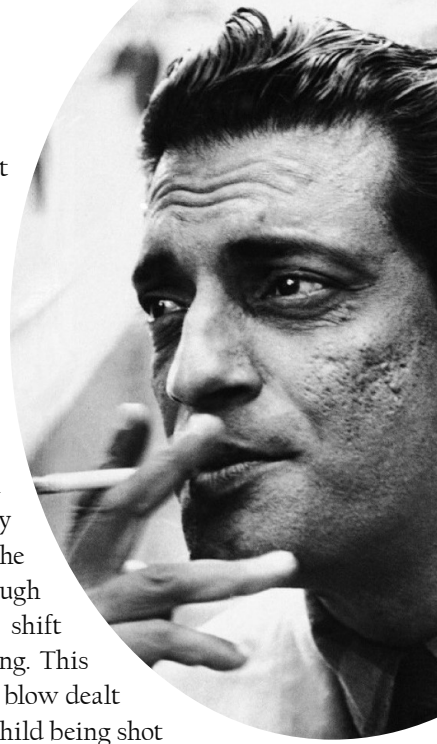
Few movie-makers can boast about the scale of their thematic inspiration being rooted as deeply in reality as Satyajit Ray. An outspoken critic of over-the-top productions which dominate,

Ray also took pride in being a revolutionary score-producer for his films, amalgamating “worldly elements” and extremely detailed sound fabrics throughout his storytelling to create an intricate tapestry of non-escapist plots.

“I locate Indian cinema as before Ray and after Ray.”

~ Shyam Benegal

A simple yet memorable tune opens up the conflict between both of them, played on a rough-cut, wooden flute by the “Street Kid”. The art of contrast sets in early with the healthy demeanor of the “Rich Kid”, continuously snacking on various foods as opposed to the dull, malnourished one of the “Street Kid”. The high-standing position of the “Rich Kid” is literally shown by the contrast of a multi-storeyed house against a patchy hut on the ground, portraying the divide between economic classes. But the attention to detail really begins to prosper with the shot of a mock mustache appearing on the “Rich Kid’s” face midway through the runtime, coinciding and symbolizing the shift from innocent showing off to sadistic undermining. This whimsical exchange of hostility ends with a final blow dealt by the advantaged class: a kite flown by the poor child being shot down by the interestingly industrial symbol of a mock gun. However, the shot that probably delivers the most intensely emotional message, is the



The metaphorical abundance of this scene is just one of the many examples of lots being said without uttering a single word, a quality dearly embedded in many Satyajit Ray creations.

one of the “Rich Kid” sitting among his noisy plastic toys which prove unable to drown out the flute song which seems to have started playing again, while one of his automated robots knocks down a toy tower he built earlier.

The film can be interpreted in two significant ways: to be symbolising the grip of a capitalist society which inhibits the growth of the lower classes; or, considering the era it was released in, to be a portrayal of the America-Vietnam war with the “Rich Kid” representing America’s selfish exercise of violent power and the “Street Kid” representing an under-developed yet resilient Vietnam. The beauty of this film lies in its adaptability to multiple social issues and artistic excellence while making a bold statement about the prevalent societal issues.

The genius of Satyajit Ray extends beyond the realm of scholarly achievement in the field of cinema and even past the breakthroughs he made in Indian storytelling, reaching into the minds of Indians and making a mark on their emotions, leaving behind an admirable legacy of *Manik Da*.

The clock struck eleven and the moonbeams furnished his room with the luminance he found perfect for days like these. Keeping the bundles of scribbled sheets beside his headrest, where enmeshed thoughts had been scrawled over, written and rewritten expressions, old compositions mostly incomplete, resting in abeyance, Paxton found his eyes fixed over a faded, brown paper he did his sketching practise on, the last summer.

THE FADED, BROWN PAPER

by Deeya Manocha

It was not that he drew something worth a long gaze, however, a few lines written over it captured his attention and a reminiscent shudder rushed down his spine. He could not drop it. Isn't it strange how one can encounter a thousand truths over an ink's lies? Although wandering in mind had never been an anaemic expression for Paxton, he found his blood quite pale in the streets he roamed that night. It was as if his blood had lost the metallic taste of red and he was rambling through the verses where his words could not help being positioned in the restless sites.

The ivory-coloured walls, dim-lit yellow lamps, opened windows and the dusty sheer curtains settle the night view of Paxton's rented room. He had turned the left wall of the room into a creative space where a few quoted cardboards are affixed. He had taken the lady's painting he did last summer off the wall to escape all kinds of opinions possible over his sleep deprived attempt. He picked up his red salve and began scratching a sheet with agitated sighs. He could not unsee the truths concealed within that faded brown paper he had long kept unopened. His trepidations soon turned into a vacancy of emotions followed by an unexpected peaceful pause.



The clock showed 11:20 and he thought that he still had almost an hour left to follow the usual night regime. Again, he held that brown paper and gazed at it until he was interrupted by his university roommate who was complaining about a boring lecture he had to go through that day due to the shortage of his attendance. He barely paid attention to his roommate's rambles and soon returned to his broken chain of thoughts. It often happens with the people living in their headspaces that their spark to engage in a conversation extinguishes when their inner speech becomes unendurable.

His silence often proved to be a delicious condiment to his creative palette. He felt alone in other people's presence and stretched his arms with contentment only when he was by himself. He believed that one's voice gets meek among the umpteen scathing opinions and thus, the more people he was surrounded with, the lonelier he felt. He shared a peculiar affinity in the company of silent people as if he was acquainting with them through the gravity of their reticence. Mingling with their injuries was his ink's leisure. Sometimes it is the pain which speaks volumes and people find their shelter under the open sky of dubiety in life. No answers, no debates, just an unspoken apprehension of hearts and the free exercise of what Keats called the "negative capability," stand as the requisite.

He drew something on the sheet he was scratching and kept the grip of his fingers hard until his entire being felt lighter. At that moment, looking at the faded brown paper, he found his solace in the gems that it had once swallowed in. He saw the clock hitting 12:30 and smiled with contentment. He bid his roommate goodnight and switched off his side of the lamp, lulling his body to an assured ease.

Winter's Sun



The water strikes the stones,
Pleasuring sound they produce,
A green plague, their spree—they hone
It with angelic spread yet it reduces
The stability of the ground
But the personal overhaul of it is
profound;
From where I stand still:
The beatinest sun rays coming through
From the middle heaven of two hills
As I begin to think of you
And swimmingly these memories shined
And their pain, within me, hymned.

As the valley was the pathway to
The wintry weather world grand,
Resting under the sky so blue
That it changed the colour of sand,
your farewell I remembered
And it smite my heart,
In the valley, I stood torn apart.
One thing was certain that, nothing is,
What is erased I could not deny,
Denial will say the sun will compress
But this lie I cannot dulcify
Even when this heart wanted to so badly
But hope said: you should let go gladly.

Profundity I found when this breeze swirled,
Your name it sang being a wordmonger,
That feeling was beyond this world,
I hope it could have had stayed a little longer
Yet the sun's heat came and wind withershins
Its destination, to another path it swings;
Watching the gloomy sides of these,
I became scripturient and a polymath,
In my mind and on pages, I created whatever to please
All those moments that I had,
Silver tongued my mind became
While crying and screaming your name.

In that moment, the sun's rising looked enticing,
Focusing on my vision and attention,
Its heat became stronger and defining
That all of this is worth the mention,
The heart was bounded yet the soul's appetite
Ironically forced it to let go of this remembrance;
It does not matter what tragedy is bestowed
Upon a structure so fragile and frail,
The sun will rise, winter will come, seeds will be sowed
And everything will go back to its trail
And this sun's beautiful effulgence
Is reviving my soul's insurgence.
The view could not become more dazzling than this,
Gasping to all this purity and innocence,
Finally, with humility I can thank the warmth's kiss
And the closure that came with the hope immense;
Now, I can sit peacefully,
Calmly understanding the equipoise

And
It felt like you were sitting beside me, smiling,
As I can hear your soothing voice

by Nandita

Two buses left every day from Torre del Mar to Málaga within 40 minutes of each other. The first one was a direct, the second one halted at every bus stop on the way, so the first one is usually what I would prefer if I had no plans to take a detour at Rincon de la Victoria.



The lady with the cigarette leaned into the front door of the bus, “Do you stop at El Palo?”

The driver shook his head, “Es directo.” It’s direct.

She insisted he stop at El Palo and he asked her to take the next bus. They talked loudly in Spanish to drown out the running engine. She argued it would only take a second and the driver decided to succumb at last, gauging that stopping at El Palo would be more efficient than this exchange with the hungover woman with a cigarette.

“Vale!”, she thumped the side of the bus in victory and sprinted towards the back door. Soon she was seated on the long, rear seat of the bus. El Palo was a town adjacent to Málaga. The buses had to go *through* it in order to avoid the long way around. And since it was a rather small town, the roads were narrow and the traffic lights always shone red.



We crossed Rincon in about 35 minutes; the familiar wooden signboard painted blue with white lettering, pointed to the famous luminous treasure caves of the place. *Costa del Sol*, or the Sun's Coast, is a picturesque series of towns and villages sprawled inland from the sea. Each of these towns has a

characteristic flavor to them; some are more traditionally structured Andalusian white villages while some have been more recently reclaimed by modern architecture; some bloom with carefully curated balconies and patios decorated with endless carnations, geraniums, bluebells and anemones while some boast of streets resplendent with a thousand tiny lights overhead on the streets, creeping up to boughs and branches of the trees along the main avenue, hanging from their walls like luminous orbs. On the beaches, waterfront restaurants extend over the water body, surrounded on all three sides by wooden piers, or walkways. Large river stones and boulders line the edges of the Mediterranean where eateries and bars haven't sprung up yet. The woman with the cigarette, who had been making merry with the passengers at the end of the bus, was now asleep and snoring loudly.

Another lady had occupied the aisle seat beside me and upon noticing my nervousness (I was constantly checking our location on the Maps app on my phone), she inquired where I was from. She had a striking complexion, her skin was supple but not too thin, she was old but smiled so genially that she looked much younger. Her hair was naturally straight and tied into a formal bun, and her eyes were more brownish than the usual Spanish blue or black.

“*Soy de India*,” I said, “I am from India.”

“I know a little English,” she said, nodding in affirmation, “Where from in India?”

If I had learnt anything about Spaniards in the five months I had spent in Spain at the time, it is that when they tell you they know “just a little” of a particular language, they usually have a well-versed command over it. If they tell you they don’t know a language at all, it means they know a few phrases, enough to understand you if you talk to them in that language accompanied with fervent gestures. The lady beside me had immaculate pronunciation, I am sure she knew it too. It is only out of politeness and humility that she described her knowledge of English as being “little.”

For me, who really did know only a little Spanish, it was always heaven finding someone to converse with in English. It would take me some time to get into the zone if I wasn’t at my workplace, but I would usually snap out of broken Spanish more enthusiastically than slipping back into it.

Assuming she wouldn’t know the name of my city, I tried to tell her that it is a few hundred kilometers East of the capital city of New Delhi. She confessed that she only knew one city in India, a place she has wanted to visit since she was a young girl. She asked if I knew about Varanasi. At first, I couldn’t make out what she said since Andalusians (people from the south of Spain) do not pronounce the letter v as /v/ but rather as /b/ making it sound like ba-ra-NA-si. Presently, I nodded in ecstatic acclaim as I realized she knew my own city. She laughed and said it was a lovely coincidence.

The driver had stopped at a red light and said, “*El Palo!*” before opening the back door for the resident lady with a cigarette who had woken up owing to the few swift turns the bus had taken. Yet, she was not awake enough to register that this was her stop.

“*EL PALO!*” The driver yelled, clearly annoyed, and this time the lady with the cigarette was out in no time but not before shouting a cheery apology (“*Lo siento!*”) that made the bus chuckle, including the driver. Happiness and goodwill seemed to be the norm of this place. I wondered if things ever got boring here.

I glanced down at my phone again, I still had about 7 minutes to my stop. The lady beside me asked how I came to be in Spain after all. I told her about my internship with the ministry, how I had been teaching English to primary school students in Torre and how I came to the country all alone in search of experience. I could see what I had said was unthinkable to her. A girl from India, alone in Europe, who had never left the nest before the big leap of faith. I could see she respected me.

She looked out the windshield and pointed out my approaching station. As we smiled and nodded our goodbyes, she said something that I cherished dearly for the rest of my days in Spain, “*Tienes valor, chica.*”

you are brave, kid.

THINGS

Things won't fall apart
Until you know they have fallen,
Until the heart finds out
That the heart is broken.

Things won't fall apart until you cry
Until you know, it's no use to try.
Things fall apart, the heart cannot hold,
Things fall apart so you hurt yourself more.

WON'T FALL APART

"Suppression" – the heart is fighting,
Even the most emotional won't stop surviving.
Grief doesn't kill, that's the issue,
While everything feels dead. Everything.

In between more things,
Lost things, subtle things, silent things
"Things won't fall apart if I don't overthink,
Things won't fall apart if I stop imagining"
Thinking this way: ignoring, avoiding, defending.

Things won't fall apart
If you smile and sing,
Things won't fall apart
If you don't let grief win.

By

Jhilam

Adhikary

meet the authors

Ankit Srivastav

Ankit Srivastav is pursuing his MBA from the Indian Institute of Management, Shillong. He completed his graduation in English (Honours) from Banaras Hindu University where he developed an insatiable appetite for literature and the written word. His passion for writing and literature has been a constant driving force for him throughout life. With every word he writes, he strives to capture the essence of what it means to be human, and to ultimately connect with readers on a profound and deeply personal level. As a writer, he is committed to writing, honing his skills, and exploring new avenues of creative expression.

Ayush is a 19 year old Business student whose interests lie in storytelling and expressing opinions about various media which he finds thought provoking. He finds amusement in hiding bits and pieces of his life's happenings in his writing, and marvels at the prospect of them lying out there for everyone to see but for few to understand in context.

Ayush Kurundwad

Diwakar Gautam

Diwakar Gautam, 23 y/o graduated in English Literature and Sociology major from a State University. He loves writing poetry and storytelling because of the cathartic feeling they give, and making characters and scenarios which are able speak to the unheard are his personal aesthetics. He aims to become a fantasy and supernatural genre novelist. He loves anime, movies, video games, and hip-hop music.

Nandita

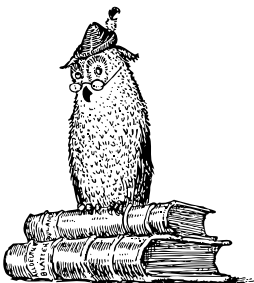
Nandita is the author of the books *The Night is Still Young* (2019) and *Tales from a Spanish Classroom* (2022). She completed her Bachelor's degree in English Literature from Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. Her internship took her to Spain where she worked as a Language and Culture Assistant for the Spanish Ministry of Education at CEIP Antonio Checa Martinez. She is currently pursuing her Master's in English Literature from University of Delhi.

Deeya Manocha

Deeya Manocha is pursuing her Post Graduation in English from University of Delhi. Writing for her is a liberating ride where she sits with her ruminations to connect with her inner self. She mostly engages herself in composing poems and journaling.

Jhilam Adhikary

Jhilam Adhikary is a First Year M.A. English student from Amity University, Kolkata. The poem written by her is about the belief that until one speaks out aloud that something bad has happened, it remains a nightmare or a fragment of their imagination. Hence, one doesn't speak up fearing that the utterance would turn imagination into reality and they would be blamed for it. So, to protect themselves, they continue to act as if nothing has happened.



“ DID EVERYTHING
ELSE *truly fade*
away for Arjuna
WHEN HE *his arrow* AIMED
AT THE EYE OF
the bird? „

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