



The Art of Movement and Pictorial Art

Man has the ability and the inclination to invent other forms besides himself and the forms which he comes upon. He creates symbols and, through them, represents the surrounding, living reality. He creates representatives of that reality, "images" in which the form he perceives and the form he creates fall together.

Pictorial art is a convenient expression, though hardly a happy one. It is wrong to limit the power of representation to painting and sculpture, in the face of the fact that it belongs, beyond doubt, as a major component of the other arts, such as dance and, above all, literature, and is actually lacking only in music. The ability to make images is primeval, and it is no accident that the earliest records of human activity show men making pictures. The prehistoric drawings and paintings on the walls of caves are not only evidence of the creative ability of man but also evidence at the same time of his mastery.

If we wish to give an account of the importance of images for man, we shall still make a survey primarily of "pictures," that is, products of sculpture, painting, or drawing. And if we wish to know exactly what an image really means to a man, we shall do well to inquire as to the connection between the image of man and the image of God.

In the very ability to make images, there is a religious component. Every art is movement. In art, the objects of life obey a peculiar rhythm. But in the pictorial arts (and in architecture) this rhythm is fixed; movement is checked. Powerful life can speak from a painting or statue, but it is as though the life were caught fast at a particular moment, as though motion were frozen. Words, too, call forth images, but their movement is continuous. The image forms before our eyes and, scarcely completed, is replaced by another. Dance, too, has a plastic character, but the image does not remain still; it forms incessantly, only to disintegrate again, equally incessantly. In a painting, in a statue, in a building, on the contrary, movement has passed from a fluid to a solid state. This results in very peculiar problems, which Gotthold Lessing discussed in his *Laokoön*, and which have caused our time, less given to observation than to technicalization, to invent the film, or as it was called in our youth, "the moving pictures."

The film art is imperialistic. It claims both drama and dance for itself, and now, through a new technical *tour de force*, has also incorporated words and music.

Kierkegaard saw the perfection of art in its growing free of space in order to turn

to time; in other words, art is the more perfect the more purely it is movement. Progressing from space to time, sculpture becomes painting. Music alone has time as an element, but it is lost, since it has no ground on which to stand. It pays for its existence with ceaseless movement; it "sounds in time, but fades away at once and has no duration." Thus, poetry is perfect art because, unlike painting, it does not have to limit itself to the moment, but neither does it vanish with time, as does music. One does not have to agree with Kierkegaard's evaluation to admit that he has presented the problem with unusual clarity. In addition, there is the fact that sculpture and painting (I omit architecture here, because in it everything is different) are bound by space, that they fix spatially, that they must interrupt the movement of life, also, perhaps even primarily, have religious significance.

I understand this religious significance in a double sense: positively and negatively. Representation as the freezing of the stream of life is a religious act which can be transformed at any moment into the opposite.

IMAGE IS NOT LIKENESS

"Pictorialization" is not the same thing as making a likeness. The man to whom it first occurred to fix permanently that which surrounded him did not intend to create a faithful reproduction. The pictures of men and animals which we have come to know from ancient cultures are neither likenesses nor portraits. At times, it is true, they may be amazingly true to life (think of the prehistoric representations of animals, their behavior and their movements, of the Egyptian geese, of the horses and asses, and much more), but no less frequently we find renderings which agree with "reality" only in a few points. Especially where human beings are concerned, representation is by no means true to nature (we think of Negro sculpture, of the statues which seem to us almost hieratic from the Old Kingdom of Egypt, of the most ancient Greek sagas). Representation is not reproduction, but a second thing is placed before and beside the first: it is the expression of a remarkable double experience, peculiar to man, regarding the forms which surround him. "Art is the signature of man," says Ches-



Sculptures of the Assumption of virgin Mary at altar in the abbey church of Rohr, Lower Bavaria, Germany, Credits: lookphotos.



Gerardus Van Der Leeuw
Excerpt from: *Sacred and Profane Beauty: The Holy in Art*

terton. Man has the ability and the inclination to invent other forms besides himself and the forms which he comes upon. He creates symbols and, through them, represents the surrounding, living reality. He creates representatives of that reality, "images" in which the form he perceives and the form he creates fall together. An image is a representation, created by man, of a visionary form which in essentials is identical with that form.

ORNAMENT

Thus, we are dealing with representation, not reproduction. In primitive art and the art of classical antiquity, this receives clear expression. One of the oldest forms of pictorial art is surely tattooing. We might think at first that the practice is purely decorative, but that is not correct. A pure will to ornament would not agree with primitive thought. Ornament as ornament does not fit into the unity of life and thought which we know from the primitive structure. We decorate our houses and furniture with ornaments. Primitive man does so, too, but for him, the ornament has not only symbolic but actual meaning. The legs of your chair are decorated with lion claws; the joiner did not give the matter any particular thought but took the motif from the history of art. In ancient Egypt, the same claw at the foot of a couch is replete with meaning: one rests upon the lion, the sun god, who overcomes death. Thus, rest becomes, instead of a likeness of death, a prelude to eternal life. Primitive and prehistoric man loved to draw the animals which he hunted, becoming master over them by depicting them. This agrees with the fact that primitive art often hints at more than it represents. What we call ornament has a very specific meaning on the Australian Tjurungas. We see nothing but lines and circles, but they represent women, houses, and animals. Something similar is true for the oldest, so-called geometric period of Greek vase painting, where every figure has its own meaning. In the oldest Egyptian drawings, it still is not clear whether ships or villages are represented. Thus, the question arose whether this ancient art had religious significance. We want to repeat here what we have said in another context: that the religious character of art is not conditioned by its subject, but by its purpose, by its character.



Ewer

This ewer belongs to a family of silver-inlaid brass vessels, alike in form and stature, each adorned with its own world of imagery. Yet, unlike the others whose fluted sides and repoussé lions guard their necks, this one bears crowned harpies upon its shoulders and a firmament of astrological visions across its body, giving its ornament a deeper aura of omen and grace. Within medallions of curling vines that unfold into rabbits' heads, the zodiac signs emerge in celestial order, each accompanied by its ruling planet, murmuring a message drawn from the vast rhythm of the cosmos.

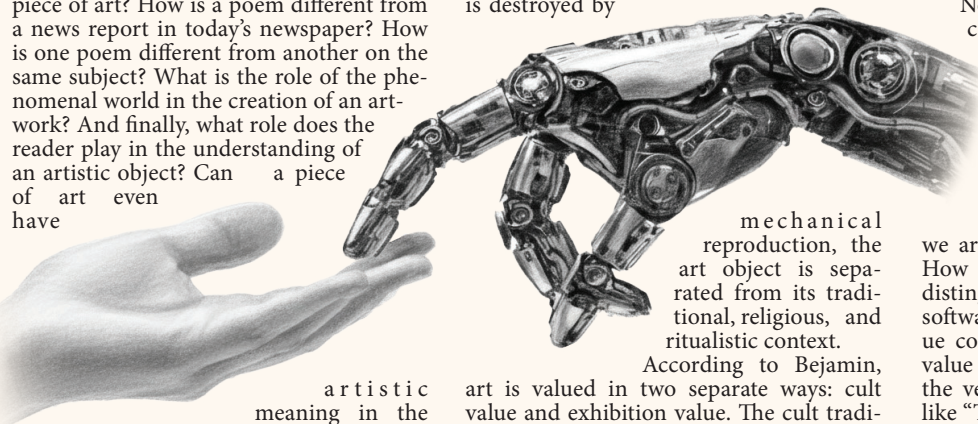
Credits: The Met Fifth Avenue

The Aura of Art in the Age of AI Revisiting Walter Benjamin

When I contemplate a work of art be it a poem, a painting, or a novel I can't help but think about its creator. They must have possessed some extraordinary traits to be able to create such a thing. In this regard, every thoughtful student of art, including myself, encounters such questions: What is it like to be an artist? Who is a poet, a novelist, or a painter, and why do they possess these special traits?

The sphere of questioning then expands to the artwork itself: What defines a piece of art? How is a poem different from a news report in today's newspaper? How is one poem different from another on the same subject? What is the role of the phenomenal world in the creation of an artwork? And finally, what role does the reader play in the understanding of an artistic object? Can a piece of art even have

Benjamin presents an important insight by stating that advances in technology, which allow art to be more easily replicated, have divorced art from its aura. By the "aura" of an artwork, Benjamin indicates its uniqueness, authenticity, and contextual value, which is relevant only in the cultural and traditional context of the work. He argues that with mechanical reproduction, the art piece becomes a mass-object, and thus art consumption becomes more about distraction and mass-reception rather than deep contemplation. When the unique character (aura) of an artwork is destroyed by



artistic meaning in the absence of a society to receive it? These are questions that have been an integral part of our poetics since ancient times.

Now, as human history has witnessed a technological revolution in our capitalist, postmodern age, these eternal questions regarding art have been both intensified and revived. To delve into these questions, we can organize our perspective by using Walter Benjamin's seminal essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," as our contextual point of departure.

mechanical reproduction, the art object is separated from its traditional, religious, and ritualistic context.

According to Benjamin, art is valued in two separate ways: cult value and exhibition value. The cult tradition features ceremonial objects meant to be valued simply for their own existence, while exhibition value comes into being when a piece of art is placed on view. He argues that contemporary art is created only for its exhibition value. With the destruction of the aura, the relationship between an artwork and its beholder (the public) has become superficial and mechanical. The use of the artwork then becomes politicized and commercialized.

Benjamin argues that the dominant economic power in a capitalist society, which is responsible for the reproduction



Surinder Singh
School of Panjab Studies,
Guru Nanak Dev University
surindersingh3991@gmail.com

of art, attempts to aestheticize politics. He further explains that the only result of an aestheticized political discourse is war, and that the proponents of war will try to make war and its technologies seem beautiful and valuable. This insight is remarkably relevant even for today's popular art, i.e., movies and songs that aestheticize violence, weapons, consumer culture, and sexuality.

Now, the question for us arises: can we accept Benjamin's insights absolutely, without a margin of doubt? If we consider other aspects of the subject, is it not possible for Artificial Intelligence (AI) to play a complementary role in the creation of art?

In our age of AI reproduction, we are forced to ask new questions. How can art created by a human be distinguished from that of an AI or software mechanism? Has market value completely replaced the aesthetic value of art? Or are we, perhaps, on the verge of encountering a concept like "The End of Human Art"?

While Benjamin focused on how technology separates an artwork from its tradition, he did not foresee a time when it could also act as a guardian of it. Is it not true that technology has also made a commitment to preserve all art forms through its numerous preserving devices? The concerns of Benjamin are profound, but the conversation must now evolve to include technology not just as a replicator, but as a creator and a preserver, forcing us to redefine the very meaning of aura, artist, and art itself.

"What Is a Classic?" A Reflection on T. S. Eliot's Essay

It is rare to encounter a literary essay so foundational, so quietly audacious, as T. S. Eliot's "What Is a Classic?" My engagement with this text stems from the intense clarity it offers, cutting through a critical landscape often muddled by debates of taste and fleeting literary trends. Eliot's true power lies not in asking what fashionable is, but in compelling the deeper question of what is foundational. For any reader seeking serious literary standards, this essay serves as both map and challenge, fundamentally reshaping not only how we read, but why we read.

Eliot opens this essay with the impossibility of a final definition of 'classic,' quickly brushing aside weary disputes between 'classic' and 'romantic' and refusing entanglement in literary politics. Instead, he offers a singular, contextually rooted use of the word 'classic': one that does not rest on mere excellence or reputation, but on the conditions under which maturity, permanence, and universality can emerge. Such qualities arise from a civilization, language, and individual mind, all ripened by history. Virgil is, for Eliot, not only a rare poet but the culminating consciousness of Rome, standing at the peak of Latin literature and in the central artery of European civilization's intellectual heartbeat.

Crucially, Eliot's sense of the variety that every scholar and every reader bring to their testimony, whether of Virgil or of English literature of the 17th and 18th centuries, opens the category of classic to genuine pluralism, even as he insists on its singular greatness. Thus, universality is not the flattening of diversity, but the inclusion that maturity brings. This profound insight, linking universality to inclusion, leads directly to Eliot's analytical core: the concept of maturity, a term admittedly elusive yet indispensable as a prism for understanding both individual literary achievement and the accomplishment of a whole society. The

classic, he tells us, can only arise when a civilization, its language, and its literature have matured, and when the work is the product of a mature mind. Yet, this maturity is never uniform or automatic; it is the result of ordered, sometimes unconscious, historical ripening, a process involving just as much selection and restriction as development.

Applying this developmental lens, Eliot uses the reference to Shakespeare and Marlowe here to show that the conscious maturation of Shakespeare's mind, even alongside his contemporaries, yields lessons not only about individual genius but about the culture and period that shape and are shaped by it. The evolution of language from simplicity to complexity, from rough difference to subtlety, traces periods both before and after classic ages, marked by monotony and eccentricity and often lacking the elusive "community of taste."

Therefore, the classic age is rare, perhaps as rare as the moment when Virgil wrote, at the apex of Roman history and under Greece's enduring shadow. Such perfection of the common style is not an embrace of blandness; it is the presence of differences made subtle and refined, a vision not of narrow provincialism but of openness to universal communication. As someone deeply engaged with translation and literary histories, I find this movement away from provincial pride and toward collective maturity absolutely critical in understanding literature's true value.

Following this logic, Virgil emerges as an archetype, demonstrating Eliot's notion that the classic must arise from not just conscious history but from a history that encompasses more than the poet's own people. Virgil's task is to reconcile the Greek and Trojan legacies, to embody Roman identity while remaining receptive to broader European influence; this is not imitation or adaptation, but high synthe-



Harkamalpreet Singh
Department of Panjab University
Delhi, New Delhi
harkamalpreet4@gmail.com

sis. Provincial literature, defined by Eliot as narrow in thought, culture, and creed, distorts values by confining its standards to a limited area. Today, provincialism is unmoored from geography and more often a matter of time; without the classical yardstick, we mistake ephemeral trends for essential truths and become "provincials together," isolated from history and indifferent to the standards that give true meaning to art.

Eliot's conviction is that universality is never effortless but fiercely earned. The classic achieves comprehensiveness, expressing the maximal feeling and genius of its people, and yet also finds equal significance in relation to a few foreign literatures. 'This moves us from the 'universal author,' as Goethe imagined, to a universal classic whose meaning transcends provincial boundaries and becomes enduringly human.

Eliot's essay clarifies that artistic creation (and even life) always involves sacrifice: "the sacrifice of some potentialities to realize others is a condition of artistic creation, as it is a condition of life in general." Thus, Eliot teaches that classics are not random honors but hard-won destinations where language, civilization, and mind converge. Reading "What Is a Classic?" reveals why simple greatness is not enough; societies and languages must mature before their works can claim classic status. Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare: these names clarify the standards for preserving literature and freedom against fleeting taste and anxious modernity.

Eliot's essay corrects us, urging us to hold the classic ideal. Tradition is not a burden but living potential, bringing order and countering the present's chaos. It connects each writer's struggle to history and civilization, inspiring pride in the past and faith in the future. This is the act of fulfilling human language and experience's deepest possibilities, renewed by each generation who cares for literature.



The Disappearing Artist: Understanding *Kantara* Beyond Its Forest

In the trance, the performer ceases to be a man. The painted face, the trembling body, the voice that is not his own, all merge into something other. The question arises: when the Nartak (performer) speaks, who speaks? The man or the god?



A scene from *Kantara* - Varaha Roopam, Credits: Youtube

Theatres still echo with chants of "Daiva!" and the reverberation of drums. *Kantara* has not merely played on screens; it has inhabited them, breathing through the smoke and dust of the forests of Tulu Nadu. Since its release, countless reviews have surfaced. Some praise its visual spectacle, others its anthropological depth, and many its rooted portrayal of aboriginal faith. People have discussed its fable, its gods, and its grandeur.

Yet I find myself drawn not to its story or folklore but to the tremor beneath it, the question it hides in its rituals: what is art, and what becomes of the artist once the art begins? This is not a film merely about gods and men or about a tribe defending its forest. It is about the artist confronting the possibility of his own disappearance.

The film opens with a story told like an ancient dream. A king, crowned with gold yet crushed by restlessness, wanders into a forest in search of peace. There, amid the rustling leaves, he encounters a sacred stone radiating stillness, the seat of the Daiva, the guardian spirit of the land. The king offers his riches in exchange for the calm he feels, but the tribe refuses. The Daiva, speaking through a possessed dancer, demands not gold but justice: that the king grant the forest to its people. In surrendering his power, the king discovers the peace his wealth could never buy.

That act of giving, of release rather than conquest, becomes the first creative act in *Kantara*. It is a parable not only of faith but of art itself. For every artist must one day learn what the king learns: that creation begins where possession ends. To create is not to hold, but to let go.

The Stoics would call it the mastery of one's inner world. The Buddhists would call it the renunciation of craving. But *Kantara* dramatizes it not in the calm of a monastery but in the fever of the forest, where peace must be wrestled from chaos.

The forest in *Kantara* is not a setting; it is a consciousness. The people breathe with it, speak to it, and defend it as though defending their own heartbeat. It is art in its purest form: organic, uncontrollable,

and alive.

For the feudal landlord, a descendant of the same king, the forest is merely property. He represents the artist's temptation to own his creation, to domesticate the wild impulse that gave birth to it. The tribe, by contrast, represents the opposite instinct: to live with art rather than over it.

Here the film quietly stages a Marxian conflict. The land becomes the means of production, and the struggle for it mirrors the historical struggle between ownership and community. But beyond economics lies a spiritual allegory. The artist must choose between exploitation and belonging, between mastery and immersion. The forest resists the notion of private property because it belongs to the rhythm of the cosmos. Similarly, art resists the notion of possession because it belongs to a mystery larger than the artist.

Then comes the Bhoota Kola, that electrifying and sacred performance where

a man becomes the vessel of the divine. It is both ritual and revelation, and it is here that *Kantara* turns from story to metaphysics.

In the trance, the performer ceases to be a man. The painted face, the trembling body, the voice that is not his own, all merge into something other. The question arises: when the Nartak (performer) speaks, who speaks? The man or the god?

The film leaves this question unanswered, and that is its greatest answer. The Daiva's riddle, "If you can find this body, it is the performer; if you cannot, it is the god," is not about faith alone. It is about art. The greatest art, perhaps, is that which cannot be traced back to a self. It erases the artist and lets something higher—beauty, truth, or divinity—take over.

The film answers through absence. The performer runs into the forest and disappears. The crowd waits, searching for the body that once held the divine. There is none. What remains is

wind, dust, and a silence thick with meaning.

That disappearance is the ultimate metaphor for art. True art, like the Daiva, cannot coexist with the ego. It demands the artist's surrender. The dancer does not imitate the divine; he becomes it, and in becoming, he vanishes.

In the artist's journey, there is always a war between creation and self-preservation. Every artist carries within him the landlord and the tribesman, the one who wants to claim and the one who wants to belong. The landlord seeks to define, to own meaning, to bend the sacred to his will. The tribesman listens, receives, becomes. Their conflict mirrors the human condition itself, the duality of material desire and spiritual release.

In Marxian terms, the landlord's greed alienates him from the land, just as the modern artist, obsessed with fame or form, becomes alienated from the essence of creation. The tribal performer, on the other hand, is the artist who returns to the raw pulse of art, the earth before artifice, the silence before speech.

Rishab Shetty's *Kantara* is therefore not about faith alone. It is about that thin, trembling line where faith becomes form, where art becomes prayer. It reminds us that every act of creation begins with the willingness to vanish, to be taken over by something greater—call it Daiva, call it muse, call it truth.

At the climax, when human justice collapses, it is the Daiva who restores order. The law of the state, written on paper, fails; the law of art, written on breath and faith, prevails. This is not mere fantasy. It is an assertion that the aesthetic and the ethical are intertwined, that art, when true, corrects what reason cannot. The divine possession is not superstition but a metaphor for justice that transcends the visible world. Art, in this sense, is not a mirror but a force, a medium through which the invisible asserts itself in the visible.

The dancer who becomes the Daiva performs the same gesture as the king who gives away his land—the gesture of relinquishment. The artist's true act is not creation but self-erasure.

In this erasure lies the ultimate unity of art and artist. The film's closing image, of the performer running into the forest and merging with the mist, captures the fate of every artist who truly creates. He becomes indistinguishable from his work.

The Stoic would say he has mastered himself. The Buddhist would say he has extinguished the flame of craving. The Marxist would say he has returned the means of production to the collective. Each, in their own language, describes the same truth: art begins when ownership ends.

The forest swallows the dancer, the Daiva rests, and the tribe continues its life. Nothing changes, and yet everything is renewed. That is the rhythm of art, the eternal return of creation and dissolution. Every performance, every painting, every poem enacts the same cycle: birth, surrender, disappearance. "If you can find this body, it is the performer; if you cannot, it is the god."

Perhaps all great art lives in that sentence. The performer disappears, and the audience is left with an echo that feels eternal.

MYTHICAL CREATURES



Tomb guardian beast (Zhenmushou)

A Tomb guardian beast, or zhenmushou, is a mythical creature from ancient Chinese funerary art, typically placed in tombs to ward off evil spirits. These figures, often depicted as fierce hybrids with human or animal faces and bodies, evolved from earlier wooden figures into elaborate earthenware and ceramic sculptures, particularly prominent during the Tang dynasty. They were usually placed in pairs near the tomb entrance, with one having a human face and the other a bestial one, serving as supernatural sentinels for the deceased.



The Fabulous Creature Buraq

Buraq, the beast on which Muhammad is said to have made his "night journey," is depicted, without a rider, as a fantastic creature with the face of a beautiful woman. The body is a composite of many small animals, fish, and birds—a convention generally popular in the eastern Islamic world. The unusually subdued palette is found in a number of paintings and album borders from Golconda, while the portrait is stylistically related to a Bijapur type.



Two Mythical Creatures (Tengu) Carrying a Parcel

The tengu were originally thought to take the form of birds of prey and were depicted with both human and bird characteristics. The beaks of the earliest representations were later humanized as unnaturally long noses. This netsuke of a pair of winged creatures carrying a heavy load wrapped in textile, offers a fascinating glimpse of some of the most represented characters in Japanese folklore.

Credits: The Met Fifth Avenue

EDITORIAL

The true richness of artistic meaning arises from a dynamic tension between its normative and descriptive interpretations, perpetually suspended between what art ought to signify and what it is perceived to express. While normativity tends to saturate any subjective experience into individual and social habits producing institutions, customs, rituals, and circles of everyday routine, the descriptive essence, many times takes subjectivity too far of one's own being, decentering both the individual and the social of any eternal meaning, thereby producing a sense of estranged alienation. In other words, there is always something that remains left out, remaining outside the domain of any ontological expression of the phenomenal world that awaits an enunciation. This is indeed the area of human understanding, which is captured in expressions of art and aesthetics. This 'residue meaning,' as some may want to call it, opens the areas of exploration and interpretation, promulgating new modes of self-expression which always remains unfulfilled in the journey of self-excitation.

This sense of unfulfillment, which is central to one's being many times remains unmediated not because of one's encounter with the other worldliness of one's experience, but precisely because of discovery of meaning of one's being within this very world of encounters. The possibility of translating these encounters is therefore drawn from opening a new world of semantic freedom that leads to realizing the evolving meaning of one's being within these expressions. Thus, we find the meaning of art and aesthetics, often producing new ideas, sensibilities, and interpretation, that continue to enliven beyond any stagnations of a priori presuppositions. To further enhance the encounters of these subjective delights we come up with this tenth edition of Makrand for our readers. It is an attempt to enhance the meaning of our diverse subjective worlds that we inhabit within ourselves, awaiting their reincarnating beyond static state of givenness.

- Amandeep Singh

The Question Concerning Death

For I hold the conviction that the mystery of death can never be assimilated through discourse alone, but only in the very moment of experiencing it—the death itself.

Is there something you will never forget in your lifetime? For me, it was my first time at the age of sixteen. When I saw the dead body of my grandmother, existential dread struck my mind. What is death, and what happens after death? Is death an uncertain certainty, something we know will eventually happen to us but can strike at any moment in our lives, or is death the ultimate end?

After a good long while, I went to college. During a lecture on the philosophy of death in the Vedas, my mind drifted to the moment when I first beheld my grandmother's lifeless body, and in that instant, the question suddenly arose within me that what is death? Moved by this thought, I turned to my teacher and asked. He suggested that I go through the *Katha Upanishad* and said, "The germinal essence of the mysticism of this Upanishad lies in Nachiketa's question to Yama about what happens after death and the entire answer of Yama is an attempt to reveal the inevitability of death."

Then I went to the library to read about the Upanishads and encountered a wide range of definitions, wandering in their diversity, each offered by different scholars. The core idea of these definitions, which I summarise, is that the Upanishads are quintessential texts in which ethos has been discussed with erudite and empirical perspectives. These scriptures are transcendental episodes in the history of man's theurgy, which have had an indelible impact on life, philosophy, and religion for centuries. The etymology of the word *Upanishad* comes from Sanskrit, which means "sit next to." This allegorises the Upanishad as a one-to-one teaching method. Chasing a cherished presence, my eyes wandered in search of the *Katha Upanishad*, as my teacher had so earnestly directed.

I found that this Upanishad, specifically, is a "rational discourse" in the form of dialogues between Nachiketa and Yama. Its essence unfolds through a triadic character, sparking light on etiological

chronology that offers deeper elucidation in a profound way. The story begins with the Yaga performed by Udalaka, a poor but pi-

ety of inquiry grew in Nachiketa, and when he asked the same question again, his father, in distress, said: "I will donate you to Yama."



Death of the Strong Wicked Man (1813) By William Blake, RA Collection: Art

ous Brahmin, who endowed all his wealth few old and feeble cows as offerings in the Yaga. When his son Nachiketa saw such cows being offered by his father, an intrusive thought struck his mind: "One who offers such grotesque things in Yaga would be a partaker of sin." He thought that his father's welfare would be assured only by offering something truly precious, so he bestowed himself as an offering in the Yaga and asked his father, "Into whose hands will you donate me?" The answer was woven in silence. The echo

Nachiketa proceeded to Yama's abode to fulfil this tenacity of Yaga. Yet Yama's home lay deserted, awaiting his return. Nachiketa waited there, hungry, for three days until Yama returned. Seeing the young Brahmin sitting steadfastly in his house, Yama felt deep regret for his absence, and to make amends, Yama graciously granted three boons to Nachiketa. Numerologically, "three" has potent meanings in the Vedic tradition. It summarises the operative laws of the universe: creation, maintenance, and transformation; birth, death, and rebirth.

Nachiketa first asked for a boon that he should return to his father alive and well, and that his father would meet him with a

Novdeep Singh
BA LLB
Sri Gurus Granth Sahib World
University, Fatehgarh Sahib
novdeepsingh9@gmail.com





Zool Festival: Kashmir's Timeless Celebration of Light

The event also marks the beginning of a new agricultural season—especially paddy cultivation—and the end of the long, harsh winter. By aligning the ritual with the rhythms of the seasons, the community ensures that this custom remains meaningful for future generations of local farmers.

Every year, as spring starts to arrive in the valley of Kashmir, it arises from the deadliest winter, the water once frozen due to the immense cold, melts down and flows in the rivulets of the valley, the village of Aishmuqam bursts with energy that words can barely capture. It's the time for Zool, a sacred celebration in honor of Hazrat Zain-ud-Din Wali, affectionately known by locals as Zaen Shah Saeb. The narrow lanes of the village shine with oil lamps, flickering like stars that have fallen to earth. Sufi Qalam fills the hills, and the scent of incense and dried herbs fills the air, carrying the essence of devotion and faith. But this is not just a festival; it's a living story, shared from generation to generation. They say that, long ago, Zaen Shah Saeb withdrew to the dark caves of Aishmuqam, he went to the void, the silence, leaving the comforts of the world behind to seek closeness with the Divine. In that solitude, surrounded by silence and nature, he faced temptations, fears, and doubts, yet he never turned away. Instead, light found him. It is believed that in the darkest moments of his meditation, a divine light, a Zool, appeared to him, illuminating not just the cave but also his path forward.

In the Himalayas of Kashmir, the shrines of Zain-ud-din Wali at Aishmuqam and Lord Shiva at Amarnath both stand tall. Many traditions have coexisted peacefully in Kashmir for centuries, bound together by *Kashmiriyat*. History attests to the land's association with the highest faith in the forces of justice, peace, and the miracle of love. A metaphysical assumption—"Did God reside in the Kashmir Valley?"—has often been echoed by people and poets who referred to it as *Jannat*, or paradise on earth. Perhaps, but the Kashmir Valley's divinity is undeniable.

The Kashmiri phrase *Lala zula zalio*, *Zaen Shah sahab khaaliyo* meaning "O' Lala! Ignite the flame and let it be taken to the shrine of Zaen Shah Sahab" signifies how the Sufi tradition is woven into the everyday cultural practices of Kashmir, with its peaceful, mystical essence appearing in seemingly mundane acts—such as a lullaby. A Kashmiri mother rocks her

child, but her words are not just for sleep; they are prayers woven into song. In her soothing voice, she doesn't merely promise dreams; she offers divine protection. In the valley, particularly in the southern region, this traditional song is frequently sung during wedding ceremonies. The song is dedicated to one of the most revered Kashmiri Sufi saints, Zain Shah Saeb—the disciple of Nund Rishi—who is said to have four mortal remains at Aishmuqam, Gofbal, Sarbal, and Pendobal. A well-known proverb in Kashmiri refers to this legend: *Sar chas Sarbal, Gof chas Gofbal, peand chas pendobal, Ash chas Aishmuqam* meaning "Saints and mortals are part of nature but the heart of divinity resides at Aishmuqam" depicts that how Kashmiri people have interwoven the natural habitat with the mystical essence in the form of lakes, caves, bridges and the saint as a whole becomes the part of the nature.

Among these sacred places, Aishmuqam, a small town in the district of Anantnag, is home to the most well-known of the four shrines in South Kashmir *Maraz*. This village is steeped in stories—tales of miracles, ancient myths, and supernatural wonders, all woven around the revered figure of Zaen Shah Saeb. Here, the festival of *Zool* is observed with



Zool Festival Celebration

deep devotion and enthusiasm. Devotees walk along Ziyarat Road to reach the Shrine on the hilltop. They then climb a long stone staircase with over 300 steps to arrive at the Shrine. There are also two *khanqahs* connected to the shrine. These *khanqahs* contain relics that are sometimes displayed to the public.

The term *Zool* is a Kashmiri word that means illumination, radiance, lighting (fairy lights), glowing, or sparkling. For the local people and devotees of South Kashmir, *Zool* holds immense meaning and reinforces their faith and sense of belonging. Two

legends are associated with the origins of the *Zool* festival and its famous torch procession, *Zool Mashal*. According to one of these legends, the villagers of Aishmuqam were once menaced by a demon popularly known as Shahmar—a mythical creature that forced them to sacrifice their lives and livestock. A courageous young tribal boy from the Gujar community named Bumisad, who was to be sacrificed, instead bravely challenged the demon and fought for seven days before being vanquished. The villagers celebrated their liberation by lighting *Zool Mashals* to honour his valour—a tradition

that continues to this day.

Another legend intertwines the festival with the life of the Sufi saint Zain-ud-din Wali. It is believed that he was born as Zia Singh into a Rajput family in Kishtwar district, J&K. When he was just thirteen years old, his father, Yesh Singh—the ruler of Kishtwar—was assassinated. Soon after, Zia Singh was struck by a severe illness thought to be incurable. His mother, in despair, pleaded with Sheikh Nur-ud-din (also known as Nund Rishi or Sheikh-ul-Alam), the Kashmiri Sufi saint and founder of the Rishi order, who happened to be visiting Kishtwar at that time, to pray for her son's recovery. The Sheikh agreed on the condition that Zia Singh would later visit him in Kashmir once he recovered.

However, legend says Zia Singh broke his promise and soon fell ill again. Grief-stricken, his mother vowed once more to fulfil the promise if her son recovered. When Zia Singh regained his health, he and his mother, Zoon Ded, undertook a perilous journey from Kishtwar to Kashmir to meet Sheikh Nur-ud-din Wali, who was then living in a cave in Bumzua—a village about eight miles south of Aishmuqam, as Rishis were known to dwell in caves. Upon meeting the Sheikh, Zia Singh was renamed Zain-ud-din and formally swore allegiance to him in the Rishi order. He was later entrusted to Baba Bam-ud-din Rishi for spiritual training.

According to local legend, Zain-ud-din achieved spiritual perfection after years of

meditation in the village of Mandjem in Sopore. Eventually, Sheikh Nur-ud-din Wali decided to move to the cave at Aishmuqam, where he spent the rest of his life in meditation. His disciple, Zain-ud-din Wali, also meditated in the same cave—now the site of the Zool festival—and is said to have conquered a terrifying demon, signifying the cave's spiritual importance. Thus, the *Zool* festival became inseparable from the legacy of the saint and his shrine within local tradition.

The torch procession, known as *Phrov* or *Zool* in Kashmiri, remains the centerpiece of the festival. *Phrov* refers to burning torches or wooden twigs (*Mashals*) used in the ritual. The grand procession takes place at the shrine located on a hill-ock, where devotees climb hundreds of steps carrying *Mashals*. Regardless of caste, religion, or creed, large crowds gather near the shrine to honour the saint. The festival coincides with the saint's annual *Urs* (death anniversary) and is celebrated as a mark of reverence.

The event also marks the beginning of a new agricultural season—especially paddy cultivation—and the end of the long, harsh winter. By aligning the ritual with the rhythms of the seasons, the community ensures that this custom remains meaningful for future generations of local farmers. Winter, often associated with cold and darkness, represents a time of stillness in the valley. As it draws to a close, people gather at Aishmuqam, carrying the *Zool* (torch), to celebrate light's return. With the arrival of spring and the rebirth of life, the blazing torch becomes a symbol of hope and renewal.

At the shrine, people tie sacred threads while praying for their wishes to come true. Adherents of the Sufi tradition typically tie knots at shrines when making a wish and return to untie them once their prayers are fulfilled. Around the shrine, a makeshift village fair emerges, with merchants setting up stalls to sell goods. Folk tales and beliefs surround the celebration, but the central idea endures: lighting the torch symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil. The flames represent divine illumination and truth, while the act of lighting a torch becomes both a prayer for inner serenity and a gesture of surrender to the saint's blessings.

Signs of the Cosmos

To see the world symbolically is to allow rebirth within life itself, to move from one realm of meaning to another.

When the blood and reproductive cells meet, life begins. In the form of a sensitive body, we come to Earth, and unlike other creatures, we are cared for with sensitive emotions. The journey of our body and our inner self begins. Before death, our physical body and inner self experience a variety of lives. However, the questions and experiences related to the meaning of conscious inner self are different, and the conscious inner self perceives solitude and boredom as questions. The life-related "WHYS" make that self feel the incompleteness of life.

The flow of cells moves through our blood, and the central cognitive system, under the shadow of our hair, continually creates new regimes of phenomenal/corporeal life and serves the purposes of human energetic flux. Energy, movement, rhythm, and inception—like this, the journey of life completes, but the question remains: "why?" Why is the pattern of humans different from all other creatures on Earth? So here are some reflections to aid our understanding.

We are born into this cosmos, and yet we are not satisfied merely to live—we seek to understand. Our existence, like a question, begins upon this land. But life is not confined to the necessities of survival. Beyond livelihood, there are symbolic meanings waiting to be unfolded. To live, then, is not only to breathe and endure, but to interpret, to see beyond appearances into the hidden language of forms.

The earth itself, by our tradition, is a mother: nurturing, sustaining, embracing. From the first breath to the last, we remain within her care. At birth, our eyes open to the world of forms; at death, those forms disappear into silence. But in between, the world surrounds us with endless signs, inviting us to read them, to live through them.

Every form, every thing offers us something. Sometimes it is food, shelter, survival. Sometimes it is beauty, joy, or inspiration. Perhaps the cosmos serves purposes of its own, but to us it appears as service, as gift.

Human beings, too, create forms. The things we fashion are not random—they are the outward shapes of the human mind. Each creation is an explanation of thought, a translation of imagination into form. Science and research extend this process further, endlessly revising, invalidating, and recreating. Knowledge unfolds as an

infinite dialogue, a perpetual re-shaping of signs.

Yet beyond survival and knowledge, symbolism remains. The river is not only water—it is flow, continuity, memory. The mountain is not only stone—it is stillness, endurance, transcendence. The earth is not only soil—it is Mother. To think symbolically is to allow the world to speak in more than one voice.

But here a deeper question arises: do we remain at the level of consumption, or do we listen to the symbolic? Too often we confine ourselves to the cycle of use—eating, buying, spending, desiring. This endless repetition breeds boredom. Instead of facing it, we try to silence boredom with more consumption, more distraction, and more postponement.

Yet boredom is not meaningless. It is a signal, a threshold. In facing boredom, we encounter what philosophers have called the absurd—the moment when life appears without reason, without justification. Most of the time, we turn away from it, attaching ourselves to new pursuits, postponing the crisis. But if we endure it—if we observe the absurd without fleeing—it may lead us into another space.

This space is where symbolic meaning begins to unfold. To see the world symbolically is to allow rebirth within life itself, to move from one realm of meaning to another. Existence, then, is not merely survival but interpretation: a constant unveiling of the cosmos as sign, as symbol, as mystery.

Life signals through every movement of life. *Kudrat* (Nature) creates humans, and the creation of the material world is a wonder of human effort. This is the outer flow of human internal energy, but in this flow, we can see and search for the signs of the internal journey of the human self.

Through the regular emergence of new corporeality and the creation of new material things, we can observe the flow of human inner energy, which eases human external life. But from a different angle, it also enslaves human consciousness.

Our tradition tells us that the systems and patterns of our body are like those of our cosmos. If we become conscious of this energetic flow—towards both the outer world and our inner world—then life's flows (creation, destruction etc), and every type of old and new corporeality, will be exposed with new meanings.

The understanding of signs and symbols will help modern man see through the ever blossoming window of life, where the rebirth process of consciousness begins. Life gives signs in between the dualities, and from here, perhaps, the journey from window to door begins.

Since the beginning of time, human beings have gazed upward and inward, longing to uncover the mysteries of the universe. From the first flicker of awareness, we've searched for meaning, carving symbols into stone, drawing signs in the sand, and shaping languages that could somehow make sense of the vast and the invisible. In this ancient search, we stumbled upon a silent, powerful code: numbers. We began to count, yes, but also to wonder. Were these numbers merely tools, or were they keys?

What, truly, are numbers? Are they fixed, certain, and measurable? Or is there something veiled within them: a hidden music, a deeper language that speaks not only to the mind but to the soul? Can a number, in its quiet simplicity, reveal the structure of the cosmos?

Perhaps we do not need to study all of them at once. Perhaps by sitting with just one, by listening to it and watching it appear across cultures and temples, dreams and diagrams, we might learn something vast. Let us choose, then, the number eight.

Eight has always followed me like a soft question. Whenever I see an octagonal structure, my mind stirs. Why this shape? Why these eight sides, these equal angles, these perfect boundaries that neither collapse inward nor spiral outward? What secret does the octagon hold? What does the number eight want to tell us?

These questions have lived quietly within me for as long as I can remember: a thread of curiosity, a longing to know what lies beyond arithmetic. Even now, I am drawn to the shape of eight, to the way it curves into itself when turned sideways, becoming ∞, the symbol of infinity. Is this a coincidence or a sign? Could it be that something so seemingly simple contains the entire cycle of return, renewal, and eternity?

The number eight does not speak loudly; it whispers. It is not dramatic, but it is profound. In its shape, there is no beginning, no end; only flow. It speaks of harmony, of balance between opposites, of two worlds endlessly folding into each other: heaven and earth, spirit and body, time and the timeless.

Eight is the breath of the cosmos in motion, unbroken, eternal, endlessly giving and receiving. Where seven speaks of sacred cycles, eight dares to rise; it quietly ascends into a higher realm. It is the octave in music, the next level of being, the place where structure becomes song. It is not just

In the Shape of Eight

Timelessness and Transformation

But the truth of eight is not locked in temples or scriptures. It is lived. It is here, in the rhythm of our daily lives. Eight teaches that harmony is not a gift; it is a practice.

order; it is beauty.

Its echo appears in geometry, in the octagon, a form that stands between the square of earth and the circle of heaven. Is it any wonder that the most sacred spaces on earth, such as mosques, churches, and temples, rise from this shape? The octagon is not merely architectural; it is spiritual. It is a prayer made of angles and light. A plea, perhaps, for the finite to touch the infinite.

In Islam, the number eight is fragrant with paradise. The Qur'an tells of eight gates to Jannah, guarded by angels who bear the weight of the Divine Throne. The poets of Persia drew the gardens of eternity with eightfold symmetry, a geometry of love, wisdom, and celestial peace. The flowing water of the Chahar Bagh divides the earth into four or eight, not to separate but to unify, creating sacred landscapes where art and divinity breathe in rhythm.

In the Judeo-Christian world, too, eight rings like a bell of renewal. The eighth day, beyond the seven of creation, marks the new beginning, the time of covenant, of purification, of resurrection. To step into an octagonal baptistry was to step into timelessness, the rebirth of the soul outside the calendar of earth. The cube of eight became more than structure. It became the shape of grace.

In the East, eight speaks of paths and prosperity. The Buddha offered the Noble Eightfold Path: eight petals of discipline and devotion, leading the soul to its highest flowering. Right thought, right intention, right action... each a step toward freedom. In China, the number eight, *ba*, carries the sound of good fortune. It is luck, it is wealth, it is infinite blessing. It is no accident that the Beijing Olympics began on 08/08/2008 at 8:08 p.m., an invocation of harmony and a belief that numbers can shape the fate of nations.

In the realm of mysticism, eight becomes the secret rhythm of divine order. In Kabbalah, it transcends the sacred seven to represent renewal, the overflowing of divine energy beyond the physical. In the Abjad system, it links to cosmic guardians: the eight angels who uphold the Throne, the eight gates to heaven, and the numerical keys that unlock scripture itself. In Vedic astrology, eight resonates with Shani (Sat-

urn), the lord of discipline, time, karma, and ultimate wisdom. Through its trials, the soul learns to grow not despite limitation, but because of it.

In every system, eight is more than quantity. It is balance. It is return. It is the unshakable axis upon which the universe quietly spins.

Even in myth, eight gallops through the sky. Odin rides an eight-legged horse,

that harmony is not a gift; it is a practice. That life finds its fullness when opposites are held in balance: work and rest, reason and mystery, self and community. The octagon does not lean to one side. Neither must we.

The horizontal eight, the symbol of infinity, reminds us that what we give returns. That love echoes. That cruelty does not vanish. That nothing is ever lost, only



Buckingham Palace: Garden Pavilion: Perspective view of the Octagon [1846] by Ludwig Gruner, RA Collection: Art

Sleipnir, who crosses the worlds without boundary, a creature of power and transcendence. In the hidden codes of Greek numerology, the name of Jesus equals 888, a number not of death but of divine perfection and eternal light. Sufi mystics speak of eight paradises blooming in the heart of the seeker. And all across faiths and cultures, the eight-pointed star glows like a mirror of heaven, reflecting symmetry, peace, and the mystery of the One in the many.

But the truth of eight is not locked in temples or scriptures. It is lived. It is here, in the rhythm of our daily lives. Eight teaches

transformed. Cause and effect spiral back in eternal grace.

And so, in every language of the heart, in art, in prayer, in science, and in myth, the number eight breathes one eternal truth:

Perfection is not in excess. It is in balance.

The divine is not above us; it is within the symmetry of things.

To contemplate eight is to step into the architecture of existence: to see not only that all things return, but that in returning, they are made new. Again. And again. Forever.

Loveleen Kour

BA (Hons.) Philosophy
Amar Singh College, Sri Nagar
kourloveleen08@gmail.com



Ekam Singh

Researcher, Naad Pargaas
Sri Amritsar
ekam1329@gmail.com



Gurpreet Singh

Researcher, Naad Pargaas
Sri Amritsar
cloudgurpreet@gmail.com





THE SHIP OF DREAMS AND THE SEA OF EXISTENCE

Nothing essential floats on the surface, indeed. The 'meaningful' actually emerges only from the 'depth' and 'search'. You have to dive deeper, have to risk, have to suffer to find something valuable.

Everything in the whole existence, primarily, is only a 'contact'. All else, all possibilities, all potentialities are the aftermaths of this fundamental juncture. The grace-divine, the being's subjectivity and particularity unfold that 'moment' in time to come. A sound, an image, a feel, a touch, a fragrance, a flash, a vision, an impression, a look, a dream, an idea, an aura connects your 'living' self with a creature/creation/symbol, and ah! Wonder! Yonder, you are pulled, stone melts, stars take abode in the dust, suffering becomes rejoice, pleasure becomes ache. You cry, you laugh, you kill, you sacrifice, and there, 'experience' erupts. Everything becomes meaningful/essential, preferences evolve, objects transform, a pulse, a throb, a vibration enters, and 'conversation' occurs, life sprouts. After this marvel befalls, the journey begins, one lives, sings, dances, chooses silence, inscribes, worships, tears apart, or dies.

*Parwat-e-khur se hai Shabnam ko fna
ki taleem,
Mien bhi hun Inayat ki ik nazar hone
tak.*

Mirza Ghalib

This 'contact/moment', a chance in the pursuit and bliss in the 'cosmic law', is the only fertile land to yearn/think/craft on. Art, in all forms, is basically the cultivation or longing of this transient moment. This article shares the meaning/experience that arose in my 'being' after the 'contact' with a piece of visual art/cinema, the film named 'Titanic'. The film is about the ship 'Titanic', which sank halfway through its maiden journey with 2224 lives on board. The voyage, from Southampton, UK, to New York, US, began on April 10, 1912, and ended at 2.20 am on April 15. How tragic and horrible the vision of the sinking is! Especially the sinking of the 'ship of dreams', the 'unsinkable'. How could a caravan of dreams drown?

The movie was written and directed by James Cameron, who represented the incident, memory, and experience in transforming creativity. He engaged a fresh, enriching, and throbbing platform, where heartbeats rise, eyes moisten, bodies fall silent, and the 'being' rekindles its entirety. The interaction of the sublime faculties of existence grafts beauty and meaning with the blend of 'historical memory' and 'instinctive desire'. The oceanic plot of the film constructs its content and form around an artist, a beauty, and the 'contact' between them. It has, however, independent shades/incidents supporting the vast canvas of the movie/life. The ship is in itself a wholeness/existence, floating, searching for the shore/certainty. The existence, where an innocent artist and a discomforted beauty meet and depart, expanding their essence through visionary cinematography, breathing aesthetics, diversified thrills, wondrous artists, and under an unheard, unnoticed but non-omittable 'divine resonance'.

Nothing essential floats on the surface, indeed. The 'meaningful' actually emerges only from the 'depth' and 'search'. You have to dive deeper, have to risk, have to suffer to find something valuable. So, the film starts deep down in the sea, with a group of people searching for the 'lost treasure', a means to their happiness. And ah! see what wonder they find. A sketch, a piece of art, a moment of love. The sketch presents 'a desire', 'a communication', 'symbolic', 'free', and 'perfect'. The sketch leads to Rose (the heroin of this movie), who is still living somewhere in solitude to unbury her love, her 'contact', and to re-hand over the sea its 'heart'. Thus, she, Mrs. Rose Calvert, calls back the 'search team' after watching 'the sketch' on TV and says, "I was just wondering if you had found the heart of the ocean yet." As if she were waiting for the day. They get her on board with their curiosity and hope. Her beautiful and contented face, however wrinkled, has all the painful, transforming experience ready to soar again. However, the intensity of still 'living past' breaks her into tears, but she refuses to hold it in anymore and narrates herself out. The whole story is in the flashback.

One fine day, people are boarding the Titanic ship with wonder, amazement, and pleasure. But the living-aesthetics, life, for whom this is all about, for whom this is built, expresses her disdain, calling it 'a slave ship', as she is not happy deep down in her heart. The story actually has two wheels to roll onto: one, the vibrational potentiality, the other, the actualizational catalyst, triggering reagent. In this festive boarding, the last man to enter is 'Jack Dawson', who won the entrance through an 'ironic chance' in gambling. He had to be there, in any case, however. The 'beginning' has always been associated with more hopes, dreams, a sense of fulfillment, and happiness, despite being woven around uncertainty. The fleet is unmoored and ready to navigate.

The cruise has started its march. All passengers settle themselves down in their



The illustration was created using AI-generated sketching tools (OpenAI, 2025).

allotted places. Jack Dawson, who is an artist, is sketching a little girl in her father's lap on the deck when he first sees Rose. Her beauty moves him so much that suddenly, one can see the adulthood/maturity in the eyes of an innocent artist. Whereas Rose, on the other hand, is sinking inside under the burden of 'lifelong engagement' with someone who knows nothing about love, with the fear of an imprisoned and robotic life lacking love/freedom. Her internal world, with tumbling thoughts, is carrying her so deep into the dungeon that the only way out, as it seemed to her, was to halt her aching heart forever. And there she runs and hangs herself on the taffrail, ready to jump into the sea to end

her life. Jack appears there to show his inevitable involvement and says he will have to jump, too. And asks her to come back to save him. It is difficult for art or an artist to exist without pulsating life. Life, too, needs him to present itself, to unfold itself, and to dwell in completeness. How truly the incident portrays the truth of 'two wheel' (mentioned earlier) and the 'contact'. He also spoke a very enigmatic statement, asserting his conviction that 'life' 'beauty' says no 'farewell', not only there — "You won't jump" but later in the movie also — "you wouldn't have jumped". Anyhow, Rose and Jack both are saved by/for each other. After this 'moment', they both spend little time together. Jack shares his sketches and life with her, but as the wheels roll on, Rose backs off a bit due to some family obligations. But soon, the realization of mechanicalness in her present and future life ultimately broke apart all her personal fears/doubts, family hesitations, and societal obligations. Rose finally submits herself to the hands of Jack to sail in the ocean of love.

*Ghulāmi mein na kām ātīn shajāāt na
tadbirein,
Jo ho zauk-e-yaqīn paida to kaṭī jaati hai
zanjirein.*

Iqbal

She asks Jack to sketch her, in which she is not wearing anything, but only a priceless, unmatched diamond, whose name is 'the Heart of the Ocean', around her neck, which she recalls as "a dreadful heavy thing" at the beginning of the movie. She actually wanted to deliver a message to her fiancée by presenting him with this sketch, who she thinks just wants to possess/capture her (the way he owns this diamond). As the ship of dreams is sailing as hurriedly as it can to reach its destiny, the art/moment is in making, the moment to be resurrected eighty-four years later in time to tell all that 'Titanic' never sank. It's there, still floating on the earth, walking in the sky, through acts of love/sacrifice, in

struggles to 'become'. Glorifying the 'will over necessity'.

Rose and Jack are on a playful run, merry like children who have touched a zenith, so may have been the 'ship of dreams'. On the other end, the captain of the ship is in conversation with a junior crew member. The junior officer says he never saw such a flat, calm sea before. At the same time, Rose's going to be husband saw the sketch and the message. He reports the missing 'diamond', blaming Jack for the theft. Rose and Jack, both escaping the separation, arrive on the front deck, where the ship guards are on duty. And, ah! see the comic tragedy, the guards, who are there to watch the path, to alert the helmsman or captain to take measures in case, forget everything, and lose themselves in the 'Rose & Jack'. No sooner had they returned to their duty than an iceberg was seen. The 'Titanic' collides with an iceberg even after turning the rudder completely, stopping, and even reversing the engines. And the story takes a turn, where most of the 'beings' act as they are from within. All reasoning and emotions evaporate into the air, leaving behind the survival-oriented-instinctive-self. The collision occurred at 11.40 pm, and in 2 hours and 40 minutes, the 'Titanic' was out of sight.

Mr. Andrews, the person who built the 'Titanic' ship, meets 'Rose' when it is acknowledged, "The Titanic will founder" (the sinking of the Titanic is now a mathematical certainty). With tears in his eyes, he holds 'Rose's' hand and changes his earlier statement ("I have built you a good ship, Rose") and says, "Forgive me, 'Rose', I

not able to move, waiting for the end, after a lady with a child in her lap asks him, "Where should I go?". Some folks are gathered around a priest, who is assuring them and himself of the harmony and of spiritual dwelling, turning the transition into a hope. An old-age couple lying in their bed, still hugging each other, committing their souls with eternal togetherness. A mother narrating a story of eternal happiness to her young kids, wanting them to sleep at ease, and an officer who shoots (killed) himself for being sincere and helpless. The hopes are leaving the most, but a group intends the 'divine resonance'. All these experiences deserve a dedicated narration to reveal their particularity. Yet, behind all these explicit expressions, there is a shared vision or unity—though it varies in degree, course, and beingness. This unity refers to the 'will', 'commitment', and 'struggle' to 'be'. The differences and separations among them are like the gaps between beads in a garland. Let us acknowledge the one who speaks mysteriously and imbibe the wholeness, before we come back to Rose and Jack. Dedicating these words to the 'musical band' and 'instrumental music', which is conferring the whole play with the 'pure will', stayed in their earned crystallization. Man can hardly escape the fundamental mould/frame out of which his 'being' is formed and out of which he forms his 'being'. This vital essentiality has its reflections through which it leaves its imprints. In the terrible situations, being's most profound tool of expression/reflection, 'language' loses its worth and practicality sometimes. Ever since (in the movie), the fear of extinction has shadowed all. The leader, Wallace Hartley, and other band members (Brailley, Bricoux, Clarke, Hume, Krins, Taylor, and Woodward) kept themselves alive and singing. Ever since everything, more or less, is futile, the 'band' has more to say and grant. The last song they played, 'Nearer, My God, to Thee', reveals the power and inspiration (the contact) behind. They continued to resonate, rebellious to pragmatism, becoming larger than life, still bestowing, and still manifesting a 'higher' meaning and pure 'will'. No circumstances can overshadow real men. The 'form' here is everything; it has the secret, potential, and possibility (It requires a separate treatise to explain, though). 'Music', as Schopenhauer says, 'is not mere representation like other arts, but an authentic expression of the will, the fundamental force behind'. However, the play keeps its pace and the 'untied earth' reaches its deepest shore with all its stories within the story, under the echo of 'divine resonance/Music', where Rose and Jack, who, passing through this finality, reach where they met for the first time. They are still hopeful and caring more for each other.

They both swim to the remote corner after the ship of dreams drowns into the sea. Jack makes Rose to lie on a wooden board and asks her to stay with him. Everything around is getting quieter, he urges Rose to promise that she will "never let go". And she promises back. A lifeboat comes back searching for any survivors, but there is none but Rose. She sees that Jack has bid farewell, though her hand is still in his hand, holding and frozen, making the 'hold' even tighter. Is it the 'promise' that makes her force her hand out of his hand and let him disappear deep into the sea, or 'You won't jump' aspect of her 'being' as said earlier by Jack. Anyhow, Rose saves herself with the diamond in her pocket. She kept it with herself for eighty-four years without disclosing it to anyone. Actually, it (the heart of the ocean) is a part/link of the celestial 'contact' between her and him, which, the heart, she promised, shall go on, needs to hold on to. And ah! see, when life/Rose has found the 'moment', the 'sketch', the 'heart of the Ocean' is handed over to the sea.

Like this, the declared 'ship of dreams' could not find a happy end in the undeclared 'sea of existence'.

Like this, the declared 'ship of dreams' could not find a happy end in the undeclared 'sea of existence'. And could not carry the 'life' it is in charge of or constructed for. Rose, however, carries and takes care of her 'contact', her 'subjective connection', her once longed-for dream, forever. James Cameron is able to convey indispensable images and vital meanings through his visionary screenplays and direction. This movie is about the struggle to keep the 'moments/contact' alive that allows you to be 'I' in a genuine sense. Life, the beauty of life requires more of fluidity, freedom, warmth, and nurture. And will be dooming all divergent sooner or later, saving herself, no matter what, to keep 'her heart go on and on'.



PEMA'S JOURNEY TO SHAMBHALA

Within the context of the film, Shambhala becomes both a mythical destination and a symbol of transformation, embodying the human pursuit of peace, harmony, and identity amidst conflict.

Throughout the world, various religious traditions speak of their own mystical cities or sacred places. In Western mythology, there is El Dorado, the fabled city of golden promise, and Atlantis, the submerged remnant of ancient wisdom, both of which resonate with a universal human aspiration. These legends intertwine geographical elements with symbolic meanings, offering the possibility of secret knowledge, spiritual refuge, miraculous abundance, or a final sanctuary for the virtuous. In Buddhism, this concept is embodied in Shambhala, or Shangri-La, believed to be located in the Himalayas and inhabited by enlightened beings. Similarly, in Hindu tradition, there is Devlok, while in Sikhism, it is referred to as Sachkhand, the realm where all enlightened souls reside.

The movie *Shambhala* illustrates an individual's internal struggles amid significant socio-political change by examining conventional and modern Nepalese culture. This article investigates the film's thematic intricacies, concentrating on the intersections of identity, conflict, and spirituality concerning Pema and the Himalayan region of Nepal.

The film begins with Pema, a young, beautiful Himalayan girl, getting married to three brothers: Tashi, Karma, and Dawa. Tashi boards a trip to Lhasa with his other colleagues for a trade. Tashi didn't return home from Lhasa when all the other traders and cattle returned home. The gravid Pema encounters communal mistrust about her child's fatherhood. This mistrust compelled her to bring evidence and win the trust back. Determined to find her elder husband, Tashi, who fathered her child, she sets out on an expedition with her second husband, Karma, the younger brother of Tashi. Karma is a monk. During their quest, both of them encountered individual challenges and were able to achieve spiritual advancement. Karma goes back to the monastery because of the death of Rinpoche, whereas Pema continued her journey, getting enlightened with each step she takes. While returning to the village, Pema encounters Tashi and proclaims her pristine independence there. The film accomplishes this by exposing Pema's child as the reincarnation of the Rinpoche. The film presents the pictorial view of Nepali Himali customs, culture, tradition, and beliefs, proposing an introspective narrative. The film Shambhala's calm and composed marching and the interpretation of the Himalayan landscape deliver an immersive experience into Pema's transformative journey.

According to the theoretical framework established by Erik Erikson, individuals formulate their identities through a sequence of encountered at various life stages. This concept is also reflected in Pema's journey within Shambhala, where the challenges she faces contribute to her identity development. At the film's outset, Pema is depicted as being married to three brothers: Tashi, Karma, and Dawa. Subsequently, an intimate scene with her mother is presented, signifying Pema's transition from a pampered daughter to a daughter-in-law and wife. The event of marriage instigates a profound transformation from a youthful and carefree individual into a woman who is required to assume the responsibilities associated with being a daughter-in-law, a spouse to three men, and fulfilling various social obligations. This shift in identity from daughter to wife is significant and abrupt, necessitating the acquisition of considerable skills that must be learned promptly.

As the narrative progresses, the film highlights an intimate interaction between Pema and Tashi, which requires her to embody the role of a supportive partner. When Tashi departs for trade, Pema assumes the head of the household, managing both domestic and external duties. She is responsible for managing the household and the well-being of Tashi's two brothers, Karma and Dawa, where Karma, an adult, requires little oversight. However, being much younger, Dawa necessitates her guidance and support in his education. Given that Dawa lacks a maternal figure, Pema is compelled to adopt a maternal role in addition to her other responsibilities. Consequently, she is tasked with navigating numerous identities simultaneously.

She asks to identify herself as a host. Not only humans, but she has to take care of her horse as an owner. After some

time, she discovers that she is expecting a child, and she is charged with adultery. She embarks on a mission to find Tashi, determined to prove to society that the baby in her womb is indeed Tashi's. The identity as an expectant woman is also in crisis because of the doubt aroused by society, which she has to fight for. During her journey, she encounters different types of incidents. Each and every incident as meeting with Ram sir, taking Karma with her and later letting him go to the Gumba after Rinpoche's death, meeting her mother, losing her horse on the way, finding the horse dead, having a miscarriage, meeting Tashi, and finally proving that she had his baby in her womb, finding out that her baby has born as Rinpoche after death, reaching the holy and eternal place Shambhala all led her to be different person. Each and every incident gives her a new experience, which changes her identity. Thus, the shift in the identities and the final transformation after reaching Shambhala are the result of all the series of incidents she encountered during her journey.

Pema's journey in the film Shambhala also symbolises the different stages as adolescence and adulthood. The first adolescence is the stage when one is in disputation between identity and role confusion. The contestation in between identity and role confusion is pictured as she has to play and shoulder the responsibilities of wife of three husbands from an innocent daughter. Due to different various identities, she gets confused. Similarly, it also represents the battle between generativity and stagnation the adulthood stage when she becomes pregnant and goes in search of primarily Tashi later herself. This is the stage where she realizes her meaning as a wife, mother and a human being and her purpose of life. Her trail is an amalgam of previous understandings, redefining individual principles and obtaining self, affiliating with Erikson's view that identity is moulded through understandings and contemplation.

Finally, the three components of Pema's quest in Shambhala can be stated as follows: Pema's journey first explores her Self-Identity, as she redefines who she is by breaking away from past constructs and embracing a deeper, more authentic self. She leaves behind her roles as daughter, wife, and mother, and embraces her actual self, ultimately reaching Shambhala to attain peace and tranquillity. Alongside this, her life is filled with Conflict, both internal—encompassing her fears, emotions, anger, psychology, and beliefs—and external, including struggles with her parents, husband, home, the baby, the horse, and even her environment. These challenges compel her to confront and overcome obstacles, integrating the contradictory aspects of herself to become whole. Finally, Spirituality frames the culmination of her quest, as Pema gradually moves beyond ego-driven desires toward transcendence and self-realisation, achieving a higher state of consciousness. Initially, she was dominated by the egoistic need to vindicate herself by bringing Tashi back home to clear her name and affirm his role as the father of the child in her womb. However, the hardships of her journey and the destiny she faced dismantled her ego, pushing her towards spiritual growth.

Shambhala raises a compelling question that transcends mere geography: is it a physical location, a spiritual realm, or a metaphor for the inner journey towards self-realisation? Within the context of the film, Shambhala becomes both a mythical destination and a symbol of transformation, embodying the human pursuit of peace, harmony, and identity amidst conflict. Rooted in Tibetan Buddhist tradition and narrated through Pema's odyssey, this enigmatic concept invites reflection on whether Shambhala exists as an external sanctuary or as an inner state of enlightenment, challenging viewers to explore its true essence and personal significance. Ultimately, Shambhala emerges as a mythical representation of self-discovery, wherein Pema's physical journey reflects an inner transformation towards self-awareness, conflict resolution, and spiritual enlightenment.

Jaypreet Kaur

Research Scholar, Guru Gobind
Singh Department of Religious
Studies, Punjab University, Patiala.
jaypreetkaur839@gmail.com





Vertical Causality

Rethinking Reality in Modern Physics

To resolve the quantum paradox, Smith introduces the idea of "Vertical Causality", a metaphysical mode of action that operates instantaneously and from a superior order of being. He suggests that the transition from quantum potentiality to observable actuality is not a process occurring within space and time but an act of determination descending from this higher domain.

Komalpreet Singh

M.Sc. Physics
Panjab University, Chandigarh
komalsohal1414@gmail.com



from a higher ontological domain.

This conflation of the physical and the corporeal reveals a larger issue. Every science is built upon first principles that are not discovered but chosen. These principles establish the framework within which knowledge grows. Classical physics, for instance, was founded on the Cartesian image of a mechanistic universe, passive, law-bound, and fully comprehensible through mathematics. These presuppositions shaped the very way scientists theorized about the world. In Smith's analysis, modern physics has become a science of measurement, constructing the "physical world" out of the act of observation itself. His stance resonates with the Copenhagen interpretation, which emphasizes the indispensability of the observer and forbids speaking of the quantum realm apart from measurement.

To resolve the quantum paradox, Smith introduces the idea of Vertical Causality, a metaphysical mode of action that operates instantaneously and from a superior order of being. He suggests that the transition from quantum potentiality to observable actuality is not a process occurring within space and time but an act of determination descending from this higher domain. The collapse of the wave function, in this light, is not an inexplicable event within physics but an ontological transformation mediated by a non-physical cause.

Smith's work thus demonstrates the profound relationship between philosophical assumptions and scientific crises. He in-

sists that the conceptual categories through which we understand the world must themselves be subject to analysis. The validity of a reformed framework, however, must ultimately be proven by intersubjective testing that results in the corroboration of that framework. Having these formulations in mind, by tracing the ontological difficulties of quantum theory to their metaphysical origins, particularly to the foundational choices that shaped modern science, Smith opens the possibility of a new synthesis.

Ultimately, Smith's proposal calls for a fundamental reorientation of scientific thought. The principle of falsifiability en-



Prefatory miniature from a moralized Bible of "God as architect of the world", folio I verso, Paris ca. 1220–1230. Ink, tempera, and gold leaf on vellum. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

sure that no scientific claim is final, but this openness also invites reflection on the assumptions that guide inquiry. Rejecting the ambition for a single unified theory of everything, Smith envisions a stratified reality in which different levels of being cannot be reduced to one another. His notion of Vertical Causality, though non-mathematical, reminds us that when a problem is ontological rather than empirical, its resolution may require crossing the boundaries of science itself. In this way, Smith compels us to reconsider what we mean by reality and to recognize that solving a scientific mystery may begin with rethinking the metaphysics that make science possible.

Understanding Einstein's Universe

Special relativity revealed that space and time are not independent but are intertwined in a four-dimensional manifold called spacetime.

As a student of physics, I am always fascinated by how the concepts of the special theory of relativity are used to explain the motion of stars, the dynamics of radioactive decay, and many other phenomena involving objects moving at speeds comparable to the speed of light. Motivated by this fascination, I read *Relativity: The Special and General Theory*, written by the great physicist Albert Einstein. It is a beautifully written book that provides clear and profound insight into the theory of relativity. The book is divided into two parts: Part I covers the Special Theory of Relativity, and Part II explores the General Theory of Relativity. Here, I am focusing on the first part, as it is comparatively easier and more fundamental before progressing to the second. The basic difference between the two is that the first deals with inertial frames—systems moving with uniform velocity—while the second addresses non-inertial or accelerated frames of reference. Understandably, for non-physicists, terms like 'frame of reference' and 'inertial' may be unfamiliar. So, let's dive deeper into the theory to truly grasp the meaning of these concepts.

All of us may have studied the law of inertia during our high school years, which states that a body sufficiently far from other bodies continues in a state of rest or uniform motion in a straight line unless acted upon by an external force. All frames or bodies of reference in which the law of inertia holds are called inertial frames, or Galilean systems of coordinates (a mathematical term for a frame of reference). Let us consider an example of a train carriage (along with the train) moving at a constant speed in a particular direction relative to the embankment, and a person walking inside the carriage in the same direction as the train's motion. If we assume the embankment to be at rest and the train moving at a constant velocity (say, 50 km/h), then both the train and the embankment are inertial frames of reference with respect to each other. Furthermore, if the person walking inside the train is also moving with uniform velocity, this constitutes a third inertial frame of reference relative to the other two. All of Newton's laws hold true in inertial frames of reference—that is, the fundamental laws of nature remain unchanged in these frames. Let us generalize the statement: If, relative to K (here, the train), K1 is a uniformly moving coordinate system (a frame of reference) devoid of rotation, then natural phenomena run their course with respect to K1 according to exactly the same general laws as with respect to K. This statement is called

the principle of relativity (in the restricted sense). It basically reveals the idea of relative motion and challenges the notion of an "absolute rest" or an absolute reference frame in the universe; motion is only meaningful when measured relative to something else. The Earth's motion provides evidence for the principle of relativity. In virtue of its motion in an orbit around the sun, our Earth is comparable to a railway carriage traveling with a velocity of about 30 km/sec. Since the Earth's direction of travel is always changing throughout the year, if the principle of relativity were not true, we would expect to see changes in how physical experiments work on Earth. The results of an experiment performed in January might be different from the results of the same experiment performed in July, but scientists have never found any evidence of these expected changes. This is a very powerful argument in favor of the principle of relativity.

Now let's move forward to the application of this relative motion. Remembering our old friend, the train's carriage, we consider the embankment to be at rest. We might think that the velocity of the man moving in the carriage with respect to the embankment would be the sum of the velocity of the train and the velocity of the man (this is called the theorem of addition of velocities). In another case, we suppose a light ray is coming towards an observer sitting on the embankment (in the same direction as the train). The velocity of light observed by him will be 'c', but the velocity of light observed by a man sitting in the carriage should then be equal to the velocity of light minus the velocity of the train, meaning it is smaller than 'c'. However, we know that the velocity of light is a constant of motion, according to the law of propagation of light (as determined by many experiments). This result is contradictory to the principle of relativity. To understand this concept, we can conduct an experiment. Consider two points, A and B, where lightning flashes occur simultaneously for an observer at rest (simultaneity needs a definition: consider an observer at M, the midpoint of A and B, such that she perceives the two flashes at the same time; then they are simultaneous). But when we observe these flashes from the moving train as it travels from A to B, the observer on the train will note that the flash at B occurred earlier than the flash at A because the flash will take a shorter time to cover the distance from M to B, as the observer is moving towards B. This tells us that events which are simultaneous with reference to the embankment are not simultaneous with respect to the train, and vice versa (the relativity of simultaneity). Every reference body has its own particular time; unless we are told the reference body to which the statement of time refers, there is no meaning in a statement of the time of an event. Similarly, the distance measured between any two points on the embankment will differ from the distance measured between those points from the train. These two results play a vital role in resolving the incompatibility between the principle of relativity and the constancy of



Pawanpreet Kaur

M.Sc. Physics
School of Physical Sciences, JNU
pawanpreetkaurgill226@gmail.com

the speed of light by deriving the Lorentz transformation equations, which consider distance and time to be relative rather than absolute. The mathematically proven Lorentz transformation gave the relation between the time interval in two simultaneous events and the length of a rod in two frames of reference, one moving with a constant velocity 'v' with respect to the other. If a rod is placed on the train (the rod is at rest with respect to the moving frame), then the length measured by an observer standing on the embankment will be shorter than the length measured by the observer on the train; this is called length contraction. On the other hand, if two exactly identical clocks are used to measure the time interval between two successive ticks, the time interval measured by the clock on the embankment will be longer than the time interval measured by the clock on the train. This means that as a consequence of its motion, the clock runs more slowly than when at rest. This is called time dilation.

These results are in accordance with the principle of relativity and the law of propagation of light, so the theorem of addition of velocities was also modified, and a new mathematical equation was created that, when inserted into the kinetic energy expression, gave the beautiful mass-energy equivalence relation $E=mc^2$, where $m = \text{rest mass} / \sqrt{1-v^2/c^2}$. The two conservation laws, one of mass and one of energy, are now unified. If the velocity of a body increases, its mass also increases, and if some energy is given to the system, its mass will increase (its inertial mass). Because the speed of light is an enormous number, a tiny amount of mass can be converted into a huge amount of energy, which can be seen in nuclear reactions.

So, from all the above experiments and observations, Minkowski proposed the idea of a four-dimensional space. The world of physical phenomena, which was briefly called the "world" by Minkowski, is naturally four-dimensional in the space-time sense, as he describes an individual event as having three coordinates of space (x,y,z) and one coordinate of time, as a point in spacetime.

Special relativity revealed that space and time are not independent but are intertwined in a four-dimensional manifold called spacetime. It establishes a fundamental mathematical condition that all physical laws must obey to be considered valid. Special relativity requires that the equations of a physical law remain the same under Lorentz transformations. Any proposed new law of nature must be "covariant" with respect to Lorentz transformations. If a proposed law fails this test, it is known to be incomplete or incorrect. This gives physicists a potent theoretical tool to evaluate potential theories and focus their research.

How can we know anything about objects that, we believe, exist in the external world? This enduring epistemological question has invited responses from philosophers for centuries. Broadly, these responses have been grounded in one of the two philosophical traditions: rationalism and empiricism. Rationalism holds that valid knowledge of the world can be attained through the reflective and cognitive capacities of the human mind, whereas empiricism maintains that knowledge arises from sensory experience of external objects and phenomena.

The conflict between these two traditions reached one of its decisive moments with the emergence of a group of philosophers and scientists known as the Vienna Circle in 1929. The Circle aimed to rationally reconstruct all scientific knowledge to establish a philosophy founded on scientific principles rather than on metaphysical speculation. Consequently, they developed the school of thought known as Logical Empiricism or Logical Positivism, the central claim of which was that all meaningful and valid statements of rational knowledge must be empirically verifiable.

Among the leading figures of the Vienna Circle was Rudolf Carnap, a philosopher, mathematician, and physicist. Carnap developed a comprehensive theory of language structure and its possible applications to philosophy. He argued that his work, *The Logical Syntax of Language* (hereafter *Syntax*), could play a crucial role in the rational reconstruction of scientific knowledge and, in turn, provide a rational foundation for philosophy.

The idea for *Syntax* was deeply influenced by Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (hereafter *Tractatus*), in which language does not describe facts about objects or events in the world but is a medium that represents objects or events of the world to us. Logical truths, therefore, are not laws of the world but by-products of this representational function of lan-

guage. Through his "picture theory," Wittgenstein rendered logical truths rendered tautological status to logical truth and thus claimed it to be empty of any objective meaning without losing its universality. This convinced the Vienna Circle to regard the *Tractatus* as having resolved the long-standing problem of the cognitive status of mathematics, which for centuries had presented a profound challenge to empiricism. This challenge arises from the fact that mathematical knowledge appeared to possess the same certainty as empirical knowledge, yet could be derived without sensory experience.

This interpretation inspired the Vienna Circle to reconstruct mathematics on a logical foundation to extend the tautological status of logic to all of mathematics—a project known as logicism. Then, by using this reconstruction, the intention of the Circle was to form a unified language of science which could be proved to be based on empirical experiences rather than on intuitive ideas. The Circle initiated the project of logicism with a radically new interpretation of the "atomic sentences" of the *Tractatus* as elementary observation (or given experience). Then,

In *Syntax*, Carnap constructed a logical language, or object language, composed of uninterpreted empty signs that represented nothing about the external world. Within this object language, he formulated a conventional arithmetic, where numbers were treated as "pure figures" devoid of conceptual meaning

Logical Syntax

Carnap's Quest for a Scientific Language

they generalized Wittgenstein's truth-functional language, conceived as a system that constructs complex propositions from simpler, atomic ones, to encompass the whole of mathematics.

Carnap's *Syntax* evolved through three stages, each marked with distinct challenges for the logicism project of the Vienna Circle. The first challenge at the initial stage was to expand the scope of the scientific language, developed through Wittgenstein's truth-functional language, to reconstruct all theoretical sciences and all of mathematics. The second, but more grave, challenge concerned the status of the theory itself on which the entire project of logicism was based. It was evoked by Kurt Gödel's (a logician, mathematician, and philosopher) question of how logical discourse can be justified if it consists only of elucidations rather than empirically meaningful statements, thereby challenging the positivist boundary between sense and nonsense and exposing the self-referential limits of its criterion of meaning.

In his first attempt, Carnap tried to expand the scope of scientific language through a loose sketch headed "New Foundation of Logic," where he struggled to meet two basic requirements of the Circle: that all knowledge be structural and that every instance should be empirically verifiable. Therefore, Carnap chose Hilbert's axiomatic superstructure, replacing its pure formal base with Wittgenstein's framework, where atomic sentences were taken as pictures of elementary facts. The axioms and derived sentences of given signs in "New Foundation" were open to interpretation, imbued with meaning through the representational

function of language. This led Carnap to believe that by using this "New Foundation," any mode of inference could be treated formalistically and, therefore, that all scientific or mathematical statements could be transformed however we like, provided the concluding statements did not exceed the content of their premises. Thus, he claimed that every sentence of a scientific theory, formulated from atomic sentences, was derivable using formal rules of inference. This indicates how Carnap was striving to extend the Wittgensteinian framework of language to one usable for mathematics and science. Yet the deeper problem of the theory's own logical status remained unaddressed in "New Foundation."

A year after Carnap's "New Foundation," the second stage for *Syntax* began with the most profound and groundbreaking result of Gödel, known as the incompleteness theorem, which eventually led to two new problems for the Circle. First, the incompleteness result proved that within any consistent formal system (logical system), one can form sentences which are true in their content but cannot be proved within the system using the inference rules of that system. This revelation shattered Carnap's "New Foundation." Second, Gödel's result undermined the Vienna Circle's basic project of logicism, which they had relied on to guarantee the tautological (and hence empty) status of mathematics by showing that there exist true arithmetic sentences (mathematical sentences) that

cannot be proved using formal rules. Compounding the problems, Gödel's question of the evident incompatibility of meta-linguistic discourse with the Wittgensteinian framework remained a basic obstacle to the Circle's broader goals.

Carnap described in his autobiography a transformative moment in January 1931, when he was working on these three problems: "After thinking about these problems for several years, the whole theory of language structure, and its possible applications in philosophy, came to me like a vision. I wrote down my ideas on forty-four pages, the first version of my book *The Logical Syntax of Language*."

On that night, Carnap decisively moved away from Wittgenstein's representational function that language is system of rules with his radical twist that are not naturally, or otherwise, inherent in language but are matters of human decision and convention.

In *Syntax*, Carnap constructed a logical language, or object language, composed of uninterpreted empty signs that represented nothing about the external world. Within this object language, he formulated a conventional arithmetic, where numbers were treated as "pure figures" devoid of conceptual meaning. The properties of this arithmetic were not intuitively fixed, such as the commutativity of addition expressed in $m \text{ plus } n \text{ equals } n \text{ plus } m$ ($m + n = n + m$) but were instead established by convention. Then, he used Gödel's method of arithmetization to express the metalanguage within the object language itself, leading to a recursive hierarchy that appeared, at least temporarily, to collapse the distinction between language and metalanguage.

Gödel's incompleteness result had shown that truth could not be equated with formal provability along with the huge expression capacity of syntactic language



Bikramjit Singh

Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Sciences, Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Engineering College, Fatehgarh Sahib
biks.asr@gmail.com

model of the *Syntax*, allowed Carnap to replace notion of tautology with a more generalized notion, called analyticity. Analyticity refers to statements that are true solely by virtue of linguistic conventions or formal inference rules and need not be provable. In this way, Carnap held that he had managed to retain the essential Wittgensteinian concept of tautology while extending its scope past propositional logic, thus fulfilling the Vienna Circle's foundational aim.

The third and final stage of *Syntax* began with the indefinability theorem of Alfred Tarski, a logician and mathematician. Tarski's theorem proved the impossibility of Carnap's idea of defining mathematical truth (analyticity) within a formal system by demonstrating that the notion of truth for a language can only be defined in a semantically richer metalanguage. Hence, it became evident to Carnap that no absolute truth can be defined in any absolute language (logical system) or its hierarchy of metalanguages; rather, truth is relative to the use of a language. This exposed a fundamental limitation of Carnap's *Syntax*, which had sought to construct a unified, absolute logical language for the rational reconstruction of science.

Confronted with this limitation, Carnap proposed his mature philosophical principle, known as the principle of tolerance, and incorporated it into the final version of *Syntax*. As he famously stated: "We do not want to impose restrictions, but to state conventions. In logic there are no morals. Everyone is at liberty to construct his own logic, that is, his own form of language, as he wishes. If he wishes to discuss it with us, he must make clear how he intends to proceed. He must give syntactic rules, not philosophical explanations."

The *Logical Syntax of Language* thus marked Carnap's transition from the pursuit of an absolute logical foundation to a pluralistic and conventional understanding of language, where logic itself becomes a human creation governed not by necessity but by deliberate choice.



Hagiography

Writing the Lives of the Holy

Yet, beyond scholarship, hagiography holds a timeless truth. In every culture, the death of a saint is not seen as the end but as the continuation of their spiritual presence.

We often read biographies that tell the stories of people's lives, their struggles, triumphs, and defining moments. Such accounts inspire us because they mirror something deeply human. Yet, when I first came across the word *hagiography*, distinct from biography, it sparked a special curiosity. What does it mean to write about holiness?

The term *hagiography* comes from two Greek roots, *hagios* meaning holy and *graphia* meaning writing. Together they mean writing about the holy. At first, it may sound like another form of biography, but it is something deeper. While a biography records a person's worldly life, a hagiography attempts to express what lies beyond the ordinary, something that belongs to the realm of the spirit. The life of a saint is not only a series of events. It is a reflection of divine consciousness, an example of moral strength and faith that cannot be captured by facts alone.

To distinguish the spiritual from the worldly, the term hagiography began to be used in the early twentieth century. It soon developed into a serious academic field that studied the lives of saints with both devotion and critical thought. But the origins of this tradition reach much further back, into the early history of Christianity.

In the second century, when many Christians were persecuted for their faith, those who sacrificed their lives were remembered as martyrs and were given the title of saints. The stories of their courage became the first hagiographies. One of the earliest recorded examples is found in *The Acts of the Apostles*, which tells of Saint Stephen, the first Christian martyr, who was executed around 36 A.D. Another important text is *The Martyrdom of Saint Polycarp*, written around 155 A.D. Polycarp was the bishop of Smyrna in present-day Turkey. His followers witnessed his death and gathered every year to remember his sacrifice. Over time, these commemorations took written form and became the foundation of the hagiographical tradition.

By the fourth century, collections of saintly lives had begun to appear, such as the *Menaion*, *Synaxarion*, and *Patrikon*, which organized short biographies of saints according to the calendar of feast days. In the tenth century, Saint Simeon Metaphrastes compiled and arranged these narratives at the request of Emperor Constantine. Later, in the thirteenth century, Jacobus de Voragine wrote *The Golden Legend*, which contained nearly a thousand brief accounts of saints, weaving them into

one vast story of faith and devotion.

The Middle Ages in Europe proved to be a fertile time for hagiography. The lives of saints were written with renewed attention and imagination. The Bollandist Society, formed in the seventeenth century by Jesuit scholars, marked an important turning point. These scholars began to study the lives of saints with academic precision, carefully examining their sources and separating historical fact from legend. The society's work continued for centuries and still contributes to the study of saints today.

In the twentieth century, Hippolyte Delehaye, a member of the Bollandist Society, laid the foundation for what we now call modern hagiography. He distinguished between practical hagiography, which was meant to

serve religious devotion, and critical hagiography, which used historical and textual analysis to study the lives of saints. This transformation from devotional writing to academic research shaped hagiography into a respected field of study. Later, in 1990, the Hagiography Society was established to promote further research, bringing together scholars from across the world who continue to explore the meaning and influence of saintly lives.

Yet, beyond scholarship, hagiography holds a timeless truth. In every culture, the death of a saint is not seen as the end but as the continuation of their spiritual presence. The saint's teachings, deeds, and virtues remain alive in the collective memory of the community. People turn to these memories for guidance and strength. The saint becomes a light that continues to illuminate the path for others.

Traditional wisdom in every religion recognizes this. The spiritual experiences of saints are not merely remembered; they are lived and practiced within communities. These teachings are meant to awaken the moral and spiritual energy of people. In this way, the purpose of hagiographical literature is not only to inform but to inspire, to remind us that the ideals of compassion, truth, and humility can be realized in hu-

man life.

With the rise of modern scholarship, religion began to be studied critically rather than only through faith. Researchers such as Jesuit Heribert and Jean Bolland examined the lives of saints historically and produced works like *Acta Sanctorum*, which explored the Christian saints from a documentary point of view. Their studies raised important questions. Can holiness be studied through history? Can we separate the mythic from the real without losing the spiritual essence that gives



Visual hagiography of St Paraskeva (Patriarchate of Pec, 1719-20)
Credits: Wikipedia

the story its meaning?

In modern times, scholars often talk about intertextuality, the way one saint's life echoes another's, creating a tapestry of spiritual connections. Earlier, hagiography sought to inspire devotion. Today, it also reflects how societies understand morality, memory, and the search for the sacred.

To read a hagiography is to move beyond time. It invites us to witness how human life can touch the divine. Whether we read it with faith or with analysis, it continues to speak to a deep human longing, the desire to find meaning and transcendence within the fragile boundaries of our lives. The story of a saint is never only about the saint. It is also about us, the readers, who through their example, may discover what is holy within ourselves.

Beyond Borders

Hume's Standard of Taste and the Search for Universality

Can beauty be universal, or is taste inherently subjective—shaped by the shifting perspectives of individuals and cultures?

In the vibrant hum of a museum, where voices echo and footsteps weave through corridors of history, a child gazes reverently at a marble Apollo. Nearby, an elder soul communes silently with a Kandinsky painting, lost in its abstract language. A tourist captures a bronze Nataraja in a photograph—an image swirling with rhythm and the architecture of time—while another visitor stands transfixed before Tagore's poetry etched on the wall, where language blossoms into revelation.

These moments, scattered across cultures and consciousness, reveal a curious unity. Despite their diverse origins and individual sensibilities, each observer experiences a spark of recognition—a moment of aesthetic revelation. Could there be, beneath these varied responses, a hidden pattern that binds them all? This question leads us to one of the most profound inquiries in human reflection: the standard of taste.

Can beauty be universal, or is taste inherently subjective—shaped by the shifting perspectives of individuals and cultures? Why does one tradition celebrate ornate complexity while another reveres minimalist simplicity? And if beauty is purely relative, how do certain works endure across centuries and civilizations—Homer's *Iliad*, Shakespeare's tragedies, Kalidasa's *Shakuntala*, the Ajanta cave paintings?

Their survival suggests that beauty is not merely a matter of personal whim. Some principles seem to transcend historical contingency. David Hume, in his essay *Of the Standard of Taste*, acknowledges the obvious diversity of aesthetic preferences. Yet he insists that a universal standard is not only possible but necessary. Sentiment, he argues, is tied to fact: while sentiment provides the immediate experience of beauty, the endurance of great works under refined scrutiny reveals that some sentiments are rooted in shared human nature.

Michelangelo's *David*, Beethoven's symphonies, Bharatanatyam dance, and Tagore's poetry—though born of specific cultural contexts—express emotions so deeply embedded in human experience that they achieve transhistorical and cross-cultural resonance. Their longevity offers empirical evidence that certain refined sentiments, purified of prejudice and validated by time, acquire universal authority.

How, then, is universality discerned? Hume rejects rigid formulas and abstract rules. Instead, he introduces the figure of the "true judge"—an individual whose critical faculties are shaped by a blend of reason and refined sensibility. This judge, through habitual practice, comparative evaluation, and freedom from bias, develops the capacity for sound aes-



The Art of Painting by Jan Vermeer, Credits: Wikipedia

thetic judgment.

In Hume's view, sentiment provides the vivid immediacy of beauty, while reason organizes and refines that perception. The harmony between the two is essential: unmediated sentiment risks devolving into aesthetic hedonism, while reason divorced from feeling becomes sterile formalism.

Criticism, for Hume, is not fault-finding but a cultivated practice through which taste matures. Today, however, criticism often succumbs to metrics, trends, and ideological slogans. Art is evaluated through algorithms, star ratings, and polarized discourse—mechanisms that obscure the delicate interplay of reason and sentiment.

True criticism must be reimagined as a slow, patient, and comparative endeavor—akin to the *rasika* in Indian aesthetic theory, whose cultivated sensibility allows for the deep savoring of *rasa*, the essence of artistic experience. In the Western tradition, Matthew Arnold's vision of criticism as "a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought" echoes Hume's call for freedom from prejudice.

When sentiment and reason are harmonized, criticism becomes a

bridge—not a battleground—between subjective delight and objective recognition. This is why certain works persist: they evoke emotional response and invite rational discernment, forming what Hume calls the paradox of "judgment emerging from sentiment, and sentiment disciplined through judgment."

Can this aesthetic paradox also guide life? Just as taste matures through disciplined criticism, the resolution of modern challenges demands judgment free from narrow cultural, sociological, and political constraints. In politics, decisions are often driven by passion inflamed by ideology, rather than by sentiments tempered through reason and comparison.

If citizens and leaders embraced Hume's ideal of the true judge, political discourse could shift from antagonism to a pursuit of universality. Hume's standard of taste, though rooted in aesthetics, reveals how refinement, sympathy, and reason can elevate humanity beyond prejudice toward shared understanding.

What begins as a meditation on beauty unfolds into a lesson in universality—a reminder that while sentiment may be the origin of taste, its authority lies in judgment. Within this paradoxical union of feeling and reason resides the enduring hope of a common humanity.

The book *Civilization and Its Discontents*, written by Sigmund Freud in 1930, takes us to the labyrinth of the human mind, revealing the strain between natural intuition and imposed discipline. Freud, an Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis, revolutionized the understanding of human psychology through his explorations of the unconscious, repression, and the dynamics of human desires. Even amid pointed criticism and attempts at refutation. The enduring impact of his work reflects its timeless relevance and its ability to speak to successive generations. His masterpiece, and foundational work *Interpretation of Dreams*, unravels the disguised logic of our nightly visions, showing the psyche's concealed longings and conflicts. It laid the ground work for psychoanalysis, influencing therapy and understanding the human psyche. This article reconnects these theories to the evolution of the modern civilization, tracing how Freud's insights complex interplay exists between the spontaneous drives of the individual and the normative frameworks that govern collective life.

Freud contends that civilization demands the suppression of our instinctual drives, from aggression to desire, in the pursuit of social harmony. This suppression is not without cost. Safety and cooperation are purchased at the expense of personal freedom and instinctual satisfaction. Human seek immediate gratification, but civilization forces adherence to the reality principle, delaying or redirecting desires to align with the societal expectation. Guilt, anxiety, and neurosis emerge as the internalization of society's rules clashes with the innate cravings of the human soul. Individuals are born with desires that civilization asks them to temper, creating a tension between the longing for

fulfillment and the obligation to conform. Even Eros, the life drive, finds itself constrained, diffused into bonds that unite yet restrain, while Thanatos, the death drive, lurks as a reminder of the conflicts we cannot fully reconcile.

In the contemporary socio-cultural landscape, geopolitical instability, climate change and environmental stress, technological disruptions and economic fragmentation, this fundamental tension persists, emerging in new forms. The human struggle between desire and societal expectation remains as potent as ever. The rise in mental health challenges reflects the strain of reconciling personal aspirations with external pressures, while the omnipresence of social media amplifies curated ideals that often clash with authentic self-expression. Political polarization fractures communities, forcing individuals to navigate identity within rigid ideological frameworks. Simultaneously, environmental anxiety underscores the moral dilemmas of consumption versus collective responsibility. Freud's psychoanalytic lens—particularly his exploration of the id, ego, and superego—continues to offer profound insight into these layered struggles, illuminating how unconscious drives and societal constraints shape the emotional and ethical contours of modern existence.

Technology magnifies the scrutiny of the superego, as social media transforms every action into a measure of conformity. The dopamine-driven pursuit of approval often conflicts with the authentic pleasures of genuine human connection, leaving in-



Digital Art by Loveleen Kour

dividuals alienated amidst hyperconnectivity. Economic and social pressures demand productivity and labor at the expense of leisure and creativity; leisure and creativity persist under the shadow of Freud's insight that civilization advances by curbing personal fulfillment. The human need for belonging often channels repressed aggression into tribalism, fostering group identity at the expense of individuality. Simultaneously, existential pressures—from climate change to AI—amplify feelings of helplessness, exposing the delicate foundations of modern societal order.

Freud identified three enduring sources of anxiety: the external world, the body, and relationships. Today, climate change amplifies nature's unpredictability, creating storms, wildfires, floods, and rising seas that threaten both survival and security across the world. The body, vulnerable to illness, aging, and mortality, faces new challenges from pandemics, antimicrobial resistance, and climate-induced health risks. Relationships, once the source of companionship and conflict alike, are now filtered through screens, algorithms, and digital disconnection, generating a sense of loneliness even amidst constant connectivity. Freud's insight into these intertwined sources of suffering remains uncannily prescient, as climate crises, health vulnerabilities, and technological mediation compound one another, challenging the human ego's capacity to adapt while also offering spaces for resilience through collective action, innovation, and ethical reflection.

Freud's framework for confronting the psychological strains of society or wit the discontent are —art, love, and sublima-

tion—resonate profoundly in our contemporary world. Creative expression allows the psyche to reclaim agency, to explore and navigate the imagination and intellect beyond the confines of expectation. Genuine connection, though complicated by digital isolation, offers solace and grounding, while sublimation channels desires into activism, innovation, and social engagement, even if co-opted at times by broader agendas. These avenues reveal the enduring potential for human fulfillment, even as civilization continues to demand conformity and moderation of instinct.

The accelerating pace of technology, widening economic divides, and persistent global crises have intensified the psychological tension Freud once described—where the human pursuit of freedom, meaning, and security collides with the constraints of social order. Rising mental health concerns and cultural movements reflect a collective yearning for authenticity and balance amid these pressures.

These dynamics remain deeply resonant in today's global landscape, where the fragile architecture of civilization continually contends with the primal instincts of the individual. Humanity grapples with three enduring adversities—the vulnerability of the body, the unpredictability of nature, and the complexities of human relationships. Navigating these tensions demands not only resilience but a reimagining of how personal authenticity can coexist with collective order in an era of profound transformation.

Yet this is not merely a tale of discontent. Individuals continue to adapt, innovate, and build meaningful connections, revealing a quiet resilience beneath the surface. The challenge of aligning personal truth with collective responsibility remains as urgent today as in Freud's time. His insights in *Civilization and Its Discontents* still illuminate the delicate, enduring complexity of human life—and our ongoing quest to reconcile inner desire with the demands of civilization.



Dr Chintanjeet Kour
Child Rights Practitioner
chintanjanjeetkour@gmail.com



The Emerald Tablet

By Hermes Trismegistus

Hermetic wisdom arose out of the Greco-Egyptian culture spanning from around 300 BCE to 400 AD and is attributed to a mythical figure called Hermes Trismegistos ("Hermes the Thrice-Greatest"). This figure derives from the Egyptian god Thoth and the Greek god Hermes, both of whom were considered patrons of the writing-centered arts. The Tablet probably first appeared in the West in editions of the psuedo-Aristotelian *Secretum Secretorum* which was actually a translation of the *Kitab Sirr al-Asar*, a book of advice to kings which was translated into latin by Johannes Hispalensis c. 1140 and by Philip of Tripoli c. 1243.



Hermes Trismegistus, floor mosaic in the Cathedral of Siena

The Emerald Tablet

Arabic Version (from the German of Ruska, translated by 'Anonymous')

0. Here is that which the priest Sagijus of Nabulus has dictated concerning the entrance of Balinas into the hidden chamber ... After my entrance into the chamber, where the talisman was set up, I came up to an old man sitting on a golden throne, who was holding an emerald tablet in one hand. And behold the following—in Syriac, the primordial language—was written thereon:

1. Here (is) a true explanation, concerning which there can be no doubt.

2. It attests: The above from the below, and the below from the above—the work of the miracle of the One.

3. And things have been from this primal substance through a single act. How wonderful is this work! It is the main (principle) of the world and is its maintainer.

4. Its father is the sun and its mother the moon; the

5. wind has borne it in its body, and the earth has nourished it.

6. the father of talismen and the protector of miracles.

6a. whose powers are perfect, and whose

lights are confirmed (?),

7. a fire that becomes earth.

7a. Separate the earth from the fire, so you will attain the subtle as more inherent than the gross, with care and sagacity.

8. It rises from earth to heaven, so as to draw the lights of the heights to itself, and descends to the earth; thus within it are the forces of the above and the below;

9. because the light of lights within it, thus does the darkness flee before it.

10. The force of forces, which overcomes every subtle thing and penetrates into everything gross.

11. The structure of the microcosm is in accordance with the structure of the macrocosm.

12. And accordingly proceed the knowledgeable.

13. And to this aspired Hermes, who was threefold graced with wisdom.

14. And this is his last book, which he concealed in the chamber.



Manjot Kaur

The Moon travels slowly

The Moon - daughter of a star,
singing, laughing, chattering child,
and skilled in the art of playing flute,
A precious child she was!

The Moon and her siblings,
even while they were children,
they were wiser than their father,
and they could see very far.

They heard many stories,
about an opening in the celestial plain,
for celestial inhabitants they were!

One night, she was awake,
and was thinking,
about a certain road which she must follow.
She did not eat much that morning,
she went, taking only a dog with her,
and traveled all day.

She searched, but could not find the road,
and with apparent discontent,
she continued crying and sobbing,
and bewailed her loss, her home in the stars.

She wavered, "Perhaps I am not blessed with
the same creative powers."
and she camped there,
on a bed of dried leaves.

Gazing upon the pine,
she had this fluttery nervous feeling,
of coming tempests.
She was about to become a 'transformative
narrative'.

Her subtle, spiritual and oblique
transmigration,
sparked a revival,
and she contemplated,
"The world might be lighted at night."

And the moon travels slowly,
Ascending and descending into the soft sky,
and her siblings always ask her,
"Tell us what you have seen on your journey."



Harleen Kaur

The Mirror

I saw broken frames, tattered curtains,
Blood marks, and rotten fragrance,
I stumbled on the broken chains,
I asked them to whom this all belongs to?
They pointed towards another direction,
Lying low, there was a mirror,
The sight was heartwrenching to see,
Clutched in chains,
covered in blood
deep drenched in darkness,
laying in the corner,
it was a reflection of nobody but me.



Vidushi Sahu

The Effigy Within

A Demon appeared at the stroke of the hour,
Part Beast, part Buddha, part poison, part flower.
He spoke in the tongues of Hell and Holy Book,
With a vow to win—by hook or by crook.

In his palace of pride, a decree he would speak,
Then hide a fragile heart, trembling and weak.
He'd don the soft mask of the doe or the dove,
And turn prey to ash with the fire of his love.

Be it Shakti or Satan, the Victor or Vanquished,
His signs still remain, an ache unextinguished.
Whether Krishna is the player or Kans the card,
The battle of Kurukshetra fills every yard.

From Helen of Homer to Omar's Rubaiyat,
From Sita of Ram to where Meera had sat,
The story returns in the frailties of men,
The struggle just ceases to start up again.

So is this the triumph of Vijay Dashmi,
Or a warning for the soul that whispers, "Hush me"?
If the chapter of Ravan is truly complete,
Why must we burn him on every street?

If this is the land of justice and right,
Why is there turmoil, never respite?
The tale marches on from the dusk to the dawn,
But truth does not burn when the effigy's gone.

"I would
define, in brief,
the Poetry of
words as The
Rhythmical
Creation of
Beauty."

— Edgar Allan Poe, *The Poetic Princip*



Ankita Kotwal

15 January 2025

When I may die which I will
Cut me into four pieces
Throw one into fire,
the flames may rise a little higher
Throw another into soil from which
a black rose may grow
and feed the third to vultures ,
so when they fly I go with them
And finally throw the last piece into water
So I can finally drown peacefully without
fearing death.



Jaspreet Singh

Honoured with Prestigious
State Award by the Punjab Lalit
Kala Akademi (2018)
singh.jaspreet58@gmail.com



Jaspreet Singh (b. 1989, Akkanwali, Punjab) paints from the soil of memory, where threads of his mother's embroidery first taught him that art could hold both silence and song. His canvases carry the pulse of human life, its tenderness, its struggles, its unspoken longings woven through with the spiritual breath of Punjab.

beauty, and loss.

His semi-realistic style, shaped by the delicate intricacies of Indian miniature painting, embraces vibrant colors not as surface decoration but as living energies—tones that whisper, clash, and console. Each shade becomes a vessel for emotion, an invitation to enter the intimate dialogue between soul and world.

At the heart of his practice lies the question of what it means to be human. He turns to symbols that speak across time: the moth circling the flame, the rose unfolding as a fragile testament to connection,

His work is less a representation than a resonance, a way of seeing that gathers the past into the present, the land into the body, and the individual into the universal. In Jaspreet Singh's art, life is not simply depicted; it is remembered, kindled, and revealed.

Editor



The Miraculous Journey



Love is Fire



The Seeker of Truth



Whisper of Blooming Hearts



The Journey Within



The Seeds You Plant in Secret will one Day Grow in Your Own Garden



Lovers