



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
NOTES - (2020-21)

Class: XI

Sub: ENGLISH

LANDSCAPE OF THE SOUL

Theme

The writer contrasts Chinese art with European art by recounting two stories about Chinese art and one story about European Art. The Europeans want a perfect likeness, whereas in Asia, art is the essence of life and spirit. Chinese art requires the active participation of the viewer both physically and mentally to understand it.

Summary

The chapter 'Landscape of the Soul' by Nathalie Trouveroy is about art. The chapter consists of two parts. The first part has been taken from '**Landscape of the Soul: Ethics and Spirituality in Chinese Painting**'; and the second part is from '**Getting Inside 'Outsider Art**', an article written by Brinda Suri in Hindustan Times.

In the part taken from 'Landscape of the Soul: Ethics and Spirituality in Chinese Painting', we learn about the art of painting through two stories. The first one is about a very popular Chinese painter, Wu Daozi. It is about the eighth century when he was hired by the Tang Emperor Xuanzong to adorn a wall of the palace. Wu painted beautiful scenery with mountains, waterfalls, forests as well as clouds and blue skies with people living harmoniously in a happy environment. However, he painted a cave at the foot of a mountain that was inhabited by a spirit. When the painter was showing his work to the emperor, he claps his hands and an entrance to the cave opens where he enters in and the painting vanished and Wu Daozi never came out. The author says that it denotes the knowledge of the mystical inner world. Thus, it says that only the masters are aware of the way within and can go beyond any material form.

Similarly, there is another story about another popular Chinese painter who did not draw a dragon's eye fearing it would become alive and fly out of his painting.

Next, we have the third story from fifteenth century Antwerp, about a master blacksmith, Quinten Metsys, who falls in love with the daughter of a painter. As the father was not accepting of his son-in-law belonging to such a profession. He accepted Quinten because he painted a fly on his board, it had such gentle realism that it resembled a real one.

Further, the author also talks about Chinese philosophy, Shanshui, meaning 'mountain water'. The mountain represents 'Yang', the male principle; and water signifies Yin, the female principle.

Finally, the second part of 'Getting Inside 'Outsider Art' by Brinda Suri talks about the concept of 'art brut'. Art Brut translates to the art of the ones who have 'no right' to be artists. It is because they lack any formal training yet somehow possess artistic talent and insight. She refers to them as the ones who think outside the box and defy the normal standards. People refer to their work as 'unorthodox' art. She cites the example of Nek Chand's work at Rock Garden in Chandigarh is a form of art brut.

Conclusion of Landscape to Soul

To sum up, Landscape to Soul summary, we learn that art is an infinite form which has a rich history and it cannot fit inside any certain box or label, it has a life of its own.