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## **SURABHI** Journal of Arts and Literature

The Bi-annual Journal of Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology

Vol.19 No. 1 (June 2024)



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## <u>From the Editor's Desk</u>

The pages of Surabhi are once again upon you to quell your intellectual curiosity and feed your creative flights of imagination. The June session brings you compelling reads on the human mind, where you understand and learn to tackle some of our most primal passions – fear and dominance. The travel memoirs to Sri Lanka and Japan will surely inspire you to pack your bags, see the world and indulge in cuisines and conversations with diverse people. The photographs will throw a challenge to your perspectives, and the sketches of life captured by steady brushstrokes of a meditating mind will offer you great delight. The power of the written word and imagination is once again retold by the book review of Jeffrey Archer's 'Paths of Glory'. The sci-fi tale is borne of a romantic heart and scientific mind. Those with a love for the lyrical can peruse the poems, and those well-versed in Odia have a surprise awaiting you in the pages of Surabhi. We take this opportunity to thank the contributors and the readers for your valuable contributions, suggestions and unwavering support.

## Contents

4	WINDING THROUGH THE PATHS OF GLORY	1
	THROW A CHALLENGE TO FEAR!	2
	THE PSYCHOLOGICAL REASONS OF DOMINANCE	3-4
	Painting	5-6
	I'm The Butcher	7
2	A Sri Lankan Sojourn	8-9
	fall	10
	Shutter space	11-12
	Longing	13
U	The art of Storytelling in Short Films	14-15
	The Lucid Oblivion	16-19
	Abstract Drawing	20
	Hajimemashite: A Journey to Japan	21-25
n'i	odiya story	26
	Painting	27
		11



## WINDING THROUGH THE

## PATHS OF GLORY

#### Aleena Thomas SC22D060, Research Scholar, Maths

 ${f B}$ e it a fourth grader or his grandfather, if you shoot the question, "Who was the first to scale Mount

Everest?" the answer would be almost instantaneous. "Who doesn't know that it's Hillary and Norgay". Not me, though; since reading 'Paths of Glory,' I would probably just smile and say, "Well, I think it's George Mallory."

'Paths of Glory' was the kind of book that invited me to pick it up and start reading. It was during a regular library visit that I came across this masterpiece by Archer. The cover page was peculiar; what was suggested by a pocket watch, a piece of rope, and some flowers? Anyhow, I started reading to quell my curiosity. The young George, who scaled whatever heights he could find, be it the church walls or the cove near their picnic location, enticed me. Who would even think of climbing up the walls of the college to secure his admission? 'Paths of Glory' winds through the life of George Mallory, a twentieth-century English man whose one dream was 'Chomolungma' (the Tibetan name for Mount Everest). We can find out all about his biography and his feats with a single tap of a button. Why then bother reading a 400-page long novel? The sole reason is the Jeffrey Archer magic. Archer, through some of his finest prose, weaves together historical facts and fiction to create a beautiful portrait of Mallory. 'The Times' has reviewed that in this book, Archer is "at the peak of his imaginative powers."

What could Mallory have thought when he was at the summit? How did Ruth feel when her dear husband was miles away, on treacherous terrains? What did the peak look like? Archer's imagination takes the reader by hand and shows the snowy peaks and dangerous caverns of Everest. After his first failed attempt at scaling the mountain (while still getting a height record), Mallory was asked the question 'Why Everest?". His answer was simple, "because it is there". Archer, through his words, brings to life this determination of Mallory.

The last time Mallory and his climbing partner Irvine were seen was about 600 feet from the summit, so 'dangerously' close. And it is this final 600 feet that stands out vividly in the entire text. Climbing up the 'second step', the exertion, Ruth's photograph on the peak, the winning spree dying off after the summit, and the miraculous, snow-cushioned escape from a fall, Archer paints a vivid picture with his words. It feels as if Archer was jotting down what Mallory was dictating as if to a biographer. This book has ingrained in me the philosophy that 'Effort is Superior to Success!' Six hundred feet off the Everest summit and perhaps on top of it is no mean feat, in 1924, about thirty years before Hillary and Norgay did it. 'Paths of Glory' expounds on the power of dreams, determination, love, and patience. Mallory's dead body was discovered on Mount Everest after seven decades, and the debate, 'Whether he was on the way up or on the way down' is still hot. I choose to believe the latter.

"Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid

Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire" —Thomas Gray (Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard)



## Throw a Challenge to Fear!

### Annamalai A SC21B144, M tech Optical Engineering (Dual Degree)

Annamalai

### What is fear?

A tiny outgrowth in the brain called the amygdala is responsible for the feeling of being 'afraid', a universal emotion. Fear can be thought of as a warning mechanism employed by our brains to safeguard us from potential dangers. Most often, this is a good thing because, without it, we'd all go haywire. Fear can take various shapes and sizes – it may be the fear of failure, of darkness, of rejection, of death or even of spiders. Any of these forms could lurk in and creep us at any point in life. While not necessarily life-threatening, it often comes in the way of doing things efficiently, hampering our growth. So, they must be sensed from afar and consciously shooed away.

## My way of tackling fear

I always tend to jump head-first into anything that scares me the most (not into a well or from a 3storey building), be it talking to a stranger (which is not at all challenging for me now), approaching a girl (still working on it), asking for help or an opportunity, taking initiative etc...I stay committed to these fear-conquering strategies for as long as I need to feel comfortable doing it.

I was fortunate to realize and adapt this method as early as my school days. I'd attribute it to my great-grandmother, who named me Annamalai. Yes, I've always been the first one to be called upon to do anything in my class in all the six schools I've studied. This gave me the courage to be proactive and get things done, unlike others in my close circle. And the best part is, if you are the one taking the

initiative, you get to set the benchmark, without having to worry about others' performance. While not having a precedent is not always easy, I learnt to focus on my own task to the best of my abilities without worrying too much about what others thought.

### **Psychology of fear**

We must have all been through this phase of awaiting a holiday trip or a movie much before the actual date, just to discover that the act itself isn't as pleasurable as the imagination. Our hallucinations have a deeper impact on us than the execution of the act itself. This is the reason why we daydream. The same is true for fear as well, the frustration before taking up something big in life is so frightening that we second-guess our choices and capabilities.

Most of the time we're scared of things that have not happened, might not happen but could happen. Researchers have proven that 90% of the things that we're afraid of, won't even happen. Yes, there is a possibility, but it is a slim one.

I was greatly moved by this beautiful quote from Marie Curie,

reference of the second se

"Nothing in life is to be feared; it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more so that we may fear less."

Let's try to understand life, ourselves and the root of our fears to liberate ourselves and live life to the fullest.





## The Psychological Reasons of Dominance

Dr. Nikhil Eyeroor Library Officer - C

"Use your power to master yourself, not to rule over others."



Dominance hierarchies are a key aspect of animal social structures, particularly in social mammals and birds. Every animal dominates those below it and subserves those above it, thereby establishing a distinct hierarchy. Fascinatingly, animals tend to avoid confrontation with higherranking animals, so disputes are rare. There are many factors behind certain individuals' or animals' dominance and submissive nature. A submissive, passive, or introverted nature is just as crucial to the maintenance and development of many social species' groups as the dominant nature of some humans or animals.

The dynamics within packs go beyond just dominants and submissives. There exists a spectrum within the hierarchy, with members ranging from the most dominant to the least dominant. Similarly, there are varying levels of submissiveness within the pack. Each member, irrespective of their position, fulfils a distinct and crucial role, contributing to the overall balance of the pack.

However, it is interesting to note that human society also typically exhibits a hierarchical structure with a dominant leader in place. Dominant leaders are crucial in strong communities to accomplish key tasks. However, many individuals fall somewhere in the middle. Apart from a leader, every society needs peers and supporters who willingly recognize, respect, and follow that leader. Only then will equilibrium exist. Each person helps the leader and community succeed in their own way. If everyone strives for dominance, the result would be a fragmented community, with everyone disconnected in a collapsed system.

Human interactions frequently exhibit dominance structures, similar to those of other social animals. These structures manage power dynamics, determine resource distribution, form alliances, and access mating opportunities. Different scenarios in human communities, such as friendships, workplaces, and encounters with authority figures, reveal dominance structures. People use various strategies to improve their standing in these structures, such as social skills, financial resources, and physical strength. Physical dominance refers to the use of one's physical actions or traits to elevate their position within a group, thereby influencing others' behaviour. Individuals employ explicit signals, such as facial expressions, sounds, and eye contact, to exert power dynamics. Nonverbal cues can indicate a potential threat of force to assert dominance over others, but they can also aid in identifying individuals who may be more submissive and susceptible to domination.

During early human history, dominance and assertiveness could have been beneficial qualities for obtaining resources, defending oneself and one's community, and guaranteeing reproductive needs. Human societies have gradually developed into hierarchical systems where individuals compete for status, resources, and power. Individuals often use dominant behaviour to solidify and uphold their status within social hierarchies. Some individuals naturally gravitate towards leadership roles and often display dominant traits in social settings. The pursuit of power and authority intensifies the dominant behaviour in certain individuals. However, dominance was the norm for countless years, where the physically strongest individuals possessed more resources, facilitating the spread of their genes.

Dominance can manifest in various forms. Individuals who possess high intelligence and are confident in their ability to make sound decisions, formulate plans, and execute tasks fall into the positive category of dominance, also known as leadership. On the other hand, individuals with deep-seated psychological issues such as insecurity, fear, and a lack of initiative belong to the negative side of dominance. This can be more accurately described as dictatorship rather than leadership. Such individuals also exhibit a superiority complex. Dealing with someone who exhibits negative dominance can be particularly challenging for everyone involved.

The workplace serves as a place where a group of people come together to form a familial bond. It is literally a group of people who, despite their different personalities, coexist together. While some teams have individuals with well-balanced personality types, others may exhibit dominant personalities that disrupt the harmony of the setting. Negative dominance may stem from a lack of self-awareness, an extroverted personality, or a conflict style focused on personal needs rather than relationships.

Human nature encompasses a range personality is a complex blend of dominance and submission is a natural cooperate or compete, depending on the evolutionary journey, cooperation has eme that once prevailed. Studies demon cooperation. To be honest, we all have an with certain people. It can be in our family, need to introspect whether we dominate in d our inner selves.

ssible adaptations to external situations. Our character traits. Embracing different roles of of human interaction. We possess the ability to umstances and societal norms. Throughout our powerful force, contrasting the dominance fat when given a choice, we lean towards llse to act in a domineering manner when we are ice, society, or even while we are in a queue. We various spheres. A critical and comprehensive self-evaluation is essential to identify and she the evolutionary traces of animal instincts from



# Painting

S

O

Mini Kumari R G Senior Project Assistant, IIST

5

## Painting

Harden



## I'm The Butcher

### Vineet SC21B161, B.Tech Engineering Physics

I have to kill them, For I get money, Why do you eat them? What do you get, honey?

When I hold the knife,My hands tremble!My body shivers!How are you not feeling this?How are you holding the spoon solid?How are you sitting straight at the dining table?

I can't sleep at night, For I have nightmares! You hold your pillow tight, How are you sleeping peacefully?

If I could leave my job, There's one thing I fear, For then you'd take my place, And I'm afraid, Your hands won't even tremble! Your voice won't even shake!

I don't wanna be the butcher, But I'm the butcher, And so are you!

7



Nagesh G

## A Sri Lankan

## Sojourn Engineer"SF", LEOS, ISRO.

Srilanka is a very close neighbour of our country and is often called the teardrop of India. Sri Lanka is known for its authentic pearls, stones excavated from the Ratnapura mines, expansive tea gardens, wood carvings, and furniture, among other things.

Until we travelled to the different parts of the country, we had never anticipated such a geographically diverse and beautiful landscape in this small nation. The climate in coastal towns of Colombo and Negombo is usually humid with an exceptionally cool breeze from the Indian Ocean. But as we travelled about 100 to 150 kilometres interior towards the towns of Kandy and Nuwarelia, nature took the form of huge mountains, tea gardens, and scenic waterfalls. There was a chill in the air, typical of hill stations.

We landed at Colombo International Airport early in the morning after a one-and-a-half-hour journey from Bangalore. There was some confusion with the free visa on arrival and we had to shell out \$25 per head as a visa fee for three of us.

Our tour guide was waiting for us holding a placard at the exit. We boarded a caravan and were taken to the hotel for an early check-in at 6.00 AM. Sri Lanka is heavily dependent on the tourism economy, so there is no dearth of posh hotels, beach resorts and restaurants. We were provided with a spacious suite with an anteroom for our short stay till 11.00 AM. After a quick, refreshing nap, we got ready and had a breakfast which consisted of dosas, idlis, masala vada, chutney, sambhar and very big plantains.

We saw a few places in Negombo, mainly a fish market and the Dutch canal. Given that many tourists in Sri Lanka are Indian, all types of Indian delicacies are served in most restaurants. For lunch, we chose one that served North Indian food. Later, we settled into a beach-side resort that offered top amenities and also had a swimming pool. The night buffet dinner was multicuisine catering to tourists from Australia, Russia and Europe.

On day two morning, we left for Pinnawala, to catch sight of the many Sri Lankan elephants taking baths in a river. It was a truly entertaining and spectacular sight. We snacked on delicious and spicy roasted cashews sold by street vendors at a very reasonable price. One King coconut in Sri Lanka is enough to fill your stomach and one nut gives you ample sweet water.



We cannot but wonder that it is the lack of industrialisation and technological development that has helped maintain nature unspoilt, and lakes, waterfalls, and rivers pristine. The unpolluted and lush green countryside views of Sri Lanka epitomize all that.

After a buffet lunch serving lots of fresh green leafy vegetables, curd, rice and exotic vegetable curries, we left for Kandy. The city of Kandy is famed for the Buddha's tooth relic temple. The narrow roads of this densely populated city made it difficult to find a parking place. The temple and the nearby lake are maintained litter-free. People are very conscious about cleanliness.

Our stay in Kandy was at the Grand Kandyan Hotel, which boasted ultimate luxury and exquisite rooms with spectacular views of the skyline of Kandy city. The lobby, courtyard and grand sky



roof reception with its views gave the place a heavenly feel and we thoroughly enjoyed our stay here.

The journey from Kandy to Nuwarelia was one of the most exhilarating experiences for us in Sri Lanka. We winded along thick forests, waterfalls originating from tall mountains, huge lakes and cliffs. We visited a tea factory where we were taken through the process of tea making. We soon realized that the

machines there dated back to the British era. We also purchased some of the expensive tea powders to take back home as trip souvenirs.





The dream-like, celestial beauty of Sri Lanka became ever so evident at the lake and the natural golf court in Nuwarelia. The small children in school uniforms added great charm to this sight.

During our trip to Sri Lanka, we covered most of the western part and some of the central regions. Galle is a small coastal town in the southwestern region, where we found great vantage points to enjoy the pristine views of the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean. At Ahungalla, a seaside town, we stayed in a beachside resort that ensured a fun time on

the beach with the soothing notes of the ocean waves.

Lastly, I should offer a shoutout to the people of Sri Lanka for the love and warmth they have shown to us and all tourists, and for being wonderful hosts, for no trip can be truly enjoyable without the right crowd.



S. Vidish SC21B128, B.Tech, ECE

## Fall

As the moon slowly descends, At the break of dawn, the sun lights up to reveal the canopy of brown wood Brown after having all of its leaves shed, Leaves that left to mark the start of fall. They fall to the earth and become one with it, nourishing the soil that once fed the trees and the leaves. Each leaf replaced by two of its kind, through this unkind process – the cycle of life. Nature gives birth to the most colourful flowers and trees that stand tall. Maybe we fall, just to rise again.

# Shutter Space





John Jyoti Das SC23B185 Title: In her light, they forge ahead Description:

In the busy streets of Guwahati, a lady holds her baby close. Her worn-out clothes set her apart and reveal her hardships. But despite all, she cradles her child with love and hope, showing strength amidst adversity.



Swastik Biswas SC23B128 Title: Green Bee-eater with its catch Description:

Here is the Green Bee-eater with its prey in its beak. Known for its bright green plumage, slender body, and long pointed beak, this is a snap of the emerald beauty from the Botanical Gardens, Kolkata.



# Shutter Space



K Sahaj Rao SC21B168

Title:Beauty in the Ordinary

#### **Description:**

This photo, for me, isn't just about the man or the puddle. It's about the beauty we can find in everyday moments if we just have the right perspective. The way the sunlight dances on the water, the fleeting reflection of a passerby - these simple elements come together to create a scene of unexpected grace. It's a reminder that sometimes, the most profound beauty lies not in grand vistas, but in the details around us, waiting to be discovered.







Satyam Shivam SC23B043 Title: Serenity on the Ganges Description:

Captured in the heart of Varanasi, this serene photograph showcases the timeless beauty of the Ganges River, where boats gently drift by ancient temples. The scene is a harmonious blend of spirituality and tranquillity, reflecting the soul of one of India's most sacred cities. The waters of the Ganges mirror the majestic temples, creating a peaceful tableau that speaks of history, devotion, and the eternal flow of life.



## Longing

Tanvi SC22D061, PhD Mathematics, II year

And thus they become Immune to the pain And the pleasure To the drug And the elixir.

And thus they become Immune to the agony Which rips their Soul apart And the Ecstacy Which makes them Feel their heart

And thus it become Their souls' addiction The prolonging Persistent, Piercing Pain of sheer longing!

13



## The Art of Storytelling in Short Films: A Journey of Creativity and Collaboration

Aditya Krishna Talande SC21B143, M.Tech Optical Engineering (Dual Degree)

As students at the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST), we embarked on a creative journey that transcended the boundaries of conventional storytelling. Through our films "Dhanishta Hostel" and "Bracelet," we ventured into the realms of human psychology and introspection, exploring narratives that resonate beyond their captivating visuals and plots. These films, crafted with meticulous attention to detail, serve as reflective mirrors, illuminating not only the external struggles and mysteries faced by their characters but also delving deep into the internal landscapes of their minds. With subtle nuances in dialogue, evocative visuals, and symbolic motifs such as the hourglass and bracelet, each frame invites viewers on a profound journey of introspection. They provoke contemplation on themes of friendship, love, identity, and the intricate layers of human emotions, challenging audiences to confront the complexities of their own lives and relationships. Through this exploration, "Dhanishta Hostel" and "Bracelet" achieved a resonance that transcends the screen, leaving an enduring imprint on the viewer's psyche long after the curtains close.

#### "Dhanishta Hostel": Unravelling Friendship Amidst Shadows

Step into the enigmatic world of "Dhanishta Hostel," where friendship becomes a labyrinth of mystery and solidarity. Director Aditya Krishna Talande orchestrates a gripping narrative that begins innocuously with a study session among friends but quickly transforms into a tale of discovery and tension. The dimly lit hostel's corridors filled with whispers, become a character, echoing the suspense that permeates every frame. The masterful cinematography of Gnaneshwaran A S, Bharath Prajwal B R, and Aditya Krishna Talande captures not only the camaraderie but also the unease simmering beneath the surface. Each character, impeccably portrayed by the talented cast led by Sahaj Rao, Aditya Mishra, Utkarsh Gupta, Harshit Dhanwalkar, and Aditya Krishna Talande himself, adds layers to the narrative, their interactions painting a poignant picture of loyalty and courage in the face of uncertainty. With an ending that leaves questions hanging in the air like wisps of smoke, "Dhanishta Hostel" is more than a film—it's an invitation to unravel the complexities of friendship and the human spirit.





#### "Bracelet": Poetry in Motion, A Symphony of Secrets

Enter the ethereal world of "Bracelet," where love and mystery entwine in a dance of poetry and symbolism. Directed with finesse by Aditya Krishna Talande, this film weaves a tapestry of emotions that linger long after the credits roll. From the enchanting cinematography by Aditya Krishna Talande, Gnaneshwaran A S, and Bharath Prajwal B R, to the haunting melodies sourced from Pixabay, every frame of "Bracelet" is crafted meticulously. The narrative penned by Vineet and Aditya Krishna Talande, unfolds like a series of verses, revealing the hidden depths of characters portrayed with conviction by Utkarsh Gupta, Tanya Kumari, Debasmita Mondal, and Vineet. As the protagonist embarks on a journey of self-discovery through cryptic poems and fleeting glances, the film invites viewers into a realm where time is fluid, and emotions resonate like echoes in a guiet room. With a climax that shatters illusions and reconstructs realities, "Bracelet" stands as a testament to the power of cinema to evoke, provoke, and inspire contemplation on the intricacies of love and the beauty of the unknown.



Both short films are available on the AKT Productions YouTube channel. Scan the Qr as below: 



Dhanishta Hostel





## The Lucid Oblivion

Aditya Singh Parihar Scientist Engineer SC, ISTRAC, Bangalore

"Where was it... Umm, where did I keep my perfume?" It was just Saturday morning, but I was already starting to get anxious. And why wouldn't I? I had every right to panic. After all, tonight I was going to meet Rachel, my best friend from school and my first love. For the longest time, she was my best friend but by high school, I had developed feelings for her. But I could never bring myself to confess them to her.



Since our early school days, Rachel had been deeply into science and computers, while my interest lay in football. We were poles apart, yet I always felt a connection between us, though I never knew if it was mutual or one-sided. School ended, and our contact began to wane. It's been 15 years now. I play football for the State Club, USA, and am mostly busy with tournaments, but there are times when I think of her. I tried reaching Rachel many times, but to no avail, as her contact details were either changed or invalid. She was nowhere to be found, not even on social media. Until last Sunday.

About a week ago, as I was lying down with a cup of coffee, listening to my AI assistant announcing worldly updates, a call from an unknown number got me up. I picked up the call. "Hello, James." I was taken aback. Those two words were enough for me to recognize the voice. "Rachel," I said gently. "It's you."

She laughed. My heart was already racing. We spent the next three hours catching up, sharing how life had turned out for us over the past 15 years until our AI assistant reminded us that we were exceeding our cellular radiation limits. We exchanged email addresses and decided to meet the following Wednesday at a restaurant near her city, which, though 500 kilometers away took just 5 minutes, thanks to the magnetic levitation bullet trains. Rachel told me that after graduating from MIT, she had been working on Quantum Realms and linking it with Augmented Reality, which could be a breakthrough in gaming, simulations, education, and more. But I was only focused on the fact that she hadn't married anyone, just like me.Unfortunately, the scheduled Wednesday meetup never happened because my official club meeting, needed us to

cancel our personal plans. As much as I wanted to meet Rachel, the work meeting was unavoidable. To make up for it, I decided to surprise her at her home and, if things went as planned, propose to her as well.

And when Saturday arrived, I re-checked my arrangements for Rachel. I donned my favourite tuxedo suit. Carrying a bottle of red wine, I stood at the flower shop in front of Rachel's apartment to buy a bouquet. Rachel had developed a sophisticated security system for her building, which would only grant access if she authorized it. I was trying to figure out how to reach the third floor to Rachel without spoiling the surprise when suddenly, there was a BOOM! Pieces of broken glass from a shattered window rained down onto the road. An explosion had occurred on the third floor, and flames could be seen coming out. I froze completely. I wanted to scream, but my mouth wouldn't open. I wanted to run to Rachel, but my legs wouldn't move. Everything was turning blank before me. I could see Rachel's image fading away as if someone were dragging her away from me.

Soon, the authorities arrived, and the area was cleared. I could only hear locals saying how good Rachel was, always helping people. Who could do such a thing to her? The authorities ruled out any possibility of foreign invasion due to the building's advanced security system and couldn't find anything inside that could have caused the explosion.

"Hello, James," Rachel's call echoed in my head, and I couldn't stop feeling guilty. If only I hadn't postponed our meeting on Wednesday... if I had proposed to Rachel that day, she wouldn't have been in her apartment right now... she would have been with me, alive.

Days passed, then weeks, but the remorse and guilt never left me alone. I kept waking up in dreams, reliving the loop of that fateful day. I needed to do something. I don't know how, but I opened my AI assistant and started to write, then delete, then write again.

"Rachel... I'm sorry. I want to hug you so badly right now and never let you go. I wish I had said these things earlier. Please forgive me, Rachel... Your James."

The mail was sent. Something was wet in my eyes. It had been two months since the accident, and I cried for the first time. I was starting to feel lighter when something next to impossible happened. I woke up to the notification sound of my AI assistant, which read, "You have a mail from Rachel."

Gathering myself, I opened the mail: "Hello James. Please HELP ME."

For a moment, I thought I had become delusional. Before I could comprehend much, I received another email: "James, I know you must be questioning your sanity right now. I would too if I were you. But right now, you are my only hope and I trust you to understand and believe me. As I told you that day, I had been working on augmenting virtual reality, creating a completely new world where we could be teleported through quantum tunneling. By the principle of entanglement, we would never lose our path back. It was in the beta phase, but I had been inside that world many times, which I named 'B-Arc,' representing the planet B for Earth. It was working smoothly until a year ago when I made certain modifications to my ML algorithm. The characters of B-Arc, which were created earlier, began to exhibit exponential intelligence growth. They started questioning the limits I imposed on B-Arc and wanted to explore beyond its dimensions into the real world. The quantum tunnel could work both ways, but the access code was only with me. They conspired against me. That Saturday following our call, they sent a bomb to my apartment. Yes, James, from B-Arc to our world. But just before it could explode, I teleported my conscience through the quantum tunnel to B-Arc. Since then, I've been waiting for communication from the real world to trace back the path and send a signal from here, which happened after your email. But this time, I can't follow the path back and teleport myself completely because I don't have the access code. I need to get the code back from them before they fully develop the ability to leave B-Arc and roam freely on Earth. I know this might sound selfish, but if it were just for me, I would never have troubled you. Unfortunately, the fate of all mankind relies on this. Even as we speak, the characters of B-Arc are working to get onto Earth. The governments will never take this seriously until it's too late. So it's just us fighting for humanity."

True, it was not something easily perceivable. But I didn't care. Even if there was the slightest possibility of this being Rachel, I was going to bring her back forever. As selfish as that sounds, my hopes were pinned on getting back my lost love and I was prepared to go to all lengths for it, however outlandish it may appear to me.

Soon, I received her next email with her workshop address, where I could find the way to access the quantum tunnel. For the password, she wrote: "The key to the quantum realm is the date of birth of my only best friend." I understood her reasons for encrypting the password to prevent any possibility of it being hacked by the characters of B-Arc. I hadn't expected I was so valuable to her. I felt even more motivated. Without wasting any more time, I went to her workshop and found the arc reactor as she described. I powered it on and entered the eight-digit password: 28102046, my date of birth. I expected something shocking, but nothing happened. I waited even longer. I began to doubt if the password was correct or if she meant someone else when she referred to her best friend.

I left the reactor in place and went outside her workshop. Something seemed strange; the road appeared much emptier than usual. "Watch out!" someone shouted, and a strong wind swept over me from above. I looked up, and, oh my God, there were vehicles flying in the sky. Four-wheelers to two-wheelers, they were all flying like birds.

"Careful, James. The laws of physics have been moulded to the convenience of the characters of B-Arc." It was Rachel. I couldn't believe my eyes. There she was, my piece of heaven. Rachel came running to me and embraced me. I couldn't resist my emotions and started sobbing. "I thought I lost you, Rachel."

"Not so soon, you idiot," she laughed.

B-Arc had the same foundation as the real Earth, and one couldn't tell the difference between the

two if it weren't for the ultra-technologically advanced machinery that Rachel had designed for B-Arc. She called her car down, which was hovering above us like a silent helicopter. "Let's first get to a safe house," Rachel said, and the car started to drive itself.

Rachel explained more about B-Arc. Most of the characters she created were very nice and helpful, with their index of humbleness set quite high in the algorithm code. However, there were certain characters programmed with high computational ML algorithms, which made them self-sustainable, fulfilling the goal of automating B-Arc. It was these characters who rebelled against the constraints set by Rachel, the developer of B-Arc. They began altering the codes of other naive and humble characters to recruit them for their purposes. They appointed a character like them, called Alpha-1, as their Commanding Character Chief (C.C.C.) to lead them out of B-Arc into the real world.

I was given a tour of B-Arc, a breathtakingly beautiful world with advanced technologies and infrastructural developments way beyond my imagination. But even as we toured the world, I couldn't help but notice how dark Rachel's eyes had become. She told me that this was the world of B-Arc; its technology had grown beyond even her imagination.

The next day, Rachel and I reached the code centre, which was shielded and heavily guarded, where I finally obtained the password for the quantum tunnel. We were confident that the characters from B-Arc could be successfully erased. Soon, we arrived at the address. A huge tower stood in front of us with the label: "HQ of Alpha-1."

Rachel and I entered the building, using the password to the quantum tunnel. We headed straight to the laboratory and located Alpha-1, who was supervising other characters as they were hacking into the quantum tunnel. An intense battle ensued. Despite the dangers, Rachel and I managed to defeat Alpha-1 and neutralize all other hostile characters.

We set the quantum tunnel parameters to erase all traces of B-Arc's characters. Just as I was about to exit B-Arc, Rachel pulled me back. "Wait. I can't come with you."

"What are you talking about? This isn't the time for jokes, Rachel."

"This world is my responsibility. I created it. Even though I'm glad to be with you, it would be unfair to leave B-Arc without its creator. Its peace will be restored with me. But don't worry, I will be watching over you and the world, just like you always wanted."

Rachel opened the path to the quantum tunnel, and I started to walk out of B-Arc, my heart heavy with the weight of losing her once again. I turned back for one last glance, and Rachel gave me a reassuring smile.

Back in the real world, I am trying to live my life, making the most of each day. I never forgot Rachel, nor could I, EVER! I knew she was watching over me. The memory of her love and courage is my life force. And though we were worlds apart, our hearts will remain connected forever.

19



## Abstract Drawing

K B Sheetal SC21B140, B.Tech ECE



20



"Sometimes, things really do seem too good to be true."

That's exactly how I felt on a Friday night in April when I opened an email that would change the course of my summer. Staring back at me was an offer to join the prestigious University of Tokyo Research Internship Program (UTRIP), 2024, from June to August. I was swept in a wave of disbelief when I recalled that the program has a mere 2% acceptance rate, and I was one of just 15 candidates selected from around the world.

After a sleepless night, grappling with the thought that the girl who hadn't even travelled alone an hour from her hometown would now have to prepare for her first solo international trip, I was torn between excitement and fear. Six weeks in Japan - a country I'd only known through books, anime, and the internet - seemed as intimidating as it was thrilling. Yet, as dawn broke, I felt an inexplicable certainty: I was going to do this.

Thus began my unexpected journey, full of countless "hajimemashite" moments - introductions to a new world - always ending with a grateful "arigato gozaimashita."

But before I could even begin to dream of landing in the Land of the Rising Sun, the first major hurdle came my way. How many of us would consider a foreign opportunity without a passport? Well, I did! I had applied purely out of my interest in the project topic but had little hope of making it, was convinced I'd never get selected, and was a bit unsure about going abroad. The thought of leaving my home country stirred up deep-seated anxieties in me. But life had other plans.

I had just five days to submit my passport details for the program, and here I was without one! My family and I scrambled, making frantic trips to passport offices, desperately trying to secure one within the deadline. Yet, despite all our efforts, the earliest I could get my passport was two days after the due date. Lesson learnt! Always be prepared! A small oversight would cost me a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.On the verge of hopelessness, I emailed UTRIP, explaining my predicament. That night, I slept with a heavy heart, blaming myself for daring to dream. But the following day, Japan welcomed me with open hands and I got my first taste of its renowned kindness - a personal extension for my passport submission. I didn't know a single email could bring so much joy! This high after a depressing night would forever be etched in my memory.

The weeks leading up to my departure flew by as we planned and prepared for the trip- repeated trips to acquire visa documents, researching how to navigate Tokyo's metro, learning essential Japanese phrases, and packing for a life I had only imagined. My parents, knowing my nerves,



even planned to travel with me to Singapore before I boarded my connecting flight to Tokyo.

Finally, the day arrived. On June 24th, I boarded my first-ever flight from Thiruvananthapuram. A four-hour journey later, we landed at Changi Airport in Singapore. After a two-hour layover, I boarded my next flight to Haneda Airport,

leaving behind my parents in Singapore. ETA seven hours to the Japan of my dreams!

As soon as the plane took off, I cried straight for two hours. The idea of being completely disconnected from everyone I knew made me feel like I was stranded in the middle of the sea for over a month, with no hope of rescue. Feeling big emotions - insecurity, loneliness and uncertainty - I was overcome by tears that I struggled to hide from the 300 strangers around me.

But two hours in, something shifted. A surge of strength - unexplainable - washed over me. The moment that revealed the resilience I didn't know I had; a reservoir of strength that would carry me through the rest of my journey.

Upon arrival at Haneda, my second hurdle awaited: navigating Tokyo's complex metrosystem to reach Hakusan Station, where my boarding was. Armed with Google Maps, Google Translate, and the generosity of the kind Japanese showered on me, I made it. Despite the language barrier, I realized that communication transcends words and cultures. The locals' politeness and willingness to help me navigate made every interaction warm and welcoming. Every "arigato gozaimashita" came from the bottom of my heart.

Tokyo's sprawling cityscape took my breath away - massive skyscrapers juxtaposed with serene gardens and green spaces. The people, quiet and disciplined, were either napping on the metro after long workdays or helping a confused traveller like me. I keep saying of their kindness, as it left a lasting impression on me, and I quickly understood why Japan is one of the safest countries in the world.

At Uninest Hakusan House, I was welcomed to my new summer home. My first Japanese meal - cold soba from a nearby 7-Eleven - wasn't love at first bite, but I soon grew to appreciate the creativity of Japanese cuisine.

The next morning marked the start of six weeks of intensive research. Contrary to my fears, I quickly bonded with my fellow interns from all over the world, including students from prestigious institutions like Cambridge University.

At the University of Tokyo, our introduction was carefully organized, with ample induction classes that helped us acclimate to the campus and the city. The internship program, UTRIP, was generous, covering round-trip airfare and accommodation, easing our transition into life in Japan. I had the privilege of conducting my research at the prestigious Okada Laboratory in the Department of Physics, under the International Research Center for Neurointelligence (IRCN). This lab, located within the Faculty of Medicine's Experimental Research Building, gave me

firsthand experience in microscope optics. The lab was equipped with cutting-edge technology, including the Nobel Prize-winning STED microscope. I worked long hours, often from 9 AM to 8 PM, but every moment felt rewarding. I even stayed until midnight on crucial days, eagerly diving deeper into my research. The work environment was incredibly supportive - my own pace, my music, and my snack breaks made the long hours enjoyable.

One memorable evening, I escaped the lab for a stroll to Tokyo Dome City, just 3 kilometers from my workplace. The massive mall, home to luxury brands like Gucci and Hermes as well as everyday stores like Uniqlo, was a pleasant diversion frommy intense research schedule.

When I wasn't working late, I took the opportunity to explore Japanese cuisine. My first encounter with sushi was at Hama-Sushi, a conveyor belt restaurant. Despite warnings from friends back home about Japanese food being too raw or tasteless, I found myself falling in love with the flavours. From flame-seared shrimp and cheese nigiri to tempura rolls, my palate expanded in ways I hadn't anticipated. Learning to use chopsticks became essential as I frequented small, authentic eateries across Tokyo. The university canteen offered a wide variety of affordable and delicious dishes like ramen, udon, katsu curry, and more, which I often paired with Japanese desserts such as soy pudding, cheesecake, dango, taiyaki, or matcha soft serve.

Another highlight of the UTRIP experience was the weekly formal gatherings with buffet dinners, where we indulged in authentic Japanese cuisine and got the chance to bondwith fellow interns and professors. As part of our cultural immersion, the UTRIP team took us to a trip to Kamakura, where I had the opportunity to create wagashi - a traditional Japanese sweet shaped like a bunny. In Kamakura, we visited the iconic Great Buddha (Kōtoku-in) and explored the historic Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine, as well as the charming Komachi-dori Street, lined with local shops selling souvenirs. The UTRIP organizers



and mentors ensured that none of us ever felt left out, planning cultural workshops in kimonowearing, tea ceremonies, and even calligraphy classes that helped us appreciate Japanese traditions at the Shinjuku Gyoen National Garden.

Travelling alone can be intimidating, especially in a foreign land, but my time in Japan proved otherwise. From the moment I set foot in Tokyo, I experienced an overwhelming sense of safety and freedom, one that is foreign to most girls. I could move about independently at any time of the day or night, whether for research or emergencies. The convenience stores - konbinis - were a lifesaver for foreigners like me, providing easy access to groceries and essentials. Most stores were just a short walk away, making everyday life incredibly hassle-free. Even during trips to remote villages, I still felt that comforting sense of accessibility and peace. Japan's seamless blend of tradition and modernity was everywhere, from the bustling city apartments filled with working families to the serene countryside.





With my UTRIP friends, I also ventured to several of Japan's renowned landmarks, including the Senso-ji Temple, the tranquil Shinjuku Garden, the bustling Shibuya Crossing, Ueno Park, and the Tokyo National Museum. The Tokyo National Museum was an intimate peak into Japan's rich history and cultural heritage. Despite the crowds, every temple and shrine we visited exuded a serene and peaceful atmosphere, allowing us to connect with Japan's spiritual side.

Visiting Asakusa, the center of old Tokyo, showed us the ingenuity of the Japanese and how seamlessly they blended the aesthetics and charm of the traditional and the functionality of the modern. One of the more exciting parts of my stay was a trip to Akihabara, Japan's electric town and the heart of otaku (anime) culture. I roamed the vibrant streets with my research guide, who generously helped me shop for the equipment we needed for our project and guided me through the city's fascinating shops. He even helped me pick out sweet souvenirs to take back home - a thoughtful gesture I'll never forget.



I also ventured solo, enjoying the freedom to explore the city at my own pace. I wandered along the bustling Ueno district with its modern shopping complexes and the artisan markets in Okachimachi. In the artisan market, I marvelled at handmade leather goods, jewellery, and intricate woodwork, all in stark contrast to the neutral, understated fashion of Tokyo's daily life.

At the same time, I discovered a newfound love for cooking. The kitchen in my accommodation was spacious and well-organized, making it easy to whip up quick meals when I wanted to save money. Cooking not only helped me stretch my scholarship funds, but it also gave me a sense of

independence. Over those six weeks, I lived the adult live, learning to balance grocery shopping, budgeting, and managing my time between work and leisure.

As my time in Japan almost ended, I found myself deeply attached to the country. From someone who once counted the days until I returned home, I transformed into someone savouring every moment in the bustling Tokyo streets. My last days were spent in soaking up the city's vibrant atmosphere. Evening strolls, late-night ramen and admiring the ginkgo trees lining the campus made the greater part of my day.



On August 6th, I successfully completed my internship presentation and received the prestigious UTRIP certificate, head held high. The farewell party was just as grand as our welcome celebration, and I said goodbye to the beautiful campus and its people with a heart full of gratitude.

I'll never forget the bench near the athletic ground at the University of Tokyo, where I often enjoyed my evening tea. On my final day, I sat there, overwhelmed by a swirl of emotions - gratitude for the journey,

happiness for the accomplishments, and a bittersweet sadness in leaving a place I had grown to love. Before leaving, I captured a final picture of the iconic Akamon Gate, a symbol of the university, feeling both nostalgic and thankful. Before we parted ways, the UTRIP interns and I gathered for our last matcha lattes at a quaint little café, reminiscing and sharing laughs. It was a poignant moment as we realized our time as a group of foreign students, exploring and immersing ourselves in the endless wonders of Tokyo, had come to an end.

The following morning, I left my room at 5AM, carrying four backpacks, to catch the metro for my 9AM flight. Even during this last metro journey, I was touched by the kindness of the Japanese people. I'll never forget the man who, despite rushing to catch his own train, helped lift my heavy 25 kg bag down the wrong escalator I had accidentally taken.

Finally, I boarded the same Singapore Airlines Airbus, settling into another window seat. This time, the experience felt completely different. As the plane ascended, I snapped one last picture of Japan from the sky and waved a silent, heartfelt goodbye.Exhausted from the whirlwind of emotions and two sleepless nights, I sank into my seat, clutching the airline pillow. When I awoke, it felt as though I had drifted back into reality, realizing that the entire experience in Japan had infact felt like a dream - one that came true!

As I reflect on those 45 days, what stands out isn't just the research or the places I visited, but the unending reservoir of generosity of its people and the safe, comfortable space that Japan came to be. Japan became more than just a destination - it became a place of self-discovery, resilience, and growth.

Indeed, sometimes things really do seem too good to be true until they become the most unforgettable experiences of our lives.



Tanmay Dash SC23B155, B.Tech ECE



ଗାଁ...ସହରର କୋଳାହଳତାରୁ ମୁକ୍ତି ପାଇବାର ଏକ ସୁନ୍ଦର ସ୍ଥାନ । ସହରର ବ୍ୟସ୍ତବହୁଳ

ଜୀବନ, ଚିନ୍ତାଗ୍ରଷ୍ତ ମଷ୍ତିଷ୍କ ଓ ଧନଲୋଭୀ ମନକୁ କେବେ କେବେ ଆରାମ ଟିକେ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ। ଏହି ଆରାମ ମିଳିବାର ପେଶ୍ଠିୟଳ ହେଉଛି ଗାଁ। ମଣିଷ ଯେତେ ଦୁଃଖରେ ଅବା ଥାଉ, ଗାଁର ସେ ନିର୍ମଳ ପବନ, ସବୁଜ ବନାନୀର ଆଭା ସବୁ ଦୁଃଖର ଅନ୍ତବିନ୍ଧୁ ହେଇଯାଏ। ଗାଁରେ ରହିବା ପାଇଁ ବିଳାସମୟ ସୁଉଚ୍ଚ କୋଠା ନାହିଁ କି କୋଠା ଭିତରେ ସଂଲଗ୍ନ ଶୌଚାଳୟର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ନାହିଁ। ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ମଲ୍ ନାହିଁ କି ବଡ଼ ସିନେମା ହଲ୍ ନାହିଁ। ଟ୍ୟାପ୍ ଖୋଲିଦେଲେ କଳକଳ ହୋଇ ପାଣି ମଧ୍ୟ ବାହାରେ ନାହିଁ। ଚବିଶି ଘଣ୍ଟା ବିଦ୍ୟୁତ ସରବରାହ ସେଠି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ। ହାତ ବିଞ୍ଚଣା ବୁଲେଇ ବୁଲେଇ ରାତିରେ ଶୋଇବାକୁ ପଡେ ତ କେବେ କେବେ ଅତି ଗରମରୁ ତ୍ରାହି ପାଇଁ ପିଣ୍ଟାରେ ମଣିଷ ଗଡିଯାଏ। ଶୌଚ ପାଇଁ ପାଣି ବାଲ୍ଟି ନେଇକି ଯିବାକୁ ପଡେ ତ ନଳକୂଅରୁ ପାଣି କାଢି ଖୋଲାରେ ଗାଧୋଇବାକୁ ପଡେ। କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଖୁସି ସହରର ଅଟ୍ଟାଳିକା ରେ ନଥାଏ। ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ହେଲେ ନଈ ପଠା ନହେଲେ ସେ ପୋଖରୀଆଡ଼ିର ସୁଲୁସୁଲିଆ ପବନ ସହରର AC ପ୍ରକୋଷ୍ଠରେ କାହିଁ।

ସେ ବାଡ଼ି ପରିବାର ସୁଆଦ ସହରର ରଙ୍ଗଦିଆ ପରିବାରେ କାହିଁ? ସେ ପଖାଳ ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ଶାଗ ଖରଡାରେ ଯେଉଁ ଆତ୍ମତୃସ୍ତି ତାହା ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ରେୟୋରାଁରେ କାହିଁ! ଗାଁ ଅନ୍ଧାର ରାୟାର ନିୟତ୍ସତା ସହରର ରଙ୍ଗୀନ ବ୍ରିଜରେ କାହିଁ? ସେ ଚୁଲି ରନ୍ଧା ଖାଦ୍ୟର ସୁଆଦ ଏ ଗ୍ୟାସ ଚୁଲା ରନ୍ଧା ଖାଦ୍ୟରେ କାହିଁ...? ଗାଁ ସବୁବେଳେ ଗାଁ। ଗାଁ ର ମଜା ଯିଏ ଥରେ ପାଇଛି ସେ ସବୁବେଳେ ଝୁରିଛି। ହଁ ଏହା ସତ ଆଜି

କାଲିକା ମଡ଼ର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଛୁଆଙ୍କୁ ଗାଁ ପରିବେଶ ଭଲ ନ ଲାଗିପାରେ । କାହିଁକିନା ଛୋଟବେଳୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ବାଥରୁମରେ ଗାଧୋଇବାର ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ତ AC ଲଗେଇକି ଶୋଇବାର ନିତି । କଣ୍ଟା ଚାମଚରେ ନୁଡୁଲ୍ସ ଖାଇବା ପିଲା ପଖାଳର କି ମହତ୍ତ୍ ବୁଝିବେ! ସେ କଉ ଅବା ଗାଁ ରେ ଯାଇକି ଚଳି ପାରିବେ ଯେ ଗାଁ କୁ ଯିବେ! ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଗାଁ ଆଜି ଖାଁ ଖାଁ । ରୋଜକାରକ୍ଷମ ହେଲା ପରେ ଗାଁ ପିଲା ସହରାଭିମୁଖୀ ହେଲେ । ଏପଟେ ବାହାସାହା ହେଇ ଘର ସଂସାର କଲେ । ସମାୟାନୁକ୍ରମେ ଗାଁ ଘରବାରି ବିକି ସହରରେ ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ ରହିଗଲେ । ଯାହାର ପରିଣାମ ଆଜି ଦରଦାମ ବୃଦ୍ଧିରେ ଅନୁମେୟ ।



# Painting

T C Rajan Senior Project Assistant, Main Accounts Section, VSSC, Thiruvananthapuram





## Designed by Ananthu Krishna H Multimedia Graphic Designer Reprographic Facility, Library IIST, Thiruvananthapuram

#### IIST-163-IP-E-03-2024



कला साहित्य पत्रिका भारतीय अंतरिक्ष विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान की अर्धवार्षिक पत्रिका

सुरभिः कला साहित्य पत्रिका भारतीय अंतरिक्ष विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान द्वारा प्रकाशित अर्धवार्षिक पत्रिका है जिसमें कलाकृतियों एवं सर्गात्मक रचनाओं का प्रकाशन किया जाता है जैसे – कहानियाँ, कविताएँ, अनुस्मरण, फिल्मों एवं पुस्तकों की समीक्षाएं, यात्रा विवरण, भेंट वार्ताएँ, रिपोर्ट, आरेख, छाया चित्र, वैज्ञानिक साहित्य, पेन्सिल ड्रॉइंग, चित्ररचनाएं आदि । अंतरिक्ष विभाग के विविध केंद्रों के लोगों की सर्गात्मक प्रतिभा को प्रोत्साहन देने में यह प्रत्रिका विशेष रुचि रखती है। इस पत्रिका में अंग्रेजी, हिंदी एवं भारत की किसी भाषा की रचनाएँ शामिल की जाती हैं। पत्रिका में प्रकाशन के लिए उपर्युक्त प्रकार की रचनाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं।

*Surabhi: Journal of Arts and Literature* is a bi-annual art and creative journal published by Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology. It publishes creative and critical literary pieces like short stories, poems, memoirs, film/book reviews, travelogues, interviews, reports, sketches, photography, science fiction, pencil drawings and paintings. It has special interest in boosting the creative talents of people from various Centres of DOS. It intends to publish articles in English, Hindi, and in any Indian regional language. The Journal invites submissions in the above category for publication.

आप अपनी रचनाओं की सोफ्ट कॉपी सह संपादक को निम्नलिखित ई मेल पते पर भेज दें।/ You may please send soft copies of your submissions to the Associate Editor to the following e-mail ID:

gigyjalex@gmail.com / gigy@iist.ac.in

