

THE

# PEACOCK

TUESDAY, 19 JANUARY 2021



# READING IN THE DARK

BY DAMODAR MAUZO

I often wonder why every year at IFFI, I see a number of writers from across the country flock to attend the festival. I personally love to watch films at the festival for two reasons: the films are well selected, and the quality of the reels and screening is effectively good. But there is more to it - I easily get connected to films as I do when I read a book.

When I tried to find answers to this thought, I received diverse responses. One said, 'I find characters that I wouldn't meet in my vicinity'. The other explicitly replied, 'I come to see if my works are worth adapting to films.' Yet another opined that he wants to imbibe the skill of minimal communication. Whatever their take is, there is some direct connect that attracts the literary fraternity to the festival.

A good film has all the elements of a good literary piece. Does that indicate that literature and film mean one and the same? As I ponder over this, I recollect a saying that was in vogue in Goa during the Portuguese colonial days. Babu-Shabu, *pouca diferença*

(there is little difference between Babu and Shabu - both proper names

prevailing then). Well, I am more interested in finding common ground rather than hitting upon dissimilarities.

I recall how the filmmaker, actor, and activist, Ms. Nandita Das, at a literary gathering a decade back, claimed that she did not belong to the writers' fraternity. It was when she was in Goa at the behest of the Konkani Bhasha Mandal to deliver a memorial lecture. I had then insisted that what she writes for films is literature. I remember telling her that though her film *Firaq* (2008) was an ensemble based on a thousand true stories, it read like a novel to me. She'd then agreed that it was a narrative told in moving images. Nandita went on to bag the Best Screenplay Award at the Asian Festival of First Films (2008) and in 2019, she was nominated for the Best Screenplay and the Best Dialogue for the Filmfare Awards. She went on to write a book, *Manto and I*, that chronicled her journey of making the film *Manto* (2018). This I cite as an example of how filmdom brought out the writer in her.

I know of another writer who took to pen after serving for Tollywood for 14 years. Ashokmitran (real name Jagadisa Thyagarajan, 1931 - 2017) worked at Gemini Studios in public relations. On resigning from the Studios, he chose to become a full-time writer and soon attained great heights. His knowledge of films and experience in the film

industry, where he interacted with all kinds of people, helped him grow in stature as a writer.

We see many good novels made into films. Mario Puzo's *The Godfather* (1969) was made into a film by the same title. Soon after the novel was published, Paramount Pictures, who saw the potential, jumped on it to get the rights from the author, even before the novel became popular. The screenplay was written by Francis Ford Coppola, with Puzo as co-writer. The novel became a *New York Times* bestseller and sold over nine million copies over two years. Meanwhile the film became a hit at the box office too and went on to bag multiple Academy awards. Both, the novel and the film are great in their place. Like most derivative works, here too a few changes were made that were acceptable to the author. Yet, the critics univocally agree that both are remarkable works of art with neither being better than the other.

*Devdas* (original title Debdas in the original Bangla) is a literary work by Sharat Chandra Chatterji that is the most filmed fiction work in India. On the novel written in 1917, the film was made in multiple languages and multiple times. The films were made in Bangla, Hindi, Assamiya, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam. The story attracted the filmmakers right from the days of the silent movie of 1928 so

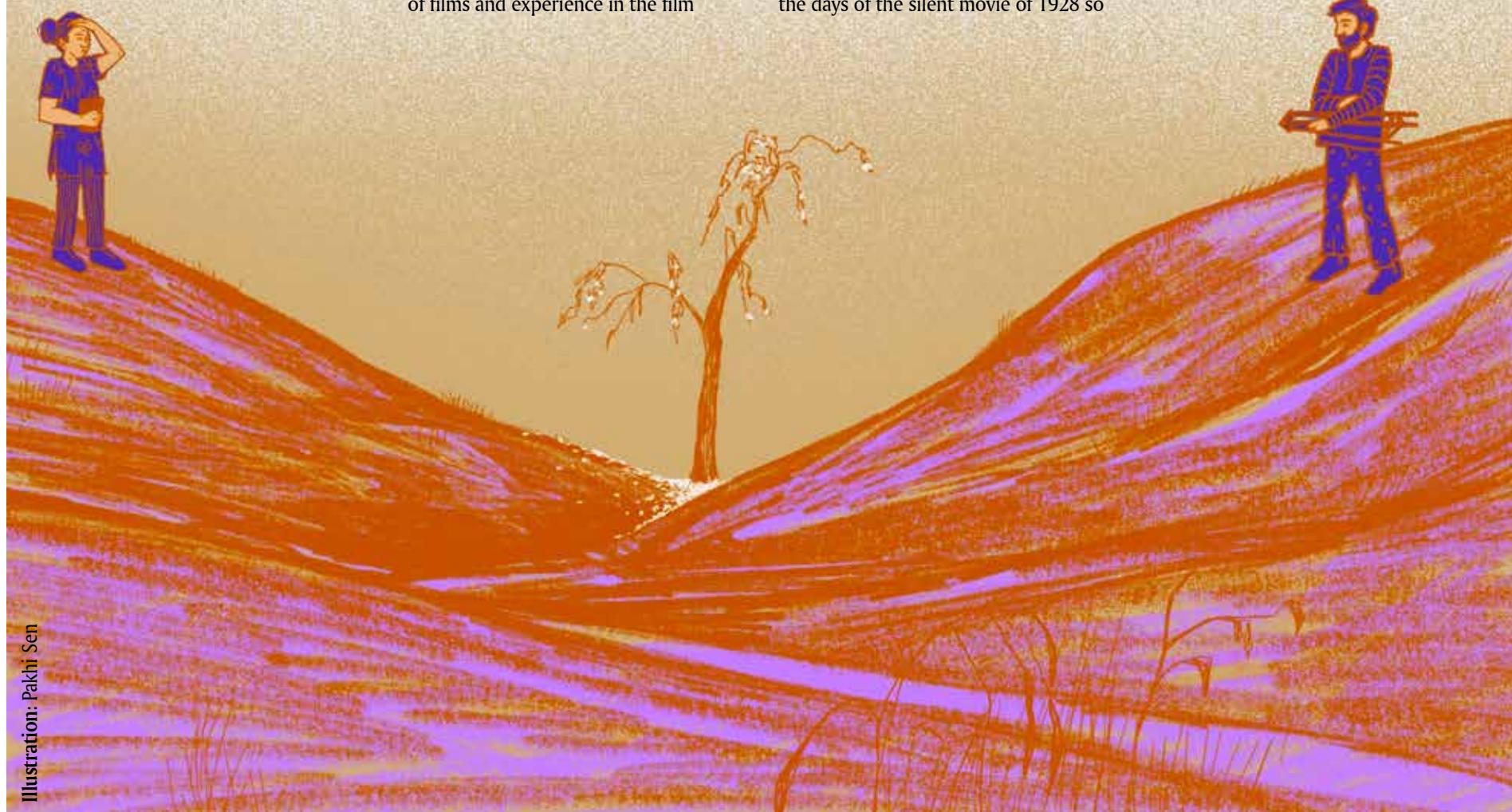
much that, from P.C. Barua's *Devdas* of 1935 to the modern-day appropriations (such as *Daas Dev* 2017) directed by Sudhir Mishra, *Devdas* has at least 20 versions. That is the magic of good literature finding its way into films.

R. K. Narayan's 1958 evergreen classic, *The Guide*, is yet another example of how literature connects well with films. Considered as one of the 20th-century classics, the novel is made into a film that became an all-time-great movie. Time magazine proclaimed the film as the fourth-best Bollywood classic.

In Goa, the imaginative film director, Laxmikant Shetgaonkar, made a film based on the Konkani novel, *Adrusht, by Mahabaleshwar Sail as Paltadcho Munis* (2009) that was awarded the FIPRESCI prize at the Toronto Festival in 2009.

Of course, the diehard book enthusiasts will never agree that films are literature. They'll say that it is imagination served on a platter. In the same breath, I can vouch for many film aficionados, who will not prefer a book to a film. I'd like to believe though that watching a film is reading a book in the dark.

Damodar Mauzo is the pre-eminent author of Konkani literature.



# PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

BY SACHIN CHATTE

**T**o say that the best thing about a film festival is films is like saying the sky is blue. But there is a larger point to that – at a festival, you get to see films which would never make it to our theatres. With the advent of OTT platforms, some of these films do make it to curated platforms like MUBI, but at the end of the day, nothing compares to the experience of watching a film on the big screen, in the darkness of the theatre.

It is the subject and themes that are

portrayed in these films that make them so fascinating. In India, we all have grown up on a staple diet of mainstream cinema, no matter which part of the country you come from. My love for cinema started with watching Amitabh Bachchan weave his magic, back then on a single screen, when the choice of timing was restricted to matinee, first or second show. Many of the mainstream films were pure kitsch and the thing about kitsch is that once you learn to appreciate that kind of cinema, some of it rubs off on you for the rest of your life. For example, Mehul Kumar's *Tiranga* (1992) was often screened either on Independence or Republic Day – it is a film that is so bad that I love it. It has a villain called Pralaynath Gendaswamy who, in the climax, tries to launch the fakest looking missiles ever and cause destruction all over India. That is the most fun I have had while watching a terrible film.

This brings me back to festivals and the kind of movies that we get to see. Monday morning started with *Suk Suk* made by a Hong Kong filmmaker, Ray Yeung. We have seen several films on relationships and the complications that arise with them – we have seen an older man, a younger woman, and vice versa. When it comes to LGBTQIA+ though, the themes have only been partly explored because the subject is still taboo in parts of the world. The gates have opened but only partly.

*Suk Suk* (2019) aka *Twilight's Kiss* is an extremely sensitive portrayal of two elderly men, who are secretly gay – they are both in their 70s and have spent most of their lives fighting to keep it a secret. In the twilight of their life, they still have to struggle because they both have their respective families to deal with. We see the travails they have to go through in making their choices - Pak (Tai Bo) drives a taxi, and has a wife and two grown-up children while Hoi (Ben Yeun) is a divorcee, who lives with his rather strict son and his wife and daughter.

Yeung manages to make us empathize with both the lead characters – you feel for them. Why can't these two men live peacefully and do what they want to do? Even to go to the market to buy ingredients to cook a meal, they have to make elaborate plans. How much can and should society impose its own-made rules on individuals? As we see them go about their lives, it is also clear that whether the families are religious or not, there is discrimination and stigma which is hard to overcome – needless to say, when religion is involved, the fight becomes that much tougher, as activists around the globe and in India, discovered as well. Hong Kong decriminalized gay sex in 2019, a year after the Supreme Court struck down Section 377 in India.

Back home, when we see an LGBTQIA+ character in cinema, it is mostly for comic effect or to make fun of. A film like *Aligarh* (2015) is an exception to the rule and *Bombay Talkies* (2013), the anthology had one story that had some gravitas while there has been the odd regional film that has shown some seriousness in the portrayal.

*Badnaam Basti* (1971) was one of the earliest films produced that depicted a gay relationship. There was no copy of the film until they found a 35mm print in Berlin, last year. Incidentally, the film was co-produced by Film Finance Corporation, which went on to become the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC).

As it has been often mentioned, cinema plays a huge role in shaping the sensibilities of our society – LGBTQIA+rights and their acceptance still has to go long way in our country but on the positive side, it is taking baby steps forward and cinema can play an important part in the process.

I certainly didn't learn anything from Gendaswamy's missiles but I could feel the pain of Professor Ramchandra Siras in *Aligarh* and the predicament of Pak and Hoi, the elderly gents in *Suk Suk* – all thanks to cinema.



"In general, the IFFI vibe is awesome. The whole experience of watching good movies with people, sharing the experience, and talking about reviews is great."

Ashika Singh,  
Architect  
Goa



"I have been attending IFFI since 2016. I am here to connect with filmmakers and watch films from Iran and Afghanistan."

Umesh Deokar,  
Director  
Kolhapur



"I try to catch European movies since they won't come here otherwise. And German cinema, in particular, since it was my entry point into film festivals."

Dipti Sharma,  
Screenwriter  
Bombay



"I like to travel and watch films. This is my first year at IFFI. I am looking forward to meeting professionals from South India as well."

Soumil Tiwari,  
Assistant  
Director  
Mumbai

# THE TASTE OF PHO: CULINARY CINEMA

BY KAVITA MASTHOFF

**W**arsaw doesn't evoke feelings of multiethnicity. Nonetheless, it has a vibrant Vietnamese community, which is one of the largest minority ethnic groups in the city. Today, Warsaw is transforming into a melting pot of cultures and that is what Mariko Bobrik, a Japanese director settled in Poland, dissects so beautifully and charmingly in *The Taste of Pho* (2019).

The focus of this Polish-Vietnamese film is on the large Vietnamese community residing in Warsaw. The name of the film could mislead a few

to believe that they will embark on a gastronomic journey, but *The Taste of Pho* is not about food. Rather, the iconic Vietnamese dish represents a connection to the past, and embracing the future, and family love. The movie hopes to stimulate emotions and Mariko Bobrik wholeheartedly succeeds with this charming and thought-provoking drama.

Long (Thang Long Do) works in an unassuming Vietnamese eatery and is a master creator of Pho. He has loyal customers, who throng the eatery to savor this delicacy of beef and noodles. Long adheres to a strict daily routine and the repetitive actions of ironing his daughter's pleated skirt and preparing her lunchbox, filled with Vietnamese food, give him solace.

Maya (Lena Nguyen), the 10-year-old daughter, is battling the void left by the demise of her Polish mother. She would rather eat Polish food than the Vietnamese fare her father gives her each day for school. While Maya loves her father, she has issues revealing her feelings and letting go of the past. She worries that her father will forget her mother and shift his attention to the sultry neighbor played by Aleksandra Domanska. This prompts her to spy on the neighbor and adds a fun element to the movie. Long, on the other hand, is too steeped in his problems and doesn't notice the turmoil brewing in his daughter. The owner of the eatery decides to relocate to Vietnam and sells his business to a Polish man, who converts it to a sushi restaurant.

Long is pulled between his Vietnamese roots and his adopted country's culture. Bobrik uses unobtrusive hints to show that Long was better able to cope with this mishmash of identity while his wife was alive and now, he is clinging to the past that is long gone but it is his escape,

a safe haven. Long still believes that girls wear pleated skirts to school (like in Vietnam) and has no idea that Maya changes into a pair of jeans the moment she turns the corner. He prefers to get things repaired instead of wasting money on buying new stuff unless spare parts are not available, like what happens to his decrepit washing machine.

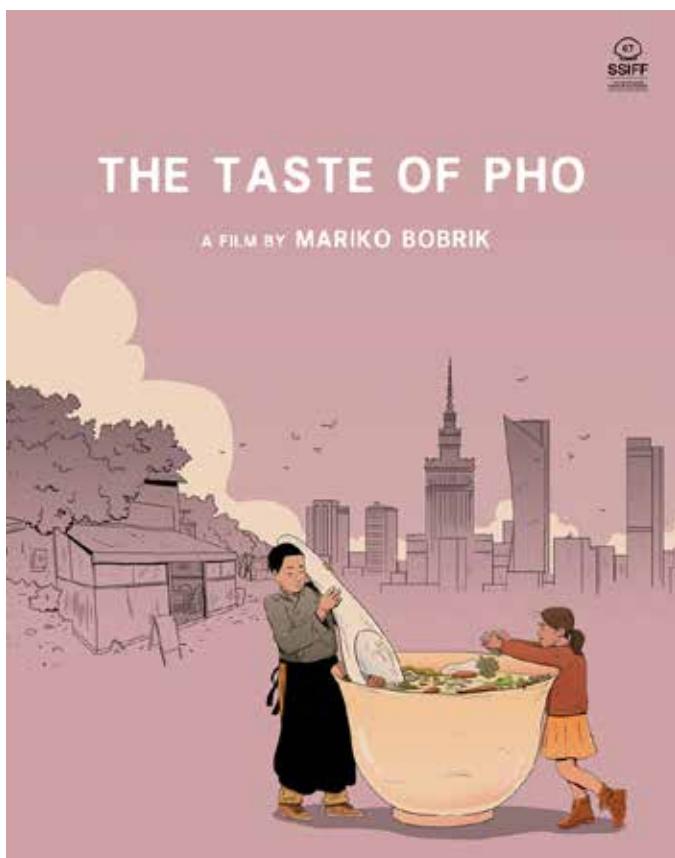
As Long struggles to learn how to make sushi and yearns for the old days of Pho, he embarks on a journey of self-discovery and acceptance. The movie gradually reveals how Long adapts and resolves the issues plaguing his family.

*The Taste of Pho* is Bobrik's first directorial venture. She ensures that the story is not overdramatized. Instead, it has a discerning storytelling touch to it. Viewers see rather than being told. Bobrik exquisitely uses objects to portray protagonists and their feelings and emotions. The warmly-lit interiors of the house convey the warmth of feelings and closeness even though the father and daughter relationship is troubled.

Instead of making it region-specific, Bobrik ensures that the film has a universal perspective so that viewers can identify with family ties and alienation, and routine of everyday life. *The Taste of Pho* takes viewers on a heartwarming journey of a family in its quest to find inner bliss and contentment.

In the end, *The Taste of Pho* beautifully showcases the ramifications of migration and how the older generation struggles with changing culture while the younger generation effortlessly embraces and slips into the culture of the country they are born in. The film score by Aki Takase does justice to the film with its enjoyable rhythm.

*The Taste of Pho* is being screened at Kala Academy (C53) at 18:00 on 19 January 2021.



There's no social distancing in the queues; there are people tugging at my shirt. There is no staff to keep people in check. Why is there no protection  
**Adrian D'Cunha,  
Retired Consultant  
Goa**



Because of COVID, this IFFI has less response. Even the government has restricted the registered number of delegates. It is good but it is limited.  
**Milan Vaingankar,  
Journalist  
Goa**



We feel safe, privileged and honored to be here. We just saw one film on autism which was enlightening.  
**Lisann Dacunha,  
Delegate  
Goa**



IFFI is too good. *In Our World*, about autistic children, showed their whole journey as well as that of their parents and others connected to them. It was great.  
**Jothi Shetty,  
Hotel Proprietor  
Mumbai**

# THE APSARA OPPORTUNITY

BY SUYASH KAMAT

Over the last 30 years or so, Madhu Apsara, a sound designer and professor, has silently played a crucial part in many landmark Indian films and documentaries. Frequently collaborating with filmmakers like Sudhir Mishra and Sriram Raghavan, Apsara's work always maintained the rare ability to keep the narrative of the film at the fore while still retaining the distinct quality of his design. *The Peacock* virtually attended his class on Sound Design & Cinema.

'How did sound come to cinema and what did it do to it?' Professor Madhu Apsara began by taking us back to the silent era of cinema. 'People were happy with silent picture. Sound wasn't a requirement.' But over 20-30 years, in the early 1900s, sound and music slowly started becoming a part of cinema. 'While the images and title cards conveyed the narrative, there was a looming question of holding the attention of audiences.' At this stage, practitioners bought in the use of music played by orchestras that travelled with the films. At times, the score travelled and different orchestras played them, primarily to cue the emotion on screen.

But much like the introduction of any new element to an already existing method, sound wasn't invited wholeheartedly by a lot of established silent era film directors, including Charlie Chaplin & Alfred Hitchcock. 'Hitchcock believed that sound had taken purity out of the cinema.' However, it's not Hitchcock's apprehension but his insight about the function of sound in the larger context of storytelling that Madhu Apsara highlighted upon. 'At some level, we are still facing the same problems they faced despite the advances in

technology and the evolution of our relationship of working with sound'. Ironically, at this point, we can also hear a few other sounds in the background of this class, which is an attempt at virtually holding the session without glitches.

But sound has evolved from that era and Madhu Apsara began exploring the history of sound through the approaches sought by directors who changed the form of cinema.

"When Hitchcock began working with sound, at times, he wasn't even bothered about what dialogue was spoken, but instead

about how it sounded." This idea of working with inflection instead of just information is what Apsara believes remains an extremely crucial aspect of how films sound. "Sound being parallel to the image has taken away the importance of what it does to the cinema."

Federico Fellini, another master of the craft, similarly wrote dialogues that had a rhythm to them. "Fellini composed music before he wrote a scene to

understand the tonality of the scene and ultimately, never even used that music in the film. He even used pitch variations to define different

characters." Building upon the context of rhythm, Apsara highlighted the work of Robert Bresson, who sought temporality in his form through the use of sound. "Bresson's idea of the image was about presenting, not representing. To him, the emotional togetherness of the sound and the picture is what created the image."

Back home, in India, Madhu Apsara spoke about the work of Ritwik Ghatak and Mani Kaul. While Ritwik Ghatak's work was sentimental, for Mani Kaul restraint was the key. These defined personal approaches to cinema are reflected in their use of sound beyond the conventional ideas of conveying information. "In *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (1960), the use of sound in certain scenes doesn't have any relation to the location. These sounds are aesthetic instruments. Sound then becomes a metaphor and conveys an emotion that is beyond the image." Mani Kaul, whose practice is associated with Bresson's approach to cinema, was equally interested in the temporality and rhythm that sound bought to the medium. "Mani would design the movement of a shot and explain its rhythm to the cinematographer by singing a phrase in the form of an alaap. This sensation and emotion of the movement were communicated only through sound. And this reflected in his cinema."

Ultimately, through the journey of the associations held by directors with sound, Madhu Apsara urged each attendee to find their personal connection with sound. "Each of us goes through sound experiences. We are always experiencing the vibrations of sound. It's the last sensation that shuts down when we go to sleep. That's when live sound and dream sound mix together. When we observe these, we realize how deeply these affect our subconscious."



**IFFI** is an opportunity to watch movies with non-commercial concepts. We saw movies without dialogues, and had to understand more by watching than listening!  
**Mark Fernandes**  
Student, Goa



For seniors it is not comfortable as we find it difficult to constantly look at phone screens for details. There must be something in printed format as well.  
**Rispal Singh Vikal,**  
Director  
Bombay



I want to watch period dramas and documentaries as I love larger-than-life realistic films, which create an empathetic connection with the audience.  
**Tharani Gosa,**  
Filmmaker  
Hyderabad



I watched *Pather Panchali* (1955) for the twentieth time, but on the big screen. I miss the crowds and having a personal hard copy of the film schedule.  
**Sobia Kudtarkar,**  
Actor  
Goa



*'Tim's just masking his territory'*

# “YOU NEED TO HAVE CONVICTION AND BELIEVE IN YOUR STORY TO MAKE IT”

BY CHRISTAL FERRAO

**E**very year, the selection committee faces the difficult task of shortlisting films for cinema lovers. This year we see some budding young talent presenting their debut work at IFFI. *Oru Paathira Swapnam Pole* (*Like A Midnight Dream*) is about a mother who is diagnosed with cancer, and simultaneously discovers a nude video of her daughter on her laptop. It focuses on concurrent conflicts in the life of a mother, who has to deal with her medical condition and question the way to control and protect her daughter.

The film is shot in Kochi and portrays the private lives of the characters. Informing *The Peacock* about the concept, director, Sharan Venugopal, said that he doesn't like to share space often with people and is a man of few words. He connected with a short story titled *Vaibhavam* written by his friend Susmesh Chandroth about exploring kinship ties in a private space. He chanced upon this and made the film as his diploma project as a student at Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute, Kolkata. He is grateful to his mentor, Putul Mehmood, from Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute for her guidance during the film. He took a group of his close confidants onboard. He was skeptical about the release of the film due to the pandemic but is delighted to be a part of IFFI. He is also happy that South Indian actor Nadiya Moidu played the role of the mother in the film.

A significant aspect of the making of the film was that it brought young filmmakers from different states together to produce a regional Malayalam film. Sharan is from Kerala, Kaustabh Mukherjee from Bengal is the cinematographer, Jyoti Swaroop Panda from Odisha did the editing, Prathik Sonkar from Madhya Pradesh worked on sound, and Prateek Bagi from Punjab is the producer. “Language doesn't play a role in making a film. We need to understand the concept and be thorough with executing the project,” said Prateek.

Speaking about portraying two women characters as a male filmmaker, Sharan said, “A filmmaker has to learn to be sensitive to understand characters

irrespective of gender. Mainstream cinema, unfortunately, conforms to the stereotype of using the male gaze rather than depict the sensitive side. I wanted to make a film in a sympathetic way. I have been inspired by the work of Polish director, Krzysztof Kieslowski, who has made films on women despite being a male filmmaker. We need more representation from women in cinema and I hope young women are inspired to make more films,” Sharan said.

The film also deals with the conflicting relationships between parents and children. Speaking about this, Sharan reflected that in our culture, it is common for parents to want to control the lives of their children when the latter seeks independence. Yet in

the film, the mother is a liberal woman who encourages open conversations despite wanting to be conservative and assertive. The film encourages such open conversations.

A great part of the film is based in a closed setting, a house with few shots outdoors. “While working in a private setting, you need to understand the mood of the scene and the way you have to communicate the same. I planned the movement accordingly”, Kaustabh said.

Sharan plans to work more on films that explore interpersonal relationships. “You need to have conviction and believe in your story to make it”, he said.



Photo by Assavri Kulkarni



Illustration: Pakhi Sen

## “FREELY INSPIRED”

BY DR. LUIS DIAS

**T**hose are the words used by famed Spanish filmmaker, director, screenwriter, producer, and former actor Pedro Almodóvar to qualify his film, *The Human Voice* (2020), an adaptation of the French poet, playwright, novelist, designer, filmmaker, visual artist and critic Jean Cocteau's 1930 play *Une Voix Humaine*.

The challenge Almodóvar faced was turning a play lasting around 20 minutes or so into a feature-length film, and making it relevant to a contemporary audience. Cocteau's play is set around just one woman on stage speaking on the telephone to a lover (invisible, inaudible) at the other end of the line who has decided to leave her to marry another woman. In his introduction to the script, Cocteau admitted that the play was written in response to criticism from his actresses that his works were too “writer/director-dominated”, leaving them little opportunity to give vent to their histrionic range more fully.

The play has already been adapted by Roberto Rossellini (*L'Amore*, 1948, the second segment of which, *Una Voce Umana* is based on Cocteau's work), and even an opera (1958) by the great French pianist-composer François Poulenc that Cocteau loved very much. Other film adaptations include a television version starring Ingrid Bergman.

Almodóvar wrote a new script, “freely inspired” by Cocteau of course. And, he chose Scottish narrator and actress Tilda Swinton for the singular role. He felt an “exceptional chemistry” with Swinton, translating from Spanish that they



were “condemned to be friends.” To Swinton, despite their different origins and backgrounds, they share a common language and “culture of cinema.” So when Almodóvar wished to draw out a certain emotion from her at a particular point, he would use cinematic references and metaphors, and she would get it at once.

In retrospect, even though it was conceptualized before the Coronavirus pandemic struck, Almodóvar feels *The Human Voice* (which is also his English-language debut; all his other formidable work is in Spanish) has even more relevance as it depicts the seclusion,

isolation, and loneliness of someone living alone, shut off from the rest of the world. “She's almost imprisoned, isn't she?” he said through a translator via Zoom interview to Eugene Hernandez, Director of the New York Film Festival. “It turned out, just by coincidence, to be a metaphor for the lockdown in the pandemic. Reality often slips in through the cracks of what you're doing.”

Almodóvar calls this film “a mix between the essence of theatre with the essence of cinema”, far from realism or naturalism. The film title is apt, as the only real element in it which guides the viewer, the continuity element of the film is “solely and exclusively” Swinton's voice. The setting is “ghostly”, as Swinton's character is “almost a ghost herself.”

To Swinton, the tension in the original Cocteau play, between the protagonist wanting to tell her once-lover everything about her feelings to show him her pain on the one hand, and wanting to create a complete fabrication, on the other, and doing that on the telephone, which allows one to hear but not see the other was intriguing to her; the fine line between “inarticulacy and articulacy.” Almodóvar's text is also about that same “dance”, that same “performance”; after all, the character is an actress. It (being jilted) is a predicament a lot of us 21 and above have lived through, says Swinton. “Everyone who has been abandoned is already in a soap opera.” The “twist and turn of sincerity and deception” makes it a rich text in Swinton's view.

Almodóvar compares the sentimental epic nature of the abandoned woman's feelings, the heightened emotions that

her character has to the musical style popular in his culture, the ‘bolero’; “the exaggerated way of living your emotions, the ups and downs, from one extreme to the other, from feeling blissfully happy to feeling dreadful.” It calls for an actress with a whole variety of registers, and he found this in Swinton.

Spanish composer Alberto Iglesias has collaborated with Almodóvar in all his films after their first partnership in *La flor de mi secreto* (*The Flower of My Secret*, 1995), the last nine of Almodóvar's 22 feature-length films. That's saying a lot, as before that Almodóvar has worked with the legendary Ennio Morricone (*Átame!*, 1989) and Ryûichi Sakamoto (*High Heels*, 1991).

Film fans will also have heard the music of Iglesias in other, non-Almodóvarian films, classics such as *The Constant Gardener* (2005), *The Kite Runner* (2007), and *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (2011). *The Human Voice* has a 100% approval rating on the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, with a weighted average of 9/10. When asked some years ago for the secret of the success of his films, Almodóvar had replied, “It's important not to forget that films are made to entertain. That's the key.”

With such a stellar combination of collaborators, *The Human Voice* promises to do exactly that.

Dr. Luis Dias is a physician, musician, writer and founder of music education charity Child's Play India Foundation [www.childsplayindia.org](http://www.childsplayindia.org). He blogs at [www.luisdias.wordpress.com](http://www.luisdias.wordpress.com).

# THE MATURITY OF MIXED EMOTIONS

BY DR RACHANA PATNI

**E**motional intelligence is an area of research and application poised to grow even further in importance in influencing our social world. An essential building block of emotional intelligence is emotional literacy, which is linked to and helps with another important aspect of emotional intelligence, self-awareness.

I work with (willing) others on their emotional literacy because it turns out that we are often not exactly on point in *feeling* what it is we are feeling and we often turn to *knowing* what it is that we are feeling, and make several more mistakes of omission and commission in gauging. If we go by how we are *behaving* to get a sense of what we are feeling, the mistakes may become even more prominent as there are many diversions between feeling and action. To share a common example, children may behave as if they are angry when the feeling they are struggling with is that of sadness. As a parent, I often get the chance to experience this, and I am aware that I have used anger to save myself from feeling the other emotions that make me feel a lot more vulnerable. Anger, therefore, becomes a good diversion tactic and fear is often the motivation behind those diversions.

Our engagement with our emotions

is a creative undertaking and while it can be pretty accurate, it is also being constructed narratively, and therefore it is reasonably open to re-storying. The re-storying is best done with the intention of clearing out any emotional debris from our unprocessed emotional backlog, which may corrupt our experience of our feelings in the present moment.

What are the ways in which we may corrupt what we are feeling? Most of the time, we bring unprocessed sediments of our past experiences into the present. In doing so, we let our past experiences impact our perception, physiological reaction, feeling, and behavior, thereby creating a situation where our under-processed past begets us our present experiences. We consistently recreate patterns of relationships by being caught in this infinite loop.

What are these sediments of the past that slip into our present? How do we carry them? I often find myself saying 'your baggage is not you'. I do this to

myself too. It is our emotional backlog that becomes powerful in informing the way we present ourselves to our present challenges and opportunities. Clearing this baggage is our own responsibility, one that we can take up more judiciously when we have more maturity. The way I employ the idea of maturity is that when we revisit our emotional backlog to clear it, we call on it with mental and emotional resources and capacities that we did not have at the time when we started creating our baggage and backlog.

*Inside/Outside* (2015) is an animated film that takes up the baton of emotional literacy and it does this in an interesting way. There are so many concepts from neuropsychology of emotions that form the characterization in the film. The film stars are our basic emotions of Joy, Sadness, Fear, Disgust, and Anger. The film also employs a stressful event, that of a house move, which is one of the top three stressful things we can undertake

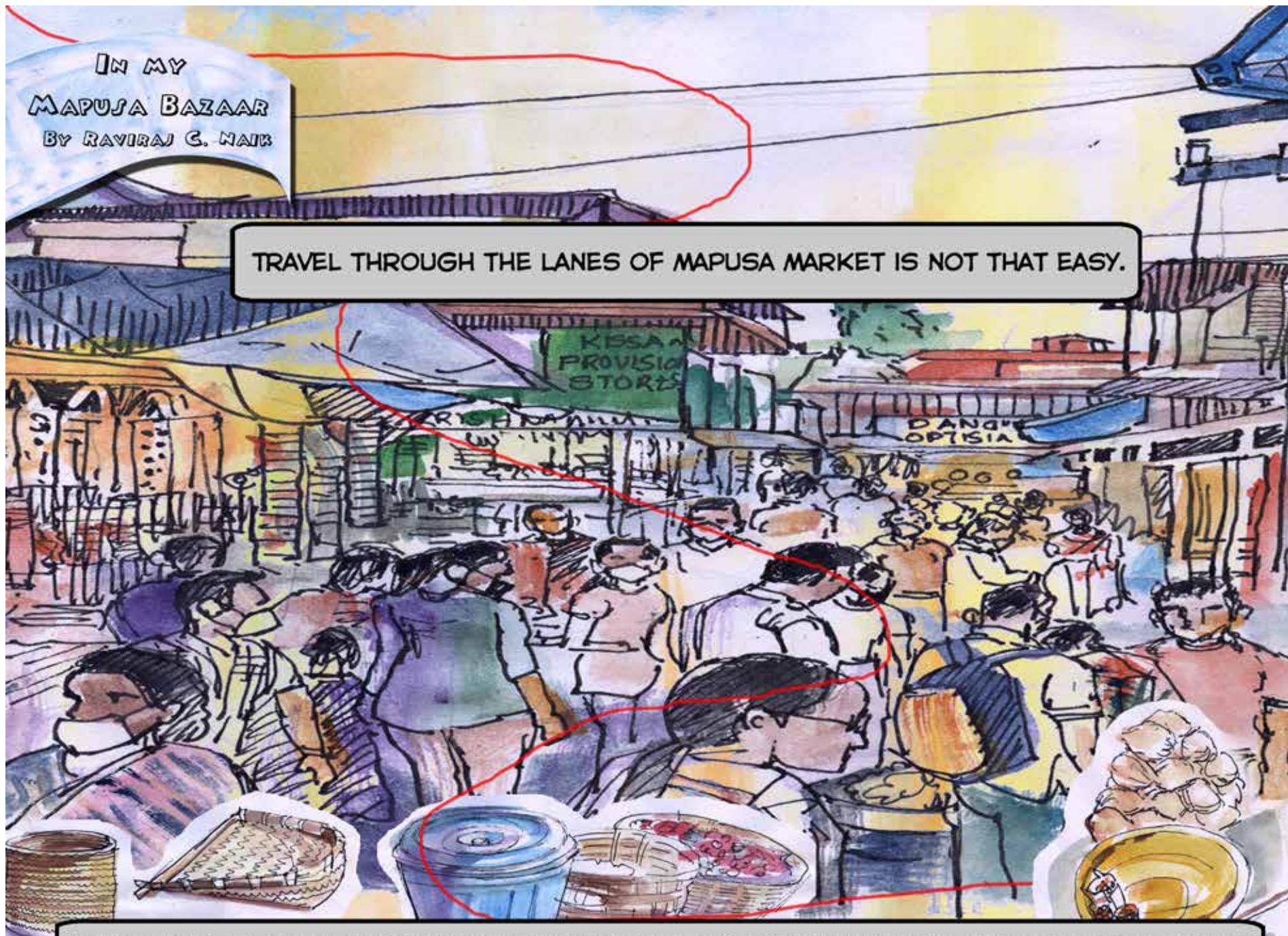
in life, to explore the life of the feelings of Riley, a young 11-year-old girl. The feelings begin as discreet and intent on working on their own agenda and then as the story progresses, the feelings begin to work together to help Riley navigate something new and difficult. The film ends with Riley's feelings getting a new and expanded console where they can participate in many more permutations and combinations of feelings, creating a vibrant canvas for Riley's life. Given that Riley is pre-pubescent at the point of the story, it is likely that this film will provide a great opportunity for a sequel that delves into the newer and more intense emotions of the teenager.

While we cannot predict a sequel, we can often take responsibility for the sequels in our own lives. We can then also understand our prequels differently, which is amazing!

Opening up to mixed emotions is just the beginning of our expanded console of feelings. I work to co-hold that possibility with enthusiasm and grace and it is a beautiful process, even though we dare not go there without tissues!

Dr. Rachana Patni is a Panjim-based leadership consultant who works globally. She is the founder of The Centre of ME and writes on emotional wellbeing and mental health.





I FELT LIKE A ' BEBDO ' (DRUNKARD) TRYING TO MAINTAIN MY BALANCE AMONGST THE CHAOS.

IT REMINDED ME OF LORNA'S SONG... BEBDO

BEBDO ZALO KOSLO, POILO BORO ASLO,  
KOSLO MHUNNON DENVCHAR SAIBA , YEUN TACHER BOSLO  
SORO PION EK DIS MOZO, KHODDO PASSUN TASLO..

*Bebdo song was featured in the konkani film  
Nachom-ia Kumpasar (Let's dance to the rhythm)  
which was released in the year 2015.*





