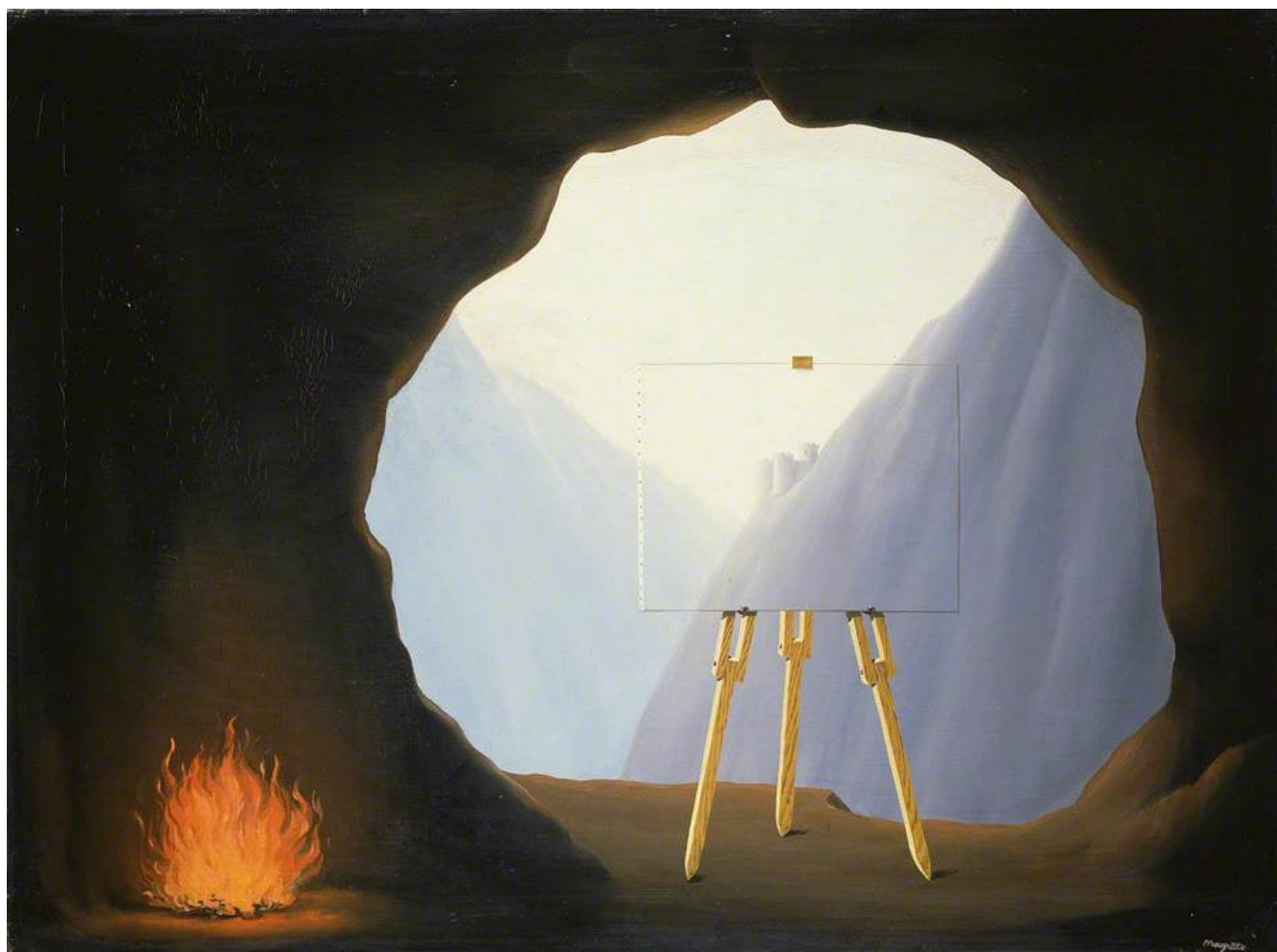


New Light on the Secret of Life

by [Peter Dreyer](#) (November 2023)



La condition humaine, René Magritte, 1935

*Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him / Eyeless in
Gaza at the Mill with slaves. –John Milton, Sampson
Agonistes*

The chief product of the biosphere– life's mighty sea
–is feeling. Manufacturing this GDP
leaves us humans reeling! No quantum computer

will, in an eternity, “learn” to feel, and we
pathetic creatures are faced with a cruel deal:
in our forebrains, sly anticipations lurk,
which great far-sighted Pain will someday put to work.
There are, of course, other monies—butterflies, bees,
birds, flowers, trees, children’s smiles, Mozart’s symphonies,
Cole Porter’s songs ... love—but suffering’s the reserve
currency everywhere accepted as deferred
payments’ common scrip; it cannot be rejected.
Hurt though (to get it over with) is consumed too
soon (an old sage avers it feeds the heedless moon);
agony’s always needed and must be devised,
our chief human skill is how to realize it!

The trick is pay no heed to what you know you lack,
take one step boldly forward, then—quick! take two back:
in wartime, peace, romance, and sexual congress,
this fatal little foxtrot will, in the wash, depress.
Humans are born, bred up, and skilled in grievous gain,
we charge stuff till it cuts, in slow or express lane.
There’s no denying this, my fond confederate mutts
Why not, then, kick those wretched Others’ sorry butts?

*Note: Mr. G—Georges Gurdjieff—is the sage who said that
suffering “goes to feed the moon.” See too
<https://nickoller.com/work/food-for-the-moon.php>.*

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Peter Richard Dreyer is a South African American writer. He is
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