



Beauty, whatever use man may make of it, fundamentally belongs to its Creator, who through it projects into the world of appearances something of His being.



Excerpt from:
Art from the Sacred to the Profane: East and West

Frithjof Schuon (18 June 1907 - 5 May 1998)

Beauty is a crystallization of some aspect of universal joy; it is something limitless expressed by means of a limit.

Beauty is a reflection of Divine bliss, and since God is Truth, the reflection of His bliss will be that mixture of happiness and truth which is to be found in all beauty.

Beauty is always beyond compare; no perfect beauty is more beautiful than another perfect beauty. One may prefer this beauty to that, but this is a matter of personal affinity or of complementary relationship and not of pure aesthetics. Human beauty, for instance, can be found in each of the major races, yet normally a man prefers some type of beauty in his own race rather than in another; inversely, qualitative and universal affinities between human types sometimes show themselves to be stronger than racial affinities.

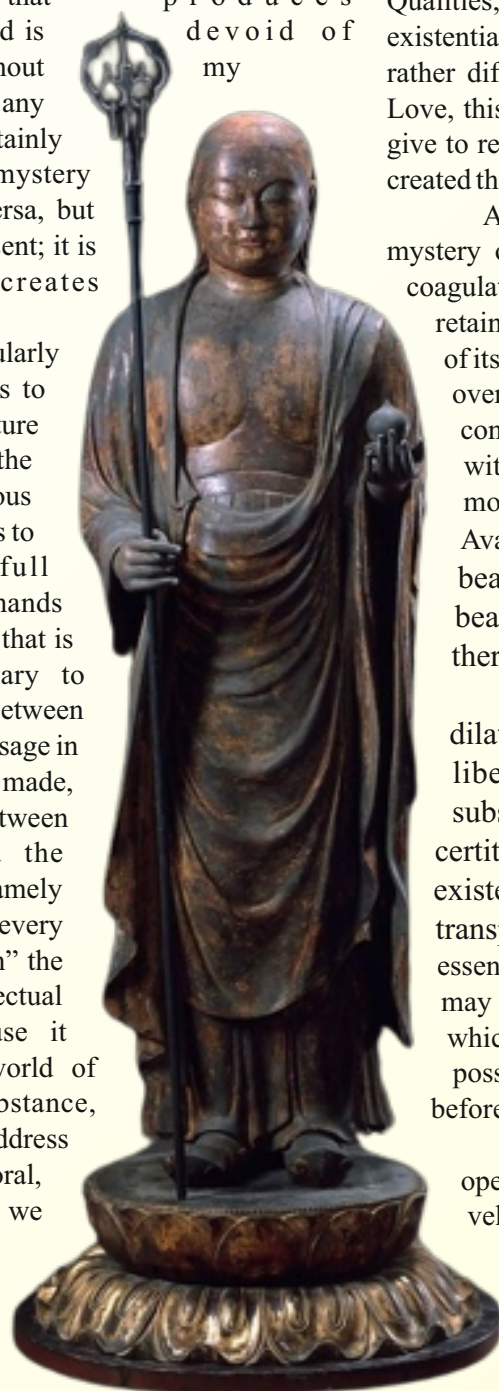
Like every other kind of beauty, artistic beauty is objective, and therefore discernible by intelligence, not by "taste." Taste is indeed legitimate, but only to the same extent as individual peculiarities are legitimate, that is, in so far as these peculiarities translate positive aspects of some human norm. Different tastes should be derived from pure aesthetics and should be of equal validity, just like the different ways in which the eye sees things.

Beauty, being perfection, is regularity and mystery; it is through these two qualities that it stimulates and at the same time appeases the intelligence and also a sensibility which is in conformity with the intelligence.

In sacred art, one finds everywhere and of necessity, regularity and mystery. According to a profane conception, that of classicism, it is regularity that produces beauty; but the beauty concerned is devoid of mystery and consequently without any vibration of infinity. It can certainly happen in sacred art that mystery outweighs regularity, or vice versa, but the two elements are always present; it is their equilibrium which creates perfection.

The cosmic, or more particularly the earthly function of beauty is to actualize in the intelligent creature the Platonic recollection of the archetypes, right up to the luminous Night of the Infinite. This leads us to the conclusion that the full understanding of beauty demands virtue and is identifiable with it: that is to say, just as it is necessary to distinguish, in objective beauty, between the outward structure and the message in depth, so there is a distinction to be made, in the sensing of the beautiful, between the aesthetic sensation and the corresponding beauty of soul, namely such and such a virtue. Beyond every question of "sensible consolation" the message of beauty is both intellectual and moral: intellectual because it communicates to us, in the world of accidentality, aspects of Substance, without for all that having to address itself to abstract thought; and moral, because it reminds us of what we must love, and consequently be.

Beauty is not only a matter of formal rectitude but also of content, as we have said, and the content of beauty is its richness of possibilities and its cosmic generosity, so that there is a beauty which possesses or envelops and a beauty which gives or overflows. Harmony of



On Beauty and the Sense of the Sacred



Credit : Rainforest Cruises

form is not merely the trueness of a square or a triangle, it is also and essentially the manifestation of an internal infinitude; it is such in so far as it is all that it is capable of being.

The archetype of beauty, or its Divine model, is the superabundance and equilibrium of the divine Qualities, and at the same time the overflowing of the existential potentialities contained in pure Being. In a rather different sense, beauty stems from the divine Love, this Love being the will to deploy itself and to give to realize itself in "another"; thus it is that "God created the world by love."

All terrestrial beauty is thus by reflection a mystery of love. It is, "whether it likes it or not," coagulated love or music turned to crystal, but it retains on its face the imprint of its internal fluidity, of its beatitude, and of its liberality; it is measure in overflowing, in it is neither dissipation nor constriction. Human beings are rarely identified with their beauty, which is lent to them and moves across them like a ray of light. Only the Avatara is a priori himself that ray; he "is" the beauty that he manifests corporeally, and that beauty is Beauty as such, the only Beauty there is.

Beauty has something pacifying and dilating in it, something consoling and liberating, because it communicates a substance of truth, of evidence, and of certitude, and it does so in a concrete and existential mode; thus it is like a mirror of our transpersonal and eternally blissful essence. It is essentially an objective factor which we may or may not see or may or may not understand but which like all objective reality, or like truth, possesses its own intrinsic quality; thus it exists before man and independently of him.

Every beauty is both a closed door and an open door, or in other words, an obstacle or a vehicle: either beauty separates us from God because it is entirely identified in our mind with its earthly support which then assumes the role of idol, or beauty brings us close to God because we perceive in it the vibrations of Beatitude and Infinity which emanate from divine Beauty.

The de facto ambiguity of beauty, and consequently of art, comes from the ambiguity of Maya

; just as the principle of manifestation and illusion both separates from the Creator and leads back to Him, so earthly beauties including those of art, can favor worldliness as well as spirituality, which explains the diametrically opposed attitudes of the saints towards art in general or a given art in particular. The arts reputed to be the most dangerous are those engaging hearing or movement, namely poetry, music, and dance; they are like wine, which in Christianity serves as the vehicle for a deifying sacrament, while in Islam it is prohibited, each perspective being right despite the contradiction. That the intoxicating element—in the widest sense—particularly lends itself to sanctification, Islam recognizes in its esoterism, in which wine symbolizes ecstasy and in which poetry, music, and dance have become ritual means with a view to "remembrance."

Beauty, whatever use man may make of it, fundamentally belongs to its Creator, who through it projects into the world of appearances something of His being. Thus, one must live the experience of beauty so as to draw from it a lasting, not ephemeral, element, hence realizing in oneself an opening towards the immutable Beauty, rather than plunging oneself into the current of things; it is a question of viewing the world, and living in it, in a manner that is sacred and not profane; or sacralizing and not profanating.

The sense of the sacred is the innate consciousness of the presence of God: it is to feel this presence sacramentally in symbols and ontologically in all things. Hence the sense of the sacred implies a kind of universal respect, a kind of circumspection before the mystery of animate and inanimate creatures.

The sacred is the projection of the celestial Center into the cosmic periphery, or of the "Motionless Mover" into the flux of things. To feel this concretely is to possess the sense of the sacred, and thereby the instinct of adoration, devotion, and submission; the sense of the sacred is the awareness—in the world of that which may or may not be—of That which cannot not be, and whose immense remoteness and miraculous proximity we experience at one and the same time.

The two poles of the sacred are truth and holiness: truth and holiness of persons and of things. A thing is true by its symbolism and holy by the depth of its beauty; all beauty is a cosmic mode of holiness. In the spiritual order, man is in truth through his knowledge, and he is holy through his personal conformity to the truth and through the depth of this conformity.

The combination of sanctity and beauty which

characterizes the Messengers of Heaven is transmitted so to speak from the human theophanies to the sacred art which perpetuates it: the essentially intelligent and profound beauty of this art testifies to the truth which inspires it; it could not in any case be reduced to a human invention as regards the essential of its message. Sacred art is Heaven descended to earth, rather than earth reaching towards Heaven.

The multifarious beauty of a sanctuary is like the crystallization of a spiritual flux or of a stream of blessings. It is as though invisible and celestial power had fallen into matter—which hardens, divides, and scatters—and had transformed it into a shower of precious forms, into a sort of planetary system of symbols, surrounding us and penetrating us from every side. The impact, if one may so call it, is analogous to that of the benediction itself; it is direct and existential; it goes beyond thought and seizes our being in its very substance.

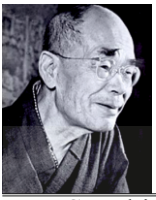
There are blessings which are like snow; and others which are like wine; all can be crystallized in sacred art. What is exteriorized in such art is both doctrine and blessing, geometry and the music of Heaven.

The Sainte Chapelle: a shimmer of rubies and sapphires set in gold. No individual genius could improvise its splendors. One might think that they had sprung from the lily and the gentian.

Parable

“ One day Hyakujo said to his monks:
—Plow this field and when you are all finished, I'll tell you the meaning of everything. When they had finished, he gave his sermon: He opened his arms wide. Then he left. ”

The Ten Oxherding Pictures



Excerpt from :
Terebess Asia Online:
Zen Irodalom Zen Literature

D.T. Suzuki (18 October 1870 - 12 July 1966)

The author of these "Ten Oxherding Pictures" is said to be a Zen master of the Sung Dynasty known as Kaku-an Shi-en (Kuo-an Shih-yuan) belonging to the Rinzai school. He is also the author of the poems and introductory words attached to the pictures. He was not however the first who attempted to illustrate by means of pictures stages of Zen discipline, for in his general preface to the pictures he refers to another Zen master called Seikyo (Ching-chu), probably a contemporary of his, who made use of the ox to explain his Zen teaching. But in Seikyo's case the gradual development of the Zen life was indicated by a progressive whitening of the animal, ending in the disappearance of the whole being. There were in this only five pictures, instead of ten as by Kaku-an. Kaku-an thought this was somewhat misleading because of an empty circle being made the goal of Zen discipline. Some might take mere emptiness as all important and final. Hence his improvement resulting in the "Ten Oxherding Pictures" as we have them now. Thus as far as I can identify there are four varieties of the Oxherding Pictures (1) by Kaku-an, (2) by Seikyo, (3) by Jitoku, and (4) by an unknown author. Kaku-an's "Pictures" here reproduced are by Shubun, a Zen priest of the fifteenth century. The original pictures are preserved at Shokokuji, Kyoto. He was one of the greatest painters in black and white in the Ashikaga period.

Paintings (mentioned here are) traditionally attributed to 天章周文 Tenshō Shūbun (1414-1463), ten circular paintings mounted as a handscroll, ink and light color on paper, Muromachi period, late fifteenth century (32 × 181.5 cm), Shōkokuji temple, Kyoto.

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2 Seeing the Traces
By the aid of the sutras and by inquiring into the doctrines, he has come to understand something, he has found the traces. He now knows that vessels, however varied, are all of gold, and that the objective world is a reflection of the Self. Yet, he is unable to distinguish what is good from what is not, his mind is still confused as to truth and falsehood. As he has not yet entered the gate, he is provisionally said to have noticed the traces.

By the stream and under the trees, scattered are the traces of the lost; The sweet-scented grasses are growing thick--did he find the way? However remote over the hills and far away the beast may wander, His nose reaches the heavens and none can conceal it.

3 Seeing the Ox
The boy finds the way by the sound he hears; he sees thereby into the origin of things, and all his senses are in harmonious order. In all his activities, it is manifestly present. It is like the salt in water and the glue in colour. [It is there though not distinguishable as an individual entity.] When the eye is properly directed, he will find that it is no other than himself.

On a yonder branch perches a nightingale cheerfully singing; The sun is warm, and a soothing breeze blows, on the bank the willows are green; The ox is there all by himself, nowhere is he to hide himself; The splendid head decorated with stately horns what painter can reproduce him?

4 Catching the Ox
Long lost in the wilderness, the boy has at last found the ox and his hands are on him. But, owing to the overwhelming pressure of the outside world, the ox is hard to keep under control. He constantly longs for the old sweet-scented field. The wild nature is still unruly, and altogether refuses to be broken. If the oxherd wishes to see the ox completely in harmony with himself, he has surely to use the whip freely.

With the energy of his whole being, the boy has at last taken hold of the ox: But how wild his will, how ungovernable his power! At times he struts up a plateau, When lo! he is lost again in a misty unpenetrable mountain-pass.

5 Herding the Ox
When a thought moves, another follows, and then another--an endless train of thoughts is thus awakened. Through enlightenment all this turns into truth; but falsehood asserts itself when confusion prevails. Things oppress us not because of an objective world, but because of a self-deceiving mind. Do not let the nose-string loose, hold it tight, and allow no vacillation.

The boy is not to separate himself with his whip and tether, Lest 'he animal should wander away into a world of defilements; When the ox is properly tended to, he will grow pure and docile; Without a chain, nothing binding, he will by himself follow the oxherd.

6 Coming Home on the Ox's Back
The struggle is over; the man is no more concerned with gain and loss. He hums a rustic tune of the woodman, he sings simple songs of the village-boy. Saddling himself on the ox's back, his eyes are fixed on things not of the earth, earthy. Even if he is called, he will not turn his head; however enticed he will no more be kept back.

Riding on the animal, he leisurely wends his way home: Enveloped in the evening mist, how tunefully the flute vanishes away! Singing a ditty, beating time, his heart is filled with a joy indescribable! That he is now one of those who know, need it be told?

7 The Ox Forgotten, Leaving the Man Alone
The dharmas are one and the ox is symbolic. When you know that what you need is not the snare or set-net but the hare or fish, it is like gold separated from the dross, it is like the moon rising out of the clouds. The one ray of light serene and penetrating shines even before days of creation.

Riding on the animal, he is at last back in his home, Where lo! the ox is no more; the man alone sits serenely. Though the red sun is high up in the sky, he is still quietly dreaming, Under a straw-thatched roof are his whip and rope idly lying.

8 The Ox and the Man Both Gone out of Sight
All confusion is set aside, and serenity alone prevails; even the idea of holiness does not obtain. He does not linger about where the Buddha is, and as to where there is no Buddha he speedily passes by. When there exists no form of dualism, even a thousand-eyed one fails to detect a loophole. A holiness before which birds offer flowers is but a farce.

All is empty--the whip, the rope, the man, and the ox: Who can ever survey the vastness of heaven? Over the furnace burning ablaze, not a flake of snow can fall: When this state of things obtains, manifest is the

spirit, of the ancient master.
9 Returning to the Origin, Back to the Source.

From the very beginning, pure and immaculate, the man has never been affected by defilement. He watches the growth of things, while himself abiding in the immovable serenity of nonassertion. He does not identify himself with the maya-like transformations [that are going on about him], nor has he any use of himself [which is artificiality]. The waters are blue, the mountains are green; sitting alone, he observes things undergoing changes.

To return to the Origin, to be back at the Source--already a false step this! Far better it is to stay at home, blind and deaf, and without much ado; Sitting in the hut, he takes no cognisance of things outside, Behold the streams flowing--whither nobody knows; and the flowers vividly red--for whom are they?

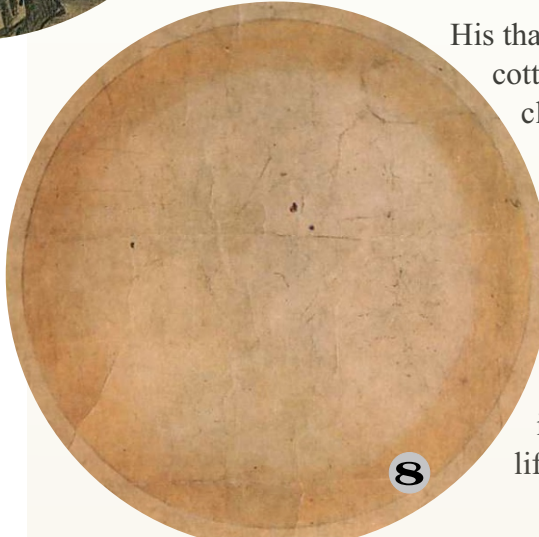
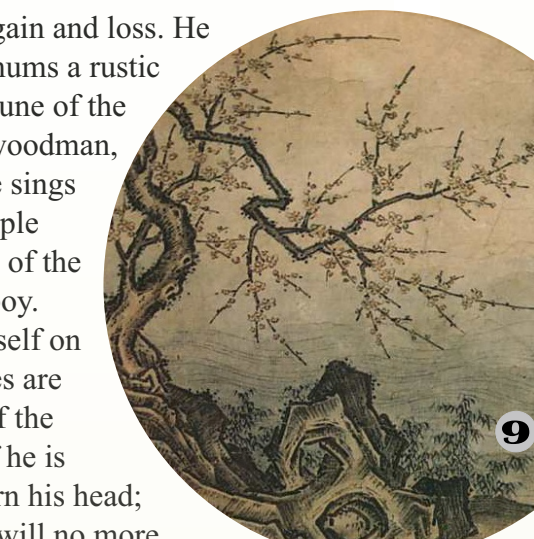
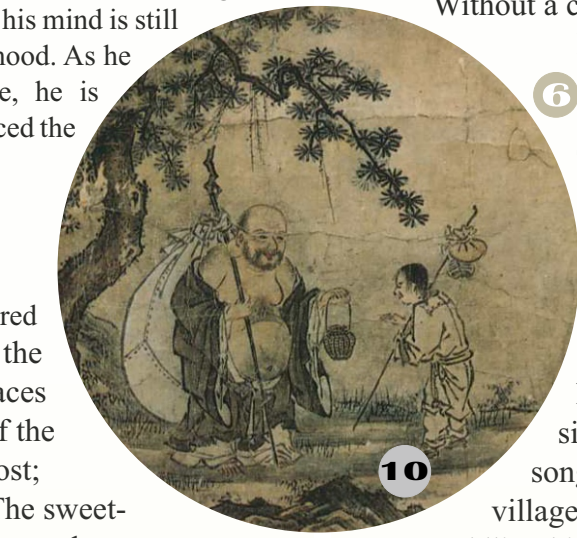
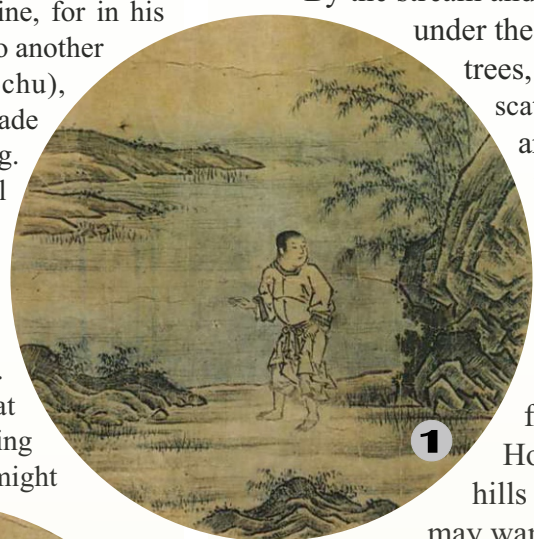
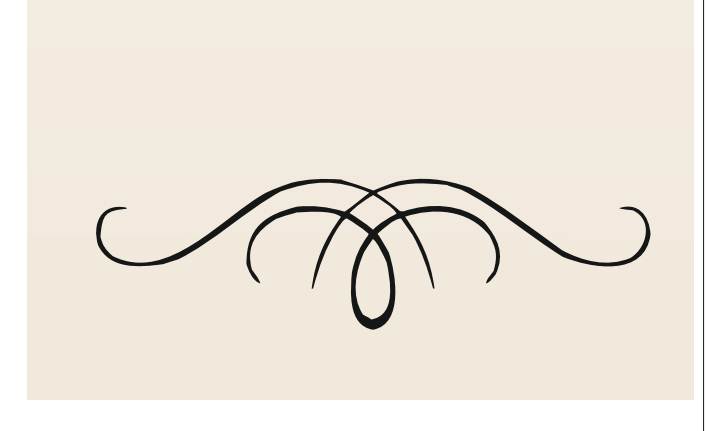
10 Entering the City with Bliss-bestowing Hands.

His thatched cottage gate is closed, and even the wisest know him not. No glimpses of his inner life are to be

caught; for he goes on his own way without following the steps of the ancient sages. Carrying a gourd he goes out into the market, leaning against staff he comes home. He is found in company with win-bibbers and butchers, he and they are all converted into Buddhas.

Bare-chested and bare-footed, he comes out into the market-place; Daubed with mud and shes, how broadly he smiles! There is no need for the miraculous power of the gods, For he touches, and lo! the dead trees are in full bloom.

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Excerpt from :
The Undiscovered Self

Carl Jung (26 July 1875 - 26 July 1875)

Although our civilized consciousness has separated itself from the instincts, the instincts have not disappeared: they have merely lost their contact with consciousness. They are thus forced to assert themselves in an indirect way, through what Janet called automatism. These take the form of symptoms in the case of a neurosis or, in normal cases, of incidents of various kinds, like unaccountable moods, unexpected forgetfulness, mistakes in speech, and so on. Such manifestations show very clearly the autonomy of the archetypes. It is easy to believe that one is master in one's own house, but as long as we are unable to control our emotions and moods, or to be conscious of the myriad secret ways in which unconscious factors insinuate themselves into our arrangements and decisions, we are certainly not the masters. On the contrary, we have so much reason for uncertainty that it will be better to look twice at what we are doing.

The exploration of one's conscience, however, is not a popular pastime, although it would be most necessary, particularly in our time when man is threatened with self-created and deadly dangers that are growing beyond his control. If, for a moment, we look at mankind as one individual, we see that it is like a man carried away by unconscious powers. He is dissociated like a neurotic, with the Iron Curtain marking the line of division. Western man representing the kind of consciousness hitherto regarded as valid, has become increasingly aware of the aggressive will to power of the East, and he sees himself forced to take extraordinary measures of defence. What he fails to see is that it is his own vices, publicly repudiated and covered up by good international manners, that are thrown back in his face through their shameless and methodical application by the East. What the West has tolerated, but only secretly, and indulged in a bit shamefacedly (the diplomatic lie, the double-cross, veiled threats), comes back openly and in full measure and gets us tied up in knots—exactly the case of the neurotic! It is the face of our own shadow that glowers at us across the Iron Curtain.

This state of affairs explains the peculiar feeling of helplessness that is creeping over our Western consciousness. We are beginning to realize that the conflict is in reality a moral and mental problem, and we are trying to find some answer to it. We grow increasingly aware that the nuclear deterrent is a desperate and undesirable answer, as it cuts both ways. We know that moral and mental remedies would be more effective because they could provide us with a psychic immunity to the ever-increasing infection. But all our attempts have proved to be singularly ineffectual, and will continue to do so as long as we try to convince ourselves and the world that it is only they, our opponents, who are all wrong, morally and philosophically. We expect them to see and understand where they are wrong, instead of making a serious effort ourselves to recognize our own shadow and its nefarious doings. If we could only see our shadow, we should be immune to any moral and mental infection and insinuation. But as long as this is not so, we lay ourselves open to every infection because we are doing practically the same things as they are, only with the additional disadvantage that we neither see nor want to understand what we are doing under the cloak of good manners.

The East has one big myth—which we call an illusion in the vain hope that our superior judgment will make it disappear. This myth is the time-hallowed archetypal dream of a Golden Age or a paradise on earth, where everything is provided for everybody, and one great, just, and wise Chief rules over a human kindergarten. This powerful archetype in its infantile form has got them all right, but it won't disappear from the world at the mere sight of our superior point of view. We even support it by our own childishness, for our Western civilization is in the grip of the same mythology. We cherish the same prejudices, hopes, and expectations. We believe in the Welfare State, in universal peace, in more or less equality for man, in his eternal human rights, injustice and truth, and (not too loud) in the Kingdom of God on earth.

The sad truth is that man's real life consists of inexorable opposites—day and night, well being and suffering, birth and death, good and evil. We are not even sure that the one will prevail against the other, that good will overcome evil, or joy defeat pain. Life and the world are a battleground, have always been and always will be, and, if it were not so, existence would soon come to an end. It is for this reason that a superior religion like Christianity expected an early end to this world, and Buddhism actually puts an end to it by turning its back on all desires. These categorical answers would be frankly suicidal if they were not bound up with the peculiar moral ideas and practices that constitute the body of both religions.

I mention this because in our time there are countless people who have lost faith in one or other of the world religions. They do not understand them any longer. While life

The Function of Religious Symbols

runs smoothly, the loss remains as good as unnoticed. But when suffering comes, things change very rapidly. One seeks the way out and begins to reflect about the meaning of life and its bewildering experiences. It is significant that, according to the statistics, the psychiatrist is consulted more by Protestants and Jews than by Catholics. This might be expected, for the Catholic Church still feels responsible for the cura animarum, the care of souls. But in this scientific age, the psychiatrist is apt to be asked questions that once belonged to the domain of the theologian. People feel that it makes, or would make, a great difference if only they had a positive belief in a meaningful way of life or in God and immortality. The spectre of death looming up before them often gives a powerful incentive to such thoughts. From time immemorial, men have had ideas about a Supreme Being (one or several) and about the Land of the Hereafter. Only modern man thinks he can do without them. Because he cannot discover God's throne in heaven with a telescope or radar, or establish for certain that dear father or mother are still about in a more or less corporeal form, he assumes that such ideas are not “true.” I would rather say that they are not “true” enough. They have accompanied human life since prehistoric times and are still ready to break through into consciousness at the slightest provocation.

One even regrets the loss of such convictions. Since it is a matter of invisible and unknowable things (God is beyond human understanding, and immortality cannot be proved), why should we bother about evidence or truth? Suppose we did not know and understand the need for salt in our food, we would nevertheless profit from its use. Even if we should assume that salt is an illusion of our taste-buds, or a superstition, it would still contribute to our wellbeing. Why, then, should we deprive ourselves of views that prove helpful in crises and give a meaning to our existence? And how do we know that such ideas are not true? Many people would agree with me if I stated flatly that such ideas are illusions. What they fail to realize is that this denial amounts to a “belief” and is just as impossible to prove as a religious assertion. We are entirely free to choose our standpoint; it will in any case be an arbitrary decision. There is, however, a strong empirical reason why we should hold beliefs that we know can never be proved. It is that they are known to be useful. Man positively needs general ideas and convictions that will give a meaning to his life and enable him to find his place in the universe. He can stand the most incredible hardships when he is convinced that they make sense; but he is crushed when, on top of all his misfortunes, he has to admit that he is taking part in a “tale told by an idiot.”

It is the purpose and endeavour of religious symbols to give a meaning to the life of man. The Pueblo Indians believe that they are the sons of Father Sun, and this

belief gives their life a perspective and a goal beyond their individual and limited existence. It leaves ample room for the unfolding of their personality, and is infinitely more satisfactory than the certainty that one is and will remain the underdog in a department store. If St. Paul had been convinced that he was nothing but a wandering weaver of carpets, he would certainly not have been himself. His real and meaningful life lay in the certainty that he was the messenger of the Lord. You can accuse him of megalomania, but your opinion pales before the testimony of history and the consensus omnium. The myth that took possession of him made him something greater than a mere craftsman.

Myths, however, consist of symbols that were not invented but happened. It was not the man Jesus who created the myth of the God-man; it had existed many centuries before. He himself was seized by this symbolic idea, which, as St. Mark tells us, lifted him out of the carpenter's shop and the mental narrowness of his surroundings. Myths go back to primitive story-tellers and their dreams, to men moved by the stirrings of their fantasies, who were not very different from poets and philosophers in later times. Primitive story-tellers never worried about the origin of their fantasies; it was only much later that people began to wonder where the story came from. Already in ancient Greece they were advanced enough to surmise that the stories about the gods were nothing but old and exaggerated traditions of ancient kings and their deeds. They assumed even then that the myth did not mean what it said because it was obviously improbable.

Therefore they tried to reduce it to a generally understandable yarn. This is exactly what our time has tried to do with dream symbolism: it is assumed that it does not mean what it seems to say, but something that is generally known and understood, though not openly admitted because of its inferior quality. For those who had got rid of their conventional blinkers there were no longer any riddles. It seemed certain that dreams meant something different from what they said.

This assumption is wholly arbitrary. The Talmud says more aptly: “The dream is its own interpretation.” Why should dreams mean something different from what appears in them? Is there anything in nature that is other than what it is? For instance, the duck-billed platypus, that original monster which no zoologist would ever have invented, is it not just what it is? The dream is a normal and natural phenomenon, which is certainly just what it is and does not mean something it is not. We call its contents symbolic because they have obviously not only one meaning, but point in different directions and must therefore mean something that is unconscious, or at least not conscious in all its aspects.

To the scientific mind, such phenomena as symbolic ideas are most irritating, because they cannot

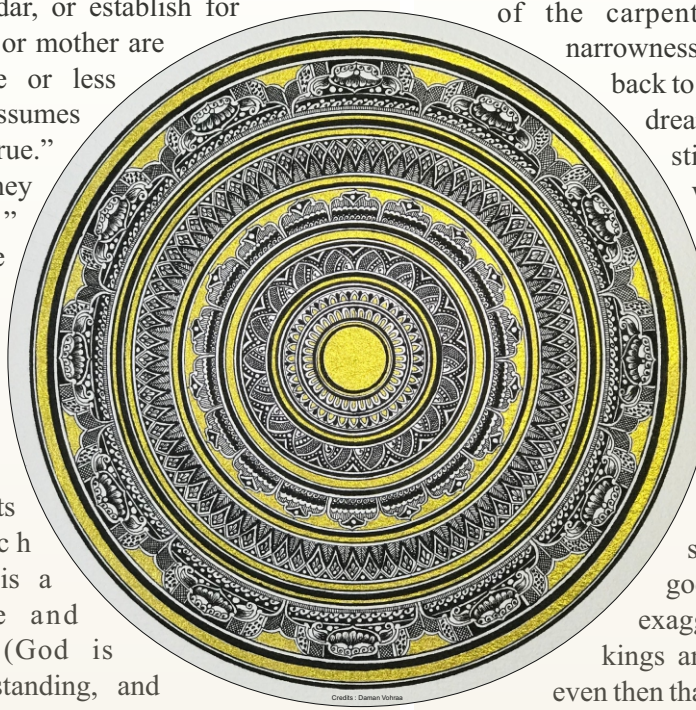
be formulated in a way that satisfies our intellect and logic. They are by no means the only instance of this in psychology. The trouble begins already with the phenomenon of affect or emotion, which evades all the attempts of the psychologist to pin it down in a hard-and-fast concept. The cause of the difficulty is the same in both cases—the intervention of the unconscious. I know enough of the scientific standpoint to understand that it is most annoying to have to deal with facts that cannot be grasped completely or at any rate adequately. The trouble with both phenomena is that the facts are undeniable and yet cannot be formulated in intellectual terms. Instead of observable details with clearly discernible features, it is life itself that wells up in emotions and symbolic ideas. In many cases emotion and symbol are actually one and the same thing. There is no intellectual formula capable of representing such a complex phenomenon in a satisfactory way.

The academic psychologist is perfectly free to dismiss the emotions or the unconscious, or both, from his consideration. Yet they remain facts to which at least the medical psychologist has to pay ample attention, for emotional conflicts and the interventions of the unconscious are the classical features of his science. If he treats a patient at all, he is confronted with irrationalities of this kind whether he can formulate them intellectually or not. He has to acknowledge their only too troublesome existence. It is therefore quite natural that people who have not had the medical psychologist's experience find it difficult to follow what he is talking about. Anyone who has not had the chance, or the misfortune, to live through the same or similar experiences is hardly capable of understanding what happens when psychology ceases to be a tranquil pursuit for the scientist in his laboratory and becomes a real life adventure. Target practice on a shooting range is far from being a battlefield, but the doctor has to deal with casualties in a real war. Therefore he has to concern himself with psychic realities even if he cannot define them in scientific terms. He can name them, but he knows that all the terms he uses to designate the essentials of life do not pretend to be more than names for facts that have to be experienced in themselves, because they cannot be reproduced by their names. No textbook can teach psychology; one learns only by actual experience. No understanding is gained by memorizing words, for symbols are the living facts of life.

The cross in the Christian religion, for instance, is a meaningful symbol that expresses a multitude of aspects, ideas, and emotions, but a cross before somebody's name simply indicates that that individual is dead. The lingam or phallus functions as an all-embracing symbol in the Hindu religion, but if a street urchin draws one on a wall, it just means an interest in his penis. Because infantile and adolescent fantasies often continue far into adult life, many dreams contain unmistakable sexual allusions. It would be absurd to understand them as anything else. But when a mason speaks of monks and nuns to be laid upon each other, or a locksmith of male and female keys. The cross in the Christian religion, for instance, is a meaningful symbol that expresses a multitude of aspects, ideas, and emotions, but a cross before somebody's name simply indicates that that individual is dead. The lingam or phallus functions as an all-embracing symbol in the Hindu religion, but if a street urchin draws one on a wall, it just means an interest in his penis. Because infantile and adolescent fantasies often continue far into adult life, many dreams contain unmistakable sexual allusions. It would be absurd to understand them as anything else. But when a mason speaks of monks and nuns to be laid upon each other, or a locksmith of male and female keys, it would be nonsensical to suppose that he is indulging in glowing adolescent fantasies. He simply means a particular kind of tile or key that has been given a colourful name. But when an educated Hindu talks to you about the lingam, you will hear things we Westerners would never connect with the penis.

You may even find it most difficult to guess what he actually means by this term, and you will naturally conclude that the lingam symbolizes a good many things. It is certainly not an obscene allusion; nor is the cross a mere sign for death but a symbol for a great many other ideas. Much, therefore, depends on the maturity of the dreamer who produces such an image.

The interpretation of dreams and symbols requires some intelligence. It cannot be mechanized and crammed into stupid and unimaginative brains. It demands an ever-increasing knowledge of the dreamer's individuality as well as an ever-increasing self-awareness on the part of the interpreter. No experienced worker in this field will deny that there are rules of thumb that can prove helpful, but they must be applied with prudence and intelligence. Not everybody can master the “technique.” You may follow all the right rules and the apparently safe path of knowledge and yet you get stuck in the most appalling nonsense, simply by overlooking a seemingly unimportant detail that a better intelligence would not have missed. Even a man with a highly developed intellect can go badly astray because he has never learnt to use his intuition or his feeling, which might be at a regrettably low level of development.



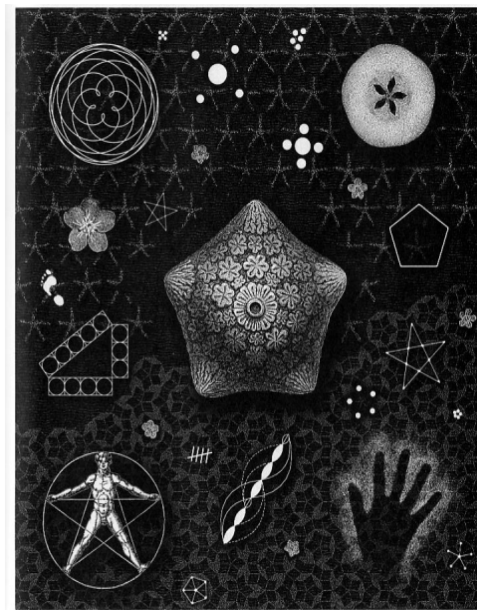
Phive life itself

Excerpt from :
Sacred Number : The Secret Qualities of Quantities

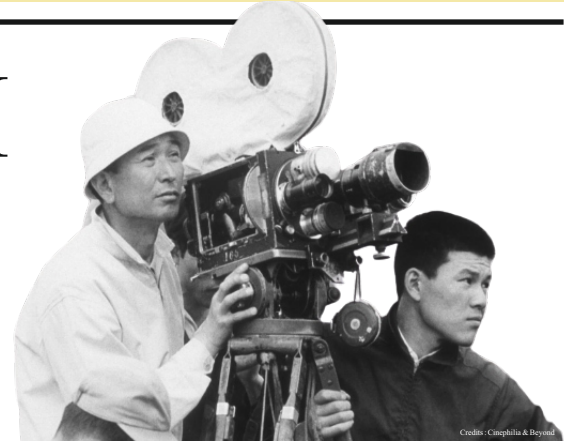
Miranda Lundy (Author of Sacred Geometry)

The quality of five is magical. Children instinctively draw fivefold stars, and we all sense its phizzy, energetic quality. Five marries male and female—as two and three in some cultures, or three and two in others—and so is the universal number of reproduction and biological life. It is also the number of water, every molecule of which is a corner of a pentagon. Water itself is an amazing liquid crystal lattice of flexing icosahedra, these being one of the five Platonic solids (below, second from right), five triangles meeting at each point. As such, water shows its quality as being that of dynamism, and life. Dry things are either dead or they are awaiting water.

Fives are found in apples, flowers, hands, and feet. Our nearest planet, Venus, goddess of love and beauty, draws a lovely fivefold pattern about Earth as she whirls around the sun (opposite, top left). Our most universal scale, the pentatonic, is made of five tones (the black keys on a piano), grouped into twos and threes. The Renaissance demand for intervals involving the number five, like the major third, which uses the ratio five to four, produced the modern scale. Five is the diagonal of a three-by-four rectangle. Unlike threes and fours, fives disdain the plane, waiting for the third dimension to fit together to produce the fifth element.



‘THE EMPEROR & I’: ABBAS KIAROSTAMI MEETS AKIRA KUROSAWA



Credits: Cinephilia & Beyond

What I like about your films is their simplicity and narrative fluency. It is hard to describe them. One has to see them.

-Akira Kurosawa

It is always difficult to judge films. Every time I act as a juror, I tell myself that I would never do that again.

-Abbas Kiarostami

one should commit anything ordinary there. In their eyes naturalism is commonplace. They say everything must be exaggerated, as they believe your films are.” Kurosawa laughs in surprise, “Maybe my actors' behavior look exaggerated in your country, but they are definitely natural here. Cultural differences must not be taken for exaggeration. I have to say that I honestly enjoyed watching your films. They include appreciation for your working style. How do you work with children, in particular? They do not feel at home in my films and keep watching me in a discreet way.” Kiarostami explains “Maybe that's because you are Kurosawa. The children that work for me hardly know me. During the actual filming I try to pretend that I'm not the governor. Usually I ask the crew to judge about their acting. Of course, every needs a special trick, sometimes it is another story.”

“This is the cinema that must be supported and taken seriously. My children and grandchildren never see American films. They have their own boycotting system which rules out violent films. I wish this humanistic cinema could stand against all vulgarity,” says Kurosawa. He adds, “I'm sure good films are being made everywhere. But filmmaking in Europe and the States is going backwards while good films are being made in Asia and finding their way to International film festivals. The global screen is not for the films of only one country. Films make their viewers familiar with the cultural settings of their country of origins. If they are made according to a national culture then they will be welcomed abroad. My grandchildren and I made ourselves familiar with Iran and her people with your films.” “You have said that films must be made with hearts and seen with hearts,” says Kiarostami. And Kurosawa admits that “Yes, I did; unfortunately most Japanese people see films with brains and try to find flaws in it. Sometimes, critics ask questions for which I have no answer, because I have not thought about the matter when I was making the film. Films must be rather felt, but there are little feelings in recent films.” Kiarostami says that maybe filmmakers have built up a kind of bad taste among viewers.” They have misled their tastes, he says, and Kurosawa believes that maybe the offering of old films on laser disks could make viewers familiar with more healthy cinema.

Kurosawa then talks about the similarity between the opening scene of *Madadyo* and Kiarostami's *Where is the friend's Home?* “Apparently we have many things in common,” he observes; and Kiarostami once again stressed that Kurosawa is far more famous. And Kurosawa modestly tells Kiarostami that how he painted the shadows of things in *Dodeskaden* because he was not financially capable of waiting for a brighter day. “Both of us tend to be attached to our locations even after the end of filming our movies,” says Kurosawa. “Every time it is so sad to say goodbye to the protagonists of a film that's finished.” Both of the filmmakers agree that those who look for flaws in films deprives themselves the joy watching a film, “My painting teacher used to tell me to look at the world with a half closed eye. We have to see everything altogether, it is only then that we will be able to see the truth.” Kurosawa's daughter serves tea twice and we have to bid farewell. Kiarostami is concerned about the Japanese master's health, “I don't want to make you more tired.” Kurosawa says he would have taken us to a restaurant if we had time. We hope of meeting him again as soon as possible.

EDITORIAL

“Makrand” emerges from a quest to reimagine the concept of a ‘newspaper’. Newspaper today, quite simply, is a medium of ‘narrating’ the image - flipping its content at highest speed before it is even absorbed. In our era, the process of actively shaping history is largely driven by the power of imagery. Its narration steers our everyday perspectives, underscoring its significant role in modern understandings.

However, we seem to have forgotten that our world is not solely political, economic, or recreational. It's also a vibrant, living entity brimming with personal stories, poems, fictions, scientific discoveries, architectural wonders, ecosystems, cultures, ideas, myths, philosophies, signs, symbols, and various other forms of knowledge. Every day brings new narratives that eclipse the previous ones, blurring the lines between narration, information, and knowledge. In such a whirlwind of rhetorical construction, the significance of conceptual understanding often gets lost. This phenomenon contributes to the proliferation of the world's image as a snapshot in our modern existence. Consequently, our attempt to comprehend the world as an image (whether political, historical, social, economic etc.) reflects the fleeting nature of self-definition. In our era, this is often subsumed into a subjective impasse.

In many respects, Makrand is an endeavor to reintroduce the objectivity of self-consciousness into a public discourse that is gradually fading from our ‘picture thinking consciousness’. We acknowledge that it's perhaps impossible for any philosophical tradition to articulate a worldview without empirically engaging with temporal canons of knowledge.

Given these empirical considerations, Makrand serves as a nexus between the ordinary and the extraordinary, initiating an exploratory dialogue of the Šabda tradition through a newspaper. We humbly seek the blessings of our readers to support our earnest efforts undertaken behind the scenes for these publications. We eagerly anticipate your continued readership and support.

- Amandeep Singh

Late in September 1993, Abbas Kiarostami and Shohreh Golparian held a two and a half hour long meeting with the renowned Japanese maestro Akira Kurosawa in Tokyo.

Kurosawa's daughter opens the door and we see a tall and strong Kurosawa approaching in pink and beige. Later on we find out that on the occasion of his meeting with Kiarostami the Japanese master has forget about his beloved colorful T-shirts and consented to put on a more formal pink blouse. All of us seem to be overwhelmed by Kurosawa's grandeur when he shows us to the second floor study with its black leather furniture, mild lighting and an Oscar statue. Other decorations in the room are some Iranian copper-ware, a photo of Kurosawa's wife and Japanese painting on the wall. “I was in Cannes when you too, were there” it is Kurosawa who opens the discussion, “of course, I had not seen your films then.” And Kiarostami continues, “I had the chance to see your *Madadyo* in Cannes and you were sitting two rows ahead of me. It was a great opportunity to see you and your film at once. You may not know how popular you are in my country. Both the intellectuals and ordinary people like your works. In fact, you and the late Alfred Hitchcock are the most popular foreign filmmakers in Iran. Once one of the officials at the Iranian film industry said that you and Tarkovsky were the only foreign filmmakers whose film compiled with the value system of Iranian arts. I wish I could share the joy of meeting you with others in Iran.”

Kurosawa said, “I was a friend of Tarkovsky. Our friendship started during a visit to Moscow. I was twice invited to Iran more than a decade ago to join the jury of the Tehran International film festival. But I don't like to judge the films. It's too difficult a job for me. I understand you were a member of the jury in Yamagata, wasn't it difficult?” “Yes, it is always difficult particularly when there are no certain criteria. Every time I act as a juror, I tell myself that I would never do that again. But any new invitation creates a new temptation... and it's always impossible to resist when you are tempted to set out for a trip. It is always nice to do something contrary to what you used to; and I won't miss any opportunity,” says Kiarostami. Kurosawa says, “I agree with you, but it is really difficult for me to embark on any trip. My legs are aching and official trips impose limitation on you. You have to accept anything that has been planned for you. In fact you do not travel. They take you from one place to another”, says Kurosawa, but Kiarostami promises to plan his visit to Iran the way he likes it, if he ever sets out for the trip; which is quite unlikely. Yet he is curious about Iran. “I'm sure there are other good filmmakers in Iran. However, what I like about your films is their simplicity and fluency, although it is really hard to describe them. One has to see them.” It is strange how you work with non-professional

actors. How do you work particularly with children?” asks Kurosawa. “The best answer to your question would be that I simply don't know”, says Kiarostami, “I learned this from you and I use it more easily since I first listened to you saying this at last year's Tokyo film festival. Sometimes, non-professional actors' performance surprises me. Of course there are certain rules for everything, but what you gain is not always necessarily the outcome of rules.” Kurosawa believes it is very interesting and at the same time difficult. “Although working with professionals, too, is not so easy. You have to crush them with every film and build them a new. That is why working with professional actors is difficult”—he says. Kiarostami says that he has heard how Kurosawa has treated the veteran actor who played in his latest film. “Everyone was obviously worried about the old man's health,” he says. Kurosawa laughs, “I had no other way but to do that, you have to trim an actor's personality if you expect an excellent performance. To do that, I have to be a little bit violent and exert pressure on them. Have you ever worked with professionals?”

“I've had a fresh experience with a professional actor in my latest film. As you said, they stick to their previous roles. A peril that threatens us, too. Sometimes, we tend use an idea that we have had for our previous films but failed to actualize. As someone has said, one wouldn't get old if s/he could forget her or his experiences. If we could forget our experience our film may not be flawless, but they will certainly be fresh. Veteran actors are powerfully experienced, but alas, they are no longer fresh; and it is difficult to make them return to their credo human feelings,” reasons Abbas Kiarostami. Akira Kurosawa confirms that he too, has to face the same problem. “In order to grasp this feeling of integrity I use long takes using a theatrical style even when what I really want is a brief piece of action. What makes it difficult in the movies is cutting. Sometimes the problem comes from the fact that two actors cannot act in collaboration with each other. When one of them acts really well, this adversely affects the others performance. And when the latter improves, the former is too tired. The most serious problem with an actor is that he does not really listen to the person acting in front of him. He is in fact preparing himself for the next line. You usually see no reaction in an actor's face of what he is seeing or hearing. So I take long takes with several cameras. Actors usually do not know which camera is filming them, so they lose their sensitivity to the camera that is taking a close up. This makes their acting more natural,” says Kurosawa. Kiarostami on the other than exclaims that many of his films have been harshly criticized for being natural. “Critics believe that the stage and the screen are sacred, so no



Excerpt from:
The Undiscovered Self

Claude Lévi-Strauss
(28 November 1908 - 30 October 2009)

Let me start with a personal confession. There is a magazine which I read faithfully each month from the first line to the last, even though I don't understand all of it; it is the *Scientific American*. I am extremely eager to be as informed as possible of everything that takes place in modern science and its new developments. My position in relation to science is thus not a negative one.

Secondly, I think there are some things we have lost, and we should try perhaps to regain them, because I am not sure that in the kind of world in which we are living and with the kind of scientific thinking we are bound to follow, we can regain these things exactly as if they had never been lost; but we can try to become aware of their existence and their importance.

In the third place, my feeling is that modern science is not at all moving away from these lost things, but that more and more it is attempting to reintegrate them in the field of scientific explanation. The real gap, the real separation between science and what we might as well call mythical thought for the sake of finding a convenient name, although it is not exactly that—the real separation occurred in the seventeenth and the eighteenth century. At that time, with Bacon, Descartes, Newton, and the others, it was necessary for science to build itself up against the old generations of mythical and mystical thought, and it was thought that science could only exist by turning its back upon the world of the senses, the world we see, smell, taste, and perceive; the sensory was a delusive world, whereas the real world was a world of mathematical properties which could only be grasped by the intellect and which was entirely at odds with the false testimony of the senses. This was probably a necessary move, for experience shows us that thanks to this separation—this schism if you like—scientific thought was able to constitute itself.

Now, my impression (and, of course, I do not talk as a scientist—I am not a physicist, I am not a biologist, I am not a chemist) is that contemporary science is tending to overcome this gap, and that more and more the sense data are being reintegrated into scientific explanation as something which has a meaning, which has a truth, and which can be explained.

Take, for instance, the world of smells. We were accustomed to think that this was entirely subjective, outside the world of science. Now the chemists are able to tell us that each smell or each taste has a certain chemical composition and to give us the reasons why subjectively some smells or some tastes feel to us as having something in common and some others seem widely different.

Let's take another example. There was in philosophy from the time of the Greeks to the eighteenth and even the nineteenth century—and there still is to some extent—tremendous discussion about the origin of mathematical ideas—the idea of the line, the idea of the circle, the idea of the triangle. There were, in the main, two classical theories: one of the mind as a *tabula rasa*, with nothing in it in the beginning; everything comes to it from experience. It is from seeing a lot of round objects, none of which were perfectly round, that we are able nevertheless to abstract the idea of the circle. The second classical theory goes back to Plato, who claimed that such ideas of the circle, of the triangle, of the line, are perfect, innate in the mind, and it is because they are given to the mind that we are able to project them, so to speak, on reality, although reality never offers us a perfect circle or a perfect triangle.

Now, contemporary researchers on the neurophysiology of vision teach us that the nervous cells in the retina and the other apparatus behind the retina are specialized: some cells are sensitive only to straight direction, in the vertical sense, others in the horizontal, others in the oblique, some of them to the relationship between the background and the central figures, and the like. So—and I simplify very much because it is too complicated for me to explain this in English—this whole problem of experience versus mind seems to have a solution in the structure of the nervous system, not in the structure of the mind or in experience, but somewhere between mind and experience in the way our nervous system is built and in the way it mediates between mind and experience.

Probably there is something deep in my own mind, which makes it likely that I always was what is now being called a structuralist. My mother told me that, when I was about two years old and still unable to read, of

The Meeting of Myth and Science

course, I claimed that actually I was able to read. And when I was asked why, I said that when I looked at the signboards on shops—for instance, *boulangier* (baker) or *boucher* (butcher)—I was able to read something because one level can be reduced to simpler phenomena on other levels. For instance, there is a lot in life which can be reduced to physico-chemical processes, which explain a part but not all. And when we are confronted with there is nothing more than that in the structuralist phenomena too complex to be reduced to phenomena of a

Science has only two ways of proceeding: it is either reductionist or structuralist. It is reductionist when it is possible to find out that very complex phenomena on one level can be reduced to simpler phenomena on other levels. For instance, there is a lot in life which can be reduced to physico-chemical processes, which explain a part but not all. And when we are confronted with there is nothing more than that in the structuralist phenomena too complex to be reduced to phenomena of a

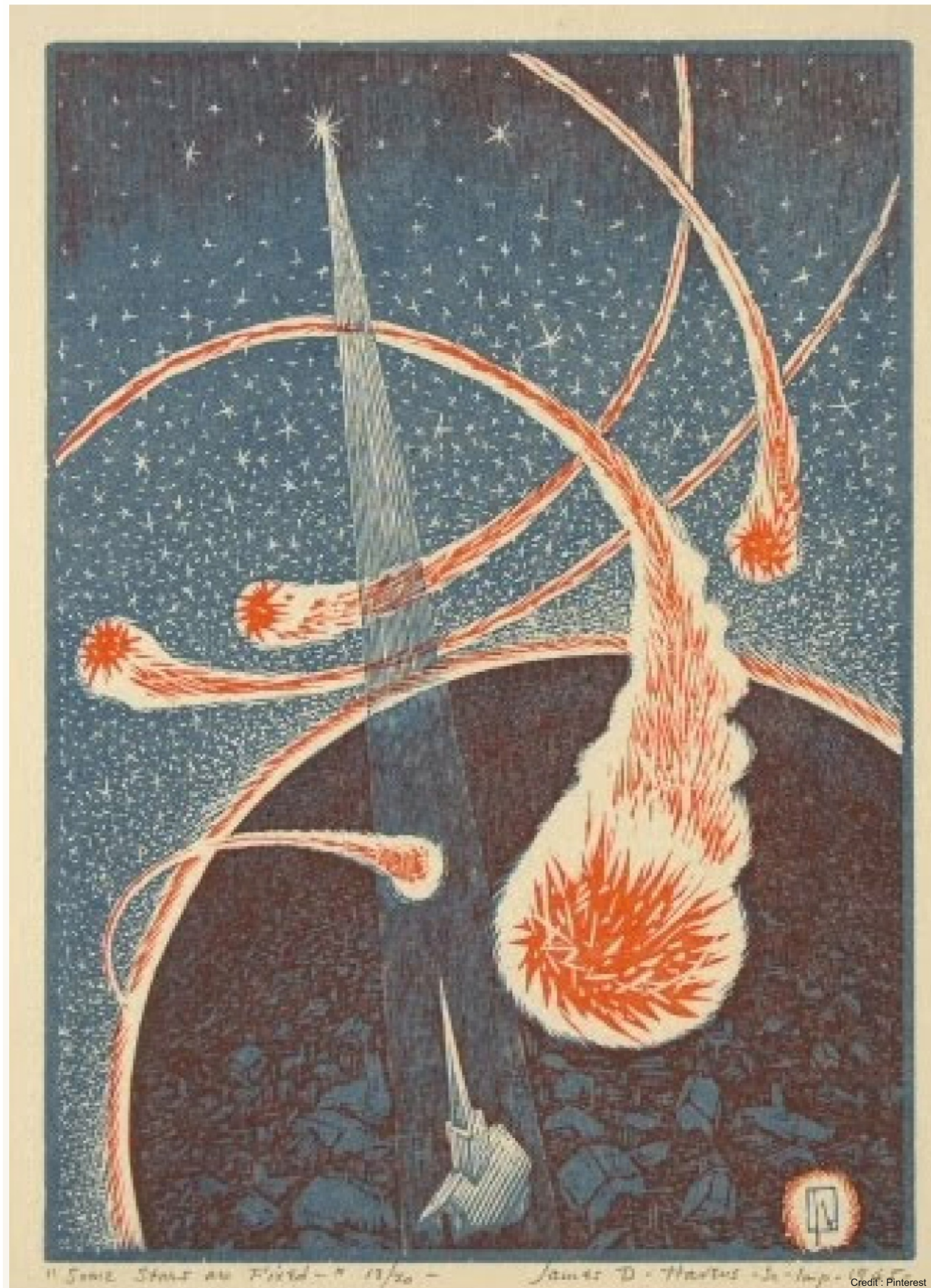
I was interested in anthropology, but because I was trying to get out of philosophy. It also so happened that in the French academic framework, where anthropology was at the time not taught as a discipline in its own right in the universities, it was possible for somebody trained in philosophy and teaching philosophy to escape to anthropology. I escaped there, and was confronted immediately by one problem—there were lots of rules of marriage all over the world which looked absolutely meaningless, and it was all the more irritating because, if they were meaningless, then there should be different rules for each people, though nevertheless the number of rules could be more or less finite. So, if the same absurdity was found to reappear over and over again, and another kind of absurdity also to reappear, then this was something which was not absolutely absurd; otherwise it would not reappear.

Such was my first orientation, to try to find an order behind this apparent disorder. And when after working on the kinship systems and marriage rules, I turned my attention, also by chance and not at all on purpose, toward mythology, the problem was exactly the same. Mythical stories are, or seem, arbitrary, meaningless, absurd, yet nevertheless they seem to reappear all over the world. A 'fanciful' creation of the mind in one place would be unique—you would not find the same creation in a completely different place. My problem was trying to find out if there was some kind of order behind this apparent disorder—that's all. And I do not claim that there are conclusions to be drawn.

It is, I think, absolutely impossible to conceive of meaning without order. There is something very curious in semantics, that the word 'meaning' is probably, in the whole language, the word the meaning of which is the most difficult to find. What does 'to mean' mean? It seems to me that the only answer we can give is that 'to mean' means the ability of any kind of data to be translated in a different language. I do not mean a different language like French or German, but different words on a different level. After all, this translation is what a dictionary is expected to give you—the meaning of the word in different words, which on a slightly different level are isomorphic to the word or expression you are trying to understand. Now, what would a translation be without rules? It would be absolutely impossible to understand. Because you cannot replace any word by any other word or any sentence by any other sentence, you have to have rules of translation. To speak of rules and to speak of meaning is to speak of the same thing; and if we look at all the intellectual undertakings of mankind, as far as they have been recorded all over the world, the common denominator is always to introduce some kind of order. If this represents a basic need for order in the human mind and since, after all, the human mind is only part of the universe, the need probably exists because there is some order in the universe and the universe is not a chaos.

What I have been trying to say here is that there has been a divorce—a necessary divorce—between scientific thought and what I have called the logic of the concrete, that is, the respect for and the use of the data of the senses, as opposed to images and symbols and the like. We are witnessing the moment when this divorce will perhaps be overcome or reversed, because modern science seems to be able to make progress not only in its own traditional line—pushing forward and forward but still within the same narrow channel—but also at the same time to widen the channel and to reincorporate a great many problems previously left outside.

In this respect, I may be subjected to the criticism of being called 'scientific' or a kind of blind believer in science who holds that science is able to solve absolutely all problems. Well, I certainly don't believe that, because I cannot conceive that a will come when science will be complete and achieved. There will always be new problems, and exactly at the same pace as science is able to solve problems which were deemed philosophical a dozen years or a century ago, so there will appear new problems which had not hitherto been perceived as such. There will always be a gap between the answer science is able to give us and the new question which this answer will raise. So I am not 'scientific' in that way. Science will never give us all the answers. What we can try to do is to increase very slowly the number and the quality of the answers we are able to give, and this, I think, we can do only through science.



approach; it is the quest for the invariant, or for the invariant elements among superficial differences.

Throughout my life, this search was probably a predominant interest of mine. When I was a child, for a while my main interest was geology. The problem in geology is also to try to understand what is invariant in the tremendous diversity of landscapes, that is, to be able to reduce a landscape to a finite number of geological layers and of geological operations. Later as an adolescent, I spent a great part of my leisure time drawing costumes and sets for opera. The problem there is exactly the same—to try to express in one language, that is, the language of graphic arts and painting, something which also exists in music and in the libretto; that is, to try to reach the invariant property of a very complex set of codes (the musical code, the literary code, the artistic code). The problem is to find what is common to all of them. It's a problem, one might say, of translation, of translating what is expressed in one language—or one code, if you prefer, but language is sufficient—into expression in a different language.

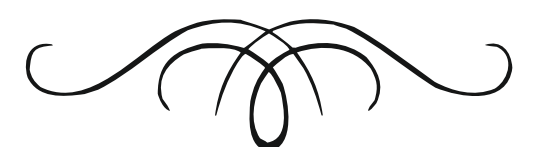
Structuralism, or whatever goes under that name, has been considered as something completely new and at the time revolutionary; this, I think, is doubly false. In the first place, even in the field of the humanities, it is not new at all; we can follow very well this trend of thought from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century and to the present time. But it is also wrong for another reason: what we call structuralism in the field of linguistics, or anthropology, or the like, is nothing other than a very pale and faint imitation of what the 'hard sciences,' as I think you call them in English, have been doing all the time.

lower order, then we can only approach them by looking to their relationships, that is, by trying to understand what kind of original system they make up. This is exactly what we have been trying to do in linguistics, in anthropology, and in different fields.

It is true—and let's personalize nature for the sake of the argument—that Nature has only a limited number of procedures at her disposal and that the kinds of procedure which Nature uses at one level of reality are bound to reappear at different levels. The genetic code is a very good example; it is well known that, when the biologists and the geneticists had the problem of describing what they had discovered, they could do nothing better than borrow the language of linguistics and to speak of words, of phrase, of accent, of punctuation marks, and the like. I do not mean at all that it is the same thing; of course, it is not. But it is the same kind of problem arising at two different levels of reality.

It would be very far from my mind to try to reduce culture, as we say in our anthropological jargon, to nature; but nevertheless what we witness at the level of culture are phenomena of the same kind from a formal point of view (I do not mean at all substantially). We can at least trace the same problem to the mind that we can observe on the level of nature, though, of course, the cultural is much more complicated and calls upon a much larger number of variables.

I'm not trying to formulate a philosophy, or even a theory. Since I was a child, I have been bothered by, let's call it the irrational, and have been trying to find an order behind what is given to us as a disorder. It so happened that I became an anthropologist, as a matter of fact not because





(Author of *Of Epidemic Proportions: The Art and Science of Obesity*)

Dr. Sylvia R. Karasu (Clinical Professor of Psychiatry)

Only a philosopher can ask, 'What is the metaphysical coefficient of lemon?'

"Tell me what you eat, and I shall tell you who you are." So wrote the late 18th, early 19th century French essayist Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin in his classic book *The Physiology of Taste*. Of course, it is not so simple, as David M. Kaplan explains in the introduction to his book *The Philosophy of Food*, (2012), "Philosophers have a long but scattered history of analyzing food... Food is vexing. It is not even clear what it is." So predictably, says Kaplan, "There is no consensus among philosophers about the nature of food." He notes that even our most essential questions about food, such as what we should eat, whether food is safe, or what is considered good food are "difficult questions because they involve philosophic questions about metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, politics, and aesthetics." For example, Kaplan wonders what are the differences between natural and artificial foods, between food and an animal, between food and other things we take into our bodies such as water or medication. Or even how food can change its identity over time as it goes from raw to cooked to spoiled.

Kaplan describes food as nutrition (e.g. objectively required for the body); food as nature (e.g. the more natural the better); food as culture (e.g. with social and cultural meanings and significance, such as categories of good and bad, legal and illegal, ritualistic and symbolic foods); food as a social good (e.g. food distribution as a basic institution of society); food as spirituality (e.g. central to religious traditions); food as desire (e.g. object of hunger and cravings); and food as an aesthetic object (e.g. has taste and appeals to the senses.) To Kaplan, "Food is about life as well as luxury... It is a profoundly moral issue," especially when we consider the basics of not eating other humans and the responsibility to provide food for others, as well as the three food virtues: hospitality (e.g. being a good host); temperance (e.g. moderation in food and drink), and table manners (e.g. all cultures have rules that may involve health, enjoyment and community.)

Other than Hippocrates, whose body of work is replete with references to the importance of a healthy regimen involving a balance between food intake and proper exercise, Plato was one of the ancient Greek philosophers to address the importance of diet and its contribution to disease. Skiadas and Lascaratos (*European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 2001) review the many references to diet and even the dire health consequences of obesity throughout Plato's writings. For example, in *The Republic*, Plato writes, "...the first and chief of our needs is the provision of food for existence and life." In *Laws*, he writes, "For there ought to be no other secondary task to hinder the work of supplying the body with its proper exercise and nourishment" and he describes the obese as "an idle beast, fattened by sloth." In *Timaus*, "...one ought to control all such diseases... by means of dieting rather than irritate a fractious evil by drugging." Skiadas and Lascaratos summarize Plato's contribution by noting that Plato's writings on diet

Some Philosophical Musings on Food

reflected his general theory of moderation that had been a major concept dominating ancient Greek philosophy.

Michel Onfray has written a charming book, *Appetites for Thought: Philosophers and Food*, an *amuse-bouche*, if you will, or rather an *amuse d'esprit*—a book to stimulate our mind's palate. Originally published in the late 1980s, it has just recently (2015) been translated from the French. Onfray, who believes that one's food choice is really "an existential choice," imagines a "banquet of omnivores" where some of the world's greatest philosophers have come to dine.

For example, ancient Greek philosopher Diogenes, (born in the 400s BC), as typical of his group of Cynics, is "possessed of a resolute will to say no, to flush out the conformism of customary behavior," says Onfray. There are numerous reports of Diogenes' unconventional behavior, such as urinating, defecating, and even masturbating publicly. The first principle, though, of the Cynics (from the Greek word for "dog") is to eat only simple, pure raw foods. This is reflective of Diogenes' rejection of fire as a symbol of civilization—"limiting your needs to those of nature." One dies as one lives so it is not surprising to learn from ancient historian Plutarch that Diogenes risked his life in the process of eating a raw octopus.

Onfray describes 18th century philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, famous for his treatise on education *Emile* as a "gastronomic self-denier" who developed a "spartan theory" of food whereby eating "is an imperative for survival, not for enjoyment." Rousseau apparently ate food that required the minimum of preparation: milk, bread, and water. Says Rousseau, in his autobiography *Confessions*, "I do not know know... any better fare than a country meal." In his novel *Julie; or The New Heloise*, he writes, "In general I think one could often find some index of people's character in the choice of foods they prefer."

Eighteenth century Immanuel Kant, famous for his *Critique of Pure Reason*, distinguished between the "superior (and objective) senses" of touch, sight, and hearing from the "inferior (and subjective) senses" of smell and taste. In his *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant writes, "Brutish excess in the use of food and drink is misuse of the means of nourishment... A man who is drunk is like a mere animal, not to be treated as a human being. When stuffed with food he is in a condition in which he is incapacitated for a time..." According to

much that she did not notice a little dog in her path ; she stumbled over it and dropped the pitcher. The dog whined pitifully ; the little girl seized the pitcher.

She thought the water would have been upset, but the pitcher stood upright and the water was there as before. She poured a little into the palm of her hand and the dog lapped it and was comforted. When the little girl again took up the pitcher, it had turned from common wood to silver. She took the pitcher home and gave it to her mother.

The mother said, " I shall die just the same ; you had better drink it," and she handed the pitcher to the child. In that moment the pitcher turned from silver to gold. The little girl could no longer contain herself and was about to put the pitcher to her lips, when the door opened and a stranger entered who begged for a drink. The little girl swallowed her saliva and gave the pitcher to him. And suddenly seven large diamonds sprang out of the pitcher and a stream of clear, fresh water flowed from it. And the seven diamonds began to rise, and they rose higher and higher till they reached the sky and became the Great Bear.



biographers, Kant suffered from irregular digestion and stomach problems throughout his life and admitted to being a hypochondriac. He apparently had nothing more than weak tea for breakfast and ate only one meal a day, at midday. In *The Conflict of the Faculties*, he writes, "...an impulse to have an evening meal after an adequate and satisfying one at



midday can be considered a pathological feeling..."

Nineteenth century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, famous for his statement "God is dead" also suffered from digestive issues, among his many ailments. There has, in fact, been considerable speculation on the nature of his illness. For a discussion of six possible hypotheses, see Tényi's 2012 paper in the journal *Psychiatra*

Hungarica. Nietzsche wrote, in *Ecce Homo*, "I am much more interested in a question on which the 'salvation of humanity' depends far more than on any theologian's credo; the question of nutrition." In *The Gay Science*, he writes, "What is known of the moral effects of different foods? Is there a philosophy of nutrition? (The constant revival of noisy agitation for and against vegetarianism proves that there is no such philosophy.)" Onfray notes that Nietzsche tended to avoid restaurants because they "overfeed" their customers. "Know the size of one's stomach," writes Nietzsche in *Ecce Homo*. According to Onfray, Nietzsche "never put into practice the dietetics of his theories" and again, in his *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche writes, "I am one thing, what I write is another matter."

Twentieth century French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre had a concept of the body that "was above all sick, mutilated, butchered, and unrecognizable," says Onfray, and Sartre had strong likes and dislikes among foods. He is, not surprisingly, the author of *Nausea*. Sartre's lifelong partner Simone de Beauvoir, quotes Sartre as saying, "All food is a symbol." Onfray notes that Sartre accepted only food that had been technically altered or prepared. Apparently, so unlike Diogenes, he disliked the natural and found "only manufactured, artificial products to his liking." De Beauvoir quotes him as saying, "Food must be the result of work performed by men. Bread is like that. I've always thought that bread was a relation with other men." In *Being and Nothingness*, he asks, "What is the metaphysical coefficient of lemon, of water, of oil?" Sartre thought it was for psychoanalysts to explore why someone "gladly eats tomatoes and refuses to eat beans, why he vomits if he is forced to swallow oysters, or raw eggs."

Over the centuries, philosophers never developed a consensus about food and eating but many have had strong opinions about both. For the 21st century, with widespread and pervasive obesity and overweight, perhaps a simple philosophy that we might agree upon is that we should eat to live, rather than live to eat.

Jealousy is more positive term than envy



Peter Sloterdijk (German philosopher)

Globalization is based on the very successful export of European methods of improving living standards. For the past 200 years Europeans and Americans have been developing a range of products that dramatically changes the way of life of people nearly everywhere as soon as the utility value of these new products is recognized. There is a regular jealousy competition about access to these resources.

The great competition is not about goods but about non-material gratification. Hegel talks about the struggle for recognition as the actual motive force of history. Both jealousy and envy exist, of course. 'Jealousy' is the more positive term because jealous people believe in the opportunity of being ahead of their rivals in the race for a particular commodity, even if they first learned from their

rivals to covet what the latter already have.

In the case of envy, jealousy is deprived of its creative edge, and disparagement of others becomes important: if I don't have something, they shouldn't have it either. Jealousy is linked more closely with opportunity and freedom, and envy more with equality. It is easier to make a general case for the unreasonable demand that people should do without something. It's certainly true that envious societies are typified by more redistribution, but a larger state share.

This makes Germany an envious society and the United States a jealous one. The German notion of the state is strongly influenced by territorialism. That is a very tragic notion of the state. It means the state exists for us to be able to die for it. In the end, the nation is a sacrificial entity, and that is something countries based more on maritime cultures, those neo-nomadic collectives of Britons and Americans are reluctant to understand."

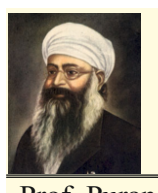


The Great Bear

Leo Tolstoy (9 September 1828 - 20 November 1910)

Along, long time ago there was a big drought on the earth. All the rivers dried up and the streams and wells, and the trees withered and the bushes and grass, and men and beasts died of thirst.

One night a little girl went out with a pitcher to find some water for her sick mother. She wandered and wandered everywhere, but could find no water, and she grew so tired that she lay down on the grass and fell asleep. When she awoke and took up the pitcher she nearly upset the water it contained. The pitcher was full of clear, fresh water. The little girl was glad and was about to put it to her lips, but she remembered her mother and ran home with the pitcher as fast as she could. She hurried so



Prof. Puran Singh

O Flower Gatherer

O Flower Gatherer!" says the rose,
"Tear me not away from my parent stem!
Linked with it, the life sap of the infinite
life flows through me.
I blossom and glow and perfume the very
universe.
All that come hither may drink of joy from
the fragrant scent of my soul.
"O flower gatherer! why dost thou take me
away, to have me all for thyself, thine
only, denied to all others!
Ah! it will be so, it will be so, thou wilt
have me all for thyself.
But thou wilt retain me for less than a
twinkling of an eye.
And I, my perfume, my beauty, my soul,
and all I am will die."

The Dew Drop on the Lotus Leaf

I am the dewdrop trembling on the lotus
leaf, As the flower floats on the water!
Borne on a ray of the sun, I dropped,
Like a pearl strung on a thread of gold.
I quiver on the lotus leaf as quivers the
morning ray,
The hand that dropped me from on
high
In itself holds all the strings of guiding
light. It is the hand of my King!
I play on the lotus leaf to day;
Tomorrow I shall be with him!
He drops me, and he draws me up
A dewdrop on the lotus leaf.



Mary Oliver

Mindful

Every day
I see or hear
something
that more or less
kills me
with delight,
that leaves me
like a needle
in the haystack
of light.
It was what I was born for-
to look, to listen,
to lose myself
inside this soft world
-to instruct myself
over and over
in joy, and acclamation.
Nor am I talking
about the exceptional,
the fearful, the dreadful,
the very extravagant -but of the ordinary,



Poem of the One Word

This morning
the beautiful white heron
was floating along above the water
and then into the sky
of this the one world
we all belong to
where everything
sooner or later
is a part of everything else
which thought made me feel
for a little while
quite, beautiful, myself.

-BY MARY OLIVER

Adrift

Sometimes,
I am just like a broken compass
that will point anywhere but North.
An hourglass
with asymmetric bulbs
and sand flowing Anti-gravity.
An obscure effigy
that blocks a ray of light and casts
a Hundred or Zero shadows.

-BY NADIYA

Credits : Amandeep Kaur

Elevating the spirit of every music to the firmamental

O' our Centenarian matriarch
Bless us with your grace
So our spirits learn to forever fraternize
With your far – spread plains and deep
He drops me, and he draws me up
With your far – spread plains and deep
freshwaters
With your lofty and steadfast
lighthouses With your robins, blue jays,
and white tailed dear
With your turtles, mastadons, and
trouts With your apple blossoms, irises,
trilliums
With your oaks, beeches, birches, and
white pines

So when we behold them
We see in them the colors of your
bridehood
So when we reminisce them
We hail their traces to times
immemorial So when we eulogize your
grandeur
We osmotically imbibe it in our miens
For our easterly mother transported us
to your lap
With the prayer that we devote our
spirit and soul to you
And in your service and honor
Lead our lives how you have lived it
since
the birth of epoch.



Surkhab Kaur

Madness

They say, repetition
with invariable outcomes
is madness.
Then I am mad.
My limbs flail
with purpose,

as I inhale salt
in the fluid desert.
Perhaps I understand

Sisyphus's turmoil,
panting and laboring
in my personal Tartarus.

I bet he went cuckoo,
climbing and pushing
again and again

and again and again.
I'm on my way there too,
reaching for shores

always a breath
too far away. I swim
in the open ocean,
a vast expanse
of fluffy white clouds
and a deceptively calm blue

through elusive horizons,
illusory islands and wayward
floats. I swim for I must

be somewhere better.
I swim for a few infinities
roller-coasting past

shades of more blue,
only to find myself
amidst this maddening inferno.

the common, the very drab,

the daily presentations.
Oh, good scholar,
I say to myself,
how can you help

but grow wise
with such teachings
as these -the untrimmable light

of the world,
the ocean's shine,
the prayers that are made
out of grass?



Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia

I and I

In the identification parade
There is a multitude of half-covered faces.
(As if they are ten heads of Ravana on a
single trunk.)
Every face is different from the other,
As I see my image in the mirror
In the same manner
I try to identify
These half-covered faces.

My mind is plagued
With a feeling of distance real and unreal,
The distance
Which intervenes
Reflection and existence
Reflection that depends on being
Being that remains unperceived without
reflection.

Sunset is approaching
Light is on wings
So I knit my brow
And try to know
who is the 'I' in them?
If there is no 'I'
In this multitude

The accusing finger can claim no latitude
And no target
If I do not place the accusing finger
Then one plus one does not make two.
If one plus one does not make two
Then where to begin
And where to end?

So I knit my brow
And try to know
who is the 'I' in them



Harjot Kaur

My Centenarian Mother Michigan

(On hundred Years of Sikh Migration to Michigan)

How might I fathom you, my Centenarian
Mother?
Are you the freshwater from heavens
That nurtured my halcyon days in the east
And then meandered through the oceans
To nourish the days of my youth in the west ?

Are you the sprawling field
That runs across the vast and glorious plains
And fed me corn and mustard in the east
And in the west served me maple's swains

Or, are you the sweet petrichor
That I savored in the lower Himalayan
foothills
And you followed me to the Mt Huron peaks
To kindle my senses in its sprawling mudsills
Perhaps, you are the ancient Veena

Or, are you the temple of our groom, the ONE
Where he sits in the grandiose of his majestic
garb
And through the many arms of your lakes's
waters

You balance his idol amidst their boisterous
rhubarb

Might you be the moccasin of tenderness
That warms each of my reluctant steps
For you know my shy and needy spirit
Often molds me into dormant schleps

Perhaps, you are the fire of the Potawatami
That simmers incessantly in deep forest
trenches
In the hope that the Odawas will coral around
her
And the Ojibwas will meld their musical
arches

Or, are you the voice of your Bonga Children
That still wails in the winds that flow over you
And reminds us all of the pain you persevered
To see one of your progenies, decimate in you

You, our centenarian mother
Took in your lap our spirits delict
For each of your children that ever came to
you
Was bespectacled by your shiny inflict
And mesmerized by the bounty of your mien

Yet you overlooked each of our instinct
You, our centenarian matron
Comforted selflessly our landing on your
bosom
Even when you knew our hearts ached
For our distant mother

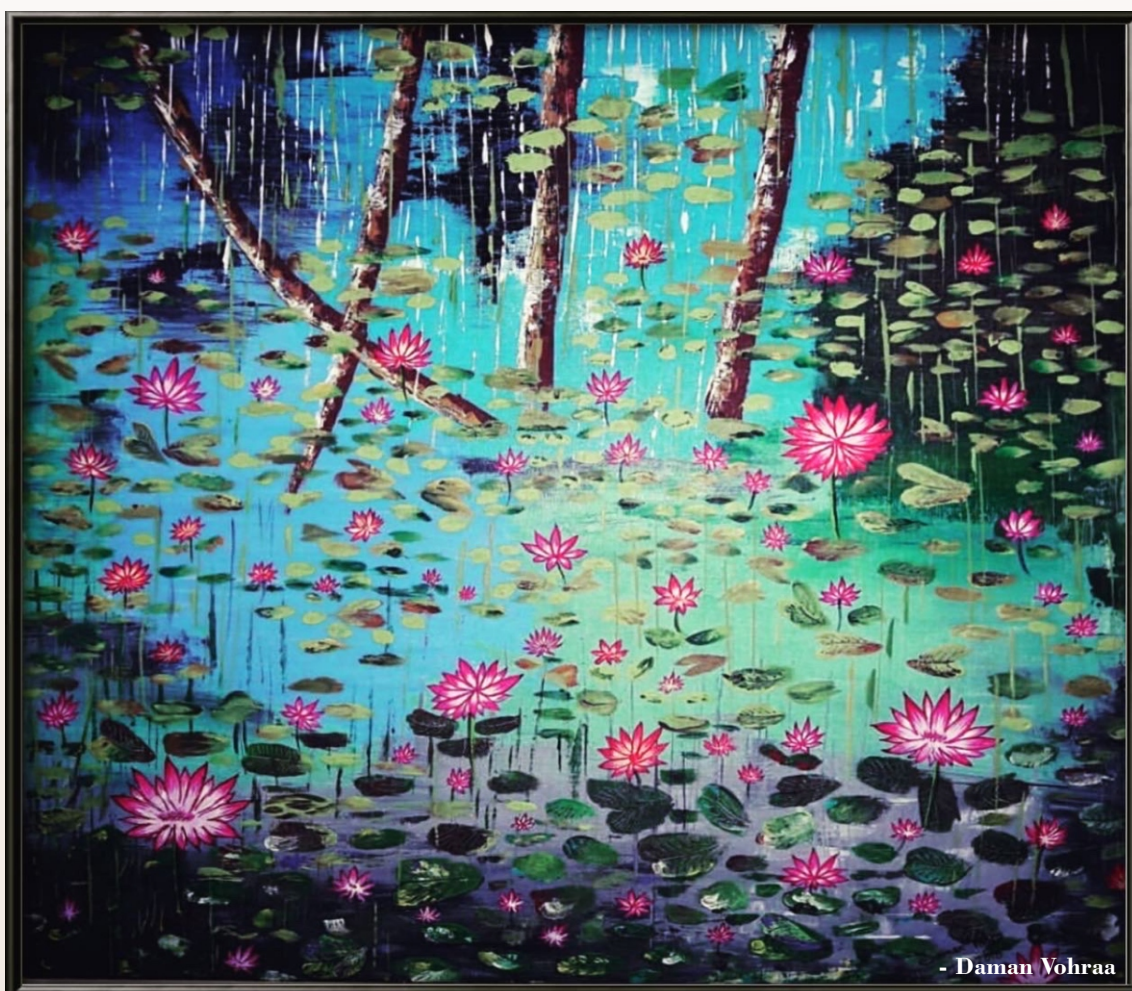
You christened love as love sublime
In rendering it as the pinnacle of
unconditionality
And adorning it with the ether of all –
pervasiveness
Corroborating it to be the eternal pervasive
axiality

You raised us and our several generations
Bathing them in plentiful abundance
And liberated our fearful souls
From the tempests of remonstrance
You festooned our skylark spirits
And propelled them to soar high into the
clouds
You unveiled elusive and exclusive vistas
That peeked at us through their stealthy
shrouds

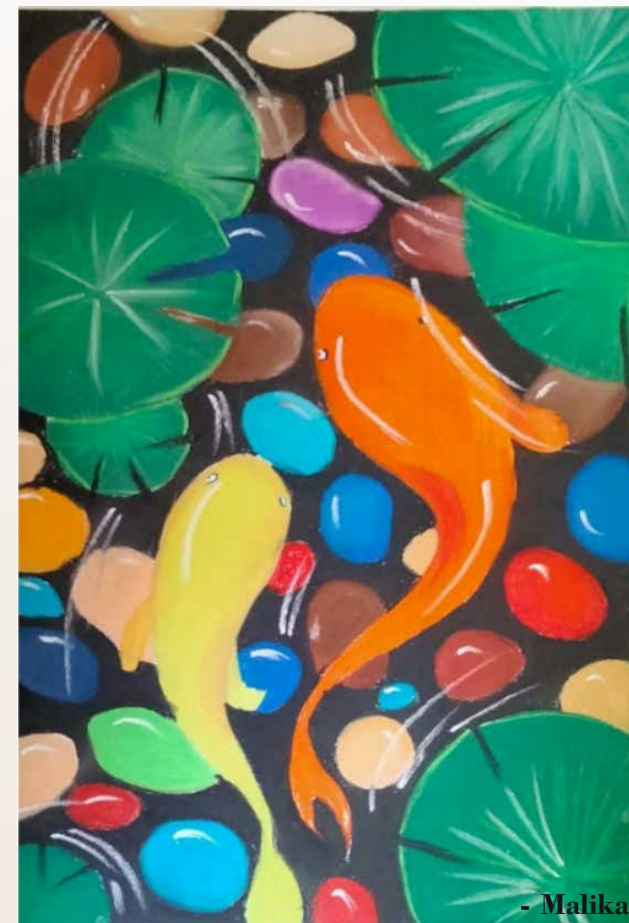
Like the dearest of our chums
You listened and reverberated our songs of the
oriental
And rejoiced equally to the lyrics of the
occidental



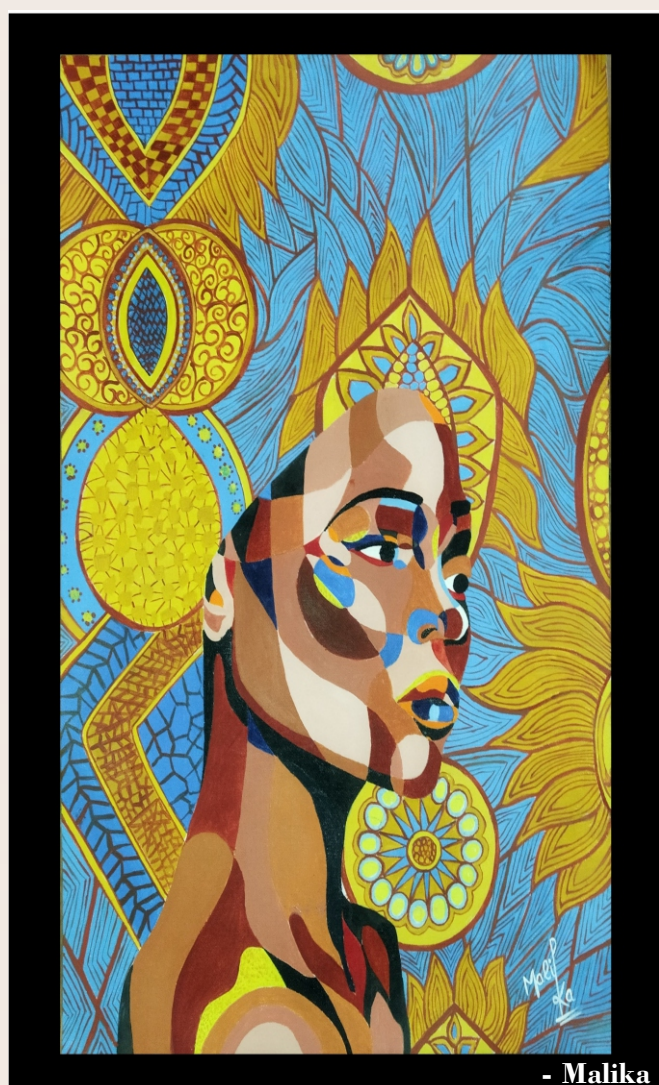
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- Daman Vohraa



- Malika



- Malika



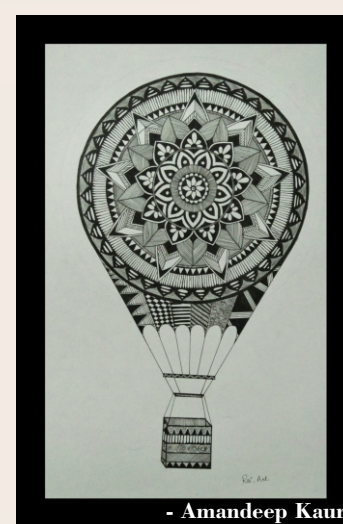
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- Shweta



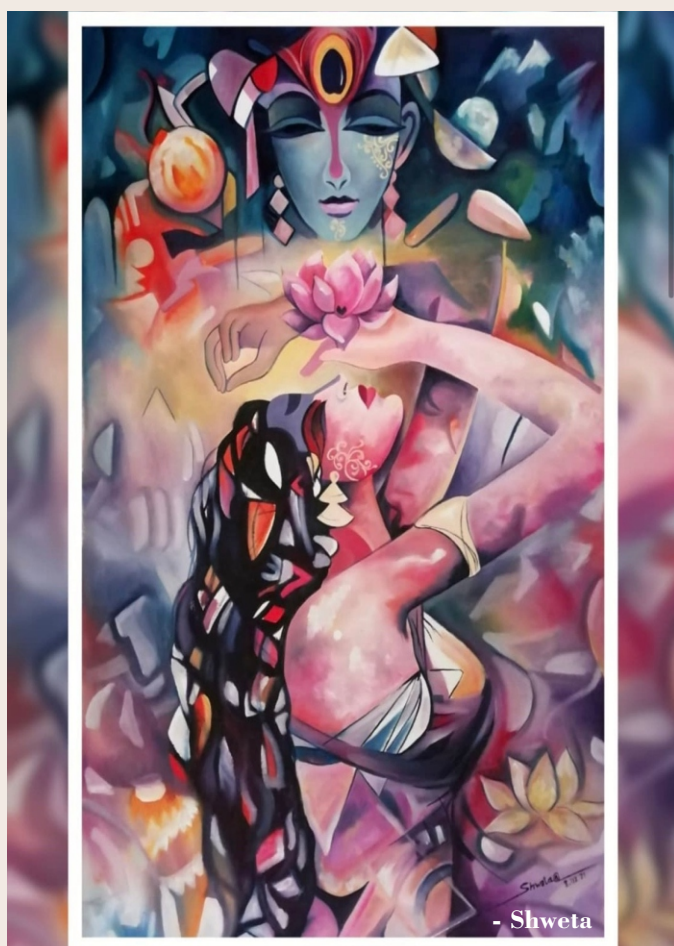
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- Daman Vohraa



- Shweta



- Manojain Manu