



**Foundations in Art: Theory and Education**  
*"Facilitating Excellence in Art Foundations"*



## *Spirituality in the Classroom*

Chair: **William Carpenter**, Indiana Wesleyan University

### PANEL PRESENTERS

*Art and Zen* - **Howard Tran**, Lycoming College

*Beauty, Quality, and the Good: Art as Material Reflection of an Ineffable Spiritual Reality* - **Brian Curtis**, University of Miami

*Making the Church Laugh* - **Seth Goodman**, Lycoming College

*The Spirituality of Teaching – A Hidden Context* - **Peter Kaniaris**, Anderson University

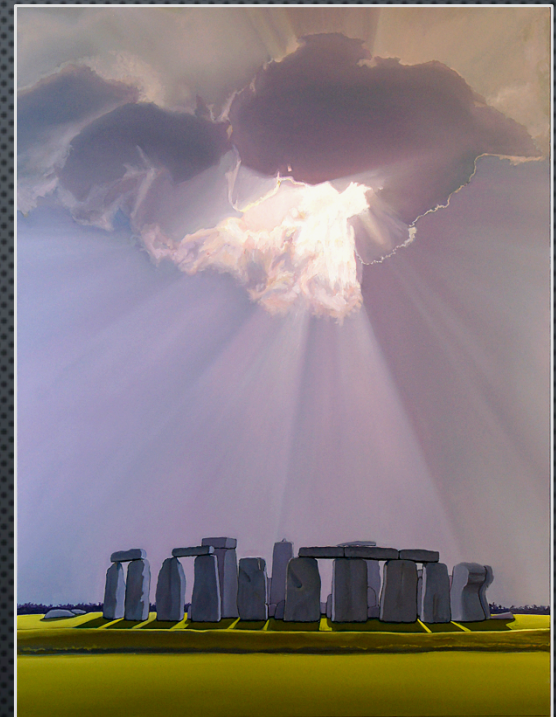
***Beauty, Quality, and the Good:***  
*Art as Material Reflection of an Ineffable Spiritual Reality*



Johannes Vermeer



Mark Rothko



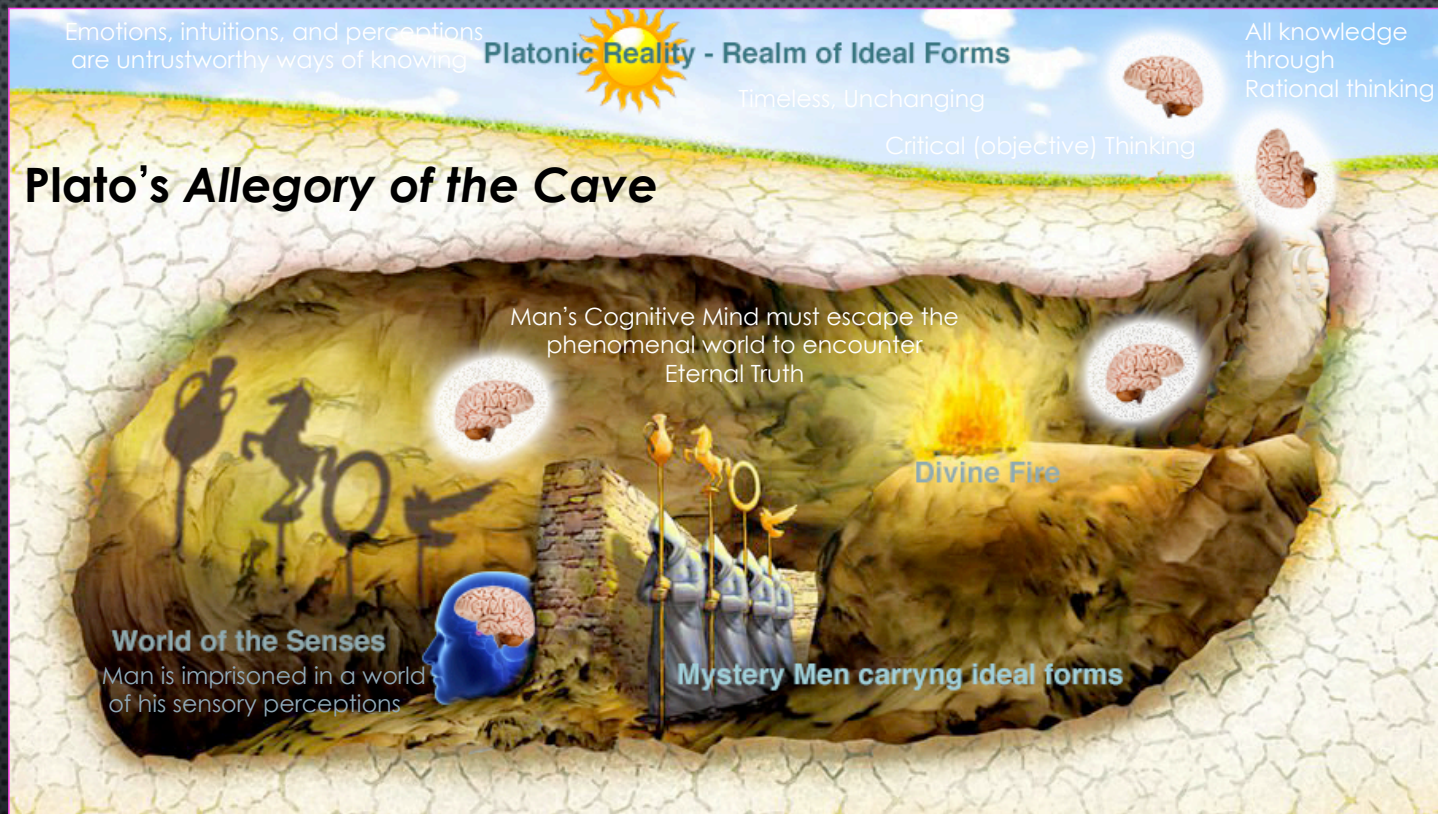
Brian Curtis

For the panel: *Spirituality in the Classroom*,  
Will Carpenter, Indiana Wesleyan University, chair  
2017 FATE Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, Thursday, April 6









Plato ignored the fact that that emotion not only plays an important role in the formulation of rational thought but also that we learn about ourselves through engagement with the phenomenal world.





## RELATED MODERN FALLACIES

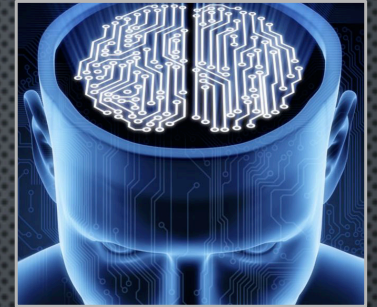
### THE HUMAN BRAIN FUNCTIONS LIKE A COMPUTER

**LOGICAL POSITIVISM** – only the only meaningful philosophical problems are those that can be solved by logical analysis

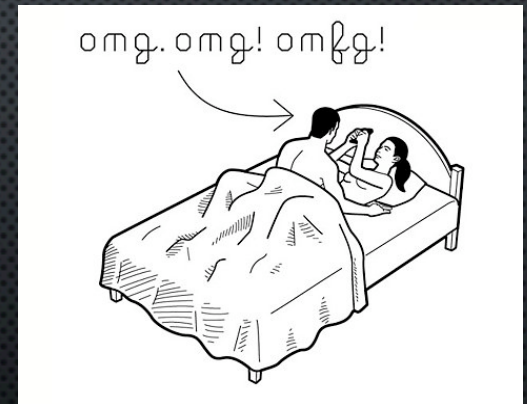
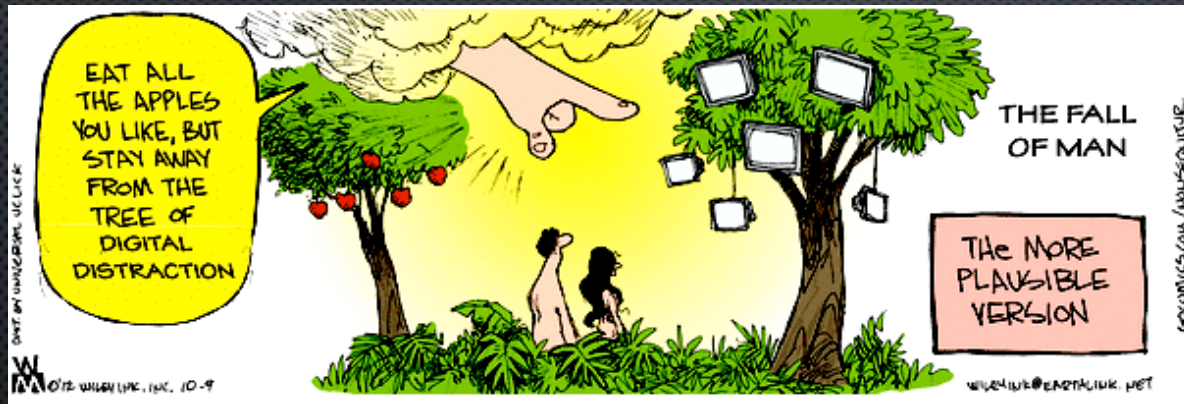
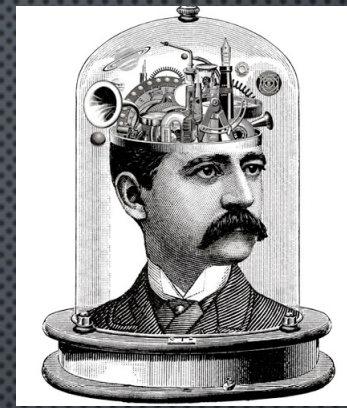
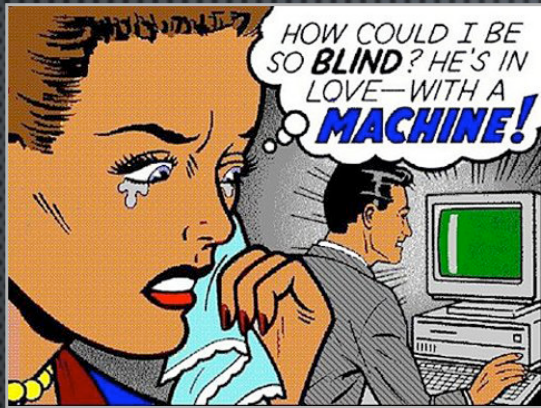
**PHYSICALISM / MATERIALISM** - a doctrine associated with logical positivism that posits that only things that are composed of measurable matter and energy are real.

**MATERIALISTIC DETERMINISM** - moral, cultural, intellectual, vocational choices of mankind are solely determined by material factors Marxism, Materialism, Freudianism

**SCIENTIFIC REDUCTIONISM** - is the idea of reducing complex interactions and entities to their most basic constituent parts in the belief that that analyzing those parts makes the complex interactions comprehensible.









# Duchamp's Legacy

## Anesthetic Art

DUCHAMP ATTACKED SKILL, TASTE, BEAUTY, AND QUALITY WHEN HE PURPOSEFULLY CHOSE  
READYMADES FOR THEIR LACK OF AESTHETIC VALUE



Duchamp substituted a disinterested spectator attitude rigid, mechanical, explicit, self-referential objects in place of the caring, attentiveness, and unself-consciousness that occur when engaging the beauty of an object





REJECT  
ALL  
RETINAL ART  
NOW









Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, *Untitled*, 1917

The "First Annual Exhibition" of the Society of Independent Artists ran from April 10 - May 6, 1917. The day after the opening Duchamp wrote to his sister Suzanne and said that, "One of my female friends who had adopted the pseudonym Richard Mutt sent me a porcelain urinal as a sculpture." Since the urinal had been submitted under a pseudonym, there is no apparent reason why he would lie to his sister about a "female friend". Duchamp did not claim authorship until 1950 when the piece again began to attract attention, twenty-three years after his "female friend" had died.



## Duchamp's "Female Friend"

**Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven** (1874-1927) lived in Philadelphia where contemporary newspaper reports about the exhibition scandal claimed "Richard Mutt" was from. If *Fountain* is, as it appears to be, a work by Baroness Elsa, then, to a German ear, the pseudonym becomes an appropriately meaningful pun since, "R. Mutt" sounds like **armut**, a German word for poverty or, in the context of the exhibition, intellectual/ artistic poverty.





## DUCHAMP'S ANAESTHETIC TRADITION LIVES ON



Orlan

The French performance artist whose assumed name is Orlan has embarked on a campaign of self-transformation through plastic surgery. The photo-documentation of her operation/performance furnishes both the imagery and the financial support for her art. **Like many artists of her generation both in France and in the U.S., Orlan was influenced by Duchamp.** Her response was an extreme one: to consider her own body a "readymade."



Ron Athey

Athey's work explores challenging subjects like the relationships between desire, sexuality, and traumatic experience. Many of his works include aspects of S&M in order to **confront pre-conceived ideas** about the body in relation to masculinity and religious iconography. Much of his work is driven by a sense of martyrdom and, arguably, a self-hate instilled on him from childhood. The body in these striking tableaux is the target of **endless assaults** - cut, pierced, slashed - as if in tearing open the flesh he might free the secrets within.



Zhu Yu

"No religion forbids cannibalism. Nor can I find any law which prevents us from eating people. I took advantage **of the space between morality and the law** and based my work on it" (Yu has claimed that he used an actual fetus which was stolen from a medical school. Close scrutinization of the picture would seem to indicate that it was in fact assembled from the head of a doll attached to the body of a duck, though this cannot be proven).



Aliza Shvarts

"On the 28th day of my cycle, I would ingest an abortifacient, after which I would experience cramps and heavy bleeding...this performance piece has **numerous conceptual goals**. The first is to assert that often, normative understandings of biological function are a mythology imposed on form...it is a myth that ovaries and a uterus are meant to birth a child."



AND ON, AND ON, AND ON



Robert Mapplethorpe, "Anal Fisting"



Andres Serano, "Self-portrait Shit"



Pietro Manzoni, "Artist's Shit"

Unbridled rationality encourages Materialism which encourages the forgetting of being

Dystopian celebration of negativity – it is easier to be outrageous than good  
Concepts dull perceptions

Cultural fragmentation contributes to a sense of devitalization which in turn encourages a need  
for sensationalism, hyper-stimulation, compulsive consumerism (The great Massification)  
Fragmented sense of self - The Great Pornification



Hyper-rationalism (small wisdom) sucks the  
Wonder (great wisdom) from human sensory experience



Socrates' enthusiasm for rational thinking and his deep seated suspicions about the value of human emotion and his reverence for the "clear crystalline theater of the intellect" caused Friedrich Nietzsche to label him as the first 'degenerate' of Western Civilization





Stonehenge Series II, *Yhi*, (Australian Aboriginal), Brian Curtis, 2013

*We think more than we can say  
We feel more than we can think  
We live more than we can feel  
And there is much more besides*

Eugene Gendling

Mystics, Poets, and Artists have understood this for thousands of years.



# UNIVERSALLY SHARED NON-PHYSICAL REALITY

QUALITY, VALUE, BEAUTY, EXCELLENCE

ETHICS, MORALITY

LOVE

INTIMACY

EMPATHY

EMOTIONS

JUSTICE

HONOR

BRAVERY

ALTRUISM

THE SPIRITUAL IMPULSE

SENSE OF BELONGING, TOGETHERNESS

(feeling interpersonally connected)

UNITY WITH NATURE

AWARENESS OF TIME (PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE)

BODILY SENSATIONS

METAPHORICAL UNDERSTANDING

MUSIC APPRECIATION

ART APPRECIATION

DANCE APPRECIATION



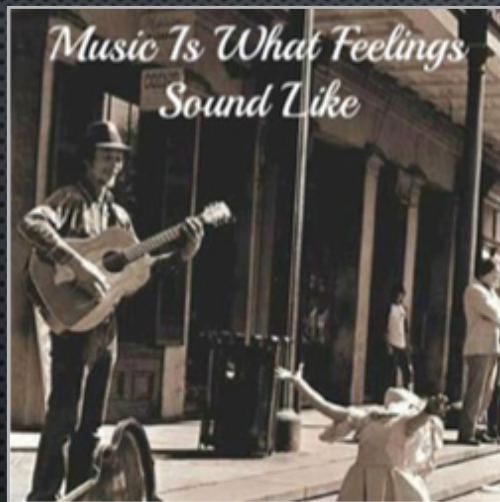
# THE RELATIONAL CONTEXT OF BEING



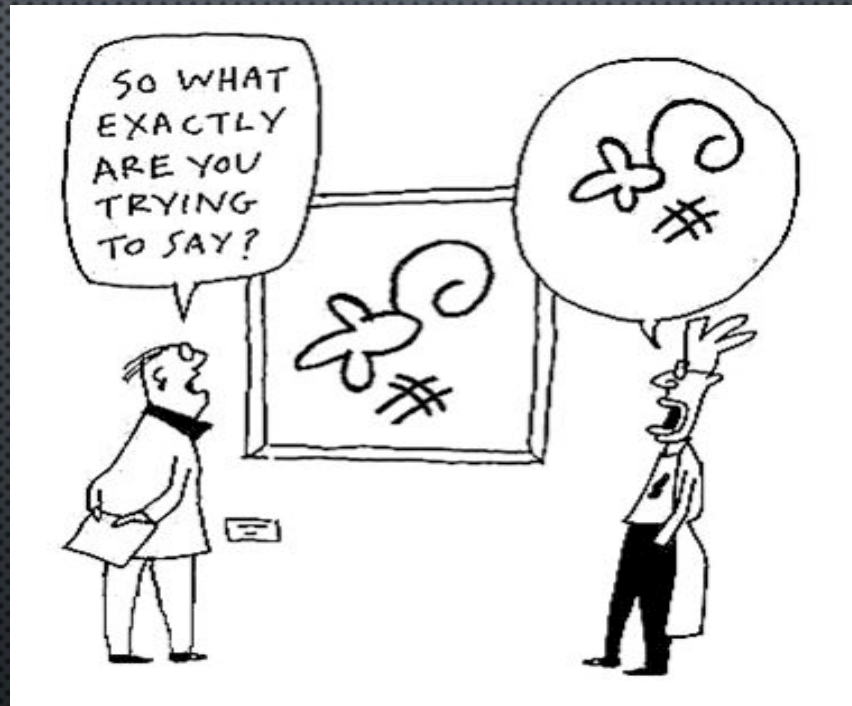
We exist in something broader and deeper than ourselves –  
we exist within the context of being



Because sensory experience of the phenomenal world is dulled when the senses are intellectualized an alternative can only be found in the long and rich tradition of implicit, metaphoric poetry, music, and visual art that has proven fully capable of inspiring us and propelling us forward toward that which is qualitatively better and toward that which infuses us with joy, fill us with energy, confidence, and a sympathetic sense of our being in and of the world.







Pictures are more REAL than words





The Primacy of Perception







The Primacy of Emotion



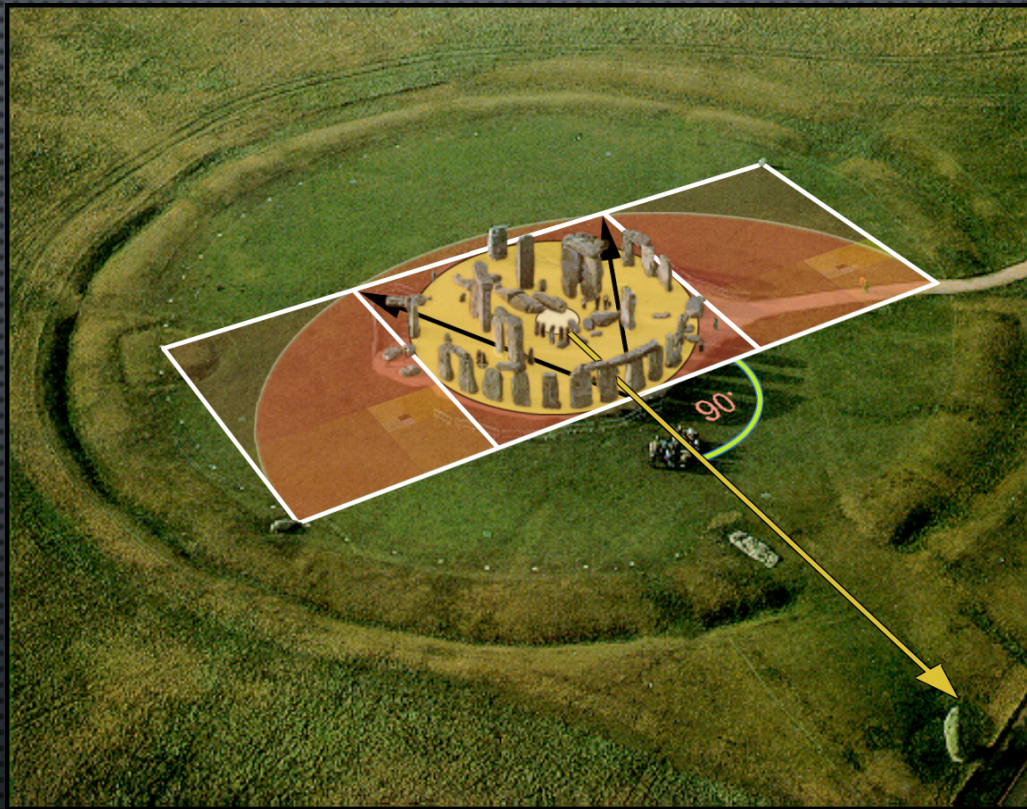


Linear, rational thinking alone is insufficient for grasping the wonders and mysteries of life









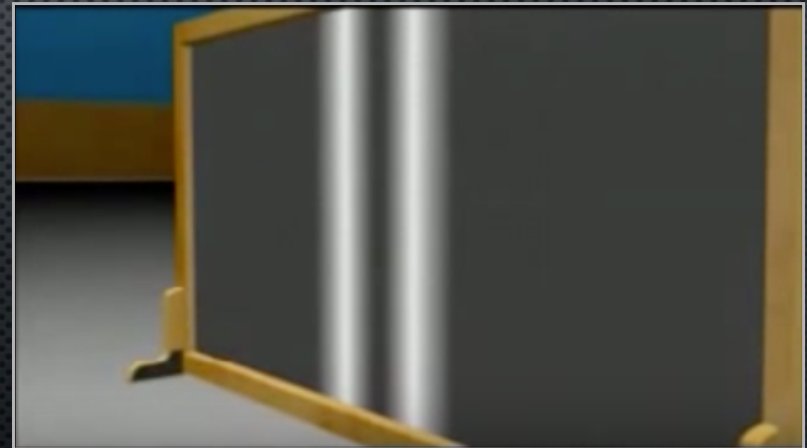
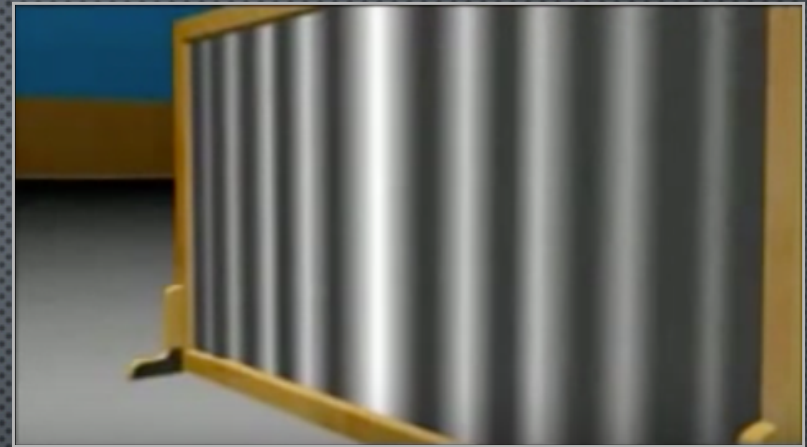
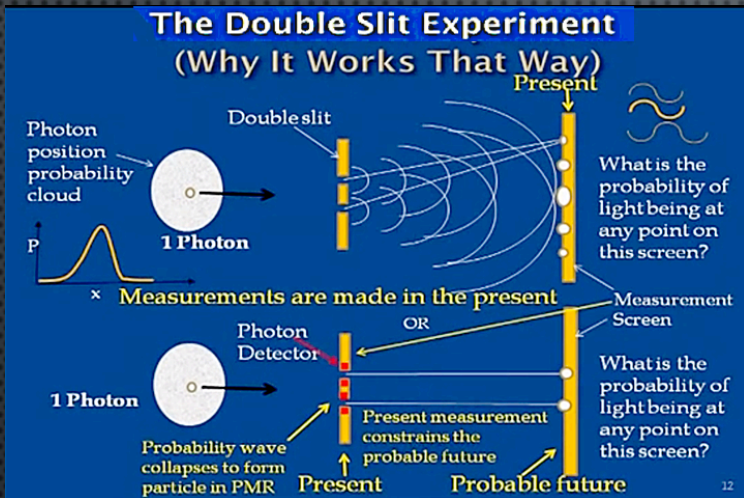
Golden Mean organization of Stonehenge



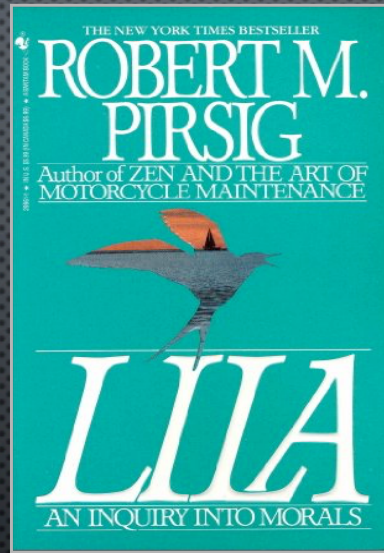
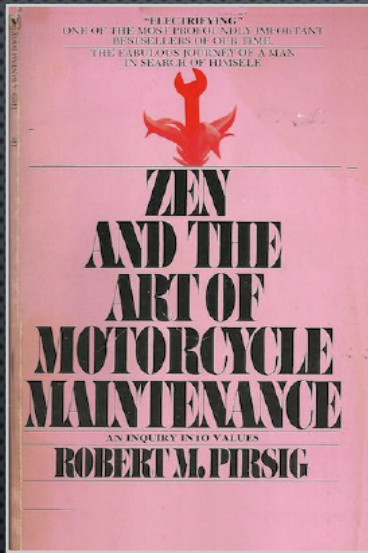





# The World of Quantum Events









A photograph of a dirt road winding through a forest. The road is light-colored and appears to be made of dirt or gravel. On either side of the road, there are tall, dry grasses and some evergreen trees. The background shows a dense forest of trees, some of which are bare, suggesting an autumn or winter setting. The overall tone is somewhat muted and natural.

**Even though quality  
cannot be defined, you  
know what quality is.**

Robert M. Pirsig

quote fancy





Quality isn't a  
thing. It is an event.

Robert M. Pirsig







Reality is always the moment of vision before the intellectualization takes place. There is no other reality.

Robert M. Pirsig





We all experience Quality. It is not an idea. It is an event like the deliciousness (Quality) that emerges when you (subject) bite into a ripe piece of fruit (object).

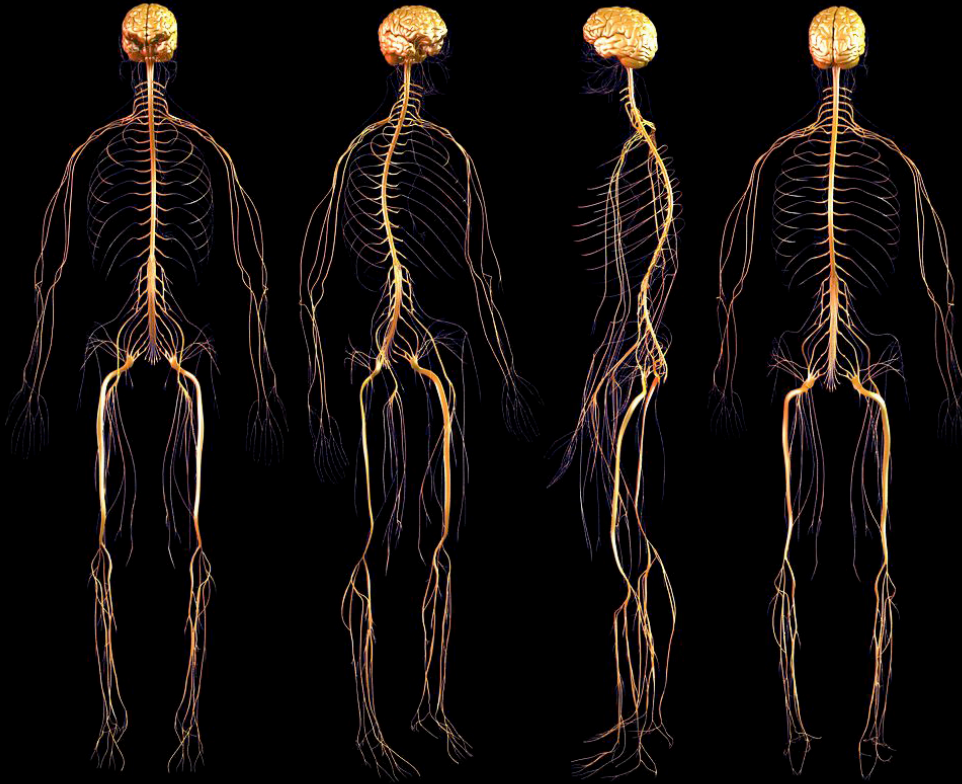




*when i kiss you i can  
taste the universe*



## human nervous system



90% of our awareness is non-verbal and pre-conceptual

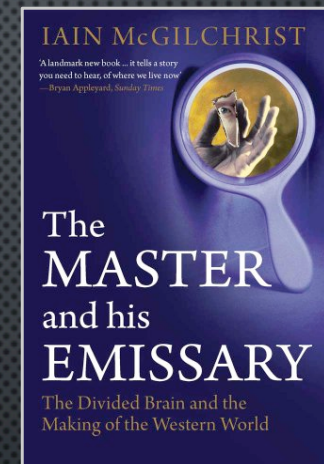
To establish a context in which artwork can be objectively evaluated we must start by acknowledging the root of all human awareness, the human nervous system and its shared embodied sensory experience, as being that from which all qualitative judgments are fundamentally derived. This primacy of perceptual experience is nothing less than the embodied mental awareness that emerges into being when we actively engage with the phenomenal world through our senses and through the inherent perceptual mechanisms identified by Gestalt psychologists. It is these mechanisms that allow us to extract meaning from the chaotic array of complex sensory stimuli in the phenomenal world.





Iain McGilchrist's book begins by looking at the structure and function of the brain, and at the differences between the hemispheres, not only in attention and flexibility, but in attitudes to the implicit, the unique, and the personal, as well as the body, time, depth, music, metaphor, empathy, morality, certainty and the self.

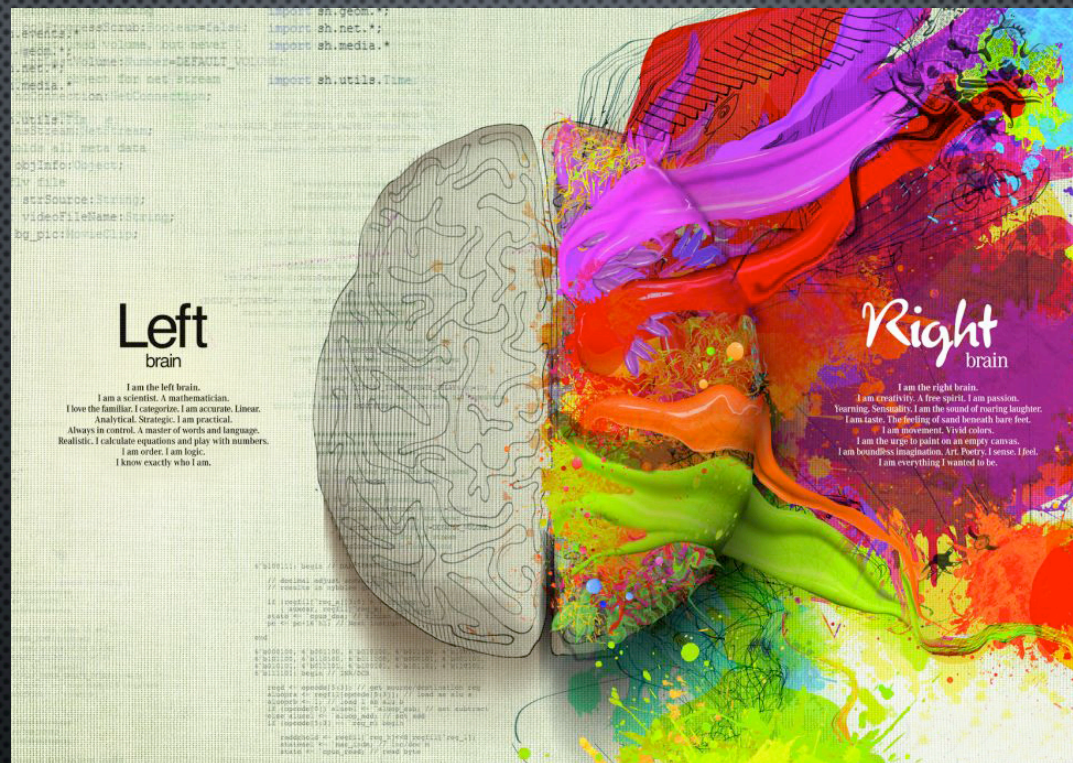
Through an examination of Western philosophy, art and literature, McGilchrist reveals the uneasy relationship of the hemispheres being played out in the history of ideas, from ancient times until the present.





## THE BICAMERAL BRAIN

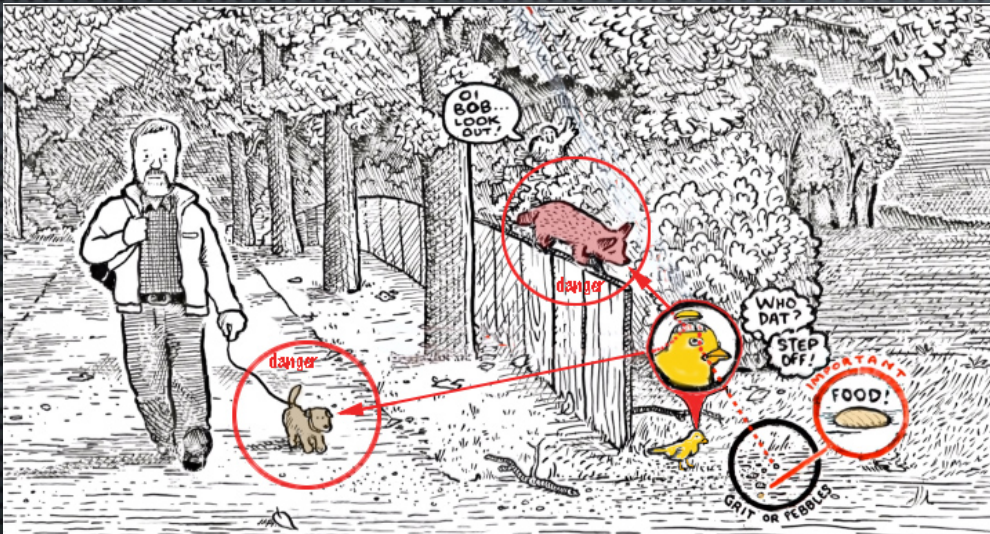
The bicameral structure of the human brain is structurally significant and provides structure to the fundamentally opposed realities of our lives





## THE BICAMERAL BRAIN

The bicameral structure of the human brain is structurally significant.  
 It simultaneously provides fundamentally opposed realities  
 One, narrowly focused and rationally based  
 The other, broad, sustained, vigilant based in emotion and intuition



EACH SIDE OF THE BRAIN IS ENGAGED IN EVERYTHING WE DO –  
 HOWEVER, EACH SIDE ATTENDS TO THE WORLD VERY DIFFERENTLY

### Left brain Style

Narrowly focused attention  
 Cognition (consciousness) 10%  
 Deals with abstract, linear processes  
 (logic)  
 Atomization (Detail oriented)  
 Emphasis on facts  
 Focus on fixed, static, unchanging truth  
 Syntax and vocabulary, literal meaning

Present  
 Philosophy, Math and Science  
 Objective, disengaged  
 Order/shape/pattern perception  
 Impersonal, isolated  
 Re-presentations (off-line), virtual world  
 Rational Thinking (abstract thinking)  
 Controlled

### Right brain Style

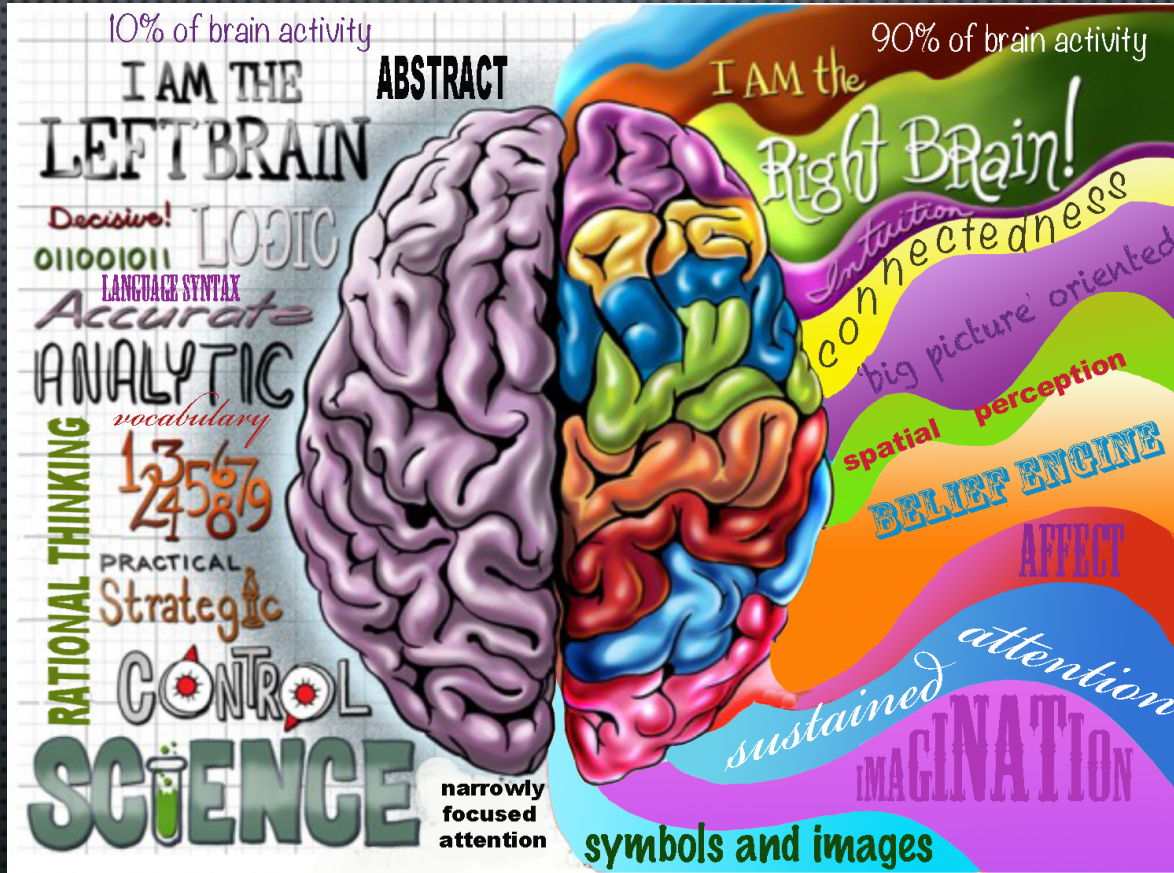
Broad, sustained, vigilant attention  
 Intuition (unconscious) 90%  
 Deals with concrete experience of  
 phenomenal world  
 Global "Big picture" oriented  
 Emphasis on feelings, 'betweenness'  
 Focus on flux, uncertainty, change  
 Affective content, Metaphoric  
 meaning, ambiguity  
 Past, Present and future  
 Art, Nature, Religion, and the Body  
 Subjective, direct experience  
 3D Visuospatial perception  
 Interconnected  
 Receptive, responsive, connected  
 Learning from experience, concrete  
 Spontaneous



# THE BICAMERAL BRAIN







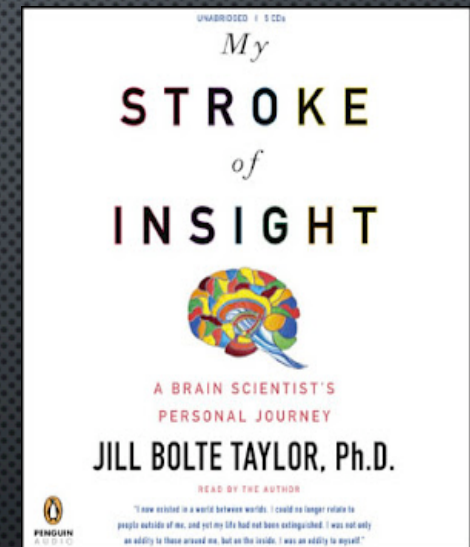




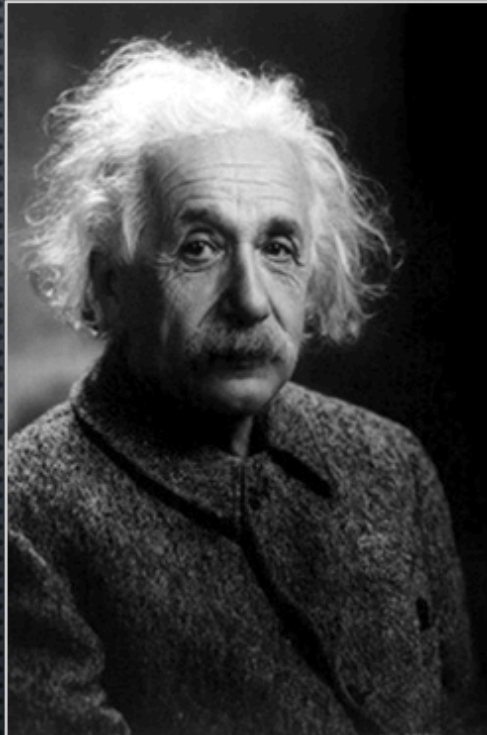




Jill Bolte Taylor, was a 37-year-old Harvard-trained brain scientist when she suffered an exploded blood vessel in her left hemisphere. As she observed her mind deteriorate to the point that she could not walk, talk, read, write, or recall any of her life - all within four hours-Taylor alternated between the euphoria of the intuitive and kinesthetic right brain, in which she felt a sense of complete well-being and peace, and the logical, sequential left brain, which recognized she was having a stroke and enabled her to seek help before she was completely lost. Eight years later she had mostly recovered.







“When I examine myself and my methods of thought I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than my talent for absorbing positive knowledge.

And certainly we should take care not to make the intellect our god; it has, of course, powerful muscles, but no personality. It cannot lead, it can only serve; and it is not fastidious in its choice of a leader.”

Albert Einstein





*Creation of Adam* - Sistine Ceiling  
by Michelangelo - 1512



