Tara Moses

Palmer

Composition II

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Journal Entry #10: Happy Fool or Unhappy Sage

It’s better to be a happy fool, I think (but I’m just choosing something because you want me to choose something). These questions are boring to me because it feels like discussing them means nothing. I guess you could argue that by having us answer these questions, you gain a greater understanding of what we value more (wisdom or happiness)…? I know you asked us to choose, but honestly neither of these choices seems particularly satisfying.

I guess what you mean by “happy” is that the fool is blissfully unaware of how stupid he is. Likewise with the sage, I guess this question implies that he’s… painfully aware of the truth of the world… which is so “objectively” unfortunate that any “wise person” would be unhappy when they think about it?? This sounds really jaded. I think the first person to think of this question (I know it’s a cliché, so there probably wasn’t any *one* person) was pretty cynical.

I feel like there’s a middle ground between the two, like it’s a spectrum and those two choices are the endpoints. (This is assuming that as one gets smarter, they get more unhappy, and vice versa. And by the way, why are we even assuming this???? This goes back to the last paragraph.) I can’t even say where the ideal place would be on this spectrum, because I think this spectrum is flawed.

Anyway, sorry for not answering this thing the right way (AND IN WAY TOO MANY WORDS SORRY SORRY). If I had, I don’t think I could have come up with 200 words genuinely defending my answer, because I seriously hate both of these choices.