



KALPA presents

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A Theoretician's take on the lockdown

- Kaneenika Sinha

Some time in the middle of March, all classes at IISER Pune were postponed until further notice; students were requested to vacate the campus. On 24th March, the government announced a nation-wide lockdown; all transport was shut down, all workplaces were closed and people were asked to strictly stay at home. A lockdown on such an unprecedented scale was unexpected, but essential to slow down the spread of the coronavirus in our populated country with an overburdened healthcare system.

Personally speaking, my research work is of a theoretical nature, all it requires is pen and paper and can be undertaken at home as well as in the office. So, my first thought was that I would be least affected by the lockdown. It just felt as if the summer months had arrived earlier than usual. This was the right time to work on projects which otherwise seemed difficult and intimidating. The period of total

self-isolation would provide long, uninterrupted work sessions, even more so than during "usual" summer months. With a little bit of self-discipline, one could spend hours learning about a research field in greater depth or nurturing an original research idea.

Each of us is but a tiny unit protected by a large and complex system of dedicated workers.

Motivated and energized, I sat down to work. But, there was a lingering thought in the background. While it is good to be self-absorbed in individual endeavors, one cannot ignore the larger forces at play. Each of us is but a tiny unit protected by a large and complex system of dedicated workers. At a basic level, it would be impossible to focus on work if there were logistical problems related to daily

living. The IISER Pune campus has essentially turned into a safe fortress, where we have access to food, medical help, and essential grocery items without needing to step out.

Pune is considered a "containment" zone for the spread of Coronavirus and has been following a strict lockdown for more than six weeks now. Many citizens complain about waiting for hours in long queues to get basic groceries. Often, there is a lack of clarity on transport and movement rules during the lockdown. In these difficult



circumstances, one can only imagine and appreciate the effort that goes into running the essential supply chain for the 120+ families within our campus. How can one not feel gratitude for our maintenance section, the housekeeping staff, and our security guards who ensure that we can work free from worry within the safe confines of our homes?

With respect to professional requirements, I have access, not only to high-speed internet but also to the entire collection of mathematical books, journals, and other resources that our library subscribes to, right inside my house. Our devoted IT staff works round the clock to ensure the availability of these privileges to all campus members without fail. They have also created digital resources so that we can engage our students through online learning.

Awareness of people working hard to take care of the IISER Pune community naturally leads one to think on a larger scale. This crisis has many aspects: how do we control the spread of the infection and trace and test an optimal number of people, and control/predict the trajectory of this pandemic? How do we develop our medical infrastructure so that health care is readily available to those who get infected? In a lockdown situation that restricts economic activities in the country, how does one maintain the supply chain of food, medicines, and other essentials? How do we ensure the comfort and sustenance of those around us who have lost their jobs and feel hopeless and insecure, away from their families in distant states? In the long term, what kind of reforms would our country need

for economic revival? These are some of the challenges that our health care workers, lawmakers, scientists, and industrialists are grappling with.

In particular, our scientists have been at the forefront of the CoViD-19 challenge. Apart from the efforts to develop drugs and vaccines, our scientists have channeled their efforts towards designing much-needed equipment for our fight against this disease as well as interacting with industry for mass production. For example, in recent news, the research teams of my colleagues at IISER Pune, Dr. Umakant Rapol and Dr. Sunil Nair have designed (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Ejl8wq6A9U>) a low-cost ventilator with locally available parts; this design can be mass-produced rapidly and can meet one of the most essential needs of our medical community right now.

Another important aspect of the scientific study of CoViD-19 is to model the trajectory of this pandemic using mathematics. If we are to control this pandemic, we must have adequate knowledge of how fast this infection spreads. In particular, keeping the non-uniform growth in different areas of India, we need to understand patterns in localized clusters. This can help in the optimal use of our limited medical resources in tracing, testing people for the infection and to plan in advance for critical care equipment in areas where they could be needed the most. Several such studies have been undertaken across India and, hopefully, will provide our health-care system with actionable inputs about future steps. Some of these studies are available at links

indicated below.

To conclude, if you are a scientist living in a protected and well-functioning campus and do not require a lab to work (or have access to your lab when needed), and furthermore, have support systems for domestic needs, you are in a singular position of great privilege. This is a time to appreciate all the people who work to make our life fruitful and peaceful; to recognize the tenacity of those working very hard at the ground level, and to be mindful of those who have lost livelihoods due to the pandemic and lockdown.

Finally, this is one of those times when the entire country is looking up to scientists to resolve the grave crisis at hand. Let us send out our best wishes to our fellow scientists who are working round the clock to find effective solutions to fight CoViD-19. Let us also make an effort to help all Corona-warriors in whatever way we can.

(Links for work of scientists on mathematical modeling)

1. <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.04.08.20057414v1>
2. <https://indscicov.in/for-scientists-healthcare-professionals/mathematical-modelling/indscisim/>
3. <http://www.cessi.in/coronavirus/>

Editorial



There has been considerable growth in the IISER Pune community in the last 14 years, with its first alumni class having graduated 9 years ago. Just the last year or so has seen the formation of our Student Council; IISER is now home to a supercomputer; we hosted IISM and the Prime Minister; a new chapter of TEDxIISERPune was just inaugurated; our campus grows more inclusive with the setting up of IISER Pune's LGBTQIA+ club - Satrangi. Even our student-run, annual institute magazine, Kalpa, has expanded to become the Student Media House. The last year also saw Pashan briefly becoming the wettest place on earth and do we even need to mention our ongoing pandemic?

The world around us, both inside and outside campus, is changing faster than ever. Our student body too is growing and becoming more mature with each passing year. In note of these changes, we at Kalpa believe that now more than ever, we need a frequently published medium that reflects the changing times and allows the members of the IISER community to express themselves at large to everyone.

We, at Kalpa, hereby launch *Sentience* - a new and revamped monthly newsletter created by the students for all the

members of the IISER community, inspired by an erstwhile campus newsletter bearing the same name. *Sentience* shall be an extension of the existing Student Media House, and will be published around the end of each month.

The inspiration for our current newsletter stems from a newsletter created by a few proactive seniors of ours in the year 2011, bearing the same name. The then *Sentience* was an independently run newsletter, overseen entirely by students. It chronicled the happenings on campus at the time: the construction of the new campus, administrative challenges students grappled with at the time, hot topic issues, and more. It held a mirror to its times; reading those archives feels like opening a time capsule that our seniors had created for us, as if telling us, "We were here, this was our experience, this is how we confronted the world and reacted to its changes."^[1]

Regrettably, as with what happens to most solely student-driven initiatives that begin to lose support and manpower, *Sentience* got discontinued in 2014. We hope that this *Sentience* will remain for a lasting time, carrying forward its original goal to serve as a mirror of its times, in which the IISER community can look back at itself.

Understandably, the first few editions may not be as extensive in coverage as we'd like, since we don't have many activities to report on due to quarantine and the lockdown. But the lockdown makes all the more apparent the imperative for discourse and a newsletter that brings us together. In this edition, we recommend some movies and books, along with describing the impact of the pandemic on students, particularly the undergraduate batch of 2015, slated to graduate this year. We also acknowledge with gratitude our essential service providers who are taking incredible risks upon themselves to provide us with a safe and smooth system.

Many of us have been engaging in various kinds of creative work amidst being locked in our homes, channeling our energy towards art and self-expression. This edition acknowledges some of that, by presenting to you the selected photographs of the month by the Photography Club and some artworks that very talented folks have provided us with. We also mention what numerous student clubs have been up to in the lockdown and how they have kept us engaged.

Feel free to submit any works of art, photography, writing, or more that you'd like published in subsequent editions!

Here's to the Class of 2015

- R Charvee

Fifth year is considered the most mentally and emotionally challenging year out of the five years in IISER, having to make decisions that are going to affect the next five to six years of our lives. The preparation for this starts early that year with preparations for GRE, NET, GATE, looking up universities/institutes, etc. And for those whose path is undecided, it's more emotionally strenuous.

It's also the first time in sixteen years we are not forced to go to classes. Hence, it becomes another challenge to develop and follow a schedule that makes us feel productive and at the same time, to find elegant time to fit in our leisure activities which we have wanted to accommodate in our schedule for so long. In short, this is the time we are forced to learn self-discipline. This is time we also use to nurture friendships, relationships, and ponder and spend emotional energy on them. Some found their academic clique and fostered their friendships and academic interests in sync; some found secluded corners of the institutes where they could ponder

about their life and career that they were unsure of; some found their right match in this last year, yearning for more time.

Alas, all this would end in a blink of an eye - an entire year. In the end, we would remain the batch of 2015. The one common identity that we all share and the one thing we all want to celebrate. Somewhere, a part of all of us wished we were closer to IISER for our fifth year. And this wish intensified with the threat of the pandemic. Little can we complain about it for it caught the entire world by surprise. A lot of us abroad managed to reach safely back to our country. But some are still desperately waiting for the situation to get better. As we know, many important events in the world have gotten canceled. So, as expected, our thesis submission was delayed and so is our thesis defense (I am writing this at a point when I am yet to give my defense :)).

But most disappointing out of all is a postponed convocation. Aside from that, we all made grand plans of things to do after our submission/defense because that's the cherry on top of the cake. Cancelled batch trips plans, canceled farewell dreams, cancelled plans of clicking one-last-time photographs, and memories made us a bit agitated and wonder why it had

to happen this year (agreed, it's a selfish thought). A few of us were in IISER when it was announced that activities in IISER were going to shut down in a couple of days. Some of us gathered to have a hurried farewell for each other. We talked and joked and sang that night away, only to leave us with our hearts screaming, "I hope this is not the last time."

Let's talk about writing the thesis at home. It definitely doesn't happen till the last minute. And convincing my mother that it's indeed an important part of my fifth year and not just an excuse to escape housework was challenging. But once all that was done and I had some time to myself, I now consider this the blessing within the curse for all of us, to slow down and actually feel bored, and having nothing to do and inventing things to do so that we can keep the day moving. And to be honest my learning curve is steeper than it's been before. Hopefully post lockdown all of us may turn out to be more creative and perceptive. This may aid a lot in not just our young research career but also any other path we may take.

May the force be with you, batch of 2015!

BS-MS Batch of 2015



iGEM Report

- Chinmay Patwardhan, Lakshmi Sriram, and the iGem team

It was the 14th of March. After much planning and deliberation, we had finalized our project idea at last: a directed bio-laser using *E. Coli* cells. We prepared the twelve-page project proposal detailing our plans to make the *E. Coli* cells spherical, coat them with a single-sided mirror, and use them to direct the bio laser by creating an aperture in the cells. We made the twelve-page project proposal and put in a bucketload of sweat to get it right.

That's when the lockdown struck us. The next week iGEM updated its guidelines to dial down on the wet-lab work for this year. This was a massive setback for we had planned a wet-lab-intensive project that was going to require hours and days of work in the labs. But we gradually learned that there were no plans of the lockdown being eased soon and that our summer break would be fused with this lockdown, there was no way we could return to the lab anytime soon.

But, as a silver lining to this overbearing lockdown, we found out that the deadline for the iBEC proposal (which would help us procure Government Funding) had been shifted to the 30th of April. So, after months of work on our original topic, we realized that it just wasn't suitable for these working conditions. And with an overwhelming majority, we voted to change our project idea and start all over again, brainstorming ideas, for the hundredth time this year, only now with sporadic internet connections and Zoom calls as a sad excuse for actual meetings.

After three weeks of ups and downs filled with motivation, lethargy, and harsh deadlines, we managed to extract some hope out of the fact that iGEM had extended their deadlines. The real efforts began in the second week of April when we set our hearts to the new idea and worked our asses off to come up with a new proposal. We were fortunate enough to

have an incredible squad of Ph.D. mentors who constantly helped us get back on our feet with their expertise and insight. Honestly, without their guidance, we'd be completely lost and tattered.

The current project is with regard to malaria: we are creating a protein drug library from which one can choose a particular drug to treat the disease. Through this library, we aim to address the problem of drug resistance in the malaria-causing parasite, *Plasmodium falciparum*. Using this library, one can choose a drug, incorporate into cyclotides, which are delivery agents, and administer it. One can use the same drug until *falciparum* is able to develop resistance against it, at which point one will choose another drug from the library. We plan to computationally model it first and then later test it out in the lab. For this, we have procured sufficient funding from multiple sponsors including The Delta Faucet Company, Scivic Engineering India Pvt. Ltd., and Reliance Industries Ltd. We have also applied for government funding (DBT's IBEC fund). If we fall short, the institute will pitch in.

We learned many things from this lockdown, beginning with how crucial it is to communicate effectively. It was unproductive to rely on calling for every small thing and WhatsApp wasn't the best mode of communication either. Nothing beats the efficiency of face-to-face conversations.



Team iGEM 2020

Satrangi

A Step Towards a More Inclusive Campus

- Likhith Chandragiri and Team Satrangi

Satrangi is IISER Pune's very own LGBTQIA+ club. It is open to all - queer or not - as long as one is tolerant and respectful. The chief goal of Satrangi is to create a safe space for LGBTQIA+ students on campus where they can be themselves without any fear of judgment or persecution. The club aims to build a sense of community and to foster an environment of support, acceptance, and inclusivity. Satrangi, as a queer safe space, will enable and facilitate people who do not necessarily conform to conventional societal norms of sexuality and gender to safely explore and express their identities.

The idea for setting up Satrangi was conceived following the Literary Club's forum on the anniversary of the repeal of Section 377 of the IPC and in the planning of Karavaan 2019's Social Initiatives' pride parade. These events brought together like-minded people who acknowledged the crucial need for the formation of such a club. The genesis of Satrangi, however, was not just limited to student imagination: it saw active and instrumental support from COSA, the Dean of Student Activities, and faculty members Suhita, Nagaraj, Mayurika, and Nishad.

LGBTQIA+ individuals are disproportionately affected by mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, caused by the lack

of acceptance and support from family, peers, and society at large. Consequently, queer spaces and support groups become essential for the well being of LGBTQIA+ students, especially students who are closeted or have extremely unsupportive families. Such spaces allow queer and trans students to find a sense of community in one another and to discuss issues pertaining to them which may otherwise be inadvertently overlooked for various reasons in spaces that lack adequate representation and do not cater to the same needs.

To guarantee everyone's safety, we have devised a series of guidelines to ensure that all participants are respected and no one's identity may be revealed without their consent. We will be organising regular support group meetings and have a helpline email address (satrangi.iiserpune@gmail.com) where anyone may contact us privately regarding any issues they may be facing or questions they may have.

In addition to this, Satrangi also intends to organise outreach activities to bridge the gap of understanding between LGBTQIA+

students and their heterosexual/cis-gendered peers. We want to promote acceptance and tolerance of diversity on campus by creating awareness on queer and trans identities and the issues they face. Through our efforts, we wish to erase the stigma against gender and sexual minorities, foster allyship from straight/cis peers, and campaign for equality and justice for LGBTQIA+ voices. This includes organising workshops, talks, discussions, creating and distributing informative resources, etc.

An important way we can create awareness about queer identities and normalising their existence in the world around us is through achieving greater visibility. Satrangi hopes to promote queer visibility on campus and outside campus through our annual pride march and pride month celebrations. We also wish to engage and collaborate with the broader Pune pride celebrations. Movie screenings, book discussions, game nights, slam poetry, and a lot more exciting events are in the works to explore culture through the queer lens and to allow for self-expression and exploration through art and fun.



Photograph by Divyansh Gupta

Pride March, Karavaan 2019

AMPHAN

A Call for Relief

North and South 24 PGS, Howrah, Hoogly, East and West Midnapore, Burdwan, and Nadia

are some of the districts of West Bengal that have been affected by the storm and several parts of these districts have been in a complete blackout for more than 24 hours, with no water supply or cell network, as we write this.

Five thousand trees are thought to have been uprooted in Kolkata itself, along with many street lamps and cell towers, causing a loss of communication. And that does not include the destroyed paddy fields and broken dams, the flooding and the vanished houses, of the mentioned districts.

Yet to assess the complete destruction, a state already devastated by CoViD-19, calls for your help, financial aid and/or relief materials, to help it come back.

State Emergency
Relief Fund:

<https://wbserf.wb.gov.in/wbserf/page/wb-serf-Generate-Receipt.aspx>

Google Pay link:

<https://gpay.app.goo.gl/gpAAWK>



Photographs

Winners of 'Out Your Window' organised by
Photography club



Abhishek Narayan



Ankur Panchal



Mukul Rawat



Arnab Laha

Check out the Photography Club on Instagram - @pixels_iiserpune

Club Initiatives

The Dance Club organised a online solo dance competition, the entries for which have been put up on their Instagram page. The results of the competition have been released.



The Literary Club has organised short story and poetry writing competitions. Respectively, Tales from the Quarantine and Verses from the Quarantine. The top few submissions have been uploaded on the Literary Club website.

The Music Club organised Quarantunes. Nostalgic music performances have been requested. All the entries will be uploaded on the Kalpa website



The Quiz Club has been faithfully organising 3 PM quizzes everyday on their Instagram page. Answers and scoreboard are uploaded on the stories on the same evening.

IPLUG organised a summer edition of Conquistar - The Online Treasure Hunt - early in April, with results announced on the IPLUG Facebook page.



The Hindi Club organised a short story writing competition in Hindi, the results of which have been announced and the stories can be accessed on their website.

Photography club has organised a photo competition on Instagram. Submissions are collected based on a new theme every week till 24th May. All the submissions are posted on the Instagram page

An Ode to MDP

-Krishna Girish

The day expires, and the onion smog
Coats the land with an ashen pallor
To disturb with weeping deep-set squalor
A layered biting chill of elegiac dusk
Shrouds over a sluggish slumbering dog.

The gut-perched rubber branch wails
In the moonless darkness of fledgling stars
And the rumble and drivel of distant cars
I toss coins to sleep's never-sated well
They'll dredge out blessings in rusted pails.

Staring at the sun is a practiced pass
Falling up the Penrose steps to light
Three hours past the crowning of midnight
The night canteen is chittering, alive
Behind the caprice of a door of glass.

With a swordfish hanging above my chest
The night wafts into hours, like sticky toffee
As I seek my elixir, my fuel, my coffee
A zombie cannot pay the price for his honesty
But surely for a Maggi, a tea, and the rest.

And ah, the people thronging all around
The corner couple into affections strayed
Beside rivers of discussion, seasons fade
Friends who never left your mind's recesses
Embrace you in their waves of sound.

No matter how far or how long I'm gone
There's a certain constant in Yogesh's smile
Through the gaps in the plywood stile
As he cheekily says, "two thousand rupees"
For the sandwich you've got your eyes on.

Men dressed in the colour of pain, astray
But that's an overshot catch, a fusty fable
Friends swing legs from the edge of the table
All is golden and bright for a little while
Till the world's pleas again call you away.

Long will I yearn for your nightly guiles
Its quiet salvation among storming sea
A fount of happiness, of breaks and tea
When work and night drag away your hopes
I rely on seeing there my friends' wide smiles.

A beacon of salvation in endless night
Like symmetric integrals, your past is vanished
Your worries for a little while now banished
In your midst are your friends, in this haven
Yes, everything's okay. Everything's right.

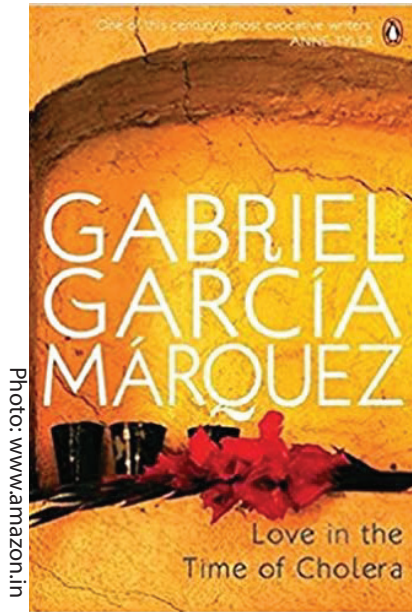


Book Reviews

Love in the Time of Cholera

by Gabriel García Márquez

- Review by Vruta Gupte



Many of us familiar with the late Gabriel García Márquez's work would liken his writing to be akin to a tapestry - a refreshing variety of narratives stitched into singular works of literature. Set in a port city near the Magdalena River, ravaged by bouts of cholera during the end of the nineteenth century, *Love in the Time of Cholera* is a chronicling of two loves - one brought about by inexorable marital bliss (or lack thereof) and the other a steadfast presentation

of youthless obsession, fleshed out over fifty-odd years.

In the beginning of the book, eighty-year-old Dr. Juvenal Urbino de la Calle, the most esteemed and distinguished physician in the City, is called upon to investigate longtime friend Jeremiah de Saint-Arbour's suicide by cyanide. He later learns that Jeremiah's suicide was abetted by his longtime mistress, and confronts her about not reporting it to the police; to this, her shocked response is, "I could not do that. I loved him too much."

Fermina Daza and Florentino Ariza, star-crossed lovers whose clandestine affair is approved only by Fermina's aunt Escolástica Daza, converse mostly through camellia-impressed letters and keepsake locks of hair. They are forced to face the music when Fermina realizes, after a chance meeting with Florentino Ariza - following a separation of yearning - that her affections for him have all but disappeared. A heartbroken and rejected Florentino Ariza pledges his undying fidelity to her before she eventually marries then twenty-eight year old Dr. Juvenal Urbino, and Ariza embarks on what can only be called a young, balding bachelor's painstakingly

documented erotic adventures - though he never loves any of the other women as much as he loved Fermina.

Márquez navigates this landscape of unrequited and unfounded loves with great dexterity and skill, employing the use of circular storytelling to impart a greater depth of character to his protagonists. Fermina Daza's sharp tongue and unwavering principles complement the aristocratically unemotional Dr. Urbino and Florentino's lovelorn romanticism. The subtle, tongue-in-cheek humour provides respite from the darker, deadlier, more melancholic parts of his story, with a teenaged Fermina promising (at first) to marry Florentino "if he promises not to make her eat eggplant".

Even though Márquez at times judges his characters harshly and makes it known that they are not perfect in their morality, he allows them - and us - to find beauty and treasure in the extraordinariness of mundane, everyday things: from reading books under a tree in the park to watching waves crash against shorelines, resulting in a rich, wholly fleshed-out yet enticing narrative. *Love in the Time of Cholera* is an unforgettable tale of love and a true classic for the ages.

East of Eden

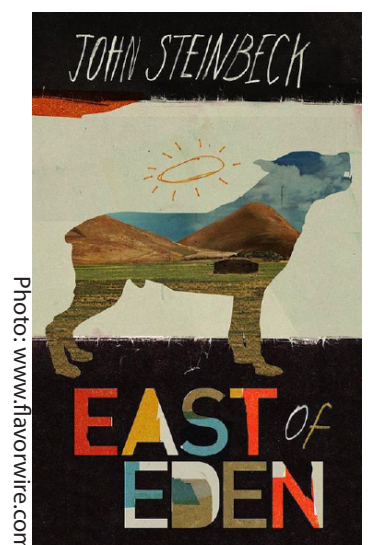
by John Steinbeck

- Review by Shaswat Nair

The greatest terror a child can have is that he is not loved, and rejection is the hell he fears. I think everyone in the world to a large or small extent has felt rejection. And with rejection comes anger, and with anger some kind of crime in revenge for the rejection, and with crime guilt - and there is the story of mankind.

- Lee

Interesting interpretations of great art often come from the greatly unartistic. Thus, it pleases me to provide you with perhaps the most interesting review of this book you will have ever read. *East of Eden* is a book by John Steinbeck published in 1952, and was the first novel I managed to complete after a certain two-year hiatus from laying hands on any non-academic book and it holds a special place in my heart for reasons apart from it being the first 600-page



book I sat with which didn't contain an 'Exercises' section at the end of each chapter.

The novel follows the complicated lives of two families – the Trasks and the Hamiltons who reside in Salinas Valley, California. I am certain that the previous line would cause admirers of this book to wince at how brutally I have summarised something so deeply moving. This is a story of great calamity, and the perspectives of different people as they cope with it. Dark themes are explored and ulterior motives revealed in so unflinching and blunt a manner,

that their world seems as unfor- giving and cruel as the one we live in. Characters are faced with moral dilemmas which create a suspense and a yearning for resolution that lasts throughout the story. One cannot help but find themselves immersed in this book, as Steinbeck's mastery of prose has yielded some of the most beautifully detailed imagery I have ever laid my novice eyes on. There is an even greater appreciation to be sought in the symbolism and allegory this story is steeped in, but my thick head proved to be quite a hindrance to that endeavour.

In all honesty, I will admit that it was rather ambitious of me to tackle something of this calibre, but it was a happy surprise to have found myself effortlessly turning each page, craving for more. I can give no greater praise to this novel than to state how it single-handedly helped me rediscover my passion for reading. *East of Eden* is an example of how a great author has managed to construct an extremely profound narrative with a simplicity that begets a beauty not often seen in its kind. And thou mayest give it a chance, for it will be worth it.

The Tattooist of Auschwitz

by Heather Morris

- Review by S Rohan

The Tattooist of Auschwitz written by Heather Morris is a remarkable biographical text depicting the life and struggles of an ordinary Jewish man who was brought to the concentration camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau during the Second World War. Lale Sokolov, originally from Slovakia, was forced to go there when the Slovakian Government made it mandatory for at least one member of each Jewish family to work for the Germans. One could picture a boy in the prime of his youth walking through the iron gates of the concentration camp into an uncertain and dark future not knowing whether he could ever make it back...

Lale seems to be a shy but confident guy who is smart enough to make friends with the 'kapo' (leader) of the building assigned to him. His multilingual prowess

enables him to connect with a multitude of people and ultimately gets him the less physically intensive job as the 'tätowierer' of the camp. Which means he is responsible for tattooing the arm of every prisoner with a unique number. He feels sorry for inflict-

Gita and strikes a friendship with her. The book elaborates on how their relationship intensifies and how they manage to stay alive in an environment where gunshots are the daily norm. The story moves on to explain the end of the War in 1945 when prisoners are freed from the camp. This leads to the separation of Lale and Gita before they reunite in Slovakia a few months later.

The story smoothly blends suffering with hope, fear with optimism, and hate with love. It serves as a reminder of the brutal history and how love flourished in such dark and unsettling times. The story questions the role of religion in branding people and instead opines that the nationality of an individual signifies his/her true identity. This book will take you on a virtual ride in the past and keep you engrossed till the end with its accurate descriptions of historical events.

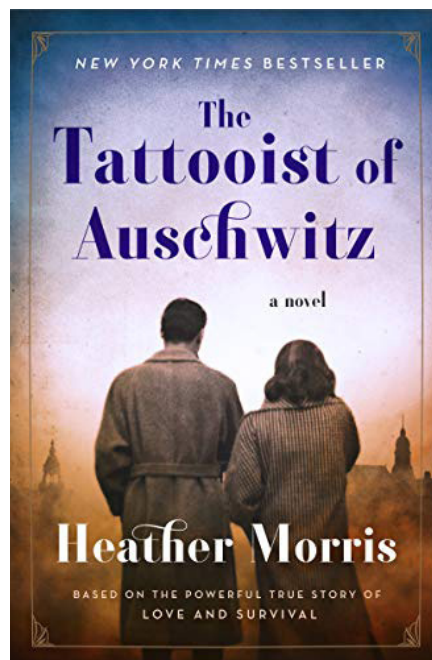


Photo: www.amazon.in

ing pain on people but does the job having no better option. It is here that he falls in love with one of the girls whose arm he tattoos. The latter part of the book follows his journey as he tries locating

Movie Reviews

Swiss Army Man (2016)

- Review by Vishrut Patel

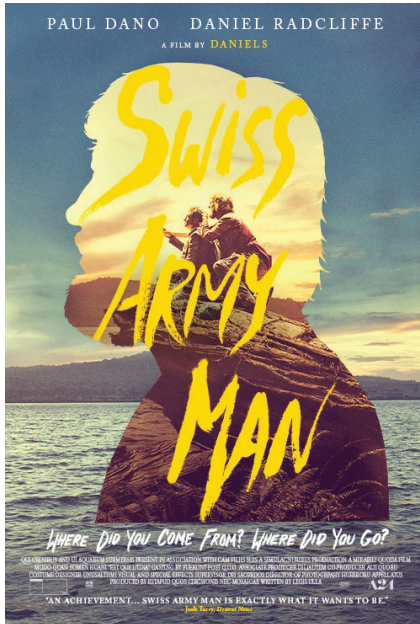


Photo: www.posterspy.com

"The First fart makes you laugh and the last fart makes you cry." That is how the co-directors Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert describe their movie, *Swiss Army Man*. The duo, previously most

known for their music videos such as Turn Down for What, take their filthy coarse humor to make a feature-length film involving a moving story with a flatulent corpse.

The film starts with a man (Paul Dano) stranded on an island about to commit suicide. He finds a corpse (Daniel Radcliffe) being washed ashore and discovers that the cadaver's fart can propel it on the waters. Inevitably, the man rides the farting corpse like a jet ski. What follows is the adventure of the uncanny pair surviving through woods as the corpse learns to talk, and what it is to be alive, and the man discovers that the corpse can be manipulated to be helpful in survival, giving the movie its name.

The acting and chemistry of the main actors are brilliant and charming enough to make you

root for their friendship. The minimal soundtrack mostly composed of ethereal vocals is the third star of the film, embellishing the poignancy of what is happening on screen. The use of practical effects and the editing of the music video directors is fresh and dynamic. This movie is wholly original not only in conception but in its execution as well.

Some scenes might leave you confused and maybe slightly grossed out, but I recommend you stick with it till the end. It is not superficially weird, but a deep reflection upon what is weird. This comedy movie which contains gags such as - what if the dead guy's penis is a compass, quickly turns into a musing about shame, a loneliness that comes with it and everything else we hold onto from our loved ones... including farts.

A Hard Day's Night (1964)

- Review by Ipsa Bezbarua

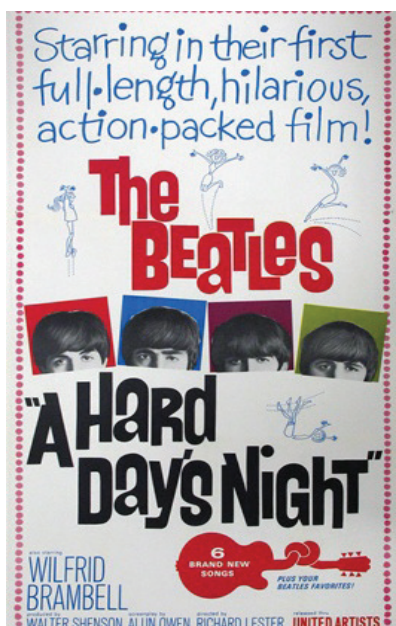


Photo: www.linimagegallery.com

The Beatles owned the Sixties in a way very few have managed to replicate. *A Hard Day's Night*, directed by Richard Lester, was released at the height of the Beatlemania to cash in on their fame. It turned out to be influential in the art of film-making, treading the fine line between fact and fiction.

A Hard Day's Night starts off with an iconic scene depicting the Beatles escaping from a bunch of crazy fans. They barely manage to slip into the train taking them to London, when they realize that there is an addition to the party - Paul's "grandfather" (played by

Wilfrid Brambell), who is nursing a broken heart. Grandfather soon proves that he is a force to be reckoned with, sending their managers, Norm (Norman Rossington) and Shake (John Junkin) into a fight about the latter's height. Over the course of the next day, we are treated with an insider's view of the life of the Beatles, including their tantrums with Norm, their desire for some freedom away from their stifling fame, and a delightful look at the working of a TV studio. After Grandfather provokes Ringo to "live well", that is, loaf around the streets, the rest of the boys have to race against time and search

the city for him, leading to mayhem.

Talking about *A Hard Day's Night* without mentioning its mellifluous music ought to be a crime. Not one of the songs can be termed as mediocre, and I urge you all to listen to the entire album sometime.

Rango (2011)

- Review by Pallav Khandekar



Photo: www.pinterest.com

Rango is an animated movie directed by Gore Verbinski and starring Johnny Depp who voices the titular character. The film

A pioneer of the “mockumentary” (mock-documentary) genre, *A Hard Day's Night* featured brilliant acting from everyone involved, quick cutting shots, and a very realistic mise en scène. Screenplay-writer Alun Owen had spent several weeks with the lads, studying their quirks with

won the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature Film in 2012.

Rango is a pet lizard whose life gets turned upside down after an accident strands him in a desert where he eventually stumbles across a town. Following a series of hilarious events, he gains the trust of the townspeople and becomes the sheriff. But a greater threat is at hand...

Rango, along with being a very funny children's movie, is also a treat for adult audiences with its unique perspectives on identity and purpose. Its storyline isn't particularly compelling, following the familiar trope of 'coward turns hero.' However, the movie excels in its characters and technical aspects like animation, character design, and sound design. Its memorable characters make it stand out in the sea of other ani-

an eagle eye. Every scene is filled with joy – something we could do within the midst of this pandemic. It is definitely a movie I will return to time and again, especially when I'm in need of a gateway to simpler times enriched by melodious tunes!

mated movies that feature talking animals. *Rango's* characters are not cute fluffy kittens that we've come to expect from animated movies; rather, they are rugged and dirty reptiles, birds, and frogs which help set the tone of the movie. They have become my favorite animal character designs in any movie ever (especially the villain).

The soundtrack for the film was composed by Hans Zimmer. The score includes his trademark orchestral swells punctuated with rustic guitars to give it a classic cowboy vibe. The story overall is an homage to the western genre of film, and it is glorious. I would recommend *Rango* to anyone who appreciates good animation and art, music, comedy, and loves cowboys. So grab your revolver and get ready to tango with the *Rango*.

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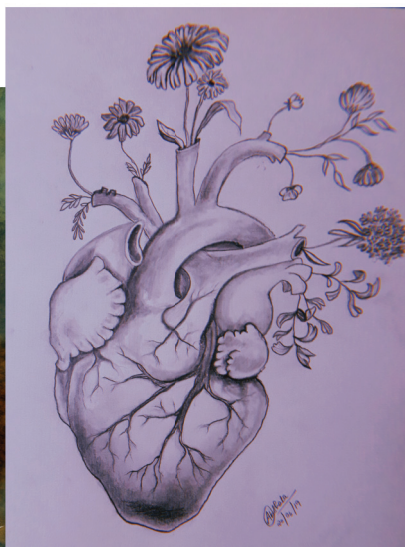
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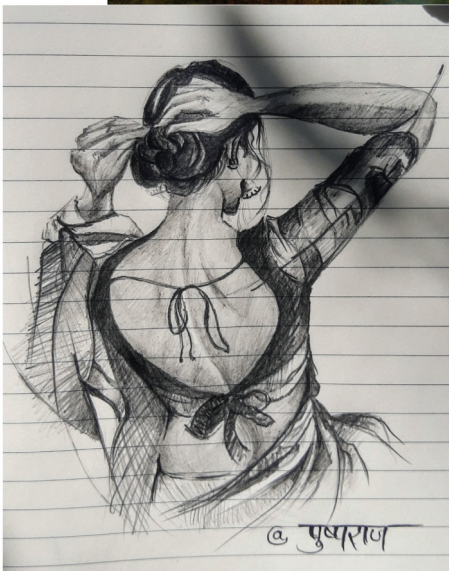
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