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OBJECTIVE ART

Credit : ThinkStock Photos



People living on the earth belong to highly disparate levels, even though they look exactly the same in appearance. Just as there are very different levels of people, so there are different levels of art. But the difference between these levels is far greater than we think. We take different things as being on one level, far too near one another, and we assume these different levels are accessible to us.

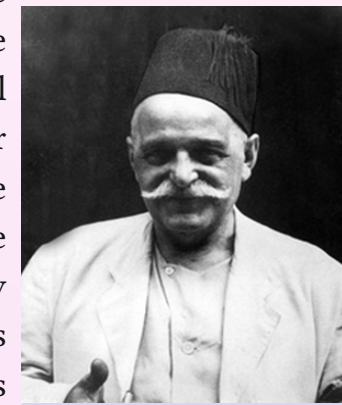
What we call art is simply mechanical reproduction, imitating nature or other people, or mere fantasy, or striving to be original. Real art is something else entirely. True works of art, especially ancient art, contain elements that



Credit : Wikipedia

are inexplicable, a certain "something" we do not feel in contemporary art. We all sense the difference, but since we do not understand it, we easily forget it and assume that all art is the same. And yet there is an enormous difference between our art and this other art. In our art everything is subjective—the artist's perception of this or that sensation, the forms in which he expresses it, and the perception of these forms by other people. In one and the same subject one artist may feel one thing and another artist a completely different thing. The same sunset, for example, may evoke joy in one artist and sadness in another. Two artists may strive to express identical

perceptions by completely different forms and techniques, or completely different perceptions in the same way—each according to his training, which he follows or disregards. And the viewers, listeners or readers will perceive, not what the artist felt or wished to convey, but what the forms he employed will make them feel by association. Every aspect of the artistic process is subjective, and everything is accidental. The artist does not "create"; he occupies himself with a work that "gets created." He is in thrall to thoughts and moods that he himself does not understand and cannot control; they rule him and can express themselves in



George Gurdjieff

"In real, objective art there is nothing accidental. here the artist actually does "create," that is, he makes what he intends, putting into his work whatever ideas and feelings he wants to put into it. this work acts on people in a definite and specific way. they receive precisely what the artist wanted to transmit, although the same work produces different impressions on people of different levels of understanding."

various ways. Since the work's form is totally accidental, it acts on people accidentally in various ways depending on their mood, tastes, habits, the kind of hypnosis they are under and so on.

In real, objective art there is nothing accidental. Here the artist actually does "create," that is, he makes what he intends, putting into his work whatever ideas and feelings he wants to put into it. This work acts on people in a definite and specific way. They receive precisely what the artist wanted to transmit, although the same work produces different impressions on people of different levels of understanding. This is real, objective art. Imagine some scientific work—for example, a book on astronomy or chemistry. It is impossible for two qualified people to understand it in different ways. Every literate person, with adequate preparation, will understand precisely what the author means to express. An objective work of art is just such a book, except that it affects the emotional as well as the intellectual side of us.

Such works of objective art exist today. The great Sphinx in Egypt is one, and there are many others, including certain historically recognized works of architecture, certain statues of gods. There are divine and mythological figures that can be read like books, not only with the mind but with the emotions, provided they are sufficiently developed. In the course of our travels in Central Asia we found, in the desert at the foot of the Hindu Kush, a strange figure that we assumed was some kind of ancient god or demon. At first we took it as a mere curiosity, but after a while we began to feel that this figure contained many things, in fact, a complete and complex

system of cosmology. And slowly we began, step by step, to decipher this system. We found it expressed in the body of the figure, in its legs, its arms, its head, its eyes, its ears—it was everywhere. Absolutely nothing in the statue was accidental, nothing was insignificant. And gradually we understood the aim of the people who built the statue, and began to feel their thoughts, their feelings. Some of us even thought that we saw their faces and heard their voices. Regardless, the fact remains that we grasped the meaning of what they wanted to convey across thousands of years, and not only the meaning but all of the feelings and emotions connected with their message. Now that was a work of art!



Before the Law

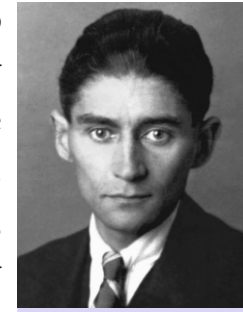
Before the law sits a gatekeeper. To this gatekeeper comes a man from the country who asks to gain entry into the law. But the gatekeeper says that he cannot grant him entry at the moment. The man thinks about it and then asks if he will be allowed to come in later on. “It is possible,” says the gatekeeper, “but not now.” At the moment the gate to the law stands open, as always, and the gatekeeper walks to the side, so the man bends over in order to see through the gate into the inside. When the gatekeeper notices that, he laughs and says: “If it tempts you so much, try it in spite of my prohibition. But take note: I am powerful. And I am only the most lowly gatekeeper. But from room to room stand gatekeepers, each more powerful than the other. I can’t endure even one glimpse of the third.” The man from the country has not expected such difficulties: the law should always be accessible for everyone, he thinks, but as he now looks more closely at the gatekeeper in his fur coat, at his large pointed nose and his long, thin, black Tartar’s beard, he decides that it would be better to wait until he gets permission to go inside.



Credit : Tanishq Shaswat

The gatekeeper gives him a stool and allows him to sit down at the side in front of the gate. There he sits for days and years. He makes many attempts to be let in, and he wears the gatekeeper out with his requests. The gatekeeper often interrogates him briefly, questioning him about his homeland and many other things, but they are

indifferent questions, the kind great men put, and at the end he always tells him once more that he cannot let him inside yet. The man, who has equipped himself with many things for his journey, spends everything, no matter how valuable, to win over the gatekeeper. The latter takes it all but, as he does so, says, “I am taking this only so that you do not think you have failed to do anything.” During the many years the man observes the gatekeeper almost continuously. He forgets the other gatekeepers, and this one seems to him the only obstacle for entry into the law. He curses the unlucky circumstance, in the first years thoughtlessly and out loud, later, as he grows old, he still mumbles to himself. He becomes childish and, since in the long years studying the gatekeeper he has come to know the fleas in his fur collar, he even asks the fleas to help him persuade the gatekeeper. Finally his eyesight grows weak, and he does not know whether things are really darker around him or whether his



Franz Kafka

eyes are merely deceiving him. But he recognizes now in the darkness an illumination which breaks inextinguishably out of the gateway to the law. Now he no longer has much time to live. Before his death he gathers in his head all his experiences of the entire time up into one question which he has not yet put to the gatekeeper. He waves to him, since he can no longer lift up his stiffening body. The gatekeeper has to bend way down to him, for the great difference has changed things to the disadvantage of the man. “What do you still want to know, then?” asks the gatekeeper. “You are insatiable.” “Everyone strives after the law,” says the man, “so how is that in these many years no one except me has requested entry?” The gatekeeper sees that the man is already dying and, in order to reach his diminishing sense of hearing, he shouts at him, “Here no one else can gain entry, since this entrance was assigned only to you. I’m going now to close it.



Fat and thin

Two friends -- one a fat man and the other a thin man -- met at the Nikolaevsky station. The fat man had just dined in the station and his greasy lips shone like ripe cherries. He smelt of sherry and fleur d'orange. The thin man had just slipped out of the train and was laden with portmanteaus, bundles, and bandboxes. He smelt of ham and coffee grounds. A thin woman with a long chin, his wife, and a tall schoolboy with one eye screwed up came into view behind his back. “Porfiry,” cried the fat man on seeing the thin man. “Is it you? My dear fellow! How many summers, how many winters!”



Anton Chekhov

“Holy saints!” cried the thin man in amazement. “Misha! The friend of my childhood! Where have you dropped from?”

The friends kissed each other three times, and gazed at each other with eyes full of tears. Both were agreeably astounded. “My dear boy!” began the thin man after the kissing. “This is unexpected! This is a surprise! Come have a good look at me! Just as handsome as I used to be! Just as great a darling and a dandy! Good gracious me! Well, and how are you? Made your fortune? Married? I am married as you see. . . . This is my wife Luise, her maiden name was Vantsenbach . . . of the Lutheran persuasion. . . . And this is my son Nafanail, a schoolboy

in the third class. This is the friend of my childhood, Nafanya. We were boys at school together!” Nafanail thought a little and took off his cap. “We were boys at school together,” the thin man went on. “Do you remember how they used to tease you? You were nicknamed Herostratus because you burned a hole in a schoolbook with a cigarette, and I was nicknamed Ephialtes because I was fond of telling tales. Ho--ho! . . . we were children! . . . Don't be shy, Nafanya. Go nearer to him. And this is my wife, her maiden name was Vantsenbach, of the Lutheran persuasion. . . .” Nafanail thought a little and took refuge behind his father's back. “Well, how are you doing my friend?” the fat man asked, looking enthusiastically at his friend.

“Are you in the service? What grade have you reached?”

“I am, dear boy! I have been a collegiate assessor for the last two years and I have the Stanislav. The salary is poor, but that's no great matter! The wife gives music lessons, and I go in for carving wooden cigarette cases in a private way. Capital cigarette cases! I sell them for a rouble each. If any one takes ten or more I make a reduction of course. We get along somehow. I served as a clerk, you know, and now I have been transferred here as a head clerk in the same department. I am going to serve here. And what about you? I bet you are a civil



Credit : Artefact

councillor by now? Eh?” “No dear boy, go higher than that,” said the fat man. “I have risen to

privy councillor already . . . I have two stars.” The thin man turned pale and rigid all at once, but soon his face twisted in all directions in the broadest smile; it seemed as though sparks were flashing from his face and eyes. He squirmed, he doubled together, crumpled up. . . . His portmanteaus, bundles and cardboard boxes seemed to shrink and crumple up too. . . . His wife's long chin grew longer still; Nafanail drew himself up to attention and fastened all the buttons of his uniform. “Your Excellency, I . . . delighted! The friend, one may say, of childhood and to have turned into such a great man! He--he!” “Come, come!” the fat man frowned. “What's this tone for? You and I were friends as boys, and there is no need of this official obsequiousness!” “Merciful heavens, your

Excellency! What are you saying. . . ?” sniggered the thin man, wriggling more than ever. “Your Excellency's gracious attention is like refreshing manna. . . . This, your Excellency, is my son Nafanail, . . . my wife Luise, a Lutheran in a certain sense.” The fat man was about to make some protest, but the face of the thin man wore an expression of such reverence, sugariness, and mawkish respectfulness that the privy councillor was sickened. He turned away from the thin man, giving him his hand at parting. The thin man pressed three fingers, bowed his whole body and sniggered like a Chinaman: “He--he--he!” His wife smiled. Nafanail scraped with his foot and dropped his cap. All three were agreeably overwhelmed.



THE ORIGINS OF MYTH IN THE STUDY OF CARL JUNG

The study of myth has long captivated the human imagination, providing a window into the room of human thoughts and psyche. Carl Jung, a pioneering figure in the field of psychology, recognised the power and significance of myth in understanding the depths of the human mind. Drawing upon the collective unconscious and human psyche concept, Jung explored the origins and symbolism of myth, unravelling its profound impact on individual and collective identity. In this article, we will delve into the origins of myth as studied by Carl Jung, examining key sources that shed light on his theories and their implications. Carl Jung was captivated by the presence of motifs and symbols in various myths that appeared to be similar in nature, despite huge geographical differences in the places of their origins. He thus asserted in his seminal work, *Psychological Types* that myths – more precisely, the motifs in myths – are not merely widespread but universal and are not merely similar but identical. Therefore, according to him, myths and symbols can arise autochthonously in every corner of the earth and yet are identical, because they are fashioned out of the same worldwide collective human unconscious.

Central to Jung's exploration of myth is the concept of the collective unconscious, an inherent and universal psychological structure shared by all human beings. Every individual possesses certain inherent primordial images, inherited in the human

imagination from time immemorial. These primal patterns of thoughts and behaviour which are shared collectively by the human psyche are responsible for similar and identical influences on the origin and creation of myths worldwide. This common substratum transcending all differences in culture and consciousness is called the collective unconscious. In Jung's view, myths emerge from the depths of the collective unconscious as symbolic representations of fundamental human experiences and desires.

We see the manifestation of the collective unconscious all around in different mythologies. For example, the mother goddess archetype is a very common and profoundly abundant archetype in mythological stories worldwide. Mother goddess figurines are found in ancient civilizations such as the Indus Valley Civilisation. Developing on it, in the Indian

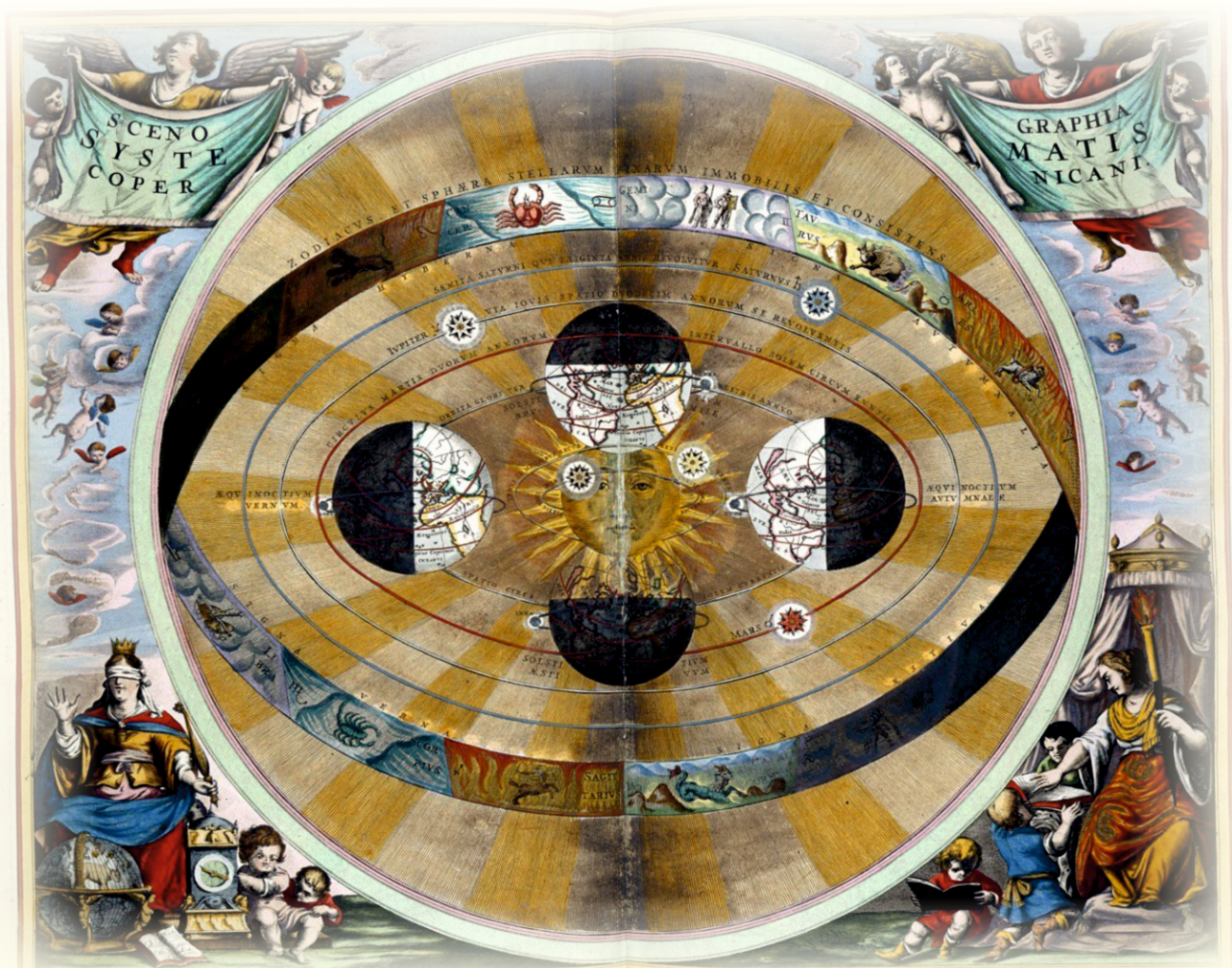
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Mehak Aggarwal

subcontinent, myths are abundant with mother goddess figures such as Durga, Kali, Lakshmi, Gauri, and many others who form the backbone of Indian mythology. In Greek mythology too, we find parallel development of the mother goddess archetype in the form of Hera, Aphrodite, Athena, Demetrius, and many such profuse figures. The Virgin Mary, in later-day Christianity, is seen as an epitome of the mother goddess archetype. This is the exemplification of the presence of the collective unconscious through the archetype of the mother goddess. Many such representative cases can be found in myths around the world which call for the presence of a collective unconscious. The field of myth-

psychology is still an emerging field of study which has benefitted a lot from the studies of Carl Jung on the origins of myth through the collective unconscious, enriching our understanding of the human psyche. By recognising the universality of mythic motifs and symbols, Jung has opened doors for the interconnectedness of myths worldwide. It has led to a universal unity of mythologies, rather than divisiveness due to geographical boundaries. The study of the origins of myth in the context of Carl Jung's works continues to provide a deeper understanding of the world around us.



Credit : Age fotostock

CADUCEUS

A wand with two serpents twined round it, surmounted by two small wings or a winged helmet. The rational and historical explanation is the supposed intervention of Mercury in a fight between two serpents who thereupon curled themselves round his wand. For the Romans, the caduceus served as a symbol of moral equilibrium and of good conduct. The wand represents power; the two snakes wisdom; the wings diligence and the helmet is an emblem of lofty thoughts. Today the caduceus is the insignia of the Catholic bishop in the Ukraine. The caduceus also signifies the integration of the four elements, the wand corresponding to earth, the wings to air, the serpents to fire and water (by analogy with the undulating movement of waves and flames). This symbol is very ancient, and is to be found for example in India engraved upon stone tablets called *nâgakals*, a kind of votive offering placed at the entrance to temples. Heinrich Zimmer traces the caduceus back to Mesopotamia, detecting it in the design of the sacrificial cup of king Gudea of Lagash (2600 B.C.). Zimmer even goes so far as to state that the symbol

probably dates back beyond this period, for the Mesopotamians considered the intertwining serpents as a symbol of the god who cures all illness, a meaning which passed



Credit : Dreamstime

into Greek culture and is still preserved in emblems of our day. According to esoteric Buddhism, the wand of the caduceus corresponds to the axis of the world and the

serpents refer to the force called Kundalini, which, in Tantrist teaching, sleeps coiled up at the base of the backbone—a symbol of the evolute power of pure energy. Schneider maintains that the two S-shapes of the serpents correspond to illness and convalescence. In reality, what defines the essence of the caduceus is the nature and meaning not so much of its individual elements as of the composite whole. The precisely symmetrical and bilateral arrangement, as in the balance of Libra, or in the tri-unity of heraldry (a shield between two supporters), is always expressive of the

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same idea of active equilibrium, of opposing forces balancing one another in such a way as to create a higher, static form. In the caduceus, this balanced duality is twice stated: in the serpents and in the wings, thereby emphasizing that supreme state of strength and self-control (and consequently of health) which can be achieved both on the lower plane of the instincts (symbolized by the serpents) and on the higher level of the spirit (represented by the wings).

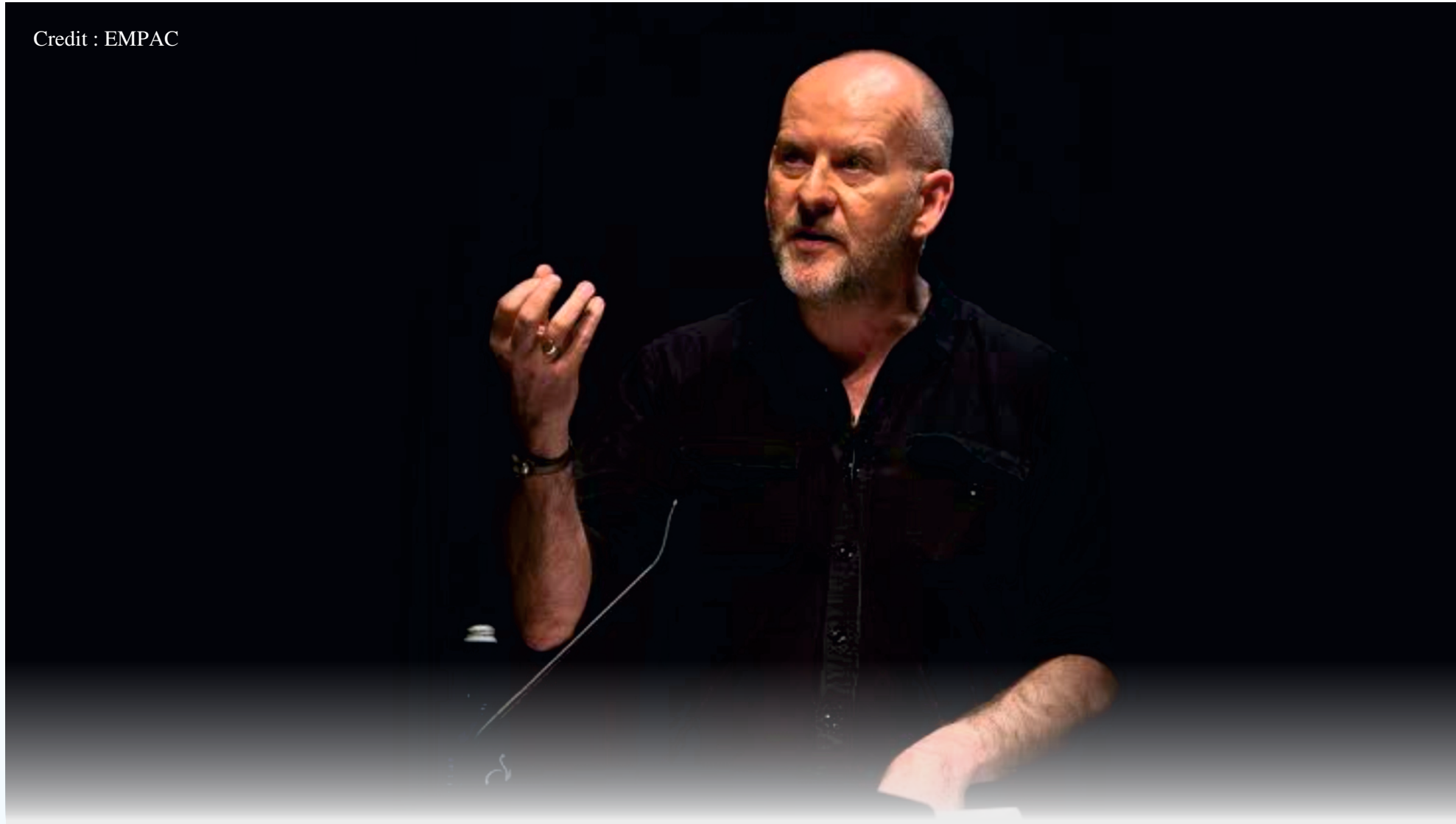
In antiquity, even Greek times, the caduceus was believed to have magical powers. Legends say that anything Mercury's caduceus touched would turn to gold (notice how the association of names is anticipated, with respect to alchemy) and it had the power to attract the souls of the dead. Even darkness could be turned to light by virtue of this symbol of supreme strength ceded to its messenger by the father of all the gods.

Excerpt From
A Dictionary of Symbols
Juan Eduardo Cirlot

HAPPY LIKE GOD

SIMON CRITCHLEY

Credit : EMPAC



What is happiness? How does one get a grip on this elusive, intractable, and perhaps most unanswerable of questions?

I teach philosophy for a living, so let me begin with a philosophical answer. For the philosophers of antiquity, notably Aristotle, it was assumed that the goal of the philosophical life—the good life, moreover—was happiness and that the good life could be defined as the bios theoretikos, the solitary life of contemplation. Today, few people would seem to subscribe to this view. Our lives are filled with the endless distractions of cell phones, car alarms, commuter woes and the traffic in Bangalore. The rhythm of modern life is punctuated by beeps and bleeps and interrupted by a

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Parables

WHERE THE PATH LEADS

Layman P'ang

- One day the Layman saw a young boy herding oxen and asked him, “Where does this path we are following lead to?”
- The boy said, “I don't know where it goes.”
- The Layman said, “Aren't you are herding the oxen?”
- The boy said, “They live in these fields”.
- The Layman said, “What time of day is it anyway?”
- The boy said, “It's time to take the oxen to pasture.”
- The Layman laughed heartily.

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generalized attention deficit disorder.

But is the idea of happiness as an experience of contemplation really so ridiculous? Might there not be something in it? I am reminded of the following extraordinary passage from Rousseau's final book and his third autobiography, *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*:

“If there is a state where the soul can find a resting-place secure enough to establish itself and concentrate its entire being there, with no need to remember the past or reach into the future, where time is nothing to it, where the present runs on indefinitely but this duration goes unnoticed, with no sign of the passing of time, and no other feeling of deprivation or enjoyment, pleasure or pain, desire or fear than the simple feeling of existence, a feeling that fills our soul entirely, as long as this state lasts, we can call ourselves happy, not with a poor, incomplete and relative happiness such as we find in the pleasures of life, but with a sufficient, complete and perfect happiness which leaves no emptiness to be filled in the soul.”

This is as close to a description of happiness as I can imagine. Rousseau is describing the experience of floating in a little rowing boat on the Lake of Biene close to Neuchâtel in his native Switzerland. He particularly loved visiting the Île Saint-Pierre, where he enjoyed going for exploratory walks when the weather was fine and he could indulge in the great passion of his last years: botany. He would walk with a copy of Linnaeus under his arm, happily identifying plants in areas of the

deserted island that he had divided for this purpose into small squares.

On the way to the island, he would pull in the oars and let the boat drift for hours at a time. Rousseau would lie down in the boat and plunge into a deep reverie. How does one describe the experience of reverie: one is awake but half asleep, thinking but not in an instrumental, calculative or ordered way, simply letting the thoughts happen as they will.

Happiness is not quantitative or measurable, and it is not the object of any science, old or new. It cannot be gleaned from empirical surveys or programmed into individuals through a combination of behavioral therapy and antidepressants. If it consists in anything, I think that happiness is this feeling of existence, this sentiment of momentary self-sufficiency that is bound up with the experience of time.

Look again at what Rousseau writes. Floating in a boat in fine weather, lying down with one's eyes open to the clouds and birds or closed in reverie, one does not feel the pull of the past, nor does one reach into the future. Time is nothing, or rather, time is nothing but the experience of the present through which one passes without hurry but without regret.

As Wittgenstein writes in what must be the most intriguing remark in the *Tractatus*, “The eternal life is given to those who live in the present.” Or, as Whitman writes in *Leaves of Grass*: “Happiness is not in another place, but in this place . . . not for another hour . . . but this hour.”

Rousseau asks, “What is the source of

our happiness in such a state?” He answers that it is nothing external to us and nothing apart from our own existence. However frenetic our environment, such a feeling of existence can be achieved. He goes on, amazingly, to conclude, “As long as this state lasts we are self-sufficient like God.” God-like, then. To which one might reply: Who? Me? Us? Like God? Dare we? But think about it: If anyone is happy, then one imagines that God is pretty happy, and to be happy is to be like God. But consider what this means, for it might not be as ludicrous, hubristic or heretical as one might imagine. To be like God is to be without time or, rather, in time with no concern for time, free of the passions and troubles of the soul, experiencing something like calm in the face of things and oneself.

Why should happiness be bound up with the presence and movement of water? This is the case for Rousseau, and I must confess that if I think back over those experiences of blissful reverie that are close to what Rousseau is describing, I realize they often took place in proximity to water, though usually saltwater rather than fresh. For me, it is not so much the stillness of a lake (I tend, to see lakes as decaffeinated seas) as the never-ending drone of the surf as I sit by the sea in fair weather or foul and feel time disappear into tide, into the endless pendulum of the tidal chronometer. At moments like this, one can sink into deep reverie, a motionlessness that is not sleep, but where one is somehow held by the sound of the surf, lulled by the tidal movement.

Is all happiness solitary? Of course not. But one can be happy alone, and this might even be the key to being happy with others. Wordsworth wandered lonely as a cloud when walking with his sister. However, I think that one can also experience this feeling of existence in the experience of love, in being intimate with one's lover, feeling the world close around one and time slipping away in its passing. Rousseau's rowing boat becomes the lovers' bed, and one bids the world farewell while sliding into the shared selfishness of intimacy.

... And then it is over. Time passes, the reverie ends and the feeling for existence fades. The cell phone rings, the email beeps and one is sucked back into the world's relentless hum and the accompanying anxiety.



WHY “THRILLERS” THRIVE

Why do we go to the pictures? To see life reflected on the screen, certainly—but what kind of life? Obviously, the kind we don't experience ourselves—or the same life but with a difference; and the difference consists of emotional disturbances which, for convenience, we call “thrills.” Our nature is such that we must have these “shake-ups,” or we grow sluggish and jellified; but, on the other hand, our civilization has so screened and sheltered us that it isn't practicable to experience sufficient thrills at firsthand. So we have to experience them artificially, and the screen is the best medium for this.

In the theater we can see things happening on a stage, remote, impersonal, detached from ourselves. We are safe, secure, sitting in an armchair and looking at the struggle and turmoil of life through a window, as it were. In order to appreciate what the characters on the stage are going through, we have to project ourselves into their consciousness; we have to receive our thrills vicariously, which is not the most effective method. Watching a well-made film, we don't sit by as spectators; we participate. Take a case in point, which a great many Picturegoer readers are likely to have seen—the scene in *Hell's Angels*, in which the British pilot decides to crash his plane into the envelope of the Zeppelin to destroy it, even though this means inevitable death to himself. We see his face—grim, tense, even horror-stricken—as his plane swoops down. Then we are transferred to the pilot's seat, and it is we who are hurtling to death at ninety miles an hour; and at the moment of impact—and blackout—a palpable shuddering runs through the audience. That is good cinema.

In this there is no harm, because in our subconscious we are aware that we are safe, sitting in a comfortable armchair, watching a screen. Let me illustrate this. Some years ago there was an exhibition sideshow promising thrills, in which people were admitted (a handful at a time) to sit facing a curtain between two columns. They naturally expected the curtain to be drawn—but instead, with a loud cracking sound, one of the pillars began to topple over on them.

Just before it reached them, and before they even had time to leap from their seats, its fall was arrested and it hung suspended above them. That provided a thrill, certainly, but not the kind to please the public. There were so many complaints that the sideshow was closed down—because the



Credit : Tink Saddal

public's basic feeling of security was undermined.

The cinema can leave the spectator with a subconscious assurance of absolute safety, and yet surprise his imagination into playing tricks on him. Secondary to the type of thrill in which the audience seems to participate is the type in which some character who has won the audience's sympathy is involved in danger; and here again the screen can be far more effective than the stage, because the screen can produce an impression of great danger where no danger is.

It would take several complete issues of the *Picturegoer* to list the number of ways in which this can be done, and anyway it doesn't do to give away too many tricks of the trade; but an example or two will show what I mean. Supposing your hero is to throw himself over a castle rampart into a moat filled with crocodiles; on the stage you hear the other characters say there are crocodiles, you see the hero jump, upstage, and disappear from sight, and perhaps a little water is splashed up. On the

screen he is in no greater actual dangers, yet you look over and see for yourself what a terrible height it is; you see the reptiles swimming about; you not only see the jump, you see him fall, you see him hit the water, you watch him swimming desperately from the crocodiles—and you must believe the evidence of your own eyes. Your hero must be in grave peril . . . for the camera, as we know, cannot lie! “Or supposing you see a terrific shock of opposing horsemen, as in Cecil B. DeMille's *The Crusades*. I have it on very good authority that not a horse was hurt during production of that



Alfred Hitchcock

sequence. The effects were secured by the use of a few horses trained to fall, and skillful editing. Such scenes, which set the blood pounding through the veins, are highly beneficial for indigestion, gout, rheumatism, sciatica, and premature middle age. The audience thrives on thrills, the cinema thrives on the audience, the director thrives on the cinema, and everybody is happy. But the so-called “horror” film—that's an entirely different matter.

The term, meaning originally

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“extreme aversion,” has been loosely applied to films which, to supply the desired emotional jolt, exploit sadism, perversion, bestiality, and deformity. This is utterly wrong, being vicious and dangerous. It is permissible for a film to be horrific, but not horrible; and between the two there is a dividing line which is apparent to all thinking people. The forerunner of the cycle of “horror” pictures which is now drawing to a close was the stage “*Grand Guignol*,” and that was merely a “stunt,” calculated to attract a neurotic section of the public.

There is a growing body of opinion, inside as well as outside the film industry, against such films, which are successful in direct ratio to their power to create unnatural excitement. As a matter of fact, they are bound to fail, because the public is, as a rule, healthy-minded. Producers of “horrible” films realize this, and consequently “tone down” their product to make it acceptable. But in doing so they tacitly acknowledge its basic fallacy; imagine a man hitting you on the head with a hammer with one hand to impress you, and with the other holding it back for fear it offends you! A “thriller” must be wholehearted—the more exciting the better. And that is why the authentic “thriller” will live and thrive, and the “horror” film will die.



“

Parables

CHAO-CHOU CHAN-SHIH YU-LU

- A monk asked, “It is not yet clear to me, what about it when someone vows to leave home and search for Supreme Wisdom?”
- The master said, “If you have not left home, wisdom uses you; after leaving home you can use wisdom.”

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INSIDE / OUTSIDE

Take the Western theater of the last few centuries, its function is essentially to manifest what is supposed to be secret ("feelings," "situations," "conflicts"), while concealing the very artifice of such manifestation (machinery, painting, makeup, the sources of light). The stage since the Renaissance is the space of this lie: here everything occurs in an interior surreptitiously open, surprised, spied on, savored by a spectator crouching in the shadows. This space is theological-it is the space of Sin: on one side, in a light which he pretends to ignore, the actor, i.e., the gesture and the word; on the other, in the darkness, the public, i.e., consciousness.

Bunraku does not directly subvert the relation of house and stage (though Japanese theaters are infinitely less confined, less enclosed, less weighed down than ours); what it transforms, more profoundly, is the motor link which proceeds from character to actor, and which is always conceived, in the West, as the expressive means of an inwardness. We must recall that the agents of the spectacle, in Bunraku, are at once visible and impassive: the men in black busy themselves around the doll, but without any affectation of skill or of discretion and, one might say, without any paraded demagoguery; silent, swift, elegant, their actions are eminently transitive, operative, tinged with that mixture of strength and subtlety which marks the Japanese repertoire of gestures and which is a kind of aesthetic envelope of effectiveness; as for the master, his head is



Roland Barthes

uncovered; smooth, bare, without makeup, which accords him a civil (not a theatrical) distinction, his face is offered to the spectators to read; but what is carefully, preciously given to be read is that there is nothing there to read; here again we come to that exemption of meaning (that exemption from meaning as well) which we Westerners can barely understand, since, for us, to attack meaning is to hide or to invert it, but never to "absent" it. With Bunraku, the sources of the theater are exposed in their emptiness. What is expelled from the stage is hysteria, i.e., theater itself; and what is put in its place is the action necessary to the production of the spectacle: work is substituted for inwardness.

Hence it is futile to wonder, as certain Europeans do, if the spectator can ever forget the presence of the manipulators. Bunraku practices neither the occultation nor the emphatic manifestation of its means; hence it rids the actor's manifestation of any whiff of the sacred and abolishes the metaphysical link the West cannot help establishing between body and soul, cause and effect, motor and machine, agent and actor, Destiny and man, God and creature: if the manipulator is not hidden, why and how--would you make him into a God? In Bunraku, the puppet has no strings. No more strings, hence no more metaphor, no more Fate; since the puppet no longer apes the creature, man is no longer a puppet in the divinity's hands, the inside no longer commands the outside.



Credit : Tokyo traditional arts program

THE BLACK SHEEP

Italo Calvino



Credit : MUBI

There was a country where they were all thieves.

At night everybody would leave home with skeleton keys and shaded lanterns and go and burgle a neighbor's house. They'd get back at dawn, loaded, to find their own house had been

robbed.

So, everybody lived happily together, nobody lost out, since each stole from the other, and that other from another again, and so on and on until you got to the last person who stole from the first. Trade in the country inevitably involved cheating on the parts both of buyer and seller. The government was a criminal organization that stole from its subjects, and the subjects for their part were only interested in defrauding the government. Thus life went on smoothly, nobody was rich, and nobody was poor.

One day, how we don't know, it so happened that an honest man came to live in the place. At night, instead of going out with his sack and his lantern, he stayed home to smoke and read novels. The thieves came, saw the light on and didn't go in.

This went on for a while: then they were obliged to explain to him that even if he wanted to live without doing anything, it was no reason to stop others from doing things. Every night he spent at home meant a family

would have nothing to eat the following day. The honest man could hardly object to such reasoning. He took to going out in the evening and coming back the following morning like they did, but he didn't steal. He was honest, there was nothing you could do about it. He went as far as the bridge and watched the water flow by beneath. When he got home, he found he had been robbed.

In less than a week the honest man found himself penniless, he had nothing to eat, and his house was empty. But this was hardly a problem, since it was his own fault; no, the problem was that his behavior upset everything else. Because he let the others steal everything, he had without stealing anything from anybody; so, there was always someone who got home at dawn to find their house untouched: the house he should have robbed. In any event after a while the ones who weren't being robbed found themselves richer than the others and didn't want to steal any more. To make matters worse, the ones who came to steal from the honest man's house found it was always empty; so, they became poor.

Meanwhile, the ones who had become rich got into the honest man's habit of going to

the bridge at night to watch the water flow by beneath. This increased the confusion because it meant lots of others became rich and lots of others became poor.

Now, the rich people saw that if they went to the bridge every night, they'd soon be poor. And they thought: 'Let's pay some of the poor to go and rob for us.' They made contracts, fixed salaries, percentages: they were still thieves of course, and they still tried to swindle each other. But as tends to happen, the rich got richer and richer, and the poor got poorer and poorer.

Some of the rich people got so rich that they didn't need to steal or have others steal for them so as to stay rich but if, they stopped stealing they would get poor because the poor stole from them. So, they paid the very poorest of the poor to defend their property from the other poor, and that meant setting up a police force and building prisons.

So it was that only a few years after the appearance of the honest man, people no longer spoke of robbing and being robbed, but only of the rich and the poor; but they were still all thieves. The only honest man had been the one at the beginning, and he died in very short order, of hunger.

POEMS

LOVE BEYOND TIMES

Stars whispering to each other
See that damsel
Making things possible which were
Impossible
Dew dithering on the lips of grass-queen
That damsel causing the dancing
What a miracle that damsel is!
Who is this damsel ?
And How lucky dew is..!
Dew embracing the moment
Moment embracing damsel
and We whispering the beauty of pearl
Without knowing the inner whirl
Look at that silly boy
Is he blind?
How can he not seeing that miracle
Alas! Boy is ungrateful for this moment...!
And we couldn't know her...
What a pity is this!
Suddenly a star of antiquity
Comes forth and said,
No! He is the one who making us whisper
Otherwise we couldn't behold
his vision of her
He is the one who seeing through us
That damsel doing miracle because of
herself
And he is the one who makes things
possible
Star asked the others then,
See that damsel now;
Impossible to behold they shouted at once
We are doomed to be blind and ignorant
Boy on the lips of grass queen

Kissing her delicately
Kiss's intoxication rushed through the veins
Ecstasy danced wildly
Stars enchanted at once, Suddenly
They all feel intoxicated at once;
Laid down on a silky surface
They all shouted, "Damsel is Earth!"
"Boy is Dew"
"the son of our mother 'The Night'...!"
From that moment till forever,
Stars became beloved of the earth....



Sandeep Sharma



THENCE

Eternity of size to
complexity of vision,
Negligible existence to
revelation's precision,
I hold the dead and
vibrant beauty,
With much of ease, with lots of duty,
I rest at wreckage, cry in solace,
Nothing to hold on, all to displace,
I dwell in doubt, rise through tragedy,
Look for certainty, live through remedy,
What to leave what to brace,
Seize the vibrant, rocks to sway,
Need 'your' grace to pulsating mine,
More of all, intervention Divine



Gurchetan Singh



A BLUEPRINT FOR LIVING

The more I force things in order
The more chaos I create
The message is getting louder
That illusionary harmony isn't innate
I won't ignore the poking reminder
To graciously embrace my frenzied state

The clutter, the litter
The shambles, the muddle
The tardy, the unpunctual
The belated, the delayed
These space-time adjectives
Were deliberately made to cage

The conceived realities
The perceived realities
Need not to be the only
Mould for our lived realities
You can lay dormant or
go haywire
These won't lead to any
penalties



Nadiya



A SIREN SONG

So sweet –
Ashamed, bees would blush.
They'd rip off their stingers,
tip forward to their demise
if they could taste the nectar
dripping off our symphony.

So pure –
Like luxurious silk,
we built a fortress of it.
Looking over shades of blue,
white, earth and green, we danced
in the cozy warmth of the song.

So loud –
when winters persisted,
we drowned out the chewing
as vermin ran rampant and reduced
our seemingly formidable fortress to
an echo of the long-faded song.

So blinding, encapsulating –
we let the echo cloak
the cavernous wounds
we imprinted on our fortress.
We let the echo consume
and patched up the surfaces,
but it was a shell of skeletons
that tore it apart.

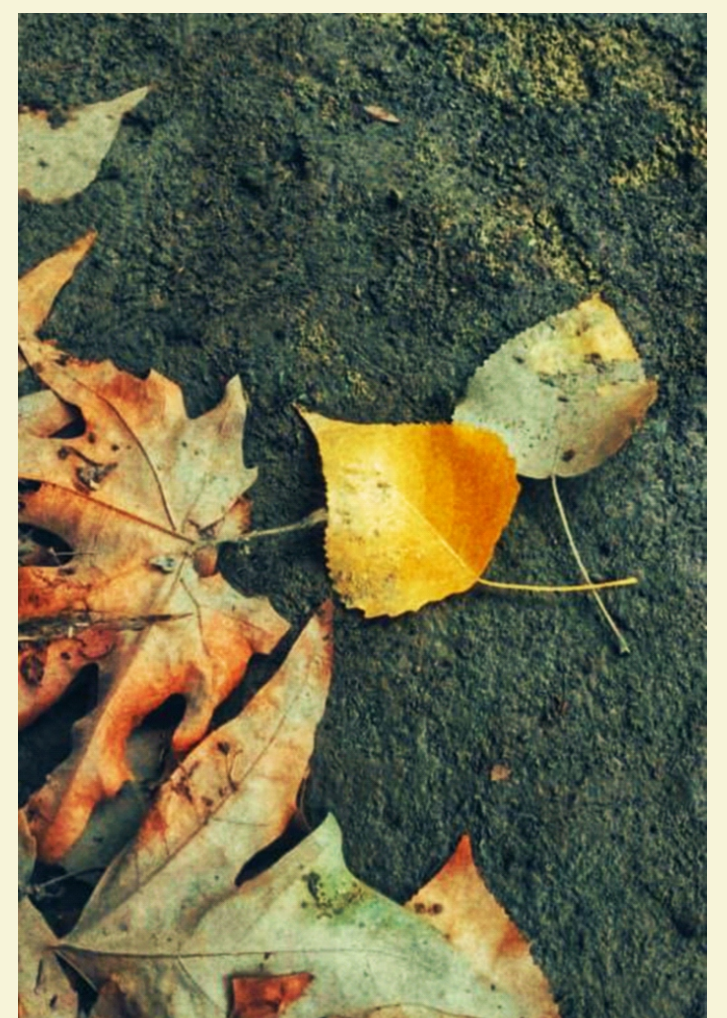


LEARN FROM ALL

Martin Buber

Question: In the Sayings of the Fathers, we read: “Who is wise? He who learns from all men, as it is said, ‘From all my teachers I have gotten understanding’” Then why does it not say: “He who learns from every teacher”?

Answer: The master who pronounced this dictum is intent on making it clear that we can learn not only from those whose occupation is to teach but from every man. Even from a person who is ignorant, or from one who is wicked, you can gain understanding as to how to conduct your life.



PAINTINGS



Palak Kainth



Palak Kainth



Alka Dhiman



Priyanka Rani

I MADE MY MIND A BEGGAR'S BOWL

Prof. Puran Singh

I made my mind a beggar's bowl.
I wandered, and begged the bread of learning from
door to door;
I filled it with crumbs that fell to me from every
house of learning.
I crammed it very full; I made it heavy, and I was
proud;
I thought I was a pundit,
I wished to walk far above the earth in my pride,
My steps hardly touched the ground.
One day I went to my saint.
I placed my bowl before him, and I gave it as an
offering;
"Dirt, dirt," he said, and turned it upside down.
He threw the crumbs away,
He rubbed it with sand, he washed it with water,
clean of all the dirt of learning.



Deepanshi Spall