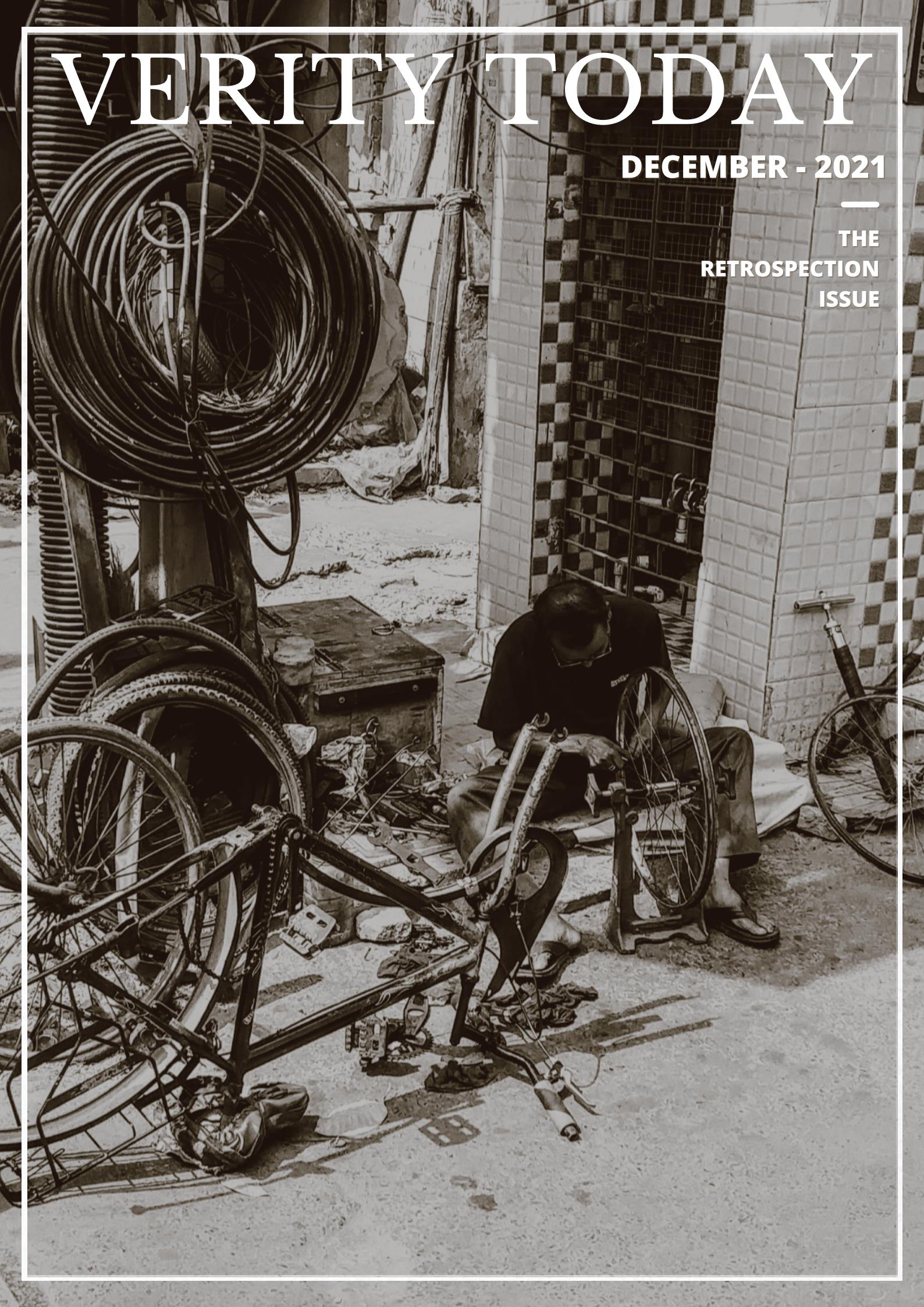
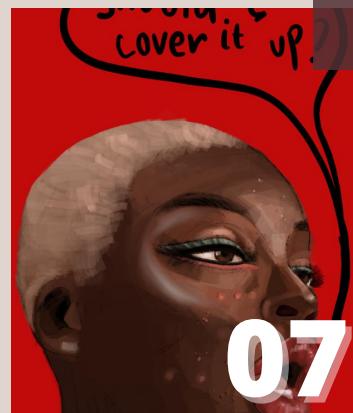
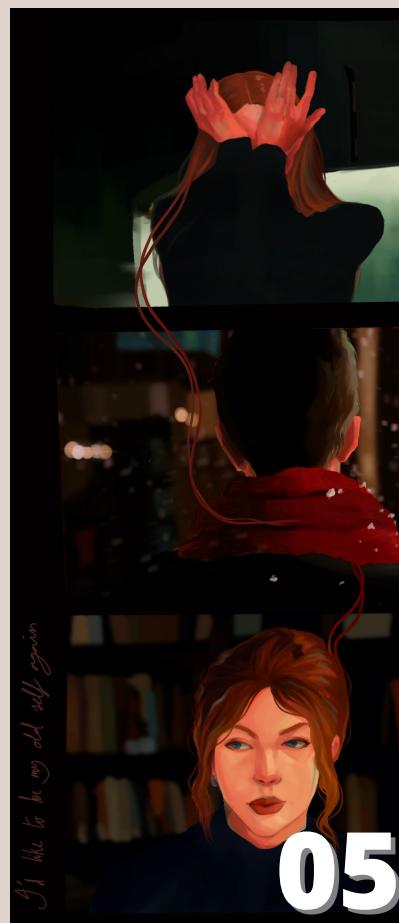


VERITY TODAY

DECEMBER - 2021

—
THE
RETROSPECTION
ISSUE





Editor's note	03
Retrospection and Redefining Art (Taylor's Version)	04
Terrorising Beauty	07
Thank You, but That Wasn't Helpful	09
A Telescope To Past Space Exploration	11

Editor's note —

Look back. A year, or 365 days, or 8766 hours, or 525960 minutes, or 31557600 seconds. Numerics. Units. Categorizations. Conventions. What did you do this year? Anything persistent, anything significant? Yes? Great. Proud of you. No? Same. Give me a hug.

Okay, yeah, no, I'm being humble. I did realize some essential things about myself this year. The most important of them was that I'm not a writer (text me if you want substantiation for my claims. Ok don't). I'm setting myself up for removal from the Editorial Team here (Please, Sohani), but that's just the truth. It's an intense task. I like the idea of it, sure. However, Lord Reality halted me in my path and told me it's FINE if I'm not a writer. Sweet trade, though. I now know I'm a very great dancer. My creativity resides in my amazingly fluid feet. Yay.

Jokes apart, this has taught me something that is truly core in my understanding of the world: action is truth. You'll figure stuff out if you just do the things you want to, or the things you think you want to. You'll be better-positioned to know who you are if you're putting yourself out there (not just to others, but to yourself), and that'll help you be in control of yourself. Not many people will have accomplishments to sprinkle over their resumes for 2021, but if you've gotten to know yourself this year - in the smallest of ways, in the biggest of personality reveals - you've done something. That's the whole point of all... this.

In this spirit (cliche teenage SLO enthusiast), Verity Today brings you its December Newsletter with Retrospection as the theme. From the Arts organ's millionth article on Taylor Swift to the STEM department's fascinating retrospection of the human anatomy and the stars, we have endeavored to bring you a few little truths of the world. They're minutely significant in the contemplation of the epistemology of things, but beautiful all the same. Retrospect, because even if it's gonna hurt you or disappoint you, it's going to lead you a bit closer to the truth. And the truth is ultimate.

Pradyumn Nahata

Senior Editor

Verity Today





RETROS



PECTION

Retrospection and Redefining Art (Taylor's Version)

Written by: Mohan Rajagopal

Edited by: Pradyumn Nahata

"It's somewhere in a drawer, I don't know," Taylor Swift responded when a fan asked about the full version of *All Too Well* a few years ago. Considered one of Swift's best-written songs, the career highlight achieved cult-like status within the fandom due to its heartbreak lyrics reminiscing over a lost relationship. Initially released as a five-minute song on her 2012 album *Red*, Swift soon revealed the song was originally 10 minutes long, which she was forced to cut down to a more radio-friendly length.

Nine years after *Red*'s release in 2012 began the well-documented and publicised struggle surrounding the master recordings of her back-catalogues. Essentially, the rights to her first six albums had been taken away from her and sold to others in the music industry, leaving Swift with no ownership over her own work. In retaliation, Swift embarked on a mission to rerecord these albums and release them with new artwork, unreleased tracks, and slicker production choices. The result has been the 'Taylor's Version' era, during which her second and fourth albums, *Fearless* and *Red*, have already been re-released.

It is not important to go into the details of the men that caused Taylor to take such drastic measures to own her music, neither do we need to discuss the men who the songs on the albums are allegedly about. Since the release of *Red (Taylor's Version)*, there has been an overwhelming dialogue online surrounding her exes at the time of each album's original release. However, Swift herself has made it clear that her re-recordings serve no purpose other than to own her music once again, instead of attempting to "rehash past drama" as hordes on the internet have been claiming (a very sexist and misogynistic take, at the very least). What is interesting here, however, is the journey that art takes over time, transforming and changing before our very eyes.



Red is notorious for being a heartbreak album, chockful of songs ranging from melancholic yearnings for a former lover to bitter yet upbeat declarations of angst for a hurtful ex. In the foreword to the album, Swift writes:

Musically and lyrically, *Red* resembled a heartbroken person. It was all over the place, a fractured mosaic of feelings that somehow all fit together in the end. Happy, free, confused, lonely, devastated, euphoric, wild, and tortured by memories past.

The failure of her relationships at the time was known to have left a last impression on her, with some of the most heartbreak songs of her discography featuring on *Red*. Paparazzi pictures from 2012 often saw her sitting forlornly alone in parks, or wandering around the city with tears in her eyes. Nearly a decade later, the grief associated with the album has ebbed away to leave behind a fan-favourite album that cemented Swift's status as a master songwriter. For both the singer as well as her fans, *Red* was no longer a manifestation of pain, failure, and sorrow. *All Too Well* was an especially painful song for Taylor; following her performance of the song at the 2014 Grammy's, she was seen weeping on stage. After the fans declared their love for the song, however, Swift has been open about how the track had now come to represent her relationship with her fans, rather than the broken romantic relationship that had served as its source material. The newly-released *10 Minute Version* of *All Too Well* is, hence, a manifestation of the transformative potential of art over time. Warmly received by fans and the general public alike, the song even went ahead to hit #1 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart: a remarkable feat considering the length of the song which makes it unsuitable for binge-streaming, and the fact that it is a country ballad.





Music has often been touted as a form of therapy, for writers as well as listeners. In pouring out one's deepest emotions into the lyrics of a song, one engages in a catharsis that is hard to find in direct conversations with other people. Meanwhile, discovering that the challenges of one's life are universal on hearing a song dealing with the same issues conveys a sense of comfort, intimacy, and support. Having sent out *Red* into the larger world, it belonged to the listeners, and for Taylor, that has made all the difference: "I'm not sure if it was pouring my thoughts into this album, hearing thousands of your voices sing the lyrics back to me in passionate solidarity, or if it was simply time, but something was healed along the way."

The re-recordings stand as a unique hallmark in the music industry, and indeed, in the consumption of art itself. Rarely do we get to see the effects of time on a piece of art, and the 'Taylor's Version' albums offer a direct comparison for us to examine. Online, thousands of fans came forward with their own stories about how, when *Red* originally came out, they too were going through bad breakups and leant on the album for emotional support. The re-release in 2021 provided an opportunity to look back on these events without pain and see the art for the sake of the art alone, divorced from any prejudice or celebrity drama. It takes time to heal, and *Red (Taylor's Version)* is a beautiful representation of that healing process. The heartbreak which an artist goes through alone comes to be shared by the world at large, and in the process, both parties evolve along with the art that they consume, the result being art in its purest form, and an audience that is truly appreciative of its depth.

Terrorising Beauty

Written by: Vidushi Shukla
Edited by: Mohan Rajagopal

The sky is low and woollen out the window. She is reading Cecelia Ahern- my favourite- my heart fails to wait and get to know a girl before it starts to claw its way out of my chest to get to her. I repeat her name over and over again in my head, she smiles at me. *She smiles at me!*

I am the first one to introduce myself to the class- I remember this, it's a routine- name, colour, hobbies.
"What is your caste? students, make sure you tell me your caste."

what?

- Forward caste, they said
- Forward caste, they said
- Schedule tribe, She said
- get out of my class, the teacher was furious. why?

She carries herself out of the class, they are the saddest steps I've seen someone take. She smiles at me, the saddest smile I've ever witnessed. I smile back at her, the saddest smile I've ever harboured.

We had entered a period of low spirits.

I've been here for a few months, and I've learned that inequality doesn't necessarily trample on your face and spit on you. It solely wraps you up in a tight, chummy hug sometimes. And it's difficult for you to move because we all pretended to be undisturbed by the loud echo of her forbidden voice.

I am no longer permitted to wear those shorts outside. I wore these last week. Is it true that I'm suddenly too old? When my father claims it's for my benefit, what can I say? He genuinely cares about me and wants me to feel safe. However, because his love isn't enough to keep indecent males off the streets, I'll have to rely on my full-length jeans. I can't raise my voice and tell him that nothing awful will happen to me, and I can't reassure him that everything will be alright. I'm going to change in my room, but I'm starting to feel like I have no idea what I'm doing. I feel their eyes slithering uncomfortably over my body as if it were more than just a gaze.





Trigger warning: Homophobia, mention of suicide
Outside the school grounds, the sunlight is so strong it crunches all the colours up and makes them sting. A warm chocolate shake with whipped cream has never tasted better! The music comes on, a pounding Taylor Swift remix, I am used to observing people from a distance, almost scientifically, I hear a muffled noise in the cafeteria- "He likes boys" continued with a burst of laughter. His presence was constantly shrunk, he was intimidated enough to play small and invisible; As months passed by, his presence almost faded, until he was wasn't there. Nobody ever assumed him of having perpetual strength. Where we might have once been shielded away from our horrors, we were now forced right into the middle of it.

The need to remind people that minorities do not have the same rights as everyone else because of their beliefs and skin colour. Despite the fact that our perfection is eroding day by day, we still have hope: it will all be beautiful one day. Minorities will no longer be oppressed, discriminated against, brutalised, waged upon, or shot for no reason. And, while we haven't given up hope and have accepted the reality of the situation, we hope that everyone will see the truth as well: this world is a beautiful place and beauty can be terrorising sometimes.

Thank You, but That Wasn't Helpful

Written by: Vaishali Sarah Mundle
Edited by: Pradyumn Nahata

Trigger warning: Mention of suicide, self harm.
Finding yourself thinking about what you *could've* done or said in the argument you had a week ago, tossing and turning in bed thinking about an important event you have the next day, these are few of the most minor experiences of an overthinker.

I have found myself in that spiral way too many times than I'd ideally like and no matter what I do, I cannot push those haphazard thoughts away. In fact, the more of a conscious effort I put, I fall into a deeper spiral.

Different people have different ways of coping with this chaos in their heads, but very few are able to pacify it.

Whenever I look up "overthinking", articles and videos like "How to Stop Overthinking" pop up. Believe me, I have tried every method, nothing has ever worked for me, but I do believe that if we change our approach to this whole mess, maybe we can try to make it a little better for us at the least. Like I said, we all have different methods of coping, so we need to give ourselves the time to figure out what is going on and solve the problem at hand, so no, this article isn't about how to stop it because frankly, I'm yet to find the answer.

The most we can do though, is be aware of what we are going through, so that at least, we do not overthink that as well.

The first thing to know: You are not alone. Here I am writing an article venting the frustration I have pent up against articles filled with impractical advice along with the cherry on top-unsolicited advice from people around you. Just like that there are so many others with the same problem who will understand you and be at peace about the fact that they're not alone either.





As for where overthinking stems from, in some cases it can be a symptom of an underlying mental illness, like anxiety or depression but in no way can you draw a conclusion from that and self diagnose. If you feel that you are in that position, please take a professional's advice.

In itself, overthinking is not a disorder, in fact it is a very natural thing for any human being to do but as I said, if you feel you cannot cope with it, do not be afraid to reach out for help, be it from a professional or someone you trust.

One thing we don't realise though, is how much this can harm you.

Overthinking is like a constant leech stuck to your mind, draining all the energy you have, making you miserable and helpless.

The main problem of most overthinkers is countless sleepless nights. How badly can this affect you? For starters, you start feeling sleepy during the day, hence there's less productivity, crankiness and possibly a high intake of caffeine. Sleep is something so important and we take it for granted. Extreme sleep deprivation may also cause sleep paralysis which is a whole other experience which leaves people even fearing sleep.

If someone's overthinking is a by product of anxiety or depression, thoughts of suicide start kicking in because that seems like the only escape. Even if it is not suicide, in order to distract themselves, some even resort to methods like self harm.

You can see how just some overbearing thoughts can affect day to day life.

So how do you tell people, "just stop overthinking"? Is it that simple?

Is it not a better option to hear someone out rather than adding to their distress?

Think about it. Think about how little you know of people and how little people know of you.

A Telescope To Past Space Exploration

Written by: Reevu Majumdar
Edited by: Mohan Rajagopal

As the year 2021 comes to a close, we grow ever so close to the highly anticipated launching date of the James Webb Space Telescope, one of the most powerful telescopes crafted and developed by a multitude of space agencies. The launch of this telescope would mean magnificent improvements to the discovery of astrophysics, looking far off into space, a billion years ago. Such discoveries will possibly change everything. And as we celebrate this new journey across space discovery that humanity will embark on, we should take a moment to appreciate the astronomers in the past, who stared up into the stars, wondering what those little flares in the sky could possibly mean.

Humans have always been the curious and adventurous species, each of us with an itch to scratch, an ache and craving to scour the unknown. For millions of years, the unknown was all around us. Space and the big pitch black darkness above us remained a mystery that we couldn't crack. Humans made theories, stories, folklore, each surrounding every little dot in the sky, trying to figure out an explanation for the world around us, trying to make sense of anything. Over the years, those theories were provable, with Nicholas Copernicus and Galileo Galilei standing their ground, challenging the conventional idea of space with the Heliocentric model, plummeting humanity further into understanding space and how it works.





by shivang singh

Brilliant scientists came together over the years, formulating ideas about the universe, their ideals clashing and forming new ones. Over time, we discovered distant planets, farther than we could imagine, discovered stars of all shapes and sizes, and even galaxies of the most bizarre shapes. All, scattered across the beautiful cosmos. The brilliant cosmos, that no human could ever imagine being explored. Little did we know, that one day, we would send humans into the darkness of the sky.

In the early 19th century, after the Industrial Revolution, the world was rapidly evolving and changing. War drove humanity to push themselves further into creating new innovations, to go beyond others and overcome obstacles to defeat other countries. Due to revolutionary 200-mile-range V-2 missiles launched by Germany onto the U.K. during the second world war, the United States and the Soviet Union began working on their own missile programs, creating new innovations that would launch objects into much farther distances than comprehensible. This marks the beginning of mankind's venture into the great unknown, space itself.

Fast forward to 1957, the 4th of October, as the first satellite, the first mankind object to venture space, the Sputnik I, was launched by the Soviet Union. As a result of political tension due to the cold war, more rockets and satellites were developed, kickstarting what can only be termed as the "space race". The Sputnik was revolutionary for the evolution of space exploration, able to orbit Earth every 96 minutes, while sending out radio signals that could be detected all the way down on Earth. Upon this magnificent milestone, the United States grew more serious about space exploration, as a result of concern regarding the power of the U.S.S.R, which kept moving forward with impressive launches, notably the Sputnik II, a satellite carrying a dog named Laika, the first living creature to travel to space.

After several failed attempts, the U.S. tried its hand at launching a satellite of its own, the Explorer, in 1958. This satellite was designed mainly by German rocket scientists and engineers who had developed German missiles in the past. Shortly after, the new government agency, NASA, came into the picture, consolidating all activities of space exploration, and reshaped the world of space exploration.

Mankind made its first journey to the world beyond Earth with Russian Lt. Yuri Gagarin, orbiting Earth in Vostok 1 in 1961, and American John Glenn, a historic orbit across Earth in 1962. Progress simply kept coming, with more and more milestones achieved by NASA and the U.S.S.R. The world held on to its seats as more groundbreaking discoveries were made, and more humans were sent into space, exploring and creating history. History, however, was only getting started. Soon after, the Gemini Project was launched, a crucial project where astronauts had to test new technologies needed for future flights to the moon, and test their own ability to endure many days in spaceflight. This project was soon engineered and improved upon, becoming the infamous Project Apollo.

Project Apollo launched six missions to explore the moon, between 1969 and 1972. Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin made history with their first steps on the moon, truly making “one giant step for mankind”. NASA launched a series of space probes following this magnificent journey, known as Mariner, venturing nearby planets such as Mercury, Venus, and Mars.

Before humanity landed on the moon in the 1960s, unmanned spacecrafts photographed and studied the surface. The Mariner spacecraft was circling and surveying the surface of Mars by the early 1970s, and orbiting communications and navigation satellites were prevalent. The Voyager spacecraft had returned comprehensive photographs of Jupiter and Saturn, their rings, and moons by the end of the decade. These images give us insight to the planets around us, enabling us to study them in detail.

The Apollo program came to an end in 1972, but human space exploration had only just begun. Thousands of exoplanets, or planets circling other stars, have been found by equipment in space and on the ground, including the Kepler Space Telescope. Exoplanet detection began in 1995, and advances in technology now allow space-based equipment to analyze the atmospheres of some of these exoplanets. Telescopes such as The Hubble Space Telescope and satellites such as Voyager 1 and 2 have embarked on amazing journeys, showing us the vast realm of space in greater detail than we could have ever imagined. And now, with the much anticipated launch of the James Webb Telescope on 22nd December, humanity has much left in store.