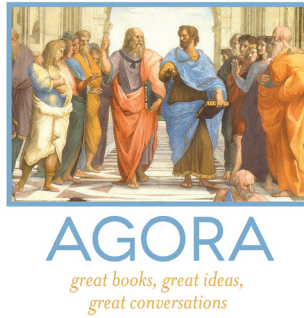




October 4, 2026

Proposal from the Agora Foundation

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this Proposal to the Smith-Hobson Foundation to continue the good work of the Agora Foundation. The Ventura County Community Foundation has been a generous supporter of this endeavor for many years and we are truly grateful for your continued interest.

Proposal - Thinking Clearly in Turbulent Times

What great people have understood and accomplished in struggling societies

Great people from the east and west, over a large span of time and across great stretches of geography, have struggled and accomplished wonderful things in challenging eras. The *Thinking Clearly in Turbulent Times* series will survey and reproduce samples of the work of these individuals, offering a coherent structure and venue for how we might learn from their wisdom and understand how we can sharpen our thinking and actions in the midst of chaos and uncertainty.

The Agora Foundation is working with our board, our subscribers, and our individual and institutional supporters to launch this latest offering. We come to you now to request \$16,000 which will allow us to offer cohorts of Ojai residents to participate in onsite series, supported by thoughtful printed materials and digital narratives which will support future attendees in navigating this critical time in our society's evolution.

We are very grateful for your kind consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Andrew Gilman

Executive Director



The Agora Foundation, Inc.

Organization — History and Mission

The Agora Foundation is a nonsectarian 501(c)3 non-profit endeavor, providing great books seminars and other educational opportunities and resources to those who are busy with careers, families, and daily responsibilities yet are seeking to further their education. The goal of these offerings is to provide an understanding of the ideas that shape civilizations and to promote meaningful inquiry and dialogue. Additionally, the *Teachers for Lifelong Learning Program* provides training to high school teachers in this engaging approach to learning, and the *Ojai Chautauqua Project* promotes civil discourse on controversial and complicated subjects.

In September 1998, a group of interested colleagues began *Great Books Seminar in Ojai*, offering one- and two-day seminars to adults who wished to continue their education through the study and discussion of the great books of the west and the east. Events were held about every six weeks. In September 2006, the endeavor was incorporated and renamed the *Agora Foundation*. The Foundation's work was extended through the *Teachers for Lifelong Learning Program*, the *Media Resource*, and the *Interactive Curriculum Map* to individual teachers and entire schools, supporting the use of original texts and the seminar method in classrooms from Los Angeles to Seattle. In 2014, we began the *Ojai Chautauqua* series of panels and interviews, promoting civil discourse on controversial and complicated subjects such as GMO's, fracking, income inequality, media and politics, wildfire mitigation, and education. Since 2018, Agora has produced free, community seminar series on subjects including *The Foundations of Our Republic*, *Poetry*, and *Eastern Classics*. Current free community series in progress include the *Tao Te Ching*, the *Poetry of Mary Oliver*, and *Sufi Poetry*.

Since its inception the *Agora Foundation* has produced over 1,650 seminars and panels. Current offerings include *The Novels of Jane Austen*, *An Introduction to Buddhism*, *Finnegans Wake* by James Joyce, *The Essential Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, an onsite film series lead by Peter Rainer of the *Christian Science Monitor*, *Epistemology*, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* by Thomas Kuhn, *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer, *The Periodic Table* by Primo Levi, *The Chemical History of a Candle* by Michael Faraday, and *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays* by Immanuel Kant. A local panel series on *The Future of Ojai* is also underway, and a revised *American Civics and History* series will launch at Ojai's City Hall this fall. As a result of this work, Agora is regarded as an informed, respectful, and valued resource for the local community and beyond.

Organization — Programs and Number Served



1. Great Books Seminars (Each onsite and online event ranges from 7-16 participants, with typically 3-5 events taking place each week.) — *Great Books Seminars* are offered in three forms: 1) Regular one-off, one-two hour events discussing a shorter work; 2) Regular monthly series of one-two hour events covering a longer work or a theme (e.g. Epistemology, Shakespeare History Plays); 3) Online Intensives, which are 6-28 week series where the same group meets weekly for the duration of the course (e.g. American History, Don Quixote, Novels of Jane Austen). The seminar method, which is central to the mission of

Agora, is very different from the educational experience of most people. Tutors, who help to guide the discussion, do not lecture about the meaning of the texts; rather they ask probing questions which, after careful discussion, help to illuminate the power of the ideas that arise in the conversation. The tutors guide the discussion minimally to keep it on track, but the real teachers in the room are the authors of the works themselves.

The reading and discussion of the great books, organized in themes, is an approach to learning which requires an active role of each participant. The seminar setting emphasizes the collaborative nature of this approach. The search to understand what the text says and what its implications are becomes a shared enterprise. Such active participation is an excellent way for one to claim for oneself an understanding of the great issues which continue to inform culture. Many of those who have attended these seminars have discussed the importance of the events to their lives, and how their character, thought, and work has been transformed as a result.

The great books of the western and eastern traditions, from the ancient Greeks, Chinese, and Indians to the present, contain some of the best that has been thought and written about nature, human nature, civics, and the divine. Whether it is a Greek tragedy by Sophocles, Aristotle's *Ethics*, the *Tao Te Ching*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the *Notebooks* of Leonard da Vinci, *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, the *Upanishads*, Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, the *Federalist Papers*, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* by Hannah Arendt, *Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu, or Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, such texts invite us to join in a great conversation about topics which transcend the particularities of the time and place in which these documents were written.

Organization — Programs and Number Served — Continued



2. Ojai Chautauqua Panels and Video Interviews

(Panel attendance ranges from 70 to 350 per onsite event) — The purpose of *Ojai Chautauqua* panels and interviews is to engage the community in civil discourse about controversial and highly passionate subjects. The Chautauqua was an adult education movement in the United States, highly popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Chautauqua assemblies expanded and spread throughout rural America until the mid-1920s.

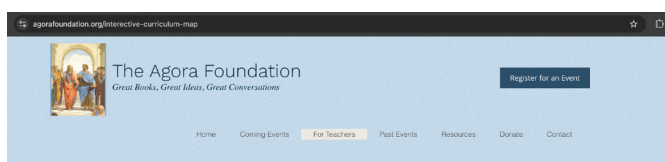


The Chautauqua brought entertainment and culture for the whole community, with speakers, teachers, musicians, entertainers, preachers, and specialists of the day. Former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt was quoted as saying that Chautauqua was “the most American thing in America.” The Ojai Chautauqua is building on and expanding this movement. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Civil discourse is perilously absent from many aspects of contemporary life. The result of this failing is not only

sad... it is dangerous. If we can develop these essential abilities of clear communication and expressions of goodwill, we can begin to affect a positive change to many aspects of life that can extend far and wide. Agora has produced 39 Ojai Chautauqua events since 2014.

Topics to date have included *Politics and Media*, *Water*, *The Purpose of Education*, *Income Inequality*, *Immigration*, *Fracking*, *Wildfire Prevention*, and much more. In addition to the moderated panel of experts representing different sides of the issues, we assemble an objective data packet outlining the issue at hand. These documents are given to every attendee and placed online. Videos of the panels can be viewed and packets can be downloaded on [our website](#). In addition to panels, Agora hosted and moderated the 2022 Ojai City Council Candidate Forum prior to the November 2022 election. Since 2023 we have conducted numerous video interviews with local government and non-profit leaders. These interviews have been well received and can be viewed on our [website](#). Finally, Agora, through the Ojai Chautauqua project, is leading and moderating *Brown Bag Lunches* in Ojai’s city center - Libbey Park. These informal gatherings are an opportunity for Ojai’s government, non-profit and business leaders, arts advocates, public school leaders, and local water district officials to come together in an informal way to discuss challenges, build trust, and find ways to support each other’s work.

Organization — Programs and Number Served — Continued



Interactive Curriculum Resource

For those leading seminars, we have begun this **interactive curriculum resource** to help facilitators thematically pair readings, as well as provide brief summaries, sample opening questions, and PDF downloads for each text. In some cases we have audio recordings of Agora seminars you can listen to. We welcome your feedback. Email us here info@agorafoundation.org. This collection will grow in the coming days and weeks.

Begin your query below:



3. Teachers for Lifelong Learning (Three to five teachers attend most seminar events, with at least some if not all of them using foundation and donor support. For whole-class or whole-school trainings, seminar sizes range depending on the needs of the school. There are 10-30 teachers at each onsite *Ojai Chautauqua* panel.) — Too often, learning in the classroom can be an exercise in memorization, with students preparing solely for performance on a test. What can be lost, both for the teacher and the student, is the deep engagement with the challenges and questions that have evolved civilization. Whether the subject area is *politics* (What is the best way to have a society?), *science* (What is the nature of the world?), *philosophy* (What does it mean to be wise?), or *literature* (What is the nature of humanity and creative activity?), thoughtful engagement with the greatest works of the east and the west can bring energy and depth back into the classroom. The Agora Foundation has worked with individual teachers and whole schools to find ways to insert these texts and methodology into their current curriculum, with sustained and meaningful outcomes.

In addition to seminar and panel attendance and individual consultation, teachers access our **Interactive Curriculum Resource**, which is on our website. This evolving tool helps teachers thematically pair readings and authors, provides brief summaries and sample opening questions, and offers a collection of PDF text downloads. There are also hundreds of audio recordings of Agora seminars on the **Media** page of our website that teachers can listen to prior to leading their classes. We have received outstanding feedback on these resources, which are accessed over 600 times per year.

Organization — Quantitative/Qualitative Date Outcomes

Agora evaluates the success of its work using the following criteria:

- The number of active subscriptions in comparison to prior years.
- Event attendance and frequency.



Attendance and the number of events grew with the introduction of the Ojai Chautauqua project in 2014. In 2018 the number of seminars doubled with added staff time. In 2020 the events were offered online due to COVID, and a huge audience and offering increase occurred, which continues into the present. In 2026, there have been 115 events produced so far.

- Website traffic, especially downloads of media content and Curriculum Resource use.
- Increased use of teaching methods and materials in classrooms, as measured by feedback from individual teachers on post-project participation surveys and consultation.
- Use of the Agora Foundation as a curriculum and teaching resource as indicated by interviews with school administrators.
- The number of participant teachers, measured through ongoing seminar attendance.

Population Served

The population served by *Agora* includes adult learners (high school teachers to retirees), and occasionally high school and college students. *Ojai Chautauqua* panels have a wide variety of attendees, from high school students and their teachers to retirees, depending on the subject. Online events have seen a wide range of participants from across the country. Onsite seminars are open to all in the community.

Teacher trainings have been provided at multiple high schools and districts including John Burroughs High School, Granada Hills Charter High School, Oaks Christian, The Notre Dame School, Providence School, Oak Grove School, and Ojai Unified School District.

While we do not collect demographic data on participants, participation in onsite events is representative of the Ojai community, which is aging. Online events are considerably more diverse as we draw from a wider geographic area.

Leadership/Governance

Staff

The Agora Foundation employs one full-time staff person — Andrew Gilman, full-time Executive Director (biography on following page). In addition, one part-time administrative contractor and ten part-time program contractors make up Agora's team. A complete list of our past and present program contractors can be found on our website. In addition to these contracted professionals, we have up to ten high school students and twelve adult volunteers to help with logistics for onsite events, especially panels. We also maintain an advisory committee made up of donors, community activists, regional leaders, and subject matter experts who offer support and guidance on programming and organizational direction.

Board of Director and Advisory Committee Expectations

Board and Advisory Committee Members serve for three-year terms and are expected to contribute in the following ways:

- Attend at least two meetings per year.
- Meet regularly with the Director
(The Director is in separate, weekly conversations with a majority of board members).
- Participate in strategic direction as well as program content creation.
- Make annual financial contributions to the Foundation, with the amount set by their ability
(no specific percentage required).

Leadership/Governance — Executive Director



Andrew Gilman

Education:

[Harrison Middleton University](#)

Tempe, Arizona — Current (part time, on break)
Pursuing a Doctorate in Education

[St. John's College](#)

Santa Fe, New Mexico
August 2003 · Master's Degree in Liberal Arts

[California Institute of the Arts](#)

Valencia, California
June 1998 · Bachelor's Degree in Fine Art, Design

Experience:

[The Agora Foundation](#)

Ojai, California · September 2006 to the present
Executive Director

[Oak Grove School](#)

Ojai, California · June 2010 to 2018
Director of Admissions and Outreach,
High School Teacher

[Ventura Charter School](#)

Ventura, California · January 2005 to June 2010
Founding Board Member and Former
Board President

[Behavioral Science Technology, Inc. \(now Dekra\)](#)

Ojai, California · February 1991 - April 2009
Marketing Manager, Communications, Design

Boards, Councils, and Volunteering:

Current Mayor of the City of Ojai

Member, Donor, Volunteer, or Former Board
Member:

[Ojai Valley Defense Fund](#), [Ojai Valley Land Conservancy](#), [Food for Thought](#), [Ojai Music Festival](#), [Ojai Rotary Club](#), [BRAVO Music Program](#), [Ojai Unified School District](#), [Help of Ojai](#), [Ojai Valley Chamber of Commerce](#), [Ojai Valley Arts Commission](#)

Writing and Art Examples:

Please visit www.goodforojai.com to view essays, published columns, and current art projects.

Personal:

I have three adult children and one grandchild. I greatly enjoy community involvement, traveling, playing music, drawing, cooking, gardening, reading, and hiking. I've walked the Camino de Santiago in Spain twice, and hike the Los Padres National Forest regularly.

Leadership/Governance — Board of Directors

Thomas Krause, President

Tom Krause, Ph.D. (Psychology) is the former chairman and co-founder of BST. For the past 40 years, he has been interested in leadership, culture, and organizational safety. In the last ten years, Dr. Krause has focused on coaching senior executive leaders. He holds a Masters Degree in Liberal Arts from St. John's College and is serving on its Board of Governors.

Cathryn Krause, Treasurer and Secretary

Cathryn Krause was BST's Chief Financial Officer for more than 20 years and brings her seasoned experience to this endeavor. In addition, she is actively involved in charitable activities, including great books and liberal education pursuits through the Agora Foundation, St. John's College, and Thomas Aquinas College.

Andrew Gilman, Executive Director

Andrew Gilman brings 35 years of experience in marketing, organizational functioning, and team leadership to the Foundation. He is a founding parent and former Board President of Ventura Charter School of Arts and Global Education and formerly the Director of Admissions and Outreach for Oak Grove School. Andy is also the current Mayor of the City of Ojai.

Karl Haigler, Board Member

Karl Haigler has more than 40 years of experience in workforce development, education, and human resources consulting and is a nationally-recognized expert in workplace and adult literacy. At the federal level (1985-1988), Karl served on the U.S. Secretary of Education's senior staff as Director of the Adult Literacy Initiative and Director of Adult Education. From 1988 to 1991, Karl served as Special Advisor to Mississippi's Governor on literacy and workforce development issues.

Rae Nelson, Board Member

Rae Nelson has held leadership positions in the public, private, and not-for profit sectors. These include serving at the White House as Associate Director for Education Policy and as Executive Director of the Center for Workforce Preparation, a non-profit affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. For the last twenty years, she has consulted with organizations to help ensure workers have the competencies they need to fulfill their potential. Rae serves as the current Mayor of Bermuda Run, North Carolina.

Barry Rabe, Board Member

Barry Rabe is a seasoned contract management consultant, expert witness, community volunteer, and former English teacher. Barry brings his legal and organizational experience, as well as his love for learning and language to this endeavor, leading several seminar series.

Leadership/Governance — Board of Directors — Continued

David Appleby, Board Member

David Appleby, Ph.D. received his master's degree and a doctorate in medieval history, focusing in his studies on the medieval Fathers of the Church, and has been a tutor at Thomas Aquinas College since 2003. He has published numerous articles and leads several Agora seminar series.

Carl Bobkoski, Board Member

Carl Bobkoski is a business leader and teacher, and brings his long-time experience with the Great Books and the liberal arts to this endeavor. Carl leads online series for the foundation and brings his experience on organizational functioning and communications.

Financial — 2025 Actuals (January 1 - December 31)

Revenue

2025 - Grants and Donations

\$80,895

2025 - Program Fees

\$37,745

Expenses

2023 - Staff and Contractors

\$94,178

2025 - Marketing

\$9,266

2025 - Books, Media, Subscriptions

\$5,784

2025 - Operations and Facilities

\$4,229

2025 - Meals and Meetings

\$2,135

2025 - Accounting Fees

\$750

2025 - Insurance - Liability

\$505

2025 - Postage and Mailing

\$162

Financial — 2026 Budget (January 1 - December 31) - \$176,000

Revenue

2026 - Grants and Donations

Budget: \$145,000

2026 - Program Fees

Budget: \$31,000

Expenses

2026 - Staff and Contractors

Budget: \$150,000

2026 - Marketing

Budget: \$10,000

2026 - Books, Media, Subscriptions

Budget: \$6,000

2026 - Operations and Facilities

Budget: \$5,000

2026 - Meals and Meetings

Budget: \$3,000

2026 - Accounting Fees

Budget: \$750

2026 - Insurance - Liability

Budget: \$505

2026 - Postage and Mailing

Budget: \$300

Financial — Institutional Support, Recent Top Donors (2023-2025):

Tom and Cathryn Krause — \$141,500

Ahmanson Foundation — \$67,700

Andrew Gilman — \$32,255

Shanbrom Family Foundation — \$30,000

Other past donors:

Esther and Tom Wachtell — \$49,741

Maurice Chasse and Marilyn Wallace — \$25,000

Ventura County Community Foundation — \$5,000

Ojai Rotary Foundation — \$3,450

City of Ojai — \$1,775

Constance Eaton and William Hart Fund — \$1,500

Financial — Liquidity

The Agora Foundation deliberately operates in a very lean fashion to keep tuition costs low. Staffing is kept to a minimum, office space is donated, and expenses have been dramatically reduced with the move to online delivery of events. In addition, initiatives are not undertaken until funding is in place, ensuring successful continuance of the organization. As a result, there is little liquidity but there is also minimal future expenditure commitment.

Financial — Reserves

The Agora Foundation does not have a reserve policy, but has taken this item to the Board of Directors and investigate the initiative for 2027.

Proposal - Thinking Clearly in Turbulent Times

What great people have understood and accomplished in struggling societies

Philosophy is a solitary business, and it seems only natural that the need arises in times of transition – when men no longer rely on the stability of the world and their role in it. – Hannah Arendt, Responsibility and Judgment

When everything is going well we usually do not think about existential questions or problems of knowledge. But when something unexpected and profound happens, such as the death of a loved one, many of us ask questions such as: Who am I? What does it mean to be a person? How can we know right from wrong? What is the nature of this world we live in? Are there divine (or supernatural) forces at work in the world? What happens when we die? What kind of life do I want? When not only our personal circumstances are in turmoil, but the larger world is turbulent, philosophical questions move into the practical realm and become more immediate. What were once thought experiments conducted in leisure might now become concrete choices with serious consequences.

Great people from the east and west, over a large span of time and across great stretches of geography, have struggled and accomplished wonderful things in challenging eras. The *Thinking Clearly in Turbulent Times* series will survey and reproduce samples of the work of these individuals, offering a coherent structure and venue for how we might learn from their wisdom and understand how we can sharpen our thinking and actions in the midst of chaos and uncertainty.

Series Components:

Workbook - A thoughtfully crafted guide will contain excerpts and short readings based on ten focus areas, described in more detail below. The initial workbook will be the source for the participant readings and the facilitator's framework. Each focus area will be the center of discussion for each ten-week course.

Initial Seminar Series - Three ten-week seminar series will be initially conducted sequentially, each series consisting of ten two-hour seminars taking place one day per week. The first series will be onsite in Ojai, California over ten consecutive weekday evenings. The second series will take place over ten weekday evenings in online seminars. The third series will take place onsite in Los Angeles, California over ten weekend afternoons. 16 participants for each of the three series will be selected from our regular subscriber base, our participating schools, our non-profit partners, and will be open for application from the public. Each group makeup will strive to represent a variety of ages, backgrounds, experiences, and social views. Should the Smith-Hobson Foundation request any individual spots in these groups, we would be grateful and pleased to offer onsite or online seats, as desired.

Website - www.thinking-clearly.org is in development and will describe the project, its goals, the progress, and the experiences of the series participants. The readings will be available online, along with audio recordings of each event (with full participants' permissions). Selected video testimonials from participants will also be posted. Registration logistics will be handled through this website as well.

Book - After the three seminars series are concluded, *Thinking Clearly in Turbulent Times* will be written in book form. The book will have all of the material the workbook includes, but will also narrate the personal experiences of the participants, including some of their biography and current concerns with society. This additional dimension will enliven the seminar content, tying these great authors, advocates, and heroes from the past to our present experience and our present benefit. The book will have stand-alone value for those who prefer to engage in this mode over the seminar or digital experience.

Round Two Series - The learning and experience from the three initial series and material creation will then be used for an enhanced second round of three series offerings, two online and one onsite (reaching farther in Ventura and Los Angeles Counties), with a revised workbook centered on adjusted curriculum and incorporating the *Epilogue on Technology* (which will also be offered as a stand-alone series). Video interviews will again take place during each of the three revised series and will contribute to future materials and offerings.

Focus areas:

1) Truth v. Convenience - Every person desires to know what is true. While discerning the truth can be difficult, the striving remains a central human priority.

We will be better, braver, and less idle, if we believe that one must search for the things one does not know, rather than if we believe that it is not possible to find out what we do not know. — Plato

Readings: Plato, selections from *Meno*; Arendt, selections from *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Aristotle, *On the Soul*.

2) Certainty v. Uncertainty - What was truly certain remains that way, and what only appeared to be certain was never truly that way.

The now that passes produces time, the now that remains produces eternity. — Boethius

Readings: Euclid, *Definitions and Common Notions*, Epictetus, selections from *The Handbook*; Boethius, selections from *The Consolation of Philosophy*.

3) Facts v. Noise - Even in peaceful times, discerning facts from hyperbole, gossip, hearsay, and propaganda can be challenging. Chaos and turbulence magnify the confusion, but they also amplify the consequences of our choices. A proper understanding of what is presented establishes meaningful and dramatic differences.

It is not enough to have a good mind. The main thing is to use it well. — Descartes

Readings: Descartes, selections from *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*; selections from Kahneman and Feynman.

4) Humility v. Hubris - Knowing that we do not know is the first step toward knowing ourselves, and appreciating both our value and our limits helps us to know our place in the world.

My name is Ozymandias, king of kings / Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair! / Nothing beside remains. — Shelly

Readings: Plato, selections from *Apology*; Sophocles, selections from *Oedipus Rex*, selected poems.

5) Tolerance v. Orthodoxy - A firm, narrow grounding for ethics can be rooted in nature (the entire natural order, not only humanity), and as with biology, a thorough understanding of right and wrong, and of fulfillment, requires suppleness.

All men make mistakes, but a good man yields when he knows his course is wrong, and repairs the evil. The only crime is pride. — Sophocles
 Readings: Sophocles, selections from *Antigone*; selections from Gandhi, Jefferson, Madison, Joseph Campbell, selections from *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson.

6) Courage v. Doubt - Our confusion and fear is often misplaced or mistaken. Courage turns out to be the only choice we can consistently live with.

There was one of two things I had a right to: liberty or death. If I could not have one, I would have the other - Harriet Tubman

Readings: Arendt, selections from *Responsibility and Judgment*; Plato, selections from *Crito*; Herodotus, selections from *The Histories*; Yeats, *An Irish Airman Foresees His Death*, Marcus Aurelius, selections from *Meditations*, Shakespeare, selections from *Henry V*.

7) Hope v. Skepticism - What does experience recommend? What does our instinct intimate? Does history serve as any guide to this question of whether or not we should dare to hope? Is history moving toward a goal?

World history is the progress of the consciousness of freedom—a progress which we have to recognize in its necessity. — Hegel

Readings: Shakespeare, selections from *The Tempest*, Hegel, selections from *Philosophy of History*, the *Book of Ecclesiastes*; W.E.B. Du Bois, selections from *The Souls of Black Folks*; selections from Stoic writers.

8) Abundance v. Scarcity - In troubling times how shall we best balance the needs of ourselves and our community? Are we clear about what price for our own individual comfort or survival is too expensive to pay?

The wise man does not lay up his own treasures. The more he gives to others, the more he has for his own. — Lao Tzu

Readings: Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World*; Ann McGovern, *Stone Soup*; *The Book of Jonah*; *Gospel of Luke 9: 10-17*, selections from the *Tao Te Ching*.

9) Art as a Sanctuary - In ambiguity and strife, meaning and strength can be found in creativity.

We have art in order not to die of life. - Albert Camus

Readings: selected poems from Keats, Rilke, Hughes, Stevens; William Faulkner, *Nobel Acceptance Speech*; selections from Existentialist writers, selections from *On the Spiritual in Art* by Wassily Kandinsky.

10) Right Action is Nimble and Contingent - Beneficial responses to societal challenges have many forms. Sincere attention and adherence to value are crucial, especially in turmoil.

You have an obligation to perform your duties, but do not be attached to the fruits of your actions. — Bhagavad Gita

Readings: Aristotle, selections from *Ethics*; Simone Weil, selection from *Waiting for God*; Arendt, *Personal Responsibility Under Dictatorship*; selections from the *Tao Te Ching*; selections from the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Epilogue) Our Relationship to Technology - The scale and scope of our technology has launched humanity into an unprecedented era. The implications of this reach are forcing us to grapple with new questions and new consequences. Do we need new tools to think and proceed wisely?

Act so that the effects of your action are compatible with the permanence of genuine human life. — Hans Jonas

Readings: Hans Jonas, selections from *The Imperative of Responsibility*; Francis Bacon, selection from *The New Organon*; Rachel Carson, selections from *Silent Spring*; Bertrand Russell, selections from *The Impact of Science on Society*; selected essays on Artificial Intelligence.

Series Timeline:

September 2026 - The workbook and website resource work has already begun and will be completed.

September 2026 - Selection of series participants will take place.

October 2026 - The first onsite series in Ojai will begin.

January 2027 - The second online series will begin.

March 2027 - The third onsite series in Los Angeles will begin.

Summer 2027 - Participant interviews will take place concurrently during all series, with a goal of producing a stand-alone book, narrative portion of the website, and revised workbook that will be used in the Round Two Series, beginning in August 2027.

Series Objectives:

The final goals of this entire project are twofold: 1) To create series that can be readily replicated and carried on in multiple locations, bringing small groups together in learning, camaraderie, and inspiration... easily accessed and experienced by anyone who is concerned about the turbulent times we live in, and wishes to think and live more clearly through them. 2) To create online and printed resource for any individuals who wish to access these learnings through multiple modalities.

Series Cost:

Initial Series Facilitators - \$8,000 (\$400 prep and facilitation per event x 20 events)

This request item includes Ojai-based series

Workbook Creation and Production - \$14,000 (already funded by The Ahmanson Foundation)

Media and Participant Coordination and Interviewing - \$7,500 (already funded by The Ahmanson Foundation)

Website development and hosting - \$5,000 (already funded by The Ahmanson Foundation)

Logistics, seminar hosting, and admin - \$4,500 (already funded by The Ahmanson Foundation)

Version Two Series Facilitators - \$8,000

Version Two Workbook Creation and Production - \$7,000 (already funded by The Ahmanson Foundation)

Version Two Media and Participant Coordination - \$3,500 (already funded by The Ahmanson Foundation)

Total Request - \$16,000

(the stand-alone book derived from the initial series will be funded through a local family foundation)

Sample Workbook Page / The Focus of One Seminar in the Series:

1) Truth v. Convenience - Every person desires to know what is true. While discerning the truth can be difficult, the striving remains a central human priority.

We will be better, braver, and less idle, if we believe that one must search for the things one does not know, rather than if we believe that it is not possible to find out what we do not know. — Plato

Readings: Plato, selections from *Meno*; Arendt, selections from *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Aristotle, *On the Soul*

Introduction - Where is the truth to be found?

Embarking upon any enterprise, each of us tends to gather together whatever tools are appropriate for the task at hand. A gardener, a builder, a painter, a doctor, each person involved in each activity will find and wield the instruments fitted to that particular task. Likewise, a thinker seeking clarity has a chance to garner energy for this work by using two sorts of tools: the thoughts of others, the thoughts of oneself.

Great thinkers such as Socrates and Hannah Arendt have taught, implicitly or explicitly, that two things are needed before any start is made, before seriously tackling a problem with the use of these thinker's tools. Two necessary first steps, preconditions for using the tools of thought, are: first, each person must accept and respect one's own thinking abilities enough to listen, read, and consider what others have thought, must give oneself credit for being able to read Plato's *Dialogues* or to consider a passage in the *Tao Te Ching*; and second, a person must be open enough to accept when one does not know something, so that knowledge may be sought.

Socrates gave everyone he spoke to credit for being able to question, to inquire, to listen, to seek. In reading the works of great minds, present or past, each of us has a chance to accept that there is a dignity in each of us, that each of us has a mind, and in whatever language we know, in whatever context we find ourselves, we each have the ability to pursue and recognize what is true. We see examples of this throughout series texts, in small and large ways. Plato's Socrates, in his dialogue *Meno*, asked a servant boy who had no formal education about how a square might be doubled, and as the boy listens, wonders, and answers questions, he moves from thinking he does know, to realizing he does not. When he is led to see what might be the true geometrical answer, he recognizes it using some inner certainty, and sees it cannot be any other way.

Likewise, we have a chance to accept, each of us, no matter our level of education, an inner authority with which we can read and consider the great texts of world, and can consider, respectfully and intelligently, the words of teachers to see if they "ring true" in our own hearts. Engagement with writings that reveal the true height and depth of human spirit, no matter where or when they were written, allows a thinker to join a timeless conversation throughout the centuries, and avails one of invaluable helpers in the task of thinking through matters in challenging or even frightening times.

When Hannah Arendt writes that she supposed that all agreed with Socrates that it is better to suffer evil than to do evil, she expresses the connection throughout great texts that allows us to use these first step tools of self respect and intellectual humility in order to move to a larger question: where is the truth to be found? This is a question that great thinkers take very seriously, and we have a chance to join them in a gentle, thoughtful consideration of how we might begin the search.

Sample Readings in the Series:

Epictetus, *The Handbook*

I. Some things are up to us and some are not up to us. Our opinions are up to us, and our impulses, desires, aversion—in short, whatever is our own doing. Our bodies are not up to us, nor are our possessions, our reputations, or our public offices, or, that is, whatever is not our own doing. The things that are up to us are by nature free, unhindered, and unimpeded; the things that are not up to us are weak, enslaved, hindered, not our own. So remember, if you think that things naturally enslaved are free or that things not your own are your own, you will be thwarted, miserable, and upset, and will blame both gods and men. But if you think that only what is yours is yours, and that what is not your own is, just as it is, not your own, then no one will ever coerce you, no one will hinder you, you will blame no one, you will not accuse anyone, you will not do a single thing unwillingly, you will have no enemies, and no one will harm you, because you will not be harmed at all.

Boethius. *Consolation of Philosophy*

Book II Poem 3

“If the form of this world cannot stay the same, but suffers so many violent changes, what folly it is to trust man’s tumbling fortunes, to rely on things that come and go. One thing is certain, fixed by eternal law: nothing that is born can last.”

Prose 4

Boethius protests that the worst sorrow is the remembrances of lost joys. Philosophy answers that the only true joy is self-possession in the face of adversity.

Then I answered: “Everything you say is true, dear nurse of all virtues. I do not deny that I came quickly to great prosperity. But the memory of it is what causes me most pain; for in the midst of adversity, the worst misfortune of all is to have once been happy.”

“You are being punished for having misjudged your situation,” Philosophy answered. “Therefore you have no right to blame the things which bother you. But if you are so impressed by this rather silly notion of happiness based on good fortune, let us consider how very well off you are. Then, if you find that among all the gifts of Fortune your most precious possessions are still safely yours, thanks to God’s providence, can you justly complain of misfortune?”

“Your father-in-law, Symmachus, one of the finest men who ever lived, and one for whom you would gladly give your life, is still unharmed. That most wise and virtuous man lives in safety to lament the injuries you are suffering. Your wife, so gracious, so chaste, so like her father in excellence of character, still lives, though now she is weary of life and goes on only for your sake. Even I must concede that in her case your happiness is greatly marred since her sorrow for your misfortunes is killing her.

“Think of your sons, the Consuls, who already at their age show the character of their father and grandfather. You are a happy man, if you consider what you still have. The greatest concern of mortals is to preserve life, and you still possess things which everyone agrees are dearer than life itself. So, dry your tears. Fortune has not yet done her worst to you; you have not become a derelict in the storm since those anchors of present comfort and future hope hold fast.”

“And I pray that they will continue to hold,” I said, “for as long as they do I shall not go down, no matter how bad things get. Still, you see yourself how much I have lost.”

“We have made some progress anyway,” she answered, “if you have found something to be happy about. But I find your self-pity hard to bear when you moan childishly over the loss of some of your happiness. No one is so completely happy that he does not have to endure some loss. Anxiety is the necessary condition of human happiness since happiness is never completely achieved and never permanently kept. The man who enjoys great wealth may be scorned for his low birth; the man who is honored for his noble family may be oppressed by such poverty that he would rather be unknown. Someone else may enjoy both wealth and social position, but be miserable because he is not married. Still another may be happily married but have no children to inherit his fortune. Others have children, only to be saddened by their vices. Therefore, no one is entirely satisfied with his lot; each finds something lacking, or something which gives pain.

“Besides, those most blessed are often the most sensitive; unless everything works out perfectly, they are impatient at disappointment and shattered by quite trivial things. It takes very little to spoil the perfect happiness of the fortunate. Just think how many people would consider themselves lucky to have only a small part of your remaining good fortune. This very place which you call a land of exile is home to those who live here: nothing is miserable unless you think it so; and on the other hand, nothing brings happiness unless you are content with it. No one is so completely happy that he would not choose to change his condition if he let himself think about it impatiently. The joy of human happiness is shot through with bitterness; no matter how pleasant it seems when one has it, such happiness cannot be kept when it decides to leave.

“You see, then, how shoddy is the enjoyment provided by mortal things. They forsake those who are content with them, and they do not satisfy those who are discontented. Why then do men look outside themselves for happiness which is within? You are confused by error and ignorance and so I will point out to you the source of perfect happiness. Is anything more precious to you than yourself? You will agree that there is nothing. Then if you possess yourself, you have something you will never want to give up and something which Fortune cannot take from you. If you will consider carefully the following argument, you will have to admit that happiness cannot depend on things which are uncertain. If happiness is the highest good of rational natures, and if nothing which can be lost can be a supreme good (because it is obviously less good than that which cannot be lost), then clearly unstable Fortune cannot pretend to bring happiness. The man who enjoys fleeting happiness either knows that it is perishable, or he doesn’t. If he does not know it, his condition is unhappy because it rests on blind ignorance; if he knows his happiness is perishable, he must live in fear of losing what he knows can be easily lost—and such constant fears will not let him be happy.

Continued Sample Readings in the Series:

William Faulkner

Speech at the Nobel Banquet at the City Hall in Stockholm, December 10, 1950

Ladies and gentlemen,

I feel that this award was not made to me as a man, but to my work – a life's work in the agony and sweat of the human spirit, not for glory and least of all for profit, but to create out of the materials of the human spirit something which did not exist before. So this award is only mine in trust. It will not be difficult to find a dedication for the money part of it commensurate with the purpose and significance of its origin. But I would like to do the same with the acclaim too, by using this moment as a pinnacle from which I might be listened to by the young men and women already dedicated to the same anguish and travail, among whom is already that one who will some day stand here where I am standing.

Our tragedy today is a general and universal physical fear so long sustained by now that we can even bear it. There are no longer problems of the spirit. There is only the question: When will I be blown up? Because of this, the young man or woman writing today has forgotten the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself which alone can make good writing because only that is worth writing about, worth the agony and the sweat.

He must learn them again. He must teach himself that the basest of all things is to be afraid; and, teaching himself that, forget it forever, leaving no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart, the old universal truths lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed – love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice. Until he does so, he labors under a curse. He writes not of love but of lust, of defeats in which nobody loses anything of value, of victories without hope and, worst of all, without pity or compassion. His griefs grieve on no universal bones, leaving no scars. He writes not of the heart but of the glands.

Until he relearns these things, he will write as though he stood among and watched the end of man. I decline to accept the end of man. It is easy enough to say that man is immortal simply because he will endure: that when the last dingdong of doom has clanged and faded from the last worthless rock hanging tideless in the last red and dying evening, that even then there will still be one more sound: that of his puny inexhaustible voice, still talking.

I refuse to accept this. I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. The poet's, the writer's, duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past. The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail.

Continued Sample Readings in the Series:

Wallace Stevens

Final Soliloquy of the Interior Paramour

Light the first light of evening, as in a room
In which we rest and, for small reason, think
The world imagined is the ultimate good.

This is, therefore, the intensest rendezvous.
It is in that thought that we collect ourselves,
Out of all the indifferences, into one thing:

Within a single thing, a single shawl
Wrapped tightly round us, since we are poor, a warmth,
A light, a power, the miraculous influence.

Here, now, we forget each other and ourselves.
We feel the obscurity of an order, a whole,
A knowledge, that which arranged the rendezvous.

Within its vital boundary, in the mind.
We say God and the imagination are one...
How high that highest candle lights the dark.

Out of this same light, out of the central mind,
We make a dwelling in the evening air,
In which being there together is enough.

Rainer Maria Rilke

Archaic Torso of Apollo

We cannot know his legendary head
with eyes like ripening fruit. And yet his torso
is still suffused with brilliance from inside,
like a lamp, in which his gaze, now turned to low,

gleams in all its power. Otherwise
the curved breast could not dazzle you so, nor could
a smile run through the placid hips and thighs
to that dark center where procreation flared.

Otherwise this stone would seem defaced
beneath the translucent cascade of the shoulders
and would not glisten like a wild beast's fur:

would not, from all the borders of itself,
burst like a star: for here there is no place
that does not see you. You must change your life.

Continued Sample Readings in the Series:

Ecclesiastes 3

There is a time for everything,
 and a season for every activity under the heavens:
 a time to be born and a time to die,
 a time to plant and a time to uproot,
 a time to kill and a time to heal,
 a time to tear down and a time to build,
 a time to weep and a time to laugh,
 a time to mourn and a time to dance,
 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
 a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
 a time to search and a time to give up,
 a time to keep and a time to throw away,
 a time to tear and a time to mend,
 a time to be silent and a time to speak,
 a time to love and a time to hate,
 a time for war and a time for peace.

Lao Tzu

Tao Te Ching

Simplicity, patience, compassion.
 These three are your greatest treasures.
 Simple in actions and thoughts, you return to the source of being.
 Patient with both friends and enemies,
 you accord with the way things are.
 Compassionate toward yourself,
 you reconcile all beings in the world.

Thomas Jefferson

The most fortunate of us all in our journey through life frequently meet with calamities and misfortunes which greatly afflict us. To fortify our minds against the attacks of these calamities and misfortunes should be one of the principal studies and endeavors of our lives.

Continued Sample Readings in the Series:

William Shakespeare

The St. Crispin's Day speech from Henry V

If we are mark'd to die, we are enow
 To do our country loss; and if to live,
 The fewer men, the greater share of honour.
 God's will! I pray thee, wish not one man more.
 By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,
 Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost;
 It yearns me not if men my garments wear;
 Such outward things dwell not in my desires:
 But if it be a sin to covet honour,
 I am the most offending soul alive.
 No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England:
 God's peace! I would not lose so great an honour
 As one man more, methinks, would share from me
 For the best hope I have. O, do not wish one more!
 Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,
 That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
 Let him depart; his passport shall be made
 And crowns for convoy put into his purse:
 We would not die in that man's company
 That fears his fellowship to die with us.
 This day is called the feast of Crispian:
 He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
 Will stand a tip-toe when the day is named,
 And rouse him at the name of Crispian.

He that shall live this day, and see old age,
 Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
 And say 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian:'
 Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars.
 And say 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.'
 Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,
 But he'll remember with advantages
 What feats he did that day: then shall our names
 Familiar in his mouth as household words
 Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,
 Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
 Be in their flowing cups freshly remember'd.
 This story shall the good man teach his son;
 And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
 From this day to the ending of the world,
 But we in it shall be remember'd;
 We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
 For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
 Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
 This day shall gentle his condition:
 And gentlemen in England now a-bed
 Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
 And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
 That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

Continued Sample Readings in the Series:

Gabriel García Márquez

The Most Handsome Drowned Man In The World

The first children to see the obscure, stealthy promontory that approached in the ocean believed that it was an enemy ship. But then they saw that it carried neither flags nor spars, and they thought it was a whale. But when it ran aground on the beach they peeled off the thickets of seaweed, the jellyfish tentacles and the rest of the tattered cloth and driftwood it carried, and only then did they discover that it was a drowned man.

They had been playing with him all afternoon, burying and unburying him in the sand, when someone happened to see them and cried the alarm in the village. The men who carried him to the nearest house noticed that he weighed more than any dead man they had ever known, almost as much as a horse, and they said that perhaps he had been adrift so long that water had seeped in between his bones. When they spread him out on the floor they saw that he had been much bigger than any other man, for he hardly fit in the house, but they thought that perhaps the ability to continue growing after death was in the nature of certain drowned men. He smelled of the ocean, and only his form allowed them to suppose that it was the body of a human, for his hair was covered with an armor-plating of remora and mud.

They didn't have to clean his face to know that he was from elsewhere. The village had barley twenty houses made of planks, with flowerless stone porches, scattered across the back of a deserted cape. The earth was so barren that mothers always went in fear that the wind would carry off their children, and they had to throw their deceased, continually taken by the years, from the cliffs. But the sea was tame and bountiful, and all of the men fit in seven boats. So, when they found the drowned man, they had only to look one to the other to realize that they were all accounted for.

That night they didn't go out to work on the sea. While the men checked whether or not anyone was missing from the nearby villages, the women remained caring for the drowned man. They removed the mud with clumps of grass, untangled the submarine burrs from his hair, and scraped off the remora with descaling knives. As they did so, they noticed that the vegetation was from far-off seas and deep waters, and that his clothes were in tatters as if he had navigated through mazes of coral. They also noticed that he bore death with dignity, having neither the solitary semblance of the other drowned men from the sea nor the squalid, needy aspect of those who drowned in rivers. But only when they finished cleaning him did they become conscious of the sort of man he was, and then they remained, breathless. Not only was he the tallest, strongest, most virile and best-equipped man they had ever seen, but as they watched him he didn't even fit in their imaginations.

They couldn't find a big enough bed in the village to lay him on nor a table solid enough to hold vigil. The festival pants of the tallest men didn't fit him, nor did the Sunday shirts of the fattest, nor the shoes of the best planted. Fascinated by his disproportion and beauty, the women then decided to make him pants with a piece of gaff sail, and a shirt of fine linen, so that he could continue in his death with dignity. While they sewed seated in a circle, contemplating the cadaver between stitches, it appeared to them that the wind had never been so sustained nor had the Caribbean been so unsettled as on that night, and they supposed that these changes

had something to do with the dead man. They thought that if that magnificent man had lived in the village, his house would have had the widest doors, the tallest roof and the firmest floor, and the frame of his bed would have been made of giant timbers with iron bolts, and his wife would have been the happiest. They thought that he would have had such authority that he could have taken the fish from the sea by only calling them by name, and he would have put such effort in his work that he would have brought forth springs from between the driest rocks and would have been able to sow flowers on the cliffs. They compared him in secret to their own men, thinking that they would not be able to do in a lifetime what that man was capable of in a single night, and they ended up repudiating them in the depths of their hearts as the most squalid and paltry beings in the earth. They went on distracted by these labyrinths of fantasy, when the oldest of the women, who by being the oldest had contemplated the drowned man with less passion than compassion, sighed:

“He has the face of one who’s called Esteban.”

It was true. For most it was enough to look at him once more to understand that he couldn’t have any other name. The most stubborn, who were the youngest, maintained the illusion that upon clothing him, laid out among flowers and with charcoal shoes, he could be called Lautaro. But it was a vain illusion. The canvas turned out too small, the poorly-cut and worse-stitched pants fit him tightly, and the hidden forces of his heart made the buttons of his shirt burst. After midnight the whistling wind diminished and the sea fell into a mid-week stupor. The silence did away with the last doubts: he was Esteban. The women that had dressed him, those that had combed his hair, those that had cut his nails and shaved his beard could not suppress a shudder of compassion when they had to resign to leaving him tossed on the floor. It was then that they understood how unhappy he must have been with that colossal body that got in the way even after death. They saw him condemned in life to pass sideways through doors, splitting his head open on crossbeams, to remain standing during visits without knowing what to do with his tender, red hands, while the woman of the house searched for the most resistant chair and pleaded, dead with fear, sit here Esteban, do me the pleasure, and him leaning against the walls, smiling, don’t worry ma’am, I’m fine here, with heels worn raw and back burning from repeating the same thing so often in his visits, don’t worry ma’am, I’m fine here, only to spare the embarrassment of breaking the chair, and perhaps without ever knowing that those who told him don’t go Esteban, wait until the coffee boils, were the same that later whispered, finally the great fool’s left, thank goodness, finally the stupid bloke is gone. This is what the women thought before the body, just before daybreak. Later, when they covered his face with a headscarf so that the light wouldn’t bother him, they saw him to be so finally dead, so defenseless, so similar to their men, that the first cracks of tears opened in their hearts. It was one of the youngest that started to weep. The others, sitting around her, passed from sighs to laments, and the more they wept the more they felt the desire to cry, for the drowned man was becoming to them more and more Esteban, until they wept so for him that he was the most helpless man on the earth, the most meek and obliging, the poor Esteban. It was such that when the men returned with the news that the drowned man wasn’t from any of the nearby villages either, the women felt a space of joy between their tears.

“Thanks be to God,” they sighed: “he’s ours!”

The men thought their gesticulations to be no more than womanly frivolities. Exhausted from the torturous inquiries of the previous night, the only thing they wanted was to rid themselves once and for all of

the nuisance of the intruder before the fierce sun of the arid and windless day rose. They improvised stretchers from the remains of foremasts and booms, and tied them with mast stops so that they would resist the weight of the body until they reached the cliffs. They wanted to tie a ship anchor to his ankles so that he would be staid without mistake in the deepest waters where the fish are blind and divers die of nostalgia, in such a way that the bad currents would not deposit him on the shore, as it had done with other bodies. But the more they pressured, the more things occurred to the women to use up time. They went around like frightened chickens pecking at treasure from a chest, here some getting in the way because they wanted to put scapulars on the drowned man that would bring good wind, there others tarrying to fasten a wrist compass, and after so much get out of here woman, go where you won't be in the way, look how you almost made me fall over the dead man, the men began to get suspicious and to grumble, to what end such lavish hardware for a foreigner, for all the odds and ends he carries he'll just be eaten by sharks, but the women continued digging up their cheap relics, carrying and bringing, tripping, going with sighs if not tears, until the men ended up ranting, since when was there ever such a fuss for an adrift body, a drowned man belonging to no one, a filthy stiff. One of the women, mortified by such insolence, then took off the headscarf from the cadaver's face, and then the men too remained breathless.

He was Esteban. It wasn't necessary to repeat for them to recognize it. If they had said Sir Walter Raleigh, perhaps, they might have been impressed by his foreign accent, by the macaw on his shoulder, with his arquebus for killing cannibals, but there could only be one Esteban in the world, and there he was tossed like a river herring, without booty, with tiny pants and stone-hard nails that only a knife could cut. It was enough for them to take off the headscarf from his face to realize that he was ashamed, that it wasn't his fault for being so large, nor so heavy nor so handsome, and if he had known that this was going to happen he would have searched for a more discrete place to drown, honestly, I would have moored myself with a gallon anchor around my neck and would have stumbled up the cliffs like someone who doesn't want all of this, to not come now getting in the way with this damned corpse, like you say, to not bother anyone with this filthy stiff that has nothing to do with me. There was such truth in his mode of being, that even the most suspicious of the men, those that felt bitterness during the long nights at sea that their wives would become tired of dreaming of them to dream instead of drowned men, even these, and still others who were much harder, shuddered to the marrow with the sincerity of Esteban.

And so it was that they held the most splendid funeral they could conceive for an abandoned drowned man. Some women that had gone to look for flowers in the nearby villages came back with others who did not believe what they had been told, and these went for more flowers when they saw the dead man, and they brought more and more, until there were so many flowers and such a crowd that one could barely walk. At the final hour it pained them to throw him orphaned into the sea, and so they chose a father and a mother among the best for him, and others made themselves brothers, and uncles and cousins, until through him all of the villagers ended up relatives. Some mariners who heard the crying from a distance lost their course, and it was later learned that one tied himself to the mast, calling to mind ancient fables of sirens. While they disputed the privilege of carrying him on their shoulders up the steep incline of the cliffs, the men and women became conscious for the first time of the desolation of their streets, the aridity of their courtyards, the narrowness of their dreams,

before the splendor and the beauty of their drowned man. They released him without anchor, so that he could return if he wished, and when he wished, and everyone held their breath during the fraction of centuries that it took for the body to fall into the abyss. It wasn't necessary for them to look at one another to realize that they were not complete, nor would they ever be again. But they also knew that everything would be different from then, that their houses would have wider doors, taller roofs, firmer floors, so that the memory of Esteban could walk everywhere without running into the crossbeams, and so that no one would dare to murmur in the future, finally the great fool has died, what a shame, finally the stupid bloke is dead, because they would paint the fronts of their houses with joyful colors to eternalize the memory of Esteban, and they would break their backs digging springs from the rocks and sowing flowers on the cliffs, so that in the dawns of the coming years the travelers on great ships would awaken suffocating on the aroma of gardens on the high sea, and the captain would have to come down from his quarter deck in full uniform, with his astrolabe, his pole star and string of war medals, and signaling the promontory of roses on the Caribbean horizon would say in fourteen languages: look there, where the wind is now so gentle that it stops to sleep beneath the beds, there, where the sun shines such that the sunflowers don't know where to turn, yes, there, is the village of Esteban.

Continued Sample Readings in the Series:

Hannah Arendt

Personal Responsibility Under Dictatorship

The controversy invariably raised all kinds of strictly moral issues, many of which had never occurred to me, whereas others had been mentioned by me only in passing. I had given a factual account of the trial, and even the book's subtitle, *A Report on the Banality of Evil*, seemed to me so glaringly borne out by the facts of the case that I felt it needed no further explanation. I had pointed to a fact which I felt was shocking because it contradicts our theories concerning evil, hence to something true but not plausible.

I had somehow taken it for granted that we all still believe with Socrates that it is better to suffer than to do wrong. This belief turned out to be a mistake. There was a widespread conviction that it is impossible to withstand temptation of any kind, that none of us could be trusted or even be expected to be trustworthy when the chips are down, that to be tempted and to be forced are almost the same, whereas in the words of Mary McCarthy, who first spotted this fallacy: "If somebody points a gun at you and says, 'Kill your friend or I will kill you,' he is *tempting* you, that is all." And while a temptation where one's life is at stake may be a legal excuse for a crime, it certainly is not a moral justification. Finally, and in a way most surprisingly, since after all we dealt with a trial whose result invariably was the passing of judgment, I was told that judging itself is wrong: no one can judge who had not been there. This, incidentally, was Eichmann's own argument against the district court's judgment. When told that there had been alternatives and that he could have escaped his murderous duties, he insisted that these were postwar legends born of hindsight and supported by people who did not know or had forgotten how things had actually been.

There are a number of reasons why the discussion of the right or the ability to judge touches on the most important moral issue. Two things are involved here: First, how can I tell right from wrong, if the majority or my whole environment has prejudged the issue? *Who am I to judge?* And second, to what extent, if at all, can we judge past events or occurrences at which we were not present? As to the latter, it seems glaringly obvious that no historiography and no courtroom procedure would be possible at all if we denied ourselves this capability. One might go a step further and maintain that there are very few instances in which, in using our capacity to judge, we do not judge by hindsight, and again this is equally true of the historiographer as it is of the trial judge, who may have good reasons to mistrust eyewitness accounts or the judgment of those who were present. Moreover, since this question of judging without being present is usually coupled with the accusation of arrogance, who has ever maintained that by judging a wrong I presuppose that I myself would be incapable of committing it? Even the judge who condemns a man for murder may still say, and there but for the grace of God go I!

Continued Sample Readings in the Series:

W.E.B. Du Bois

The Souls of Black Folk

So dawned the time of *Sturm und Drang*: storm and stress to-day rocks our little boat on the mad waters of the world-sea; there is within and without the sound of conflict, the burning of body and rending of soul; inspiration strives with doubt, and faith with vain questionings. The bright ideals of the past,—physical freedom, political power, the training of brains and the training of hands,—all these in turn have waxed and waned, until even the last grows dim and overcast. Are they all wrong,—all false? No, not that, but each alone was over-simple and incomplete,—the dreams of a credulous race-childhood, or the fond imaginings of the other world which does not know and does not want to know our power. To be really true, all these ideals must be melted and welded into one. The training of the schools we need to-day more than ever,—the training of deft hands, quick eyes and ears, and above all the broader, deeper, higher culture of gifted minds and pure hearts. The power of the ballot we need in sheer self-defence,—else what shall save us from a second slavery? Freedom, too, the long-sought, we still seek,—the freedom of life and limb, the freedom to work and think, the freedom to love and aspire. Work, culture, liberty,—all these we need, not singly but together, not successively but together, each growing and aiding each, and all striving toward that vaster ideal that swims before the Negro people, the ideal of human brotherhood, gained through the unifying ideal of Race; the ideal of fostering and developing the traits and talents of the Negro, not in opposition to or contempt for other races, but rather in large conformity to the greater ideals of the American Republic, in order that some day on American soil two world-races may give each to each those characteristics both so sadly lack. We the darker ones come even now not altogether empty-handed: there are to-day no truer exponents of the pure human spirit of the Declaration of Independence than the American Negroes; there is no true American music but the wild sweet melodies of the Negro slave; the American fairy tales and folklore are Indian and African; and, all in all, we black men seem the sole oasis of simple faith and reverence in a dusty desert of dollars and smartness. Will America be poorer if she replace her brutal dyspeptic blundering with light-hearted but determined Negro humility? or her coarse and cruel wit with loving jovial good-humor? or her vulgar music with the soul of the Sorrow Songs?

Merely a concrete test of the underlying principles of the great republic is the Negro Problem, and the spiritual striving of the freedmen's sons is the travail of souls whose burden is almost beyond the measure of their strength, but who bear it in the name of an historic race, in the name of this the land of their fathers' fathers, and in the name of human opportunity.

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And now what I have briefly sketched in large outline let me on coming pages tell again in many ways, with loving emphasis and deeper detail, that men may listen to the striving in the souls of black folk.