



A God in Ruins: The Human Family and Civility

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Scrivener's Quill





- "[W]e note with dismay the ever growing number of cases in which most of the trappings of civility . . . are lacking." (Townsend v. Superior Court (1998) 61 Cal.App.4th 1431, 1438, 72 Cal.Rptr.2d 333.) Here, appellant's counsel has taken that unfortunate practice to its extreme. As we will explain, there is no excuse for the uncivil, unprofessional, and offensive advocacy employed by appellant's counsel, which is all the more unconscionable because it falsely attributes offensive language to others.
- In re SC, 41 Cal. Rptr. 3d 453 - Cal: Court of Appeal, 3rd Appellate Dist. 2006



As all parties admit, the spirit of the discovery disputes was hostile. At the very least, it lacked the civility and professionalism one expects from such experienced attorneys. Plaintiffs filed a total of twelve motions for sanctions and/or contempt, seeking to sanction all Defendants and all their attorneys, as well as two non-parties and their counsel. Magistrate Judge Rapoport denied the five requests for sanctions or contempt before him. Only two of Judge Gardner's subsequent rulings on the sanctions requests are the subjects of this appeal.

- *Grider v. Keystone Health Plan Central, Inc.*, 580 F. 3d 119 - Court of Appeals, 3rd Circuit 2009





- Mutual enmity does not excuse the breakdown of decorum that occurred at Gerstein's deposition. Instead of declaring a pox on both houses, the district court should have used its authority to maintain standards of civility and professionalism. It is precisely when animosity runs high that playing by the rules is vital. Rules of legal procedure are designed to defuse, or at least channel into set forms, the heated feelings that accompany much litigation. Because depositions take place in law offices rather than courtrooms, adherence to professional standards is vital, for the judge has no direct means of control.
- *Redwood v. Dobson*, 476 F. 3d 462 - Court of Appeals, 7th Circuit 2007



As we shall explain, in light of the nature and extent of Kallins's insolent and contemptuous conduct, the trial court's admonishments of Kallins in front of the jury were necessary and did not constitute misconduct.

[I]t is vital to the integrity of our adversary legal process that attorneys strive to maintain the highest standards of ethics, civility, and professionalism in the practice of law. In order to instill public confidence in the legal profession and our judicial system, an attorney must be an example of lawfulness, not lawlessness.

Accordingly, an attorney, "however zealous in his client's behalf, has, as an officer of the court, a paramount obligation to the due and orderly administration of justice...." An attorney must not willfully disobey a court's order and must maintain a respectful attitude toward the court.

When, during the course of trial, an attorney violates his or her obligations as an officer of the court, the judge may control the proceedings and protect the integrity of the court and the judicial process by reprimanding the attorney.

People v. Chong, 90 Cal. Rptr. 2d 198 - Cal: Court of Appeal, 3rd Appellate Dist. 1999



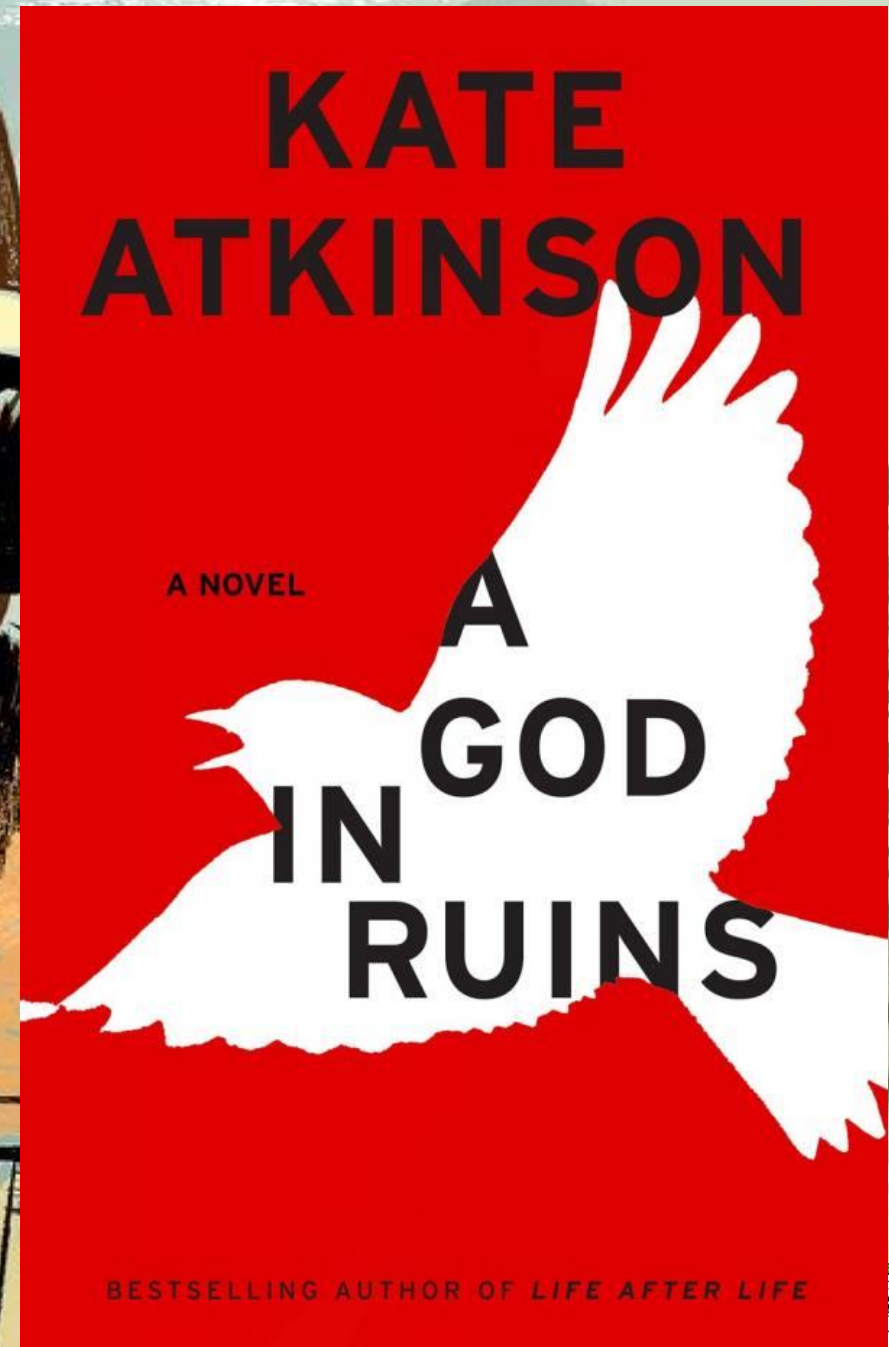


- A God in Ruins, the ninth novel by Kate Atkinson, was published in 2015. The main character, Teddy Todd is the younger brother of Ursula Todd, the protagonist in Atkinson's 2013 novel, *Life After Life*. Atkinson calls it the "companion piece" rather than a sequel to the earlier novel. Both books are about World War II. It won the Costa Book Award for Novel in 2015.
- [Wikipedia](#)



“A God in Ruins” is by no means an antiwar novel. If anything, it’s a love letter to the men and boys who fought on the British side, infused with an attitude closer to “The Greatest Generation” than to “Catch-22.” Atkinson doesn’t romanticize the war — there are stomach-turning scenes of horror, and an acknowledgment that the R.A.F. bombers targeted civilian populations — but she, like Teddy, never questions its necessity, or minimizes its costs. For Teddy, these costs include the loss of his future, the possibility of becoming a different sort of man: “The truth was there was nothing else he wanted to do, could do. Flying on bombing raids had become him. Who he was.” He’s trapped forever in his Halifax bomber, fighting the good fight against impossible odds, raining destruction on the guilty and innocent alike, a god already ruined, always about to fall.

- - “Kate Atkinson’s ‘A God in Ruins,’” Tom Perrotta, New York Times Book Review.





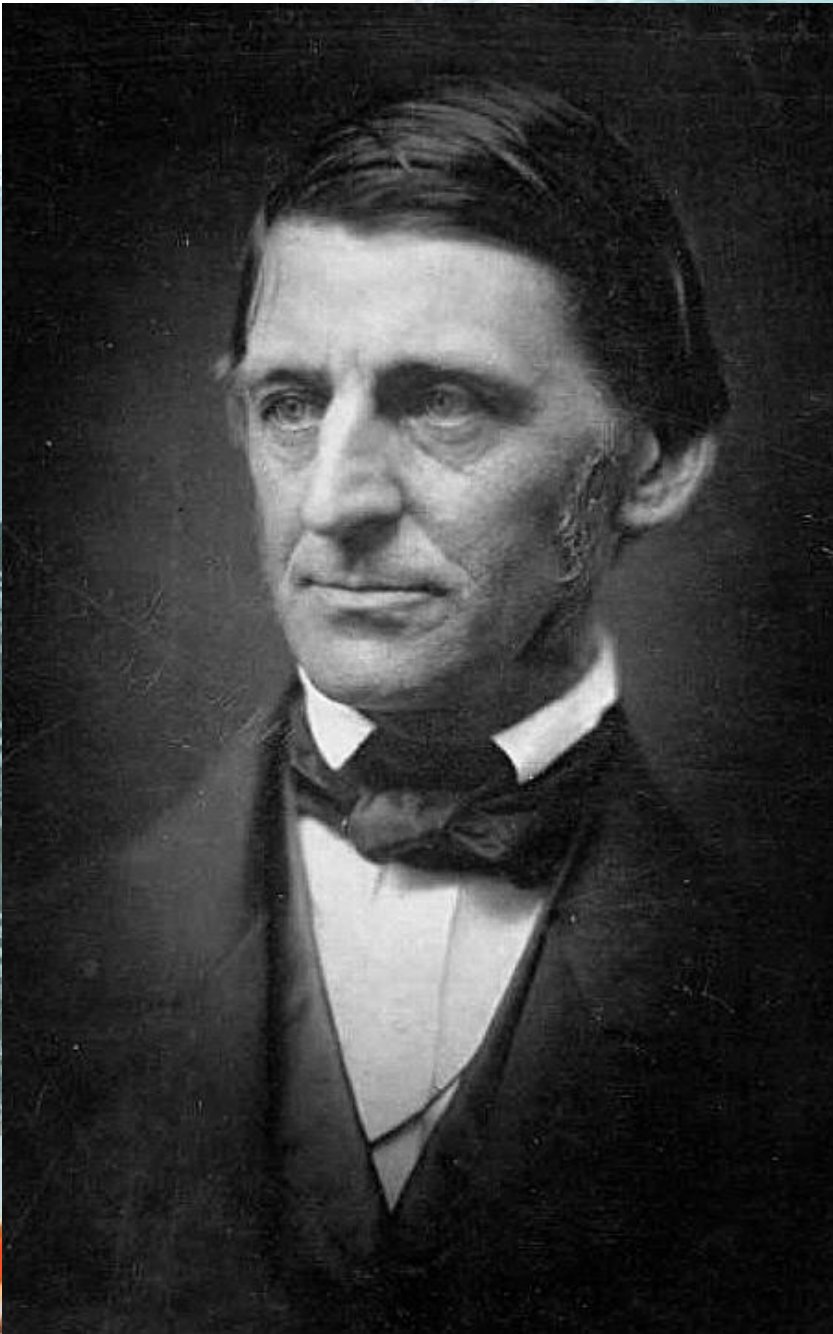
- “War is Man’s greatest fall from grace, of course, especially perhaps when we feel a moral imperative to fight it and find ourselves twisted into ethical knots. We can never doubt (ever) the courage of those men in the Halifaxes and Stirlings and Lancasters but the bombing war was undoubtedly a brutish affair, a crude method employing a blunt weapon, continually hampered by the weather and lack of technology (despite massive advances that war always precipitates). **The large gap between what was claimed for the results of the bombing campaign and what was actually achieved was never fully understood at the time, and certainly not, I suspect, by those men flying the bombers.**”
- — Kate Atkinson, *A God in Ruins*



Undoubtedly we have no questions to ask which are unanswerable. We must trust the perfection of the creation so far, as to believe that whatever curiosity the order of things has awakened in our minds, the order of things can satisfy. Every man's condition is a solution in hieroglyphic to those inquiries he would put. He acts it as life, before he apprehends it as truth. In like manner, **nature is already, in its forms and tendencies, describing its own design.** Let us interrogate the great apparition, that shines so peacefully around us. **Let us inquire, to what end is nature?**

— Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature





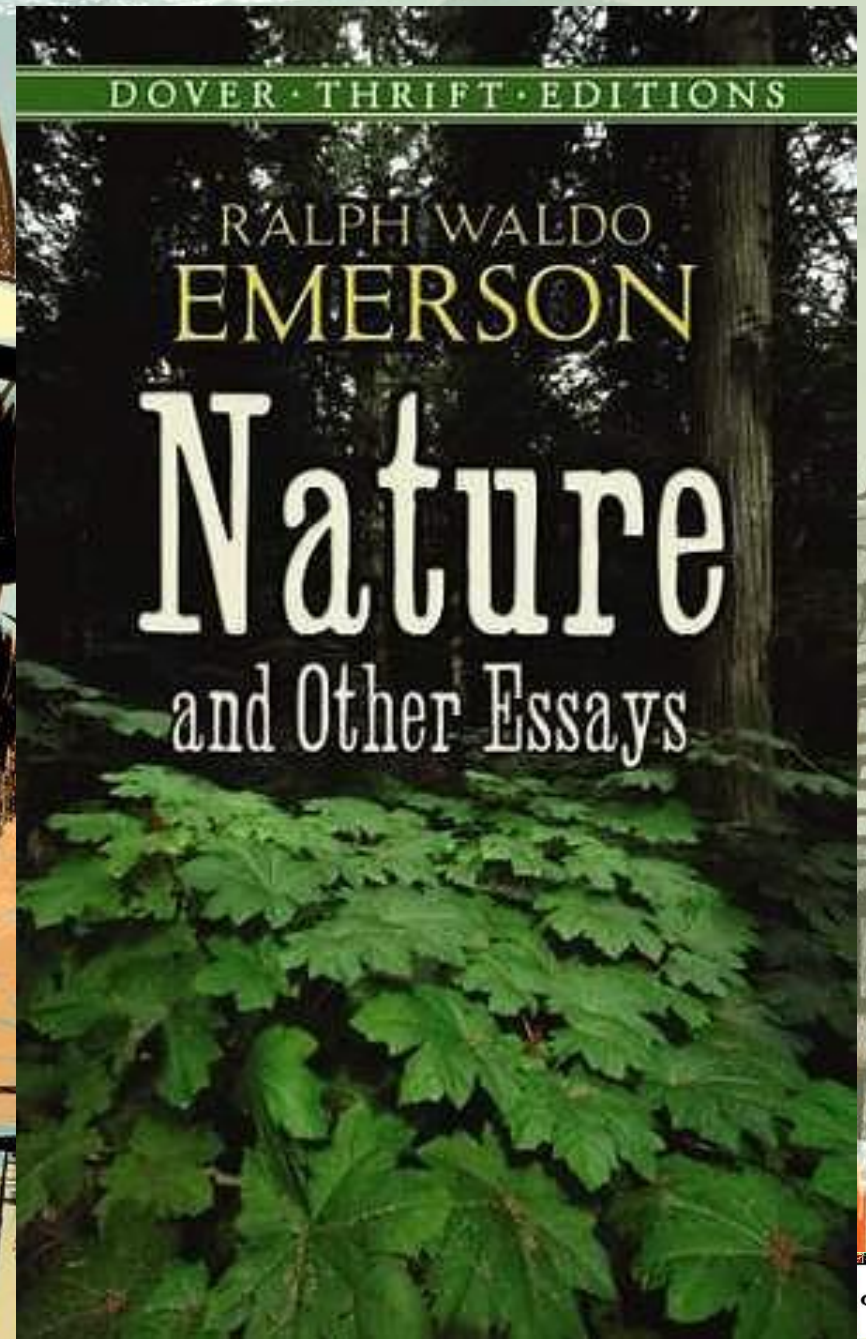
- “A man is a god in ruins. When men are innocent, life shall be longer and shall pass into the immortal, as gently as we awake from dreams”

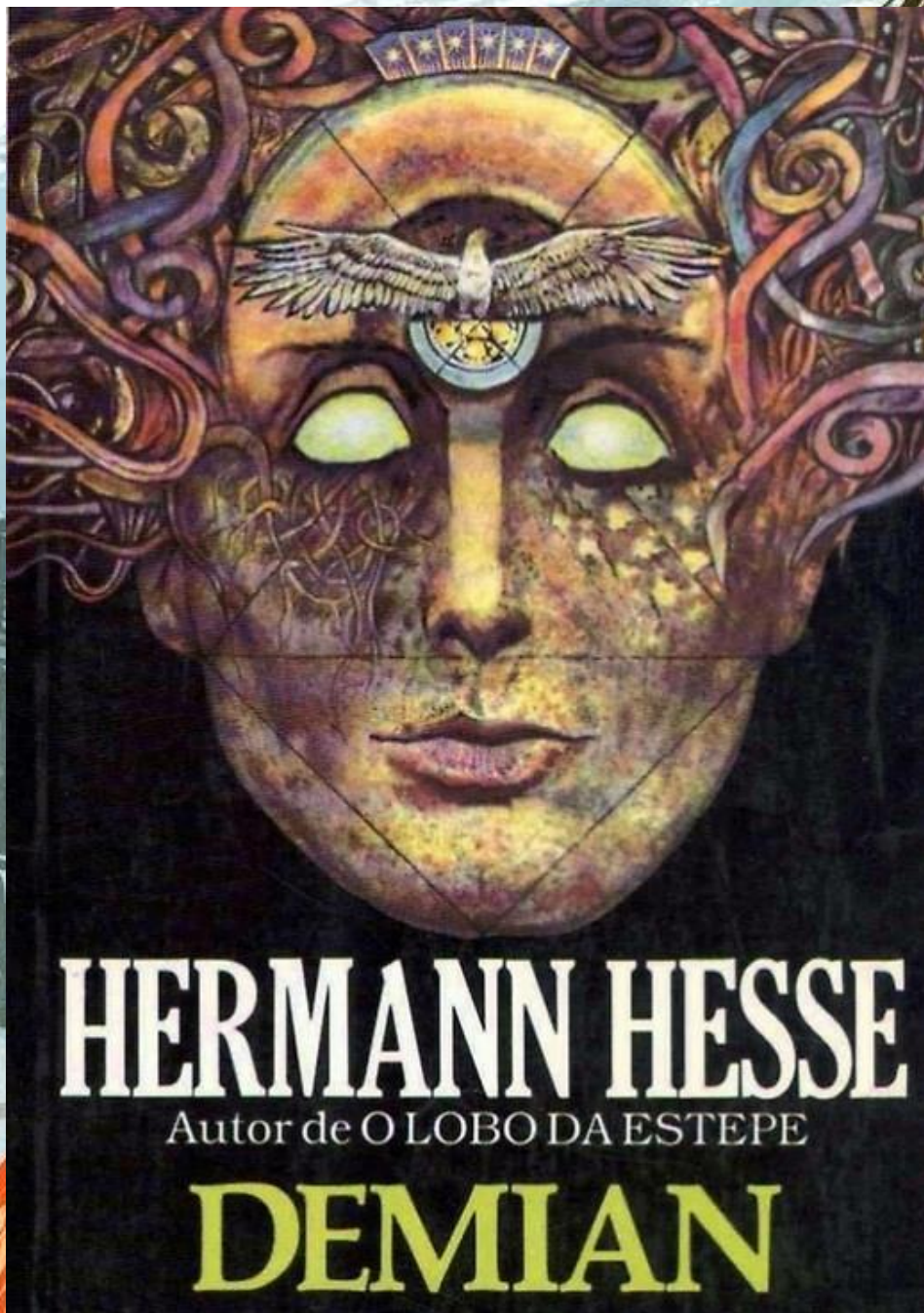
- — Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature



“Every spirit builds itself a house; and beyond its house a world; and beyond its world, a heaven. Know then, that the world exists for you. For you is the phenomenon perfect. What we are, that only can we see. All that Adam had, all that Caesar could, you have and can do. Adam called his house, heaven and earth; Caesar called his house, Rome; you perhaps call yours, a cobbler's trade; a hundred acres of ploughed land; or a scholar's garret. Yet line for line and point for point, your dominion is as great as theirs, though without fine names. Build, therefore, your own world.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature





- "Every man is more than just himself; he also represents the unique, the very special and always significant and remarkable point at which the world's phenomena intersect, only once in this way, and never again. That is why every man's story is important, eternal, sacred; that is why every man, as long as he lives and fulfills the will of nature, is wondrous, and worthy of consideration. In each individual the spirit has become flesh, in each man the creation suffers, within each one a redeemer is nailed to the cross."
- — Hermann Hesse (Demian. Die Geschichte von Emil Sinclairs Jugend)



“Somehow, we'll find it. The balance between whom we wish to be and whom we need to be. But for now, we simply have to be satisfied with who we are.”

— Brandon Sanderson, *The Hero of Ages*

“It sounds to me, young one,” Haddek said, “that you are searching for something that cannot be found.”

“The truth?” Sazed said.

“No,” Haddek replied. “A religion that requires no faith of its believers.”

— Brandon Sanderson, *The Hero of Ages*





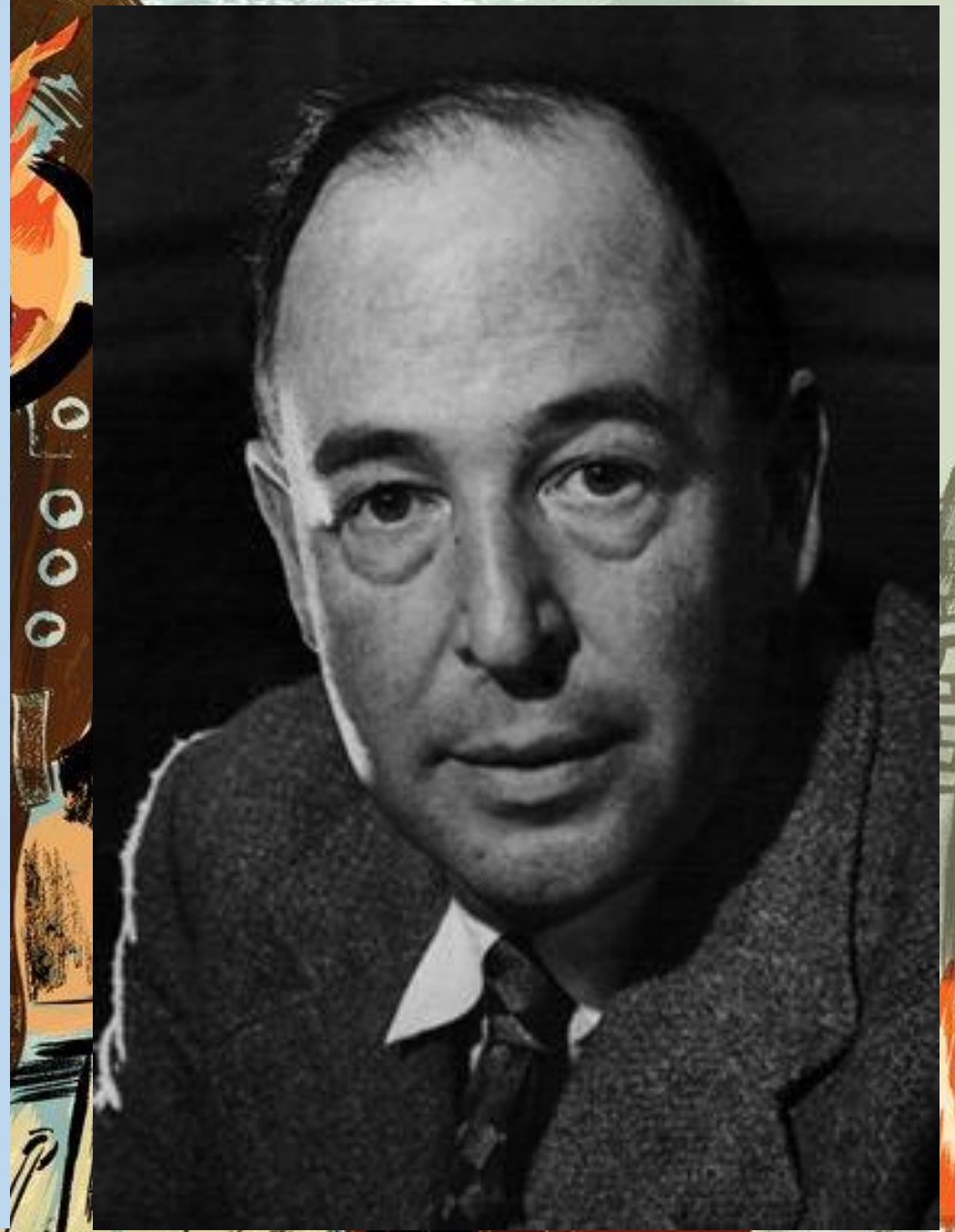
• "But I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin."

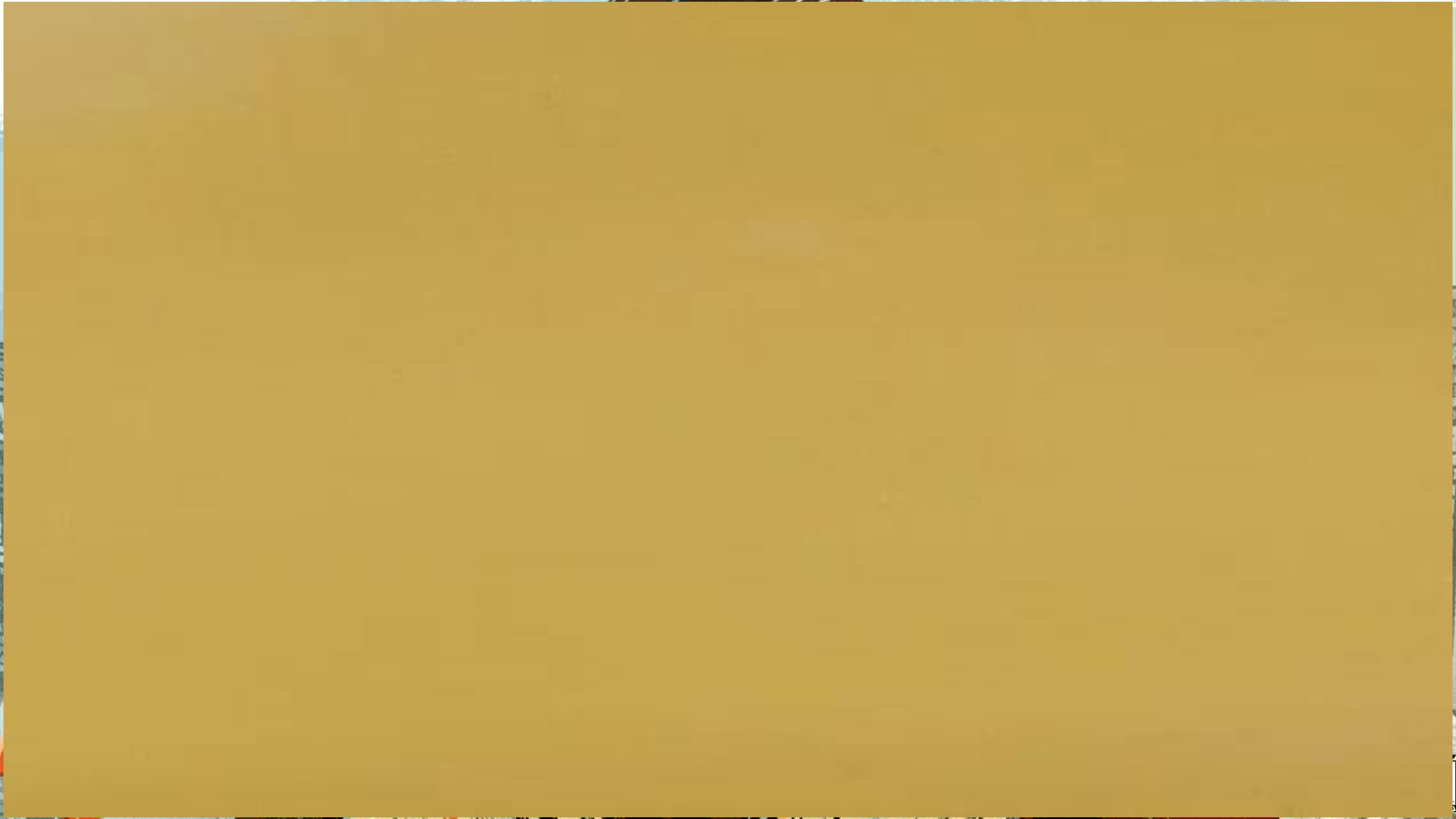
• — Aldous Huxley (Brave New World)



“It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree helping each other to one or the other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all of our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.”

— C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*

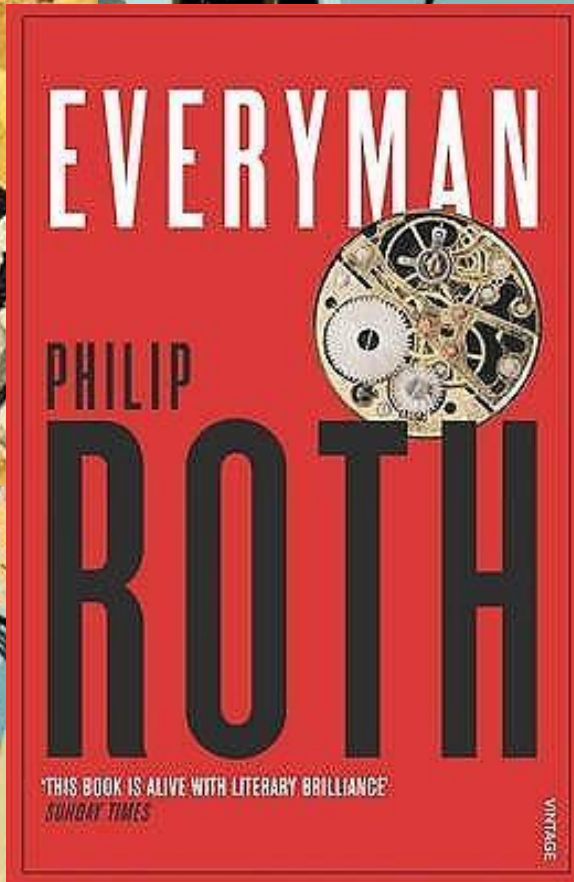
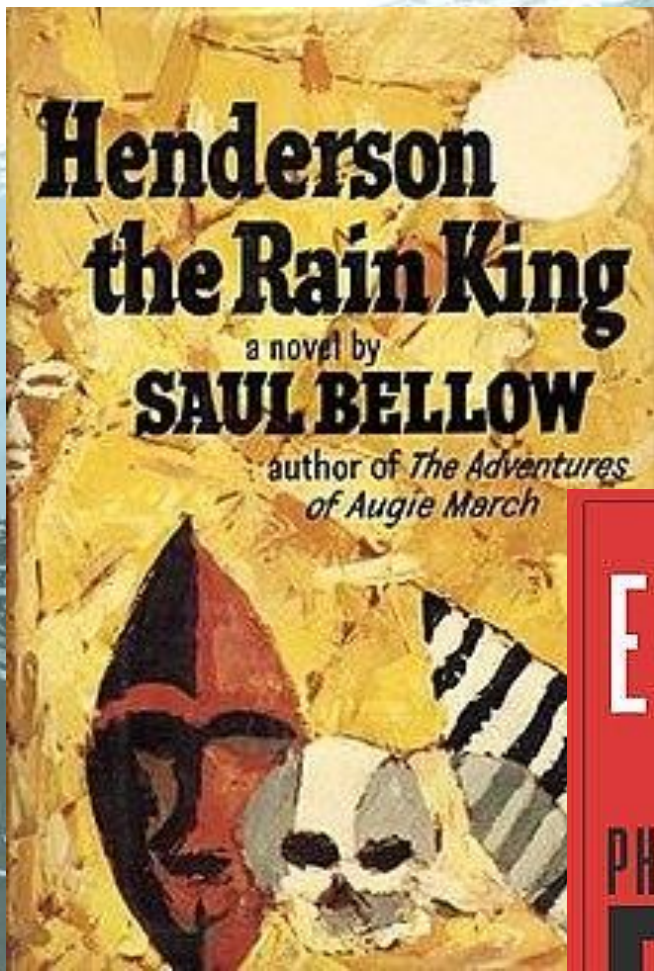




**“Literature had
fueled her
childhood
fantasies and
convinced her that
one day she would
be the heroine of
her own
narrative.”**

— Kate Atkinson, *A God in Ruins*





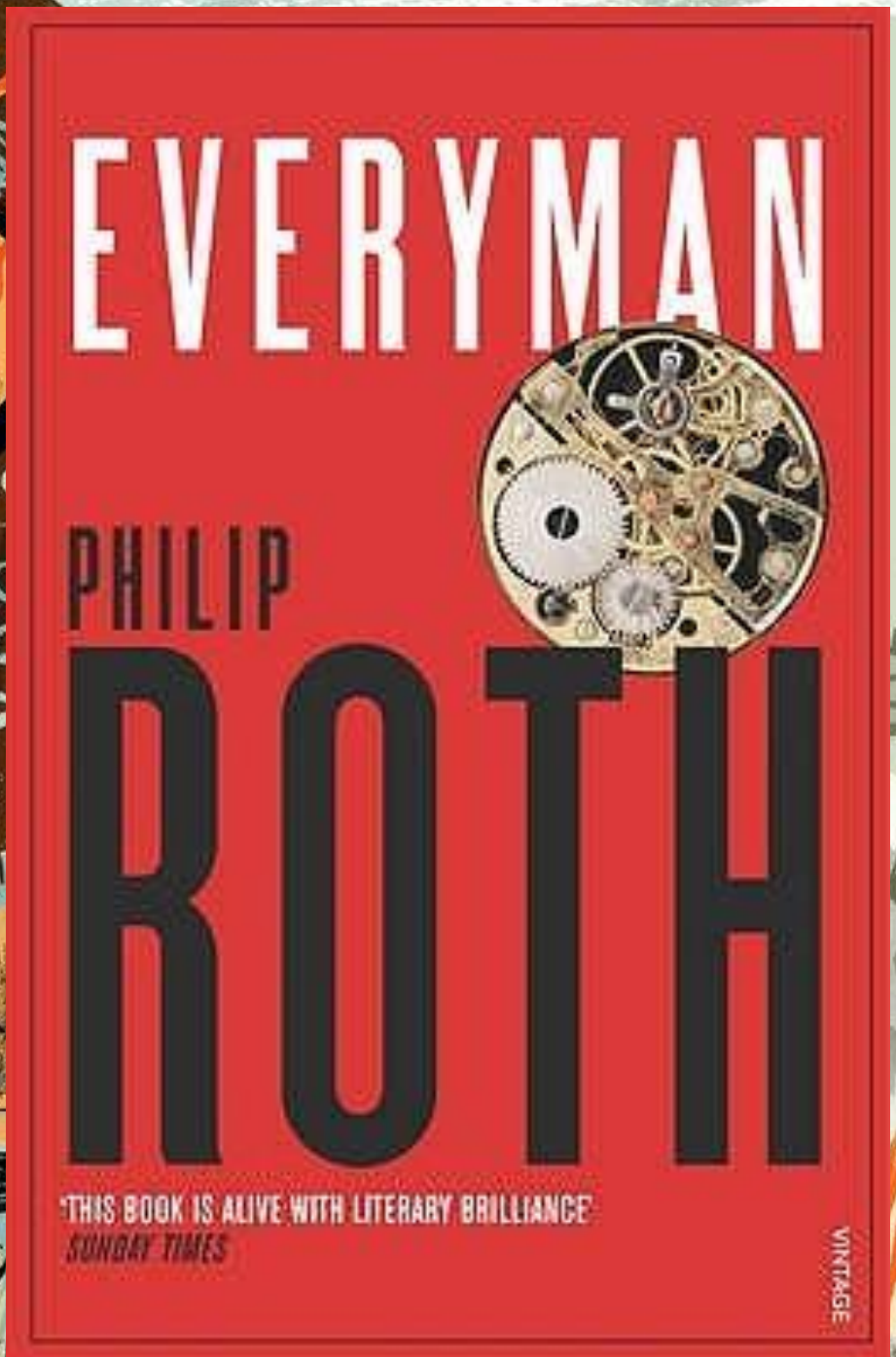
• “Moments left, Teddy thought. A handful of heartbeats. That was what life was. A heartbeat followed by a heartbeat. A breath followed by a breath. One moment followed by another moment and then there was a last moment.”

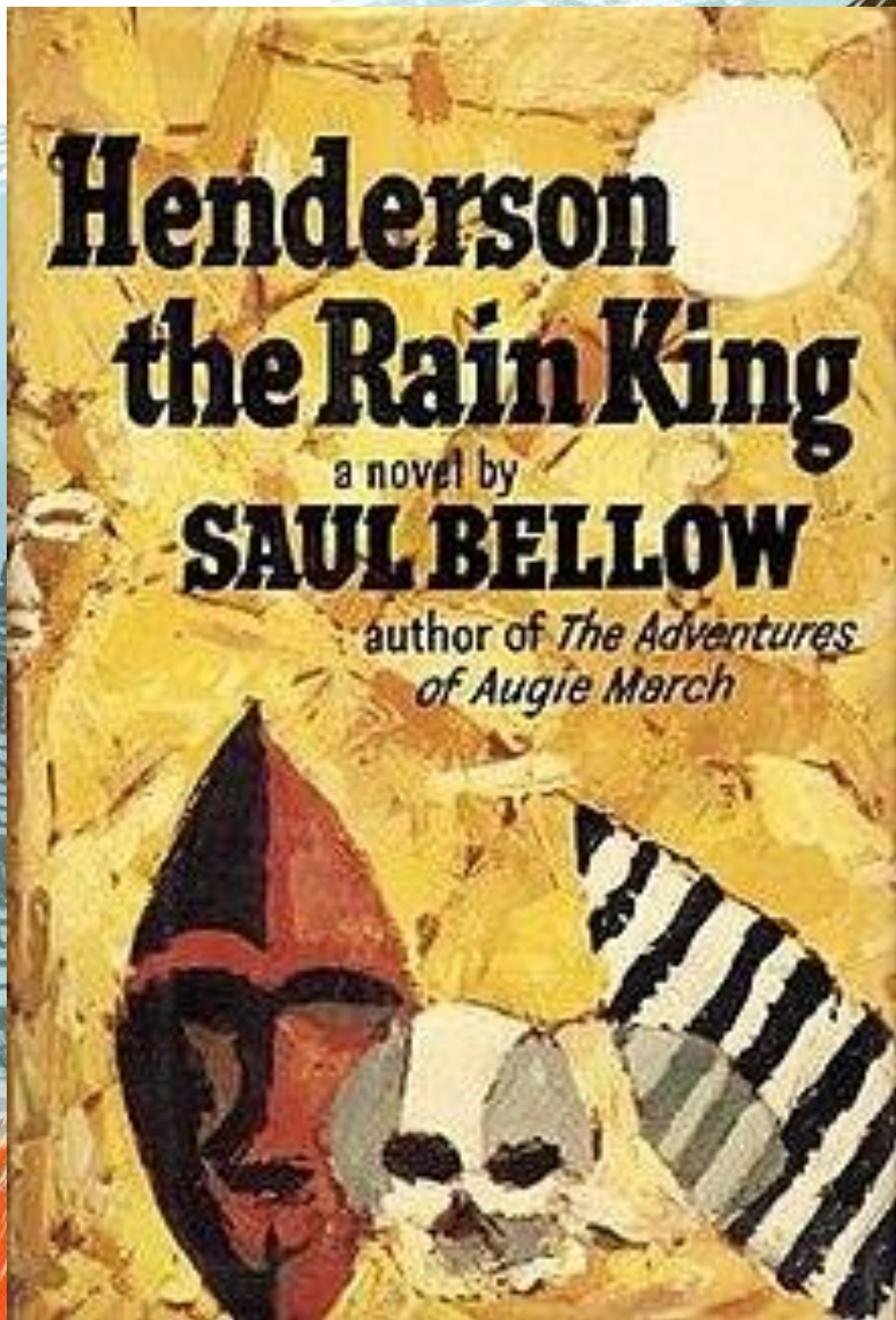
• — Kate Atkinson, *A God in Ruins*



“My God, he thought, the man I once was! The life that surrounded me! The force that was mine! No “otherness” to be felt anywhere! Once upon a time I was a full human being.”

— Philip Roth, *Everyman*





- “Some powerful magnificence not human in other words, seemed under me. And it was the same mild pink colour, like the water of a watermelon, that did it. At once I recognized the importance of this, as throughout my life I had known these moments when the dumb begin to speak, when I hear the voices of objects and colours; then the physical universe starts to wrinkle and change and heave and rise and smooth, so it seems even the dogs have to lean against a tree, shivering.”
- — Saul Bellow, *Henderson the Rain King*

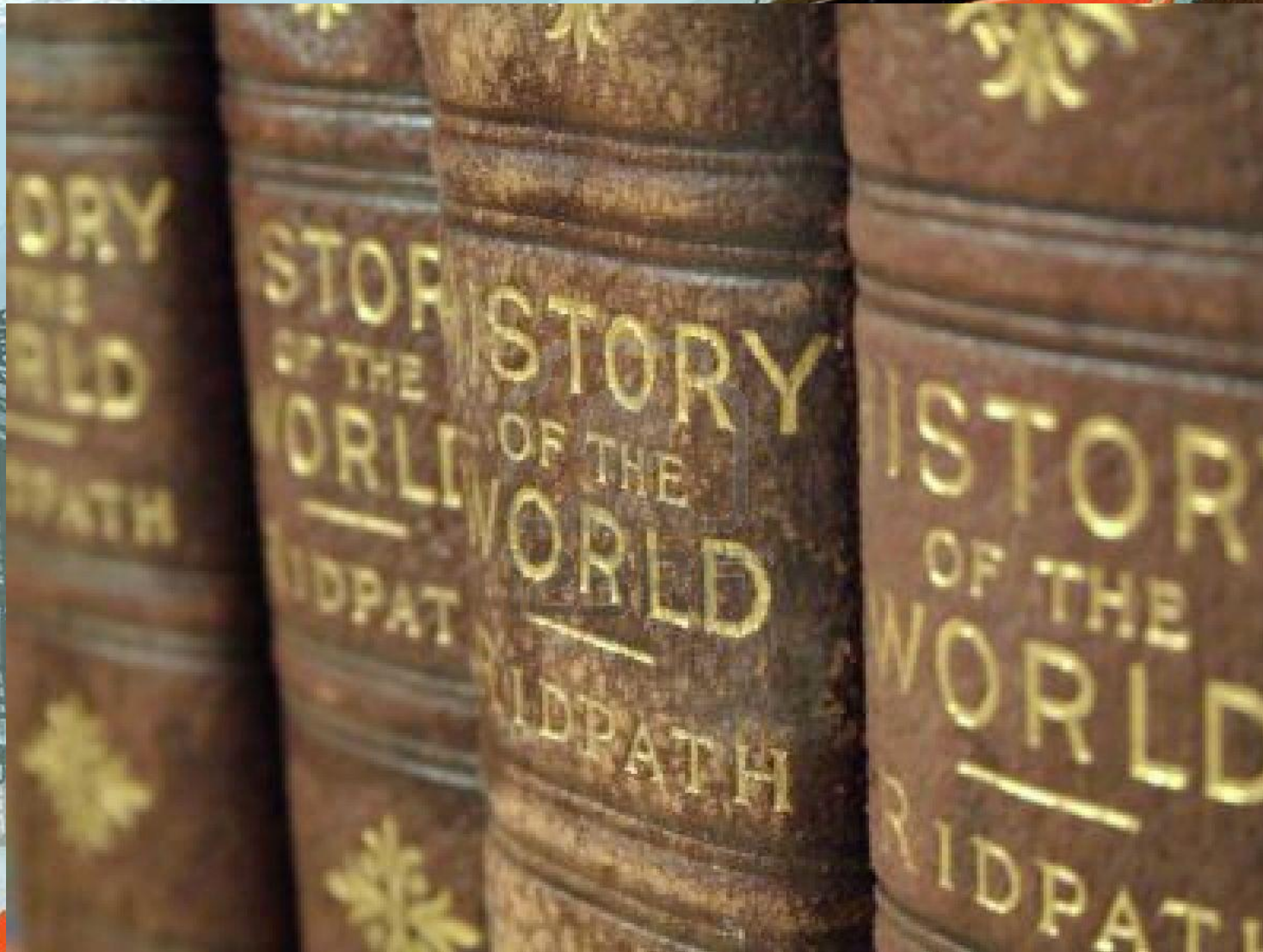


“And I prayed and prayed, ‘Oh, you...Something,’ I said, ‘you Something because of whom there is not Nothing. Help me to do Thy will. Take off my stupid sins. Untrammel me. Heavenly Father, open up my dumb heart and for Christ’s sake preserve me from unreal things. Oh, Thou who tookest me from pigs, let me not be killed over lions. And forgive my crimes and nonsense and let me return to Lily and the kids.”
— Saul Bellow, Henderson the Rain King



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OWN



- “One’s own life seemed puny against the background of so much history.”
- — Kate Atkinson, *A God in Ruins*

‘The foundations of man are not in matter, but in spirit. But the element of spirit is eternity. To it, therefore, the longest series of events, the oldest chronologies are young and recent. In the cycle of the universal man, from whom the known individuals proceed, centuries are points, and all history is but the epoch of one degradation.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature





- “Fifty-five thousand, five hundred and seventy-three dead from Bomber Command. Seven million German dead, including the five hundred thousand killed by the Allied bombing campaign. The sixty million dead overall of the Second World War, including eleven million murdered in the Holocaust. The sixteen million of the First World War, over four million in Vietnam, forty million to the Mongol conquests, three and a half million to the Hundred Years War, the fall of Rome took seven million, the Napoleonic Wars took four million, twenty million to the Taiping Rebellion. And so on and so on and so on, all the way back to the Garden when Cain killed Abel.”
- — Kate Atkinson, *A God in Ruins*




"Blessed be they who are not Patriots and Idealists, and who do not feel they must dash right in and Do Something About It, something so immediately important that all doubters must be liquidated—tortured—slaughtered! Good old murder, that since the slaying of Abel by Cain has always been the new device by which all oligarchies and dictators have, for all future ages to come, removed opposition!"

— Sinclair Lewis (It Can't Happen Here (Signet Classics))

IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE

READ BY GROVER GARDNER
UNABRIDGED

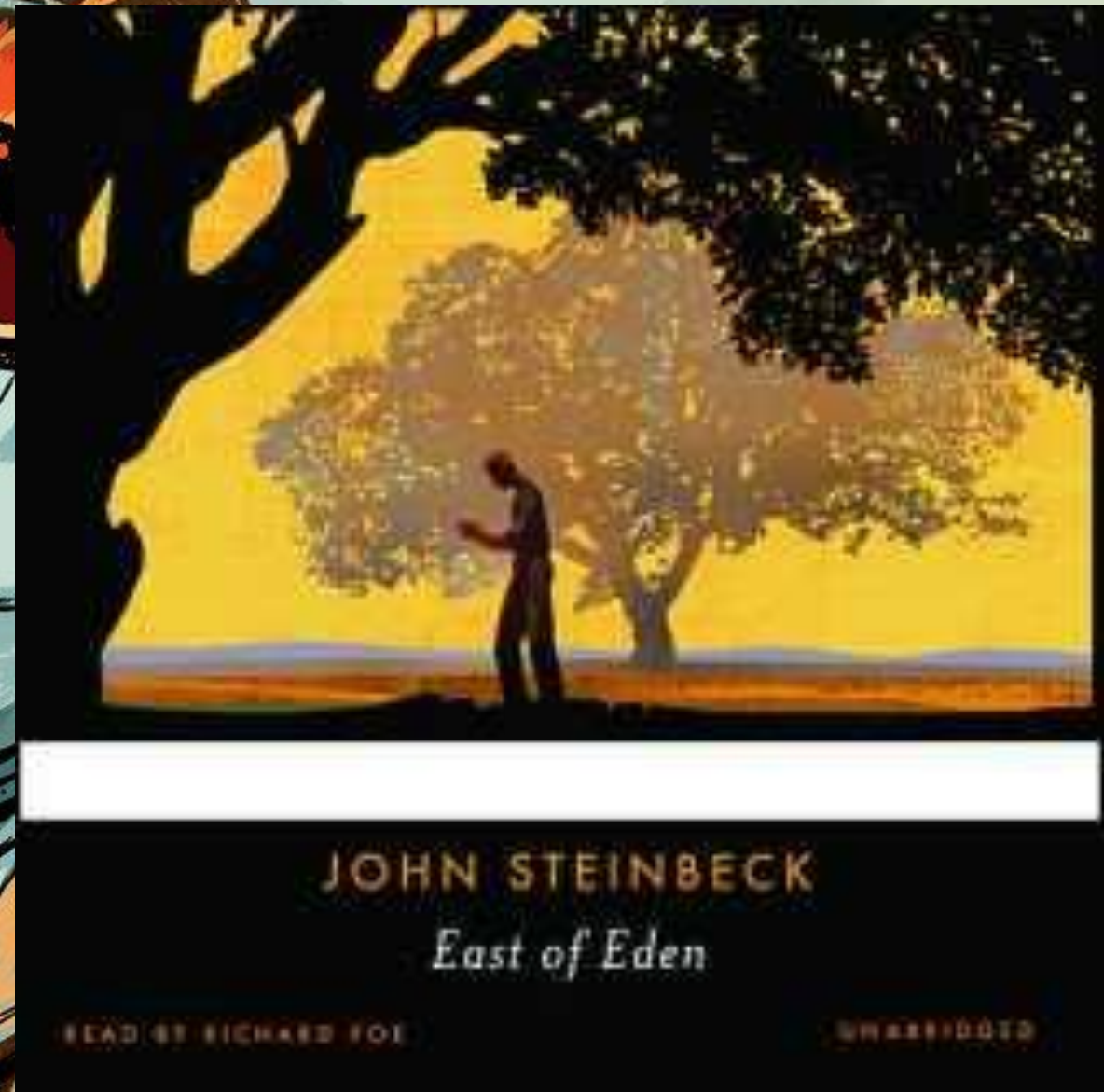
SINCLAIR
LEWIS



The King James version says this—it is when Jehovah has asked Cain why he is angry. Jehovah says, ‘If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.’ It was the ‘thou shalt’ that struck me, because it was a promise that Cain would conquer sin.”

Lee sipped his coffee. “Then I got a copy of the American Standard Bible. It was very new then. And it was different in this passage. It says, ‘Do thou rule over him.’ Now this is very different. This is not a promise, it is an order. And I began to stew about it. I wondered what the original word of the original writer had been that these very different translations could be made.”

- John Steinbeck – *East of Eden*





Timshel

EAST OF EDEN • STEINBECK

- “After two years we felt that we could approach your sixteen verses of the fourth chapter of Genesis. My old gentlemen felt that these words were very important too—‘Thou shalt’ and ‘Do thou.’ And this was the gold from our mining: ‘Thou mayest.’ ‘Thou mayest rule over sin.’ . . . “Don’t you see?” he cried. “The American Standard translation orders men to triumph over sin, and you can call sin ignorance. The King James translation makes a promise in ‘Thou shalt,’ meaning that men will surely triumph over sin. But the Hebrew word, the word timshel—‘Thou mayest’— that gives a choice. It might be the most important word in the world. That says the way is open. That throws it right back on a man. For if ‘Thou mayest’— it is also true that ‘Thou mayest not.’ Don’t you see?”
- - John Steinbeck – *East of Eden*



But ‘Thou mayest’! Why, that makes a man great, that gives him stature with the gods, for in his weakness and his filth and his murder of his brother he has still the great choice. He can choose his course and fight it through and win.”

Lee’s voice was a chant of triumph.

- John Steinbeck – *East of Eden*





- "Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, and intelligent execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives - choice, not chance, determines your destiny."
- — Aristotle

