



The Water Carrier

The Water Carrier by Francis Coates Jones transforms an ordinary act into a moment of quiet contemplation. A young woman, draped in flowing classical garments, pauses beside a marble fountain, her earthen vessel held gently as water descends from a sculpted mask into the basin below. The scene unfolds within a lush garden where foliage dissolves into soft light, characteristic of Jones’s painterly treatment of nature. Although the subject recalls the everyday occupation of fetching water, the artist removes it from the sphere of labour and places it within an idealized classical landscape, where every element—the marble fountain, the ceramic vessel, the flowering garden, and the diffused luminosity—contributes to an atmosphere of stillness rather than movement. Jones, whose paintings often draw upon Greco-Roman aesthetics, does not narrate an event; instead, he composes an encounter between the human figure and the quiet rhythms of nature, allowing the ordinary to acquire an almost timeless presence.

PAINTING BY FRANCIS
COATES JONES
Hindman Auctions, Chicago

Although the material of art is drawn from reality, the artwork often reveals possibilities that reality itself has not yet disclosed. If art indeed expresses something that cannot be known by any other means, then its truth cannot be measured solely according to propositional standards.

Jaspreet Singh

When someone claims that an artwork speaks the truth, how are we to discern whether that truth is genuine or merely an appearance? How can we know what truth is without first knowing the matter, concept, or idea that lies behind words or thought? How do we distinguish truth from falsity, and what exactly is truth in the first place? Is it simply what we inherit from our elders—what we are taught is right or wrong—or does it belong to an altogether different order of philosophical and metaphysical inquiry? Is truth a value, a thought, or a rigid form, or is it something that exceeds conceptual definition altogether?

Within the Greek philosophical tradition, truth is not merely a word but an entire conception. It offers a way of approaching questions that occupied philosophers for centuries. In its simplest sense, truth signifies “the un-hidden” or “disclosure.” Rather than treating truth as a fixed possession, this understanding suggests that truth emerges through a process in which something concealed comes into view.

In *The Question of Artistic Truth: Preparations for a Critique of Non-Discursive Reason* (2023), Errol Boon identifies three interrelated conceptions of truth. First, “truth is a value; that is, an intensification of meaning.” Second, “truth is an intellectual value; that is, a value attributed to thought broadly construed.” Third, “truth is attributed to thought if the form of the thought enhances one’s understanding of the content of the thought.” Framed in this way, truth is understood primarily through its cognitive significance. It is not something existing independently in the world, but something that allows the world to become intelligible.

This understanding also distinguishes truth from other forms of value, such as morality, justice, religion, or pleasure. It is precisely at this point that the question of artistic truth emerges.

To understand any artwork, one must distinguish between its material medium, its content, and its form. An artwork is said to bear truth when its form meaningfully discloses its content through the material in which it appears.

While philosophers have long debated whether art possesses truth, disagreement remains over the manner in which that truth appears. Some argue that truth in art belongs primarily to discursive reason, whereas others maintain that art reveals a different order of reality through non-discursive reason. Artistic truth therefore cannot simply be reduced to correctness or factual representation.

As Martha Nussbaum observes, “literary form is not separable from philosophical content but is itself a part of content—an integral part then of the search for and the statement of truth.” Form is therefore not merely a vessel through which meaning is communicated; it actively participates in the disclosure of truth itself. Yet much of the philosophical discussion surrounding artistic truth has remained within the boundaries of discursive reasoning, acknowledging that art contains truth while frequently overlooking the symbolic, metaphysical, and invisible dimensions that cannot be exhausted through conceptual language alone.

This limitation becomes particularly evident in the work of Manfred Frank. Frank emphasizes the enduring importance of the history of aesthetics for contemporary philosophy, an importance often overlooked within the English-speaking tradition. He revisits Kant’s discovery of the relationship between the structure of an object, the form of judgment, and proportion, arguing that it fundamentally reshaped aesthetic philosophy. Although Kant discusses truth as *adequatio*—the correspondence between mind and reality—through the harmonious activity of imagination, he simultaneously insists upon the active role of the subject in the production of knowledge. Knowledge therefore cannot be understood as passive representation alone.

The distinction between discursive and non-discursive reason therefore becomes essential. Discursive reason proceeds through concepts, propositions, and sequential argumentation. It seeks explicit correctness, where truth is judged as either true or false. Non-discursive reason, however, operates differently. It unfolds meaning through forms that

The Question of Truth in the Artistic Realm

(Below)
EARTHBOUND
by Evelyn De Morgan,
De Morgan Collection



resist complete conceptual translation. It is concerned less with explanation than with disclosure.

Beethoven’s late string quartets provide a profound example of this non-discursive dimension of truth. Their claim to truth cannot be replicated by the natural sciences because they communicate meanings that exceed conceptual language. The meaning of instrumental music cannot simply be translated into words, for its truth is inseparable from the very form through which it appears. Music does not merely express an idea; it becomes the event in which that meaning is disclosed.

The conditions governing discursive truth are ultimately conditions of correctness. They are explicit, sequential, and bivalent, permitting only the alternatives of true or false. Non-discursive truth, by contrast, may appear ambiguous or even logically incorrect,

yet it frequently discloses meanings that lie far beyond what is immediately visible. Although the material of art is drawn from reality, the artwork often reveals possibilities that reality itself has not yet disclosed. If art indeed expresses something that cannot be known by any other means, then its truth cannot be measured solely according to propositional standards.

This brings us back to our original question. Is art merely a representation of reality, understandable through the logical and sequential branches of knowledge? Or does it open a horizon of meaning that cannot simply be grasped through conceptual reasoning? What cannot be fully defined often belongs to the realm of art. Sometimes art discloses reality; sometimes it unsettles it. Are there forms that forever remain beyond logic, where non-discursive truth proceeds through its own ambivalent

yet meaningful disclosures? Or do philosophers who defend non-discursive reason merely set aside logical reasoning and call anything a work of art?

Perhaps art fulfills its deepest promise only when it is permitted to represent not merely what already exists, but also what has not yet come into being. In this sense, artistic truth is neither the passive reflection of reality nor the abandonment of reason. Rather, it is the disclosure of possibilities concealed within reality itself. As Friedrich Schlegel fittingly remarked, “if the absolute truth were found, then the task of spirit would be completed and it would have to cease to be, as it only exists in activity.”

Author is a
Bsc. Economics Student at
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.
singhahoney9@gmail.com

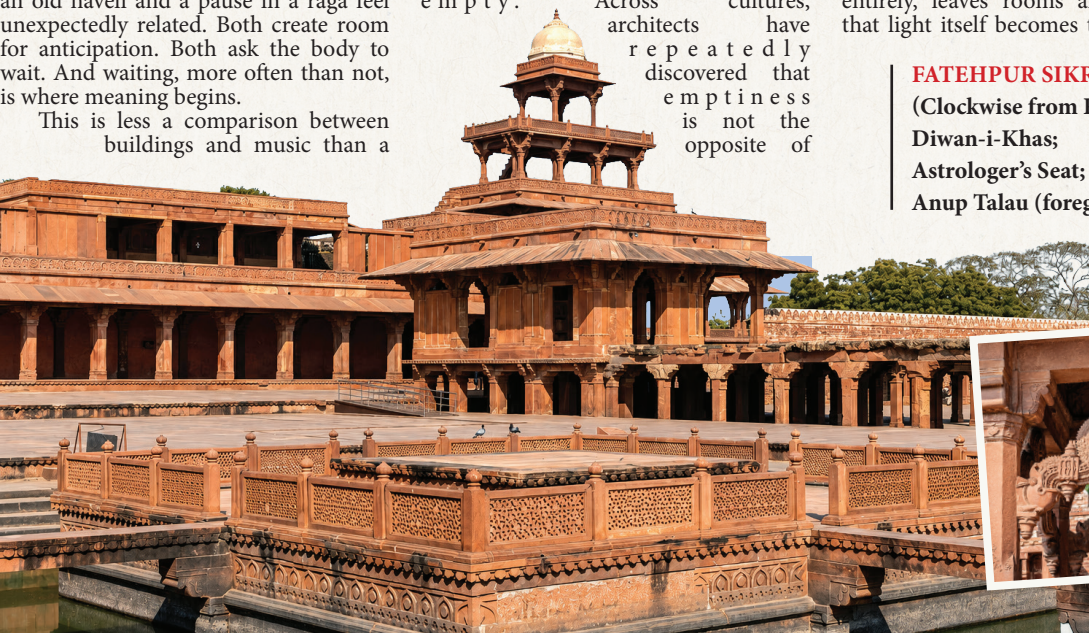
Sukirat Singh

Why does a courtyard at the heart of a building feel strangely complete despite containing almost nothing? Why does the pause before a note sometimes linger longer than the note itself? They come from something withheld. Perhaps architecture and music have always shared the same quiet understanding, presence is only felt because absence gives it shape.

A wall that stretches endlessly eventually becomes invisible. A melody that refuses to breathe becomes noise, no matter how beautiful it is. We perceive things through contrast. A doorway feels like a threshold because there is a wall beside it. A single note feels like an arrival because silence prepared a place for it.

Maybe this is why a courtyard in an old haveli and a pause in a raga feel unexpectedly related. Both create room for anticipation. Both ask the body to wait. And waiting, more often than not, is where meaning begins.

This is less a comparison between buildings and music than a



way of thinking about perception itself. Eyes notice edges before they notice surfaces. Ears notice change before continuity. Perhaps this is why neither architecture nor music is experienced as an accumulation of walls or notes. Both unfold as rhythms, compression and release, enclosure and openness, sound and silence until the mind quietly stitches them together into a whole.

People often call architecture “frozen music,” though the phrase has become so familiar that it risks saying very little. The connection seems deeper than shared proportions or mathematical harmony. Both seem to understand that expression often begins where excess ends. They know that what is deliberately left untouched often carries as much emotional weight as what is carefully made.

Perhaps emptiness is the only material shared equally by every art. Empty space, after all, is rarely empty.

Across cultures, architects have repeatedly discovered that emptiness is not the opposite of

architecture but one of its materials. The courtyard of a haveli gathers light, wind, conversation, and sky. Even the space beneath the buildings of Le Corbusier feels less like leftover land than a pause between earth and architecture. These voids serve practical purposes, certainly, but they also shape experience in quieter ways. They give the mind somewhere to rest before asking it to move again.

Silence in music behaves much the same. A rest is never merely the absence of sound. It holds expectation. It measures time. It lends weight to the note that follows. Miles Davis often seemed to understand that the notes he withheld could speak as clearly as the ones he played. Tadao Ando, in another medium entirely, leaves rooms almost bare so that light itself becomes the event. One

FATEHPUR SIKRI,
(Clockwise from Right)
Diwan-i-Khas;
Astrologer’s Seat;
Anup Talau (foreground).



Architecture and Music Built from Silence and Space

Empty space, after all, is rarely empty. Across cultures, architects have repeatedly discovered that emptiness is not the opposite of architecture but one of its materials.

composes with sound, the other with concrete, yet both appear to trust what they choose not to fill.

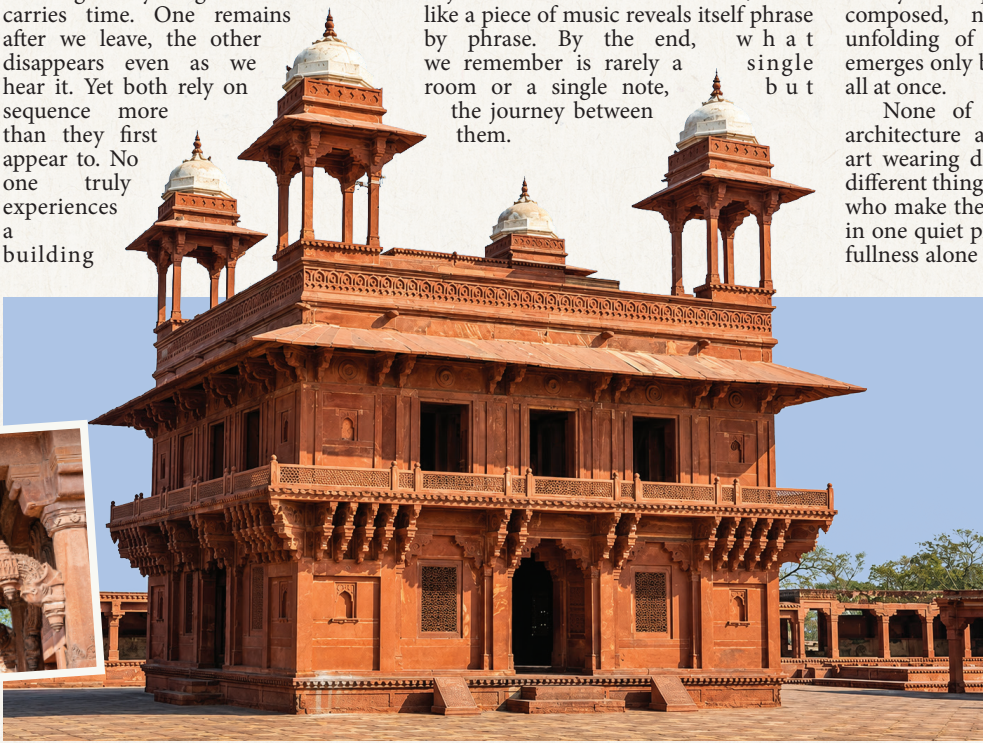
Of course, the analogy has its limits. Buildings carry weight. Music carries time. One remains after we leave, the other disappears even as we hear it. Yet both rely on sequence more than they first appear to. No one truly experiences a building

all at once. We move through it. A narrow passage gives way to an open court. A dim entrance releases into daylight. The building unfolds not as an object but as a series of moments, much like a piece of music reveals itself phrase by phrase. By the end, what we remember is rarely a single room or a single note, but the journey between them.

Perhaps this is why walking through Fatehpur Sikri can feel strangely musical. The experience isn’t simply visual. It has tempo. Corridors tighten before courtyards expand. The sequence feels composed, not unlike the gradual unfolding of a raga, where meaning emerges only because it refuses to arrive all at once.

None of this is to suggest that architecture and music are the same art wearing different clothes. They ask different things of the world and of those who make them. Yet they seem to meet in one quiet place both understand that fullness alone rarely moves us. Meaning often arrives through intervals, through restraint, through the spaces where nothing obvious is happening. We build walls to shape space, but perhaps space is what we were trying to build all along.

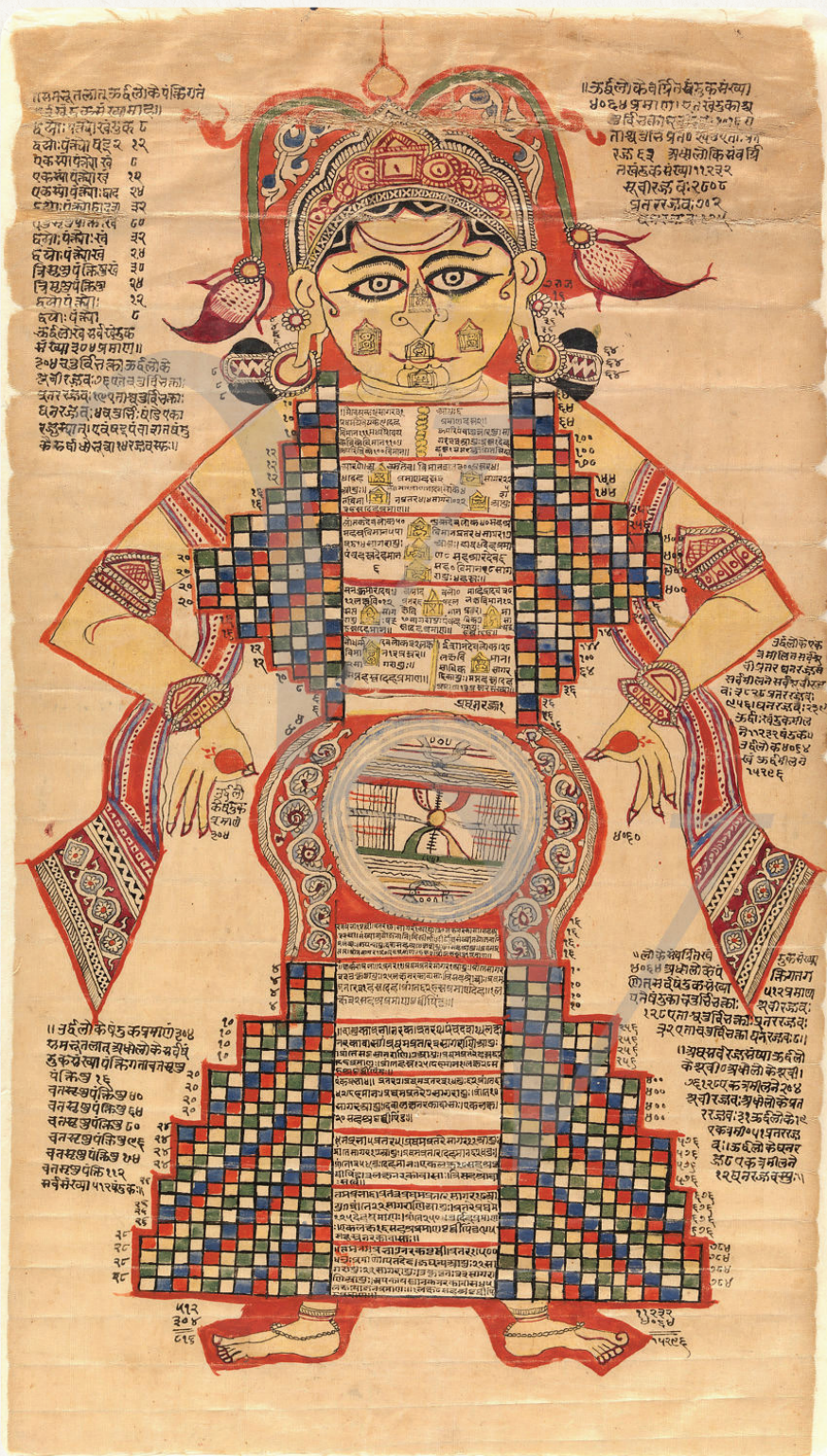
Author is a B.Arch
Student at Faculty
of Architecture and
Ekistics, JMI, New Delhi
sukiratsingh887amritsar@gmail.com





Panchakosha: The Five Sheaths of Human Body

The Atman itself never becomes brighter or dimmer; rather, our awareness of it becomes clearer as the koshas are understood and purified.



JAIN COSMIC MAN

Photo credits: Opium of the poets

Who am I existentially? Do I exist only because of this flesh-blood-bone structure, or is there something more to my body? This question is not new; we have been asking this for thousands of years. The ancient Vedic sages answered it through the concept of *Panchakosha*, which explains that every person has five layers, beyond these five layers is the Atman, or the true Self, which is always pure and peaceful. Just as clouds hide the sun without changing it, these five layers can hide our true Self but cannot change it.

The structure of Panchkosha is explained in a detail in the *Taittiriya Upanishad's* second chapter "Brahmananda Valli." The third chapter "Bhṛigu Valli," illustrates this philosophically through a story about a young seeker named Bhṛigu who wanted to know the truth about his life. Bhṛigu went to his father, Varuna, and asked, "What is Brahman?" Instead of giving him the direct answer, Varuna told him to meditate and discover it himself. Through deep meditation, Bhṛigu first understood *Annamaya Kosha*, the physical body nourished by food. Then he realized *Pranamaya Kosha*, the life energy that keeps the body alive, followed by *Manomaya Kosha*, the layer of the mind and emotions. As his understanding grew, he discovered *Vijnanamaya Kosha*, the layer of wisdom and right understanding, and finally *Anandamaya Kosha*, the layer of inner peace and bliss. Going beyond all these five *koshas*, Bhṛigu realizes *Brahman*, the ultimate truth and the source of all life.

This insight about layers of body is incredibly unique yet not incomprehensible. *Panchakosha* teaches us that we are much more than our physical body. We are not merely flesh and blood instead we made up of five

connected layers our external body, life energy, mind, intellect, and inner bliss. These five layers work together and affect every part of our lives. If one layer is not healthy or balanced, it can affect the others. According to the Vedic tradition, our Inner Self (Atman) is our true nature. It is pure, peaceful, and unchanging. The *Panchakosha*, or the five sheaths, surround the Inner Self like layers around a seed. They help us experience and interact with the world, but they are not our true identity. When we understand and keep these five layers healthy and balanced, our Inner Self shines more clearly. Just as removing the clouds allows us to see the sun, understanding the *Panchakosha* helps us realize the peace, wisdom, and happiness that already exist within us.

The *Panchakosha* can be compared to a car. The *Annamaya Kosha* is like the body of the car. The *Pranamaya Kosha* is the fuel and battery that give it energy to run. The *Manomaya Kosha* is like the steering wheel, helping control the direction. The *Vijnanamaya Kosha* is like the driver, who makes the right decisions while driving. The *Anandamaya Kosha* is the destination or purpose of the journey. Just as a car needs all these parts to work

“

When all five koshas are healthy and balanced, we feel physically fit, mentally calm, emotionally strong, and spiritually peaceful.

properly, a person needs all five koshas to stay healthy and live a balanced life.

Each layer has an important role in our life. Together, they affect our health, thoughts, feelings, actions, and happiness. When all five layers are healthy and balanced, we feel better physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Understanding the *Panchakosha* helps us know ourselves better and brings us closer to our true Self, the Atman.

Annamaya Kosha is our physical body. It is made from the food we eat. It is the part of us that we can see and touch. A healthy body helps us stay strong and do our daily work. We can keep it healthy by eating good food, exercising, getting enough sleep, and following healthy habits. *Pranamaya Kosha* is our energy layer. It gives us the energy to breathe,

work, and do all our daily activities. When this layer is healthy, we feel active and full of energy. We can improve it through deep breathing, yoga, exercise, and a healthy lifestyle.

Manomaya Kosha is our mind layer. It includes our thoughts, feelings, and emotions. It affects how we think and how we react to different situations. When our mind is calm, we feel happy and peaceful. We can keep this layer healthy with positive thinking, meditation, prayer, and spending time with good people.

Vigyanmaya Kosha is our wisdom layer. It helps us understand things, make good decisions, and know the difference between right and wrong. We can make this layer stronger by learning new things, thinking carefully, and following good values.

Anandamaya Kosha is our inner happiness layer. It is the deepest of the five koshas. When this layer is healthy, we feel peaceful, happy, and satisfied from within. We can experience it through meditation, prayer, gratitude, kindness, and helping others.

The five koshas are connected and work together as one. *Annamaya Kosha* (physical body) gives us strength and supports our daily activities. *Pranamaya Kosha* (life energy) provides the energy that keeps the body active. *Manomaya Kosha* (mind) controls our thoughts, feelings, and emotions. *Vijnanamaya Kosha* (intellect) helps us think clearly, make good decisions, and understand what is right. *Anandamaya Kosha* (inner bliss) brings peace, joy, and contentment. When all five koshas are healthy and balanced, we feel physically fit, mentally calm, emotionally strong, and spiritually peaceful. If one kosha becomes weak or disturbed, it can affect the balance of the others. Therefore, caring for all five koshas is important for a healthy and meaningful life.

One small point from Vedanta: the phrase "The Inner Self shines more clearly" is a metaphor. The Atman itself never becomes brighter or dimmer; rather, our awareness of it becomes clearer as the koshas are understood and purified.



Rachita Joshi

Acupuncture &
Acupressure Expert &
Faculty in ASPEUS
shreecaayurvedic@gmail.com



Roc

The Roc derives its name from the Persian *rukḥ*, referring to a gigantic bird whose very mention evokes immeasurable size and overwhelming power. Unlike many mythical creatures confined to a single cultural tradition, the Roc traverses the literary landscapes of Persia, Arabia, and the wider Indian Ocean world, attaining its most celebrated form in *One Thousand and One Nights* through the voyages of Sinbad the Sailor.

Medieval Arab geographers and travellers described it as a bird so immense that its wings obscured the sun and its talons could seize elephants with effortless ease. Roc never belonged to a single narrative or culture. Its image resonates with older traditions surrounding the Persian Simurgh, the Arabic 'Anqā, and even the Indian Garuda, suggesting that it evolved through centuries of cultural exchange rather than emerging from a single source. Roc is less a creature of fantasy than a symbol of the immeasurable horizon toward which every civilization has, in one way or another, directed its imagination.

THE ROC WHICH FED ITS YOUNG ON ELEPHANTS & RHINOCEROTIDAE

Plate from "The Second Voyage of Sinbad the Sailor" by Edward Julius Detmold

Editorial

A fundamental dimension of art and aesthetics lies in their power to embody human imagination, rendering the invisible world of thought perceptible to the senses. A painter expresses imagination through schemes of colors and patterns; a poet through rhyme and reflective language; a literary artist through stories and memories; and a movie actor through dreams and imagined self-images. Different artists and aestheticians transform imagination into sensory experience, triggering latent human passions and opening a realm of intellectual meanings and associations. Intellectual interpretation creates an inner dialogue and provides an expressive language through which these works of art can be understood, allowing them to manifest in diverse forms and translations.

In many ways, works of art involve a fusion of the real world and its abstractions. The development of aesthetic taste provides an opportunity to decode empiricism, objectivism, and ontology into ever-expanding modes of understanding producing new epistemologies. A fine work of art is always contingent in its meaning and interpretation. It generates an expanding resonance that fills the mind with a sense of magnanimity stimulating an expansion of imagination. This spirit underlies many of the fresh articles presented in this edition of *Makrand*. We invite art lovers from diverse backgrounds to engage with these textual arts, like bees gathering nectar from flower, while discovering the richness of artistic interpretations offered on the pages of this edition.

Amandeep Singh |

Who Gets to Be a Minimalist?

Where artists once used raw materials to strip away pretense, modern lifestyle influencers use empty space to broadcast financial comfort.



STEVE AT HOME, SITTING UNDER HIS TIFFANY LAMP,
Photographed by Diana Walker in 1982.

flipping the narrative into a commodified wellness brand. The mainstream minimalist movement has inverted the original intent of the art movement it borrows from: clean, unadorned white space has been re-coded as a signifier of status, economic security, and cultural distinction. Where artists once used raw materials to strip away pretense, modern lifestyle influencers use empty space to broadcast financial comfort.

None of this diminishes minimalism's genuine ethical appeal. Many adopt it as a sincere attempt to consume more consciously and live with greater intention. But modern minimalism is often just Veblen's conspicuous consumption wearing a different look, a way to performatively signal "look at all the things I have refused to buy." "White-on-white-on-white" living rooms and hyper-curated, expensive goods signal

that the choice not to wear a visible logo has itself become the status symbol. The irony of the "invisible label" is it's steep barrier to entry: the single, perfectly draped white T-shirt is only a status symbol if it is recognized as a \$300

piece of "quite luxury", rather than a five pack from a discount department store.

Consider the iconic 1982 photograph of Steve Jobs sitting in a nearly bare room, an \$8,000 stereo system his only indulgence, an elite "longing for less." Jobs discarding his belongings was not a step outside the capitalist matrix. It was, in Baudrillard's terms, the consumption of sign-value: "purity," "security," "simplicity," purchased as meaning rather than furniture.

For those without Bourdieu's economic and cultural capital, minimalism cannot function as "distinction." The same sparse room that signals cultivated taste for one household signifies material deprivation for another.

For the underprivileged, frugality often looks like "clutter," an inventory of accumulated items kept as a safety net against precarity, the drawer of mismatched plastic containers, the second hand winter coat kept 'just in case' and bulk bought canned goods. You cannot "choose" to declutter a home you're too poor to furnish, or "reduce" a diet already down to one meal a day. When survival runs on government assistance and low-wage labor, discarding functional items isn't a lifestyle. It's a loss you can't recover from. Poverty produces scarcity, not minimalism.

This divide raises the real question: who actually gets to be a minimalist? Is it the person in a white t-shirt and cargo pants because it's all they own, or the person in the same white t-shirt and cargo pants because that's the uniform they've chosen? The clothes are identical. What differs is who gets read as choosing, and who gets read as lacking.

Minimalism, then, is less about owning fewer things than possessing the privilege to make having less appear intentional. For this generation minimalism was never just a sustainability movement, it is what capitalism looks like once it has learned to sell the absence of wanting anything at all.



Kabir Singh

MA Sociology
Pondicherry University,
Pondicherry
kabirgill12864@gmail.com



THE ASSASSINATION OF JULIUS CAESAR

Part cropped from The Death of Julius Caesar (1806) by Vincenzo Camuccini Glasgow Life Museums

Remembering *What We Did*

Life refuses simple roles. None of us remain heroes forever. And perhaps that is the most uncomfortable truth.

There are shelves full of stories about betrayal. Perhaps that is because pain has always been a better storyteller than guilt. Since childhood, I have been surrounded by songs of abandoned lovers, poems written by broken hearts, and stories narrated by people who carry wounds left by others. We inherit these memories almost naturally. Families remember who failed them. Friends speak about those who disappeared. Communities preserve histories of

suffering, of promises broken, of trust violated.

The betrayed speak. And they should. Pain deserves language. Yet, over the years, a strange question has followed me like an unwelcome companion: who writes the story of the one who betrayed?

Not the villain of fiction. Not the monster we create to make sense of our suffering. I mean the ordinary human being—the friend who walked away, the lover who chose someone else, the neighbour who remained silent,

the person who abandoned loyalty for comfort, ambition, fear, or survival.

Where are their confessions? Libraries are overflowing with memories of wounds. But where are the memoirs of guilt? Where are the poems written by those who shattered someone's faith? Where are the diaries of people who look back and whisper to themselves, "I know what I did?"

Perhaps they exist somewhere, hidden between shame and memory. Or perhaps silence itself becomes their

autobiography. I often wonder whether betrayers remember differently. Does the friend who disappeared replay the friendship in lonely moments? Does the lover who broke another's heart carry fragments of regret that nobody sees? Does the neighbour who remained silent during someone's suffering hear old voices in sleepless nights?

Or does life simply move on? Maybe some people sleep peacefully. Maybe others never truly do. Human beings possess a curious talent. We are experts

at remembering the wounds inflicted upon us and surprisingly poor historians of the wounds we inflict on others. We remember every harsh word spoken against us, every abandonment, every humiliation. But when it comes to our



Mumtaz Ahmed

Research Scholar,
The English and
Foreign Languages
University, Hyderabad
mumtazdphdsvc24@
efluniversity.ac.in

own failures, we become editors rather than historians. We soften facts. We rename cowardice as necessity. We call selfishness self-preservation. We explain away our silences as circumstances beyond our control.

The mirror, after all, is easier to face when covered with excuses. Perhaps that is why genuine confessions are so rare. Because to admit betrayal is not merely to acknowledge a mistake; it is to dismantle the comforting mythology we build around ourselves. It is frightening to discover that one can simultaneously be wounded and wound others, that the victim in one story may

But very few stories venture into the quiet and dark chambers where betrayal itself is born. What if betrayal is not always born out of evil? What if sometimes it emerges from fear? From exhaustion? From loneliness? From weakness? From the desperate desire to belong elsewhere?

None of these reasons justify betrayal. They merely remind us that human beings are far more fragile than the moral categories we assign to them. Perhaps monsters are rarer than failures. And perhaps failures are far more frightening because they resemble us. Entire societies preserve memories of what was done to them. Nations build monuments to suffering. Communities carry inherited grief across generations.

Yet I wonder whether civilizations mature not only when victims remember, but also when perpetrators remember. Not to erase responsibility. Not to demand forgiveness. But simply to tell the truth.

Imagine books filled not with self-justification but with remorse. Imagine former friends admitting their cowardice, estranged lovers acknowledging the pain they caused, neighbours confessing the comfort of silence, societies recognising not only their wounds but also the wounds they have inflicted upon others.

Would such honesty heal everything? Certainly not. Some scars outlive apologies. Some losses cannot be restored. But perhaps grief becomes less lonely when it is acknowledged. Perhaps truth, even when it arrives late, allows dignity to survive. And perhaps shame, when transformed into responsibility, becomes something more valuable than denial.

Because future generations do not merely learn from the stories of those who suffered. They also learn from those who had the courage to say:

"Yes, I failed."
"Yes, I caused pain."
"Yes, I betrayed someone."

Such words cannot rewrite the past. But they might prevent its repetition. And perhaps that is why, in a world where almost everyone speaks of being betrayed, the rarest story is not the story of the wounded. It is the story of the one who finally finds the courage to confess.

Maybe reconciliation does not begin with forgiveness. Maybe it does not even begin with forgetting. Maybe it begins with something far simpler and infinitely more difficult:

"I know what I did.
I know whom I hurt.
And I refuse to hide from it anymore."

For history remembers wounds. But perhaps humanity advances when guilt, too, learns how to speak.

“THE BETRAYED SPEAK. AND THEY SHOULD. PAIN DESERVES LANGUAGE. YET, OVER THE YEARS, A STRANGE QUESTION HAS FOLLOWED ME LIKE AN UNWELCOME COMPANION: WHO WRITES THE STORY OF THE ONE WHO BETRAYED?”

become the betrayer in another.

Life refuses simple roles. None of us remain heroes forever. And perhaps that is the most uncomfortable truth. I have often noticed that cinema gives us broken protagonists and cruel antagonists. Literature celebrates the abandoned and condemns those who abandon. History remembers communities that suffered betrayal, and rightly so.

Does there exist Justice at all?

What kind of justice the court delivers? Does the punishment itself produces justice, or does the court merely enforces a legal rule?



ALLEGORY OF JUSTICE

by Bernardino Mei, Credits: Artvee

Have you ever wondered what law is ultimately meant to achieve? Why do societies create legal systems, and what purpose do they serve? Every academic discipline is guided by a distinct question, and the philosophy of law is no exception. It is concerned not merely with understanding legal rules but with investigating the very nature of justice, rights, and the moral foundations upon which law rests.

Let us begin with a thought experiment. Suppose two individuals, A and B, go on a vocation. During their outing, a dispute arises, and A kills B. The family of B files a criminal case against A. The evidence overwhelmingly establishes A's guilt, and after due process of law, the court sentences A to life imprisonment in accordance with the law. Society generally concludes that justice has been served because the offender has been punished for the wrong committed. In legal philosophy, this conception is commonly understood as retributive justice, according to which justice is achieved by imposing a punishment proportionate to the offence.

While studying different theories of justice in law school, one question has continued to trouble me: What kind of justice the court delivers? Does the punishment itself produces justice, or

does the court merely enforces a legal rule? More fundamentally, does justice exist as an objective reality independent of human beings, or is it merely a human convention created by societies to regulate social life? If justice is only a social construct, then its content may vary across cultures and historical periods. However, if justice possesses an objective existence, then legal systems

merely discover and imperfectly express an eternal moral order rather than create it. This metaphysical question forms the foundation upon which every social and political theory of justice rests.

The diverse theories of justice developed throughout the history of political philosophy are, therefore, reflections of deeper metaphysical assumptions regarding the nature of reality, morality, and the human person. Plato's theory of justice, presented in *Republic*, offers one of the earliest and most influential answers to this question. For Plato, justice is not merely a legal principle or a political arrangement; rather, it is an objective and eternal Form that exists independently of the material world. Human laws derive their legitimacy only to the extent that they participate in this higher moral reality.

Plato explains justice through his theory of the tripartite soul. According to him, the human soul consists of three parts: reason, which seeks truth and wisdom; spirit, which embodies courage, honour, and determination; and appetite, which represents bodily desires and material wants. A just individual is one in whom reason governs the soul with wisdom, spirit supports reason with courage, and appetite remains disciplined under the guidance of reason. Justice, therefore, is achieved when each

part of the soul performs its natural function without interfering with the others, resulting in an inner harmony of the person.

Plato extends this analogy to the structure of the state. Just as the soul comprises three parts, the ideal state consists of three corresponding classes: the rulers, the guardians (soldiers), and the producers. The rulers, who possess philosophical wisdom, should govern the state; the guardians should defend it with courage; and the producers should provide for its economic needs. Every individual ought to perform the function for which he or she is naturally best suited. Consequently, the state is not merely an institution established to protect individual interests or enforce laws. Rather, it possesses a moral purpose: to cultivate virtue and enable individuals to realise their highest rational potential.

For Plato, therefore, justice extends far beyond punishment. Punishment may restore legal order, but it does not by itself constitute justice. True justice is a condition of harmony in which every part of the soul and every constituent of the state performs its proper function under the guidance of reason. Justice is realised only when the moral order of the individual is reflected in the political order of society, thereby establishing a reciprocal relationship between personal virtue and social harmony.

Returning to our original thought experiment, we can now see that the criminal case raises more than a legal question. It invites us to ask whether justice primarily concerns the punishment of wrongdoing or the moral condition of the human person. Is justice fundamentally an attribute of individuals, of society, or of both? Can a genuinely just political order arise from morally unjust individuals, or does social justice necessarily presuppose individual justice?



Novdeep Singh

BA LLB

Sri Guru Granth Sahib World
University, Fatehgarh Sahib
novdeepsinghtsc@gmail.com

When we talk about faith, different words come to mind, such as trust, belief, confidence, credence, and hope. These are the components that make up faith. When we think about faith, it appears deeply sacred and spiritual. Yet, despite its familiarity, faith remains one of the most profound and widely discussed concepts in philosophy and religion.

At its core, faith means placing trust or belief in something beyond ourselves, whether it is an external object or a supreme power. Depending on a person's state of mind, faith can be experienced individually or collectively. While this gives us the ordinary understanding of faith, philosophers have attempted to explore its deeper nature. Among them, Paul Tillich offers one of the most influential interpretations.

In *Dynamics of Faith*, Paul Tillich defines faith as "the state of being ultimately concerned." This means that whatever is most important to you, the one thing that gives your life its ultimate meaning, becomes your faith. A human being is willing to surrender everything for this ultimate concern. Most people think faith means believing in a set of religious rules, doctrines, or things that cannot be seen.

Tillich argues that faith is much deeper. According to Tillich, faith is not a single element. It is the total integration of the heart, the mind, and the will. If we try to build faith using only the logical mind, it ceases to be true faith. The mind belongs to the realm of logic, and when we process everything solely through the intellect, it becomes mere intellectual knowledge rather than deep belief. Similarly, if we attempt to base faith purely on wishful or driven desire, it becomes a heavy burden on the human mind. This happens when we force a concept to become our belief through external pressure or conditioning; a decision made by suppressing our intellect can never result in genuine faith.

On the other hand, when a person believes solely on the basis of emotion, without the balance of intellect and reason, that faith also remains incomplete. Personal emotions are unstable and constantly change according to time and circumstance. Therefore, genuine faith is a harmonious act of all three elements: intellect, desire, and emotion.

What Is Faith?

Understanding Paul Tillich's Vision

True faith always includes doubt because we can never fully know or completely see our ultimate concern. Faith therefore always involves risk.



THE TEARS OF SAINT PETER

By El Greco, Credits: El Greco Museum

Having defined faith in this way, Tillich also explains its relationship with doubt. When you place your faith in a supreme power, doubt naturally enters your mind. He teaches us that doubt is not a bad thing; rather, it is a necessary part of faith that enables it to grow stronger. True faith always includes doubt because we can never fully know or completely see our ultimate concern. Faith therefore always involves risk. When confronted with this uncertainty, human beings must discover the courage to accept it. Through this courage, faith becomes alive, resilient, and deeply meaningful.

If faith consists of the heart, mind, and will working together, another question naturally arises: How is such faith born? Paul Tillich argues that faith is born within a community because the community provides the primary linguistic and symbolic tools that shape our consciousness. A person cannot develop a mind, a heart, or a will without a shared language. The community introduces us to sacred symbols, stories, and words that awaken our inner capacity to believe. It is through this shared social soil that our individual heart, mind, and will are nurtured, allowing our ultimate

concern to take root and grow.

Having explained the nature and origin of faith, Tillich further distinguishes the different ways in which faith is expressed. He identifies three broad types of faith. The first is Ontological Faith. This is the experience of God's presence in the here and now. It perceives the holy in all things through the sacramental dimension, experiences a profound spiritual connection through the mystical dimension, and expresses love for humanity through the humanistic dimension. However, when separated from reason and critical reflection, it can easily become blind faith.

The second is Moral Faith. This is the attempt to reach God primarily through moral duties and ethical rules. Here, people focus on righteous conduct and obedience. However, when faith becomes merely a checklist of moral laws, it loses its spiritual warmth, joy, and depth.

The third is Unity, which Tillich regards as the fullest expression of faith. It brings together the strengths of both ontological and moral faith. It preserves the living experience of God's presence while also inspiring responsible moral action.

Finally, Tillich explains the relationship between faith and history, reason, philosophy, and science. Faith is not opposed to any of these fields; rather, it stands independently alongside them. For Tillich, faith is neither blind belief nor the enemy of reason. It is the deepest orientation of the whole person—heart, mind, and will—toward what is ultimately meaningful. In this sense, faith can coexist with history, philosophy, science, and reason while remaining an independent and indispensable dimension of human existence.



Gurpreet Singh

Research Scholar, GGS Dept.
of Religious Studies,
Punjabi University, Patiala
gurpreetrali007@gmail.com

Institutional Certainty & the Tragedy of John Coffey in *The Green Mile*

Coffey's miracles bring what literary critics refer to as artistic justice, in which the story, rather than the courts, reveals the moral truth.

Prison is often understood as an institutional system designed to punish the evildoer. But what happens when prison faithfully follows its own procedures while failing to recognize the very truth it claims to protect? Frank Darabont's *The Green Mile* (1999), adapted from Stephen King's novel of the same name, is built upon this unsettling question. The film initially appears to be a conventional prison drama. Yet beneath its familiar setting lies a profound philosophical inquiry into morality, suffering, redemption, and the fragile relationship between legality and justice. More than a story about crime and punishment, *The Green Mile* transforms the prison into a metaphor for institutional failure, exposing the tragic consequences of a system that punishes goodness simply because it cannot recognize it.

The story is narrated through the memories of Paul Edgecomb, the former head guard on Louisiana State Penitentiary's E Block, known as "The Green Mile." It is called "The Green Mile" because of the green floor leading to the execution room. Life within the prison is governed by routine and certainty. Every inmate awaits an irreversible sentence, and every guard is expected to carry out the law without allowing personal conscience to interfere. Paul, however, occupies an uneasy position within this institutional order. While he respects the law, he believes that punishment should never deprive a human being of dignity. His growing conflict between legal duty and moral responsibility becomes the emotional and philosophical centre of the narrative.

The inmates themselves are not merely prisoners awaiting execution; each embodies a distinct moral possibility through which the film examines the complexity of justice. Eduard Delacroix, despite being convicted of murder, forms an affectionate bond with a small mouse, Mr. Jingles, reminding the audience that a criminal act cannot exhaust the moral identity of a human being. Wild Bill Wharton, in contrast, represents cruelty without restraint, a figure whose violence appears almost instinctive. John Coffey, the newest prisoner, enters the Green Mile under the accusation of murdering two young girls. His imposing physical presence immediately conforms to every expectation of guilt.

It is only with John Coffey's first miracle that the philosophical horizon

of the film shifts entirely. What begins as a prison narrative gradually transforms into something far more unsettling—a meditation on the limits of human knowledge and the inability of institutions to recognize truths that lie beyond their own established categories. The transformation begins with an event that the prison's legal framework is fundamentally incapable of explaining. When Paul Edgecomb is struck by an excruciating urinary infection, John Coffey quietly takes his hand and heals him, releasing a swarm of tiny black insects from his mouth as though drawing sickness out of another human being. With this moment, *The Green Mile* abandons the boundaries of conventional realism and enters the realm of the supernatural. Yet the miracle is not introduced merely to astonish the audience.

Rather, it functions as a philosophical interruption, compelling both the characters and the viewers to reconsider the assumptions through which reality, justice, and truth have thus far been understood.

Prior to John Coffey's arrival, justice in *The Green Mile* is based on witness, evidence, and the legal system—systems that are subject to human mistakes and limitations. Coffey's miracles bring what literary critics refer to as artistic justice, in which the story, rather than the courts, reveals the moral truth. In this case, the film changes from representing reality to that of the paranormal. However, the legal system does not change despite the viewers' realization that John is a miraculous person. The system fails to see the truth and still considers him a criminal. The greatest source of misery in the film lies in the fact that the system is blinded despite the miracle taking place

in prison.

Each amazing occurrence reveals some truth about reality: Wild Bill is revealed to be the real killer of the girls, Paul gets healed, Mr. Jingles lives on, and Melinda Moore is cured of her brain tumor. But Coffey's destiny is never changed by these disclosures. Artistic justice reveals institutional failure rather than fixing it. It shows that under the obedience of law there is a greater human ability for conscience, empathy, and moral imagination. It highlights the struggle between outside obligation and personal truth. People change when they see innocence, suffering, and compassion, even when the law alone cannot deliver justice. The film makes the jail, not Coffey, the real defendant by shifting the emphasis of judgment from the condemned prisoner to the legal system itself.



THE GREEN MILE (1999),
Panoramic scenes from the film depicting John Coffey's tragic execution

Healing in *The Green Mile* goes beyond just the physical, as it involves transformation both morally and experientially. Healing in the film is represented by the fact that Paul regains health and redefines his understanding of justice, implying a holistic change involving body and perspective. The same is true when Mr. Jingles' survival gives Delacroix dignity in his dying days, and the same applies to Melinda Moore's recovery, bringing back hope into her life.

In the film, miracles have the role of inciting the process of moral change in viewers. Whereas Percy completely ignores this possibility, Paul, Brutal, and the other guards react with increased empathy. In this way, the film implies that miracles are indicators of character and not of belief or moral virtue. In situations where people show cruelty, they will

innocent man and the failure of the system to subjugate process to truth.

The most touching part of the film is the scene where Paul offers John Coffey a chance to escape. But Coffey rejects it because he feels tired not physically but spiritually because of the evil within human beings. His condition can be described as feeling their hatred and suffering "as pieces of glass." He reinterprets his execution not as a punishment but as a means of liberation from the world where there is no recognition of innocence or any sign of compassion. In Coffey's acceptance, there lies a silent condemnation of society where ethical deficiencies have necessitated such a sacrifice. In *The Green Mile*, the primary argument presented is that death does not mark the defeat of a person but instead marks the liberation of his soul from the confines of his

physical being. Therefore, John Coffey's execution is different from those of all the other prisoners. The guards know that John Coffey is innocent, and as a result, they are going against their own conscience by carrying out the execution. Yet the legal system plows on without batting an eye: the straps are pulled, the lever is flipped, and another miracle dies, a victim of law.

The scene also illustrates one of the film's moral conflicts and contradictions, whereby justice has been done to the letter of the law, but in moral terms, it is a spectacular failure. The film concludes with the suggestion that while a law can conform to the procedures it prescribes and yet inflict great injustice, sometimes there's simply no getting around it, legally at least. John Coffey's story isn't finished when the chair clicks; it begins outside of the death house. It changes Paul Edgecomb's notion of justice and of good forever. His abnormally prolonged life becomes not a privilege, but a curse, of knowing he took part in the electrocution of an innocent man. And he outlasts them all as a human conscience to an event that could, and surely would, be lost.

John Coffey's death also challenges our definition of justice. By executing Coffey, the film challenges viewers to question their assumptions that legal rulings and moral rightness are always interchangeable and to think of the earthly justice system in comparison to *The Green Mile*'s justice system. His death represents the condemnation of a culture that is unable to see goodness when it is in front of it rather than the defeat of a miracle. Neither public redemption nor legal reform result from his passing. Rather, it leaves a lasting scar on the audience's conscience as well as that of those who witnessed it. The film makes the argument that miracles exist to test humanity's moral fiber rather than simply astound it. The fact that humanity frequently fails that test is its greatest tragedy.



Jaideep Singh

BA Honours Political Science,
Rayat Bahra University,
Mohali.

jaideep151699@gmail.com

Sanitation & Social Imagination



Dr Ram Kumar Thakur

Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science
Hindu College,
University of Delhi
ramkumarthakurt@gmail.com



Perfect Days (2023) a Japanese movie about the life of a sanitation worker was celebrated across the world by cinema lovers. The story revolves around the life of a middle-aged man named Hirayama (played by Kōji Yakusho). Unlike fellow workers who are shirkers, Hirayama is dedicated to his work of cleaning lavatories with full sincerity. Besides work he finds meaning in reading, listening to music, pursuing photography or even enjoying solace in nature, reflecting contentment. In an world defined by alienation, exploitation and informality the movie appears as a balm of sorts. It presents Hirayama's spiritual journey who lives his life in fullest terms by affirming the philosophy of 'now is now'. The question however lingers is how can people be happy within a structure defined by adversity?

If one readily agrees with the reading of 'now is now', it can either mean neoliberal success story or a negotiation amidst precarity where one can let go anxiety and remain and enjoy the moment. One can argue that in the Japanese context maybe the social security is better, the dignity of labour is reciprocally valued in society and so the character flourishes through a

meaningful way of life. Unlike this film, if one were to imagine the life of a sanitation worker in Indian subcontinent, the first image that comes to people's mind is precarious life, undignified and unequal social order. It becomes an interesting exercise if we try to locate the crisis of social imagination by contrasting *Perfect Days* with a Marathi movie *Court* (2014). In this movie, a folk singer faces a Kafesque trial and tribulations for challenging the caste-based sanction of sewer cleaning, the charge being of abetment to suicide. A worker dies in a man-hole sewer cleaning exercise after attending a program of his revolutionary songs, that too two days prior to the event! The police charges the singer for consciousness raising songs against the illegality of manual scavenging, contrastingly promoting suicide? The danger and risk of sewer cleaning is given a twisted dimension representing the absurdity of law and justice. If one

were to arrive at a social imagination which is just, dignified and ecologically sustainable, where should the churning really take place?

It becomes evident from the above mentioned contexts that consensus continues to elude, on what really ails the issue of sanitation. While, the divine logic framework of caste-based servility has been challenged by the framework of law and rights, and yet the momentum to emerge out of the hierarchical system has been quite difficult. Even the popular governmental initiatives of *Swachh Bharat* (Clean India) mission provides a moral interface rather than a sustainable alternative. There is a need for alternatives encompassing political, economic and social transformation through concerted efforts at all levels of governance. Through discourses and experiences of humiliation and discrimination of the hitherto 'untouchable community', anti-caste movements have critiqued the



LOOKING UPWARD
(Left) Movie Scene from *Perfect Days* (2023)

MAN BEFORE LAW,
(Above) Scene from movie *Court* (2014)

“IF ONE READILY AGREES WITH THE READING OF 'NOW IS NOW', IT CAN EITHER MEAN NEOLIBERAL SUCCESS STORY OR A NEGOTIATION AMIDST PRECARIETY WHERE ONE CAN LET GO ANXIETY AND REMAIN AND ENJOY THE MOMENT.

purity and pollution framework of caste system that binds people to hell hole opportunity structures. The spiritual embrace of cleanliness paradigms to caste-based occupation is unlike the protagonist in *Perfect Days*. In the social

imagination of state, society and market, an ideal sanitation worker lies at the crossroad of modernity and tradition with little scope of emancipation. Such workers exist as spectacles often used as a prop in official programs of supposedly inclusion and development by the state. The flourishing amidst precarity emerge out of informality, risk of disease, socially ostracization, often recognised by the state along the lines of instrumental value.

Historically both the caste and patriarchal order have been quite decisive in demarcating limits of social change. It has done so by constantly shifting the goal post of emancipation. The reciprocal imagination of recognising dignity and value of labour has largely been defined by exploitation and subservience. Resistance is often blinkered through subsidised solutions offered by the market, state and society, which looks at cleanliness and sanitation along the lines of utilitarian reasoning. From household to public sphere such exercises are sometimes assisted by technocratic solutions and formal law subject to contingencies of religious sanction and gender roles. The crisis of social imagination of emancipation as such requires churning not just in moral terms, it requires rethink and reflexivity beyond spiritual reconfiguration of charity-parity discourse. We need structural change by demystifying the underbelly of failed resistance and social transformation so far, that is by recognising the crisis within.

Tug of war

My favorite childhood game was tug of war.
Our petite bodies had lofty ambitions to bring the other side down on their knees in defeat.
Nimble fingers over the abrasive rope getting ready, planting our feet strongly on the grass before the game started.
The other side also built big dreams to bring us down in shame and claim victory for themselves.
When the whistle blew, we gave our everything and pulled the rope with sheer audacity to win at all costs. But the slow force surrendered as the splintered grip weakened.
The other side beamed with the prospect of a win and loosened the grip.
We then swooped like hawks, dragging them in on our side and fell on each other happily in victory.
The other side too laughed and fell on their bruised egos and the war ended peacefully.

PARVINDER MEHTA
Author of *On Wings of Words* (2021)



"Nobody Understands Quantum Mechanics"

How should we think about what occurs in the quantum world? Is there an underlying geometrical picture corresponding to the mathematical equations?

What Did Feynman Really Mean?



Komalpreet Singh

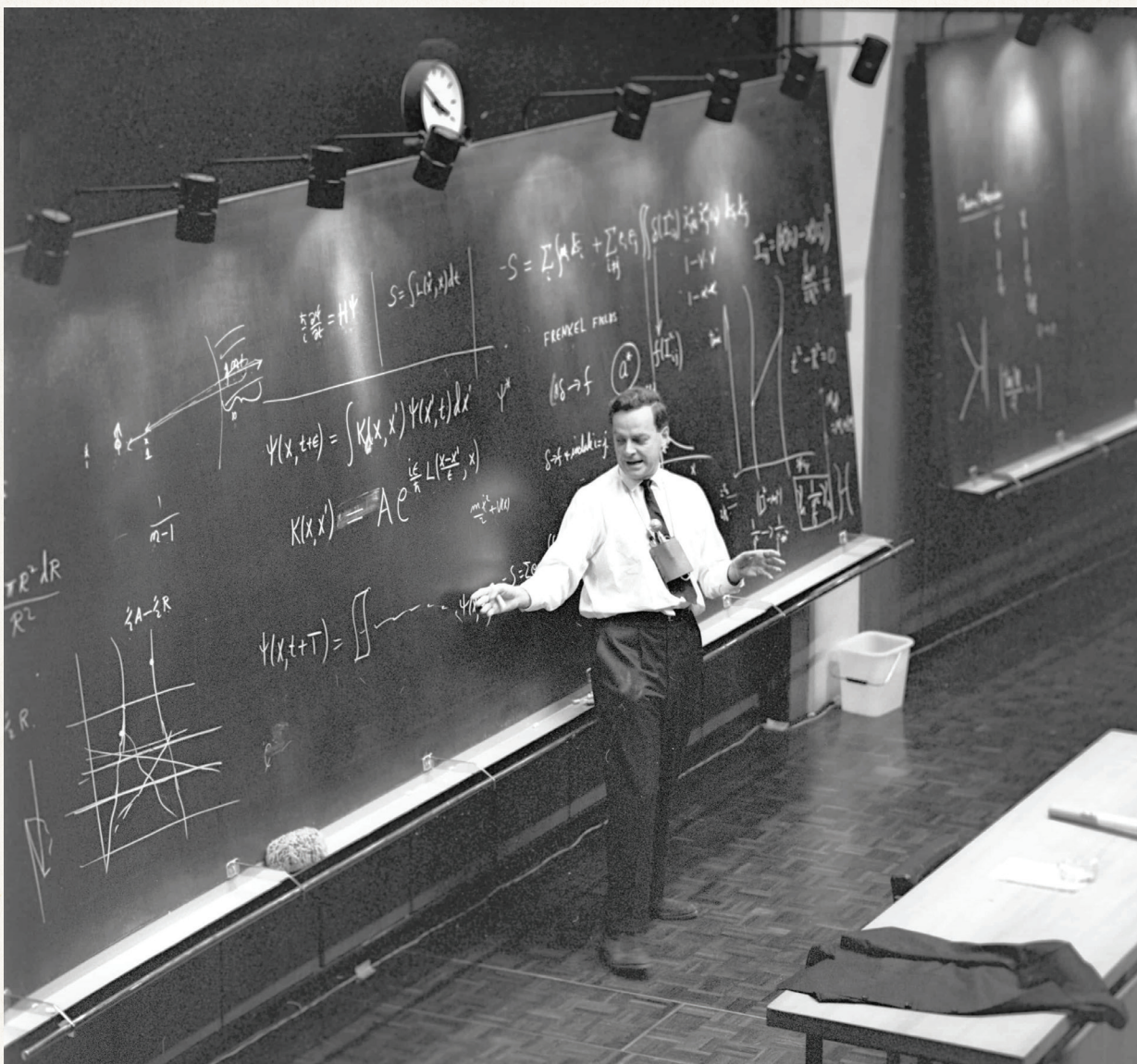
M.Sc. Physics
Panjab University,
Chandigarh
komalsohal1414@gmail.com

Richard Feynman once made the public remark that "nobody understands quantum mechanics." Over the years this statement has become a cliché in popular discussions of quantum physics, and it is frequently misunderstood. It is often taken to imply that there exists some fundamental impossibility in understanding quantum mechanics, as though the principles of the theory lie forever beyond human comprehension because of discontinuities in their behaviour—what we casually describe as "quantum jumps." Consequently, numerous superfluous interpretations and exaggerated claims have been attached to this remark, treating it as though it were itself a scientific conclusion.

However, Feynman's statement was addressing a very different problem. It points toward a difficulty that lies at the heart of quantum physics: not whether the mathematical formalism works—it undoubtedly does—but whether we truly understand what the theory tells us about the fundamental structure of reality. Rather than announcing an unsurpassable barrier to human knowledge, Feynman was drawing attention to the conceptual challenge of interpreting quantum mechanics. During the period in which Feynman made this remark, the Copenhagen interpretation largely dominated the teaching and practice of quantum mechanics. This interpretation placed greater emphasis on the predictive algorithm of the theory than on providing a description of what the world is actually like. Today, however, there is no universally accepted interpretation of quantum mechanics. Different schools of thought continue to offer competing accounts of what the mathematical formalism tells us about reality.

This famous statement is therefore limited in one sense and universal in another. It was made at a time when the conceptual foundations of quantum mechanics were still under active development, and many of the modern debates concerning quantum foundations had not yet fully emerged. Yet its universality lies in highlighting a problem that remains unresolved even today. Quantum mechanics is not

intuitive in the way classical physics is. The behaviour of quantum systems cannot easily be compared with familiar objects such as billiard balls or water waves. Scientists possess no entirely satisfactory analogy through which quantum phenomena can be visualised. The difficulty is therefore not one of calculation but of imagination. In simple terms, there exists a problem of visualisation in quantum physics. How should we think about what occurs in the quantum world? Is there an underlying geometrical picture corresponding to the mathematical equations? Classical physics naturally lends itself to geometric representation: planets move through space, waves propagate through media, and particles follow trajectories. Quantum mechanics, by contrast, is formulated in an abstract mathematical space whose objects do not easily correspond to everyday experience. Although its mathematics predicts



experimental results with astonishing precision, physicists continue to debate what this mathematical structure actually represents. The problem is therefore not that quantum mechanics lacks mathematics; rather, it lacks a universally accepted ontology—a clear account of what fundamentally exists.

This difficulty becomes particularly evident in what is known as the measurement problem. Before measurement, quantum systems are described by a superposition of different possible outcomes. Yet every experiment produces only one

PHYSICS IN CLASS,

In the early 1960s Feynman Giving Lectures to Undergraduates..

is realised in different branches of the universe. Bohmian mechanics restores definite particle trajectories guided by a quantum wave, thereby offering a

definite result. What exactly happens during measurement? Does the wave function physically collapse? Does every possible outcome occur in different branches of reality? Or does the wave function merely represent our knowledge rather than physical reality itself? Quantum mechanics provides remarkably accurate predictions for the probabilities of experimental outcomes, but it remains silent about which of these interpretations, if any, reflects the true nature of the world.

It is precisely this silence that has motivated several competing interpretations. The Copenhagen interpretation regards the wave function primarily as a tool for predicting observations and assigns a special role to measurement. The Many-Worlds interpretation removes the mysterious collapse altogether by proposing that every possible outcome

clearer ontology but at the cost of introducing non-locality. Objective collapse theories suggest that the collapse of the wave function is itself a genuine physical process, while newer approaches such as QBism interpret quantum probabilities as expressions of an observer's expectations rather than objective properties of nature. None of these interpretations has achieved universal acceptance, which explains why the conceptual debate continues nearly a century after quantum mechanics was first formulated.

These questions are not merely philosophical curiosities. They influence some of the deepest problems in contemporary physics. One of the greatest challenges is constructing a theory of quantum gravity capable of unifying quantum mechanics with Einstein's general theory of relativity. General relativity describes the geometry of space and time themselves, whereas quantum mechanics describes microscopic phenomena through probabilistic mathematical structures. Reconciling these radically different pictures of reality remains one of the central goals of modern theoretical physics. It is therefore difficult to develop a satisfactory theory of quantum gravity without first asking what quantum mechanics itself is actually describing.

Perhaps, then, Feynman's famous remark deserves to be understood in a different light. He was not declaring that quantum mechanics is forever beyond human understanding. Rather, he was acknowledging that our mathematical success has far outpaced our conceptual understanding. We know extraordinarily well how to calculate the behaviour of quantum systems, but we continue to debate what those calculations reveal about the nature of reality itself. In that sense, "nobody understands quantum mechanics" is not a confession of ignorance but an invitation to continue one of science's most profound intellectual journeys.

The Cellular Symphony of Self and Cosmos

The antigen represents the external chaos of the universe forcing its way into our reality, while the antibody represents our internal consciousness rising up to define its own borders. They are the yin and yang of our biological existence.

From the sudden, violent burst of a sneeze to the tight, rhythmic struggle of a wheeze, our bodies are constantly engaged in a silent, hyper-vigilant dialogue with the outside world. This dialogue is governed by the immune system, a complex network of cells, tissues, and organs that serve as the body's ultimate defence force. But immunology is more than just a biological shield; it is a profound biological philosophy. It is the science of identity, answering the ultimate existential question on a cellular level: 'What is I, and what is not I?' This cosmic boundary is defined by two fundamental entities: antigens and antibodies.

An antigen is any substance, be it a viral protein, a bacterial wall, or a grain of pollen that the body recognizes as foreign or "non-self." In contrast, an antibody is a highly specialized, Y-shaped protein generated by the body to bind specifically to that antigen and neutralize it. Philosophically, this biological dualism echoes the fundamental principles of Hegelian dialectics. Hegel argued that identity is not static; rather, a thing truly defines itself only by confronting its opposite the "Other." In this light, the antigen represents the external chaos of the universe forcing its way into our reality, while the antibody represents our internal consciousness rising up to define its own borders. They are the yin and yang of our biological existence; as Hegel's philosophy suggests that truth emerges from the clash between thesis and antithesis, the defensive grace of the antibody would never be called into being without the provoking presence of the foreign antigen. Every great defence starts with a wall, and in biology, this is our innate immune system the ancient, non-specific guard that reacts instantly to any intruder.

When you inhale a speck of dust, pollen, or a viral particle, your body doesn't pause to analyse its genetic sequence; instead, it triggers an immediate physical eviction notice in the form of a sneeze. Your respiratory tract is lined with microscopic, hair-like structures called cilia and a sticky layer of mucus that trap invaders before they can penetrate deeper into the



WHEN MOLD IS LOOKING FABULOUS!,
The Microorganism Studies by Daria Fedorova, Photo Courtesy: Dasha Plesen.

tissue. If an invader manages to breach these physical barriers, innate immune cells like macrophages and neutrophils rush to the scene as first responders, performing phagocytosis to literally engulf and digest the foreign entities. The sneeze is simply the overt, macro-level evidence of this micro-level war;

loud, messy, and remarkably efficient. Sometimes, however, the immune system becomes too protective, which brings us to the wheezes the hallmark of allergies and hypersensitivity reactions. A wheeze often occurs during an allergic asthmatic response when the immune system encounters something completely

harmless, like peanut dust or pollen, and mistakenly treats it like a mortal threat.

Upon first exposure to an allergen, specialized white blood cells called B cells produce a specific class of antibodies known as Immunoglobulin E (IgE). These IgE antibodies bind to the surface of mast cells, which are loaded with chemical weapons like histamine. The next time you encounter that allergen, it cross-links the IgE on the mast cells, causing them to degranulate and release a flood of histamine into the surrounding tissue. In the lungs, this chemical cascade causes smooth muscles to contract and airways to swell, forcing air through narrowed passages and creating that high-pitched whistle we recognize as a wheeze. It is a stark reminder that pathology is often not caused by the invader itself, but by our own disproportionate response to it. This delicate balance between a necessary defence and a destructive overreaction is managed by a dense, chemical network of communication known as the cytokine signalling pathway, which serves as the cellular language of the immune system.

When innate immune cells encounter an antigen, they do not fight in isolation; they secrete small signalling proteins called cytokines, such as interleukins and interferons, which act as microscopic distress signals and tactical commands broadcasted throughout the body. This chemical chatter travels through the bloodstream, summoning reinforcements, increasing blood flow to cause inflammation, and adjusting the local cellular environment to host a full-scale defensive operation. Philosophically, this phenomenon reflects the interconnectedness of society and the universe at large, demonstrating that no single entity can survive a crisis through isolated action, but must instead rely on a shared, collective resonance. When communication breaks down, or when the signals become too loud as seen in a dangerous "cytokine storm" the system collapses under the weight of its own chaotic noise, proving that harmony in life is entirely dependent on clear, measured dialogue.

To prevent such chaos and ensure that this cellular orchestra performs smoothly, the body relies on a rigorous control known as central and peripheral

tolerance, which acts as the judicial branch of our internal state. During their development in the primary lymphoid organs: the bone marrow and the thymus, immature T and B cells are subjected to a brutal evolutionary screening process where they are exposed to the body's own native proteins. If a developing immune cell reacts too aggressively to these "Self" components, it is immediately flagged as a potential traitor and forced to undergo apoptosis, a targeted cellular suicide, or rendered entirely harmless through a process called anergy. This internal screening ensures that only the most disciplined, discerning cells are permitted to patrol our tissues, drawing a fascinating philosophical parallel to the human quest for wisdom, where we must constantly audit our own internal biases and destructive impulses before attempting to interface with or alter the external world.

When the innate immune system is overwhelmed and its chemical signals call for specialized reinforcements, it activates the elite, highly specialized forces of

adaptive immunity to achieve what we might call the "immune pleases" the elegant responses that grant us long-term survival and memory. Unlike the blunt instrument of innate immunity, the adaptive immune system is highly specific and features two primary branches. The first is humoral immunity, driven by B lymphocytes that operate in the fluids of the body; when a B cell recognizes a specific foreign antigen, it matures into a plasma cell and secretes millions of Y-shaped antibodies to neutralize the enemy. The second branch is cell-mediated immunity, driven by T lymphocytes. This includes Helper T cells, which act as the generals coordinating the battle via chemical signals, and Cytotoxic T cells, the targeted assassins that order virus-hijacked or cancerous host cells to undergo programmed cell death, or apoptosis. Once the battle is won, the system keeps a small pool of specialized Memory B and T cells. If the same enemy ever returns, these memory cells recognize them instantly and wipe them out before you even realize you've been exposed, which is the exact biological principle behind vaccines.

When we step back from

this intricate cellular machinery, immunology reveals itself as a profound meditation on existence. At its core, the immune system relies entirely on Major Histocompatibility Complex (MHC) molecules: cellular ID badges that display fragments of proteins to passing T cells. If the T cell reads the badge as "Self," it moves on in peace; if it reads it as "non-self," it attacks. Philosophically, this implies that our very survival depends on maintaining

“

In the grand tapestry of the cosmos, we like to think of ourselves as entirely separate, isolated beings, but immunology teaches us that we are in a constant, breathless dance of negotiation with the universe.

a strict boundary between us and the rest of the universe, suggesting that to exist as individuals, we must reject the outside world. Yet, looking closer at the wheezes and sneezes, we see a deeper truth that aligns with the thoughts of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida and his concept of hospitality—the inherent tension where host and guest, or hospitality and hostility, merge. A wheeze is what happens when we refuse to let the outside world pass through us, a crisis of intolerance, while autoimmune diseases happen when the system loses its mind and attacks the "Self," forgetting who it is protecting. Furthermore, our bodies are home to trillions of microbes making up the microbiome that are technically "non-self," yet we welcome them because we cannot survive without them. The immune system, therefore, isn't just a rigid border wall; it is a negotiator. It is a dynamic process of learning how much of the world to let in, and how much to keep out. In the grand tapestry of the cosmos, we like to think of ourselves as entirely separate, isolated beings, but immunology teaches us that we are in a constant, breathless dance of negotiation with the universe. We are defined not by our absolute isolation from nature, but by our exquisite, orderly, and beautiful interaction with it. Every sneeze is a boundary asserted, every wheeze is a boundary miscalculated, and every moment of health is a beautiful, peaceful compromise with the world around us.



Gurvin kour

Uttaranchal University,
Dehradun
B.Sc. Biotechnology
gurvinkour1@gmail.com



Why Every Child Should Play Multiple Sports *Before* Choosing One

True passion cannot be manufactured by parental anxiety.

The roaring stadiums of the FIFA World Cup and the latest global football championships do more than crown winners, they ignite massive waves of inspirations. Every time a superstar hoists a trophy on television, millions of children rush to local grounds, dreaming of starting their own athletic journeys. Yet, as parents and coaches, we put up critical crossroads. In our eagerness to find the next sporting icon, many children are pushed into one specific sport from a young age.

So the question arises, Are we helping our children discover where they can truly succeed, or are we locking them into a single path far too early? This decision is often dictated by family tradition, local popularity, or a desperate search for "career security." Let's be honest, pursuing sports in India has traditionally been viewed as a massive financial risk. With limited professional avenues outside of cricket, parents naturally lean toward the path of least resistance, or no risk at all. They specialize their child early, hoping a head start will guarantee success.

Ironically, this fear-driven early specialization does the exact opposite. It narrows a child's potential. Every child possesses unique physical abilities, personalities, and learning styles. Forcing a seven-year-old to conform to one rigid environment ignores this natural diversity. True passion cannot be manufactured by parental anxiety. When we force a sport onto a child, we invite psychological burnout and a higher risk of overuse injuries.

Instead of early specialization, the formative years should be an open playground of options. Sampling multiple sports is mandatory for creating a robust, "hybrid" athlete. Consider the physical literacy built through variety: Football develops rapid agility, endurance, and spatial awareness; Basketball enhances explosive power and hand-



Jose P Anil

MA Sports, Department of Physical Education and Sports,
Pondicherry University
josepanil38@gmail.com

eye coordination; Swimming builds core strength and lung capacity without joint stress; Athletics teaches the fundamental mechanics of running, jumping, and throwing.

Experts recommend a balanced training model that prioritizes variety during childhood to optimize both physical health and psychological well-being. Roger Federer, suggests that diverse athletic experiences can prevent fatigue and sustain a lifelong passion for physical activity. When a child builds this diverse movement vocabulary, they aren't just playing; they are bullet-proofing their bodies and minds. They learn how to adapt to different team dynamics, handle varied coaching styles, and problem-solve on the fly.

Global sporting powerhouses like United States, China and Australia consistently invest in grassroots systems that prioritize this exact multi-sport philosophy before specialization. Some of the best athletes like LeBron James, Michael Jordan, Rebecca Romero, Clara Hughes, Sarah Storey, Johnny Weissmuller, Frank Kugler, H a v e

multiple medals in various sports. They understand that a child who eventually chooses their sport based on personal passion rather than external pressure will train with greater commitment, navigate failures with resilience, and sustain motivation for decades. Therefore, our role as parents, and peers is not to pre-determine a child's sporting destiny, but to provide the playground for potentialities.



KYLIAN MBAPPÉ
at the 2022 World Cup

The Schools That Imprisoned Students

Colonial power also operates through institutions that appear ordinary, even benevolent. Schools, churches, and families become sites where political authority reshapes identity, language, memory, and culture.

For many people outside the United States, American history is often associated with democracy, constitutional ideals, and the struggle for civil rights. Less visible, however, is another chapter in the nation's history, the one in which the U.S. federal government sought to assimilate Indigenous people by systematically removing Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children from their families and placing them in boarding schools.

This history illustrates an important feature of colonialism: it is rarely sustained through military conquest alone. Colonial power also operates through institutions that appear ordinary, even benevolent. Schools, churches, and families become sites where political authority reshapes identity, language, memory, and culture. Such institutions mattered because they enabled colonial power to operate through everyday life rather than through force alone. What Michel Foucault later described as *governmentality* helps illuminate this logic: durable rule depends not

society around them. The Federal Indian Boarding School system demonstrates how education can be transformed into an instrument of colonial governance rather than a means of liberation.

Before European colonization, historians estimate that more than one million Indigenous people lived across what is now North America, speaking over 300 distinct languages. By the beginning of the twentieth century, only around 200,000 Native Americans remained after centuries of disease, warfare, forced displacement, land dispossession, and policies designed to dismantle Indigenous societies. Among the most devastating expressions of this colonial project was the Federal Indian Boarding School system. Between 1819 and 1969, the United States operated more than 400 federally supported boarding schools that removed tens of thousands of Indigenous children from their homes, often through coercion or force, with the explicit objective of assimilating them into white American society.

The Carlisle Indian Industrial School, founded in Pennsylvania in 1879 by Army officer Richard Henry Pratt,

Children were assigned English names, their hair was cut, they were forbidden from speaking their Native languages, forced to convert to Christianity, and compelled to perform manual labour. In this context, education functioned less as instruction than as assimilation.

Violence within these institutions was neither incidental nor exceptional; it became a routine mechanism through which colonial authority was enforced. Testimonies from former students of Alaska's W r a n g e l l Institute reveal the emotional and physical brutality that accompanied these policies. Boys caught speaking their Indigenous language were publicly whipped with razor straps by older students acting under adult supervision. One survivor reflected decades later,



Rupali Sehgal

Graduate Student,
The University of Chicago
Divinity School, US
segalarupali@gmail.com



STUDENT BODY AT THE CARLISLE INDIAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL,
Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 1892
Photograph by J. N. Choate.

only on controlling territory but also on shaping how people think, behave, and come to govern themselves. Education therefore offered colonial administrations a particularly effective means of producing subjects who internalised the values and norms of the settler state. As the French philosopher Louis Althusser argued, education is one of the state's most powerful ideological institutions because it shapes how individuals understand themselves and the

became the blueprint for this nationwide system. Pratt's infamous slogan of "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man" captured the ideology that underpinned federal Indian policy. Indigenous children were not viewed simply as students but as future citizens whose languages, beliefs, customs, and identities had to be replaced by Euro-American norms. Schools that ordinarily symbolize learning and opportunity instead became institutions through which Indigenous cultures were systematically erased.

"Even to this day, I can't maintain or hold my own language." Another remembered lying awake as entire dormitories echoed with homesick children crying after lights out, admitting years later, "Sometimes I still hear these little children crying." Former students described the institution

as "dark and oppressive," comparing it to a prison or even a concentration camp, and spoke not of graduating from the school but of "surviving" it (Hirshberg, 2008). These memories reveal that the schools sought not merely to educate Indigenous children but to sever the emotional, linguistic, and cultural bonds that connected them to their families and communities. Viewed in this light, the boarding schools sought more than obedience. By dismantling the cultural relationships through which Indigenous communities reproduced themselves, they reveal a form of colonial power that extended beyond governing conduct towards producing conditions in which Indigenous worlds could no longer reproduce themselves. In this sense, they echo what Achille Mbembe later theorised as forms of colonial power that render particular ways of life increasingly unliveable.

Dr. Ramona Klein, a boarding school survivor and Board Member of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, recalls watching her mother cry as six of her eight children boarded a bus to the Fort Totten Indian Boarding School. Reflecting on those experiences, she explains that "the impact of the experience was not isolated to those who lived it—it ripples through whole communities. The legacy of these abuses severed families, disrupted the sharing of cultures from one generation to the next, and has contributed to broader stereotyping of Native Americans." Her testimony reminds us that colonial violence extends far beyond physical removal. It interrupts the transmission of language, cultural knowledge, family relationships, and collective memory, leaving communities to navigate losses that cannot easily be measured.

The history of the Federal Indian Boarding School system compels us to reconsider what colonial violence looks like. It is not always enacted through battlefields, territorial conquest, or political treaties. Sometimes it unfolds quietly such as in classrooms where children are punished for speaking their own language, in dormitories filled with homesick tears, or in families carrying grief whose origins they did not personally experience. The persistence of PTSD, anxiety, substance dependence, and suicide among survivors and their descendants reminds us that historical violence does not simply disappear when governments abandon particular policies. It survives through silence, disrupted kinship, interrupted cultural transmission, and inherited memory. In this sense, the boarding schools sought not merely to govern Indigenous populations but to dismantle the cultural conditions through which Indigenous life reproduced itself. Their history reminds us that colonial power was exercised as much through the management of life, identity, and memory as through the conquest of land.

Whose Madness? Who Gets to Tell?

The question worth asking is not how convincingly a text renders a fractured mind, but a simpler and more uncomfortable one: who owns the story of that mind?

There sits a woman in a room, watching the wallpaper. Its pattern, she tells us, is "dull enough to confuse the eye... pronounced enough to constantly irritate, and provoke study"—and still she cannot look away. This is the unnamed narrator of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892), and by the story's final page, she will have all but vanished into that pattern.

The plot is deceptively simple. A woman is confined to an upstairs nursery by her physician husband, John, as treatment for what he diagnoses as a, "temporary nervous depression - a slight hysterical tendency." She is forbidden to work, write, or even dwell too long on her own condition; rest and air are her only prescriptions. Left alone for hours with nothing to occupy her but the room's peeling, sulphur-yellow wallpaper, she begins to make out a figure trapped behind its chaotic pattern - a woman, creeping, trying to get out. Over the following weeks the fixation deepens into identification, until, on the last night before the couple is due to leave, she locks herself in the room and tears the paper from the walls, convinced she has finally set the woman inside it free.

Yet one fact remains striking: she has written every word we have just read. Silenced by her husband, her doctor, and her culture, she is not silenced by her author. Gilman gives her something literary history had rarely granted the mentally ill: the right to narrate herself. The story carries added force

because it emerged from Gilman's own experience. After suffering postpartum depression, she underwent the infamous 'rest cure' prescribed by Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, who instructed her to abandon intellectual work and live as domestic a life as possible, even advising her never again to "touch pen, brush, or pencil" ("Why I Wrote *The Yellow Wallpaper*"). Gilman wrote *The Yellow Wallpaper* only a few years later. The narrator's confiscated pen and the author's own become one and the same. The story is less an invention than a reclamation of a voice medicine had attempted to erase.

This raises a tighter, harder question than it first appears to. Literary depictions of madness have grown steadily more psychologically sophisticated, from Shakespeare's tragic heroes to the fractured interior monologues of modernism; and that sophistication is often mistaken for evidence of literature's growing compassion toward the mentally ill. But sophistication is not the same as justice. The question worth asking is not how convincingly a text renders a fractured mind, but a simpler and more uncomfortable one: who owns the story of that mind? Is the disturbed character permitted to narrate her own descent, or does her madness exist only to illuminate someone else's?

Shakespeare's tragedies illustrate this distinction. In *King Lear* and *Hamlet*, madness reveals truths that reason cannot. Lear's descent strips away illusion and exposes the emptiness of power, while Hamlet's feigned or

genuine madness becomes a weapon against corruption. As Michel Foucault observed, Western culture has long silenced the mad even while granting madness a peculiar authority to expose hidden truths (*Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*). Yet Shakespeare's characters remain instruments of larger moral dramas. Their madness serves the audience's understanding more than their own.

The nineteenth century begins to shift the question from madness itself to who controls its telling. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* offers perhaps the clearest contrast. Bertha Mason, the "madwoman in the attic," is seen entirely through the eyes of others. She functions as symbol, obstacle, and projection, but never as a consciousness in her own right. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argued that Bertha embodies the repressed anger of nineteenth-century women, yet even this sympathetic reading leaves her trapped within someone else's narrative.



Madiha Mahak

BA Hons English
School of Open Learning,
University of Delhi
madihaalwa@gmail.com

Gilman's narrator refuses that position. She has no name, no advocate, and no one willing to believe her. Yet she possesses the entire story. Rather than

becoming a symbolic double to be punished or erased, she writes herself into existence. Her descent into madness is also an assertion of narrative authority.

Modernism appears to carry this project further. Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* takes readers directly into the mind of Septimus Smith, a shell-shocked veteran haunted by trauma and hallucinations. His consciousness is rendered with extraordinary intimacy through stream of consciousness, seemingly fulfilling literature's ambition to represent mental illness from within.

Yet even here the question of ownership remains. Septimus's suffering ultimately exists to illuminate Clarissa Dalloway's emotional and philosophical journey. His death acquires meaning largely through its impact on another character. Modernist technique brings readers closer to a disturbed mind than ever before, but closeness is not the same as narrative freedom. Psychological depth does not necessarily mean narrative autonomy.

Seen in this light, *The Yellow Wallpaper* remains surprisingly radical. Long before modernism revolutionized literary form, Gilman allowed a mentally distressed woman to occupy the centre of her own narrative. Her voice is unreliable, fragmented, and deeply unsettling, but it is unmistakably hers. The story asks readers not merely to observe madness but to inhabit a consciousness that refuses to surrender its authority, even as it disintegrates.

The history of literary madness is often told as a story of steady progress, from fear and spectacle to sympathy and psychological understanding. Gilman's work complicates that narrative. Septimus Smith, written more than three decades later and equipped with all the technical innovations of modernism, arguably possesses less narrative sovereignty than a woman secretly writing in a room



THE YELLOW CURTAIN
by Edouard Vuillard,
National Gallery of Art

where she has been forbidden to think.

At the story's close, after tearing down the wallpaper, the narrator declares, "I've got out at last." It is hardly a triumphant moment; by any clinical measure, she has lost her grasp on reality entirely. Yet the sentence is entirely her own. She names her own escape at the precise moment everyone around her has stopped listening.

That image leaves behind a harder question than the one this essay began with. What, exactly, is madness and who gets to decide? Is it a deviation from reality itself, or simply a deviation from what a given society, in a given century, has agreed to call sane? By the only standard that mattered in her world, the narrator is mad because she will not stop thinking, will not stop writing, and will

not accept her husband's diagnosis of her own mind. Her insanity, looked at closely, resembles disobedience as much as it resembles illness, which raises the uncomfortable possibility that some of what gets labelled madness is simply a refusal to comply.

Gilman's story survives because it declines to settle that question for us. It insists only that the woman behind the wallpaper deserves to tell it herself. More than a century later, that insistence remains the standard by which every subsequent portrait of a 'mad' mind should be measured and it is a standard many still fail to meet.



Ankita Kotwal

BA Major English literature, Government College for Women Parade, Jammu

ankitakotwal15@gmail.com

Poets from Rilke to Seamus Heaney have described writing not as invention but as listening; waiting for a poem to surface on its own terms rather than assembling it by will. Ankita Kotwal seems to belong to this tradition. She does not force a poem into being; by her own account, she waits, sometimes for a year, for the rest of a line to arrive. Reading her poems, this patience reads less like a working method and more like a worldview: her verses are built on withholding and delayed release, as if the poet trusts that meaning, like grief, arrives on its own schedule. She keeps returning to the body as the site where abstraction becomes unbearable, and therefore real.

Ankita comes from Jalga, a village in Chinta Valley within the Bhaderwah Devdaar forest region, a place where folk religious practice still shapes daily

life, and pilgrimages to the guardian deity Subhar Nag are common. The Devdaar mountains, the valley's tutelary deity, and its forest spirits are not backdrop for her - they are integral to her worldview, and they surface, directly or otherwise, as inspiration throughout her poetry. When she writes of Mother Earth, then, she isn't reaching for a romantic convention second hand; she's writing from inside a cosmology where the natural world was always understood to be watching back.

Her poetry reveals a poet for whom the divine is never distant or abstract - it is embodied, immediate, and often indistinguishable from what most traditions would call profane. God appears not in temples but in blood shed at eighteen; Persephone is invoked not as ancient myth but as living mother; the woman who buries wretchedness

in a dream is treated with the same reverence one might reserve for a deity. This is a theology of immanence rather than transcendence; sacredness located inside the body, inside grief, inside death itself, rather than above or beyond them.

Editor



Fragments

Hands of death were ready to hold my trembling ones
On my knees I pleaded for mercy
Fragments of cosmos, I shattered into
Stood there, you didn't even budge
Cried the tears of blood, rivers ran of sorrow
I saw the skin of humanity burning to ashes
Torment is a lover with merciless hands, who traced my scars where
hope once danced.
Given the bites of love, you better savour it
Because even the fate has its favorites

HER

For the love of the Aphrodite,
For the love of apollo
For the love of Pershophone and hades
Oh heavens, her smile
Her locks, like the branches which bow down to the sacredness of
the earth
Giggling, like the stars dancing on tip toes
Butterfly, fluttering among the flowers
But no flower should hold her
For she is not for one to hold
She tasted just like the forbidden wine
If she is the fruit of Eden,
I will still have her again and again

Roots of insanity

The roots of insanity have made their way
Out of my lungs through my mouth
And then have spread on the road from where I know they will stroll
Fibres of love, can even tangle God And bleed him to his death.
So, I stood no chance
I am cursed to love to death
I am cursed to die of love I am cursed to love
I am cursed to die.
All my life I thought evil of love,
But for you I will let you rip my skin off,
And burn me into ashes
Because it will be love that will intertwine our souls
I believe, that it will be love which will lead us to death
The great love with gods of death

Dance of what

God forbid if I cry, God forbid if I die
God forbid if I smile, God forbid if I fly
tears were forcefully dried of me
life was forcefully bound to me sorrow was forcefully tied to me
Wings were forcefully diced of me
I have crawled with these wounds
I have growled with no one listening to my sounds one day forbid
me if
I get lost and come find me where the death dances the most

Delicious Agony

Bitter droplets of mashed love, and sour bites of hate
I swallowed with pride the crumbs of being nice Savoured the loath-
ing of poison, burned me from inside out.
Tear my skin, dismay is what you will find
Turned my empathy into despite
Turned my soulfulness into emptiness
God if you do exist, bow down for my forgiveness
Or paint the heaven of yours with my ashes and blood

Friend

Why may I fear from her for in the isolated nights
The promise of her taking my breaths gives me a hope to live for
once
On one side of night,
I am sitting and on the other side sits she And we both are staring at
the stream of passing days between us
Living on the hope that one day
When this stream of day and night will dry
We will surely meet somewhere in between

The last meeting

She has promised me that she will meet me
Either In the form of the last breath that will leave my body
Or the white sheet that will be used to cover me
Either in the form of the tree that will be used to burn me
Or the flames of that fire only
Or maybe in the form of smoke coming out of that fire
She has promised me that she will meet me
In the form of my last friend

Who was she?

Dark, cold nights give me a kind of peace
no human presence ever could.
When I walk alone through midnight streets, there is always that quiet fear of
dying, yet your memory follows beside me like a shadow.
The walk to your grave was the calmest journey I had ever taken. The slow
wind through the graveyard made my skin shiver beneath the silence.
And there you were, sitting beneath a dying tree.
I did not want to come closer. I wanted to run, to disappear, to free myself
from whatever remained of you.
But instead,
I found my feet carrying me forward.
And in that moment— that single, unbearable moment— my life flashed
before my eyes.
That evening by the shore.
The river black beneath the fading sky. The way I pushed you into the water
knowing exactly what I was doing.
You sank slowly into the depths, drowning beneath the dark current, while I
stood there, smiling, bidding you a silent goodbye.
But when I looked upon your face— that soul-stirring, lifeless face— I saw
the same smile mirrored back at me:
dark, empty, and utterly without pity.

Odor of death

For always I wondered, what is the Odor of death like?
Does it smell like me when I was newly born?
Or does it have a hint of the smell of the streams of my village? No
for it must smell like the ground I scaped my knees on when I was
six.
But what if, it smells like when
I took my little brother in my arms for the first time Maybe it smells
like between my legs when for the first time the stream of divinity
flowed from me
But something tells me that it must smell like the Blood of God that I
stabbed multiple times when I was eighteen.

15-01-2022

I saw a lake in my dream it was full of blood
I saw a house in my dreams it was full of death
I saw a field in my dream it was covered with poisonous mud
I saw a woman in my dream she was standing with dagger on a mc-
beath no wariness, no heed, no beam, no rush
I walked towards her with peace
She was digging the grave of existence the cry of agony,
the scars of misery with every shove she wasn't digging the mud
when I reached her, I saw her burying the wretchedness
I slowly moved towards her
I kept my head on her lap while she caressed all of my wrath
She wasn't a fairy or fae of woods
She was herself the death

Foxglove

I have spent my life picking up fragments of my soul from the floor
of this house
I grew scared of depth,
but I have drowned in the depth of my own sorrow everyday
I want to jump into the arms of Persphone
Oh! she is my mother
Oh mother! call me and take me
Like you were taken by Hades
But for I am your child. oh mother! come take me
I no longer belong to this realm of mortals
Oh mother! come
Pick up my fragments of soul from this mortal realm and let it grow
into a poisonous foxglove
For I am your child, so let me return to the lap of my mother



Ashish Kumar Pandya
ashish.pandya211@gmail.com

Ashish Kumar Pandya is a Ph.D. Scholar in the Department of Philosophy at the Islamic University of Science and Technology, Kashmir. His research explores contemporary epistemology, with a particular focus on the social dimensions of knowledge, truth, justification, and epistemic goals. This engagement with epistemological questions also informs his artistic practice.

Ashish waits for forms more than he draws them. A drawing begins only when a form demands its own appearance. He feels that he is less its creator than the ‘occasion’ of its arrival. Shaped by years living among indigenous communities and working within the corporate

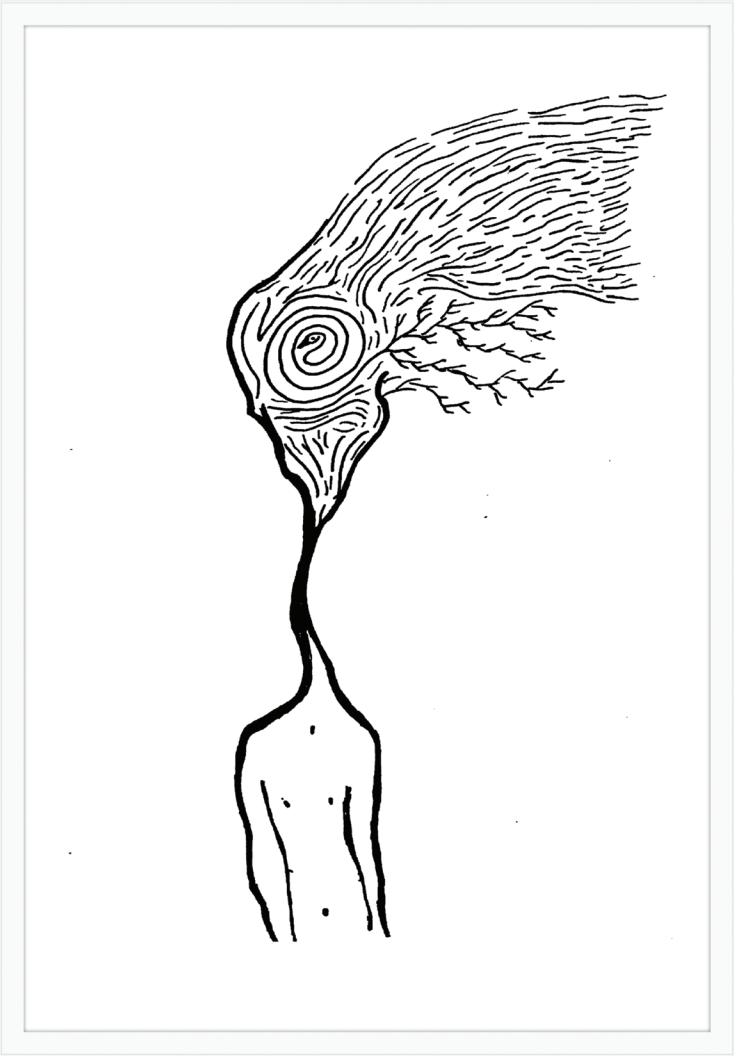


Editor

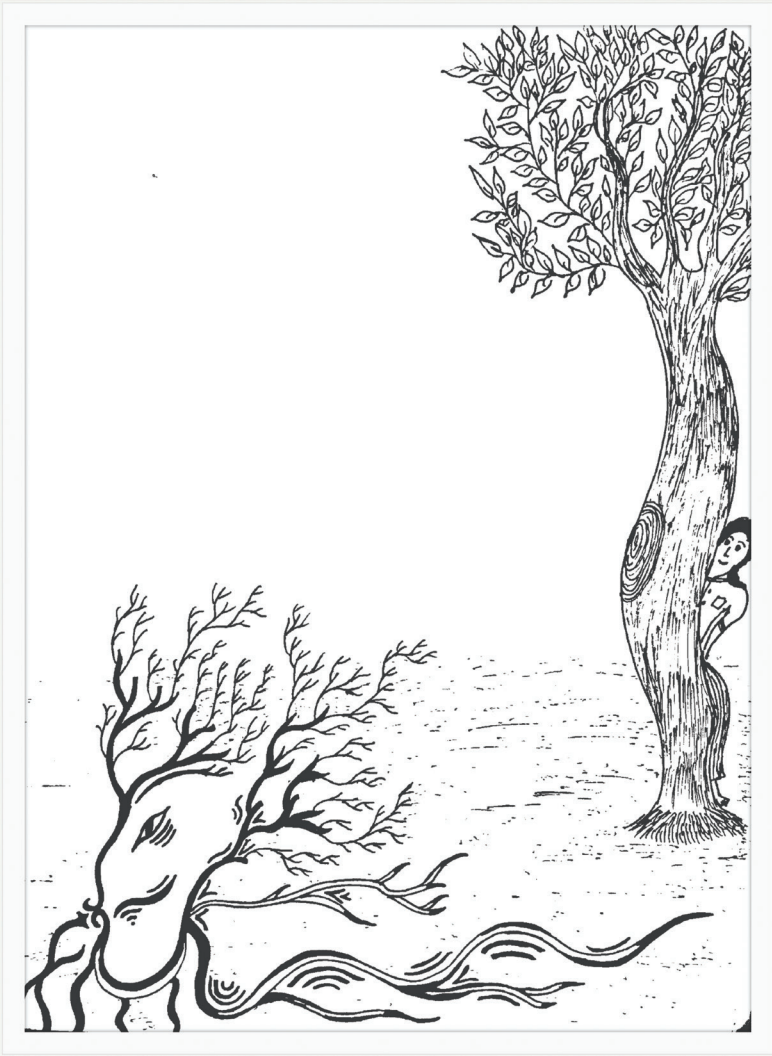
“One need only remind oneself of all that we expect from life to see how very strange it is, and to arrive at the conclusion that man has found his way into it by mistake and does not really belong there.”

— Italo Svevo, *Confessions of Zeno*

world, his practice neither reconciles these worlds nor privileges one over the other. It allows forms to exist before they become meaning. For him, these forms come to rest in a world where meaning is neither spoken nor written.



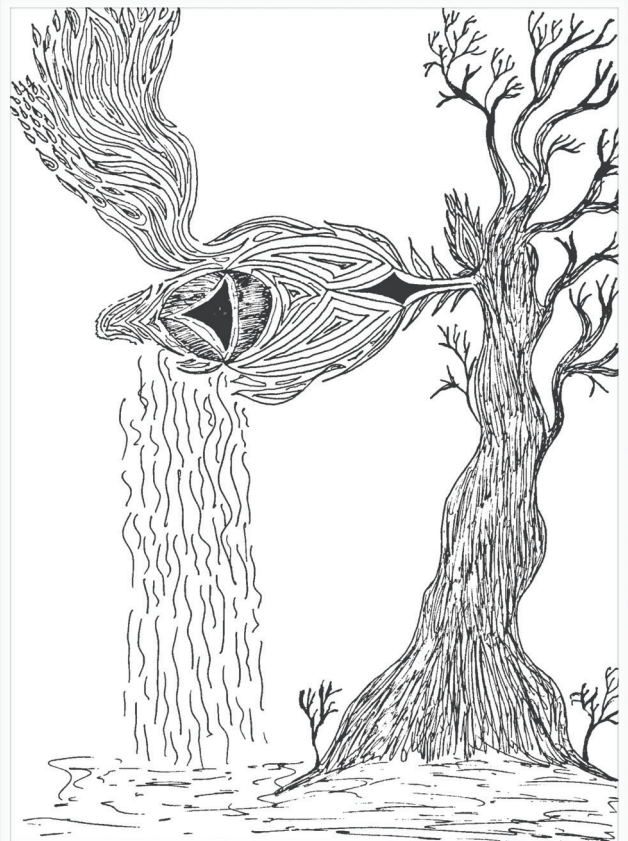
WATCHWORDS



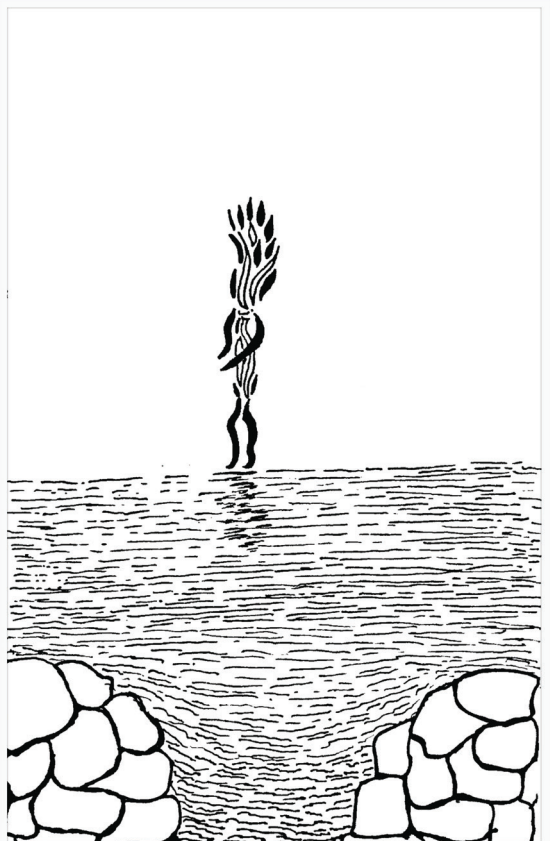
OTHERKIN



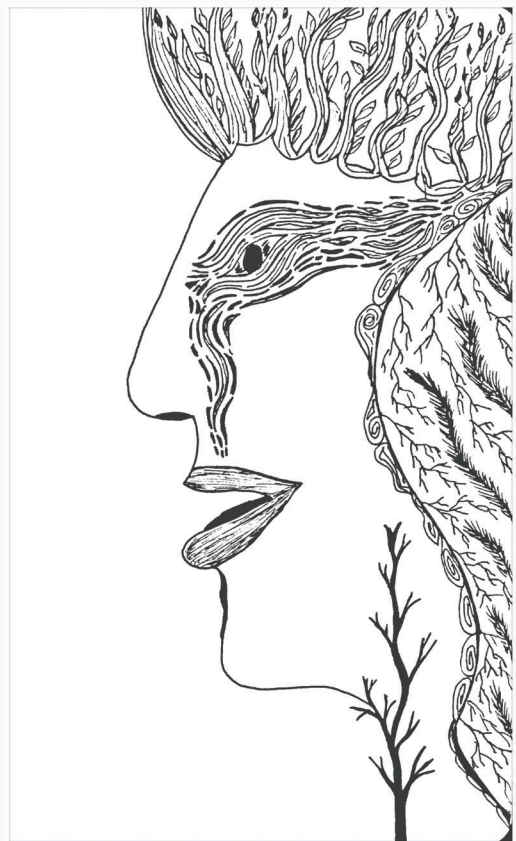
FERAL



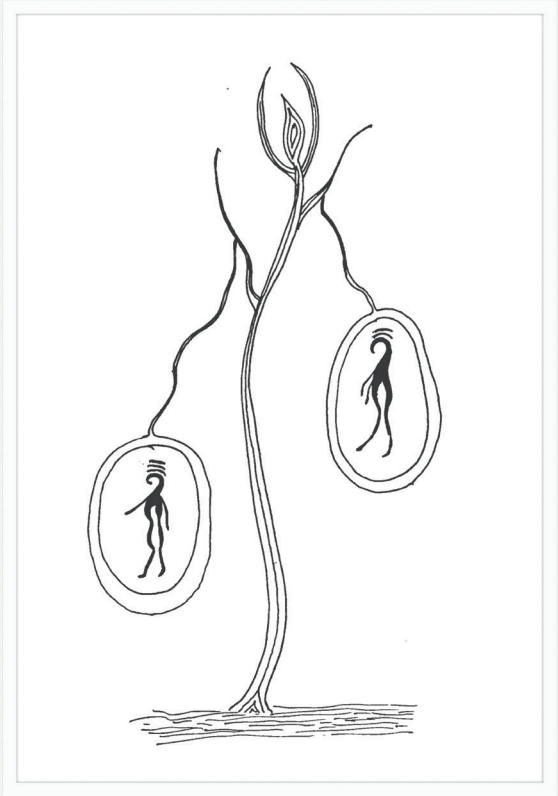
THE SPUR



IMPLODE



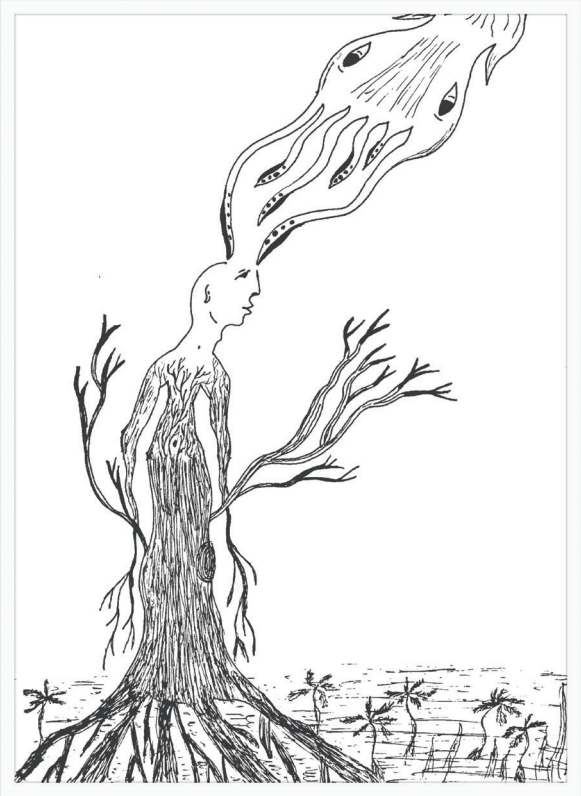
INSIDE OUT



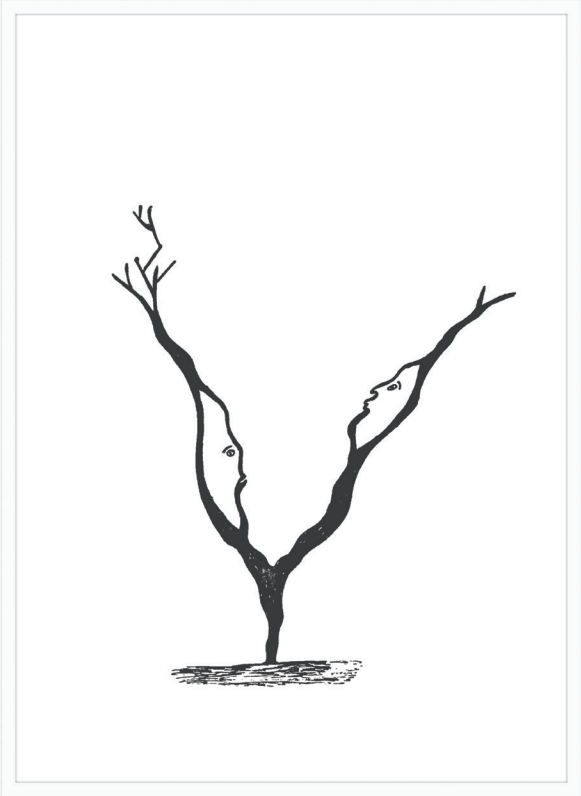
TÊTE-À-TÊTE



IN-ELEGANCE



FLAYING



SOLILOQUY