

# Beirut Ethics Colloquium



**YEAR IN REVIEW  
FALL 2014 & SPRING 2015**

The unexamined life is not worth living- Socrates

# Identity



- Ethics is dynamic. Human nature is fundamentally relational. We first have to understand what it is to be a human being, then to discover how we develop over time.
- He who knows others is wise. He who knows himself is enlightened.  
-Lao Tzu



# St. Augustine- Divine Knowledge

The Light of Truth or The Vapor of the Ego

Presenter: Fahim Samaha



- Augustine's Ethics stressed the importance of human happiness but he emphasized just how much lies within the human being's own control- his free will.
- Yet he also believed that man is not the master of his first thoughts thus he requires Divine knowledge and it is the light of divine illumination that will consent to what is good.
- Positing a *principle of darkness* explains the existence of evil. But it also affords to easy *relief from moral responsibility*.
- Augustine was more attracted to Plato's doctrine that evil is not part of reality, but rather the *privation or lack of goodness*.

# The battle line between good and evil runs through the heart of every man...- Solzhenitsyn



## One Day - Alexander Solzhenitsyn

*How easy it is for me to live with you, Lord!  
How easy for me to believe in you,  
When my spirit is lost, perplexed and cast down,  
When even the most intelligent can see no further than the night,  
And know not what they must do tomorrow*

*You give me a sure certainty  
That you exist, that you are watching over me  
And will not permit the ways of righteousness to be closed to me.  
Here on the summit of earthly glory I look back astonished  
On the road which through depths of despair has led me here.  
To this point from which I can also reflect to men your radiance*

*And all that I can still reflect - you shall grant to me.  
And what I shall fail you shall grant to others.*



# Aural Ethics- Desire & Self in Music

Presenter: Henry Sanger



- Aural Ethics- the encounter between music and the listener.
- Music's effect on human beings is its ability to **penetrate bodies**, it allows man to appear not as an autonomous, self-consistent, rational self but as a relational subject, thereby opening the possibility to think of a '**de-individualized**' **ethics**



# Aural Ethics- Playlist



- 1. Maurice Ravel: Bolero, 1928, performed by Sergiu Celibidache 1971 (Utube)
- 2. Claude Debussy: La Cathedrale Engloutie, 1910, Lots of strong performances, I used Alain Planes
- 3. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov: Two Pieces from the Opera Mlada, 1892 - Indian Dance and Procession of the Nobles, Performed by Neeme Jarvi and The Scottish National Orchestra, 1984
- 4. Franz Liszt : Les Jeux D'Eau de la Villa d'Este, 1883, Best performances by Jeffrey Swann or Gerome Rose
- 5. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov: "The Sun is Sinking" from the Opera La Nuit de Mai, 1877, sung by Serguei Lemiecheff 1948 Recording with the Choeur & Orchestra du Grand Theatre de Moscou
- 6. Sergei Prokofiev: Violin Concerto No. 1 in D Major, 1917, Many Strong performances, my favorites are Leila Josefowicz (2001) or Midori (2005) (Utube)
- 7. Aaron Copland: "Bought Me a Cat", from Old Amerian Songs - 1950, William Warfield and the Columbia Symphon Orchestra, 1988 Compilation
- 8. Hector Berlioz: Symphonie Fantastique, 1830, Many Strong recordings, I used Roger Norrington and the London Classical players, 1989
- 9. Igor Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring, 1913, Reconstruction of Original Performance by Valery Gergiev and the Marinsky Orchestra and Ballet (Stravinsky and the Ballets Russes DVD, 2008)

# Velazquez – The Human is Divine

Presenter: Gregory Buchajian



- It is the body of the painting that controls the gaze and in turn gazes back out at us to form what Foucault refers to, “a sort of vast cage projected backwards by the surface,”
- Trapping us in our own subjectivity and locking the observer into the interplay of elements that construct the seen and unseen, the interior and exterior, and the fluctuating boundaries between the observer and the observed.
- If the soul is the cage of the body, as Foucault contends, our souls (or subjectivities) are captured by the force relations at play in *Las Meninas* that render our bodies static for the purpose of viewing.

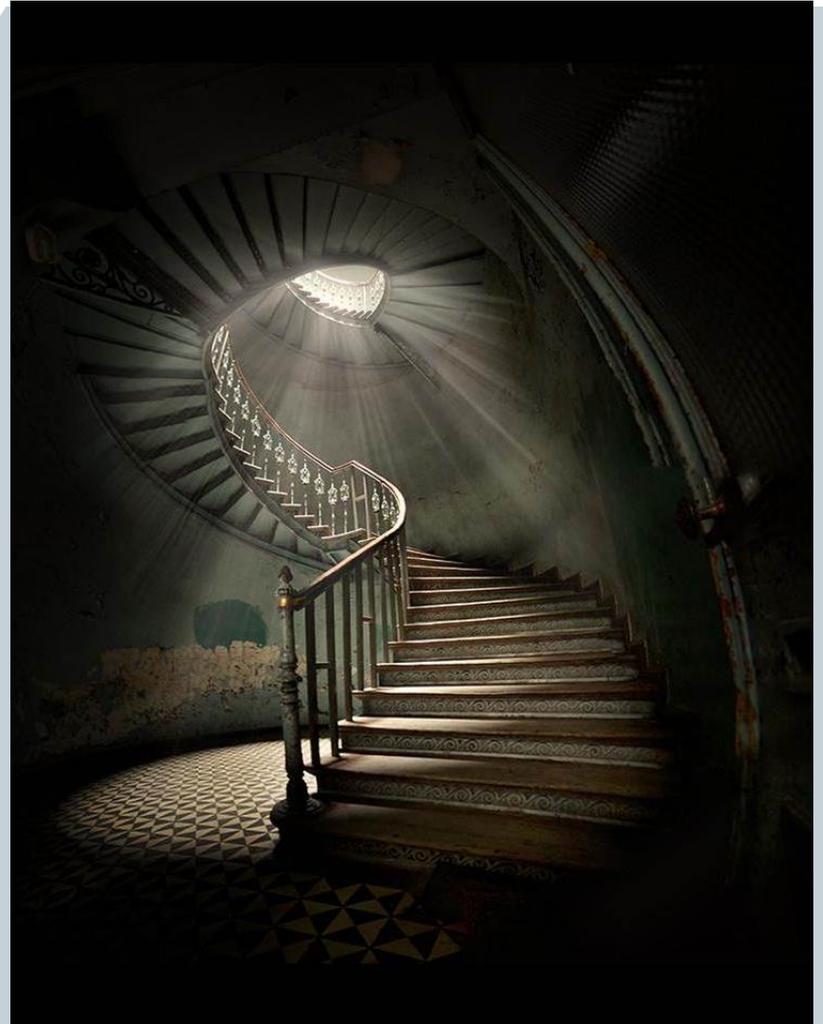


# Velazquez- Ethics Thread

## Theory of Emanation



- Theory of ***Emanation***, a great staircase of light, if you will, leading up to the heavens and thence to God.
- Emanation, from the Latin *emanare* meaning "to flow from" or "to pour forth or out of", is the mode by which all things are derived from the First Reality, or Principle.
- All things are derived from the first reality or perfect God by steps of degradation to lesser degrees of the first reality or God, and at every step the emanating beings are less pure, less perfect, less divine.
- In this theory every living creature had a place, distanced from God ("...the Way, the Truth, the Light.") according to his lights, that is, his perfections or his lack thereof.

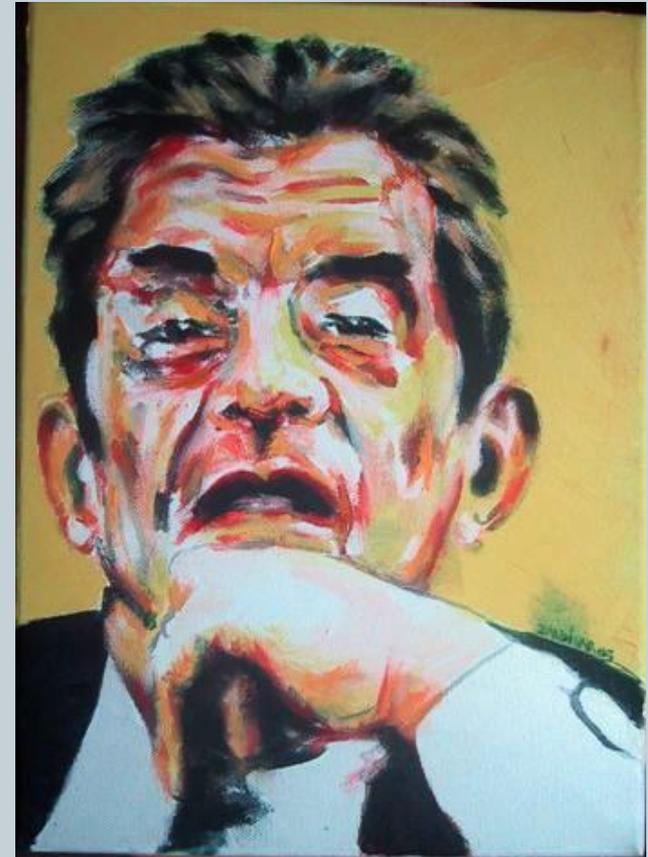


# Jacques Lacan- Mirror Stage

Presenter: Pere Charbel Batour



- For Lacan, when we look in the mirror, we “assume an image” – namely, a way of picturing ourselves.
- Yet, because we have not yet learned language or learned to take on the images that the rest of society has for us, it is a unique experience.
- All other self-images occur after we have learned language and started interacting with others, and so all other self-images are constructs of the *other*.



# Face to Face Encounters

## Somatic Workshop Milia Ayache

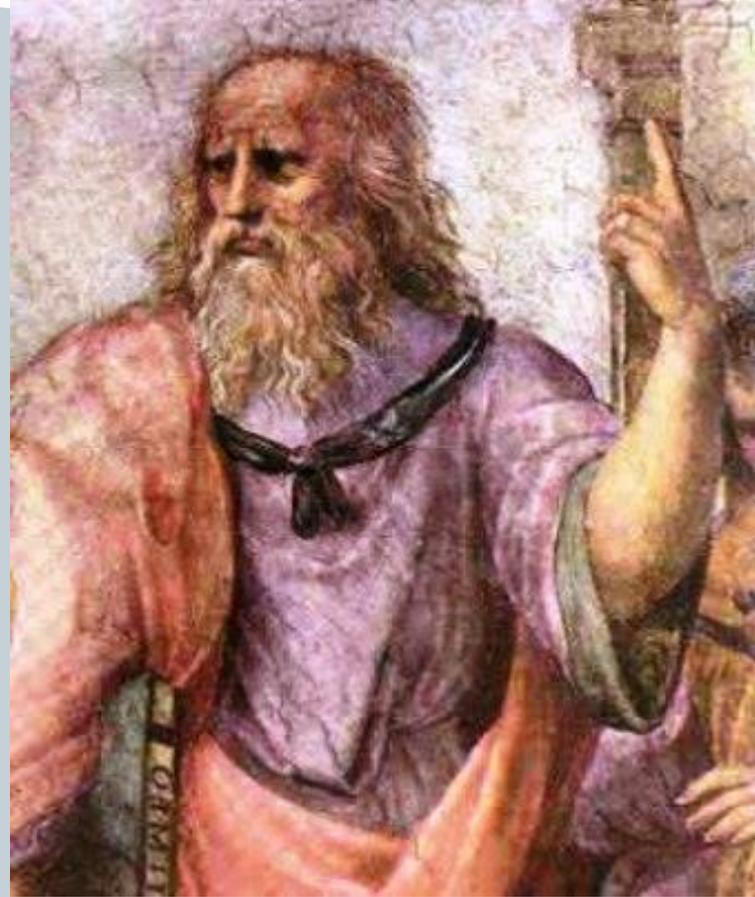


# Plato- Virtue Ethics

Presenter: Joanne Sayad



- To a virtue ethicist like Plato, actions are only good to the extent that virtuous persons take such actions.
- When Plato talks about what is good, he always means for us to think of an ideal good person.
- In this way, Plato's focus is on what a good person is, rather than what good actions or good consequences are.



# Plato – The Cave



**Socrates:** This entire allegory, I said, you may now append, dear Glaucon, to the previous argument;

- the prison-house is the world of sight,
- the light of fire is the sun,
- the journey upwards to be the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world

The world of knowledge, the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; it is also inferred:

- the universal author of all things beautiful and right,
- parent of light and the lord of light in this visible world
- and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual;

**Glacoun:** I agree, he said, as far as I am able to understand you...

*And as far as we could understand him also...*



# Perception



- Ethics can not make sense without a view of the nature of human freedom and the nature of the mind is to perceive and create reality.
- The truth is helpless when up against perception...



# Cezanne- Art & Being

Presenter: Jennifer Tabet



- By remaining faithful to the phenomena in his investigations of perspective, Cezanne discovered what recent psychologists have come to formulate: ***the lived perspective***, that which we actually perceive, is not a geometric or photographic one.
- The lived object is not rediscovered or constructed on the basis of the contributions of the senses; rather, it presents itself to us from the start as the center from which these contributions radiate.
- We see the depth, the smoothness, softness, the hardness of objects; Cezanne even claimed that we see the odor.

We see things; we agree about them; we are anchored in them.  
Cezanne wanted to paint this primordial world, and his pictures therefore seem to show nature pure.



# Merleau Ponty- Emergent Phenomena

Presenter: Jennifer Tabet



- In Merleau-Ponty's essay "Cezanne's Doubt" he identifies Cezanne's impressionistic theory of painting as analogous to his own concept of radical reflection, the attempt to return to and reflect on pre-reflective consciousness.
- Merleau-Ponty emphasized the body as the primary site of knowing the world and maintained that the body and that which it perceived could not be disentangled from one another.
- This articulation of the primacy of embodiment led him away from phenomenology toward what he was to call "indirect ontology" or the ontology of the 'flesh of the world' (la chair du monde).

# An Artist's Shift in Perception

Habib Bardawil



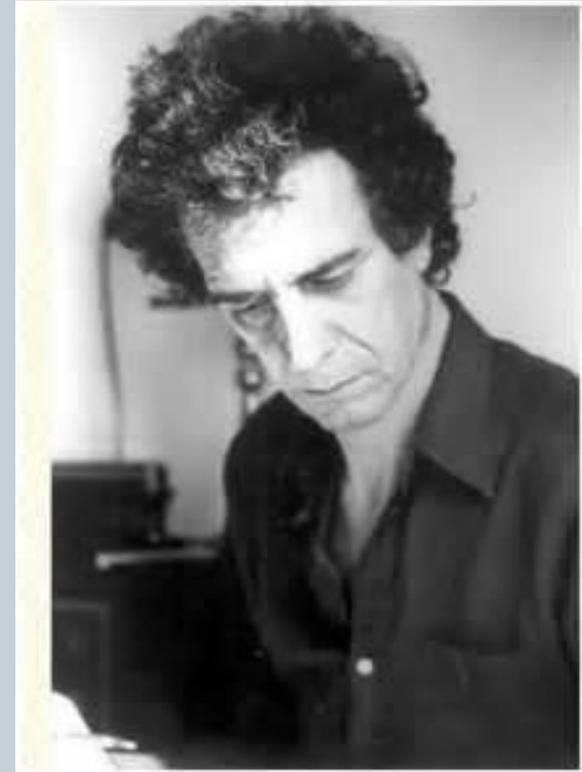
- *They lacked the necessary humility to look really at the model and learn from her. They were interested only in interpreting their ideas on her.*
- The nude figure there represents **nature in its real sense**. The figure is there in a continuous fluctuation in space and time, in continuous change, in lighting, in colour.
- In stillness, in motion in variation every moment. To paint this huge movement onto a canvas means to translate three dimensions onto a limited two dimensions.
- To paint a face is to paint a moving, changing object in space and time. It is a soul within a body. To recognize a **Person without being able to define precisely what that perception really is.**

# Jean Louis Baudry – The Unseen

Presenter: Michelle Acra



- Jean-Louis Baudry took the mirror analogy from Lacan.
- For him, the film screen serves as a mirror through which the spectator can identify himself or herself as a coherent and omnipotent ego.
- The sense of power that spectatorship provides derives from the spectator's primary identification with the camera itself.
- Though the spectator is in actual fact a passive (and even impotent) viewer of the action on the screen, identification with the camera provides the spectator with an illusion of unmitigated power over the screen images.



# Laura Mulvey- Visual Pleasure

Presenter: Michelle Acra



- The spectator's sense of power is, for Mulvey, a definitively masculine sense of power.
- The spectator, then, is gendered male.
- On the screen, the male character, the site of identification, drives the movement of the film's narrative and is the character whose movement the camera follows.
- The female character serves as a spectacle for both the spectator and the latter's screen proxy, the male character, to look at.
- This process, which Mulvey termed the "gaze," deprives the female subject of her subjectivity, reducing her to a "to-be-looked-at-ness" that provides pleasure for the male spectator.
- Mulvey's appropriation of psychoanalysis for feminism is meant to destroy this pleasurable experience through the act of analyzing it.

# Bishop Berkeley- Subjective Idealism

Presenter: Pere Charbel Batour



- Berkeley summarized his theory with the motto "*esse est percipi*" ("To be is to be perceived"), but went on to elaborate it with God as the source of consensus reality and other particulars.
- According to Berkeley, an object has real being as long as it is perceived by a mind.
- According to Berkeley there is no material universe, in fact he has absolutely no idea what that could possibly mean

# Levinas- Face to Face Encounter

Presenter: Ralph Sayad



- The face-to-face relation (rapport de face à face) is a concept in the French philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas thought on human sociality.
- It means that, ethically, people are responsible to one-another in the face-to-face encounter.
- Specifically, Lévinas says that the human face "orders and ordains" us.
- It calls the subject into "giving and serving" the Other.

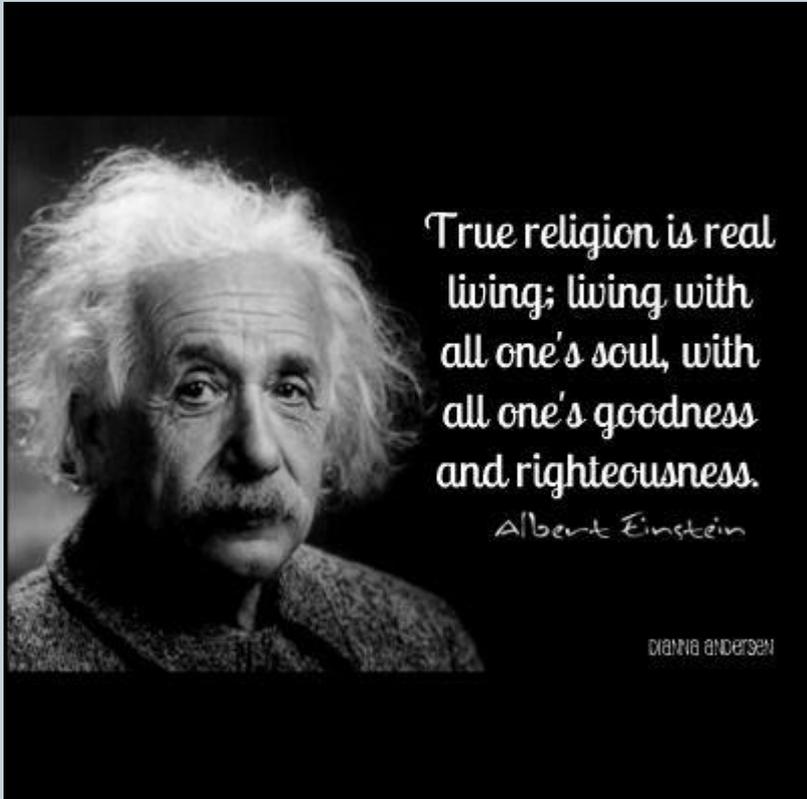
# Face to Face Cooking Encounter

Meat the Fish- Chef Reem Azoury



# Albert Einstein- Moral Relativism

Presenter: Fahim Samaha



- After Albert Einstein came up with the theory of relativity people in the social sciences such as the German sociologist Max Weber, again applied the concept of relativity to concepts such as morality.
- Thus appeared the concept of moral relativism in which morality simply becomes what a particular society believes is moral.
- Weber's discussion of **an ethics of commitment and an ethics of responsibility**.
- To be "a match for them inwardly" is to cling to one's values even in the face of the inevitable "polar night of icy darkness."

# Awareness



Let us not look back in anger,  
nor forward in fear.  
But around in awareness.  
-James Thurber

- Ethics is not an achievement- it is a grace.
- A grace called Awareness; a grace called looking, observing and understanding.
- It is this nonjudgmental awareness that heals and changes and makes one grow.

# Lyrical Ethics – Omar Abboud



- Music evokes feelings. Feelings are in turn enabled by sensibility.
- When a person's sensibility is repressed as if it were anesthetized, there is no longer an ethical different 'I' or 'you' but rather replaceable agents.
- Then indifference instead of ethics reigns at the price of humanness of the human.
- However sensibility is like the hope and root of a dying tree at the first smell of water (Job 14:7-9).
- In this modality, lyrical experience is a small wakeup call that spurs lapsed sensibility into an acute state and so awakens the listeners humanness...  
(excerpt from Sarah Zhang on the Song of Songs)

# Hegel & Duality

Presenter: Pere Charbel Batour



- Hegel developed the concept that mind or spirit manifested itself in a set of contradictions and oppositions that it ultimately integrated and united, without eliminating either pole or reducing one to the other.
- Central to his belief is freedom or self-determination implications, for soul or mind or divinity.
- "The essential nature of freedom... is to be displayed as coming to a consciousness of itself and thereby realizing its existence. Itself is its own object of attainment, and the sole aim of the Spirit"

The world of will is not at the discretion of randomness

~ Georg Hegel ~

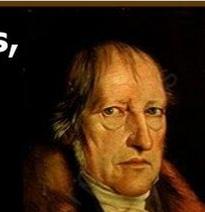


**Only through the realization of great goals a person reveals his strong character**



**What a person does, so is he**

~ Georg Hegel ~



The history of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness of freedom.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel



# Anthony De Mello sj - Awareness and On the Way to Love

Presenter: [Tony Farah](#)



- "Why is everyone here so happy except me?"...  
"Because they have learned to see goodness and beauty everywhere," said the Master.  
"Why don't I see goodness and beauty everywhere?"  
"Because you cannot see outside of you what you fail to see inside."
- Until his sudden death on June 2, 1987, Fr. Tony de Mello was the director of the Sadhana Institute of Pastoral Counseling near Poona, India. Author of five best selling books, renowned worldwide for his workshops, retreats, and prayer courses, he aimed simply to teach people HOW TO PRAY, how to WAKE UP AND LIVE.
- Most people, he maintained, are asleep. They need to wake up, open up their eyes, see what is real, both inside and outside of themselves. The greatest human gift is to be aware, to be in touch with oneself, one's body, mind, feelings, thoughts, sensations.
- Here are some of his typical challenges:
- "Come home yourself!  
Come back to your senses! Do you hear that bird sing?  
How can you hear the song and not hear the singer?  
How can you see the wave and not see the ocean?  
How can you see the dance and not see the dancer?"



Obedience keeps the rules. Love knows when to break them.

*Anthony De Mello*

meetville.com

There is only one cause of unhappiness: the false beliefs you have in your head, beliefs so widespread, so commonly held, that it never occurs to you to question them.

*Anthony De Mello*

meetville.com

*"If it is peace you want, seek to change yourself, not other people. It is easier to protect your feet with slippers than to carpet the whole of the Earth."*

I have no fear of losing u, for you aren't an object of my property, or anyone else's. I love you as you are, without attachment, without fears, without conditions, without egoism, trying not to absorb you. I love you freely because I love your freedom, as well as mine.

**- Anthony de Mello**

“

*Wisdom tends to grow in proportion to one's awareness of one's ignorance.*

Said the river to the seeker,  
"Does one really have to fret about enlightenment?  
No matter which way I turn,  
I'm homeward bound."

*~ Anthony De Mello ~*



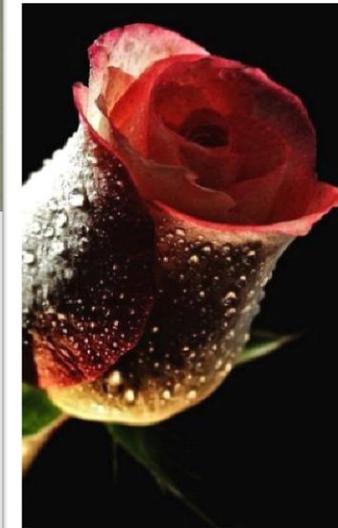
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*You see persons and things not as they are but as you are.*

”  
OkDay.com

~ Anthony de Mello ~

**"Perfect love casts out fear. Where there is love there are no demands, no expectations, no dependency. I do not demand that you make me happy; my happiness does not lie in you. If you were to leave me, I will not feel sorry for myself; I enjoy your company immensely, but I do not cling."** VERYBESTQUOTES.COM  
*— Anthony de Mello*



Is it possible for the rose to say,

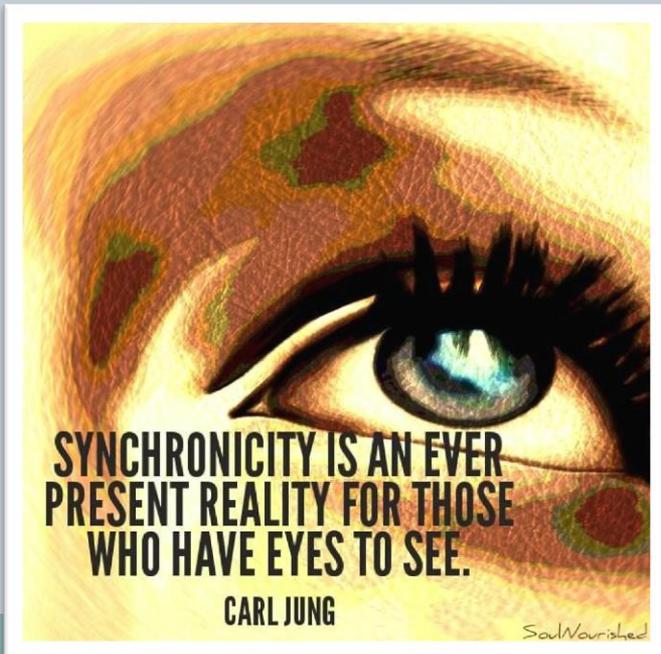
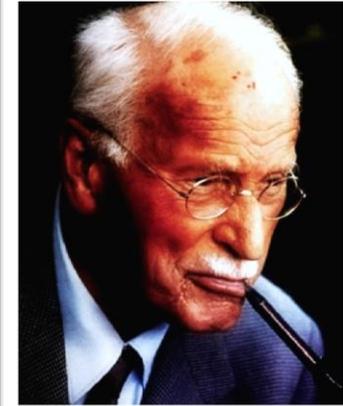
"I will give my fragrance to the good people who smell me,

but I will withhold it from the bad?"

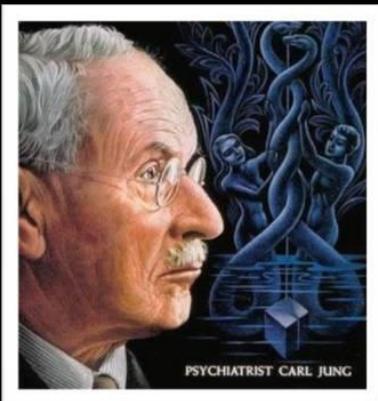
*~ Anthony De Mello ~*

# Carl Jung & Synchronicity

Presenters: Hosn Abboud & Kimberly Samaha



- The culmination of Jung's lifelong engagement with the paranormal is his theory of synchronicity, the view that the structure of reality includes a principle of acausal connection which manifests itself most conspicuously in the form of meaningful coincidences.
- Difficult, flawed, prone to misrepresentation, this theory none the less remains one of the most suggestive attempts yet made to bring the paranormal within the bounds of intelligibility.
- It has been found relevant by psychotherapists, parapsychologists, researchers of spiritual experience and a growing number of non-specialists.
- Indeed, Jung's writings in this area form an excellent general introduction to the whole field of the paranormal.



*'Your vision will become clear only when you look into your heart . . . Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside, awakens.'*

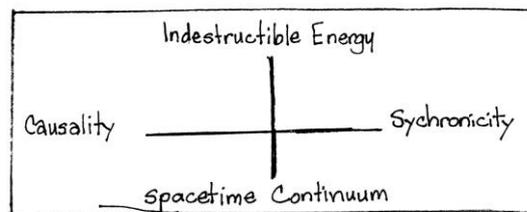
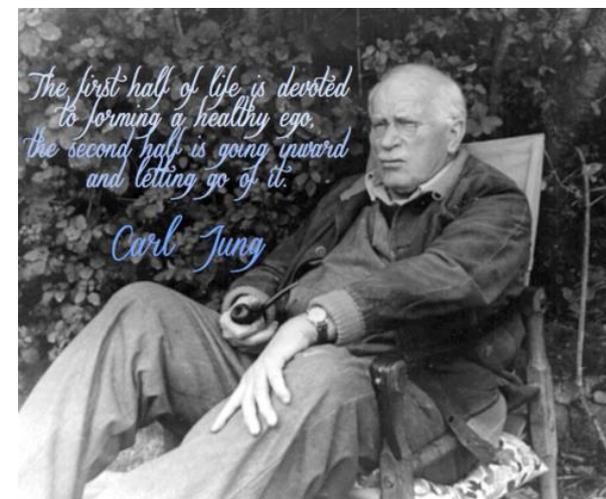
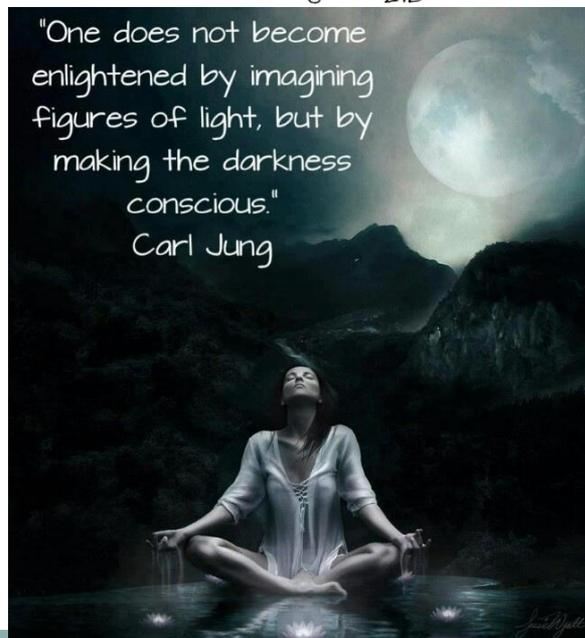
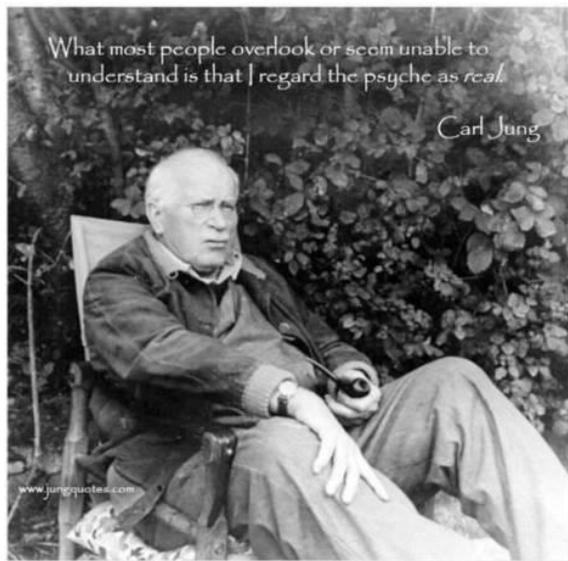
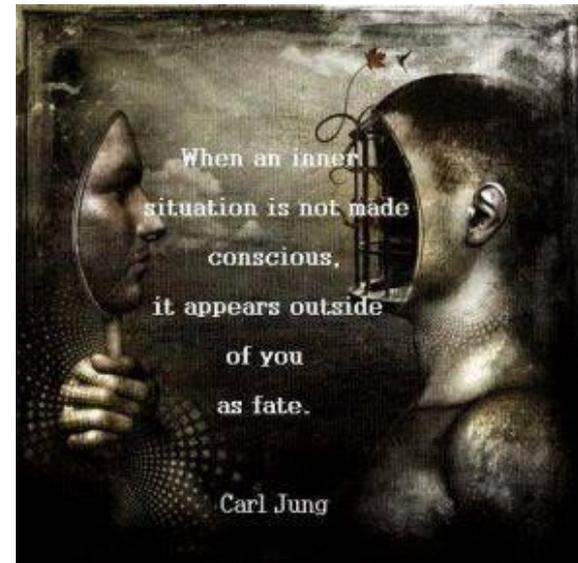


Diagram illustrating concept of synchronicity after CG Jung

*Jaral 2012*



# Lao Tzu & Confucius Taoism

Presenter: [Lydia Sholy Farah](#)



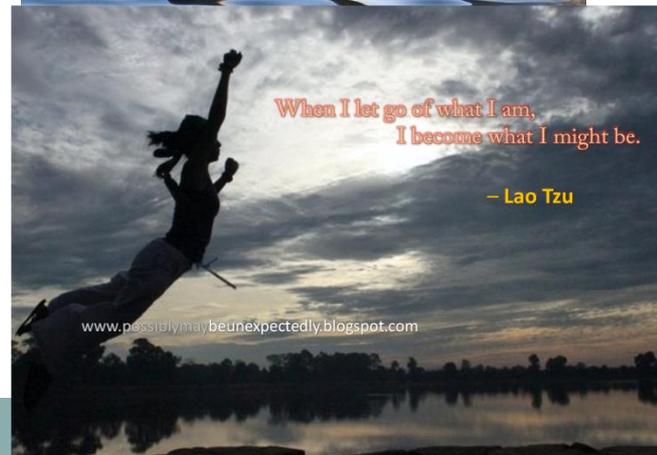
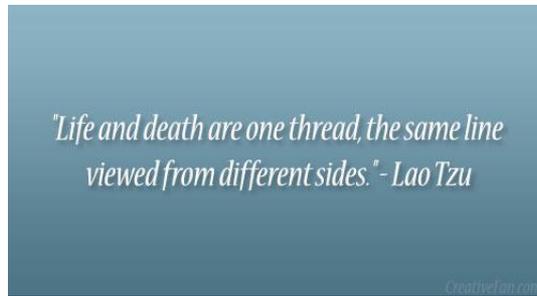
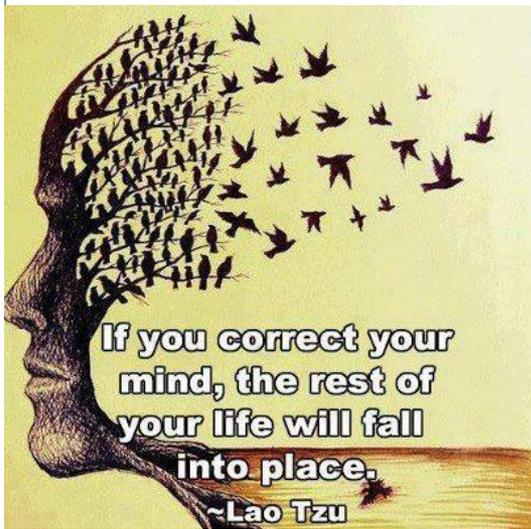
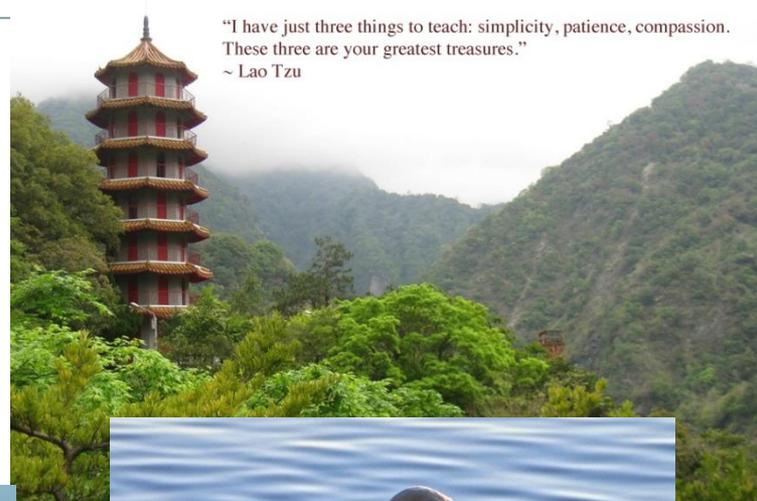
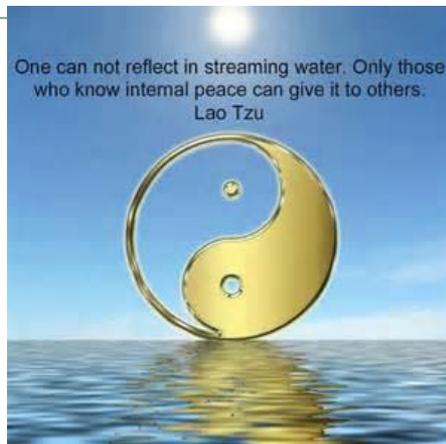
- Jung was interested particularly with the Ethics or Ways of Being presented in the classical Chinese texts of Lao Tzu.
- Like Aristotle, Lao Tzu promoted the middle way between opposites good-bad, man-nature, heaven-earth.
- These fundamental dualities were not causally connected but were nested within each other as the yin and yang, believing that when events proceed to their extremes they give way to their opposites.
- Confucius spent 50 years devoted to the study of the I-Ching (book of changes) and greatly influenced Chinese society from forms of government to how burial services should be arranged.



Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage.

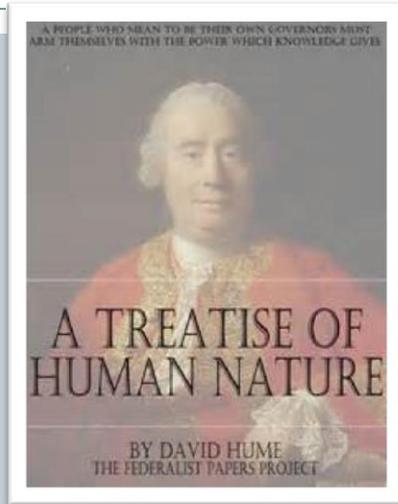
- Lao Tzu

Love of Life Quotes.com



# Philosopher David Hume- Moral Sentiments

Presenter: Pere [Charbel S Batour](#)



The rules of morality  
are not the  
conclusion of our  
reason.

*David Hume*

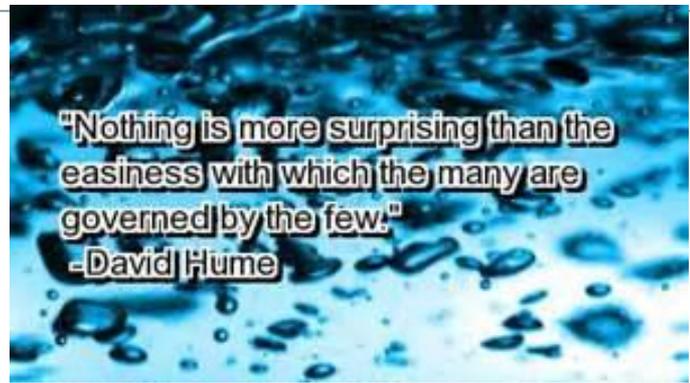
meetville.com

- Hume maintains that moral distinctions are derived from feelings of pleasure and pain of a special sort, and not as held by many Western philosophers since Socrates from reason.
- Working from the empiricist principle that the mind is essentially passive, Hume argues that reason by itself can never prevent or produce any action or affection. But since morals concerns actions and affections, it cannot be based on reason.
- Since moral distinctions are not based on reason, Hume infers that they are based on sentiments that are felt by what he calls a “moral sense.” When we describe an action, sentiment, or character as virtuous or vicious, it is because its view causes a pleasure or pain of a particular kind.
- Hume is well aware that not all pleasures and pains (e.g., the pleasure of drinking good wine) lead to moral judgments. Rather, it is “only when a character is considered in general, without reference to our particular interest, that it causes such a feeling or sentiment, as denominates it morally good or evil” (Treatise, Book III, Part I, sec. 2).
- Finally, Hume argues that even though moral distinctions are based on feelings, this does not lead to moral relativism. For the general moral principles and the moral sense faculty that recognizes them are common to all human beings (see second Enquiry, “A Dialogue”).

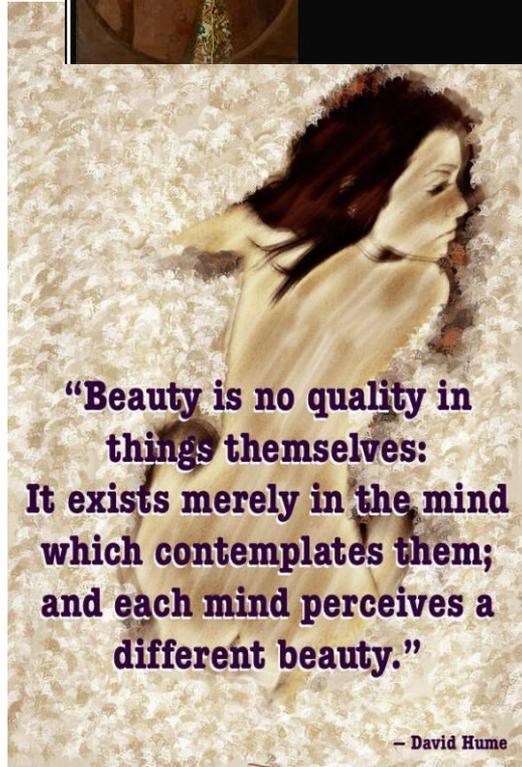


Belief is nothing but a more vivid, lively, forcible, firm, steady conception of an object, than what the imagination alone is ever able to attain.

(David Hume)



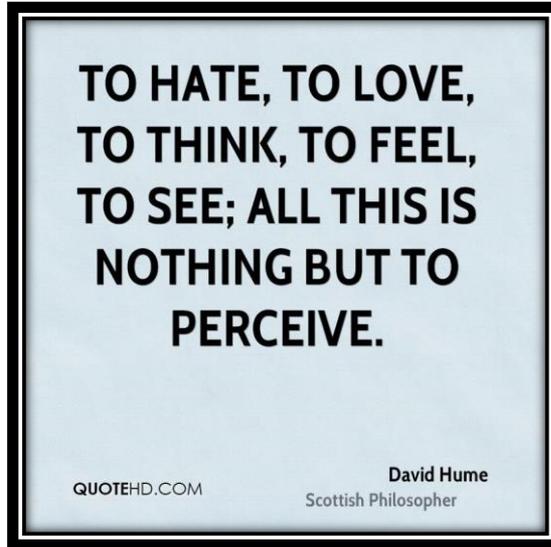
"Nothing is more surprising than the easiness with which the many are governed by the few."  
-David Hume



**"Beauty is no quality in things themselves: It exists merely in the mind which contemplates them; and each mind perceives a different beauty."**

- David Hume

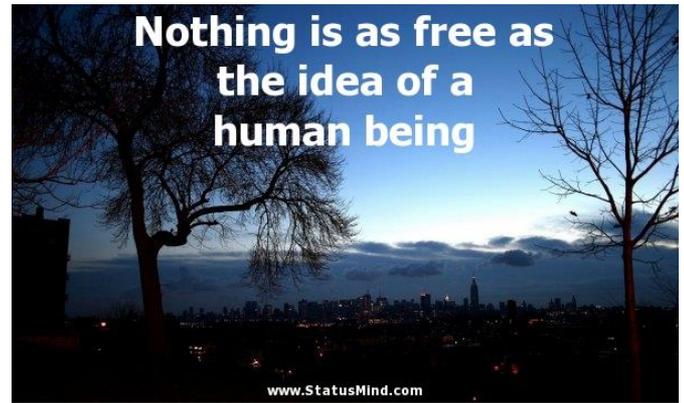
PICTUREQUOTES.COM



**TO HATE, TO LOVE,  
TO THINK, TO FEEL,  
TO SEE; ALL THIS IS  
NOTHING BUT TO  
PERCEIVE.**

QUOTEHD.COM

David Hume  
Scottish Philosopher



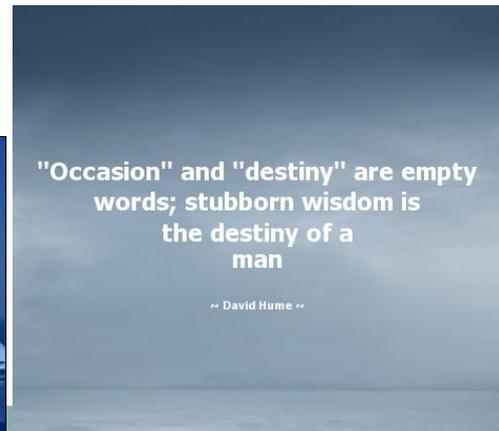
**Nothing is as free as  
the idea of a  
human being**

www.StatusMind.com



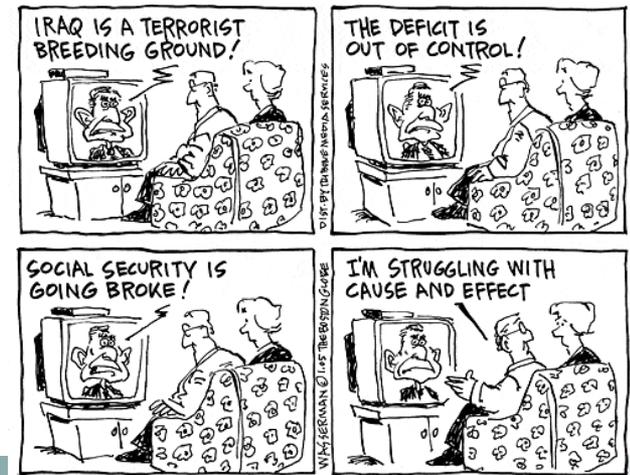
**Beauty in things exists in the mind  
which contemplates them.**

David Hume



"Occasion" and "destiny" are empty words; stubborn wisdom is the destiny of a man

~ David Hume ~



IRAQ IS A TERRORIST BREEDING GROUND!

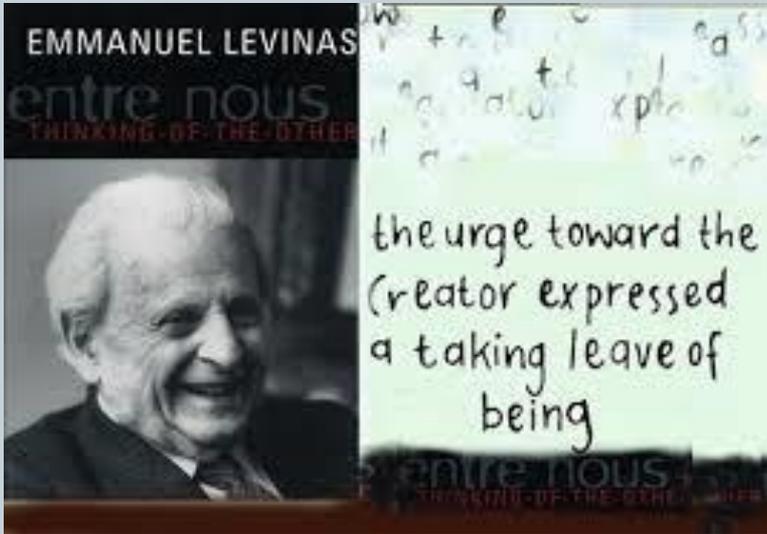
THE DEFICIT IS OUT OF CONTROL!

SOCIAL SECURITY IS GOING BROKE!

I'M STRUGGLING WITH CAUSE AND EFFECT

# Emmanuel Levinas: Metaphysical Desire

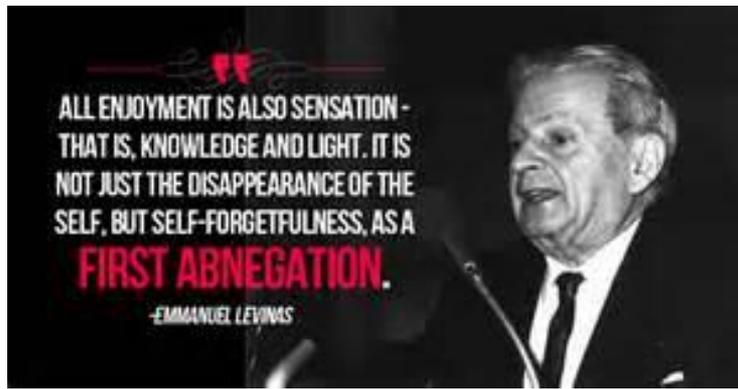
Presenter: [Ralph Sr Sayad](#)



the radical impossibility  
of fleeing oneself

- One of the most persistent and poignant human experiences is the sensation of longing—a restlessness perhaps best described as the unspoken conviction that something is missing from our lives.
- Metaphysical desire, according to Levinas, does not stem from any determinate lack within us, nor does it aim at a particular object beyond us, much less promise any eventual satisfaction.
- Rather, it functions in the realm of the infinite where such distinctions as inside and outside or one and the other are indistinguishable, perhaps even eliminated.
- As Levinas conceives such longing, it becomes a mediator in our relation to the other—both the human other and the divine Other.

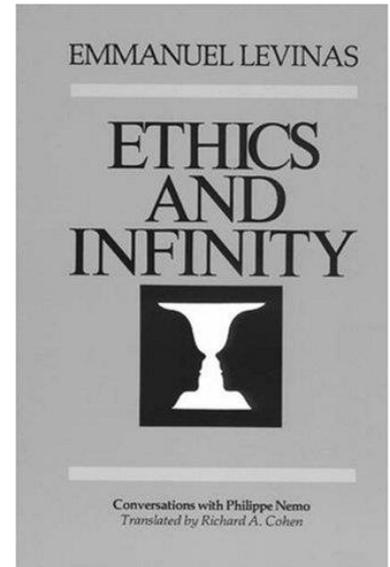
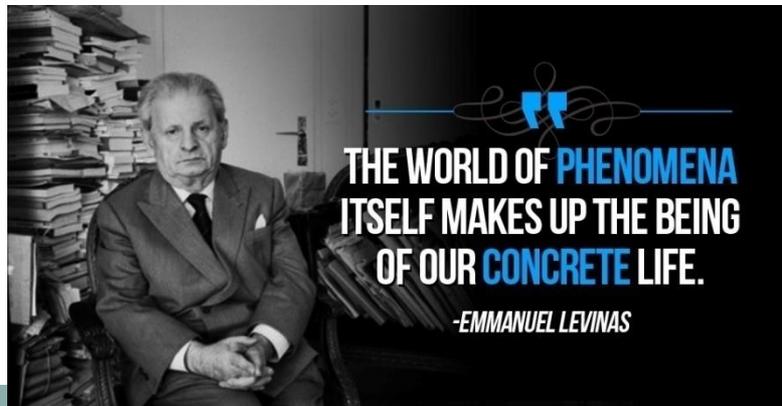
the satisfaction  
of a need does  
not destroy it.



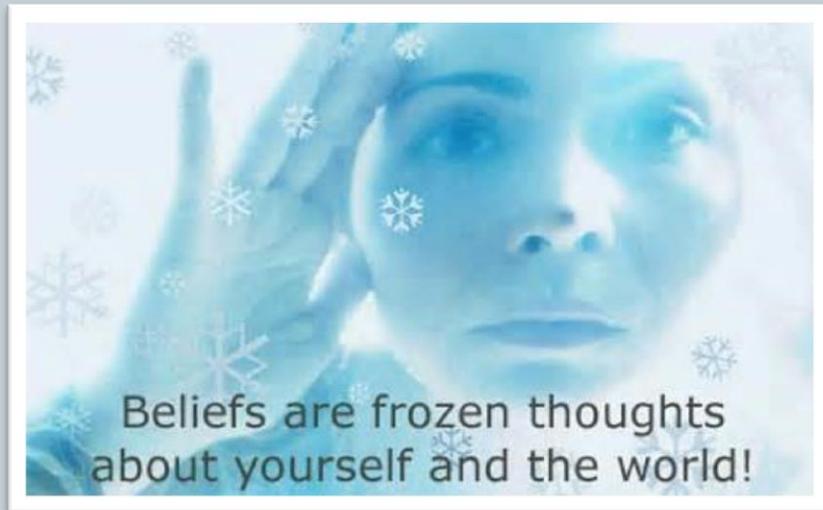
what counts then, in all this  
experience of being, is the  
discovery not of a new cha-  
racteristic of our existence,  
but of its very fact, of the  
permanent quality itself  
of our presence

FAITH IS NOT A  
QUESTION OF THE  
EXISTENCE OR  
NON-EXISTENCE  
OF GOD. IT IS  
BELIEVING THAT  
LOVE WITHOUT  
REWARD IS  
VALUABLE.

— Emmanuel Levinas —



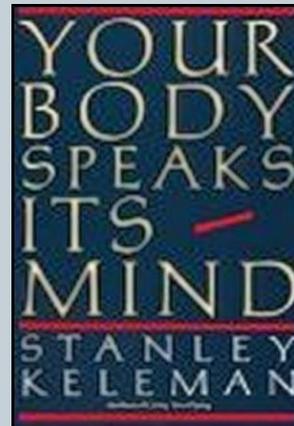
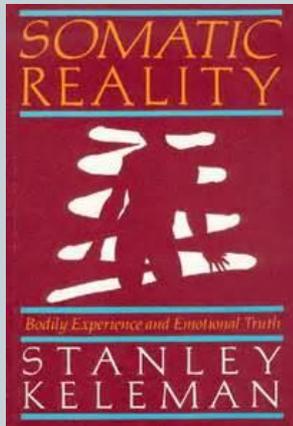
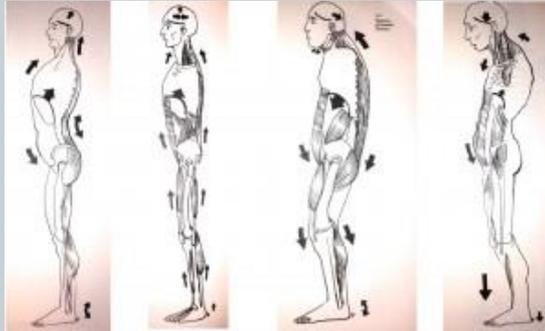
# Believing



- Ethics questions about when and how our beliefs are justified or qualify as knowledge.
- What one person doubts or hopes, another may fear, or believe or desire or intend.
- Different attitudes result in different beliefs.

# Stanley Keleman- Formative Psychology & Voice Workshop

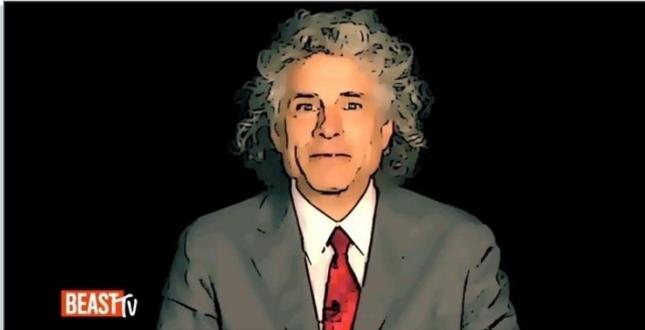
Presenter: [Lena Idriss](#) & [Fady Jeanbart](#)



- Formative psychology suggests that we have many somatic selves waiting to be bodied.
- Our life is continually forming and re-forming, and from birth to death the shapes of our fate present themselves to be lived.
- We are not just waiting to die; we are living ourselves. Each of our bodied selves is a distinct self, and has its special feelings, needs, images, actions, and a consequent world view.
- Experience is connected to myth. Being immersed in self-experience is living one's own myth, one's own life story...
- As our connectedness to living depends, we learn that experience is the teacher. And experience cannot be programmed.
- We are our own mythmakers, knowingly or unknowingly. -Keleman

# Steven Pinker- The Moral Instinct

Presenter: Dr. [Eddy Acra](#)



- Steven Pinker is an experimental psychologist and one of the world's foremost writers on language, mind, and human nature at Harvard. Pinker has also taught at Stanford and MIT. His research on visual cognition and the psychology of language has won prizes from the National Academy of Sciences, the Royal Institution of Great Britain, the Cognitive Neuroscience Society, and the American Psychological Association. He has also received eight honorary doctorates, several teaching awards at MIT and Harvard, and numerous prizes for his books *The Language Instinct*, *How the Mind Works*, *The Blank Slate*, and *The Better Angels of Our Nature*. He is Chair of the Usage Panel of the American Heritage Dictionary, and often writes for *The New York Times*, *Time*, and *The New Republic*. He has been named Humanist of the Year, *Prospect* magazine's "The World's Top 100 Public Intellectuals," *Foreign Policy*'s "100 Global Thinkers," and *Time* magazine's "The 100 Most Influential People in the World Today."

- "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and more steadily we reflect on them," wrote Immanuel Kant, "the starry heavens above and the moral law within." These days, the moral law within is being viewed with increasing awe, if not always admiration. The human moral sense turns out to be an organ of considerable complexity, with quirks that reflect its evolutionary history and its neurobiological foundations.
- These quirks are bound to have implications for the human predicament. Morality is not just any old topic in psychology but close to our conception of the meaning of life. Moral goodness is what gives each of us the sense that we are worthy human beings. We seek it in our friends and mates, nurture it in our children, advance it in our politics and justify it with our religions. A disrespect for morality is blamed for everyday sins and history's worst atrocities. To carry this weight, the concept of morality would have to be bigger than any of us and outside all of us.
- So dissecting moral intuitions is no small matter. If morality is a mere trick of the brain, some may fear, our very grounds for being moral could be eroded. Yet as we shall see, the science of the moral sense can instead be seen as a way to strengthen those grounds, by clarifying what morality is and how it should steer our actions.

# Denis Vasse: Desire as an Ethical Notion

Presenter: Pere Charbel Batour



- **Desire as a Way of Being- Responsive or Resistant**
- Denis Vasse, in 1969 sets out to analyze prayer, work and speech, which are anthropologically related to a “Being of Desire”, that is God.
- He distinguishes between a prayer of need and a prayer of desire, between a human work (travail) and a job (besogne) and between speech and discourse.
- At the basis of these distinctions is the way these three human activities are or are not the expression of human desire.
- When prayer is just an expression of need (for an object), when work is confined to merely satisfying the urgent needs of life or greed, when discourse denies its foundational dependency on speech, then prayer work and discourse no longer bear witness to what constitutes the very identity of the human subject, that is, desire.
- Thus, prayer is but a prayer of need, work becomes just a job (a burden), and human discourse becomes redundant and alienating. (p.321)



To derive pleasure out of the feeling of desire, that is, to make the feeling of desire the very goal of our desire (self-satisfaction).

To desire simply because it makes us feel good and because it gives us the impression of being alive, rather than desiring because the Other is desirable and that it (the Other) is the beginning and the end of the movement which carries us. (pp. 337-338)

# Jouissance & Jealousy

## • Jouissance

- For Lacan, jouissance is not a mere conscious pleasure related to bodily senses. Jouissance is an unconscious attachment to a representation of pleasure (a signifier) that affect concrete acts and attitudes. This attachment contradicts the natural limit of pleasure, which is the result of the rise of physical tension and its necessary consequent release.
- Yet, in the unconscious, in the living and memory that psychoanalysis calls the unconscious, the subject can reduce itself to a representation of pleasure. Instead of embodying the act of desire, it freezes in its capacity to act.
- In jouissance the subject of desire is deadened for its desire is paralyzed. The subject who is unconsciously attached to a representation of pleasure pushes the biological pleasures of its body beyond their natural limitations. This attachment compels it to endlessly repeat in concrete acts its unconscious attachment to pleasure.
- Hence both Lacan and Vasse maintain that the ultimate horizon of jouissance is death. Death as a state or an effect not as acts- it is the synchrony of life and its negation. To summarize Vasse's understanding of jouissance and its relation to desire:
- For desire is a defense, a defense against going beyond a limit in jouissance. The indefinite repetition of jouissance is too insistent because it knows that it is not, that wished satisfaction of going to the extreme will always fail: it (jouissance) always opens up on a void, for the pleasure it seeks did not become a means of encounter in truth for the partners. (pp 324-326)



## • Jealousy

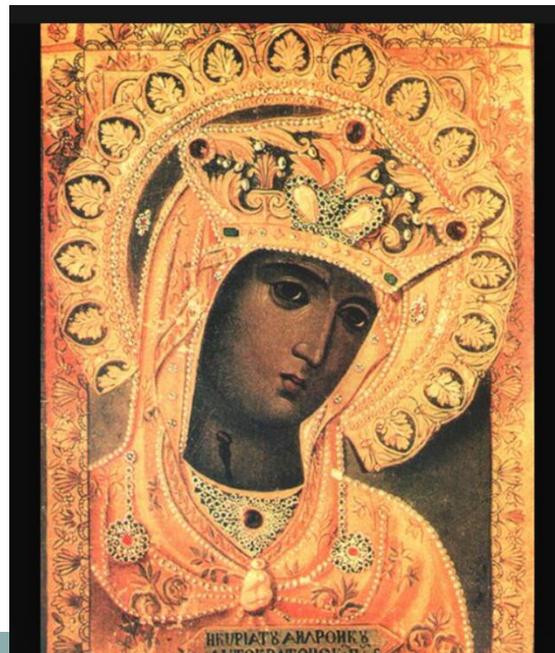
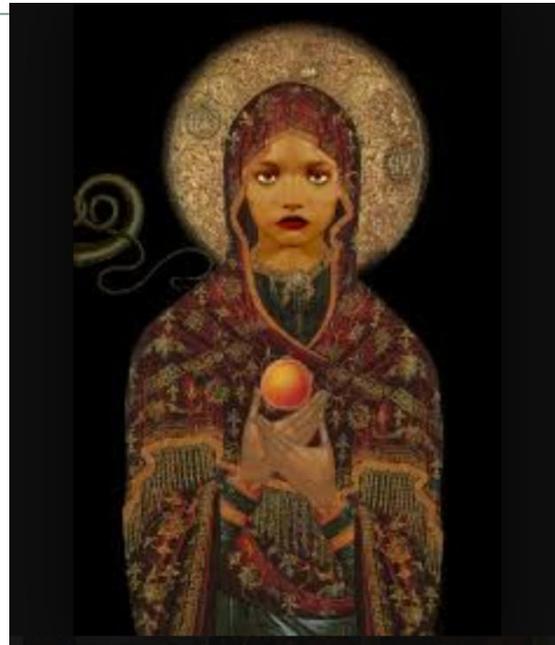
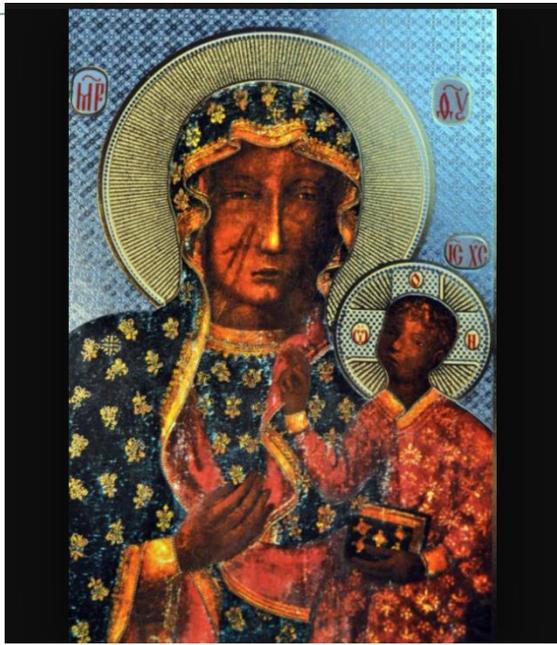
- Jealousy is what stands in opposition to difference; jealousy determines the field of sameness (*mêmeté*). The person trapped in jealousy is a person who keeps comparing and interpreting differences as mere oppositions. Jealousy tends to annul the difference and the differentiation processes that constitute human life. Jealousy is one of the ways to describe the confusion of the imaginary and the real and the way one imprisons itself in this confusion.
- Jealousy he holds “substitutes the might of the image for the service of speech.” Whereas desire tends to absolute difference, ‘jealousy tends to an absolute narcissism.’(p.330)
- The jealous person refuses the Life as gift; it rather tends somehow to possess this gift. A jealous person cannot bear seeing life given to others. This *gaze*, which alienates the subject here, goes hand in hand with such a jealous perspective. What is given to others is interpreted as necessarily a wrenching from him or her; this is how the jealous person unconsciously interprets the gift of Life- of human life.
- Whereas in desire the subject opens up to the Life as a gift, in jealousy he attempts to annul this gift.
- In jealousy either I possess the gift of Life or the others possess it. For the jealous person there is no room for sharing of the same gift by everyone. Our jealousy makes us see what is given to others as an injustice done to us.
- In this regard, jealousy stands as a *pure attraction* either to life or to death. Conversely the desire of the Other amounts to the unconscious act that *unites death to life*.

# The Black Madonna

Presenter: Michelle Acra



- In the early days of the 'comparative religions' discipline, authors casually equated the 'Black Virgins' venerated by Catholics with pagan goddess images of similar appearance, providing some with a polemic argument against the Catholic Church.
- More recently, some feminist writers have suggested the Black Madonna as indicating a perspective on Mary underemphasized in traditional Christian doctrine.
- In any case, Black Madonnas have proved themselves as devotional aids within ecclesial life over the course of centuries.



- **"Hymn to the Eternal Female" by Teilhard de Chardin**

I appeared from the beginning of the world.

Everything in the Universe is a work of unification and fertilization - occurring through the gathering of the elements, who look for each other, melt together two by two and are thus reborn in a third.

I am the uniting face of all existence - I am the god scent, attracting them in freedom and passion on the path to their union and to Myself.

Through me everything moves and relates. I am the female essence. In life I have begun to reveal my Self.

When a man loves a woman he has, first, the notion that he approaches an individual being, just as he is, who he embraces as well as he can, and who he joins with freely.

While he surrounds my face with a nimbus he discovers a radiation, making his heart receptive and all things shine.

He interprets the shining of my essence as a subjective reflection of his enthusiastic mind, or a mere reflection of my beauty on the multiple facets of nature.

Soon, however, he is astonished by the monster emerging within him when I approach. He realizes that he can only unite with me if he allows himself the inevitability of touch, as a servant of the universal work of Creation.

He thought that, on my side, he would find a companion: but he realizes now that in me he touches the mysterious power, the mysterious secret that takes him.

Those who find me are standing at the entrance of all things

I am the magic of the universal presence and its many-faced smile.

I am the access to the heart of All Creation - the gateway to the Earth - the initiation

Those who take me surrender to me and will be taken by the Universe

When he realized that I was the Universe for him he believed he could embrace me with his arms.

He wanted to lock himself to me in a closed world of two where we would be enough for each other.

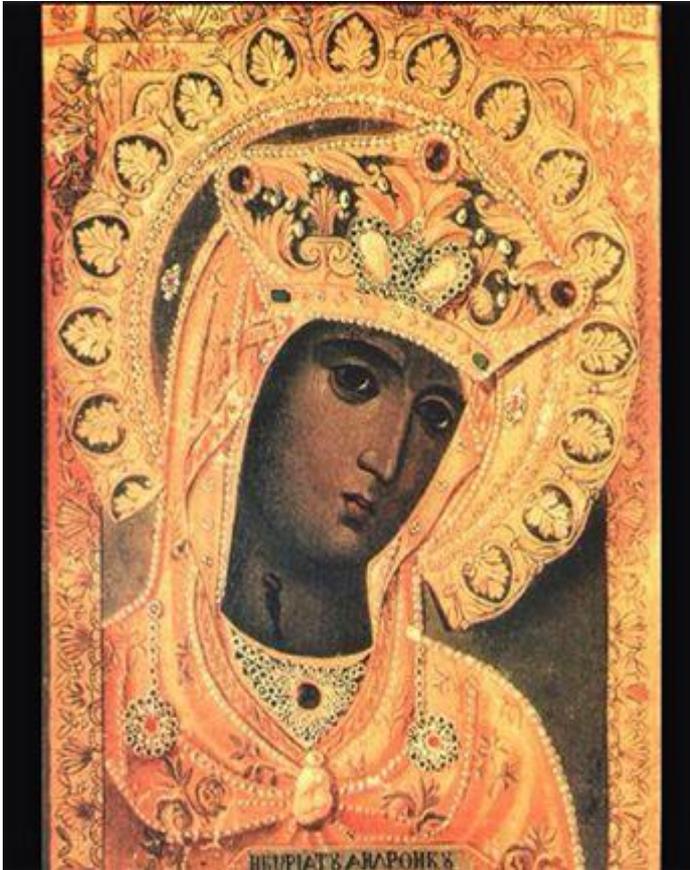
Exactly in this moment I vanished from his hands it may have seemed as if I were the doom of humanity - the temptation.

From the moment you try to hold me and possess me as a totally willing figure, you suffocate me.

You spoil me, purposefully you turn my essence upside down

But I seduce the light I take with me, into freedom.

I am the incorruptible beauty of the future, the female ideal



# Movie Night- The Giver



- Does Mill's concept of the greatest good for the greatest number translate into a Utopian society or into a Dystopia where sameness is the norm but the thrill of living is gone...
- Plot: Following a calamity referred to as The Ruin, society is reorganized into a series of communities, and all memories of the past are held by one person, the Receiver of Memory.
- Since the Receiver of Memory is the only individual in the community who has the memories from before, he must advise the Chief Elder, and the other Elders, on the decisions for the community.

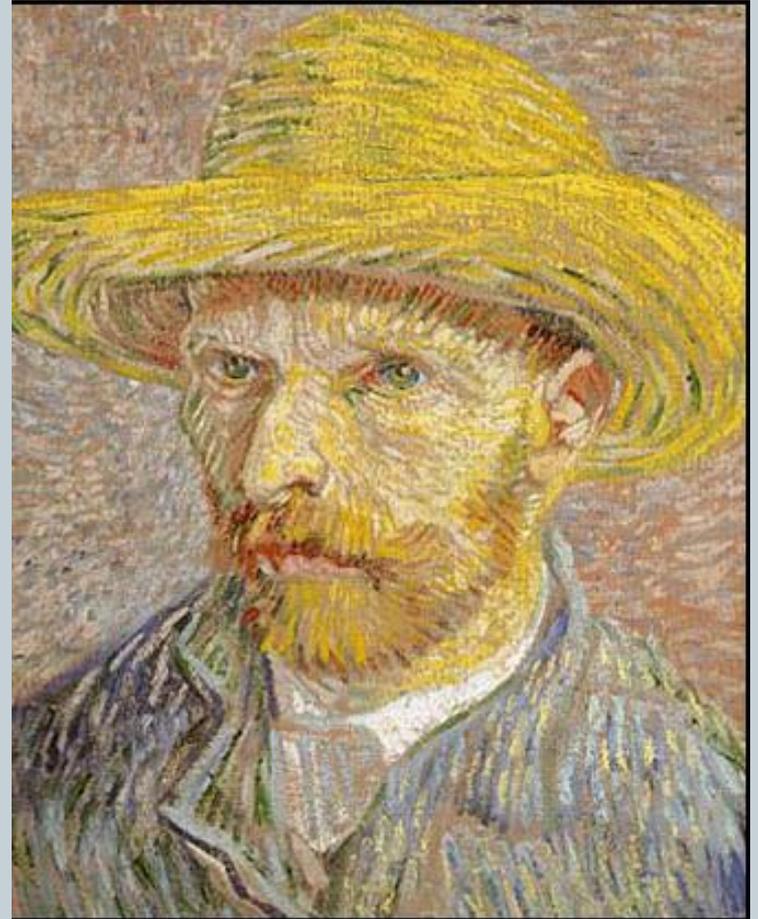


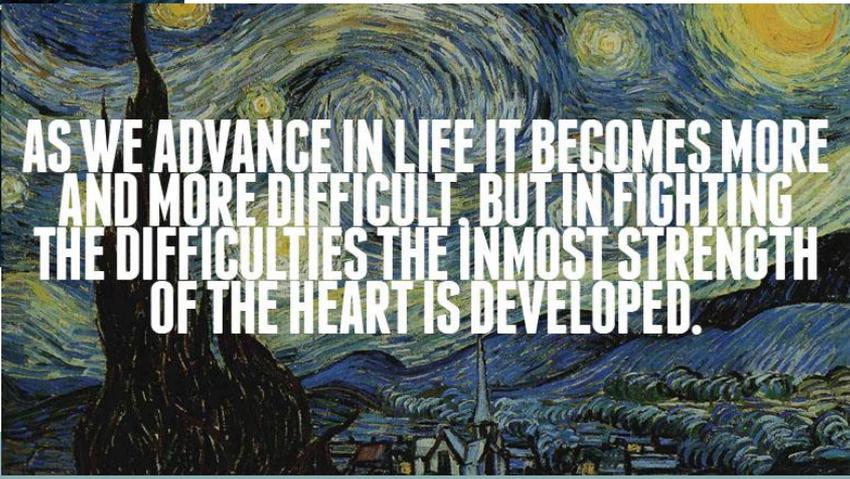
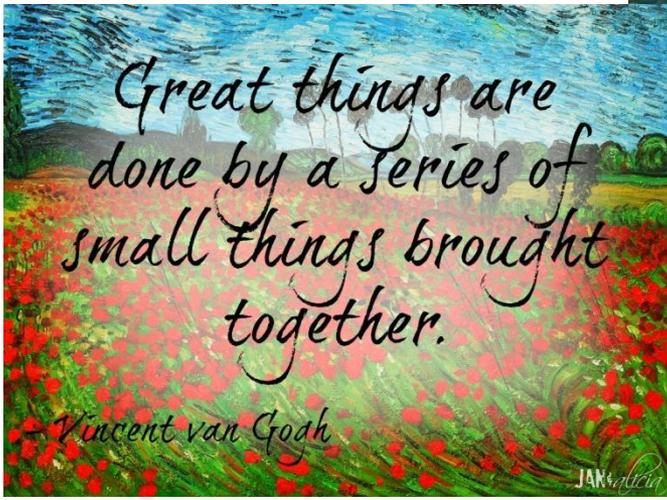
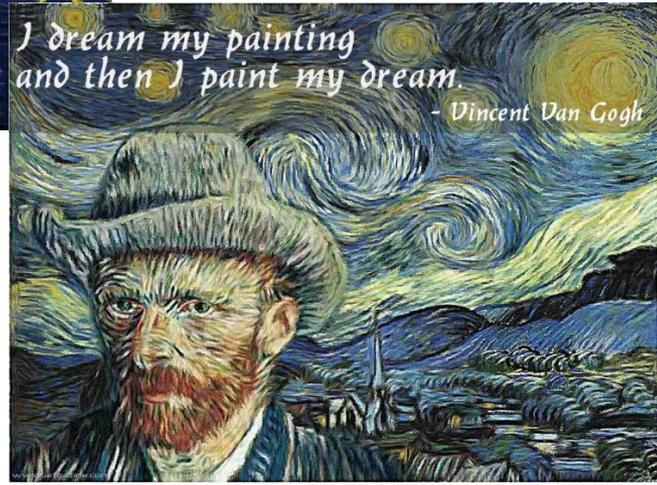
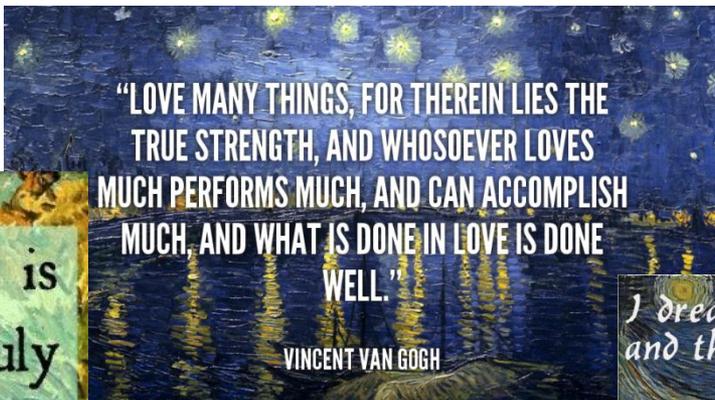
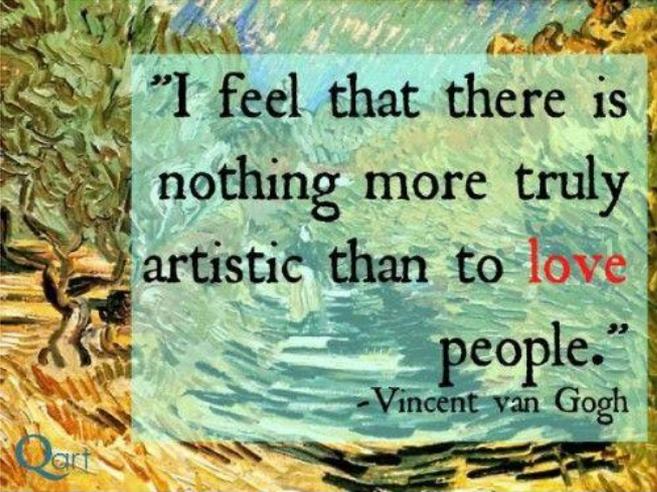
# Vincent Van Gogh

Presenter: Jackie Ohanian



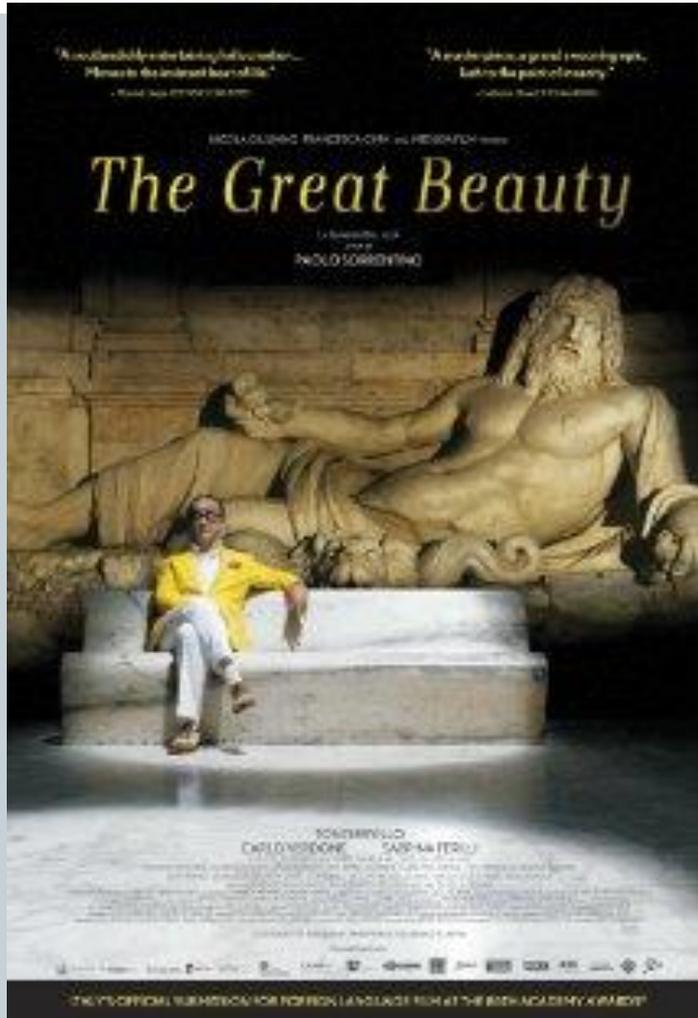
- “I know for sure that I have an instinct for color and that it will come to me more and more, that painting is in the very marrow of my bones.” Vincent Van Gogh wrote these words in an 1882 letter to his brother Theo van Gogh.
- With these words the famous post-impressionist artist seems to imply that he is emotionally attached to his art and he feels that it is also a huge part of who he is as a whole human being.
- So, who was Vincent van Gogh? What was he like? Most importantly, how did his personal life motivate and affect his art?





# Beauty

Presenter: Joanne Sayad



- The film opens with a quote from [Céline's \*Journey to the End of the Night\*](#): “To travel is very useful, it makes the imagination work, the rest is just delusion and pain.”
- Our journey is entirely imaginary, which is its strength.”
- The main character is an aging socialite, Jep Gambardella, who once wrote a famous novel in his twenties, only to retire into a comfortable life writing cultural columns and throwing parties in Rome.
- After his 65th birthday party, he walks through the ruins and city streets, encountering the various characters, reflecting on his life, his first love, and sense of unfulfillment.

“Everything has beauty,  
but not everyone sees it.”

~ Confucius

beauty

For beautiful eyes,  
**look** for the good in others;  
for beautiful lips,  
**speak** only words of kindness;  
and for poise,  
**walk** with the knowledge  
that you are never alone.

~Audrey Hepburn

**Since love  
grows within you,  
so beauty grows.  
For love is  
the beauty of  
the soul.**



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The best and most  
beautiful things  
in this world  
cannot be seen  
or even heard,  
but must be felt  
with the  
heart.

~ Helen Keller

Imperfection is *Beauty*,  
madness is *Genius*

and it's better to be absolutely ridiculous  
than absolutely boring.

- Marilyn Monroe

# Beirut Ethics Colloquium



**THANKS EVERYONE  
UNTIL NEXT FALL  
BE GOOD HOOLIGANS!!!1**

