



AUC: Asian Journal of Religious Studies

66/3 May-June 2021, ISSN P-2249-1503 E-2582-791X | 15-21

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo. 5033920

Stable URL: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo. 5033920>

Thinking the Nude: A Call to Authenticity and Humility

Victor Ferrao

Dean of Philosophy, Rachol Seminary, Goa

Abstract: What is human life? This question strikes at our very birth and death. Job from the bible seems to answer it for us when he says, ‘naked I came, and naked I will go.’ It reveals the vanity of clothed life. Nude, therefore, does not represent the body. It represents an idea or better still an ideality. It stands for the idea/utopia of human life that is exposed to our gaze that is immobilised before the fixity and eternity of the beauty of the nude. What is the idea that the nude portrays about our life? Can we really think the nude? In our days the nude seems to have met its end. People are hurt by the portrayals of nude images of gods and goddesses. We have lost the distance that the nude marked and made us comfortable. The author concludes by affirming that We cannot always hide our nakedness by clothing in our society. One day or the other we have to face our nakedness. True life is always a naked one.

Keywords: Naked Life, Nudity, Ideality, Clothed Lives, Search for Authenticity

Humans like clothed life. We enjoy cooked food. We dress and live our life clothed with culture, religion, tradition, science and technology. Nudity is nauseating us yet in the artistic works we can

Cite as: Ferrao, Victor. (2021). Thinking the Nude: A Call to Authenticity and Humility (Version 1.0). AUC: Asian Journal of Religious Studies, July-August 2021(66/4), 15-20. http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5033920
--

trace that it is celebrated. Nude is artistic-metaphysics par excellence. It is usually abstracted from the dimensions of the particular. The nude portrayals are anonymous to us. Even if we know them like Adam of Michel Angelo, Adam is sufficiently distant to us across time and space and does not upset our aesthetics sensibilities. The artistic works usually manifest the nude as fixed, immobile and timeless beauty. These works of art take us to the sublime. Such works raise the raw naked question: What is human life? This question strikes at our very birth and death. Job from the bible seems to answer it for us when he says, ‘naked I came, and naked I will go’ (Job.1:21) It reveals the vanity of clothed life. Nude, therefore, does not represent the body. It represents an idea or better still an ideality. It stands for the idea/utopia of human life that is exposed to our gaze that is immobilised before the fixity and eternity of the beauty of the nude. What is the idea that the nude portrays about our life? Can we really think the nude? In our days the nude seems to have met its end. People are hurt by the portrayals of nude images of gods and goddesses. We have lost the distance that the nude marked and made us comfortable.

Job from the bible seems to answer it for us when he says, ‘naked I came, and naked I will go.’ It reveals the vanity of clothed life. Nude, therefore, does not represent the body. It represents an idea or better still an ideality. It stands for the idea/utopia of human life that is exposed to our gaze that is immobilised before the fixity and eternity of the beauty of the nude.

Nudity Fails and Succeeds

To a large extent, the nude fails as well as succeeds. It is an absolute-being-in-itself that is simultaneously an absolute-being-outside itself. The nude is silent. It is wordless. It does not speak. Since it does not have the luxury of verbal language, the nude is even more naked. Therefore, it is always ek-static/ outside itself in a state of utter disorientation (Riley, 2015). But the

nude breaks the silence. It speaks without speaking. We are faced with the gaze of the nude. The meaning that the nude communicates without speaking exceeds our systems of signification/meaning. It becomes an open sign that speaks directly to the on-looking spectator. Its speech cannot be closed to one singular meaning. It speaks without speaking in many tongues. The spectator and his or her gaze also contribute to the polyvalent speaking of the nude.

This is why the nude can be called pure signification. It is the first exposition of our life. It manifests our raw life. In it, the nude, nudity and the flesh melt into one another and/or oscillate in a movement that refuses to resolve into a standstill closure. The nude is always open and does not come to the closure of signification. It is fecund in meaning and keeps generating it in its interaction with the onlooker. The nude lives on the liminal edge questioning the clothedness of our life. Nude is completely detached from clothed life. It shares our life with animals, plants and other life that do not need clothes. It seems to remind us what Derrida said when he wrote: The animal, therefore I am. The nude interrogates the clothed life of its onlooker.

Immersed in Our Clothed Lives

Perhaps we need to strip bare our clothed life to understand life itself. Our naked coming and naked going is hidden from our consciousness because we are totally immersed in the clothed life. Maybe we have to come to terms with the nudity of our clothed life which has very often become the hiding place for many evils. Nudity introduces us to an endless interrogation of our clothed life. Very often our clothes fail to hide our nudity. Nudity is an open signifier that semiotizes and hence takes up the clothes of meaning that

Nudity is an open signifier that semiotizes and hence takes up the clothes of meaning that remain open. Therefore, the nude is not really nude. It clothes itself in the intersection of its gaze with the gaze of the onlooker.

remain open. Therefore, the nude is not really nude. It clothes itself in the intersection of its gaze with the gaze of the onlooker (Reed, 2010). Clothed life is a closed signifier. It has reached the closure of its meaning and has attained a fixation and a kind of semantic immobility and hence we can think that clothed life is actually nude and tending towards nudity. This means we can think together nudity and clothed life. They do cross each other.

But the nude that artworks have revealed are portraying the immanence of our raw life that is totally exposed and unprotected. This means our clothes, cultures, science and technologies etc., can never fully protect us. We are always naked even in our clothes. We have to come to terms with the fact that our life that is always as Heidegger tells us is moving towards its own impossibility/ death. This is the naked fact of our life. We are born naked and we die naked even in our clothes. We are prone to disease and death and hence stay naked in our clothes. This nakedness in our clothes reminds us of our finitude and frailty (Williams, 2011). Our clothes cannot save us from it. We are still nakedly finite, frail and fragile in our clothes of all hues and colours.

Concluding Remarks

Acceptance of nakedness makes us real and humble. Otherwise, we live under the false security provided by the mask of clothing. The nude is divine. It makes us transparent. God loves nudity. The masked/ clothed is a hypocrite to the divine. The nude is a sign of human and divine authenticity. Clothes/ masks are often a sign of inauthenticity. The reflection that I have done here does not leave us with a choice between nudity and clothed life. We have seen how the nude can be clothed and the clothed can be nude. We have thought the nude and the clothed together. We have attempted to arrive at non-dual thinking that thinks beyond the either/or structure of our habitual thinking. The reminder that naked we have come and naked we will go invites us to choose authenticity and humility. We

are always naked before God. We cannot always hide our nakedness by clothing in our society. One day or the other we have to face our nakedness. True life is always a naked one. Let us have the courage to choose the nudity of our naked life.

References

- Reed, Marthe. *Gaze*. London: Black Radish Books, 2010.
- Riley, A. (2015). Ethnography of the Ek-Static Experience: Poésie Auto-socioanalytique in the Work of Michel Leiris. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 44(3), 362–386.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241614530428>
- Williams, T. J. (2011). *Love, Freedom, and Evil: Does Authentic Love Require Free Will?*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.



Dr Victor Ferrao is Dean of Philosophy, Patriarchal Seminary of Rachol, Goa. He obtained first PhD from India on science and religion dialogue. Email: victorferrao@yahoo.co.uk. ORCID: 0000-0002-5008-8114

Article received: Feb 23, 2021; Accepted: April 24, 2021. Word count: 1290



© by the authors. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license. (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>)



AUC: Asian Journal of Religious Studies |

66/3 May-June 2021, ISSN P-2249-1503 E-2582-791X | **21-35**

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo. 5033918

Stable URL: <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo. 5033918>

Palliative Care: The Practice of End of Life Care

Esther Macedo Chopra

Research Scholar, Jnana Deepa, Pune 411014

Abstract: Providing care to the sick is not an obligation but a duty that is bound with human connectedness to each other. Palliative care picks up the strings along with curative treatment to try and provide a comfortable death. Palliative care is provided after a complete assessment is done on the symptoms and the stage of the disease and the condition of the patient. This discipline works not in isolation but with the patient's family or care giver. The family becomes a part of providing treatment to the patient and they are also given emotional and mental support.

Keywords: Palliative Treatment, Pain Management, Process of Dying, Comfort Care, End of Life Care.

Cite as: Chopra, Esther Macedo. (2021 Palliative Care: The Practice of End of Life Care (Version 1.0). AUC: Asian Journal of Religious Studies, July-August 2021(66/4), 21-35. <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo. 5033918>