



SAAWARIYA

Production Notes - Saawariya

Meaning of Saawariya

Saawariya is beloved. But he's not just any beloved. He's the dusky, blue tinged (savla) God Krishna who is adored as saawariya. On a less heavenly though as sublime note, saawariya is that beloved who is always in love. But again, not every lover can qualify as saawariya. Only that lover who stands the test of time...who overcomes all obstacles... who doesn't care whether he gets the girl or not... as long as he's consumed by love... as long as he remains in a perpetual state of being in love...

That man, that rare lover is saawariya.

The Director's Note

– *Sanjay Leela Bhansali's perspective on Saawariya*

Black received such an unexpected and unprecedented response, that I was in danger of being lulled into a safe zone. But that's not me. I constantly need to challenge myself, to push the envelope, to set higher standards for myself. To ensure that I did not reach a stagnation point, I knew my next movie would be totally different; not just from Black but from all the movies I've done so far. Saawariya is a simple but exotic love story. True love is divine. It has to have yearning, disappointment and agony. For Saawariya, I needed freshness, youth, energy and joy. My previous movies starred established actors like Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Aishwarya Rai, Madhuri Dixit and Rani Mukherjee.

For Saawariya I needed two young newcomers and I got them in Ranbir Kapoor and Sonam Kapoor. Ranbir and Sonam are like my own children and the time spent with them gave me a fresh perspective to life and new way to look at the movies. I suddenly feel alive once again. Working with these kids was a challenge in itself. Not just teaching them all that I know, but constantly being in a state of doubt. Do I know enough to teach them? Will I succeed in bringing out their inherent potential and making them live up to their formidable legacies? Not just my lead actors, I have a debutant music director too! When Monty Sharma did the background score for my Black and Devdas; I recognized that special spark in him and with Saawariya he's turned into a full fledged music director. Monty, an exhilarating blend of spirituality, youth and madness has spent more than two years composing and perfecting the 10 songs for Saawariya. I'm also introducing two new singers in the movie – Shail Hada and Parthiv Gohil. I've also roped in Anuradha Vakil and Rajesh Pratap Singh to do the costumes for the movie. And again it's the first time that these two well known designers are designing for a movie!



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The Music of Saawariya

Sanjay's films have always made a deep emotional connection with audiences everywhere especially due to their visual splendour and the soulful and melodious music that accompanies every mood. With Saawariya, he takes the Bollywood musical to a different level altogether.

Monty Sharma's soulful and melodious music in Saawariya continues the rich Sanjay Leela Bhansali tradition of memorable music.

Commenting on the music of Saawariya, Sanjay expressed his penchant for working with debutants. "I have a debutant music director too! When Monty Sharma did the background score for my Black and Devidas, I recognized that special spark in him and with Saawariya he's turned into a full fledged music director. Monty, an exhilarating blend of spirituality, youth and madness has spent more than two years composing and perfecting the 10 songs for Saawariya. I'm also introducing two new singers in the movie – Shail and Parthiv, who will certainly bring alive the score".

The Music Director of Saawariya, **Monty Sharma**, naturally excited about his debut and at the opportunity to be a part of the rich legacy of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's memorable music, added "Working with Sanjay Leela Bhansali means there are no shortcuts – only absolute and complete perfection!". He further added, "the songs of Saawariya are neither purely western nor classical Indian – but a fusion of both. The mood is very simple, very passionate. The music is all body and soul – the rhythm is the body, the melody the soul. It's the kind of music that will appeal to the masses and the classes".

The Lyricist of the film, **Sameer**, was delighted to be a part of a team led by Sanjay Leela Bhansali and thrilled to work with a talented composer such as Monty Sharma. "Sanjay Leela Bhansali is one of our finest movie makers, very dedicated towards music. He gave me a lot of valuable inputs and you can see the passion in his eyes when he talks about music. I feel honoured that he chose to work with me. He called me because Saawariya needed very simple and youthful lyrics. Monty, is new but a very talented composer and I was inspired by his tunes" said an excited Sameer.

There are no less than 10 songs in Saawariya and for Monty Sharma this meant two and a half years of intense, concentrated work. "That in itself was a challenge for me, because I'm this 'finish-a-job-and-get-out' kind of person," he admits. As if the challenge of working for a perfectionist like Sanjay Leela Bhansali wasn't enough, Monty chose to introduce two new singers in the movie.

"**Shail Hada** and **Parthiv Gohil** had both sung some alaaps for me previously and I knew the quality of



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their voices. Shail has sung the title track and its reprise, while Parthiv has sung Yoon Shabnami. The rest of the songs have been rendered by established singers like Shaan, Kunal Ganjawala, Alka Yagnik and Shreya Ghoshal. "Going into details about the music, he says, "The songs of Saawariya are neither purely western nor classical Indian – but a fusion of both. The mood is very simple, very passionate. The music is original. It is not inspired by any other movie track. The songs are very simple and easy. I belong to a musical family and I have been highly influenced by my uncle Pyarelalji's genre of music. So my school of music has always been very lavish and grand. Music always has had that grandeur for me, which we always associate with Sanjay Leela Bhansali's films. He never interfered in my work and encouraged me to compose whatever I think would suit his movie-making style. The music is all body and soul – the rhythm is the body, the melody the soul. It's the kind of music that will appeal to the masses and the classes. What else can I say but that the songs of Saawariya will bring smile on your face!"

The Highlights of the Music

Ten songs, each one delicately and beautifully composed by debutant music director Monty Sharma with lyrics penned by the 'romance specialist', Sameer.

-The young and peppy title track *Saawariya*, is sung by newcomer Shail Hada who does the goose bump inducing reprise also.

-*Masha-Allah* was a word Sanjay Leela Bhansali loved, and the entire song was composed and written with this one word in mind.

-Sanjay Leela Bhansali proves his mastery over music, by composing the next track *Thode Badmash*, himself!

-*Yoon Shabnami*, sung by newcomer Parthiv Gohil was a challenge because from a romantic number, it swings into a quawali section, all the while staying true to its intrinsically romantic feel.

Daras Bina Nahin Chain is the essence and power of Indian ragas, arranged in a contemporary style. The classical *Sawar Gayi* sung with great intensity by Shreya Ghoshal takes the listener to an entirely different spiritual level.

-*Jaan-E-Jaan* sung by Kunal Ganjawala and Shreya Ghoshal is the most complicated track with its rich orchestration. "Huge like an opera", says Monty.

-*Pari* by Kunal Ganjawala is a fairy tale told in music, with the extensive use of strings.

-*Chhabeela* by Alka Yagnik follows the racy, popular format of Hindi movie music from the 70s.



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-Director of Photography Ravi K Chandran talks about the “look” of Saawariya

The photographic brilliance of Black, with director Sanjay Leela Bhansali, took Indian cinematography to another level and it won Chandran commendation in all award functions throughout the country. Saawariya is their second venture together.

“Sanjay Leela Bhansali desired to give Saawariya a poetic approach by visuals itself,” shares Ravi. “To make the visuals for Saawariya more like paintings rather than photographic images, we started by looking at paintings of artists like Frederick Arthur Bridgman, Fred R Wagner and William Louis Sonntag as references.”

Although set mostly outdoors at night, Saawariya has been shot completely within indoor sets. “This gave us complete freedom to create the ambience and mood of the movie from scratch. Though the story unfolds over four nights, we wanted the different times of the night to look distinctly different.

For the first time in India, Space Lights have been used in a variety of ways. “The painterly look of this movie was possible due to Space Lights, which we gelled with ¼ CT Blue for a cool night feel and without gels for the daylight scenes. The main advantage of this light was that it did not catch smoke and gave an unlit look to the image,” explains Ravi.

But his biggest challenge was to maintain a consistent look throughout. The movie has been shot on eight sets and in the story, the actors move from one set into another on the same night. “But we were shooting these scenes with gaps of few months due to construction and deconstruction time and to complicate matters, the story demanded changing weather - from windy, misty nights to rain.”

To achieve consistency Ravi maintained complete lighting records and photographs of each scene. He also used the same film stock and constant exposure throughout the film.

“We wanted to achieve a painterly moody lighting for the entire film. The idea was to have a dark unlit quality for the night but the actors had to be constantly lit as it was their first film. The key was to strike a balance between the two, and that worked out just fine. The camera was static almost throughout the movie, making it look like a painting on canvas with the actors performing within that space. Every frame of the film looks like a painting. Every song has been lensed and lit differently and stands apart from the other. The experience has been magical and fulfilling.”



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The Sets of Saawariya: Art Director, Omung Kumar, brings to life Sanjay Leela Bhansali's vision

Already, even before the movie releases, his set designs for Saawariya are the talk of the town.

“Saawariya is sheer poetry in motion,” Omung exclaims. “From the day we read the script to the final day of shoot we were on a constant creative high. The brief by Sanjay to us was to go all out creatively and we were only too glad to do so! Designing sets for ‘Saawariya’ was like creating visual poetry on film. Every frame had to have a soul, a style and feel of surrealism. That’s why we decided to create sets in the palette of blues and greens. It added a certain style, look and feel of being transported to a world that anybody would love to live in. Personally we would love to be in a town like this if it ever existed.”

From creating a larger than life Buddha to constructing lakes and specially designed boats to creatively setting up busy streets with buzzing shops, bulbs and signages, Omung had a blast.

“We painted the walls and floors with peacock and lotuses transporting us into a world which is very Indian yet nothing like anybody has ever seen before,” he says.

A lot of thought went into doing the elegant Christian lady - Lillian’s (Zohra Sehgal) house. “Each and every prop in the room was hand picked like the picture frames, the alter, the paintings and the furniture. The dominant factor in this set was the hand painted Mona Lisa curtain which finally became a dominant part of a very beautifully picturised song on Ranbir.”

In complete contrast was Gulab’s (Rani’s Mukherjee) room. “Situated on a busy street with shops and a colourful night life, it was fun doing up the street and finally Rani’s room to suit her flamboyant character, with deep magenta walls enhanced with glitter, crystal chandelier, pink and purple lotuses and a mirror mosaic staircase. It was a complete riot,” he laughs.

The heroine Sakina’s (Sonam) house was probably the toughest to do, because the brief specified a haveli that had a history of carpet making.

“We specially created blue green carpets and a huge carpet making contraption. From a dressing room with differently shaped mirrors with carved frames suspended in air; to Salman’s room that has a stark beautiful quality with just a bed, desk and an interesting ceiling fan created from a carpet that had to be pulled by a rope; to the house exterior on which we painted white peacocks at the entrance to add that pure untouched quality; Sakina’s house was a visual splendor, the best shots of the film were shot here.”

He continues, “The entire outdoors was created indoors. A certain timeless quality permeates each and every frame in each and every set - from the clock tower to the pre-dominantly created RK logo, from the silent bridge to the still waters of the lake. We had to create a town where it snowed and rained and looked different as the season changed without for a second shifting away from the blue green colour scheme! Saawariya was as challenging as it was exciting but we can proudly say that every frame is a visual delight.”



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A Conversation with the Costume Designers of Saawariya

Rajesh Pratap Singh. Often called the Greta Garbo of Indian fashion, Rajesh is one of the most reclusive Indian designers around today. Critically acclaimed for his cut and style, Singh grants few interviews, is almost never seen at parties and doesn't even walk the ramp at the end of his shows for the mandatory bow.

Naturally he was flummoxed when Sanjay Leela Bhansali requested him to design for three of the actors – Salman Khan, Zohra Sehgal and Begum Para.

“Salman is such a huge star, but so easy and so charismatic,” Rajesh says. “Since he is ‘the mysterious stranger’ I’ve given him a slightly military look and bingo it worked with Sanjay. As for Zohra, I’m totally besotted with her. She’s truly the grand dame who love to hold court. And what a memory she has! In the movie she’s an Anglo Indian lady with a colourful past, so I’ve given her a lot of chintz prints. Though I never met Begum Para, she’s such a legend in her own right and I’ve heard so much about her from my father that I felt I knew her personally and then the unit also send me plenty of photographs. She’s this old Muslim lady in the movie and her look is conservative yet stylized and I had to do some research to get the correct length of the kurta and the exact drape of the dupatta just right.”

Reza Shariffi. A professional fashion designer for the last 15 years, he has worked on several movies like Mohabbat, Wajood, Gaja Gamini, Hindustani, Hey Ram, Kaho Na Pyar Hai, Filhaal, Deewaanapan, Rahena Hai Tere Dil Mein and many more. He won a National Award for Devdas where he had designed for all male characters except Shah Rukh Khan and also done some of Madhuri Dixit's costumes.

“I had liked Bhansali's work in 1942, A Love Story and Khamoshi, The Musical. When Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam was released I wished I could work with him and someone up there heard me and Devdas happened. When he announced Saawariya I wished again and my wish was fulfilled!” laughs Reza. Working with Sanjay Leela Bhansali is both tough and easy. Tough, because he is very clear in his mind as to what he wants and does not compromise, easy because neither do I!”

Reza had to design mainly for lead Ranbir Kapoor. “His costumes were mainly khakis, whites and maroons. Authenticity is what I was told to bring out, so I've used a lot of vintage fabrics like velvets, a lot of layering, more tone on tone; but everything is muted, nothing screams. These are normal day to day clothes but put together differently. I also had to design Muslim, Anglo Indian, Colonial British and some Hindu costumes in the hues of blue and green and it was a refreshing change to make authentic clothes from a bygone era.”

Anuradha Vakil She's one of India's most unlikely designers. Armed with a Masters' in Business Administration from Michigan, U.S., and experience in a corporate house, she moved on to combine all that she is and all that she had imbibed, driven by her passion for Indian textile crafts. For the past 12 years, her entire body of work,



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epitomized in the eponymous label produced by her design company Noor, has striven to ensure its survival by making it relevant to contemporary fashion.

“Initially there was hesitation,” she admits when Sanjay Leela Bhansali called her for a meeting. “Largely, because I did not see my work fitting in to genre of commercial films. My work in fashion is deeply rooted in crafts and you don’t see that in mainstream cinema often. But, I was also acutely aware what a visionary Sanjay is. Having admired his work always, my instinct told me to trust this artist par-excellence. I went for the first meeting... and was bowled over completely!”

Anuradha has designed for the two female actors Sonam and Rani Mukherjee. “The colour palette was derived from the look of the movie and the silhouettes came from Sanjay’s and my common love for kathak and appreciation of Islamic arts and culture. I have used a lot of antique fabrics and weaves like appliqué, ikat and kalabootan embroidery. A lot of thought and effort went into creating Gulab’s (Rani) look. She’s a woman who loves attention, likes to be noticed... and her clothes had to reflect that.”

Anuradha shares a piquant situation whilst designing. “I had this antique white/red/ black odhna and Sanjay loved it on sight and said he would use it in a major song sequence. Then his production team calls me and tells me that since it’s been used in a boat song, I must have a duplicate ready in case the original gets wet! How on earth do I get a duplicate of an antique piece?” she exclaims in mock horror.

It took her all of four months and all her contacts to source out a “similar, if not exact’ odhna!

“As a fashion designer, you are used to having complete creative control,” she says. “You can indulge all your whims and can afford to get carried away. But, for a movie, you have to create within certain boundaries. You need to do what is appropriate for the characters, the movie and be in sync with the director’s vision. In fact, all through out this journey, I chose to see Sanjay Leela Bhansali as the master painter and myself as an apprentice who only mixes the colours!”



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PROFILES OF TALENT

Director - Sanjay Leela Bhansali is perhaps India's most acclaimed and decorated movie director. His middle name Leela is his tribute to his mother, who told him early in life, 'the dreams are yours, the nightmares are mine'. These words have been imprinted on his psyche since then.

His body of work has been in a class of its own, from his very first endeavour, *Khamoshi*, through *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam* to *Devdas*, and his most recent critically acclaimed movie, *Black*, his movies have epitomized sensitivity and embodied visual splendour.

Bhansali's debut movie which he wrote and directed was *Khamoshi – The Musical*. The movie depicted the screaming silences in the world of the dumb and deaf and won him the Filmfare Critics Award for best film.

"*Khamoshi* remains my favourite child because it was my first-born. It had far more conviction, it was a gutsier topic to tackle in the popular format. The performances were superlative," he asserts.

Bhansali proved to be destiny's child with the second movie written, produced and directed by him, *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*. The story was inspired by a folk tale from Gujarat and Bernard Shaw's *Candida*. 'Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam' created such an atmosphere of celebration that people enjoyed every minute of it.

It won him Filmfare Awards for the best film, best director and best screenplay; Lux Zee Cine Awards for the best film, best director and best screenplay; Screen Awards for best film, best director and best screenplay and also the IFFA Awards for the best film, best director and best screenplay.

His third movie was based on Sarat Chandra Chatterjee's immortal novel *Devdas* written in 1917. With *Devdas*, Bhansali set industry benchmarks by winning several honours at home, the most prominent being nominated as India's official entry to the Oscars®. International recognition for Bhansali came when *Devdas* won the 'Asian Film Award' at the MTV Asia Award, received a nomination in the 'Best Film not in the English Language' at the BAFTA, and was premiered at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival. This grand commercial and critical success catapulted Sanjay Leela Bhansali in the top league of directors from India.

And then Sanjay Leela Bhansali made the path breaking *Black*, the sensitive story of the relationship between a deaf-blind child and her teacher. *Black* was selected by Time magazine's influential critic Richard Corliss as one of the 10 best films for the year 2005, along with other films like Werner Herzog's German film, *The White Diamond & Grizzly Man*, Ingmar Bergman's *Saraband*, Fernando Meirelles' *The Constant Gardener* and Rob Marshall's *Memoirs Of A Geisha*.



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Citing his reasons for this singular honour, Corliss wrote, “This is an unusual film for India: no songs, a running time under two hours, and most of the dialogues in English, yet it became a box office hit. It could also be a test for Western audiences unused to the fever pitch of Indian melodrama; they may need a warning label. Caution: Extreme Sentiment (May be Contagious).”

In his latest Saawariya, Sanjay Leela Bhansali does a magical love story that spans all of four nights! He also breaks from the conventional in regards to treatment, sets, light design and above all casting.

Making their debut in Saawariya are Bollywood’s most exciting newcomers – Ranbir Kapoor and Sonam Kapoor. And Sanjay Leela Bhansali, the demanding director transforms into a gentle teacher as he taps into the immeasurable potential of his immensely talented but raw charges and turns them into actors, he vows will be a force to reckon with in the years to come.

Ranbir Kapoor, hails from the “first family” of India Cinema. Founded by the legendary Prithviraj Kapoor, whose legacy was carried on by his son ‘showman’ Raj Kapoor who launched the eponymous RK banner which dominated the Hindi film industry for decades. Raj Kapoor was perhaps the first of the ‘superstars’ in Indian cinema while his other brothers, Shashi and Shammi went on to become stars in their own right.

Four generations of the Kapoor family have contributed to Indian Cinema by way of acting, directing and producing. Raj Kapoor’s descendants have carried on the family legacy. It is to this legacy that Ranbir Kapoor was born. This grandson of Raj Kapoor and the son of one of India’s most romantic on screen pair, Rishi Kapoor and Neetu Singh, makes his debut with Sanjay Leela Bhansali’s Saawariya. Even before the release of his first movie, Ranbir is already being touted as the most sought after talent in Indian cinema.

Sonam Kapoor’s debut in Saawariya is perhaps the most anticipated launch for any talent in the recent years. Her pedigree comes from her father Anil Kapoor, who in happens to be one of the most established and decorated actors in Indian Cinema. His contribution to Indian Cinema has won him many accolades, most striking amongst them being his “Best Actor” Awards in 1988, 1998 and 2001. Sonam Kapoor is expected to be the next big actress in Bollywood.

Rani Mukherjee, is a six-time Filmfare Award-winning Bollywood actress who has made immense impact at the box office with her powerful award-winning performances. Having made her debut in 1992, she tasted commercial success in 1998 with Aamir Khan (amongst India’s top 3 talents) in Ghulam. Ever since, she has been an integral part of Bollywood, yielding commercially successful films. She has consistently been featured in Filmfare’s annual power list of Bollywood female stars for three consecutive years (2004-2006).

Some of her most famous films have included Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, Black, Saathiya, Hum Tum, and Bunty



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Aur Bubli. She received critical acclaim for her portrayal as Michelle McNally, a deaf and blind student, in the movie *Black* which was selected by Time Magazine as #5 on the list of “Best Movies of the Year 2005.” Rani Mukerjee was named fourth on the All Time Best Bollywood Actress Ever Listing in Women’s International Day 2007.

She comes from a film-oriented family of Bengali origin, as her father Ram Mukherjee is a retired director, her mother Krishna, a playback singer, her brother Raja, a film producer and director, and her cousin Kajol, a leading Bollywood actress.

Salman Khan, the eldest son of India’s most celebrated screenwriter Salim Khan, is one of India’s top talents and amongst the “Top 3” stars in Indian cinema. This immensely popular actor had a dream debut in 1990 with “Maine Pyar Kiya”, which went on to become one of the highest grossers in the country.

His second film with Sooraj Barjatya “Hum Aapke Hain Koun”, catapulted him to “superstardom” and amongst the top 3, where he has remained ever since. One of Bollywood’s most enigmatic actors, Salman Khan has entertained audiences across the world with some sensational performances and was actually crowned the “Most Sensational Actor” by the Bollywood Movie Award in 2002. He is arguably the biggest draw at a Bollywood musical stage show anywhere in the world. Having worked in Sanjay Leela Bhansali’s directorial debut *Khamoshi*, he subsequently work with Bhansali in the top grossing musical *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*. *Saawariya* will be Salman Khan’s third film with his favourite director.

Salman’s tremendous contribution to Indian Cinema can be measured from the fact that he has been associated with the top grossing Hindi films and till date continues to vow his audiences with his charismatic performances.

Director Of Photography - Ravi K. Chandran

Having won the Filmfare award for Best Cinematography for his first Hindi movie *Virasat*, Ravi K. Chandran went on to win 30 awards including 4 Filmfare awards for movies like *Kandukondain Kandukundain* (Tamil), *Sapne* (Hindi), *Dil Chahta Hai* and *Calcutta Mail* (Hindi), *Boys* (Tamil), *Kannathil Muthamital* and *Aayutha Ezuthu* (Tamil), *Yuva*, *Paheli*, *Fanaa* and *Black* (Hindi).

Art Director - Omung Kumar

TV anchor, model, creative director, set designer – this multi-faceted man wears many hats and all of them with great aplomb. Over the last ten years, he has designed over 180 sets for TV shows and serials. He has designed and executed sets for numerous major events including *Femina Miss India*, *Ceat Cricket Awards*, *Stardust Awards* as well as for films like *Jhankar Beats*, *Fidaa*, *Masti*, *Ishq Vishq*, *Chameli*, *Rehna Hai Tere*



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Dil Mein, Na Tum Jaano Na Hum and Dil Hai Tumhara. For Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Black, Omung Kumar recreated Simla, complete with its Mall in Mumbai!

Music Director - Monty Sharma

Having studied music with his grandfather late Pandit Ram Prasad Sharma and having played the keyboards for his uncle - the legendary music director Pyarelalji, music literally runs in Monty Sharma's blood. This young music director makes his debut with Saawariya and is naturally excited at the opportunity to be a part of the rich legacy of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's memorable music.

"I have never planned anything in life," he admits. "I had composed the background scores for Devdas and then Sanjayji offered me Black. I had composed a song in Black, but that song was not featured in the movie and was only available on CD, so it wasn't widely heard. But Sanjayji had loved my work. I never knew that I would be doing Saawariya, till Sanjayji offered me the movie."

He continues, "Working with Sanjay Leela Bhansali means there are no shortcuts – only absolute and complete perfection!"