

RTC LIBRARY E-NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2021

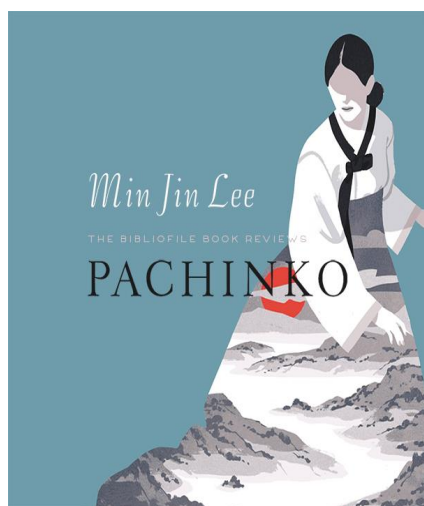
Welcome to the OCTOBER 2021 issue of RTC LIBRARY E-NEWSLETTER

In this issue: Recommended Reads: [Pachinko](#), [Entangled Life](#), [The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind](#), [Tuesdays with Morrie](#).

Recommended Reads from the RTC community

[Pachinko](#) by Min Jin Lee

This marvelous story takes place around the 1900s in a time when Japan was occupied by Korea. It is a three part story however the overall story is about a teenage girl called Sunja who falls for a wealthy man. This man promises the world to her but she soon uncovers that she has become pregnant after one passionate night. She also finds out that this same man is actually already married. Her refusal in accepting the wealthy man's hand in marriage causes a turn of events. A gentle and sickly minister agreed to marry her where they journey off to Osaka, Japan. This story explores the concept of love, sacrifice, ambition, and loyalty. The author managed to create such complex characters who managed to live through a part of history by holding on to their family bond.



“The widow told me about her daughter only yesterday. And last night before my evening prayers, it occurred to me that this is what I can do for them: Give the woman and child my name. What is my name to me?” This is the turning point in the story where Sunja is ‘saved’ by the minister and taken to live with his brother in Japan. There, she lives out her life with her sons facing all the trials and tribulations that life brings to the table.

Another quote that has to be mentioned is said by Mrs. Jun to Sunja, ““Sunja-ya, a woman’s life is endless work and suffering. There is suffering and then more

suffering. It's better to expect it, you know. You're becoming a woman now, so you should be told this. For a woman, the man you marry will determine the quality of your life completely.

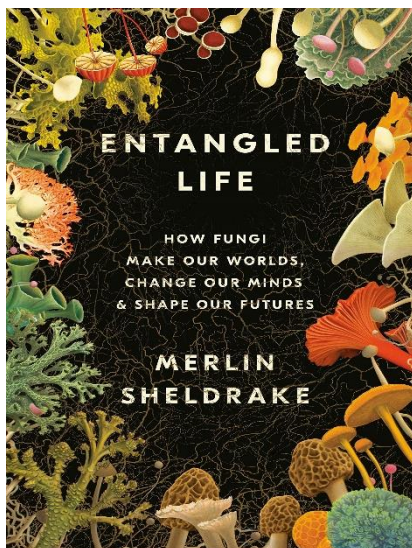
A good man is a decent life, and a bad man is a cursed life—but no matter what, always expects suffering, and just keep working hard. No one will take care of a poor woman—just ourselves.” This is such a prominent quote pertaining to the lives of women at the time no matter where one lived in the world. Women didn't have much say in almost anything and they were seen as 'lesser than'.

Thank you

**Pema Yeshey,
BSc Env Mgt**

[Entangled Life: How Fungi Make our Worlds, Change our Minds and Shape our Future: by Merlin Sheldrake](#)

This is a beautifully written book about the much neglected fungi which are everywhere and influence almost everything in and around us. It is largely based on scientific and empirical evidence but it is so modestly written that a reader does not need science background to understand or to enjoy the read. Although fungi have been sustaining the very substance of life by bringing life on land and securing the health of all plants on earth, they are largely hidden underneath which is why they are so mysterious. Their super powers to either build the world or to destroy it, makes us rethink our position in the center of the ecosystem and at the top of the food chain. Fungi are the networks stitching the world together, helping humans plan the most efficient routes, an information hub of everything that is happening in and above the ground. They provide us with remediation to degraded environments. Starting from declining bee populations to radioactive contamination, it can remediate most. It is now also a source for new eco-friendly alternatives to old commodities including leather, bricks, foams and many more. The book not only describes them as fungi, but portrays them as social beings who are continuously communicating with its biotic and abiotic surroundings, wisely deciding with whom to form a relationship and whom to avoid. Fungi are capable of doing almost everything that ensures their survival, thereby challenging our self-proclaimed title of the most intelligent being on earth.



and as medicine.

There are so many interesting ideas and views discussed that leaves the readers wondering, such as the theory of psilocybin mushrooms triggering the development of human self-reflection, language and spirituality in the Paleolithic period, and also suggesting that maybe mushrooms were the original tree of knowledge. Through various pieces of evidence we learn that fungi were no strangers to humans such as the psychedelic mushrooms that were used by shamans during their rituals and fungus that were found in Neanderthals' diet

In some parts of the world people do not hesitate to bloody their hands for fungi. Animals on the other hand do not hesitate to hurt themselves to taste some of it. The relationship of fungus is so large and complex that it does not end with just plants. The book also talks about horrifying parasitism of fungi where they invade and take control over the insect's body to disperse its spores. We have fungi in our bodies that help us and without which our bodies may not perform the way they should. The book also tells us that fungi have contributed to what we are and how we do what we do. Thus putting us in a dilemma of what might individuality mean? Does our "I" include the bacteria and fungi on our body?

It is so enriching and just as the author wishes, this book helps us view the world and ourselves in a different light. It makes us see where we stand in an ecosystem and makes us doubt our intelligence. It is simply humbling to read but it is a great read.

Thank you
Bijayata Rai
Assistant Academic Officer

A Ladder

(A poem inspired by The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind by Bryan Mealer and William Kamkwamba)

Summary of the book There is a young fourteen-year-old boy in Masitala Village, outside of Kasungu, Malawi. He lives on a farm with his family where they grow maize and tobacco. He is William Kamkwamba (one of the writers of this book). Even when William is no longer able to attend school because his parents cannot afford to pay the fees, William's will to learn never leaves him. His curiosity becomes his greatest teacher and William is soon recognized for his talents. This inspirational and heart-wrenching non-fiction is about his journey on harnessing the power of the wind to save his village in the time of extreme drought and famine.

Why this inspired me? After reading the novel (and watching the movie), it saddened me, yet gave me hope that with perseverance and will we can make miracles happen instead of waiting for them to happen. Sometimes we forget how fortunate we are as most of the time we end up comparing our lives, especially in this digital age. Although we are aware of the poverty and the pains of the world it feels distant, it's a reality that feels like an illusion to most of us, something that we can often forget about but when I read this book, looking at the environment that William and his village had to endure made me realize that living under the same sky is not the same. That we have much to be grateful for and we are all in this together no matter where we are - if we don't look out for each other who will?

Isn't the sky that I see the same as yours?

Is the moon that I see so different from the one you see?

Or is it the warmth of the sun that is so different?

Doesn't the same blood run through you and me?

Or do I not breathe the same air that you breathe?

You and me,

Me and you

We are all human after all.

Bound under the same sky

Nourished by the same earth

Cherished by the same wind

Ripened under the same sun

And yet

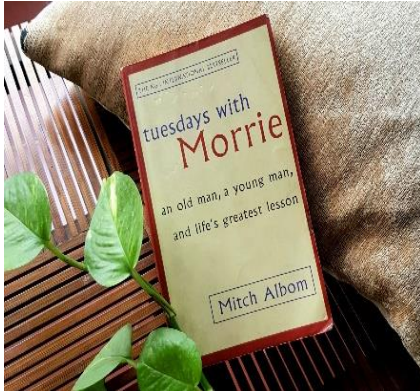
And yet

The world is round
Never was it once flat
When I have day
You have night
Through tattered roofs or shiny glass?
Under bridges or open terraces?
An empty stomach or a blissful belly?
Which shall it be?
Whom will it be?
Is it you or is it me?
We have created a hierarchy
Living under the illusions of anarchy
Everything we set our eyes on
Taken for granted
We have forgotten humanity
And laid waste to the mother
who keeps us alive.
The brunt we bear is not equal
The hurt we feel is not equal
The pain we suffer is not equal
Living under the same sky is not the same.
The moon is stained red
The sun is far too harsh
And the wind is ever unyielding
In this world of hierarchy
between you and me
And yet
And yet
Hope is a thing with feathers
And it lives within you and I...

Thank you
Pem Dechen Topgay, BFound

Tuesdays with Morrie: by Mitch Albom

“One afternoon, I am complaining about the confusion of my age, what is expected of me versus what I want for myself. “Have I told you about the tension of opposites? . . . Life is a series of



pulls back and forth. You want to do one thing, but you are bound to do something else. Something hurts you, yet you know it shouldn't. You take certain things for granted, even when you know you should never take anything for granted. A tension of opposites, like a pull on a rubber band. And most of us live somewhere in the middle.”

Location: - 920 ALB

Brief Summary Tuesdays with Morrie is a beautiful non-fiction on Morrie's life after his diagnosis with ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis also known as Lou Gehrig's disease). Morrie was Mitch Albom's professor and after many years, one night on the famous television show called “Nightline”, Mitch finds out that Morrie is terminally ill. And so Mitch meets his old professor once again every Tuesday, and they discuss Morrie's life and life as we know it, as Morrie prepares for death.

Take away from the book

The moment we are born one thing is set in stone - the fact that we all have to eventually die and leave this world behind. And in between birth and death we have this thing called 'life' where often many of us live as if we will go on forever, making plans today for a tomorrow which is uncertain and start to take many things for granted in our pursuit of happiness.

It is important for us to know that we all live our lives in small moments and that we should slow down and reflect from time to time in order to anchor ourselves to the present.

This short read is one of my favorites and I highly recommend it for anyone who hasn't read it yet.

Thank you
Pem Dechen Topgay, BFound

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 gyanupradhan@rtc.bt or come by the library and see the library staff.

Thanks!!

YOU MUST TELL YOURSELF, “NO MATTER HOW HARD IT IS, OR HOW HARD IT GETS, I AM GOING TO MAKE IT...”-Les Brown.