

Beyond Pixels: The Stories Behind the Photos

Ashish Joshua

Photography, often described as the art of capturing light, is a unique, yet very effective form of story-telling with a single static image. Since its introduction in 1822, photography has evolved into this complex art form, leaving photographers more free to play with elements such as lighting, motion, emotion, and composition of scenes. My favourite genre in photography is motion photography where people or objects are in motion. The main challenge in this field is trying to capture speed, movement, and the fluidity of time. Motion photography allows giving an alternative view, effectively conveying a feeling of energy and fluidity contained within a static view.

My most recent experience was my participation in an intercollegiate photography contest. The selected theme for the competition was "Emotion to the Motion." The task was to take up the theme and submit an image that represented the theme effectively, within a strictly limited time frame and without post-processing. Having no means of editing software, I had to use my photography skills and creativity to its fullest. So I made a friend walk



down in the rain because the combination of movement and emotional content one relates to offers substantial depth to the composition. The shot that won me the award would be the final shot, which portrayed this coming together of motion and emotion. A dramatic photograph depends often on the place and time, added to appropriate camera setups and favourable lighting conditions.

It calls for how to capture the essence of a situation and express it pictorially. It can provoke certain thoughts and meanings from what an observer is looking at, such that it is highly subjective to apply as art. Each photographer has his unique style that he uses to tell a story, implant an emotional response, or reflect an attitude. Photography is not merely about capturing a particular moment; it tells a story, expresses emotions, and conveys a standpoint. It is the combination of technical skill, creative vision, and post-production artistry that makes any random photograph an artistic achievement.

Kendrick Lamar's Mr. Morale and the Pain of Modern Man

Aman Rasheed

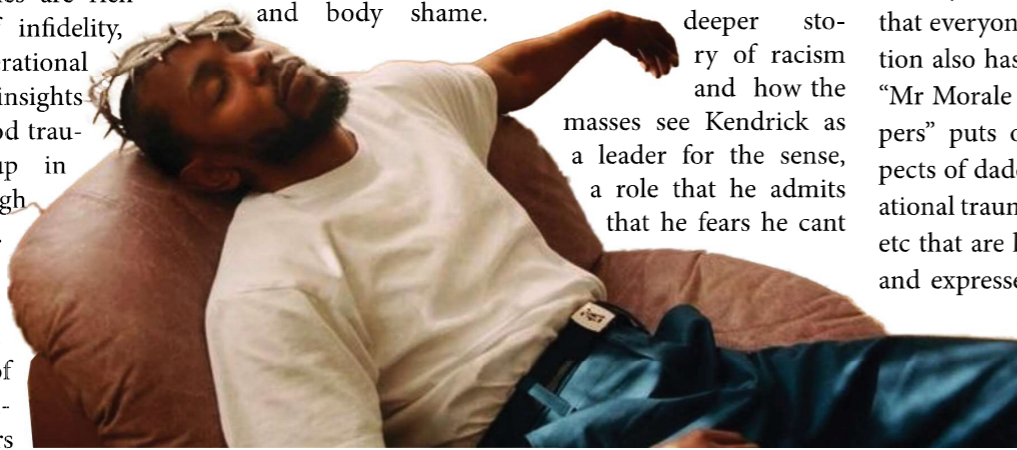
After a 5-year break, Kendrick Lamar released his fifth studio album, Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers, on May 13, 2022. This project provides a comprehensive look into Lamar's personal journey, including his therapy experience and reflections on the hardships he faced over the last five years. The album's lyrics are rich with themes of infidelity, fame, and generational pain, offering insights into his childhood trauma growing up in Compton's rough neighbourhoods. The album begins with "United in Grief," a culmination of 19 years as Kendrick ponders

the challenges and triumphs that come alongside fame. He discusses going to therapy and working through his "demons". On the song "N95", which happens to be a nod to the covid times, Kendrick examines how he deals with this history of violence & trauma differently than others, dealing with fame and body shame.

The album then continues talking about deeper themes with songs such as "Die Hard" talking about how his insecurities keep him from being a good partner, "Father Time" dwelves into how men develop unhealthy habits of emotional coping and how it is passed down onto generations and so on. The song "Crown" dwelves into the deeper story of racism and how the masses see Kendrick as a leader for the sense, a role that he admits that he fears he cant

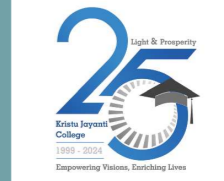
please everyone with his views. The album ends with the song "Mirror", which talks about the contradiction of leading a personal life and as a celebrity,

An album that is more focused on his private life, it is put through in a way where it manages to express his pain as not just his, but a problem that everyone in this generation also has to go through. "Mr Morale & The Big Steppers" puts out complex aspects of daddy issues, generational trauma, sexual abuses etc that are less talked about and expresses it in a simple manner that can be understood by the general masses.



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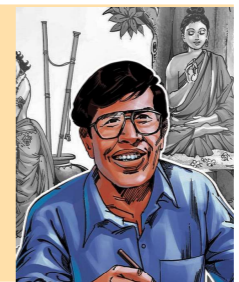


The classical Dance Community of India: Mixed identities



Page 2

Uncle Pai : The Pioneer of Indian Comics



Page 3

Kendrick Lamar's Mr. Morale and the Pain of Modern Man



Page 4

The Philosophy of Cinema

Prejwal M

Cinema, the world's seventh art, with its perfect blend of visual communication and emotional depth, can be entertaining and come up with philosophical thinking. Composing a cast of characters, dialogue, and visual language, filmmakers have been said to be philosophers who bring stories to the people that would cross the line of perception to touch their hearts as well as their intellect.

Plato's Allegory of the Cave makes a great metaphor to explain cinema's power. In this allegory, there are prisoners chained inside of a cave facing a wall where all they see is the shadow of things that pass between them and a fire that is behind them. Those shadows are their reality, unless one prisoner is freed to experience the world outside.

Films nudge the thinking of the audience about their values through characters put into morally challenging choices, and South Indian

cinema offers stories that present niceties and nuances to present moral dilemmas to the audience, making them question justice, empathy, and the human spirit. Therefore, movies are philosophical grounds for the exploration of such moral ambiguities in order to resonate long after the credits roll. Thus, the depth of philosophical content in a film is not in what it is saying about the plot but rather, the beliefs.

Another theme that makes philosophical inquiry find itself with a vibrant character in the journey of self-discovery is inserted and found in both film and philosophy. Filmmakers have come up with characters whose problems shape those questions, opening up a window to the human soul.



Cinema is tapping into this very deep well of questioning, and enlightenment. 'Anbe Sivam' is a South Indian classic that unravels the story of Nallasivam and his journey along with a cynical, materialistic companion who then delves into the facets of love, kindness, and relationships. The film looks into the concept of love as an agent to change this world. The viewer is asked, through Nallasivam's story, to exist in a view with compassion rather than success or material achievements.

The philosophy of cinema lies in making people reflect and change, removing the masks and unveiling truths of life amidst their mundane daily living. As spectators, these characters encourage us to make our way from shadows into light and challenge the reality and morality concerning identity and society. Where Plato saw a vision of rising from the cave, films can be the most potent way of escaping out of the darkness of assumptions to step into the clarity of understanding frame at a time.

Mystical Black Cats

Sarvagya Singh

In most cultures, black cats are believed to be a symbol of bad luck, are feared and disliked by people. The origins of these beliefs can be traced back to Middle Age Europe. Despite the superstition, some cultures consider them symbols of good luck like Egypt, where they were worshiped. One of the most remarkable features of black cats is their appearance, their jet-black fur, and the contrasting jewel-like eyes.

Black cats make great pets. Studies even suggest they can exhibit social and friendly behaviors, their nature playful and affectionate. The belief that black cats embody misfortune is not only wrong but is also even harmful to these felines who are often mistreated. It's time to move beyond these myths to appreciate these lovely creatures and give them the love and care they deserve.



Kaveri's Blessing: The Sacred Waters of Coorg

Pratika Shastri

Kaveri Changrandi, also known as Kaveri Sankramana, is a significant festival in Kodagu (Coorg) district, Karnataka, celebrated in mid-October to honor the River Kaveri. The primary celebration occurs at Talakaveri, the river's source, situated in the Brahmagiri hills. Every year in mid-October, thousands of people from Kodagu (Coorg) district gather at Talakaveri in the Brahmagiri hills, Karnataka, to celebrate Kaveri Changrandi, also called Kaveri Sankramana. This festival honors the River Kaveri. The main event is the Theerthodhava, when sacred water miraculously emerges from the Brahma Kundike. Devotees take a holy dip in the river, believing it purifies them and brings blessings. Kaveri Nadapu, celebrated



during the Kaveri Changrandi festival, is an important event in Kodagu (Coorg), Karnataka. People walk from Bhagamandala to Talakaveri (approximately 9 kilometers). Women carry a plate of rice, betel leaves, betel nuts, and a lamp while they walk. This festival honors the River Kaveri, which is considered a goddess by the local people. During Kaveri Nadapu, several rituals and activities take place, reflecting the cultural significance of the river.

In Kodagu households, the festival is marked by a ritual called *Kani Puje*. Families worship the goddess Kaveri by placing a decorated coconut or cucumber wrapped in a plate of rice, symbolizing the goddess. The offering is ornamented with glass bangles, showing the community's deep respect for the river. After the Kani Puje family members gather for a reunion, especially those who share the same family name.

Even married women return to their maternal homes for this gathering, praying for good health and prosperity. It is also a time to honor ancestors through a ritual known as Pinda, where offerings are made to the departed souls of the family. Nearly 95% of the families in Kodagu perform this ancestral offering. As it is considered a holy day, everyone in the community eats only vegetarian food, maintaining the sacredness of the occasion. The kupyaa is the most recognizable garment worn by Kodava men. It is a short, knee-length, half-sleeved robe made from wool or cotton, resembling a coat. The kupyaa is typically white or off-white and is tied around the waist with a belt. Traditionally, men wore this garment for physical tasks or while hunting.

The classical Dance Community of India: Mixed identities

Mridula Madhu Nair

The professional dancers of India had to juggle their identities between being the 'accepted' and 'respected' representatives of culture and traditions and being the 'public' or the 'available' ones for society. What changed over the years? How have dance performances been reduced to only proscenium stages? From the very little reliable history we have about the dancing community in India, we understand that the dance that originated with the Devadasi community, was buried as an effect of the reform movement. In the Mughal culture of court performances, the artists earned a privileged status, and being financially independent gave

them a better social position than most women of their time.



Unfortunately, the cultural practice came under severe criticism by reformists as it was seen to cater to the male gaze. This brought an end to the performances in spaces like courts and palaces and led to a shift in performance

spaces towards private dancing in 'Bungalows' to entertain the aristocrats.

This period did not last long as several social reform movements of the time criticized the practice of private dancing for entertainment purposes. Gradually the community diluted and declined. The stereotype

against the dancers prevailed for years. Another movement tried to bring a change in the way these dancers were perceived by society and this led to a shift from private spaces to the proscenium stages. The performance by Rukmani Devi Arundale was the first time the 'Bharatanatyam' was experienced frontally by the audience. She brought a change to the art form to make it more respectable among the audience. The original classical dancers are still marginalized and their efforts to take forward their legacy of dancing are in vain. Their history needs to be put out to the world to give them a better future.

Uncle Pai : The Pioneer of Indian Comics

Samyukth M

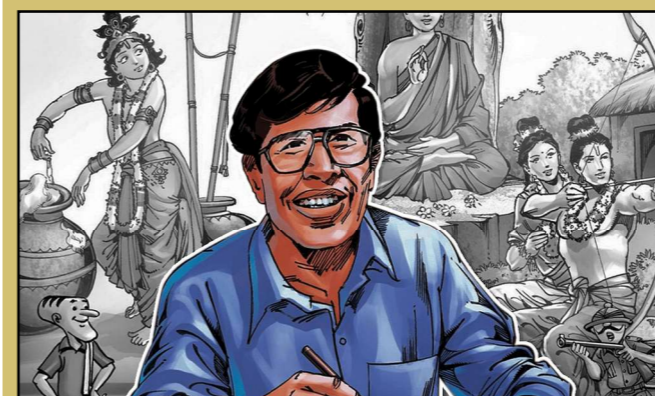
Anant Pai was one of India's greatest storytellers. Also known as the "Father of Indian Comics", he is the creator of Amar Chitra Katha and Tinkle. He brought life to the best stories of the land and created some of the most endearing characters in Indian comics. His story began on September 17th 1929 in a small village of Karkala in Karnataka. He lost both his parents at the age of 2, leaving him with his elder sister and a younger sister. After graduation, Anant joined the comic division of Times of India, where they were newly introducing comics to the Indian market.

Then, Indrajal Comics was launched and characters like Phantom and Mandrake came to India and they were a huge success. Anant then suggested that comics should be produced based on Indian mythological stories and history and so, the first issue of Amar Chitra Katha, Krishna, rolled out in the year 1970. The book was a huge success, with children all over the country reading the comics as more and more issues kept being published. Amar Chitra Katha then created the world's longest comic story

at the time with the story of the epic Mahabharata. It was a mammoth 42-comic telling of this great epic. As its popularity soared, the demand increased and introducing and making new titles became a tedious job. With that they introduced the comic digest, Tinkle which was a huge success, 35,000 copies of Tinkle were sold within a day.

Anant Pai was every child's Uncle Pai. He regularly wrote editorials for Tinkle and interacted with the children who wrote to time via Tinkle. His vision to instil knowledge about their own country's mythology, heritage and history was taking shape. Children discussed tinkle stories and ACK stories amongst each other with great enthusiasm. Tinkle became a symbol of childhood for many Indian children. Anant Pai was later awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award in the year 2011.

He passed away on February 24 2011, due to a heart attack at the age of 81. He was survived by his wife Lalita. Anant and Lalita had no children of their own, but they dedicated all their life to serving children.



Maggi: Not Just Food , But An Emotion

Harshaa Hari

In every Indian household there will be a packet of instant noodles tucked safely in a cabinet. This isn't just any noodles - it's Maggi. The name stirs warmth, nostalgia and comfort for millions. A simple meal with a cooking time of just 2 minutes as the ad says, but we all know that's not true. Nostalgia is one invisible but highly potent ingredient that makes any food ten times tastier and more enjoyable to relish.

The moments when Maggi cooks in the hot steaming pot will always be one of those moments where you are more eager and impatient than those husbands who wait near the labor room. Maggie has transcended its status as a mere food item to become an emotion, a cultural phenomenon, and a unifying experience across generations.

Maggi's charm lies in its simplicity, it is a simple meal never complicated with just two minutes, some boiling water, and a dash of the iconic masala flavor. it has always been for all, be it young or old. Maggi was for everyone. Those bittersweet memories where my mother came back home after staying away for work with a single Maggi packet, will always stay in my mind as a symbol of both happiness of being able to be with Amma after a full week and also of sadness due to the reality that she will leave next Monday morning. The joy of cooking maggi with Amma and ammamma

all standing around and the happiness of us three eating it with my grandfather's constant nag that it's "chemicals" stays in my mind with the warmth of amma's embrace.

After munching over my friend's tiffin maggi for the first time, I started having Maggi every now and then. One day me and my sister were eating Maggi. Suddenly there was an earthquake everyone felt and rushed to go outside but we took our Maggi bowls with us in hurry to escape. Everyone out there teased us for our Maggi love. We also laughed after remembering this moment.

Just like that Maggie made memories across generations with siblings cooking it up sneakily in the kitchen at midnight, or mother's adding all the veggies she could find just to make it healthy.

As we all grow up we fly off from our nest called home. Sometimes it is this simple yellow packet that ties us to it, enveloping us in its warmth and calling us back home.

