

# RTC LIBRARY E-NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2022

Welcome to the November 2022 issue of RTC LIBRARY E-NEWSLETTER

**In this issue: Recommended Reads: *The Picture of Dorian Gray, No Longer Human* and *The art of happiness: a handbook for living***

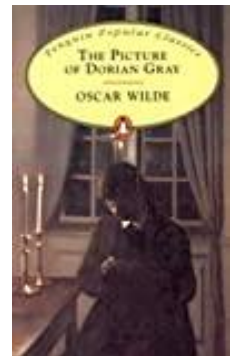
## Recommended Reads from the RTC community

### *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde

Written with an aphrodisiac style of prose, the book has actively dealt with several issues that England as a nation was facing during the Victorian times. Hypocrisy, suppression of lower class and the themes of homosexuality have all been explored by Wilde.

Wilde was a writer who liked to “Feast with panthers” (Des Profundis) and wrote several other works such as “Lady Windermere’s Fan”, a play about the misogyny and the sexism that was widely prevalent during his times. In addition to it, his beliefs in “Art for Art’s Sake” also revealed a mind that rejoiced in the sheer beauty of the literature.

Yet, it is his one and only novel that lays his soul bare to the readers. The book’s first manuscript consisting of sixteen chapters was edited and published by the Lippincott’s magazine. The book still faced intense backlash. So, Wilde included four more chapters and removed some highly controversial scenes from the book. Still, the criticism persisted as the book openly showed the illness that was infesting England.



At the end, the book and his stubborn refusal to give in to the societal pressure cost him his home, wife, children and his cherished books. Though unintentionally, through his novel, he had opened and contributed to chip away the discrimination against non-binary section of people, and to this day, remains an icon for his support of Aestheticism.

Thank you  
Sangay Zam  
BA English Studies  
Cohort 2020.

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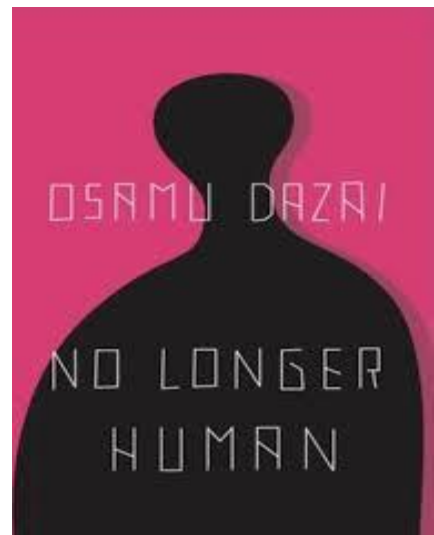
## *No Longer Human* by Osamu Dazai

Written by an author whose life can be traced along the lines of the protagonist's life in his book "No Longer Human", Osamu Dazai was a deeply haunted and haunting individual. Belonging to one of the aristocratic families in Japan when the Land of Rising Sun was witnessing a sharp decline in the traditional values, Dazai has captured the capricious longing for a dead past and the hallowing hopes for the future in several of his pieces such as "The Land of the dying Sun". However, while most of his pieces do have psychological exploration of an individual as a recurring theme, the book "No Longer Human" is a landmark in his works in terms of the in-depth level of writing that he has done about human psyche from both an autobiographical as well as Yozo, his main character's, perspective.

Through the book, Dazai has questioned what being a human truly means.

Is it simply about eating, sleeping, breathing and defecating?

The book has been divided into five separate parts namely, the prologue, the three parts narrating about different aspects of the main character's life and the epilogue. The book begins with the journey of Yozo, the main character. He starts by talking of his childhood and in the ensuing chapters, he speaks of his unhappy family life, torturous schooling days and the debauchorous college life that he experiences. Despite the differences in the events, one single thread binds all the events into a story of a tragic young man. That thread is his inability to connect with others and feel that he is a human being too. He constantly compares himself with



others and feels that while others are 'real' humans who belong to the society of human beings, he is an imposter who must forever hide his true emotions. For this, as a young child, he resorts to being a prankster who is mischievous, witty and naturally doles out laughter from his classmates and parents. He feels proud of this fact because he is always scared of being recognized for who he 'truly' is; a fearful little child whose fear of being found out behind his garbs of deception. For this and his reputation's sake, he even makes fun of himself to please others.

Then, as a college student, he joins the communist society and spends his time at brothels or drinks to his heart's content with another merry weather friend. However, despite his vice filled life, nobody complains as one after another, the women in his life quietly pay for his lifestyle because he was a good looking man with a personal secret that enticed women or so Yozo liked to believe. However, even as a communist and a man loved by many women, he finds himself to be completely detached from everyone he meets. As a communist, he completes several tasks assigned to him. Yet, in his heart, he feels like an abomination amongst the true believers of the ideology as he cannot commit to the cause wholeheartedly. With women, he feels like a leech mooching off from these motherly figures who could not touch the heart of the matter. He finds only two individuals who he feels truly understands him.

At the end, the narrator who compiles the diaries of Yozo and writes his own impressions in the prologue and the epilogue ends visits one of the many women in Yozo's life who paid for him. The woman is a pub owner who pitifully ends the book with the line, "...but he was such an angel..."

To end, while the final line can illustrate the fact that perhaps, even during the end of his days, Yozo was never 'truly' understood by even the women he loved because instead of a "human" that he was striving to be, he was labelled an angel, the other meaning can also be that Yozo was too darkened by his own insecurities to understand that he was a human being whose deep understanding of the world overshadowed his own good deeds. Yozo strived to view himself as an imperfect being, an imposter among the human beings who never deserved to live in the society. Yet, through the impressions that he gave to others such as the pub owner, another side of him being a flawed but humane human can also be witnessed because at the end, other human beings cannot be perfectly devoted to a cause or understand everyone perfectly either.

We, especially I, simply pretend to grasp and enjoy the moments as if I understand everything simply as a form of retaliation against the sinking feeling of darkness and alienation that lurks at the pit of our stomachs. At night time, when the darkness at the horizons seem to be an ever-glowing presence at one's mind, the thoughts of humanity and a deep sense of longing for that glimpse of time scurrying past your peripheral vision haunts you for a period that can never be restored, a smile that gleams like gold on features blurred by times and a silent plea through gestural acts that transcends times. In short, these lines of thoughts are marred and beautified at the same time by a merging line of time and space that takes you to a niche in your mind where you can be happy while feeling sad or be sad while feeling happy.

At the end, we are all inhumanely humane.

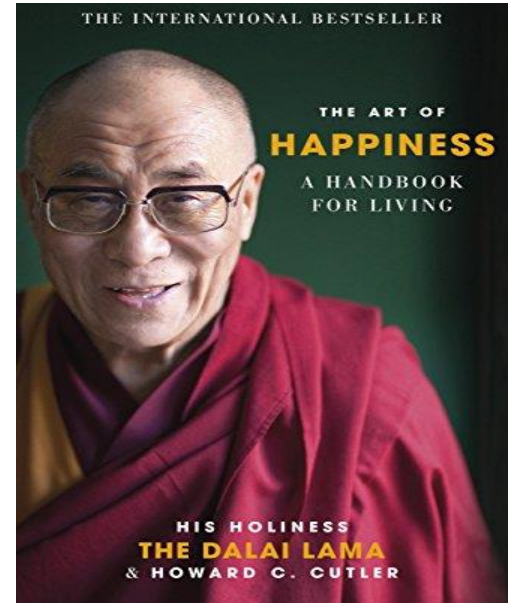
**Thank you**  
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## *The art of happiness: a handbook for living* by Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler.

The Art of Happiness is a book by the 14th Dalai Lama and Howard Cutler, a psychiatrist who posed questions to the Dalai Lama. This book is based on His Holiness the Dalai Lama's belief that while attaining general lasting happiness is not easy, a list can be made. Dalai Lama claims that the main purpose of everyone's life is actually to seek and achieve happiness.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama says that happiness is determined more by one state of mind than by external events. For example, success can give us a feeling of elation or a tragedy that can lead us to depression. But these feelings are temporary because sooner or later our overall level of happiness migrates back to a certain baseline.

Dalai Lama also adds that whether we are feeling happy or unhappy depends on how we perceive our situation, how satisfied we are with what we have, not surprisingly it is a tendency to compare which influences our perception of how happy we are. Not only have we compared ourselves to others, but also our past selves. As an example, Dr Cutler says that if a person's income ranges from \$20,000 to \$30,000 a year, it's not the actual amount of the income which makes one happy because one soon becomes used to the new income and this covers that one will not feel happy again unless he or she is earning at least \$40,000 a year. When we compare ourselves with those who are smarter, richer, and who is beautiful than ourselves which intend to become enviously frustrated, and unhappy, but Dalai Lama says using the same principle in a positive way that we compare ourselves with those who are less fortunate than we can increase our level of life satisfaction in our overall happiness.



Dalai Lama further says that all the individuals who have both negative mental states and emotions, and positive ones. To achieve happiness, the first one must avoid negative states. He also says that positive motions act as an antidote for the negative ones. For example, the true antidote for greed is contentment, anger and hatred are patients and tolerance, fear and anxiety are sincere motivation, and low self-esteem is honesty.

In the book, the Dalai Lama says that he never feels lonely or isolated and when questioned on it, he says that he always approaches people with the thought of compassion and empathy. And it automatically reduces fear and allows openness with other people or to overcome any sort of sufferings, the Dalai Lama says that the first step is to accept suffering as a natural fact of existence. And rather than giving up hope, we should understand that our suffering can increase our ability to empathize with others and their suffering, and this transforms us into more compassionate beings.

In a conclusion, the Dalai Lama repeats each day “In short of I, directly and indirectly, offer benefit happiness to all being, May I secretly take on myself the harm and suffering of all beings.”

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### Wanted! Book reviews from Faculty, Staff, and Students

If you have read a good book and would like to contribute a review to the Library Newsletter, we would love to receive one from you. Tell us a little about the book and why you liked it in 250-500 words. If interested, send your review to [psutherland@rtc.bt](mailto:psutherland@rtc.bt) or come by the library and see the library staff.

Thank you!!

The MORE  
that you read,  
the MORE things  
you will know.  
The MORE that you  
LEARN,  
the MORE places you'll go.

