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WORLDVIEWS (2022) 1–14

WORLDVIEWS

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Review Essay



Ecocritical Analysis of Classics by Three Indian Film Maestros

An Extended Film Review

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1 Introduction

Satyajit Ray is the only Indian filmmaker who has received the prestigious Academy award and India's highest civilian honor of Bharat Ratna for his lifetime achievements and contributions to the cinema. Although he made dozens of films, we review only those with natural elements playing essential roles in shaping the plot. After a few of Ray's films, we look at another maestro, Ritwik Ghatak's one film, which prominently features a drying river and its impact on people. Finally, we complete our trinity by reviewing a few movies by Mrinal Sen that show the conflicts between the people of the natural world in villages and those from the modern world. Each film is rooted in Indian settings, yet the themes they evoke are universal and universally accoladed with awards and recognition worldwide.

2 *Pather Panchali* (Song of the Little Road) (Apu Trilogy 1)
(Satyajit Ray, 1955)

Ray launched his filmmaking career, which won international acclaim and set Ray on the firm-footing from the first step. This movie is a saga of a poor Brahmin scholar who cannot make his ends meet in a remote Bengali village. In this painful struggle, he loses his daughter and his mother. It ends with their decision to leave their village and move to Varanasi to search for better job prospects and living conditions. Some of the scenes are brilliant in terms of cinematography, especially the children playing in the rain and raindrops falling on the flowers, Apu's mother trying to close the broken door of their home, her refusal of food to her mother-in-law, and her dragging of her daughter with her hair to punish a minor theft among many other sequences. This rural family's slow, rustic natural world is jolted into action by a few key events. First, as the young kids have their first encounter with a train passing by outside of their village, their old aunt passes away as if the ancient world is crumbling with the onslaught of modernity into their little world. Second, the family welcomes the monsoon rain with the Hindu ritual, *Punyi Pukur Brata*,¹ a vow for the sake of sacred merit, in which the children dig up a small pond and wish to imbibe tolerance and endurance from Mother Earth. However, the young daughter is soaked wet in the downpour and falls seriously ill. The benevolent nature thus suddenly turns baneful as the powerful monsoon rain destroys their cottage and kills the daughter. Ray's camera and sound effects and the expressions of his actors leave memorable impressions on the audience. After performing religious rituals at a nearby village, the father returns with some money. Still, the parents and the son soon migrate from their ancestral village to a faraway but famous pilgrimage city of Varanasi, where they hope to live better. This final scene, in many ways, anticipates millions of climate refugees that are now appearing all over the globe from the US southern border to European countries to India and beyond.

1 <http://www.filmsufi.com/2013/08/pather-panchali-satyajit-ray-1955.html> (accessed Jan 12, 2022).

3 *Aparajito* (The Unvanquished) (Apu Trilogy: Part 2) (Satyajit Ray, 1957)

In this sequel to *Pather Panchali*, Ray traces the migration of Apu and his parents as they settle in an urban setting. This film starts with stunning visuals across the pilgrimage town of Varanasi's riverfronts, streets, and temple towers inundated with humans, monkeys, cows, and pigeons everywhere. One of the talents of Ray which strikes us immediately, is his brilliant cinematography. Even in the black and white shades, he successfully captures various moods of the characters and locales of Varanasi with fantastic clarity and depth. Apu's father is much happier here with his stable job of performing multiple rituals as if the only place where a Brahmin can make a living is a famous pilgrim town. Apu's mother is shown to do the household chores as in *Pather Panchali*. In one of the scenes, their neighbor makes sexual advances towards her, and Ray superbly captures the way she retaliates to that.

Ray conveys all the emotions with subtle finesse in the usual explicit or graphic form. Another scene worth mentioning is the untimely death of Apu's father. His last few moments are poignantly depicted. One feels as if one is witnessing losing someone's life. And immediately after his death, pigeons are shown flying over Varanasi's buildings suggesting "flying off of vital air (*Prāna-Pakheru*)." The same water that is sacred to millions of people appears to be the dying father's last wish, although it is not clear if the pollution of the river is the cause of his death.² Apu and his mother go to their distant uncle's village after this tragic event. Soon Apu rejects the ritualistic career and religious learning that brought only hardships to his father. Apu's mother, in this title role, courageously faces life's difficulties and sends Apu to Kolkata to give him a Westernized education. Apu works in a small printing press at night and goes to school during the day. Finally, she passes away, waiting for Apu, who is busy with his exams in the city. Apu returns to the village after his exams only to repent for the loss of his mother. The divide between nature and culture seems to be completed here. The original family that was an integral part of monsoon rains, rivers, and animals, is now reduced to an urban bred protagonist who can only occasionally interact with the old world of flora and fauna. Modern urban people have abandoned their Mother Earth, Mother Nature, symbolized by Apu's biological mother, who must die alone.

2 I came across only one critic that suggested the contaminated water of Ganges as the cause of Apu's father's death: <http://www.filmsufi.com/2013/08/aparajito-satyajit-ray-1956.html> (accessed Jan 10, 2022).

4 *Apur Sansar (The World of Apu) (Apu Trilogy: Part 3)*
(Satyajit Ray, 1959)

In this final part of the Trilogy, Apu is now a grown-up young man looking for a job in Kolkata, living in a small apartment. He writes a novel and discusses its plot with his old childhood friend. Both think Apu has seeds of greatness, but he could not achieve great heights since he had to abandon his education due to a lack of financial support after his mother's death. Nevertheless, Apu keeps struggling with his life and does not get frustrated. His friend accidentally takes him to a wedding where Apu has to marry a woman, although he is neither mentally prepared nor knows this family. After their marriage, they return to Kolkata, and Apu gets some petty job. The romantic chemistry between them looks very natural on the screen. Apu's wife gives birth to a premature son and dies. Apu is heartbroken and slaps his brother-in-law at the news in rage. He abandons his home and destroys his incomplete novel as well. He roams from place to place to try to forget his departed wife. His son is raised by Apu's father-in-law, who gets Apu's letter from time to time. From one of the letters, his old friend finds out that Apu is now working in a coal mine and decides to go there and meet him. He persuades Apu to come back and meet his son. Apu rejects his son because, for him, his son is his wife's killer. In the climax, Apu finally returns and meets his son. His son fails to accept him and, after much cajoling, goes with him. Thus, the saga of the Apu Trilogy finally ends on a happy note, but only after we have seen almost half a dozen tragic deaths, primarily due to poverty or health problems. Collectively, the films constitute an epic portrayal of helpless humans struggling to survive in the most challenging situations brought on by nature and its fury in some instances.

5 *Jalsaghar (The Music Room) (Satyajit Ray, 1958)*

This film is a tragic introspective story of a wealthy landlord, gradually losing his glory, money, and family due to his obsession with music. It is a rich depiction of human envy and pride. While the protagonist keeps losing his money in concerts, soirées, and other pompous events, his neighbor keeps getting richer. The changing times instill a strong sense of insecurity in the erstwhile wealthy landlord. Finally, he loses his last possessions and life due to his nostalgic passions. This suicidal obsession can be compared with Yudhishtir's passion for gambling in the great Indian epic, the *Mahabharata*, through which he loses all his possessions. However, unlike Mahabharata, there is no divine hero or evil villain to save or deceive. Before his death, he toasts to his great ancestors only

to see cockroaches crawling on their grand portraits. Similarly, his elephant and horse are dusted by the neighbor's trucks, yet another statement by Ray of the ensuing modernity on the old rustic lifestyle that once reveled in calm music and a serene environment rich with animals and birds.

6 *Devi (The Goddess)* (Satyajit Ray, 1960)

This film signifies the progressive ideals of Ray. In a sharp attack on mindless superstitions and rituals, Ray portrays the plight of a housewife who suddenly becomes the goddess because her father-in-law saw her divine image in his dream. The staring eyes of the heroine convey the torture she is undergoing quite adequately. Her husband encourages his wife to reject this new goddess role. But the wife is burdened with the feelings of people around her, and her convictions are too weak to challenge their faith. In the end, when she cannot rescue her nephew with her supposedly miraculous powers, she runs away, fearing the outburst of the people around her. The film is a strong critique of society's treatment of feminine energy. As Vandana Shiva has noted, the feminine side of the society and the earth receive similar unjust oppression from masculine forces. Even religious reverence can turn to exploitation and harassment if mindless superstitions overtake it.

7 *Teen Kanya (Three Daughters)* (Satyajit Ray, 1961)

This anthology of three short films is based on Tagore's short stories. In the first story, *The Postmaster*, we encounter the tragic end of a brief relationship between a young girl and a postmaster in a remote Bengali village. After joining his new duty, the postmaster first keeps his distance from this girl but eventually teaches her reading and writing and basic sanitary skills. But after his illness there, he decides to resign and return to his native town Kolkata. This news shocks the girl, and she stays away from the postmaster. The helpless eyes of the girl convey the sentiments without having to utter any lengthy dialogues. The divide between the rural and the urban is too wide to be bridged by any spontaneous bond. This dichotomy has only grown deeper over the decades, highlighting the city dwellers' distance from the ecosystems of people who primarily live in villages and derive their sustenance from their natural surroundings.

The second story, *Monihara* (The Lost Jewels), begins in front of an abandoned mansion on the banks of a river. Although shot inside the mansion,

nature remains consistently present with the flowers, birds chirping, and glimpses of the rivers from windows. The film is unique in Ray's rapporteur with its overarching presence of extra-human characters such as spirits and ghosts, a potential reason Ray never released this part of the film for the foreign audience. The YouTube version also does not have English subtitles.³ The uncanniness of the plot comes alive when a sudden fire burns down their jute plantation. Still, the female protagonist refuses to part her jewelry to help the family recover from this disaster. The deranged human greed for materialistic possessions knows no boundaries even as the world around us is burning and perishing at a faster pace than ever before.

The third and final story *Samapti* (The Conclusion), is of a young man returning to his village after his education and marrying a childish young lady. After their wedding, during their first night together, the new bride runs away to play with her pets and friends. When the husband wakes up and does not find his wife there, he gets very distressed and leaves the village immediately with a note to reform herself. The wife is heartbroken, and this new separation changes her completely. She starts to learn reading, writing, cooking, and other household chores. She slowly develops into a mature lady. When she learns that her husband is back, she is elated and writes a note to accept her in the climax. And thus, both of them unite again. Here again, the female protagonist, having grown up in her village with forests and rivers, is hard-pressed to "civilize" herself and is tamed after her marriage as if feminine power and mother earth must bow down to masculine civilizing force; otherwise, they remain irrelevant for the modern society.

8 *Ashani Sanket* (Distant Thunder) (Satyajit Ray, 1973)

This film is based on the 1943 famine of Bengal in which more than five million people died. This manufactured famine occurred as the food was directed to the military during World War II. The skyrocketing price of rice, the essential food ingredient of Bengal, depicts the severity of the situation. As the famine turns severe, people are forced to eat from pond grass and other wild fruits. One of the most heartbreaking scenes is a young girl being forced into a sexual relationship to earn food. After almost five decades after this film was made, natural disasters such as droughts and famines are becoming increasingly common worldwide, from the US to Africa to India, making this poignant film more

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2LbejQkHBk> (accessed Jan 15, 2022).

relevant. The film is a stark reminder of nature and climate making or breaking culture and society.

9 *Ganashatru (An Enemy of the People)* (Satyajit Ray, 1990)

In this film, an honest doctor initially treated as an enemy of the people eventually gets noticed as he continues to spread awareness about the contaminated water potentially spreading epidemics across the town. The film seems to have anticipated much of the debate around climate change in today's America. One set of people denies the overwhelming scientific or even commonsensical observations about the impact of climate change across the world. The film has a few characters who keep denying contaminated water being distributed at a temple with serious health consequences. Mahatma Gandhi had these cautionary words against such practices (1909:41), "The holy places of India have become unholy. Formerly, people went to these places with very great difficulty. Generally, therefore, only the real devotees visited such places. Nowadays rogues visit them in order to practice their roguery."

10 *Agantuk (The Stranger)* (Satyajit Ray, 1991)

Agantuk was Ray's swan song—his last film before his death. The plot revolves around an Indian anthropologist who has lived in a western country for 35 years and returns to Kolkata to visit his niece and family. Both the guest and the hosts have never seen each other, so the hosts keep suspecting the identity of their new guest. They try to investigate the host's identity through various means, such as a lawyer and an actor interrogating and probing the guest. Eventually, aggravated by the persistent skepticism of his hosts, the uncle leaves their home. He goes back to his original love—anthropological research with native tribes in a nearby Bengali village.

Meanwhile, his hosts realize their mistake and rush to find the uncle to bring him back to their home. In the end, the uncle gives all his ancestral money to his niece and leaves them amazed by his kindness. Throughout the plot, in his characteristic silent and subtle method, Roy exposes the hollowness and shallowness of modern society. Contrariwise, the anthropologist serves as our bridge and our window to the world of the indigenous people across the natural world. Their grounded simplicity is what Ray keeps looking for in his entire career, and this is his parting message as he leaves the world also. Ray died within a few months after the release of this film—his befitting message to the

world was to take inspiration from the indigenous premodern societies do not distrust or avoid them.

11 Analysis

One of the most distinct qualities of Ray's filmmaking was his subtlety in portraying all human emotions and relations. He indirectly conveys the sentiments powerfully, keeping them as close to reality as possible hence he was often compared with Italian Neorealist cinema. Ray was an expert in extracting the best performances from his crew, both in front of the camera and behind. A common theme in Ray's films was his characters succumbing to the forces of nature and destiny. Rarely do they strive hard and fight back to take charge of their lives. In the Apu Trilogy, all the main characters are victims of natural circumstances, including calamities and diseases. In *The Music Room*, the landlord loses all his glory, family, and his own life due to his irresistible passions. In *The Goddess*, a helpless housewife fails to reject or ignore the responsibility thrown on her by her family. In *Three Daughters*, the postmaster is forced to resign because of his homesickness and health problems. The husband runs away from his childish wife in another anthology story. *Distant Thunder* is the most tragic real-life portrayal of great famine, and its human victims are helpless against a human-made disaster. *The Stranger* has the host family under the spell of their doubts, fail to learn or even accept their anthropologist uncle's deep insights about indigenous people and their cultures.

In conclusion, Ray's characters rarely emerge victorious against prevailing circumstances. In one way or the other, they end up behaving as any normal human being would do, and they don't rise to the challenge to emerge in larger-than-life kind of roles. Critics rightly called Ray a humanist director for this brilliant portrayal of ordinary humans. The trials of these commoners have appealed to Ray, and he has captured all their emotions and situation both by his powerful camera and by his introspective imaginations. The power and awe of nature, both by its elements and the destiny of individual characters, comes across vividly in the films we reviewed. His many other films portrayed urban people, and their lives and natural elements make only a marginal presence in tune with the times after the 1970s specifically. However, his last couple of films again brought the environment to the forefront. While his earlier films celebrated the beauty and power of nature, his final films lamented how far modern society had already moved away from nature even in the 1980s.

12 *Titas Ekti Nadir Naam* (A River Called Titas) (Ritwik Ghatak, 1973)

This film is based on a perishing fisherman community in Bangladesh. The story of a few characters is woven around the overall social theme on the banks of the river Titas. The film contains an overriding humanism reminiscent of Satyajit Ray's films. However, a noticeable difference is the more graphic portrayal of sabotage and violence than the subtler portrayal in the latter's films. The film ends with the heroine's hopeful eyes. While commenting on the novel (Mallabharman 1993) on which the film is based, Amitav Ghosh (2017:63) notes,

[T]he rest of the landscape is pushed farther and farther into the background until at last, we have a setting that can carry a narrative. The setting becomes, in a sense, a self-contained ecosystem, with the river as the sustainer both of life and of the narrative. The impetus of the novel, and its poignancy, come from the Titas itself: it is the river's slow drying up that directs the lives of the characters.

The novel and the film based on this novel can be considered one of the earliest plots based on a climatic event—the drying of the river Titas. Diamond Oberoi Vahali (2020:103) notes that the film's plot is loosely based on a legend from the Sanskrit text, *Shiva Purana*, and the *Manasamangal* genre of Bengali medieval epics. Unlike the myth in which Behula, the wife, succeeds in saving her husband Lakshinder, the film's protagonists fail differently.

Ghatak thus develops the legend of Behula and Lakshinder but depicts the powerlessness of humans to appease the gods (in this case represented through nature and the community at large), unlike the legend in which Behula is able to appease the goddess Mansa. The ultimate powerlessness of humans is portrayed in the film in the depiction of the drying up of the river Titas which eventually changes its course. The film thus reflects the failure of the mythic when it actually confronts the real. In *Titas Ekti Nadir Nam*, despite Rajar Jhi's and Basanti's complete devotion and commitment, life is not restored rather everything disintegrates, though the film yet ends in hope. Ghatak thus codes the contemporary in the mythic, in order to speak to people from within their primordial psychic configurations.

Vahali's insights match well with my analysis of Ray's films mentioned earlier. In these films, nature remains unvanquished, and humans succumb to its indefatigable presence throughout the plots.

13 *Bhuvan Shome* (Earth Moon) (Mrinal Sen, 1969)

Bhuvan Shome (1969) was the first film that brought several awards and recognition for Mrinal Sen. It was also his first Hindi film, although he had made several in Bengali for almost a decade. It is widely regarded as one of the milestone films (Majumdar 2021). However, like earlier critics such as Amladi (2000), the most recent academic study of Sen's films by Rochona Majumdar (2021) failed to analyze the movie from an ecological perspective despite nature being a dominant character in the entire movie. The film opens with a thoroughly urban-bred government officer moving from Bengal to a Gujarati village to develop his newfound interest in hunting birds. As his body is shaking in a bullock cart, we see him enjoying his frolicking in the rustic idyllic natural ambiance. Sen contrasts the close-up shots of moving trains with horses and bullocks to highlight the urban-rural divide. The entire route is portrayed with images and sounds of water bodies, trees, villages, temples, a world transcending the barriers of nature vs. culture and humans vs. animals. The amateur hunter is finally stopped and schooled by a village girl who minces no words in highlighting the violence in hunting and eating meat. She even changes his costume and makes him wear typical rural clothes casting off his hunting costume resembling a British officer's costume. Soon after, the landscape also changes to the backdrop of the desert. Together they succeed in capturing a bird, but he loses interest in killing or capturing any bird and gifts it to her. Just as he pardons the bird, he also pardons his subordinate, who is the fiancée of the girl. The rendezvous with the village belle thus transforms the strict disciplinarian British-looking officer into a kind, light-hearted man, which is how Satyajit Ray also summarized the film, "Big Bad Bureaucrat Reformed by Rustic Belle."⁴

14 *Mrigayaa* (The Royal Hunt) (Mrinal Sen, 1976)

As the credits roll, several villagers energetically scream in what turns out to be their failed attempt at deflecting invasive wild boars that keep destroying their crops. Soon, we realize that the exploitative landlord is another threat they face daily, the double whammy that all marginalized and impoverished people have—the threats from nature and those from crony capitalistic forces. As

4 <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/bengali/movies/news/bhuvan-shome-why-this-mrinal-sen-classic-can-teach-you-a-lot-about-self-isolation-and-social-distancing/articleshow/75049424.cms> (Accessed Jan 16, 2022).

a British officer enters the village looking for a game-hunt, villagers enthusiastically welcome him, expecting that he will rid them of the wild boars, alluding to the clever colonial game that the British Raj played, making false promises only to usurp entire India eventually in the 18th century.

The protagonist, a Santhal tribal man, dutifully hunts a deer and carries it to the British officer's bungalow just when the officer is shown riding a horse. Both the men appear with their respective animals, the former under the weight of the injured deer and the latter reveling in his power over animals and other humans. As Santhal gifts him the deer, another servant digs out a human skull from his front yard, an apt metaphor is placed in the hands of the British officer, the hunt has been happening over a long time, and it continues in the plot of the film. The village headman similarly recalls another past event in which a few Santhal men had revolted against the British and against the landlord, which also weaves into a contemporary Santhal rebel who indulges in the guerilla attacks on the British treasury. Meanwhile, the protagonist Santhal kills the landlord to avenge the kidnap of his wife. The British court, in turn, gives the death sentence to the Santhal man. The film ends with a call, "Stand up, Stand up. Remember the martyrs who loved life and freedom." The film is a tribute to Santhal culture showing their dances, music, weddings, forests, costumes, performances, and above all, their harmonious co-existence with their natural surroundings. It is worth remembering Mahatma Gandhi's alarming words about the tribal communities (1909:40),

the English and you and I would hesitate to sleep where they sleep. Strength lies in absence of fear, not in the quantity of flesh and muscle we may have on our bodies. Moreover, I must remind you who desire Home Rule that, after all, the Bhils, the Pindaris, and the Thugs are our own countrymen. To conquer them is your and my work. So long as we fear our own brethren, we are unfit to reach the goal.

15 *Aakaler Sandhane (In Search of Famine) (Mrinal Sen, 1981)*

Aakaler Sandhane (1981) starts with film artists browsing through pictures of the Bengal famine of 1943 during the British Raj, in which 5 million people had died of starvation. Even as they browse photos of malnourished victims, they joke, smoke, and plan for their next big meal; natural disasters serve their voyeuristic pleasures for urban casual visitors to the village. This urban-rural divide plays out in the entire film. The female protagonist recalls how people would starve but not sell their land, reminding the viewers of other films, such

as *Dharti Ke Lal* (Children of the Earth, 1946) and *Do Bigha Zamin* (Two Bighas of Land, 1953) with similar instances. In the climax, the film crew is forced to wind up their shooting as the tension arises when the director tries hiring a local woman to play the role of a prostitute desperate to feed her family starving from the famine. This subplot resembles a similar one in Satyajit Ray's film *Ashani Sanket* (reviewed above) and coincided with the village's contemporary reality, which is the main point of Mrinal Sen's film. In an interview after the film won an award, Sen regretted "using" the rural setting for his movie but not being able to do anything constructive for the upliftment of the village.⁵ One of the dialogues from the film summarizes the conflict successfully, "They came to take pictures of a famine and sparked off another famine." (Mukhopadhyay 2009:147). Sen received the maximum number of awards for this masterful handling of the urban-rural divide and overlap of past and present famine-like conditions of Indian villages.

16 *Genesis* (Mrinal Sen, 1986)

Genesis is a timeless tale of two men and a woman, which could have been the chronicle of months, years, and decades (Mukhopadhyay 1995:41). The film was shot at a ruined desert village near Jaisalmer in Rajasthan. It was an ideal necropolis—the graveyard of civilization (Mukhopadhyay 1995:169)—which was destroyed after the film was shot. As if the misfortune of the place was to be connected with the film itself, Sen was brutally injured at the culmination of the film's shooting. To this day, the film could not be shown commercially in India due to the lack of interest by the distributors even though it evoked strong reactions from film critics and scholars, including Gayatri Spivak (1993) and Sumita Chakravarty (2000). As the film's title suggests, it has several instances of destruction and reconstruction of models of civilization and the birth of humankind with an overarching figure representing God, either helping or controlling them. As is Sen widely known, the film also has its share of Marxist underpinnings, e.g., exploitation of underprivileged class and corrupting influence of capitalism.

For the first time after *Bhuvan Shome*, Sen also invoked nature more directly in this film. The film references a severe drought, a devastating flood, and an epidemic and is interweaved into two extremes of the desert (life-destroyer) and water (life-sustainer). Although Deepankar Mukhopadhyay (1995:175)

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cc8M7ef39os> (accessed Jan 13, 2022).

compares the presence of a woman also with the water, I would like to draw her comparison with Mother Earth. Life is harmoniously sustained as long as humans are grateful and respectful to her and live in harmony without selfishness and greed. Still, as human vices take over, the earth is destroyed, and so is her sustaining capability. Another comment upon mechanization is the two male protagonists throwing stones at the passing by aircraft and declaring that they are entirely “free” and not “slaves” of anybody even though at the end of the film, again due to their human weaknesses, their life is destroyed by huge machinery. The final comment by the woman (symbolizing the earth) to the two men nicely summarizes Sen’s critique of human exploitation of the planet: “We three became one, but today, you want to exert your rights. You have become my proprietor. I can see that your enemy is not outside—your enemy is within you.” As Sen remarked to his actor on the sets, the land indeed was the protagonist of the film (Mukhopadhyay 1995:177)

17 Concluding Analysis

In his groundbreaking non-fiction work *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and The Unthinkable*, the prominent novelist Amitav Ghosh first laments the virtual indifference of contemporary fiction writers in the context of climate crisis (2017:3) and then goes on to note the potential power of fiction in the context of climate crisis (2017:126),

The great, irreplaceable potentiality of fiction is that it makes possible the imagining of possibilities. And to imagine other forms of human existence is exactly the challenge that is posed by the climate crisis: for if there is one thing that global warming has made perfectly clear, it is that to think about the world only as it is, amounts to a formula for collective suicide. We need, rather, to envision what it might be.

Elsewhere, he also notes, “Television, film and the visual arts have found it much easier to address climate change than has literary fiction.” This article is partially inspired by this observation and a tribute to some of the most admired Indian filmmakers. Their significant portions of the portfolio raised the nature, environment, and climate issues.

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