

## CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE – love engine for social change

Whenever we hear the word 'PROTEST', we always tend to believe it to be a fight or a way of showing one's displeasure towards a thing or towards a system. We have seen many types of movements in the past and also heard the history of these movements. One such type of a movement is the Civil Disobedience movement. Mahatma Gandhi was considered globally to be the brand ambassador of peace and the entire world idolized the Gandhian principle of Non-Violence. One such person who was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi was Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr was an activist and a leader in the African American Civil Right Movement. He encouraged people across United States to protest the unjust laws of segregation founded on race. He was a national icon in the history of American Progressivism. The extreme racial oppression of black Americans that



King experienced was an example but along with it poverty and oppression were other issues important to him. Martin Luther King Jr. believed that the strong influence of the Gandhian principle of Satyagraha could be effectively be applied to the struggle of the black community in United States for racial Integration. He believed that non-violence could serve as a cohesive factor for the Black community. He was jailed several times for his campaigns. In his letters he also stated that the crisis of racism is too urgent and a painful experience be-

cause 'freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor, but it must be demanded by the oppressed.' Martin Luther King Jr gave a practical outline for his Civil Disobedience in four steps:

- i) Data Collection - collection of the facts to determine whether injustice really exist and if it does exist then to what extent.
- ii) Negotiation - the natural channels for protest and changing the law must be exhausted. One should try to change a law before simply disobeying it.
- iii) Self Purification - the third step is the important one because one must get rid of all the feelings of hatred and revenge and be prepared to be prosecuted or be punished by the law. This includes full willingness to accept a legal consequence of breaking the unjust law.

Jeena Sam, S.Y.B.A.

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iv) Direct action - this means it is only after the first three steps are taken. It is justifiable to peacefully break the laws through direct action. Protest can be shown in march demonstration and even boycott.

King believed that a law is unjust when it is inflicted on minorities without allowing them to enact or revise the law. The law that authenticate discrimination is an unjust law. A law can be just on its face but unjust in its application. Such laws were regarded as unjust laws by King Jr. Civil Disobedience was a refusal to obey government demands or commands in a very peaceful and non-violent way. This movement served a better cause and was successful because the method was right and the purpose behind it was noble.

## Hues of Dissent

Maitri Venkatesh, TYBA-History

Sometimes a social change can announce itself in the dropping of a preposition. It used to be that when you used the verb "protest" to mean "object to" you had to add "against". "She protested against her ill treatment." Then in the early years of the twentieth century, Americans began to drop the preposition and say things like "He protested the government's policy."

As it happens, it was around this time that people started using "protest" with a direct object that they also started to think of protest as a kind of direct political action, aimed at mobilizing public opinion against a particular policy. That's when you begin to see phrases like "protest demonstration," "protest strike," and "protest movement."

Over the following decades, "protest" would be intimately linked with those new techniques of political resistance. By the 1930's, people were using phrases like "the literature of protest" and "social protest" to suggest the whole range of progressive agitation.

But it wasn't until the sixties that the notion of "protest" entered the mainstream of the American vocabulary. That was the moment when songs with political messages began to make their way out of the

coffee houses and hootenannies and onto the airwaves.



For some people, "protest music" evokes the folk-inspired topical songs, civil disobedience demonstrations, destructive, non-destructive and many more. However civil disobedience, strikes, protests against a military shipment or against a government are the most common and are widely talked about. There are innumerable protests and "protest waves" that happened throughout the years. But, now let us shed some light on the untold forms of protests which will help us gain a new perspective on this voice of dissent.

Dance is a key form of protest. Politically motivated flash mobs and performances react to current questions of society with popular

and contemporary forms of dance. For example, is it possible to give answers to oppression with the body? Theatre and dance scholar Susanne Foellmer explains how such a kind of protest can have a public impact. After the 2013 protests at Gezi Park in Istanbul, a ban was imposed on public gatherings. Erdem Gündüz's Standing Man was a response to this ban wherein he just stood looking at the Atatürk monument and not leaving. Soon others followed suit and stood next to him. The action quickly went viral on social media. Maybe it wasn't extreme in expression, but in any case it was a very much an action of resistance to which the police didn't know how to respond. . In this sense, it was a subtle action that subverted the ban on public assembly and demonstration.

Music is another form of voicing dissent. A protest song is a song that is associated with a movement for social change and hence part of the broader category of topical songs (or songs connected to current events). It may be folk, classical, or commercial in genre. Among social movements that have been associated with a body of songs are the abolition movement, women's suffrage, the labor movement, the human rights movement, civil rights and many such movements. Protest songs are often situational, having been associated with a through context. Martin Luther King Jr. described the freedom songs this way: "They invigorate the

movement in a most significant way ... these freedom songs serve to give unity to a movement."

Films form a very significant form of protest. They are as controversial as they're effective. Films, like every kind of art, are often made purely for cinema's sake – but sometimes they aren't. Some of the most iconic recent films have actually played a major role in inspiring rights' movements and protests around the world. Ten Years, recipient of Hong Kong's best film award on 3 April 2016, is just one of the latest examples of how cinema can side up with rights: films have often given protests momentum and a cultural reference. However movies are the most wild spread form of protest as they cross language barriers and reach to all kinds of audience from old to young, across the globe crossing barriers creating an impact in people's minds.

Whatever the form of expression in voicing dissent, what needs to be remembered is that the post protest stage is as important as during the time of action. Political transitions are difficult, and they require successful activism in both the protest and post protest periods. The transition from participating in protests to longer-term activism can be especially complex. . The success or failure of the civic process after a protest is linked to this cutting-up of forces, as the common goal of toppling a regime does not morph automatically into a united strategy for building democracy.



## The Psychology Behind Police Brutality

Palak Amal, S.Y.B.A.

During the 2019-2020 Hong Kong protests, various incidents of police brutality have been observed. A chain of events has encouraged the abuse of police authority leading to an extreme use of inestimable power, brutality and arbitrary arrests. In an attempt to impede protests, the police have been said to have used 16,000 rounds of tear gas, baton charges, water cannons laced with blue dye, skin irritants, projectiles such as 10,000 rounds of rubber and 2,000 rounds of sponge tipped bullets, pepper spray, arrests and even sexual abuse of female protestors. The identities of the officers stay masked owing to the head-to-toe gear covering them. The clashes between police and protestors have grown increasingly violent over time. The Hong Kong government under pressure seems to have resorted to using police against the protestors. These events have disturbed the entire world.

The Stanford Prison experiment conducted by Philip Zimbardo in 1971 might shed some light on this brutality. Zimbardo conducted this study by appointing volunteers as either guards or prisoners in a mock prison. The guards were instructed to oversee the prisoners but were also given

the freedom to do as they deemed fit. Within hours of beginning the study the guards began to harass the prisoners and began to get more aggressive as the study moved forward. The acts were indirectly encouraged by Zim-



bardo, acting as the prison warden, who upon witnessing them did nothing. Their actions being overlooked by an authority figure assured the guards that their behaviours were acceptable. The prisoners were stripped naked, made to perform demeaning acts and abused. Prisoners who didn't comply were forced into solitary confinement and denied food or water. The study ended after six days when a prisoner couldn't take the abuse anymore and broke down. This highlights that even regular "good" people can turn "evil" and "inhuman" when

put in a context that encourages abusive, negative behaviour.

The Stanford Prison Experiment is a powerful demonstration of how social context can change anyone's behaviour. The police too are regular good people, yet under these stressful events, they seem to surrender their virtues and engage in actions many of

us would find inexcusable. It is the situation in which these officers find themselves, which largely determine their behaviour but they too are answerable for it. Also, noting that the Milgram

Shock Experiment, when compared to this study, shows that participants were extremely influenced by higher authorities. These events unfolded so quickly that the officers involved were given little chance to consider their options. In the Hong Kong protests one can note that the police brutality is somewhat being supported by authorities, as some refuse to take any action against the police and even seem to approve of them. Thus the police are encouraged to subdue the protestors in any way they see fit, resorting to violence which escalated

quickly. This is also a result of lack of identification, meaning they cannot be held responsible for their actions.

It is estimated that around 2600 people including children and the elderly, have required emergency medical aid due to police retaliation. History is witness to the fact that that law enforcements can show restraint and deal with similar situations and diffuse them with non-violent procedures. Although, external influences play a crucial role in the outcomes of these events, there is a dire need for reformation. Refined psychological programmes should be implemented to combat the underlying violent tendencies and train the law enforcement officers to deal with stressful situations in a better manner. The future calls for a social structure where such events aren't recurrent and also not exempt from consequences.

*If you unraveled all of the DNA in your body, it would span 34 billion miles, reaching to Pluto (2.66 billion miles away) and back ... six times.*

## Vermeer's Girl with a Pearl Earring

Neha Shaikh, T.Y.B.A.



**G**irl with a Pearl Earring is an oil painting on canvas (c. 1665) by Dutch Golden-Age artist Johannes Vermeer. It depicts an imaginary young woman wearing a very large pearl earring. The work permanently resides in the Mauritshuis museum in The Hague.

As captivating as it is, its composition is delightfully simple. The subject here is an enchantingly plain girl looking over her shoulder at the viewer. No hint of a setting is provided, other than its atmospherically dark tone. The unusually direct contact between subject and spectator and the slightly parted position of the lips, present

a sense of immediacy and implies significant innocence or intimacy. She wears a blue and yellow turban, the titular pearl earring, and a soft brown jacket with a visible neat white collar beneath. This shows that she is a sophisticated young girl. The brown, however, is not a rich, deep brown but a simple, wooden brown, which suggests that she may be of a middle class household. She is wearing the colours of nature, suggesting a down-to-earthiness of her personality.

The pose she holds is not a purposeful one, but it bears an air of reality - a natural pose. Caught in a fleeting moment, she turns her head over her shoulder, meeting the viewer's gaze with her eyes wide and lips parted as if about to speak. Her enigmatic expression coupled with the mystery of her identity has led some to compare her to Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa (c. 1503-19). However, Girl with a Pearl Earring is not a portrait but a *tronie*, a Dutch term for a character or type of person. A young woman might have sat for Vermeer, but the painting is not meant to portray her or any specific individual in the same way that Leonardo's piece portrayed an existing person (likely Lisa Gherardini, the wife of a Florentine merchant). The work attests to Vermeer's technical expertise and interest in representing

light. The soft modelling of the subject's face reveals his mastery of using light rather than line to create form, while the reflection on her lips and on the earring show his concern for representing the effect of light on different surfaces. The lighting of this painting is very telling and could be interpreted in a number of interesting ways. In the reflection of her eyes, and in her pearl earring, one can see an angle to the light that illuminates her face, not from straight ahead but a little to the left. It is not some mere coincidence that the profile of her face is angled correctly to the light.

The darkness in the background is in strong contrast to the colours of her face, the emotions she is subtly expressing and the colours of her clothes. The background thus holds a sense of macabre; a grimness that surrounds this girl, and her escape seems to be towards the light. Her expression seems to be sorrowful or pensive yet the maturity and innocence in her face, and the sadness that the contours of her eyes are made of, imply that she has suffered a lot and is saddened by the corruption she sees (maybe owing to her middle class belonging). The shine in her eyes makes her look like she is about to cry, and her parted lips are an expression in itself. Her pearl earring seems to be shaped like a tear, but

the strokes suggest it is quite a heavy earring. Is her life summed up in one heavy tear that she must wear as a sort of adornment to her personality? The weight and size of the pearl could also imply a social class - maybe she is actually of a higher class but chooses to live humbly and modestly. There is not an air of affluence about her, though she certainly seems very elegant. Another interesting aspect of her earring is its position. It does not seem attached to her but sort of suspended near her ear. Maybe that is the real masterstroke of illusion that the great artist Johannes Vermeer has created. It is for this and other reasons that one starts a new tale with every look at her and thinks about what she is trying to communicate, forgetting that it is not the girl he/she is looking at but oneself, for our interpretations and thoughts are a result of our experiences.

*The Pacific Ocean is the world's largest ocean and contains around 25,000 islands.*



# IN THE SPOTLIGHT: ROBERT EGGERS'S 'THE LIGHTHOUSE'

- Sharvari Virkar, S.Y.B.A.

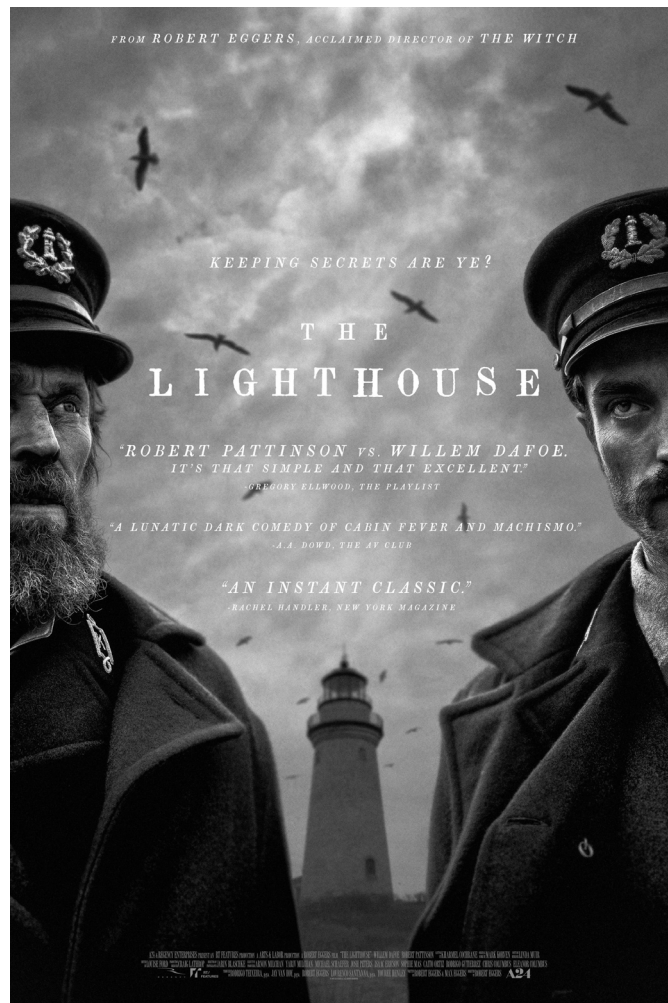


A film that sparked conversation before it even hit all theatres; *The Lighthouse* is a cinematic experience that has become quite rare in the 21st century. Premiering at the Cannes Film Festival, it has already received well-deserved critical acclaim. Loosely based on the work of Edgar Allan Poe, this psychological horror film defies many logical assumptions. Set in the 1890s, the film has only two speaking characters. It follows Winslow, a “wickie,” or lighthouse keeper, who begins a duty shift under the supervision of the salty sea dog Thomas Wake.

The basic plot is simple. It's about 2 men in the late 19th century in a lighthouse that only have each other for company with a pattering of seagulls that always surround them. Such a lifestyle would make anyone stir-crazy and these two are no exception as the environment slowly makes them lose their sanity. While the basic plot may be simple, it manages to keep you on the edge of your seat almost throughout the runtime. There is a consistent high tension environment and a very uncomfortable atmosphere that allowed extremely dry humour and some very funny scenes without ruining the whole air

of the movie.

Willem Dafoe, a known thespian, accompanied by Robert Pattinson, a blockbuster star turned indie heavy hitter, are in constant focus as the only characters in the entire film, though they never let a moment feel mundane or redundant. Perhaps a bit highfalutin with their vernacular accent, none of the monologues or soliloquies felt overdone. Both actors were given such brilliant material that allows them to go parody levels of insanity that it works beautifully for the world they inhabit. The director also successfully used silence as a tool- in fact, the first 10 minutes have barely any dialogue- just heavy sound effects and a mesmerizing score to enchant



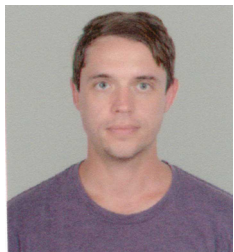
the viewer and keep them hooked.

A film festival sweetheart for a reason, *The Lighthouse* transcends current films in its technical aspects

through its minimalism. The movie is shot in 35mm black and white film at a 1.19x1 aspect ratio, making it resemble something that came out in the 1900s. The director and his team fantastically recreated the era, not only adding an element of realism but also lending their effort to the atmosphere of claustrophobia and creating a sense of heaviness. The amount of thought and perseverance is clear in every shot, which is well encapsulated with the fact that this film was nominated for an Academy Award for the Best Cinematography. This film combines the magic of a black and white reel with beautiful modern elements such as creative camera movements and music composition that were impossible in the golden era of black and white films.

This avant-garde piece of work is a revelation in the current times when all theatres are saturated with rom-coms and CGI heavy movies. To me, this is one of those films that simply sucks you into a fanatical hallucinogenic world that somehow keeps its tentacles in you long after the credits roll.

## CALIBRE CORNER



**Nick Reishus**

**Q.** Please tell us something about yourself.

**A.** My name is Nick Reishus. I am from Minnesota, USA. My official position here at Somaiya Vidyavihar is as English Language Fellow. Our program emphasizes International English Education and is sponsored by the US State Department. At Somaiya, my role is a little bit more complex, I do teach a couple of English classes, but I also take Communication classes, Public Speaking classes and Employability Skills classes. Other than that I like sports, reading, and watching movies.

**Q.** How has your teaching experience been in India?

**A.** So far, it's been really good. My class sizes have been a bit small because my courses are designed as additional courses. I've really enjoyed working with the students here, they're very passionate and

excited about doing different activities in the class and overall it's been really positive.

**Q.** How different has it been from your other Asian experiences?

**A.** I can compare my experience in India to China but not necessarily South Korea because there I taught kindergarten students. Firstly, the Indian students I've been working with seem to be a bit more social, which I believe has a lot to do with the low level of language barrier here as compared to China. Thus, there is increase in the interaction between me and students, leading to a good amount of mutual understanding. And I usually always have fun in my lectures, so overall both the experiences have been unique.

**Q.** What is the most difficult part of your job as a teacher?

**A.** The most difficult part of teaching for me personally, is assessment, because a lot of times especially with language teaching, I find assessment to be very arbitrary. When we're assessing any subject, we're making up numerical scales or giving points, and it is difficult because every student is coming in at a different level and I don't find it fair to reward students who are

coming in at a faster or a higher level as compared to those who aren't.

**Q.** Can you elaborate on your teaching philosophy?

**A.** My teaching philosophy is kind of what I've mentioned earlier about using class time to have the students interact with each other and me as much as possible. I would say my philosophy is very student centered. I highly emphasize interaction and participation of the students in different kinds of activities. I believe they need to be freshened up with all the familiar and unfamiliar faces in their classes as well as me. It will just create a better understanding and momentum in the class.

**Q.** What are some of the memories that you will take back from your experience in India?

**A.** Learning how to do “Garba” would definitely be one of the fondest memories that I'll be taking back from here. I'll remember meeting the faculties that I work with, and with my office in SIMSR, I usually have some professors popping into my office and we just talk and have a pleasant time. I haven't visited around too much, but I'll always remember how nice and warm it is interacting with all the people here.

- Shreya Nair, T.Y.B.A.

- Apoorva Nair, T.Y.B.A.

**Q.** How supportive has your family been in your endeavors?

**A.** My family's been getting more and more supportive in the past years. They've been more supportive since the time I've been away. I've been moving a lot in the past years from South Korea to China and now here, so I usually go back home every summer for one or two months. I always tell my mom that I spend more time with her when I come back in the summer than I would when I was living in the same state. And now the program I'm in is a very big and reputed one so now they're even more supportive and proud.

**Q.** What would your advice be to all the upcoming undergraduates?

**A.** My advice to all the undergraduate students would be to approach your teachers and build a rapport with them outside of the class. This will help you when you move into the industry or higher education. Also, using your teachers as a resource for understanding the material really does help you understand the subject in an even better way as personally, this has helped and benefited me a lot.



## The Boy on the Train

- Jonah Nirmal, S.Y.B.A.

*"Listen! I was already planning on jumping off this train later in the night. So, if you don't stop bothering me, I will do it right now!"*

Upon hearing this everyone in the compartment gasped. One could have sworn that they felt the whole train shiver. Sitting two cubicles away, Abraham Samson heard it too. Although he was unpacking his dinner, the sinking feeling in his stomach was a sure sign that he had just lost his appetite. Abraham got up from his seat and followed the direction of that gut punching voice. It seemed to take him a good minute to reach it. However, as by now it was evident that every passenger in the compartment, as far as the voice had been heard was curious to see the source.

And then Abraham saw him. The source of the voice, standing at the end of the compartment near the toilets, belonged to a boy who looked no older than sixteen. He was pinned against the wall by the Ticket Collector.

"Hey kid, this is no time to joke!" the inspector hesitated. "Do you understand?"

"Do you think I'm joking? The real joke is how your black suit fits so tightly against your fat belly that it might just rip open!"

"Now you're clearly begging to be beaten up!" the ticket collector raised his hand and would have successfully punched the boy had the men watching not interfered and pulled him back.

Abraham caught a glimpse of the intense fear in the boy's eyes. He was clearly a runaway. It was enough to help Abraham make the choice in his head, to either help the boy or just shamelessly relish the entertainment like the rest of the crowd.

"I'll pay his fine!" he blurted out quickly while walking up to the ticket collector.

"You look like a good man. Don't get yourself involved in this unnecessary tantrum."

"Sir please. I'll take his responsibility. I know an NGO in Mumbai that can get him help."

"Alright," the ticket collector groaned, "but if he attempts anything during the night then you will be responsible."

Abraham looked at the boy a second time and sighed. He paid off the fine and brought the boy to his seat. He unpacked his dinner, neatly arranging all the items into an irresistible meal and offered it to the boy.

"I'm not hungry—"

"I insist."

"...Thank you. My name is K-Kabir...I thought you'd like to know."

"I appreciate it. I'm Abraham. Kabir, I know I am in no position to tell you what to do with your life, but ending it is never the answer," Abraham took a deep breath. "Do you want to come to Mumbai with me?"

"You are right," Kabir nodded his head aggressively. "You are in no position to tell me what to do with my life and no, I can't just come with you. We just met!"

"I only want to help—"

"But why? Why would you want to help a complete stranger?"

"Because you deserve a chance at a better life. Sure, I'm not obliged to help you but there is already not enough goodness in this world and we as people, all of us, owe it to each other. So, I'm asking you to come just for one week. Come stay with me and let me take care of you. If you still aren't happy, then you're free to leave and make your own decision thereafter. But give me just one chance to show you that your life matters. Will you give me that chance?"

Kabir burst into tears, "I'm not a bad person. I'm just tired of all the pain that people have caused me. I just wanted all of it to end. I just want it to end, please—"

"Hey, you are not weak, okay?" Abraham consoled him. "Look I can

help you. Will you let me help you?"

A deafening silence fell on the cubicle. Kabir's heart raced as he felt his forehead heat up. His body felt like it was constantly being slammed underwater by wave after wave. There was no sound in the cubicle, no sound anywhere. The blood pumping in his veins, right now, was the loudest sound his body had ever perceived. A faint voice in the distance called out to him.

"Kabir"

A faint voice.

"Kabir"

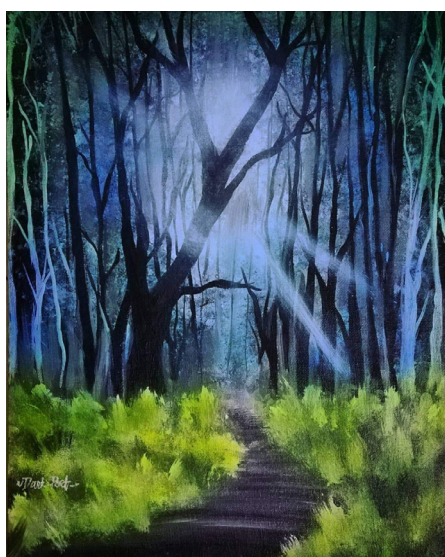
"So what will it be, Kabir?"

He snapped back.

"Yes."

*The Olympic rings cover every flag in the world. Yellow, green, red, black, and blue were selected because at least one of those five colors appears in every flag in the world.*

- Pragma Parakh, Siddhi Momaiya, S.Y.B.A.



"in this forest, dark and deep, I offer you... Eternal sleep"



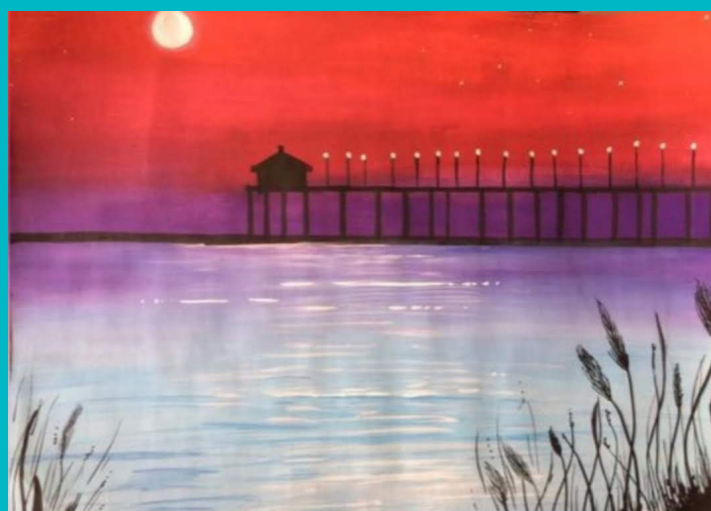
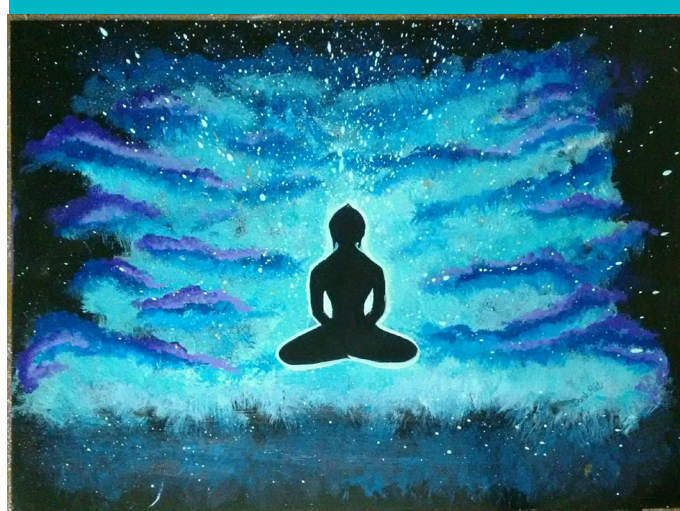
"It's all in the details..."



"Anger" is just a letter short of "danger"



"Lord of the universe"



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