

Man is a late comer. Darwin's theory is anticipated by origin myths of tribes all over the world. They say there were other beings that preceded humans on earth; a hen, a crow or creatures fierce and fantastic. Links are direct in myths while for science there is the eventful process of evolution before the emergence of our distant predecessors. What irresistible force draw us to the memory of those mysterious days when the human beings were only a slightly modified replica of the beasts? And what do we gain from this inheritance of memories from time immemorial? Psychologists and aestheticians generally have a sway over this domain of enquiry. For an artist the very celebration of this awareness, this revelation to which he is raised through visual images up surging from the innermost depths of his self, and the pain and ecstasy of transforming them in one's own lines and shapes, is an end in itself. Bhagyanath's drawings attain a unique strength of communication when they portray the sharing of fate or predicament by a human being with an animal, most strikingly the monkey. This sharing is made possible to a man only when his soul is totally denuded. In those pristine moments a secret play takes place between man and the beast where both straddle the concerns of success and failure. This is followed by a mutual transference or passionate absorption of the other self. All the primordial instincts of life and death are aroused in this process and an indescribable experience, which may perhaps be compared to that of rebirth, is actualized. I think it is an emotional ritual which many artists unknowingly and at times with a magically awakened intellect practice as part of their creative life-a life which otherwise gets muddled with the mundane realities of daily existence. Bhagyanath has brought out with an inspiring ease in his drawings the mysterious beauty, grandeur and even pathos in man's secret plays and dialogues with the other representatives of the animal world. This is something about which any artist may feel a sense of spiritual delight and elation.

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