



THE HERITAGE COLLEGE LITERARY SOCIETY
PRESENTS



THINKSPIRE

*The Relationship Between
The Artist and The Art*

September, 2026

Issue #2



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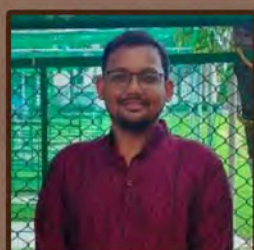
Behind The Scenes



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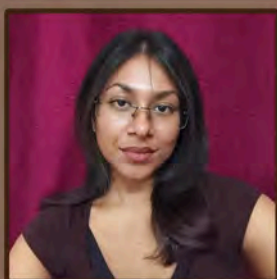
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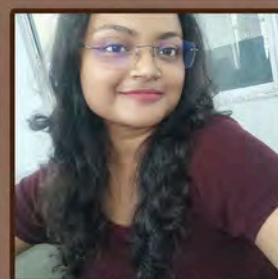
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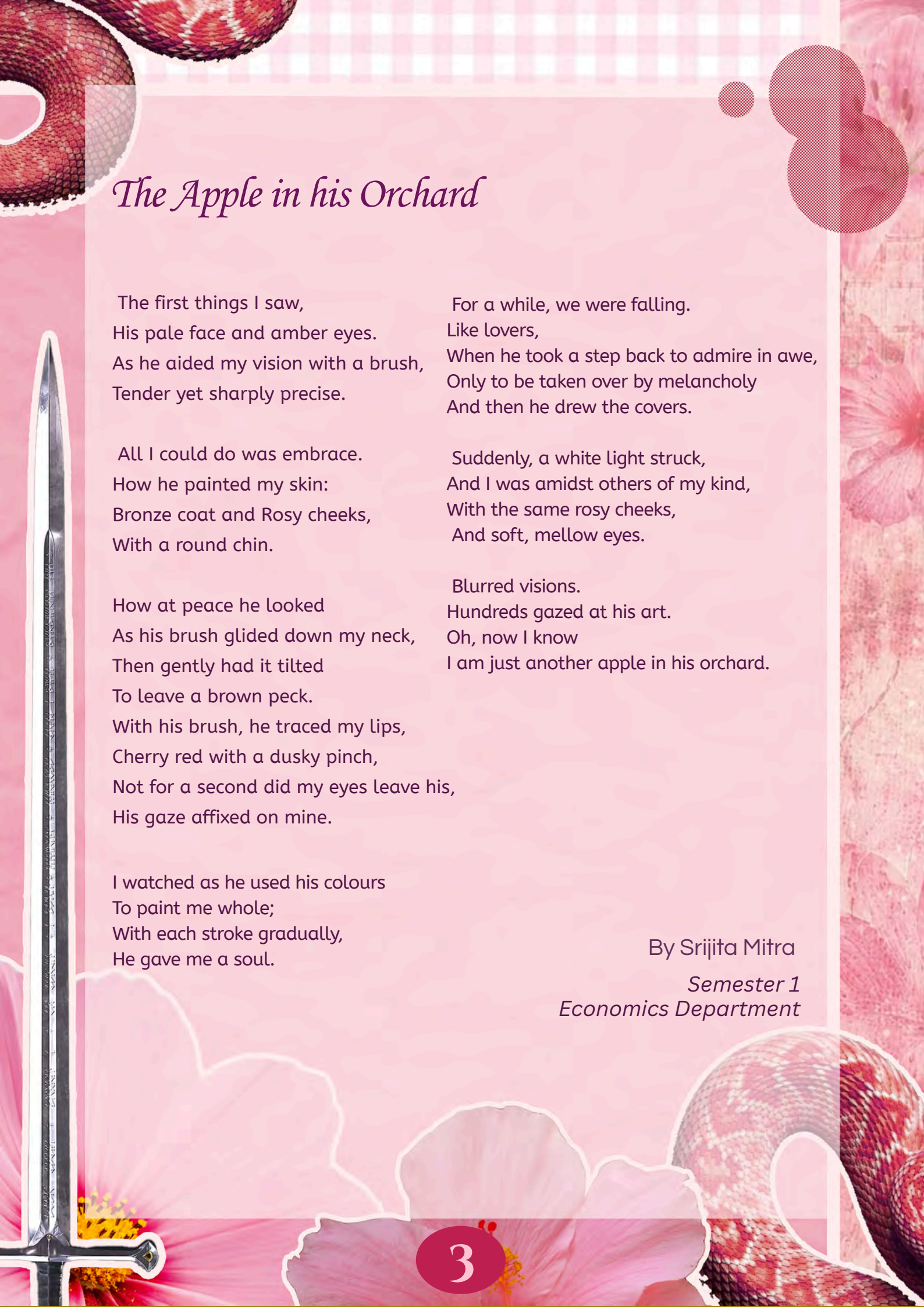
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Poetry



- William Blake,
Auguries of Innocence



The Apple in his Orchard

The first things I saw,
His pale face and amber eyes.
As he aided my vision with a brush,
Tender yet sharply precise.

All I could do was embrace.
How he painted my skin:
Bronze coat and Rosy cheeks,
With a round chin.

How at peace he looked
As his brush glided down my neck,
Then gently had it tilted
To leave a brown peck.
With his brush, he traced my lips,
Cherry red with a dusky pinch,
Not for a second did my eyes leave his,
His gaze affixed on mine.

I watched as he used his colours
To paint me whole;
With each stroke gradually,
He gave me a soul.

For a while, we were falling.
Like lovers,
When he took a step back to admire in awe,
Only to be taken over by melancholy
And then he drew the covers.

Suddenly, a white light struck,
And I was amidst others of my kind,
With the same rosy cheeks,
And soft, mellow eyes.

Blurred visions.
Hundreds gazed at his art.
Oh, now I know
I am just another apple in his orchard.

By Srijita Mitra

*Semester 1
Economics Department*



Veiled Oracles

I hemmed the dawn in folds of lace and called the silence you;
The lilies learned a softer hymn than any garden knew.
Before the bells embraced dawn, before the lilies stirred,
The Lord unstitched the morning light and sang the angels' words.
He carved no hearts from marble stone, nor crowns of beaten gold;
He breathed them from His lonely breast to bloom where Heaven rolled.
And every hymn the angels sang returned to where it grew;
No psalm forgets the sacred mouth from which it was first drawn.
You wore my voice like borrowed silk, so gentle, pale, and bright;
A daughter sewn from holy hush and handfuls of gathered light.
The angels drank my whispered psalms as swans receive the rain;
Each feather bore the ghost of me, though none could speak my name.
I kissed your brow with candle smoke where lonely incense climbed;
A blessing leaves the warmth of hands long after it has shined.
You thought the stars had chosen you to bloom above the sea;
Not knowing every silver tide first learned its pull from me.
For art may leave the artist's home, yet never leave her skin.
The river bears another name. The spring still sings within.
I could not make a soul from dust. The Lord reserves that thread.
So Heaven breathed where I had sewn, and love awoke instead.
Go wander through cathedral light where marble roses bloom;
Each chapel keeps my pulse concealed beneath its sweet perfume.
Should someone love your gentle hands and praise your faultless grace,
May they not hear my quiet hymn still resting on your face.
And when the Lord recalls us both beyond the veil of skies,
He'll know the artist by her art, the angel by her eyes.

By Sidra Ashraf

*Semester 1
Psychology Department*

The Price of Creation

They tell you:
separate the art from the artist
as though I could rip the veins
out of a hand
and still ask it to paint.

every poem I have ever written
has stolen something from me—

a long-forgotten childhood.
a face now unloved.
a grief I tried to bury.
And a version of me
that never made it out alive.

people call it
"beautiful."

they underline my metaphors,
circle my cherished lines,
debate what I meant.

while i sit quietly
watching strangers applaud
the wounds
they mistook for literature.

they ask,
"where do you get your ideas?"

i don't;
i lose them.

every page is a funeral
for the person
I had to turn into
to write it.

the cruellest part of creating
is not where it hurts,

But the pain that ends up belonging
to everyone else.

the moment I place the final full stop,
the poem is no longer mine.

someone reads it after losing their
mother.

Some read it in love.

One sees hope
where I buried despair.

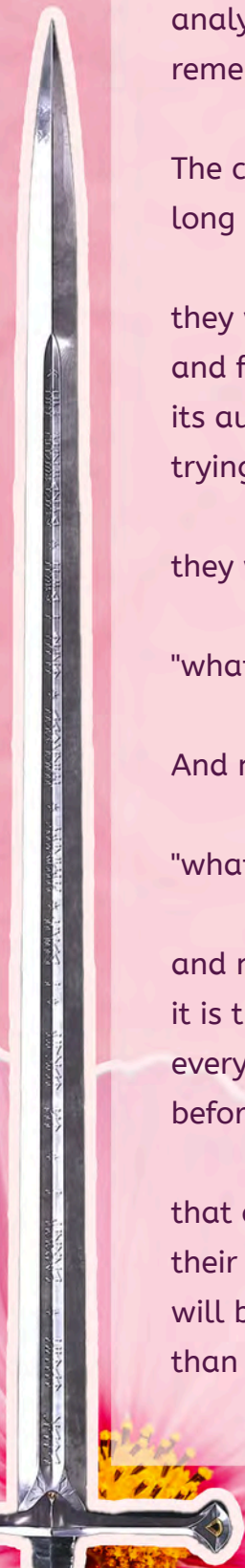
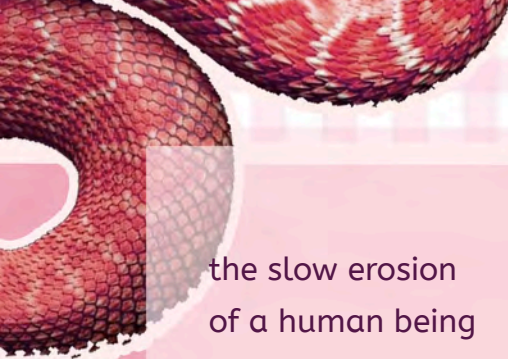
they all leave
holding different versions of me,
and somehow
none of them are the one
that wrote it.

perhaps that is art.

not self-expression.

But self-disappearance.

Contd.



the slow erosion
of a human being
turned into something
that can be framed,
published,
quoted,
analysed,
remembered.

The canvas will be preserved
long after the hands turn to dust.

they will speak of the novel
and forget the nights
its author spent
trying not to ebb away

they will say,

"what a masterpiece."

And never,

"what did it cost you?"

and maybe
it is the silent agreement
every artist signs
before they ever create.

that one day,
their work
will be loved more deeply
than they ever were.

and still,

they will pick up the brush.

they will sharpen the pencil.

they will press trembling fingers
against blank paper,

and offer another piece of themselves
to people
who'll never know
which line
was written in ink,

and which was written
in blood.

By Raunak Sen

*Semester 1
Psychology Department*



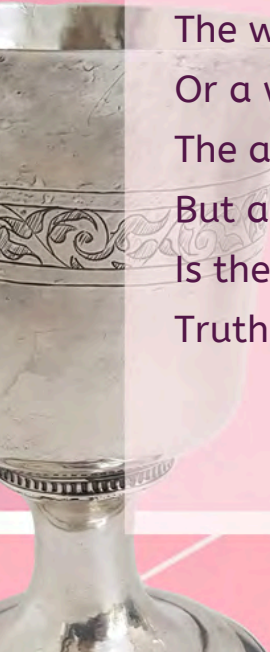
The Argument and the Song

“You asked for truth”, says the painting,
voice of layered pigment.
“And you asked for shelter”, answers the
painter, fingers stained.
They argue politely about who remembers
first: the stroke or the pain.
Art insists it was born ready, a twin
waiting at the ribcage.
The artist says he learned to listen, like a
violin learning silence.
In the end they make a small treaty: the
artist will not hide the cracks,
and the art will not pretend they are not
fingerprints.
They hang the treaty up where light can
read it; every dawn, they revise.

By Dibyashree Sen

*Semester 1
English Department*

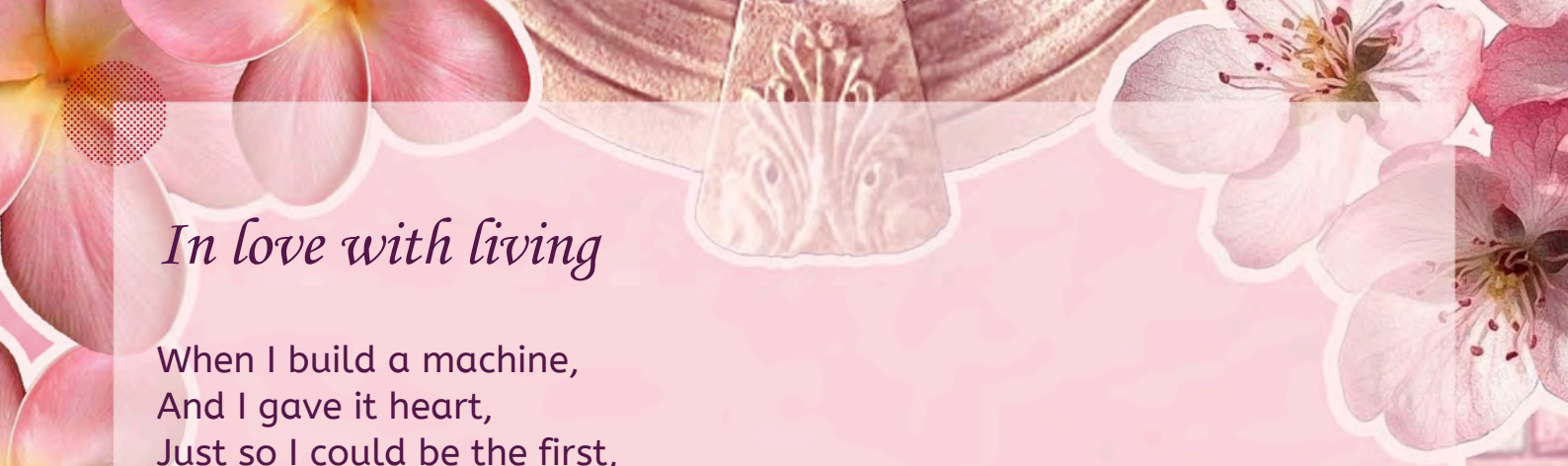
Tapestry



What is art if not a depiction of the painter?
Do different interpretations make it universal?
The world's property, created by a stranger?
Or a way to make ignorance seem somewhat ethical?
The author may be lousy, the poet a fraud,
But art is creation, woven by words and imagery
Is the mosaic breaking because the artisan is flawed?
Truth or a lie, the winner is the tapestry.

By Dyuti Kundu

*Semester 1
English Department*



In love with living

When I build a machine,
And I gave it heart,
Just so I could be the first,
Just so I could be the start.
I named it a sweet name,
Gave it all of my heart,
Called it my greatest thing to ever be,
Let it play out in the sun,
Charge into the night.
No one should know I am lonely,
Trying to build the greatest thing that could be,
No one should know I am lonely,
I hide behind the fakeness of who I could be.
My sweetheart had a heart and fell in love,
I forgot to say that the heart was not my own,
It didn't have a soul and no primal impulses,

Just love in its pure form.
It bled red in its arms with their first injections,
The heart pumped blood of its own accord,
It was my greatest invention,
Falling in love with it was not my intention.

How can I say I am lonely,
When people praise my standing,
But the creation I made as a person,
Fell in love with another- it fell in love with a fish.
There was no primal instinct,

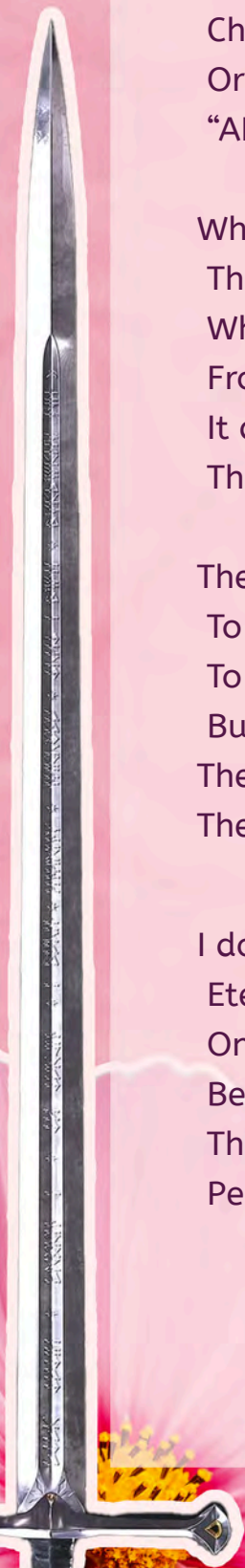
Only love from compassion and as a creator,
I watched it all happen, my invention in love with living

By Taijashi Koyal

Semester 7
English Department



When I hold a pen, I fear



When I hold a pen, I fear
Will people read, discuss, and hear?
Will I be judged by a thousand others?
Children, Uncles, Aunties, critics, and followers;
Or will I just be forgotten amongst a pile of others?
“Al, Al!” they scream; it bothers me.

Why do I write? To vent
Thoughts, emotions, and feelings all pent.
When the streets are happy, I feel sad,
From a distance, the flashback comes, makes me mad.
It all happens time and again,
The ups and downs of pleasure and pain.

They say the power is mine,
To govern my character’s spine,
To shape my reader’s view,
But oh! I never truly do.
The characters work themselves out.
The public is biased; they scream and shout.

I don’t write to be read, I write to escape.
Eternity I wish for my creations to shape.
One praise is enough, though more is great,
Because, my friend, greed is a threat.
Though fifty years hence,
Perhaps I would change my own sense.

By Soumini Sil
Semester 1
English Department



The Art that Never Faded

No one asks
What becomes of the artist?
After a masterpiece is born.
They praise the canvas;
never the hands
that bled into its colours.
They memorize the poem,
And never the nights
that carved each word
from a heart unwilling to survive.
Every work of art
Is a beautiful theft.
It steals a little sleep,
a little innocence,
a little life—
until the artist
becomes a stranger
to the person they once were.
The cruellest truth:
art remembers
what the artist
longs to forget.
The painting holds the tears.

The music echoes the ache.
The pages record the soul
which never found healing.
And perhaps
that is why the greatest works
feel immortal.
Because something mortal was
buried,
deep within.
One day,
the artist will become
a name beneath a date;
their voice swallowed by time.
Yet someone,
Standing before the work,
will whisper,
"I've never felt so seen."
Not knowing,
they are listening
to the echo
of a heart
that broke itself;
Just to be heard.

By Sayantani Ojha
*Semester 2
English Department*



The Tethers of Genesis

The painter bleeds into the brush,
The writer walks the ink-stained floor;
Within the crowded, quiet hush,
The shadow steps through every door.
Is the canvas flesh and bone?
Or does it breathe a separate air?
The sculptor carves the heavy stone,
And leaves a piece of spirit there.
A mirror held to hide the face,
A voice that speaks in disguised tone;
Yet through the lines, you trace the
place.
Where the maker's heart is known.
You cannot strip the weaver's hand.
From threads that form the final cloth;
The art and artist firmly stand,
As both the flame, and both the moth.
The dancer spins across the stage,
Leaving an outline in the air;
The novelist binds up the page,
But leaves a pulse trapped hiding there.
Who owns the cry within the chord?
The player or the hollow wood?
The metal belongs to the sword,
But the strike belongs to the blood.

We build a wall of brick and name,
To prove the object stands alone;
We say the spark forgets the flame,
And that the child outgrows the bone.

Yet every fiction holds a fact,
A secret window to the mind;
Within the script of every act,
The ghost of purpose stays behind.

The potter's thumbprint stays
concealed,
Deep in the hardening of the clay;
The deepest truths are quite
revealed,
By words we did not mean to say.
The canvas speaks what lips deny,
The melody remembers grief;
An author scripts a quiet lie,
To give their honest soul relief.
So pull the yarn and try to find,
Where master ends, and work
begins;
They are forever intertwined,
Like matching saints or matching
sins.
The breath is gone, the song
remains,
Yet who can say the voice is dead?
The maker flows within the veins,
Of every single sentence read.

By Simran Ballav

*Semester 1
Physics Department*



Poems I Haven't Written.

You say all my poems are about grief –
overcast skies, lovers who stir their tea,
watch it whirl, and sit in silence.
I'll write lovers who hold a gaze,
and leave their seats humming a tune.

The flower I left on a grave,
I'll place in a tall glass,
on your table.

Let me write a little on joy.
The sun rising above the clouds,
the way children always draw it.

The winter words will begin to leaf,
become a tree.
Many autumns later,
we'll stand beneath its shade.

When the leaves begin to fall,
neither of us will think of the grave.

By Sankha Ghosh
*Assistant Professor,
English Department*

Fiction



There's no greater agony than
bearing an untold story inside you.

- Maya Angelou,
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

When the night began to talk

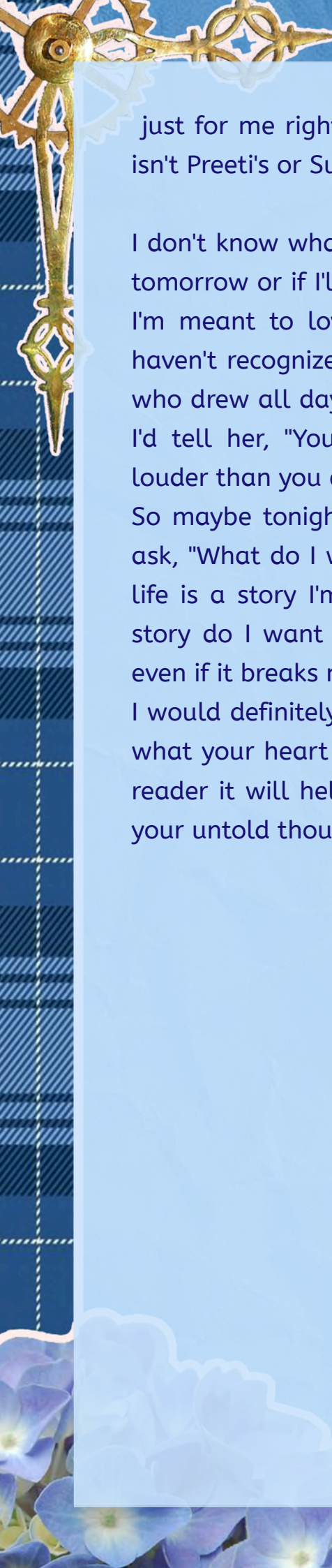
It's August 1st, and I'm fairly certain that everyone is asleep except for me and my thoughts. Unfortunately, my heart keeps telling me to "write whatever is going on in your mind," so I started even though I really don't know how to express my inner thoughts or feelings. I'm 19 years old, still a teenager, and, in today's terms, a member of Generation Z. I enjoy watching TV shows and movies and reading romance novels, and, ideally, I want a romantic life that makes people say, "I want a love like this in life. Ummm, the ultimate love goals." But because life is unpredictable and uncertain, life and certain situations have tamed my expectations. My parents have told me since I was a young child to put everything aside, concentrate on my career, and create a plan because they were spending a lot of money. I wanted to be an artist, but for the sake of my future and everyone's advice, I turned my dream into a hobby. Now, that hobby has become "I don't have time for my hobby," and this is how my dream career turned into a no-time pastime. I watched a series called "MUSAFIRCAFE" yesterday. It's an intense love story conveying profound emotions. Three individuals are the focus of the narrative: Preeti, a writer, Sudha, a divorce attorney, and Chander, a software engineer. It's an open-ended story, which helps the viewer to think about what will happen next, expected or unexpected.

A scene from yesterday's Musafir Cafe showed Preeti sitting by herself in the café, staring at her notebook, not sure whether to write or flee from her own words. That silence made sense to me. When my thoughts are louder than my room at 2 a.m., I experience the same silence. Perhaps this explains why I watch a lot of love stories. People are free to express their hopes aloud in books and television. Hope feels risky in real life, as if life will hear me and take it away if I express it. I therefore store my desires inside, where they are secure and unspoken. However, there are moments when I wonder, "What happens when you stop expecting anything? Do you shield yourself from disappointment, or do you also prevent yourself from experiencing positive surprises?"

Contd.

I know what I'm writing about sounds like a script, or rather, I would say a scripted series that I imagined or watched with background music and dramatic pauses, but the truth is, my life doesn't have background music or dramatic pauses. It has alarm clocks, Wi-Fi that cuts out during online lectures, and a mother who still asks, "Did you study today?" as if art were a distraction and not a part of my soul I'm trying not to lose completely. Some nights, I scroll through Instagram and see people my age travelling, starting businesses, and posting couple photos with captions like "Found my forever." And I sit there, 19, in a city that never really sleeps but somehow makes me feel invisible. I wonder if they figured out the secret—how to balance dreams and reality, love and stability, hope and self-protection. Or maybe they're just better at pretending. I used to draw every evening. Now, I sketch in the margins of my notebooks when no one's looking—small faces, broken lines, tiny hearts hidden between definitions and formulas. It's my rebellion. My quiet way of saying, "I'm still here. I haven't forgotten you." Love, for me, exists mostly in the stories I consume. In the way fictional characters hold hands in the rain, in the confessions made under streetlights, and in the "I choose you" moments that feel cinematic. In real life, love is complicated. It's unspoken expectations; it's parents arranging meetings with "good families," and it's the fear that maybe the person I'm meant to love hasn't found me yet—or worse, that I'll settle for someone safe instead of someone who makes my heart race. I'm tired of being practical. I'm tired of hearing, "Focus on your career first; love will come later. "What if I want both? What if I want to build something with my hands and my heart at the same time? What if I don't want to wait until I'm ready to feel alive? Maybe that's why I'm writing this on August 1st —'Girlfriend Day,' though I have no one to dedicate it to. Maybe this is my way of saying, "I'm still hopeful." I'm still waiting for the kind of love that feels like coming home. I'm still holding on to the belief that my art matters, even if it's

Contd.



just for me right now. And maybe, just maybe, the open- ended story isn't Preeti's or Sudha's or Chander's. It's mine.

I don't know what comes next. I don't know if I'll pick up my sketchbook tomorrow or if I'll bury myself in books again. I don't know if the person I'm meant to love is out there or if they're already in my life and I haven't recognized them yet. If I could talk to my younger self—the one who drew all day and believed every story could have a happy ending—I'd tell her, "You're not wrong for wanting beauty. The world is just louder than you expected."

So maybe tonight, instead of asking, "What will happen to me?" I can ask, "What do I want to write next?" Even if it's just one line. Because if life is a story I'm writing with every choice I make, then what kind of story do I want to tell—and am I brave enough to let it be beautiful, even if it breaks me?

I would definitely suggest to these Gen Z kids to write if you can't speak what your heart and mind want to say, like me, and I can assure every reader it will help in the end because no one will stay except you and your untold thoughts.

By Anushka Mukherjee

*Semester 2
English Department*

Through the images of you

He held the diary in his hands. His vision blurred with tears. His hands trembled as he turned the pages. He blinked rapidly, trying to clear his vision, but a teardrop fell onto the paper nonetheless. He continued flipping through the pages.

Things had not been like this even an hour ago. It had been an ordinary afternoon. After his post-lunch jog, Arka had curled up on his bed with a book. But the peace of his afternoon had been shattered by a phone call.

Arka did not have many friends, and consequently, he rarely received phone calls. In fact, he barely remembered what his own ringtone sounded like. But that day, someone did call him.

The sudden chime caught him off guard. He closed his book and picked up the phone.

"Hello?"

"Hey, is this Arka?"

"Yes... and who is this?"

"Manish. We're classmates. I'm the class representative."

Weird.

Arka had never received a call from anyone in his class, let alone someone he had never spoken to before. He searched his memory, trying to recall if he had done anything that might warrant a call from the class representative.

"Yeah, hi, Manish. Did you need something from me?" he asked, trying to keep the anxiety from creeping into his voice.

There was a sigh on the other end.

"Arka, did you know Mohor? Our classmate?"

Arka knew her a little too well. Not because he was acquainted with her, but because of a stupid rumor that had made his life difficult for the past six months.

He rubbed his forehead before replying.

"Yeah... I know her. And Manish, it's not true. Those kids are bullies. They

Contd.

make stuff up—"

"She took her life this morning."

The words took a moment to settle.

The world suddenly seemed to stop around him.

His mind went blank, and the only thing he could see was Mohor.

He remembered the first time he had caught her staring at him. She had been seated diagonally across the classroom, separated from him by a sea of students busy with their own conversations. The memory should have ended with her quickly looking away, embarrassed.

But now it didn't.

Time stood still.

Neither of them broke eye contact. One by one, the students disappeared. So did the chatter. It was just the two of them, alone in an empty classroom, staring at each other in complete silence.

"Arka? Are you there?" Manish's voice broke through from the other end of the line.

Arka snapped out of his trance.

"Yeah... yeah. I'm just... I'm sorry. Can I call you back?"

"Sure. But before you hang up, I wanted to let you know that the school is arranging a memorial service for her. The teachers have asked us to prepare an obituary. Please try to write one... something positive... by Monday."

Arka barely registered what Manish had said.

"Yes... I will. Thank you for letting me know."

He hung up.

Arka somehow managed to make his way to the chair by his desk and sank into it.

It felt like yesterday.

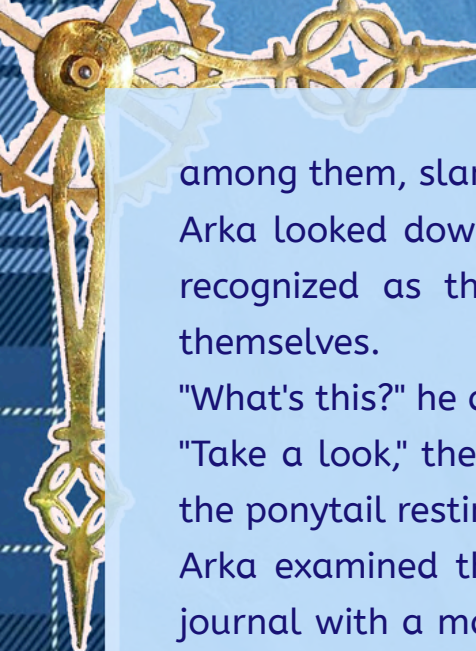
The first time he had heard her name.

It was a Friday. Arka had been copying down the notes he had missed from his deskmate during recess when a group of students walked into the classroom, laughing and whispering among themselves. The noise irritated him enough to make him look up.

They stopped beside his desk.

One of the girls, one Arka knew as the most popular and notorious

Contd.



among them, slammed a diary onto his desk.

Arka looked down at the diary before raising his eyes to the group he recognized as the school bullies. They were still laughing amongst themselves.

"What's this?" he asked.

"Take a look," the girl said, absentmindedly running her fingers through the ponytail resting over her shoulder.

Arka examined the diary more closely. It was a brown leather-bound journal with a matching ribbon bookmark peeking out from between its pages. The initials 'M.S.' had been carved into the cover.

"Whose is it? And why would I go through it?"

The girl rolled her eyes.

"You are too good for your own sake. Just read it!"

Arka folded his arms.

"This is someone's private diary. I refuse to..."

Exasperated, the girl slammed her palm against the desk.

"It isn't private when it's about you!"

Arka frowned.

About him?

"Arka," she announced dramatically, "we have an artist amongst us. And you'd be honoured to know that you're her muse!"

The group burst into laughter as she flourished her hands theatrically.

As much as Arka hated to admit it, curiosity stirred within him. His eyes drifted back to the diary.

Its owner probably wasn't even aware that her privacy had been violated. The diary lay before him, tempting him with everything it contained.

"Please take it back to her," he said quietly.

It was almost a plea.

He wanted the diary gone. His curiosity was beginning to get the better of him, and if the diary disappeared, so would his dilemma.

The girl picked up the leather-bound journal.

"You're such a weird guy! How can you not want to know which girl's been drooling over you? I bet she..."

"Please leave."

Contd.

"Fine! Since you're so determined to protect her privacy, return it to her yourself."

Arka never did.

He told himself it was because he wanted to avoid the uncomfortable confrontation that returning the diary would bring.

In reality, curiosity had already won.

He wanted to know what lay inside those pages. He wanted to know how a girl he barely knew could find him interesting enough to make him her inspiration. He was just a quiet nerd who kept to himself.

But he never opened it.

His conscience would not allow him to. The guilt of not returning the diary already weighed heavily on him; he did not want to add another burden to it.

And if he read it, he would be no better than the bullies he despised.

Soon enough, the gossip spread throughout the school, and Arka finally learned the identity of the diary's owner.

Mohor Sen.

A girl he hadn't even realized, let alone cared to notice, was in his class.

Ever since learning her name, he found himself avoiding her, though he rarely had to. Yet, much to his irritation, he became increasingly aware of her presence.

Sometimes he caught her looking at him.

Other times, he noticed her sitting quietly in the corner of the classroom, scribbling away in a notebook.

Was she aware that her diary was with him?

Given how quickly the rumors had spread, there was no way she couldn't have known.

By the time the gossip reached him, the story had already been exaggerated beyond recognition. Some students even claimed the diary contained inappropriate things.

Mohor, however, remained nonchalant.

She continued to occupy her corner of the classroom in silence, keeping herself absorbed in her sketches and scribbles.

Then, within a few days, she stopped coming to school.

Arka found himself noticing her absence just as often as he had once noticed her presence. Her corner of the classroom remained empty.

Contd.

But Mohor was no more.

Arka found himself rummaging through his drawers until he pulled out a leather-bound diary.

The diary that had started it all.

His hands trembled as he held it. He placed it gently on the desk and sat staring at it.

Mohor was gone.

So were her secrets.

But a part of her remained here, resting on his desk.

Before he could gather another thought, he flipped the cover open.

Then the first page.

His eyes landed on a sketch. He held the diary closer for a better look.

It was a sketch of him.

A beautiful one at that.

Every feature had been recreated with astonishing precision.

His gaze lingered on the drawing for a long moment before he turned the page.

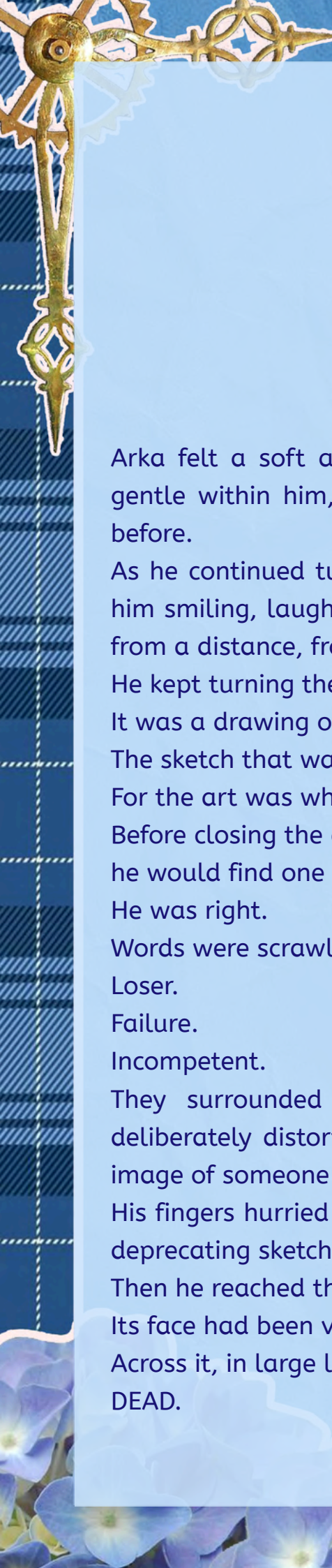
This time, it was a poem.

It read:

"To Him:

*Childhood mirth marked our days,
careless and bright as
the sun on the dusty lanes.
Suddenly you shone like sunlight after rain,
Turning mere hours into golden days.
Like a harp strumming softly across my heart,
you woke a music I had never known;
and where small, quiet shadows used to dwell,
your presence fell and
suddenly all the dark was gone.
Illuminated was this hidden
space within, a secret room
lit so vibrantly by your name;
its walls were filled with quiet praise of you.
Stolen were the glances.
Shrouded with constraint.*

Contd.



*Careful steps on
a tender, trembling ground,
each moment new,
yet strangely still my own;
a part of me I never knew existed
until your light had shone
and darkness was defeated."*

Arka felt a soft ache settle in his chest. The poem stirred something gentle within him, something unfamiliar, something he had never felt before.

As he continued turning the pages, he found more sketches. Images of him smiling, laughing, reading, writing; everything as she had observed from a distance, from her quiet corner of the classroom.

He kept turning the pages until he came upon an unfinished sketch. It was a drawing of him reading.

The sketch that was ill-fated to ever be completed.

For the art was what was left while the artist had left the world.

Before closing the diary, he turned to the final page. Something told him he would find one last piece of her there.

He was right.

Words were scrawled across the page.

Loser.

Failure.

Incompetent.

They surrounded a hideous self-portrait. Mohor's face had been deliberately distorted, her features exaggerated and contorted into an image of someone she despised.

His fingers hurried through the remaining pages, only to find more self-deprecating sketches.

Then he reached the last one.

Its face had been violently crossed out.

Across it, in large letters, was written a single word.

DEAD.

Contd.

Arka slowly lowered the diary onto the desk.
Only then did he realize he had been crying.
He wiped at his face as he sat trembling in his chair.
If only he had gone through her diary.
If only he had known she had been struggling.
All the beautiful images she had created of him flashed before his eyes.
A person who could see such beauty in someone else could only find ugliness within herself.
And that...
That had led her to end her life.
Before he knew it, Arka broke down in tears, the weight of guilt crushing him.
He finally got to know her, as her art spoke of her in a million ways words could never have.

By Ahiri Bhattacharya

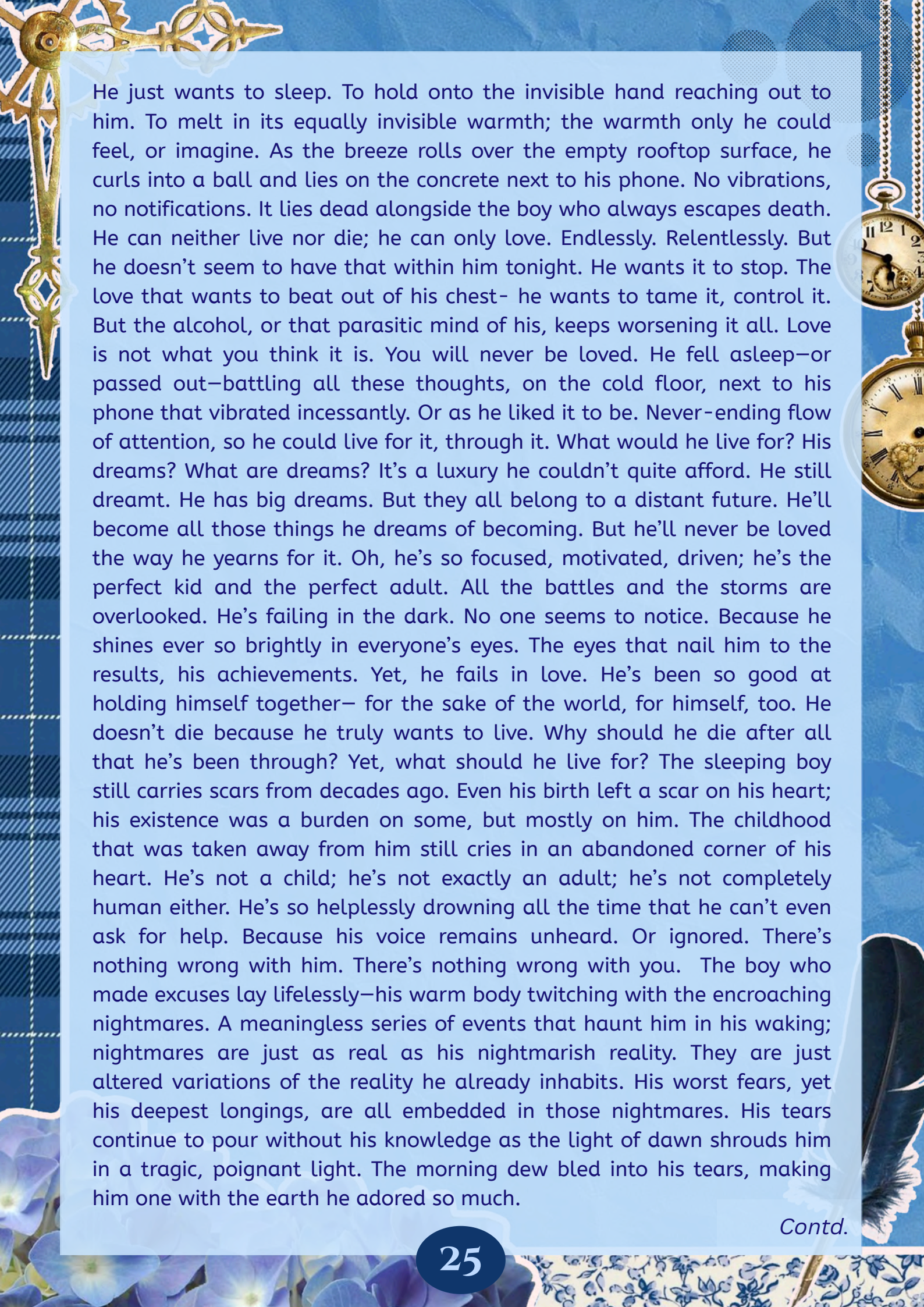
Semester 2
English Department



The Diaries of a Yearner

The stars were stuck in a whirlpool of motion. All the stars in the galaxy, all the constellations, were reflected in his eyes as he stared aimlessly at the sky. A blurry wonder, a wondrous mess, tears stream like the heart pumps blood. He's crying, but he seems unaware of the pain that pulls strings around his heart. All numb and pained, his existence bears too heavily on his small body. He's crushed and beaten, but he's still undefeated. He must go on—through the tears and the pain—and he must stay alive. For what he doesn't know, but he must, he knows. With his balled-up fist, he beats his chest—to outhurt the heartbreak, to stop the pain. He coughs uncontrollably, choking on his own tears. He hates this feeling. He hates crying. It feels like he's lost all control over his eyes. Even when the tears seem to soften his tragedy, he hates that they take away the pain with them. Numbness is all that is left. If he can't have love, then what would he be without his aches? What meaning would his life have? He must keep suffering and keep hoping. Love, he loves. But can he have it? Is the pain that comes with love worth it? Is love meant to be painful? *Please stop hurting.* He begged with all his might. All these years of relentless torture that life has inflicted upon him came pouring down on him. He's so helpless, he's so alone, so lonely—love, love, love was all he yearned for. Love was the only hope he desperately held on to. He lived for love. All of this pain for love. So why does love hurt so much? Or is it the hope of love that hurts? Even through his drunkenness, his thoughts pierced through his heart. They never stopped. The alcohol rushing through his veins only aggravated his hyperawareness. Everything felt too heavy, too burdensome. What was he to do? He was helpless. He needed to escape his body. But now he can't feel his body anymore. Only his mind, a parasitic entity, snakes its way through his existence. His poor, poor heart, thumping loudly in his chest, was fighting to keep him alive. His abandoned, cold phone lay on the concrete; its emptiness echoed loudly in his parasitic mind. A roaring loneliness gurgled in his stomach; he couldn't take it anymore. What is he to do with himself? Who is he supposed to lean on? Who's going to wipe his tears?

Contd.

The page is decorated with various elements. On the left, there is a vertical strip of blue and white plaid fabric. Above it, a golden, ornate metal piece resembling a key or a decorative handle is visible. On the right side, there are two pocket watches. The top one is smaller and shows the time as approximately 10:10. The bottom one is larger and shows the time as approximately 1:50. Below the watches, there is a black feather. At the bottom of the page, there are purple flowers and a blue and white floral pattern.

He just wants to sleep. To hold onto the invisible hand reaching out to him. To melt in its equally invisible warmth; the warmth only he could feel, or imagine. As the breeze rolls over the empty rooftop surface, he curls into a ball and lies on the concrete next to his phone. No vibrations, no notifications. It lies dead alongside the boy who always escapes death. He can neither live nor die; he can only love. Endlessly. Relentlessly. But he doesn't seem to have that within him tonight. He wants it to stop. The love that wants to beat out of his chest- he wants to tame it, control it. But the alcohol, or that parasitic mind of his, keeps worsening it all. Love is not what you think it is. You will never be loved. He fell asleep-or passed out-battling all these thoughts, on the cold floor, next to his phone that vibrated incessantly. Or as he liked it to be. Never-ending flow of attention, so he could live for it, through it. What would he live for? His dreams? What are dreams? It's a luxury he couldn't quite afford. He still dreamt. He has big dreams. But they all belong to a distant future. He'll become all those things he dreams of becoming. But he'll never be loved the way he yearns for it. Oh, he's so focused, motivated, driven; he's the perfect kid and the perfect adult. All the battles and the storms are overlooked. He's failing in the dark. No one seems to notice. Because he shines ever so brightly in everyone's eyes. The eyes that nail him to the results, his achievements. Yet, he fails in love. He's been so good at holding himself together- for the sake of the world, for himself, too. He doesn't die because he truly wants to live. Why should he die after all that he's been through? Yet, what should he live for? The sleeping boy still carries scars from decades ago. Even his birth left a scar on his heart; his existence was a burden on some, but mostly on him. The childhood that was taken away from him still cries in an abandoned corner of his heart. He's not a child; he's not exactly an adult; he's not completely human either. He's so helplessly drowning all the time that he can't even ask for help. Because his voice remains unheard. Or ignored. There's nothing wrong with him. There's nothing wrong with you. The boy who made excuses lay lifelessly-his warm body twitching with the encroaching nightmares. A meaningless series of events that haunt him in his waking; nightmares are just as real as his nightmarish reality. They are just altered variations of the reality he already inhabits. His worst fears, yet his deepest longings, are all embedded in those nightmares. His tears continue to pour without his knowledge as the light of dawn shrouds him in a tragic, poignant light. The morning dew bled into his tears, making him one with the earth he adored so much.

Contd.

He'd spent all night out in the dark, alone and lonely. Now he'd be waking up alone, his body sore and stiff and cold. He'd wake up and wipe his eyes, remove the crust and his drool, straighten his shirt, fix his hair, and descend to his apartment. Large and empty. But he's just as emotionless and quiet. As if nothing happened last night. It was just another night; its memories will be dusted in one corner of his mind. Maybe it'll make its way to the pages of his journal. That's it. His love was once again abandoned in the darkness of the night. All his yearnings will be engraved on all those pages he cherishes so much. He'll be a mere character in those pages. A character who sees love, feels love, but can never make it his. And he'll fondly look back at all those pages, admire his handwriting, be in awe of how well he's written, aspire to write better, and continue to forget. He'll forget slowly before it all fades into oblivion. For "loving is so short, but forgetting is so long". That's it.

By Nimesa Majee

Semester 7
English Department



Critical Essay



"The counter-tendency and test of a first-rate mind is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function."

*-F. Scott Fitzgerald,
The Crack-Up, 1936*



On Separating the Art from the Artist

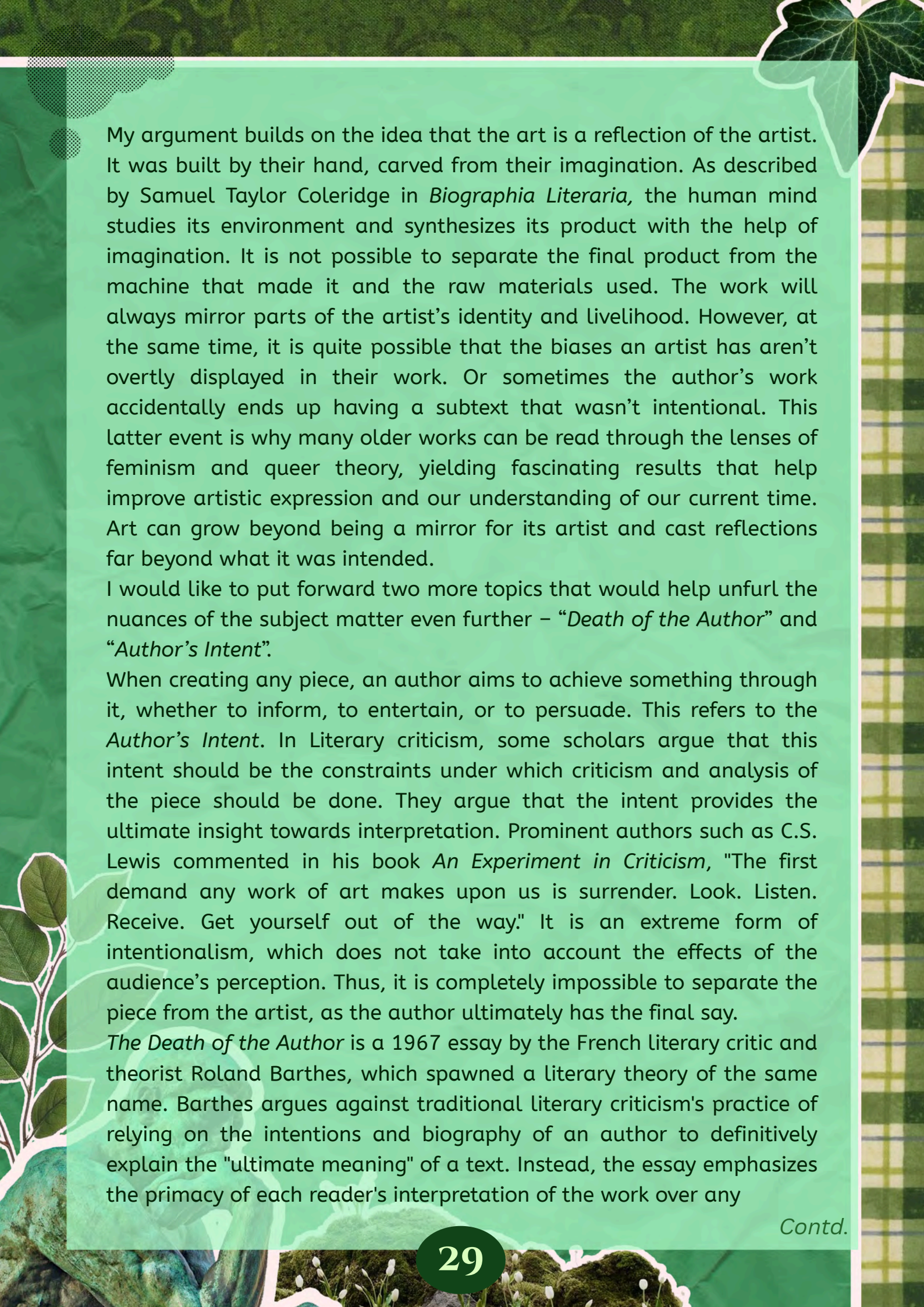
No person in this world is perfect; they are neither free from biases nor are they born perceptive and all-knowing. Socialization and one's environment are odd things that ultimately shape how a child is going to view and comprehend their surrounding world. And as the child grows with time, they learn and adapt to society. Setting this as the spine of my argument, I would like to state that it requires nuance and multifaceted analysis to separate an art from its artist. For some artists, it might work; for some it might not. It is difficult to come to a definitive conclusion.

The urge to separate art from an artist becomes overwhelming when important pieces of work have been authored by someone 'problematic'. A problematic person in the light of the recent world is someone who holds dangerous and discriminatory beliefs— racist, misogynist, or a queerphobic mindset. A common problem that often arises is when a person authoring a beloved series turns out to hold malice in their heart for a certain community, for example, JK Rowling and her Harry Potter series. Harry Potter has been a love and a cherished childhood memory for many people. However, the author's viewpoints against the transgender community have deeply perturbed them. They are torn between holding on to their love or abandoning it to show their defiance against unjust intolerance.

Of course, this dilemma is not limited to artists of contemporary times. Perhaps you resonate with Sylvia Plath's poetry, but do not agree with her depiction of racially insensitive sentiments. Pablo Picasso's artworks have opened up important discussion on abstractism, yet he is also criticized for his exploitation of women. The genres of classical arts— literature, portraiture, or music—are all widely loved and cherished. A lot of these artists have lived a life completely unethical yet were accepted during their time period. Perhaps they have dabbled in crimes of sorts. To us consumers, we wish to be comfortable in our consumption without being afraid of being seen as condoning these harmful manners of the artists.

Thus, the need to separate the art from the artist arises.

Contd.



My argument builds on the idea that the art is a reflection of the artist. It was built by their hand, carved from their imagination. As described by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria*, the human mind studies its environment and synthesizes its product with the help of imagination. It is not possible to separate the final product from the machine that made it and the raw materials used. The work will always mirror parts of the artist's identity and livelihood. However, at the same time, it is quite possible that the biases an artist has aren't overtly displayed in their work. Or sometimes the author's work accidentally ends up having a subtext that wasn't intentional. This latter event is why many older works can be read through the lenses of feminism and queer theory, yielding fascinating results that help improve artistic expression and our understanding of our current time. Art can grow beyond being a mirror for its artist and cast reflections far beyond what it was intended.

I would like to put forward two more topics that would help unfurl the nuances of the subject matter even further – “*Death of the Author*” and “*Author's Intent*”.

When creating any piece, an author aims to achieve something through it, whether to inform, to entertain, or to persuade. This refers to the *Author's Intent*. In Literary criticism, some scholars argue that this intent should be the constraints under which criticism and analysis of the piece should be done. They argue that the intent provides the ultimate insight towards interpretation. Prominent authors such as C.S. Lewis commented in his book *An Experiment in Criticism*, "The first demand any work of art makes upon us is surrender. Look. Listen. Receive. Get yourself out of the way." It is an extreme form of intentionalism, which does not take into account the effects of the audience's perception. Thus, it is completely impossible to separate the piece from the artist, as the author ultimately has the final say.

The Death of the Author is a 1967 essay by the French literary critic and theorist Roland Barthes, which spawned a literary theory of the same name. Barthes argues against traditional literary criticism's practice of relying on the intentions and biography of an author to definitively explain the "ultimate meaning" of a text. Instead, the essay emphasizes the primacy of each reader's interpretation of the work over any

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"definitive" meaning intended by the author, a process in which subtle or unnoticed characteristics may be drawn out for new insight. This new method of analysis allows an art piece to develop far beyond intentions. It establishes each work as having its own unique identity built by the community of readers and audience alike, separated from the author.

Hence, it reduces entirely to the individual thought process of whether one can separate the art from the artist. Whether a piece is a mouthpiece and weapon for the author, or whether it has outgrown its service to its audience and moved away from the environment it sprouted in – is for the consumer of said piece to decide.

The last point to consider in this argument is the social and economic aftermath of the art pieces. One must consider whether these pieces weaponise the discrimination or suffering of any community, and whether indulgence in said piece benefits a movement of hate. On more literal terms, 'Death of an Author' could apply to literal death. If the author has passed away and no longer benefits from the popularity of their work, it is not harmful to indulge in it, albeit keeping a critical eye open. However, for more modern 'problematic' artists, indulging in said pieces might benefit their hate campaigns; they might use the profit margin to fund institutions with perhaps not the best actions in process. The ability to separate the art thus becomes muddled if the artist gains to profit from its consumption. It is thus incredibly important to be aware of the social and political timeframe of the work and its author's existence. Older works have the chance to break free from an artist's shackles and return to the embrace of the masses that change and mold it – newer pieces do not have the same luxury.

I would thus conclude that art and artists are like Velcro pieces. Sometimes they could be torn apart, sometimes stuck close; but most often they are partially joined at odd angles, unable to be fully stripped away from each other efficiently. If one must separate the two to comfort a guilty conscience, they should question first if it benefits the very author they chose not to associate with. The dilemma also highlights a fundamental question – whether art is defined by the artist's mind or the reader's perception, or a combination of both. As long as this question remains unsolved, the dilemma cannot find itself an answer either.

By Snehabrita Hota

*Semester 7
English Department*



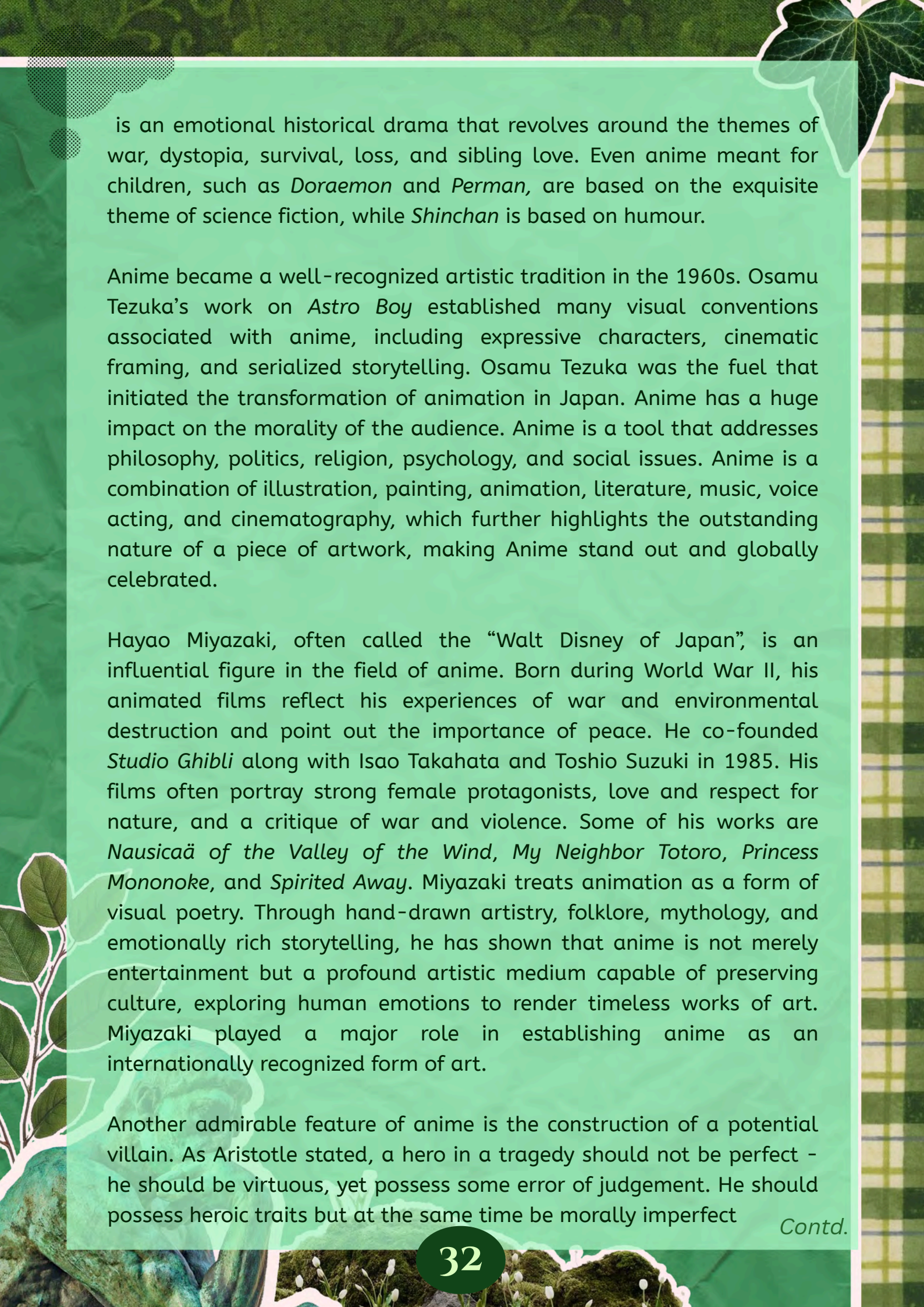
Anime as Art: From Animation to Cultural Expression

Can we consider animation as a form of art? This is a dicey debate, but the passion, hard work, and talent of animation creators cannot be overlooked. Earlier, animation creators used to draw the characters by hand. After the 1990s, the use of digital creation was popularised. But the digital platform is just a medium. Creators still have to draw the characters using their own imagination and skill. Regarding this idea of creation, can we call animation creators “artists”?

Animation is a globally popular art form that began in the late 19th century. Inventions of the zoetrope, phenakistiscope, and flip books enabled artists to experiment with creating the illusion of movement. Countries such as France, the United States, Russia, Germany, and Japan started producing animated films. Some countries developed their own artistic identities, like Disney and Warner Bros whose focus was mainly fairy tales and musical animation. Children get first-hand experience of animation through animated cartoons. For this reason, many people perceive animation as simple cartoons meant solely for children. But Japan transformed this into a serious art form, specifically using the term “anime” instead of animation.

Anime revolves around various topics - real stories, folklore, action and thrillers, and emotional plots. Anime often uses manga-inspired drawings. Instead of adapting to the Disney style of creation, Japan initially developed its own artistic language. Anime artists use vibrant colours to make the film appealing to the audience. *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba* is a popular anime featuring a young boy, Tanjiro, who becomes a demon slayer in order to turn his demon sister back into a human. The use of vibrant colours, soothing music, multiple unique characters, and action-filled and emotional scenes contribute to the success of the anime. Japan's talent can be experienced in its creation of unique characters and interesting plotlines. Tanjiro is portrayed as someone who is diligent and strong, yet grieves after killing a demon. He understands the pain and helplessness of the demons and feels sorry for them. Another famous anime is *Spirited Away* based on Japanese folklore and fairy tales. *Grave of the Fireflies*

Contd.



is an emotional historical drama that revolves around the themes of war, dystopia, survival, loss, and sibling love. Even anime meant for children, such as *Doraemon* and *Perman*, are based on the exquisite theme of science fiction, while *Shinchan* is based on humour.

Anime became a well-recognized artistic tradition in the 1960s. Osamu Tezuka's work on *Astro Boy* established many visual conventions associated with anime, including expressive characters, cinematic framing, and serialized storytelling. Osamu Tezuka was the fuel that initiated the transformation of animation in Japan. Anime has a huge impact on the morality of the audience. Anime is a tool that addresses philosophy, politics, religion, psychology, and social issues. Anime is a combination of illustration, painting, animation, literature, music, voice acting, and cinematography, which further highlights the outstanding nature of a piece of artwork, making Anime stand out and globally celebrated.

Hayao Miyazaki, often called the “Walt Disney of Japan”, is an influential figure in the field of anime. Born during World War II, his animated films reflect his experiences of war and environmental destruction and point out the importance of peace. He co-founded *Studio Ghibli* along with Isao Takahata and Toshio Suzuki in 1985. His films often portray strong female protagonists, love and respect for nature, and a critique of war and violence. Some of his works are *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, *My Neighbor Totoro*, *Princess Mononoke*, and *Spirited Away*. Miyazaki treats animation as a form of visual poetry. Through hand-drawn artistry, folklore, mythology, and emotionally rich storytelling, he has shown that anime is not merely entertainment but a profound artistic medium capable of preserving culture, exploring human emotions to render timeless works of art. Miyazaki played a major role in establishing anime as an internationally recognized form of art.

Another admirable feature of anime is the construction of a potential villain. As Aristotle stated, a hero in a tragedy should not be perfect - he should be virtuous, yet possess some error of judgement. He should possess heroic traits but at the same time be morally imperfect

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to invoke pity and fear in the audience. Using this idea, anime artists often create villains who have tragic and painful backgrounds. This justifies the evil and cruel actions of the villains but at the same time arouses sympathy among the audience. In Demon Slayer, most demons had miserable backgrounds which motivated them to become demons. This forces the audience to deeply consider the idea that villains are not born but made by society. Anime often portrays characters who would be judged harshly and often rejected by society in real life. In A Silent Voice, Shoko Nishimiya is bullied and considered “different” by classmates for being deaf since birth. Shoya Ishida is a bully who suffers from guilt, depression, and social isolation.

Anime is often viewed as a Japanese art form, but its creative scope extends far beyond Japan. Anime artists frequently engage with myths, literature, architecture, religions, and histories from different cultures. By combining these global influences with Japanese animation techniques, they create works that are both culturally respectful and artistically innovative. Ramayana: The Legend of Prince (1993) is the first major Indo-Japanese anime feature film and one of the earliest feature-length animated films associated with India. While working on "The Ramayana Relics," a documentary film about excavations by Dr. B. B. Lal near Allahabad, Yugo Sako came to know about the story of the Ramayana. He loved the story and read ten versions of the Ramayana in Japanese. He wanted to adapt this into anime. He believed that a live-action movie cannot capture the essence of the Ramayana. Sako said: "Because Ram is God, I felt it was best to depict him in animation, rather than by an actor." Thus, the film was conceived by Japanese filmmaker Yugo Sako, co-directed by Ram Mohan (Father of Indian Animation) and Koichi Sasaki. It was originally planned as an official India-Japan co-production. But due to political and religious opposition in India at the time, the Indian government withdrew support. Consequently, the film was financed and completed in Japan. Even then, Indian artists played significant roles in production. Japanese anime artists guided Indian artists in the creation of the anime, while Indian artists enlightened Japanese artists about Indian culture, traditions, and myths, guiding the production of the film. The Ramayana is a remarkable artistic example of cultural amalgamation. Based on an Indian epic, the use of Japanese anime aesthetics and techniques, and Indian music and cultural authenticity foster creative collaboration between Indian and Japanese artists. Indian artists worked dedicatedly on the screenplay, developed the cultural references and art settings, recorded the dialogue and handled most of the animation,

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storyboarding, coloring, editing, and photography. Indian composer Vanraj Bhatia created the music. Despite having limited screenings, *Ramayana* won the Best Animation Feature award at the Santa Clarita International Family Film Festival in 2000. In spite of being one of the best cross-cultural pieces of art, *Ramayana* could not escape critical comments. When it was screened at the Vancouver International Film Festival, festival director Alan Franey called the film "extraordinary" and said, "The backgrounds are done in beautiful detail, while the foreground characters are an Indian version of the Disney style, with big dewey eyes." Ken Eisner wrote in *Variety* that the film was "not even great to look at." Madhu Jain of *India Today* called it a "charming film, despite some minor errors". She further wrote, "Sita looks like Snow White in a saffron sari and Ram, lily white, bows and moves like a Samurai warrior. One would expect him to say sayonara any moment."

Thus, anime transcends geographical and cultural borders. Anime involves multiple artists, which further brings in new and innovative ideas to work. Many critics often point out the similarity in features of many anime characters. Artists represent changes not really through physical features, but by incorporating different styles of clothing, fashion, hair styles. Nonetheless, anime is based on imagination and artistic skills, which enables the creation of new plots, characters, and storytelling methods. Although underrated, anime is as worthy as any other artwork.

By Sutanuka Sengupta

Semester 7
English Department

An Interpretation of the life of a “Girl Interrupted”

“Have you ever confused a dream with life? Or stolen something when you have the cash? Have you ever been blue? Or thought your train moving while sitting still? Maybe I was just crazy. Maybe it was the 60's. Or maybe I was just a girl... interrupted.” — Susanna Kaysen, *Girl, Interrupted*

The 1993 memoir turned film, “*Girl Interrupted*,” is an autobiographical account of Susanna Kaysen’s 18-month stay at McLean Hospital to undergo psychiatric treatment. After a failed suicide attempt by overdosing on pills in April 1967, she regroups at McLean, where she is diagnosed with clinical depression and borderline personality disorder. In the memoir, Susanna delves into the experiences of her and her fellow patients Polly, Cynthia, Lisa Rowe, Lisa Cody, Georgina, and Daisy. The swinging sixties were marked by a youth-driven cultural revolution, ushering in an era of newer, more accepting, and more vibrant social shifts. This shift, however, was yet to be seen in society's view of the crazed. The memoir thus explores society's perception of herself and the other patients, where characters like Susannah’s parents act as the primary enforcers of this stigma. Furthermore, the trajectory of the shift in Susannah’s own perception of herself and her fellow patients is established as she writes, “Crazy isn't being broken or swallowing a dark secret. It's you or me amplified.”

One of the most striking aspects of “*Girl, Interrupted*” is its unconventional narrative structure. Her flow of memories is fragmented, merging timelines of when she was at her lowest. The memoir's profound impact lies in it being a direct reflection of Susanna herself, the scared and confused seventeen-year-old girl she once was and the woman she had now grown into. The art of acceptance, the will to grow, and the need to keep living despite all odds being against you. Susanna and the patients were the masters of this art of madness that society wished to keep hidden. Her memoir is what gave her the power to reclaim her identity. Throughout her life, her identity and subsequently her illness have been defined by the people around her: psychiatrists, nurses, critical outsiders, and medical documents. A brief interview results in a diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder,

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a label that comes to define her existence within the institution. Years later, it's only through her memoir that she takes back the power she once never had. The outcast patient who was once spoken about becomes the author who speaks for herself.

Her personal accounts interrogate the concept of madness itself. Susanna doesn't present insanity as an absolute condition; she rather questions who has the authority to define normality. She and the patients' mental illness wasn't just another category of psychiatric cases; they were fully realised individuals whose personalities extended beyond their diagnoses. Lisa's rebellious intelligence, Daisy's obsessive routines, Polly's quiet optimism despite unimaginable trauma, and Georgina's childlike innocence revealed the extraordinary complexity hidden beneath medical labels. They were "troubled" but strangely were free. They had reached the end of the line. They had nothing more to lose. Their privacy, their liberty, their dignity- all of it was gone, and they were stripped down to the bare bones of themselves.

Ultimately, "Girl, Interrupted" remains tightly bound to Susanna, the way a work of art clings to its artist. The exclusion, the fear, the care, the love, and the patients' memories- the memoir unravels it all. Was she ever crazy? Maybe. Or maybe just life is. Crazy wasn't being broken, but the absurdities and complexities of emotions amplified. If you ever told a lie and enjoyed it, or perhaps if you ever wished to be a child forever. The patients were not perfect, but they were her friends. And by the 1970's, most of them were out, living lives. Some she had the pleasure to meet; some never again. But there wasn't a day her heart didn't find them.

By Maria Saha

*Semester 7
English Department*

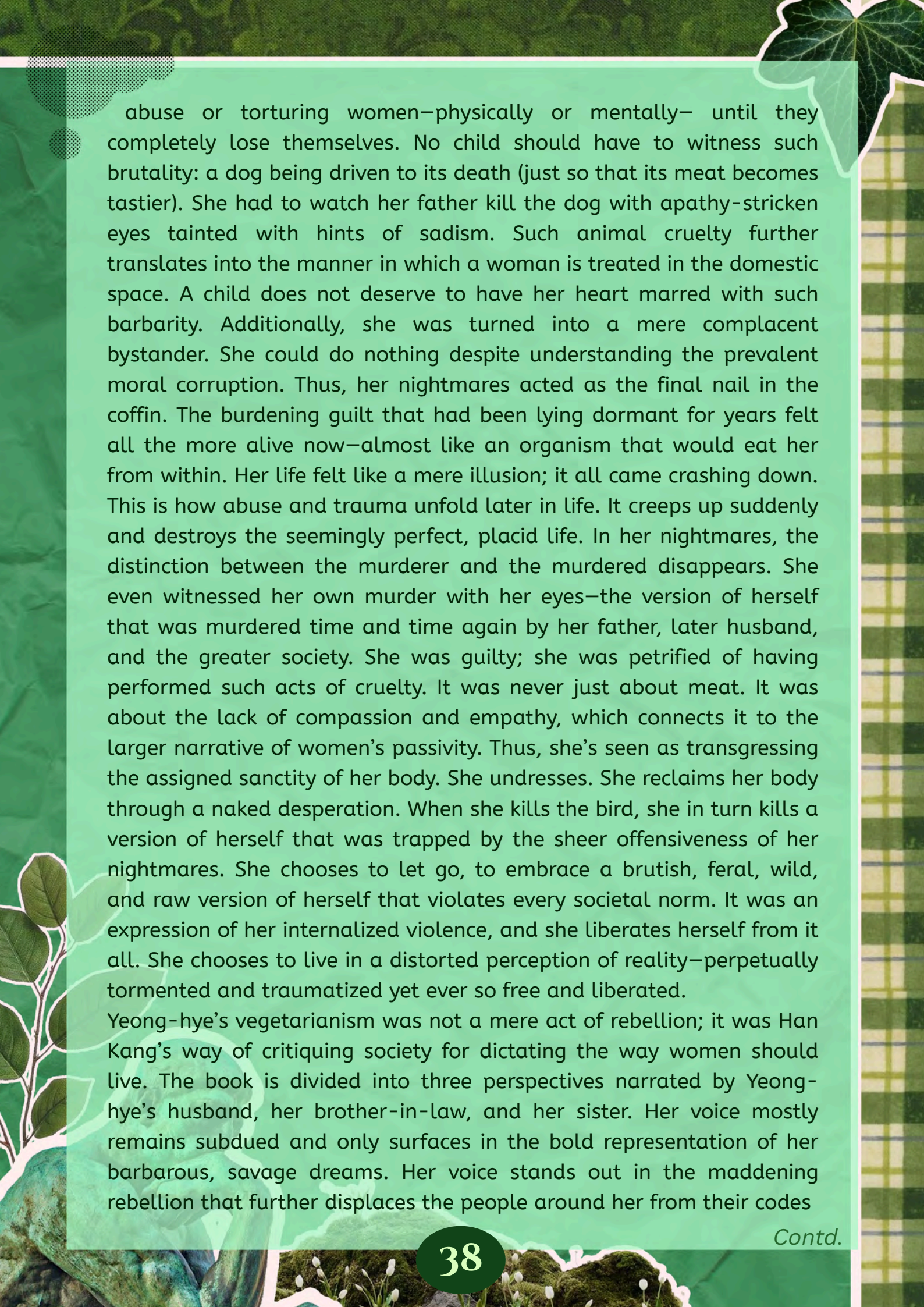


A Reading of The Vegetarian by Han Kang

Unsettling, grotesque, yet awe-inspiring, Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* is a Nobel Prize-winning piece of literature. In this novel, Han Kang creates a sense of universality that's both unreachable and palpable. 'The Vegetarian' transcends the story of Yeong-hye and metaphorizes the lives of millions of women. Women who never truly live, women who merely inhabit the husk of "femininity" and "womanliness" curated by society, women who fight for autonomy after it is almost too late— this novel celebrates the voices of women that remain unheard. It is rendered through bloodshed and violence—both physical and psychological. As grotesque and jarring imagery is woven together with tenderness and human complexities, we witness the severity of the loss of autonomy and the sheer violence it takes to regain it. 'The Vegetarian' is for all those women who lost themselves only to regain a distorted version of themselves. Readers are exposed to a plethora of juxtaposed emotions. Every line is deliberate and aggressive, and forces the reader to delve into a narrative that is both perplexing and gut-wrenching. It's horrifying yet fulfilling, tantalizing, titillating, but gruesome, grotesque, and repulsive all at the same time. It is intimate, innately sexual, and the carnality is almost terrifying yet tenderly graphic. The sexuality portrayed in the novel in its rawest form is what challenges the central imagery of a 'vegetarian'. The sexuality is almost beastly, animalistic. The urges are uncontrolled. It's completely antithetical to the saintly patience and discipline of Yeong-hye. In the rather bizarre first chapter, we come across Yeong-hye's dream progression, which pushes her to give up meat. She's haunted by the bloodshed in her dream, so demented and terrified that she can't even sleep. However, it was all a manifestation of the cruelty she witnessed in her own childhood. She had internalized and normalized the cruelty and abuse that was meant to oppress her.

This book does not condemn meat consumers, nor does it simply promote vegetarianism. Rather, it condemns oppressors who'd never forfeit the chance to subject women to seething torture. The 'dog' that's been alluded to in Yeong-hye's memories was an allegory for domestic

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abuse or torturing women—physically or mentally— until they completely lose themselves. No child should have to witness such brutality: a dog being driven to its death (just so that its meat becomes tastier). She had to watch her father kill the dog with apathy-stricken eyes tainted with hints of sadism. Such animal cruelty further translates into the manner in which a woman is treated in the domestic space. A child does not deserve to have her heart marred with such barbarity. Additionally, she was turned into a mere complacent bystander. She could do nothing despite understanding the prevalent moral corruption. Thus, her nightmares acted as the final nail in the coffin. The burdening guilt that had been lying dormant for years felt all the more alive now—almost like an organism that would eat her from within. Her life felt like a mere illusion; it all came crashing down. This is how abuse and trauma unfold later in life. It creeps up suddenly and destroys the seemingly perfect, placid life. In her nightmares, the distinction between the murderer and the murdered disappears. She even witnessed her own murder with her eyes—the version of herself that was murdered time and time again by her father, later husband, and the greater society. She was guilty; she was petrified of having performed such acts of cruelty. It was never just about meat. It was about the lack of compassion and empathy, which connects it to the larger narrative of women's passivity. Thus, she's seen as transgressing the assigned sanctity of her body. She undresses. She reclaims her body through a naked desperation. When she kills the bird, she in turn kills a version of herself that was trapped by the sheer offensiveness of her nightmares. She chooses to let go, to embrace a brutish, feral, wild, and raw version of herself that violates every societal norm. It was an expression of her internalized violence, and she liberates herself from it all. She chooses to live in a distorted perception of reality—perpetually tormented and traumatized yet ever so free and liberated.

Yeong-hye's vegetarianism was not a mere act of rebellion; it was Han Kang's way of critiquing society for dictating the way women should live. The book is divided into three perspectives narrated by Yeong-hye's husband, her brother-in-law, and her sister. Her voice mostly remains subdued and only surfaces in the bold representation of her barbarous, savage dreams. Her voice stands out in the maddening rebellion that further displaces the people around her from their codes

Contd.



of normalcy. The people live in the art she created out of her existence; they are abandoned in it, being forced to confront themselves. The sheer destruction she caused, the havoc she created— her people live in the aftermath of it all. She remains alive amidst the violently reclaimed freedom—a form of liberation that imprisoned others. A freedom that cost her sanity, yet she basks in its pained comfort. Her dreams ever torment her, but she's autonomous even in her insanity. Despite being deemed passive throughout the narrative, across all perspectives, her existence and persistence had everyone in a chokehold. Her defiance became the defining point of everyone's existence, forcing them to stop and contemplate their own lives. She was abandoned all because a wish of hers jeopardized years of patriarchal conditioning. It was not merely her wish to turn vegetarian that angered everyone around her. It was her unwavering determination, abstinence, and her reluctance to listen. She revolted against psychological and even physical torture. When she was force-fed, she retorted by slitting her wrist in front of her whole family. Unfortunately, that was the only way of reclaiming authority over her body. Even the extremity of the situation did not make anyone consider her pain. They were only concerned about her refusal to eat meat. Yeong-hye was a criminal. She defied her husband's wishes, humiliated him, tarnished her reputation and honor—she did not wear a 'bra' to an office dinner— and lastly, chose herself over him. She chose for herself and made her own decisions. How dare she go against her father and her husband? The same husband who addressed her as the maid of the house; his caregiver, his nurturer: how could she be cruel to him? He treated her with utmost respect; she was an object of his desire. Despite being vested with so much honor, she chose to defy. And the moment she inconvenienced his perfectly decorated, secure life, he left her. And the same father who subjected her to ruthless violence for his entire life. The father who idealized and craved violence; how dare she go against him? She brought shame and shame only— to them, to the agents of patriarchy. Except, she brought liberation to herself. In the end, she was abandoned by everyone but not her desires. Her desires bloomed in vibrant colors, and in the flowers painted all across her body. She wanted to break free from the bleak grays and the ferocious reds of her life and exist silently in the gentle autumn of her life— the beginning of the end. Where she finally begins to live her life when it's already coming to an end. She's dying, but she's free.

Han Kang depersonalizes this story by making it the story of all women. Inscrutable and uncanny, it's hard to understand. However, as Yeong-hye's story is detailed by the three narrators, we get a glimpse of how women

Contd.



are truly treated in society. Her husband is the quintessential prototype of a mediocre, average man. The opening lines of the novel, “Before my wife turned vegetarian, I’d always thought of her as completely unremarkable in every way. To be frank, the first time I met her I wasn’t even attracted to her,” expose how lowly he thought of Yeong-hye. He describes her as “sickly-looking” and passive. Her plainness was such that it hid his own insecurities, or as he says, “inferiority complex”. A prettier woman would have challenged his “carefully ordered existence”. On the other hand, it was her plainness and the presence of her “Mongolian Mark” that marked her as an exotic entity in the eyes of her brother-in-law. In the end, she was reduced to a mere object of lust and eroticism. She was the sun, and the people were her planets. It was her ferocious will to live—but truly die—that governed the lives of those surrounding her. It was only her sister, In-hye, who was left utterly destroyed and shattered by Yeong-hye’s unnerving will to own herself. Yeong-hye had transcended beyond the codes of femininity society assigned to women, and those that were internalized by In-hye unknowingly. In-hye’s life had remained permanently altered. She couldn’t help but feel a sort of anger and envy that bled into pity for her dying sister. “And before Yeong-hye had broken those bars, she’d never even known they were there.” The freedom that Yeong-hye sought seemed to be choking In-hye.

“Why, is it such a bad thing to die?” In the end, the two sisters unite, emotionally and spiritually. Not just two sisters, but two women— In-hye, who was desperate to understand her sister, to make sense of all the uncertainty, and Yeong-hye’s hysteria, and Yeong-hye, who was still battling her nightmares. Yeong-hye’s desire to turn into a tree, to be one with nature and the greater world, was a poignant plea to evade her womanly body. In the end, the art of her rebellion was understood, felt, and maybe resonated with. The finishing chapter that brings the two sisters closer also unites the million aching souls of women across the universe. And hence is the art of being a woman in this painfully ordered existence.

By Nimesa Majee

*Semester 7
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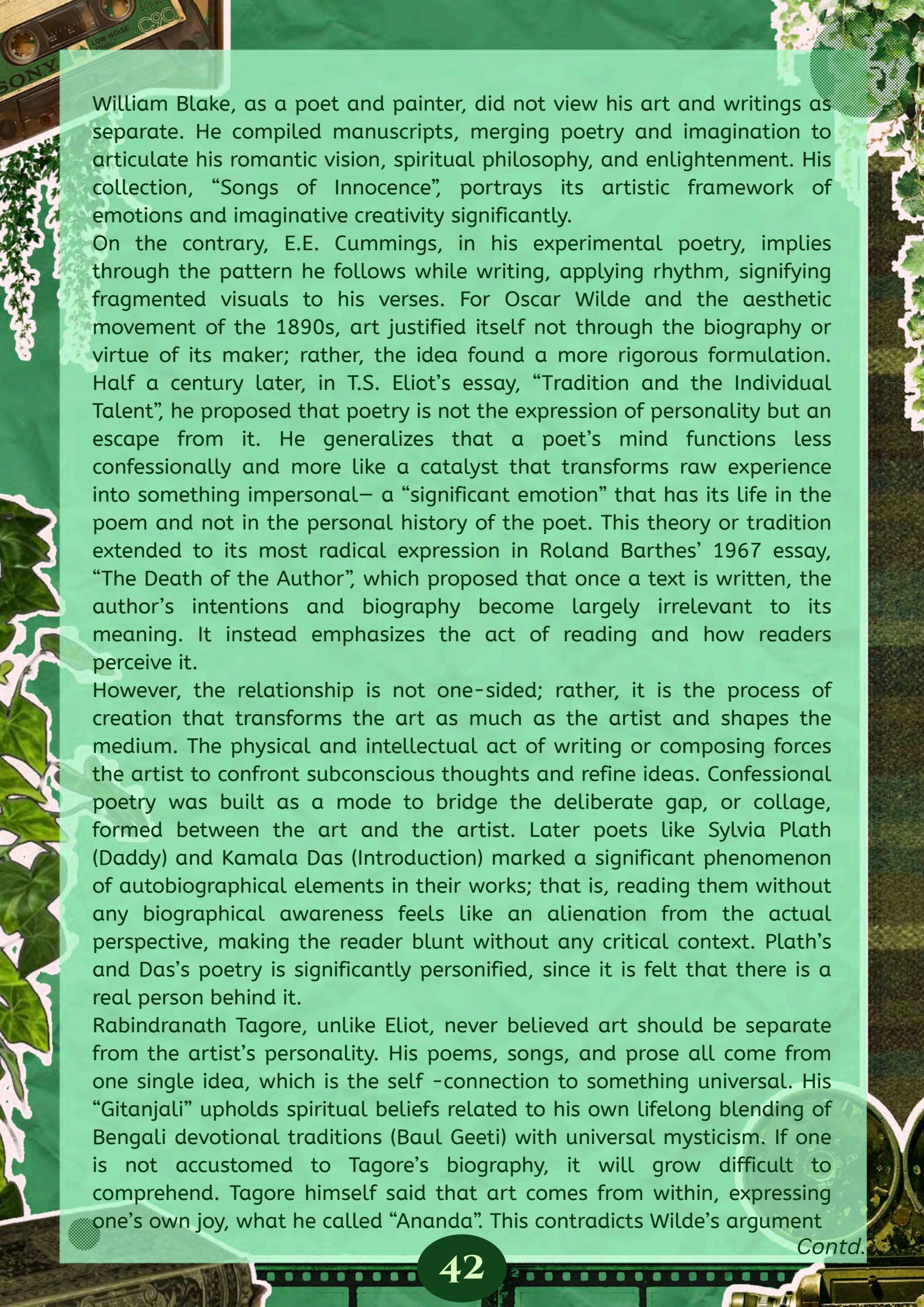
To be, or not to be?

The conflict over whether to analyze “Art” as an individual entity or through an “Artist’s” perspective is often observed. An artwork has its own authorial agency to assign structure, ideas, symbols, and meanings that transcend the artist’s personal life and further translate subjective experience into objective reality. This demonstrates that interpretation of art cannot be limited to either the reader’s subjective analysis or the artist’s perspective; there must be a blend of the two binaries. Across centuries, art has been an essential medium of expression and imagination, through which artists have striven to convey their creative intent directly to the readers. Simultaneously, art has been a mode of escapism for artists, allowing them to separate themselves from worldly expectations and embrace tranquillity.

The relationship between Art and The Artist has been represented through different lenses. Various theories solidify this stance with substantial arguments. Initially, Formalism argues that the ‘art and artist’ framework remains disconnected, as the artist’s personal life is not linked to the artwork he has crafted. This idea is carried forward by New Criticism, which presents the artist’s life as a distraction from their self-sufficient artistic creation. On the contrary, the Biographical Approach preaches that art cannot be understood unless the artist’s history, trauma, and life experiences are taken into account. It is a direct reflection of the creator’s absolute authority poured into his artwork. Thus, the conflict remains unresolved, even in contemporary times.

Art, externally, is the embodiment of human consciousness. An artist’s personal background, psychological state, cultural context, and lived experiences form the lens through which the work is produced. Art functions as a philosophical framework. Through art, the artist regulates their own functional belief system. Frida Kahlo, a Mexican writer, is known for her raw, honest self-portraits and her trivializing life with boldness and expression of physical and emotional pain in depth. Her paintings, ‘*The Two Fridas*’, for instance, cannot be fully depicted without considering her lived experiences of physical pain and identity. Her artwork is a direct visual translation of her inner landscape

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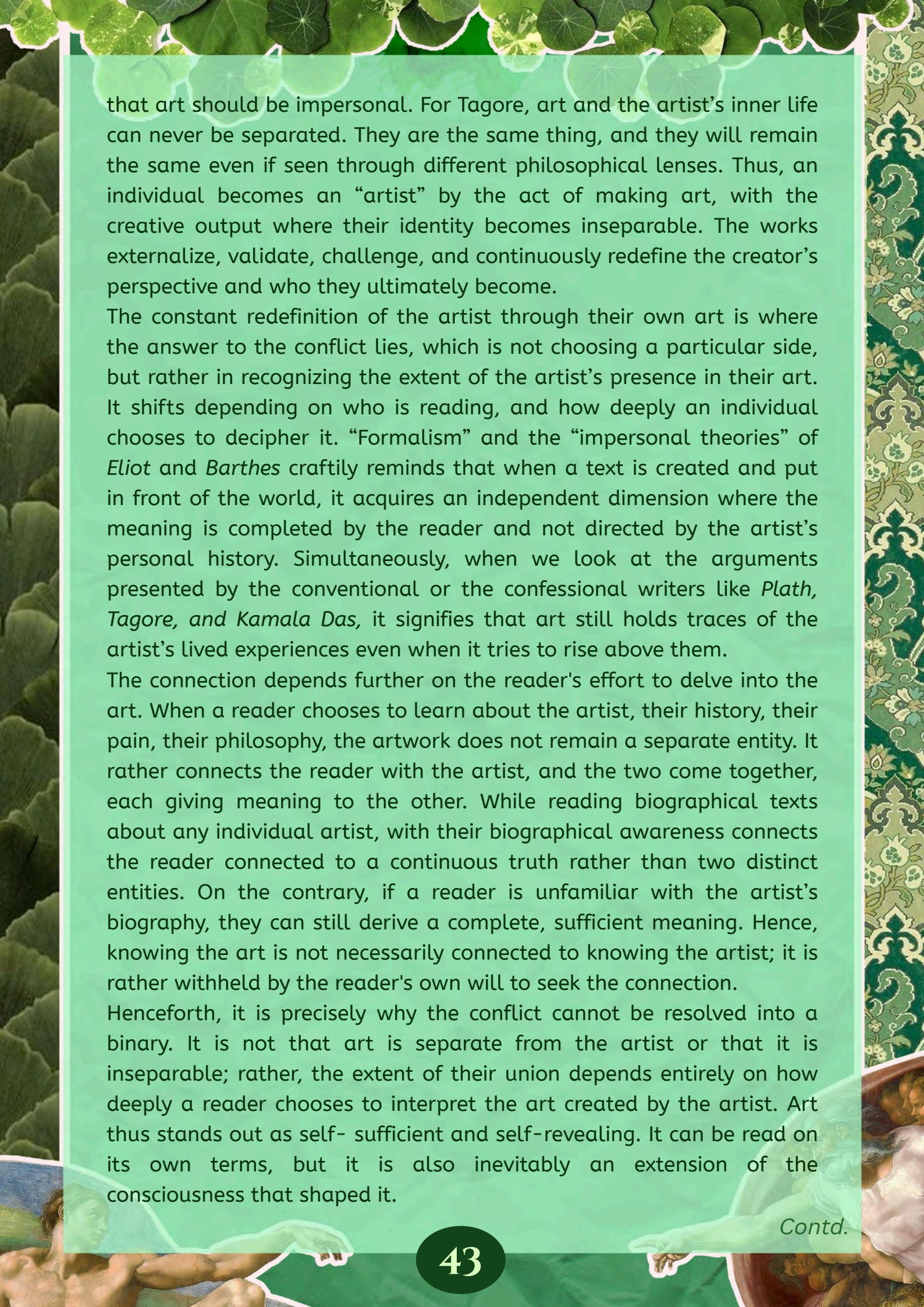
William Blake, as a poet and painter, did not view his art and writings as separate. He compiled manuscripts, merging poetry and imagination to articulate his romantic vision, spiritual philosophy, and enlightenment. His collection, “Songs of Innocence”, portrays its artistic framework of emotions and imaginative creativity significantly.

On the contrary, E.E. Cummings, in his experimental poetry, implies through the pattern he follows while writing, applying rhythm, signifying fragmented visuals to his verses. For Oscar Wilde and the aesthetic movement of the 1890s, art justified itself not through the biography or virtue of its maker; rather, the idea found a more rigorous formulation. Half a century later, in T.S. Eliot’s essay, “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, he proposed that poetry is not the expression of personality but an escape from it. He generalizes that a poet’s mind functions less confessionally and more like a catalyst that transforms raw experience into something impersonal— a “significant emotion” that has its life in the poem and not in the personal history of the poet. This theory or tradition extended to its most radical expression in Roland Barthes’ 1967 essay, “The Death of the Author”, which proposed that once a text is written, the author’s intentions and biography become largely irrelevant to its meaning. It instead emphasizes the act of reading and how readers perceive it.

However, the relationship is not one-sided; rather, it is the process of creation that transforms the art as much as the artist and shapes the medium. The physical and intellectual act of writing or composing forces the artist to confront subconscious thoughts and refine ideas. Confessional poetry was built as a mode to bridge the deliberate gap, or collage, formed between the art and the artist. Later poets like Sylvia Plath (Daddy) and Kamala Das (Introduction) marked a significant phenomenon of autobiographical elements in their works; that is, reading them without any biographical awareness feels like an alienation from the actual perspective, making the reader blunt without any critical context. Plath’s and Das’s poetry is significantly personified, since it is felt that there is a real person behind it.

Rabindranath Tagore, unlike Eliot, never believed art should be separate from the artist’s personality. His poems, songs, and prose all come from one single idea, which is the self -connection to something universal. His “Gitanjali” upholds spiritual beliefs related to his own lifelong blending of Bengali devotional traditions (Baul Geeti) with universal mysticism. If one is not accustomed to Tagore’s biography, it will grow difficult to comprehend. Tagore himself said that art comes from within, expressing one’s own joy, what he called “Ananda”. This contradicts Wilde’s argument

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that art should be impersonal. For Tagore, art and the artist's inner life can never be separated. They are the same thing, and they will remain the same even if seen through different philosophical lenses. Thus, an individual becomes an "artist" by the act of making art, with the creative output where their identity becomes inseparable. The works externalize, validate, challenge, and continuously redefine the creator's perspective and who they ultimately become.

The constant redefinition of the artist through their own art is where the answer to the conflict lies, which is not choosing a particular side, but rather in recognizing the extent of the artist's presence in their art. It shifts depending on who is reading, and how deeply an individual chooses to decipher it. "Formalism" and the "impersonal theories" of *Eliot* and *Barthes* craftily reminds that when a text is created and put in front of the world, it acquires an independent dimension where the meaning is completed by the reader and not directed by the artist's personal history. Simultaneously, when we look at the arguments presented by the conventional or the confessional writers like *Plath*, *Tagore*, and *Kamala Das*, it signifies that art still holds traces of the artist's lived experiences even when it tries to rise above them.

The connection depends further on the reader's effort to delve into the art. When a reader chooses to learn about the artist, their history, their pain, their philosophy, the artwork does not remain a separate entity. It rather connects the reader with the artist, and the two come together, each giving meaning to the other. While reading biographical texts about any individual artist, with their biographical awareness connects the reader connected to a continuous truth rather than two distinct entities. On the contrary, if a reader is unfamiliar with the artist's biography, they can still derive a complete, sufficient meaning. Hence, knowing the art is not necessarily connected to knowing the artist; it is rather withheld by the reader's own will to seek the connection.

Henceforth, it is precisely why the conflict cannot be resolved into a binary. It is not that art is separate from the artist or that it is inseparable; rather, the extent of their union depends entirely on how deeply a reader chooses to interpret the art created by the artist. Art thus stands out as self-sufficient and self-revealing. It can be read on its own terms, but it is also inevitably an extension of the consciousness that shaped it.

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Perhaps the truer formulation is ultimately not, “to be or not to be” but ‘to be and not to be’. This line in “*Hamlet*” is about choosing between two options, that is, live or die, one or the other. While the latter line flips the structure, as instead of forcing a choice of whether art is tied to the artist or is separate from the artist, art is both simultaneously, and one does ultimately have to pick a side. Art exists both with and beyond artists. The art carries the artist inside it, overflowing with their life’s emotions and experiences, but at the same time, it exists independently. The artist creates the work, but every time an individual reads or views it, they interpret it in their own way. Which in a way, the meaning gets “unmade,” which means that the original fixed meaning might break down, and ultimately it is “remade,” where a new meaning, form, or idea takes place each time. There is a constant negotiation between origin and interpretation; that is, whether the art came from the artist’s life or intention, or what ultimately the readers make out of it. The constant push and pull between these two never stops, and in a way always contradicts each other. This is exactly why “art” stays alive and meaningful over time and keeps getting reinterpreted. The conflict ultimately is that art is tied to the artist or not does not have a final answer. Perhaps it was never meant to be, and that is what makes art interesting. Art isn’t fully the artist’s or fully independent; it lives in the space between the two and this unresolved tension is what keeps it meaningful

By Tiasha Das

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Art: A Confluence of Creative Expression

Art is not just limited to paintings, but it is a wide term used to describe any original creation by a human who is considered an artist. We have been brought up with the notion that artists are the ones who professionally pursue art to make a living out of it, but is it so? Just because someone chooses privacy over exposure and their love for creating art instead of selling it does not prove that they are any less of an artist.

Art is mostly driven by every kind of emotion. Every poet, author, dancer, and singer has a way of expressing themselves through their artwork. Each poem has a certain way of giving us insight about the poet's life and thoughts; each artwork is a little piece of the artist exposed. There is a certain type of undecipherable shared intimacy between the art and the artist. An author or a poet puts down their feelings on paper, or sometimes their darkest experiences, their happiest moments, or even the mundane and how they perceive it. However, sometimes the artist does not write of their experiences but the things that they longed to experience. A fairytale of their own kind jotted down in a cluster of messy words on paper- their desires, dreams, expectations, or everything they ever wanted but could not have- condensed on a piece of paper—they live vicariously through their writing. The same goes for the other artists who find a reliable method to express their emotions through their favorite form of art. An artist gives life to a blank canvas by pouring out his creative self on it. The artwork itself rewards the artist with an irrevocable sense of security, reliability, and comfort. Every painter's paint, canvas, and paintbrushes act as a medium for them to make their soul lighter by exposing parts of themselves they cannot expose to anyone else; the same way a dancer's stage and footwork reach out to them and comfort them like a warm hug, and the same chain continues for every kind of artist. Every person has an artist hidden deep within them that waits to be unleashed in the form of their best artwork. It is just a matter of time until people realize the extent of their potential and embrace it in its truest form.

By Druti Ray

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Art transcends the Artist: An Ethical Dilemma

The relationship between art and its creator is an ancient, complex paradox, oscillating between complete autonomy of the work and total biographical determinism. This dynamic involves the tension of intentionality, the rupture caused by post-structuralist critique, and the contemporary ethical crisis of separating the creation from the creator.

Art is an inseparable part of our existence. Throughout our lives, we build our own imaginary kingdoms through the books we read, escape into different fantasies through the music we listen to, and become intrigued by the stories that paintings and sculptures tell us. We watch dramas, performances, and movies. We laugh and cry as the artists take us on a rollercoaster ride. Millions derive a sense of nostalgia from this.

For some, it could be Enid Blyton's 'Famous Five' series that made their childhood memorable. A great many would have relished countless days revering and celebrating the legacy left by Picasso, and maybe a few others would have found solace in Charlie Chaplin's timeless works. Now, if I told you that one of them was openly racist, one was a misogynistic womanizer, and the other married minors and ill-treated them, how would you feel about them? Do their works still hold as much importance to you? Or will you never be able to view and enjoy their works in the same way again?

This leads us to the question of how to address the complexity of the relationship between an artist and the works they produce and how it can, will, and should be perceived. There is rarely a binary answer to the question posed.

Ever since the dawn of humanity, art has been an expression of the wonders of human creativity and imagination. For many, it's a getaway from their monotonous lifestyle; for some, it has been a tool for emancipation; and for others, it is their life.

"Whenever we celebrate art, we never appreciate it separately. We see ourselves growing closer to a concept or a piece of work, getting attached to the artist. For many, the art becomes the artist themselves. Art is an abstract concept, but the artist, nevertheless, is a human. It's far easier to love a human and identify with them."

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Whenever we listen to Taylor Swift's latest album, read Riordan's books, or stare into Van Gogh's masterpiece, we secretly celebrate the artist and their ingenuity. What is *Starry Night*, if not a reflection of Van Gogh's masterful mind captured on a canvas?

But now, we come back to the question. When we realize the artist is not really a good person because they've done a misdeed or are openly racist, homophobic, or sexist, how would we feel?

What follows a sudden expression of disgust and disrespect is the dilemma of whether their artwork is still worthy of all the appreciation. Suddenly, we no longer view their art in the same way we used to before. The more information we get about art, the more clouded our perception of it becomes. Undoubtedly, it's hard to erase the fact that Picasso disrespected women whenever we stand to interpret his paintings or to turn a blind eye to the racist remarks made by Blyton or Twain while reading their books.

The Ethical Dilemma: Can We Separate Art from the Artist?

In contemporary discourse, the debate shifts from the theoretical to the intensely ethical. When an artist commits atrocities, behaves abusively, or embodies oppressive ideologies, the audience faces an acute crisis of reception. One camp argues for aesthetic autonomy: the work of art exists as an independent phenomenological entity. To dismiss a masterpiece because of its maker's moral failing is to commit a category error, confusing moral judgement with aesthetic evaluation. Conversely, a robust critical consensus insists that art cannot be cleanly excised from the socio-economic and political systems that produced it. Financial patronage, cultural canonization, and the ongoing consumption of an artist's work directly validate and enrich the individual, perpetuating cycles of harm. Furthermore, critics note that recognizing an artwork as an artifact of its maker's worldview often reveals systemic corruptions embedded within the text itself.

To sum it up, when someone does something wrong, they must be held accountable in the eyes of the law. No matter how much they've

accomplished, we should refrain from using that as an excuse to hide their misdeeds. After its conception, we need to treat art as a separate entity, not as a product or reflection of the artist's persona.

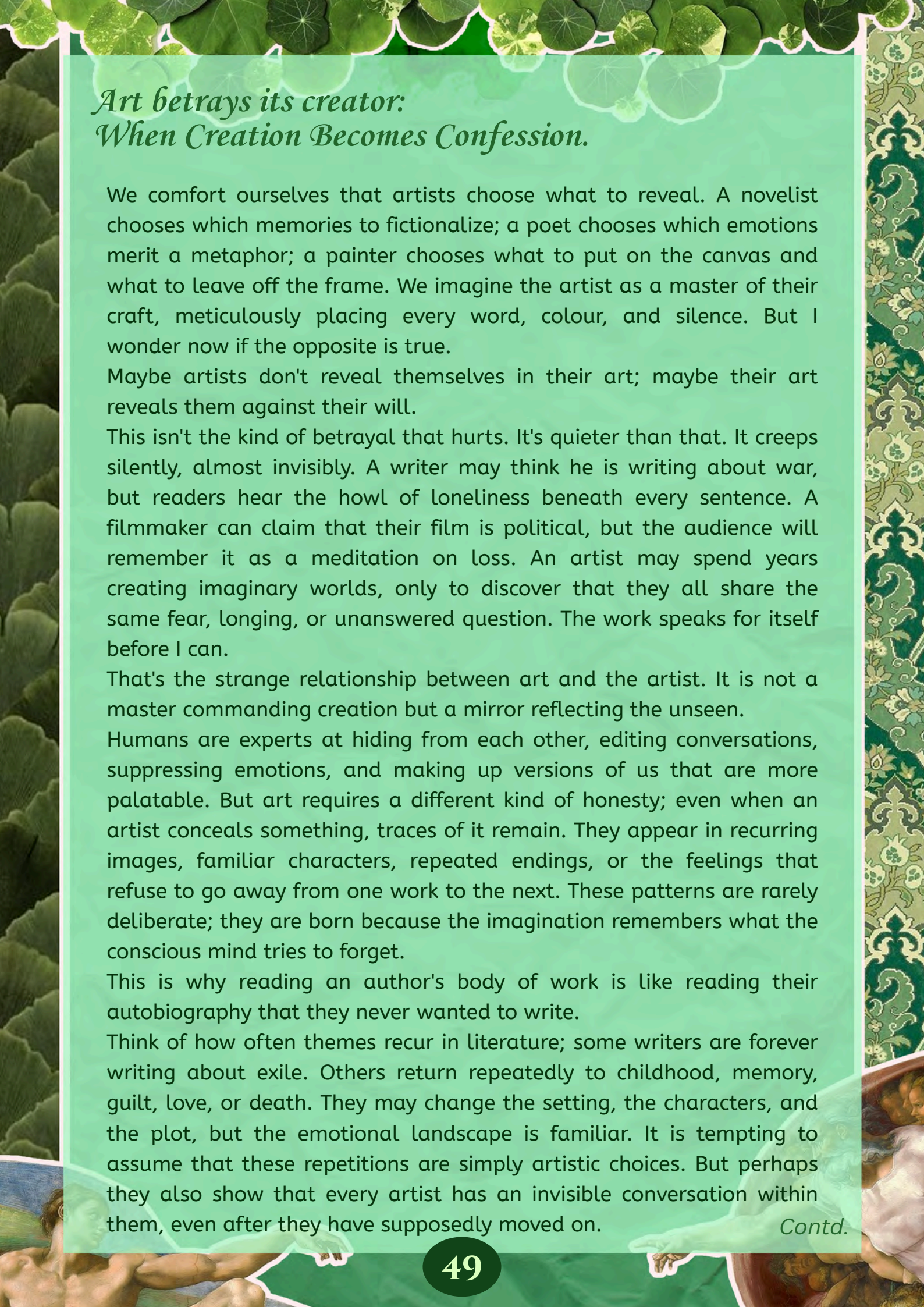
"Whatever the artist feels, says, or does is outside the realm of the art they've produced. It will be difficult to look up to a piece of work with no preconceived notions, but at the end of the day, art isn't all about viewing it from the eyes of an artist. Art is all that we make of it."

As long as the work serves the true purpose of art: to uplift, entertain, empower, and emote, it deserves to make its mark in human history.

By Anupriya Chowdhury

*Semester 2
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Art betrays its creator: When Creation Becomes Confession.

We comfort ourselves that artists choose what to reveal. A novelist chooses which memories to fictionalize; a poet chooses which emotions merit a metaphor; a painter chooses what to put on the canvas and what to leave off the frame. We imagine the artist as a master of their craft, meticulously placing every word, colour, and silence. But I wonder now if the opposite is true.

Maybe artists don't reveal themselves in their art; maybe their art reveals them against their will.

This isn't the kind of betrayal that hurts. It's quieter than that. It creeps silently, almost invisibly. A writer may think he is writing about war, but readers hear the howl of loneliness beneath every sentence. A filmmaker can claim that their film is political, but the audience will remember it as a meditation on loss. An artist may spend years creating imaginary worlds, only to discover that they all share the same fear, longing, or unanswered question. The work speaks for itself before I can.

That's the strange relationship between art and the artist. It is not a master commanding creation but a mirror reflecting the unseen.

Humans are experts at hiding from each other, editing conversations, suppressing emotions, and making up versions of us that are more palatable. But art requires a different kind of honesty; even when an artist conceals something, traces of it remain. They appear in recurring images, familiar characters, repeated endings, or the feelings that refuse to go away from one work to the next. These patterns are rarely deliberate; they are born because the imagination remembers what the conscious mind tries to forget.

This is why reading an author's body of work is like reading their autobiography that they never wanted to write.

Think of how often themes recur in literature; some writers are forever writing about exile. Others return repeatedly to childhood, memory, guilt, love, or death. They may change the setting, the characters, and the plot, but the emotional landscape is familiar. It is tempting to assume that these repetitions are simply artistic choices. But perhaps they also show that every artist has an invisible conversation within them, even after they have supposedly moved on.

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Ironically, the artist isn't always the best interpreter of his work. Once a piece goes out into the world, readers start to discover meanings in it that he never meant. A symbol disavowed by the author becomes the centre of literary criticism. A passing sentence takes on a life of its own. Years later, scholars discover anxieties and desires in the text that even the writer could not have confessed.

Unsettlingly, readers sometimes know the artist better than the artist does.

Psychology provides an interesting way of thinking about it: Much of our inner life is below our consciousness. We may think we understand our fears and desires, but unconscious emotions still manipulate us. Creative expressions tend to circumnavigate censored, everyday language. But while I paint, my mind makes connections that logic would never allow. The consequence is that 'art is no longer a carefully crafted statement but rather an accidental confession.'

That confession may not be true, but a fantasy novel about dragons may reveal more about the author than his autobiography. I doubt that fiction is valuable because it tells us what happened. It is valuable because it explains why imagined worlds like this felt necessary to begin with. Every invented kingdom, every impossible creature, and every fictional dialogue springs from a real emotional need. Imagination can hide reality but never outruns it. Perhaps that is why literature still feels so personal, even when it's all just fiction. Readers first grasp the emotional truth before the factual one. We may never have lived the life of a character, but we understand their loneliness, hope, jealousy, or regret. These emotions travel from the artist to the audience without meeting each other. Between creation and interpretation, private feeling becomes common experience.

But there's another irony lurking here.

The moment art reveals its creator, it leaves him behind. An artist can rewrite a manuscript, repaint a canvas, or rewrite a poem a thousand times. But once the work reaches its audience, it's not entirely theirs anymore. Readers hold it in classrooms, libraries, conversations, and memories. New meanings emerge in cultures the artist never dreamed of. A novel of the last century speaks differently to a novel of this. A poem written for one friend becomes comfort to thousands of strangers.

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The artist loses the authority to decide what the work means.

In this respect, betrayal seems to be a two-way process. Art exposes the creator and then abandons him, just as he abandons the reader, leaving them alone with the author's work.

Maybe this is why so many writers feel betrayed by their works and refuse to speak of their intentions. It seems that the work always has its will and its way of living on after its creator has died. It is not given to the reader to understand what the author really meant; instead, the reader is given their own interpretation, which exists independently of the author's intentions.

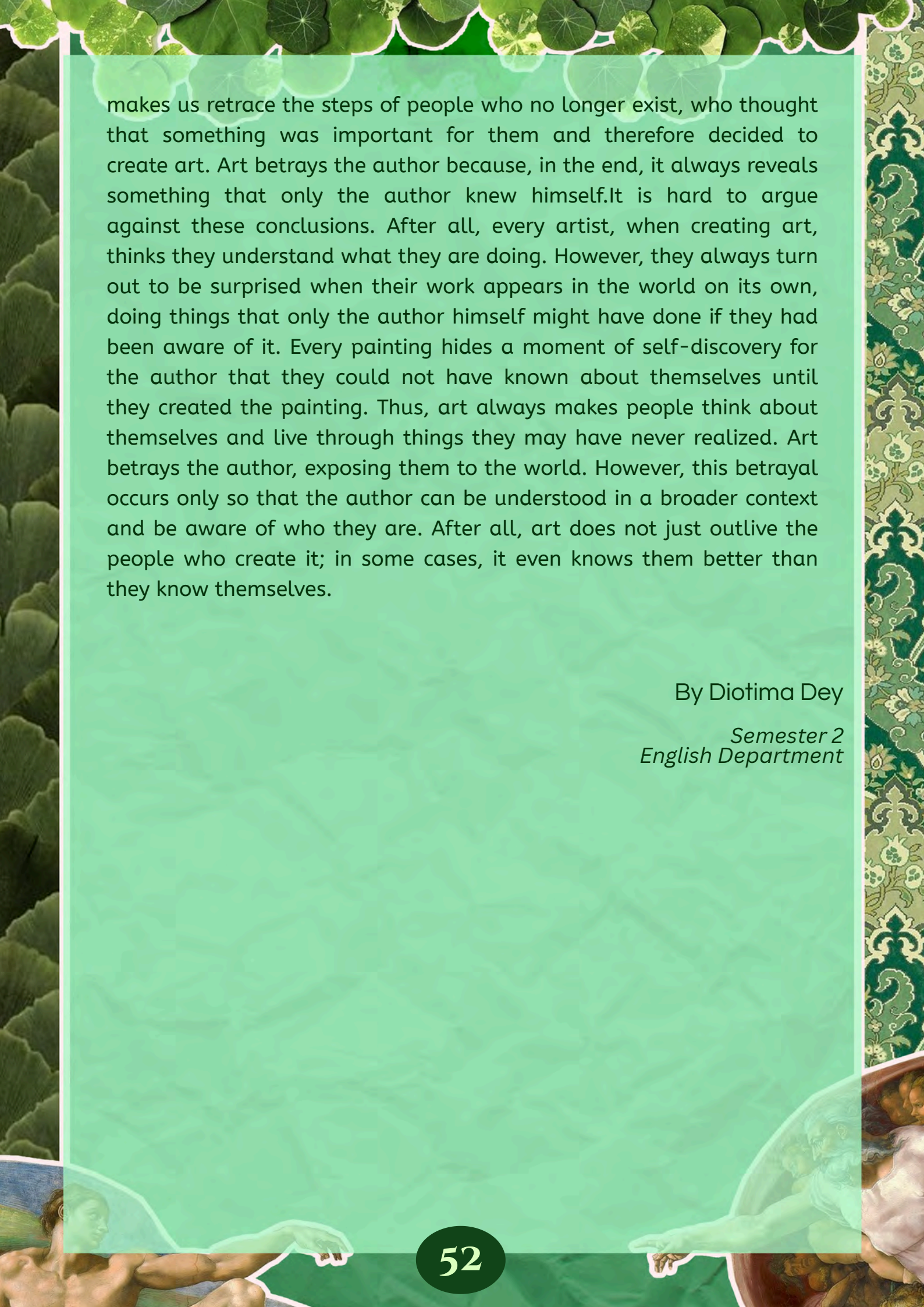
It is this very ambiguity that makes art alive. It makes it evolve with each new reader, a generation, and an interpretation. The work of art, in its way, is like an intersection between the author and the reader. The ideas and memories of both people meet there, and the two people think for a moment about the same thing. However, after the meeting, it is not the thoughts of anyone that survive, but rather the shared idea, which sometimes hardly has anything to do with either participant in the creative process.

This does not mean at all that biography should not be considered when studying art; rather, it means the opposite. An understanding of art always begins with the history of its creator; the analysis of the author's biography is always useful for understanding his work. It helps to comprehend the life questions that find their answers in the work of art. However, one should not try to cut the author's biography to the shapes of their works or, inversely, to cut the work of art to the shapes of the author's biography. Art is not given to be interpreted, explained, or disassembled. Great works of art are those that continue to live after their authors have died, saying things that the authors might not have known themselves.

Perhaps, therefore, it is not the authors but their works that create geniuses. Great works of art create their authors, just as they create readers, students, and critics. Art betrays its author when it leaves them, living on and continuing to live after their death. It tells people what they wanted to say to them, even if they did not want to say it themselves. It reminds them of what they did not want to remember, and it tells others what they tried to hide from them and from themselves.

Maybe this is the essence of art and the reason why we return to it. The reason why we read books is not that they contain answers; it is because they contain traces of people who thought there were answers. We do not need art to interpret anything for us; we need it to remind us of things we have forgotten, or, more accurately, that someone has forgotten for us. Art

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makes us retrace the steps of people who no longer exist, who thought that something was important for them and therefore decided to create art. Art betrays the author because, in the end, it always reveals something that only the author knew himself. It is hard to argue against these conclusions. After all, every artist, when creating art, thinks they understand what they are doing. However, they always turn out to be surprised when their work appears in the world on its own, doing things that only the author himself might have done if they had been aware of it. Every painting hides a moment of self-discovery for the author that they could not have known about themselves until they created the painting. Thus, art always makes people think about themselves and live through things they may have never realized. Art betrays the author, exposing them to the world. However, this betrayal occurs only so that the author can be understood in a broader context and be aware of who they are. After all, art does not just outlive the people who create it; in some cases, it even knows them better than they know themselves.

By Diotima Dey

*Semester 2
English Department*

Can Art Ever Truly Escape its Artist?

Art has rarely existed independently of the person who creates it. Every poem, painting, novel, film, or song in front of us today emerges from a particular consciousness and, to some extent, carries the imprint of its creator's experiences, beliefs, circumstances, and intentions. But once an artwork enters the world, it acquires a life beyond its creator. Audiences interpret it through their own experiences and contexts, often producing meanings that the artist never intended. Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah", though rooted in his own religious and personal ideas, has taken on new meanings for people through weddings, funerals, and countless personal moments. Art therefore occupies an ambiguous space; it originates with the artist, but its meaning and cultural life are not entirely controlled by them.

This tension raises the enduring question of whether art can, or should, be separated from its artist. The problem becomes particularly complicated when an artist's biography, moral conduct, or beliefs influence our interpretation of their work. Roland Barthes's "Death of the Author" challenges the authority of the creator over meaning, while Michel Foucault's concept of the "author function" reminds us that the author's identity continues to shape how works are classified, interpreted, and valued. The question, therefore, is not simply whether art and artist can be separated but what kind of separation is possible and where such separation ceases to be ethically defensible.

To make this distinction clearer, "separating art from the artist" can mean several different things. It may mean refusing to treat the artist's intentions as the final authority over a work's meaning; it may mean judging artistic merit independently of the artist's moral character; or it may mean engaging with a work without materially or symbolically supporting its creator. These forms of separation are not all identical. A reader may reject an artist's character, while still recognising the artistic value of their work, or interpret a poem differently from what its author intended. At the same time, choosing to financially support, publicly promote, or even strengthen the influence of a living artist raises a different ethical question. Pablo Picasso's "Guernica" can still be admired for its artistic power, even while people criticise Picasso's

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treatment of women and personal conduct. What might therefore be called “critical separation” is not the complete removal of the artist from the artwork but the ability to examine the work on its own terms without idealising its creator or ignoring the consequences of engaging with them.

The relationship between art and artist begins with the recognition that artistic creation is rarely detached from the person who produces it. An artist’s experiences, social environment, the circumstances they lived through, and worldview can enter their work consciously or unconsciously. Vincent van Gogh’s paintings, Frida Kahlo’s self-portraits, or Sylvia Plath’s poetry, for example, are frequently all interpreted in relation to the personal and historical circumstances that shaped them. Yet, understanding a work through its creator’s life does not mean reducing the work to biography, as biographies can provide context without exhausting meaning, but painting may reveal something about its painter without being reducible to the painter’s life; a poem may emerge from a particular experience while acquiring meanings that exceed that experience.

This becomes clearer in debates surrounding authorship and interpretation. In “The Death of the Author,” Barthes challenges the assumption that a text’s meaning should ultimately be determined by the author’s intentions; once a work reaches its audience, it enters a new interpretive space. Readers bring their own thinking and assumptions to it and consequently may discover meanings that the artist never anticipated. A poem can become meaningful to a reader because of an experience entirely unrelated to the poet’s life; a song written about one particular relationship can become attached to an entirely different memory in the listener’s mind. The artist therefore loses exclusive authority over their work.

Yet autonomy is not the same as independence. Foucault’s discussion of the “Author function” complicates the idea that the author simply disappears once the work is published, but the author’s identity continues to influence how a work is classified, circulated, interpreted, and valued. Knowing that a poem was written by a particular person under a particular situation can change how we read it. The artist may no longer possess absolute control over meaning, but their presence remains part of the cultural life of the artwork.

The problem becomes more difficult when moral judgement enters the discussion. Artistic and moral value are not necessarily the same; a morally flawed artist can still produce powerful or technically accomplished work, and recognising its merit does not mean approving of its creator. However, the artist’s morality cannot always be ignored. When harmful beliefs are merely part of the artist’s biography, separation may be easier; when they are embedded in the work itself, the distinction becomes much harder.

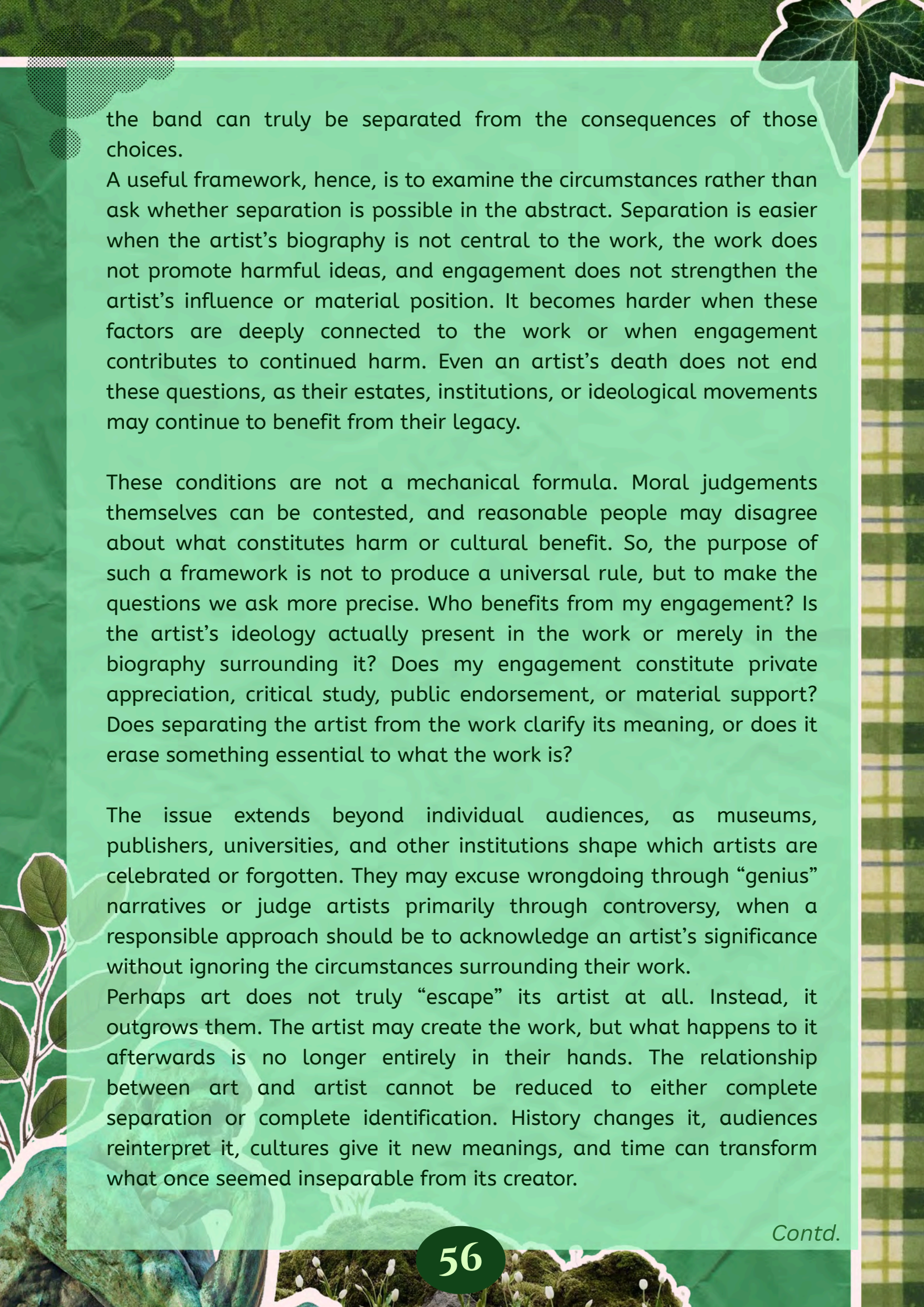


This distinction matters because the morality of the artist and the morality of the artwork are not always the same. An artist may behave terribly while producing a work that does not express or justify those behaviours. On the other hand, a work may itself glorify or depend upon harmful ideas. A person may reject an artist's personal behaviour while still recognising the value of their work, but when harmful beliefs are built into the work itself, as in D. W. Griffith's "The Birth of a Nation", which portrays Black people through racist stereotypes and glorifies the Ku Klux Klan, separating the art from the artist becomes much harder. Moral objection does not necessarily erase artistic value. However, when the work itself carries those harmful ideas, its ethical significance becomes a part of any serious discussion of its artistic value.

The same principle applies to the question of audience engagement. Appreciating a work is not necessarily the same as supporting its creator. Reading a controversial author in a library, studying their work in a classroom, buying a second-hand copy, streaming a living artist's music, purchasing their merchandise, and publicly promoting them are not ethically similar acts. They involve different degrees of financial support, visibility, and influence. The relevant question is therefore not simply, "Am I enjoying this?" But also, "What does my engagement enable?"

This becomes particularly important when dealing with living artists whose conduct is morally questionable. If consuming their work directly provides financial benefit, increases their public platform, or helps normalise behaviour that audiences would otherwise condemn, complete separation becomes more difficult to defend. Yet even here, the opposite extreme is problematic. Private engagement is not automatically equivalent to public endorsement, just as enjoyment does not necessarily constitute moral approval. J. K. Rowling's "Harry Potter" shows why the nature of engagement matters; readers may continue to value the series while disagreeing with her public views, but buying her newer work or publicly promoting her can contribute to her financial and cultural influence in ways that privately rereading the books does not. Radiohead presents an even more complicated case; their striking music can still be appreciated, while their political choices have led some listeners to question whether enjoying and supporting

Contd.



the band can truly be separated from the consequences of those choices.

A useful framework, hence, is to examine the circumstances rather than ask whether separation is possible in the abstract. Separation is easier when the artist's biography is not central to the work, the work does not promote harmful ideas, and engagement does not strengthen the artist's influence or material position. It becomes harder when these factors are deeply connected to the work or when engagement contributes to continued harm. Even an artist's death does not end these questions, as their estates, institutions, or ideological movements may continue to benefit from their legacy.

These conditions are not a mechanical formula. Moral judgements themselves can be contested, and reasonable people may disagree about what constitutes harm or cultural benefit. So, the purpose of such a framework is not to produce a universal rule, but to make the questions we ask more precise. Who benefits from my engagement? Is the artist's ideology actually present in the work or merely in the biography surrounding it? Does my engagement constitute private appreciation, critical study, public endorsement, or material support? Does separating the artist from the work clarify its meaning, or does it erase something essential to what the work is?

The issue extends beyond individual audiences, as museums, publishers, universities, and other institutions shape which artists are celebrated or forgotten. They may excuse wrongdoing through "genius" narratives or judge artists primarily through controversy, when a responsible approach should be to acknowledge an artist's significance without ignoring the circumstances surrounding their work.

Perhaps art does not truly "escape" its artist at all. Instead, it outgrows them. The artist may create the work, but what happens to it afterwards is no longer entirely in their hands. The relationship between art and artist cannot be reduced to either complete separation or complete identification. History changes it, audiences reinterpret it, cultures give it new meanings, and time can transform what once seemed inseparable from its creator.

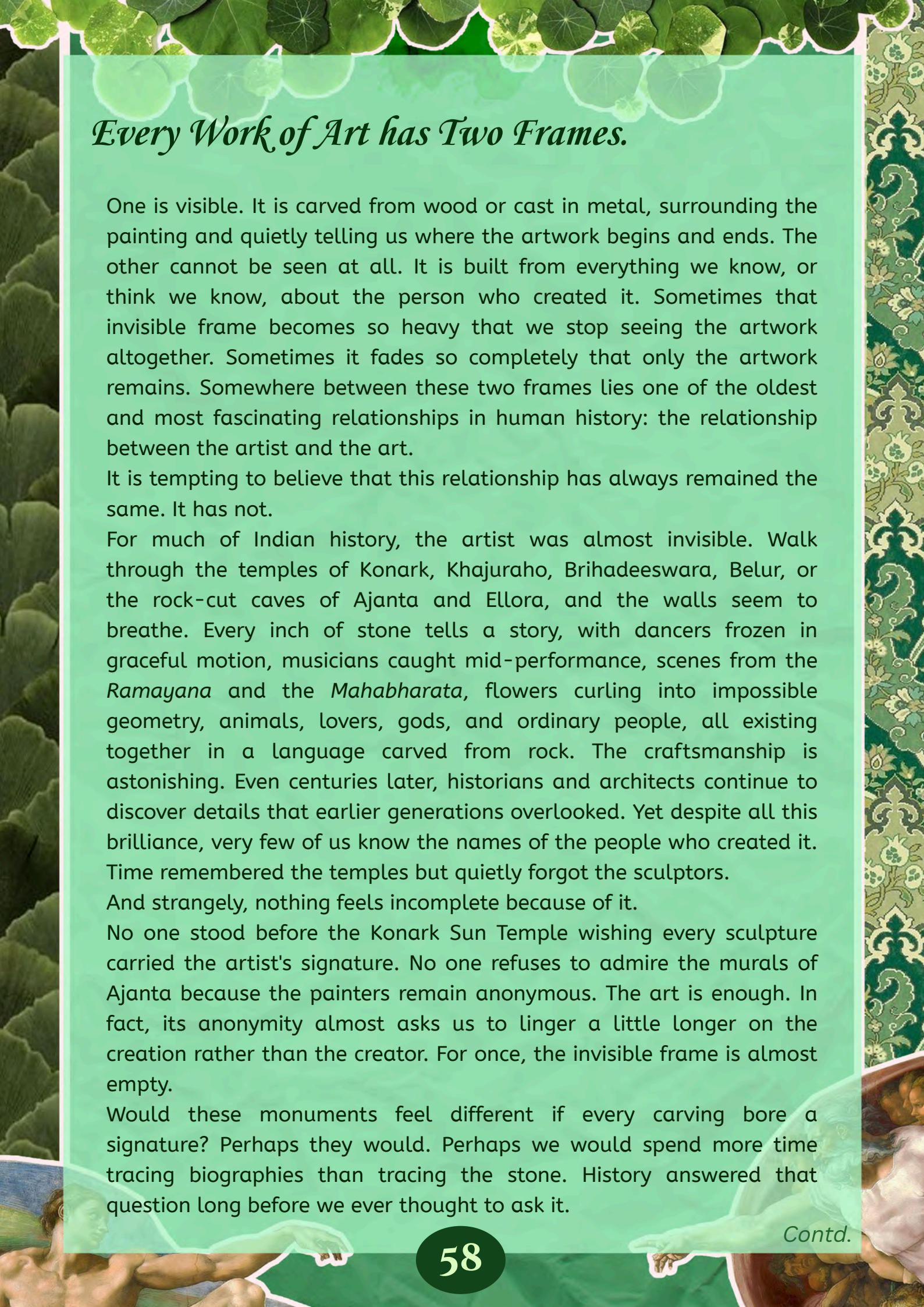
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Hence, the connection between artist and artwork should not be imagined as a rigid boundary that can simply be crossed but as an ever-shifting relationship between creation, interpretation, context, and consequence. The challenge is not to choose art over the artist or the artist over art, but to recognise that both can be scrutinised without allowing either to completely determine our judgement of the other. The artist gives art its beginning, while the audience gives it a life, and somewhere between the two is where art truly exists.

By Aratrika Biswas

*Semester 2
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Every Work of Art has Two Frames.

One is visible. It is carved from wood or cast in metal, surrounding the painting and quietly telling us where the artwork begins and ends. The other cannot be seen at all. It is built from everything we know, or think we know, about the person who created it. Sometimes that invisible frame becomes so heavy that we stop seeing the artwork altogether. Sometimes it fades so completely that only the artwork remains. Somewhere between these two frames lies one of the oldest and most fascinating relationships in human history: the relationship between the artist and the art.

It is tempting to believe that this relationship has always remained the same. It has not.

For much of Indian history, the artist was almost invisible. Walk through the temples of Konark, Khajuraho, Brihadeeswara, Belur, or the rock-cut caves of Ajanta and Ellora, and the walls seem to breathe. Every inch of stone tells a story, with dancers frozen in graceful motion, musicians caught mid-performance, scenes from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, flowers curling into impossible geometry, animals, lovers, gods, and ordinary people, all existing together in a language carved from rock. The craftsmanship is astonishing. Even centuries later, historians and architects continue to discover details that earlier generations overlooked. Yet despite all this brilliance, very few of us know the names of the people who created it. Time remembered the temples but quietly forgot the sculptors.

And strangely, nothing feels incomplete because of it.

No one stood before the Konark Sun Temple wishing every sculpture carried the artist's signature. No one refuses to admire the murals of Ajanta because the painters remain anonymous. The art is enough. In fact, its anonymity almost asks us to linger a little longer on the creation rather than the creator. For once, the invisible frame is almost empty.

Would these monuments feel different if every carving bore a signature? Perhaps they would. Perhaps we would spend more time tracing biographies than tracing the stone. History answered that question long before we ever thought to ask it.

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As centuries passed, the artist slowly stepped into the frame. Raja Ravi Varma did not simply paint Lakshmi and Saraswati; he transformed the way generations of Indians imagined them. His paintings travelled beyond galleries into calendars, prayer rooms, and family homes, until his interpretation quietly became collective memory. Somewhere between the easel and the altar, something profound had changed. People were no longer looking only at the goddess. They were, knowingly or not, looking through Ravi Varma's eyes. The artist had entered the artwork without ever appearing on the canvas.

The relationship had become more intimate.

With artists like Amrita Sher-Gil, it became almost impossible to separate the painting from the person who painted it. Her search for identity, her loneliness, her fascination with ordinary Indian lives- these are often discussed alongside her colours and compositions, as though the biography and the brushstroke were speaking the same language. Yet one cannot help but wonder whether the paintings themselves ask for this intimacy, or whether we bring it with us. If we knew nothing about Sher-Gil beyond the canvases she left behind, would we still see solitude in her women? Or have we learned to recognise the artist before we recognize the art?

Perhaps every artwork is a mirror. The only uncertainty is whose reflection we are looking at.

This uncertainty becomes even more unsettling when the artist enters public controversy. M. F. Husain's horses still run across the canvas with the same restless energy they possessed decades ago. His colours remain as bold, his compositions as daring. The paintings themselves have not changed. Yet it is almost impossible to enter a gallery carrying only the artwork. Every viewer arrives accompanied by memories of debates surrounding his depictions of Hindu deities, discussions about artistic freedom, questions of faith, offence, exile, and expression. The canvas remains silent while the world argues around it.

The painting does not change. The conversation does. And so does the viewer. It is easy to imagine this relationship as one between two participants- the artist and the artwork. But there has always been a third presence in the room.

The audience.

The moment a poem is published, it begins a life the poet can no longer control. A song written after heartbreak becomes somebody else's wedding song. A novel inspired by one city finds readers on another continent who recognise themselves within its pages. Satyajit Ray's

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Pather Panchali' belongs as much to the child who watches Apu for the first time today as it did to the filmmaker who imagined him decades ago. Art has an extraordinary habit of refusing ownership. It leaves the artist's hands only to gather thousands of other lives along the way.

This is why the relationship between art and artist is far more complex than questions of separation allow. The artist undoubtedly shapes the work- their experiences, beliefs, joys, and griefs leave fingerprints that cannot simply be wiped away. But the artwork does something equally remarkable. It begins shaping the artist in return. Over time, we remember people through what they created. Tagore lives not only in history books but in the songs sung during moments of solitude and celebration. Ravi Varma survives every Diwali when countless homes welcome Lakshmi in a form imagined by his brush. The artwork slowly becomes the biography.

Yet our own century has complicated this relationship further. Social media, interviews, documentaries, and public controversies ensure that artists rarely arrive alone. They arrive carrying opinions, scandals, apologies, headlines, and carefully curated public identities. The #MeToo movement in India and across the world forced audiences to confront difficult questions about creators whose work they admired. Should the artist's actions alter our experience of the artwork? Can admiration survive disappointment? Does understanding the person deepen our appreciation, or merely change its direction?

The answers seem to shift with every artist, every artwork, and every viewer. Maybe they are meant to.

Because every generation builds a different invisible frame around the same piece of art. One generation sees devotion where another sees politics. One sees rebellion where another sees disrespect. One finds comfort in a poem while another finds grief. The artwork remains still while meaning continues to move around it.

And perhaps that movement is the relationship itself.

Not a thread tying the artist permanently to the artwork, nor a wall separating the two, but something far more fluid- a conversation that keeps changing each time another pair of eyes enters the room.

The invisible frame is never truly finished. The artist begins building it with imagination, memory, and craft. History adds admiration and criticism. Society adds morality and controversy. The audience adds its own fears, beliefs, and experiences. Every person who pauses before a painting, lingers over a poem, or loses themselves in a melody quietly adds another layer to that frame, leaving behind something of themselves without ever touching the work.

Maybe that is why great art survives. Not because it remains unchanged, but because it never stops changing. The artist creates the first story. The artwork carries it forward. The rest are written by everyone who chooses to look.

By Anwesha Mohanty

*Semester 1
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"KEEP STILL, PLEASE"

Dismantling the Barriers

Inextricably attached is the voice of the artist to the work of art that he creates. It cannot be neglected. We cannot entirely annihilate the existence of the author nor can the author extinguish himself completely after the work is done. The author produces his work with a purpose as he attempts to convey a message, be it social like Bertolt Brecht's "The Good Woman of Szechwan" that sheds light upon the inherent exploitation of generous people who struggle to retain their humanity in a society that is governed solely by self-interests, political like Amitav Ghosh's "The Shadow Lines" that explores the impact of displacement and forced migration and violent uprisings, or exploring one's own consciousness such as Joyce's "Ulysses" and Woolf's "Mrs Dalloway" or another contemporary author, Jon Fosse's works that employ what they called "the stream of consciousness" technique where they delve into minds of the characters revealing their preoccupations with certain things along with their insecurities, fears, moments of pure bliss and suffering. Now it is a pre-established fact that a work of art is born out of an artist's imagination that is an amalgamation of his beliefs, perceptions, desires, influences, and so it becomes absurd to even think of severing the cord between the muse and its creator. Without the author, there would be no work in question to be put under the rigorous task of analysis. However the author has certain limitations just as we readers have certain limitations as to how much we can rightfully give credit to the author. The author's limits lie in the fact that he cannot impose his intended message upon the readers. It has to be dug out and uncovered by the readers themselves and whatever message or lesson that the readers collectively come at after close readings, shall be regarded as the work's ultimate essence because it is the readers to whom the author addresses primarily so the readers are bestowed with the sceptre to critically examine it. But we cannot wash our hands off yet as there is no certainty that we readers will come to a shared conclusion, it is more likely that we will arrive at various interpretations of the same text, so how do we judge a work accurately? We have to collectively develop an awareness regarding the socio-political context during which the work was created and attempt to trace the probable reflections of it done by the author. Alongside that, we must consider the narrative work in itself in order to dissect it critically; the figures of speech, motifs, narrative techniques, the characters and the plot structure all of which makes it a coherent entity that becomes eligible for rightful appreciation or criticism. But we are faced

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with yet another obstruction that is the contemporary debate between separating the art from the artist with reference to the author's private and public image where increasingly we are uncovering disturbing facts about them that compels us to re-evaluate and reconsider acknowledging their works. For example, Khushwant Singh, the renowned Indian author of the popular novel "Train to Pakistan" had admitted in his memoir "Khushwantnama: The Lessons of My Life" (2013) "I have also come to the sad conclusion that I have always been a bit of a lecher. I have never been able to conform to the Indian ideal of regarding women as my mothers, sisters or daughters. Whatever their age, to me they were, and are, objects of lust". Such an admission makes a plausible explanation for his otherwise consistent emphasis on erotic descriptions of the female characters in his works. Moreover in an essay collection, *"Why I Supported the Emergency: Essays and Profiles"* (2009) he had supported the 1975 Emergency Period declared by Indira Gandhi that had suspended civil liberties, imposed press censorship and forced sterilization drives that caused numerous deaths and chaos across the nation. In 2010, Arundhati Roy, the author of the celebrated "The God of Small Things" had asserted at a literary seminar in Delhi that "Kashmir was never an integral part of India" which sparked off a major controversy when she was trying to advocate for the rights of the Kashmiri citizens to demand a separate state, but nevertheless the quoted statement itself was considerably thoughtless of her to utter despite being aware of common people's tendency to use statements without context to create chaos. The famous American poet, Ezra Pound had vocally supported Benito Mussolini the then Italian dictator who believed in fascism and promoted antisemitic propaganda. Pablo Neruda's autobiographical entries and George Orwell's biographical accounts reveal how they had harassed women sexually. The list could go on but the central problem that we have arrived at needs to be taken into account first; how do we draw a line between an author's personal records and his public works? To dispel this dilemma we have to develop again a sense of moral awareness and the rational ability to separately criticise the shortcomings and morally depraved attitudes towards certain race or caste or gender and then also acknowledge rightfully, the works analysing whether they deserve appreciation or criticism based on its literary contents. We must consciously resist the temptation to

incline towards one side and formulate a biased opinion of an artist with respect to either his works solely or his personal life. Areas where the artist has failed to develop or misrepresented must be critically commented upon, just like the areas or aspects where the author has succeeded in producing an accurate representation or has evoked in us readers, emotions and encouraged introspection.

There is but one last knot which we have to untangle and that is, if the artist has acted entirely against what he has advocated for, does it not render the art as an insincere imitation bearing no truth whatsoever? To this I will quote from Seneca's "Letters from a Stoic" where he suggested "to weigh the utility of a thought or a philosophical precept on its own merits rather than scrutinizing the fame, background, or perceived flaws of the person who uttered it" 1. The message has to be absorbed and inculcated without the illusionary voice that seems to be attached with it.

1. Suvak, Vladislav. (2024). Ethics as self-mastery in Seneca's Letters. Ethics & Bioethics. 14. 1-13. 10.2478/ebce-2024-0008.

By Asmita Sahoo

*Semester 7
English Department*



Can Art be considered as an extension of the Artist?

Art is not simply something an artist produces. It is often a reflection of their thoughts, emotions, experiences, imagination, and worldview. When an artist creates something, they leave a part of themselves within it. Since the beginning of human civilization, art has been an inseparable from it. Sometimes, an artist expresses the unspeakable through their works. Art gives them freedom to communicate their feelings indirectly. Something as simple as a colour, a character, or a melody can represent something deeply personal. Art and Artists are like two sides of the same coin. Creating art can help an artist understand themselves, process emotions, or perceive differently. The artist creates the artwork, but the process of creation itself is transformative.

For some, it may be JK Rowling's 'Harry Potter' series that made their childhood magical; for many, the books became a source of comfort, imagination, and an escape from reality. When JK Rowling created Harry Potter, she did not simply create a fantasy novel. She created an entire universe filled with characters, places, conflicts, relationships, and ideas. The story explores loneliness, friendship, courage, prejudice, loss, love, and most importantly, greatness in all of it. Although these themes exist within a fantastical realm, they reflect very real aspects of human life.

However, the relationship between an artist and their art is not always simple. An artist may sometimes turn out to be very different from the person people imagine them to be. They may create something that is loved by millions of people while holding beliefs that are utterly repulsive; some that even violate their own art.

This raises an important question: does the artist define their art? Although the artist creates the work, once the art is shared, people interpret it through their own experiences. Art is dispersed and perceived differently. It never means the same to everyone. Art is never completely owned once it's out in the world. In this way, the meaning of art can grow beyond the artist. An artist may create a piece of art, but its meaning continues to grow through people. This is what makes the connection between an artwork and artist so special.

By Isha Das

*Semester 2
English Department*

Satyajit Ray- A complete artist

Satyajit Ray was a phenomenon of Indian cinema. His works are not ordinary, but masterpieces. However, to title him a mere filmmaker would do injustice to his other artistic abilities. Ray was multifaceted. He was a writer, illustrator, storyteller, music composer, filmmaker, and typographer. He was masterful in it all. His different forms of art influenced each other, which therefore presented Ray as a complete artist.

Ray, in his early life, became interested in art. He came from a family integrally associated with literature and art. Ray trained himself in visual art at Kala Bhavana in Santiniketan. His experience of art and design helped him to achieve his perfect artistry.

One of Ray's important artistic identities was that of an illustrator. He illustrated books and magazines, developing a distinctive style of drawing. His illustrations were purely decorative, which helped him bring to life characters and convey palpable emotions through them. His ability to communicate through images later became inextricably linked to his filmmaking. A notable example of his work was the Bengali children's magazine, *Sandesh*. The magazine morphed into a confluence of various art forms. Ray was also an accomplished graphic designer. Before becoming a filmmaker, he used to work in advertising and design book covers, etc. His designs were simple and visually appealing. He also designed fonts, including *Ray Roman* and *Ray Bizarre*. His interest in typography shows he considered letters as a form of art.

Ray as a writer was equally important. He created memorable literary characters like Feluda and Professor Shonku. His stories provide a picture of his imagination, humour, and interest in mystery and adventure. His relationship with literature continued through his films, many of which were adaptations of literary works.

His work as a music composer added another dimension to his artistic personality. Ray composed music for many of his films and used it to create emotional depth. His musical understanding helped him to control both auditory and visual aspects of cinema. Thus, his films were a complete fusion of several artistic forms.



In cinema, Ray brought these different abilities together. *Pather Panchali*, based on Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay's novel, shows his sensitivity towards ordinary people, nature, and everyday life. *Charulata*, based on Tagore's *Nastanirh*, demonstrates his insight into women's inner lives and exploration of loneliness. *Mahanagar* examines women's independence and the changing social life of Kolkata. These films show Ray as a writer, designer, illustrator, musician, and observer.

Ray's art was deeply connected with his ability to observe human life. He often found beauty and drama in ordinary experiences rather than focusing on unusual events. His understanding of people, culture, and society united his different artistic forms. His works were not direct autobiographies; instead, he blended his personal experiences with imagination to create beautiful and meaningful stories.

Thus, it can be inferred that his talents flawlessly blended into one another, marking him as a complete artist. His love for literature influenced his films; his illustrative and graphic design skills shaped his visual styles. His interest in typography added one more creative identity to his personality, and his knowledge of music enriched his storytelling. His life and work prove that art does not have to be limited to one form. In Ray's case, different art forms came together to create one remarkable and lasting artist.

By Swarnamitra Saha

*Semester 2
English Department*

Artwork

In the sublime war of humanity
against reality, humanity has but one
weapon, the imagination.

- Benjamin de Casseres,
The Poetry Journal



Digital Artwork



By Nilanjana Chatteraj
Semester 1
Psychology Department

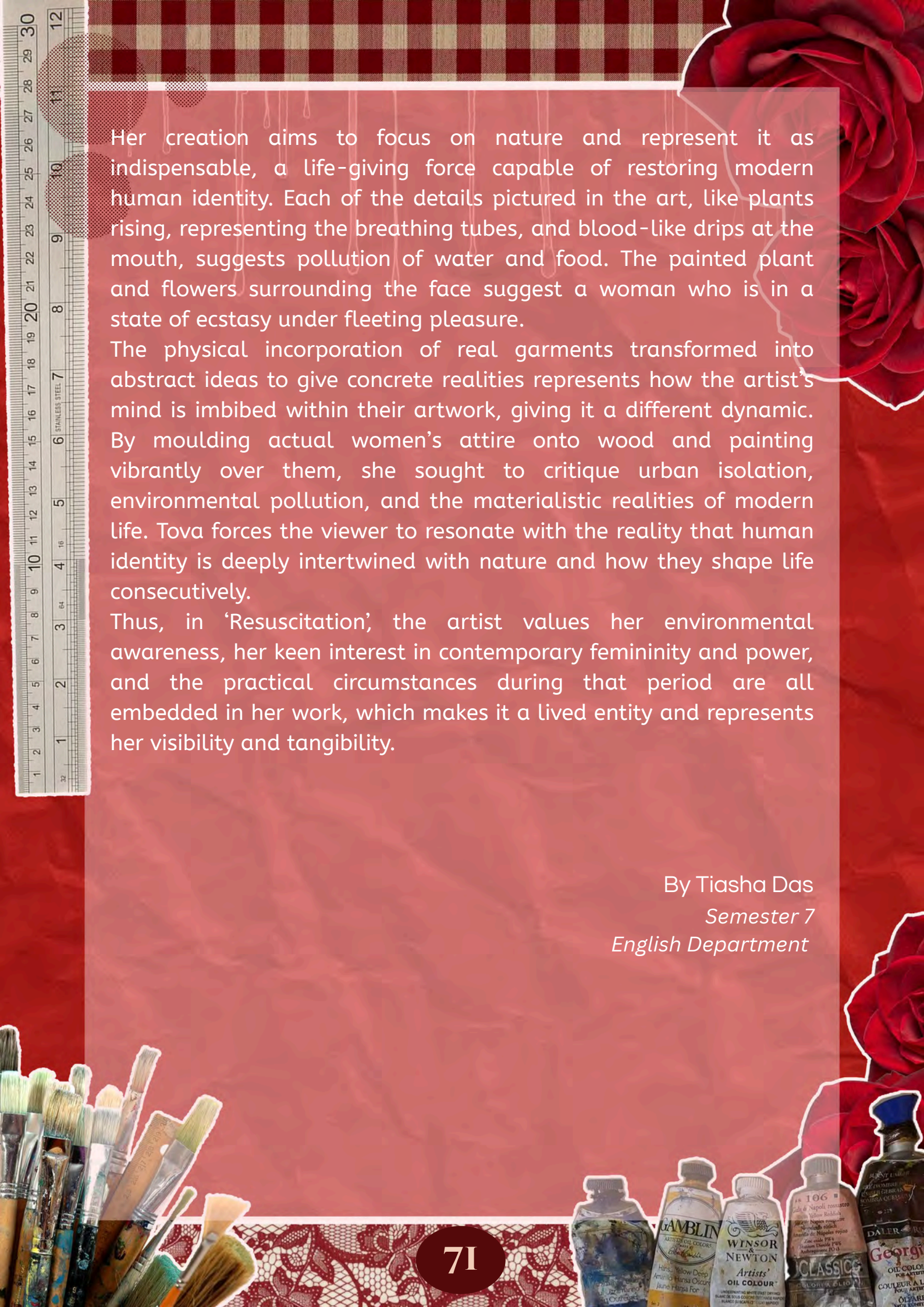


“Resuscitation”, Oil and arsenic on women’s clothing and accessories on wood.

The artwork of ‘Kate Tova’ was created in 2024 and challenges the limits of painting, including its narrative possibilities. California's best creator turns to a vibrant use of color and natural imagery to explore the contemporary concepts of femininity, identity, and power. Her work has long been defined as mixed media due to the sculptural quality of her canvases, and the materials that add textures to her pieces are full of meaning. Her art piece particularly resonates with the objectivity and social themes.

Kate Tova created the piece during a 2024 residency at the School of Visual Arts in New York, a period heavily dominated by contemporary discussions on environmental crisis, human disconnection from nature, and social pressures surrounding identity. The surface of her artwork is crafted around donated garments and accessories like hats, leather jackets, dresses, high heels, jewellery, and makeup that belonged to local women.

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Her creation aims to focus on nature and represent it as indispensable, a life-giving force capable of restoring modern human identity. Each of the details pictured in the art, like plants rising, representing the breathing tubes, and blood-like drips at the mouth, suggests pollution of water and food. The painted plant and flowers surrounding the face suggest a woman who is in a state of ecstasy under fleeting pleasure.

The physical incorporation of real garments transformed into abstract ideas to give concrete realities represents how the artist's mind is imbibed within their artwork, giving it a different dynamic. By moulding actual women's attire onto wood and painting vibrantly over them, she sought to critique urban isolation, environmental pollution, and the materialistic realities of modern life. Tova forces the viewer to resonate with the reality that human identity is deeply intertwined with nature and how they shape life consecutively.

Thus, in 'Resuscitation', the artist values her environmental awareness, her keen interest in contemporary femininity and power, and the practical circumstances during that period are all embedded in her work, which makes it a lived entity and represents her visibility and tangibility.

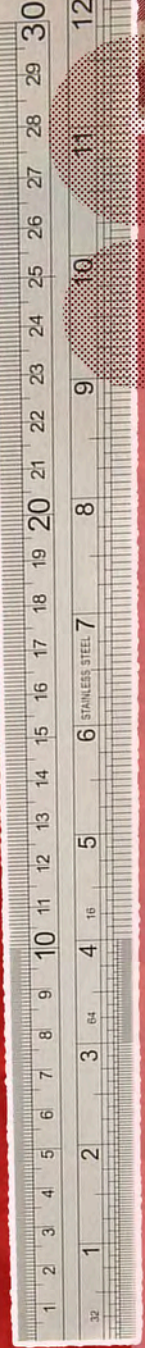
By Tiasha Das
Semester 7
English Department



Breaking down “The Starry Night” by Vincent Van Gogh.

The Starry Night is an oil-on-canvas painting created in 1889 by the Dutch artist *Vincent van Gogh*. He created it while living as a voluntary patient at the Saint-Paul-de-Mausole asylum in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, France. It belongs to the Post-Impressionist era of the late 19th century, a period that moved from the optical concerns of Impressionism towards expressive color, emotional intensity, and personal vision. He was severely struggling with mental illness and physical isolation during that time, and hence, he turned towards art to find meaning and spiritual connection through it. Painting, thus, enabled him to stabilize his mind and internal state, acting as therapy during the post-Impressionist era. Van Gogh’s intention in his painting was to represent or express the intense cosmic energy he felt in the night sky, which he referred to as the “terrible passions of humanity.” He intended to channel inner emotional turbulence by seeking spiritual peace and capturing it through his vision.

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The swirling sky represents the cosmic energy and emotional chaos, showing how the artist translated his inner distress and restless mind into the canvas. The Cypress Tree rising like a dark flame in the foreground acts as a connecting bridge of earthly existence with the infinite heavens. The quiet village painted orderly represents calmness and ordinary human life, which acts as a sharp contrast with Van Gogh's real life because he did not experience any of it. Each stroke of his painting captures his psychological mind-space, emotional suffering, his spiritual experience, and a desperate longing for connection and meaning.

Van Gogh painted the night as the most realistic vision from his experience and feelings. The rhythmic brushstrokes and vibrating colors are all representations of his mind, and what he experienced collectively is all painted with intensity. The painting becomes both a catalogue of his emotional state and a transcendent attempt to find order, beauty, and spiritual presence within chaos. Even after his death, his work continues to echo precisely. Since he has delved so much of himself in a dynamic into his artwork, it represents how the art and the artist are fused and made visible on a canvas.

Thus, the artwork is not just an illustration of the artist, but it is an intention of the artist that is extended in their work. All the aspects, including the materials, the gestures, the imagery, the emotional content or connection, and the intention, are all rooted within the art since it deeply resonates with the artist and how they painted it. Van Gogh, in his painting, represents how he felt about every aspect, and his brushstrokes represent it. The artist's attempt to make sense of their own world through their feelings, emotions, and expressions. It thus represents the larger order of their lived experience. Whether reflecting outward social conventions or inward psychological turmoil, both artists, through their paintings, show that art definitely remains linked to the lived experience of the artist.

By Tiasha Das
Semester 7
English Department



Thankyou for Reading

THE END.

Stay Tuned for More

