

# THE THIRD AGE

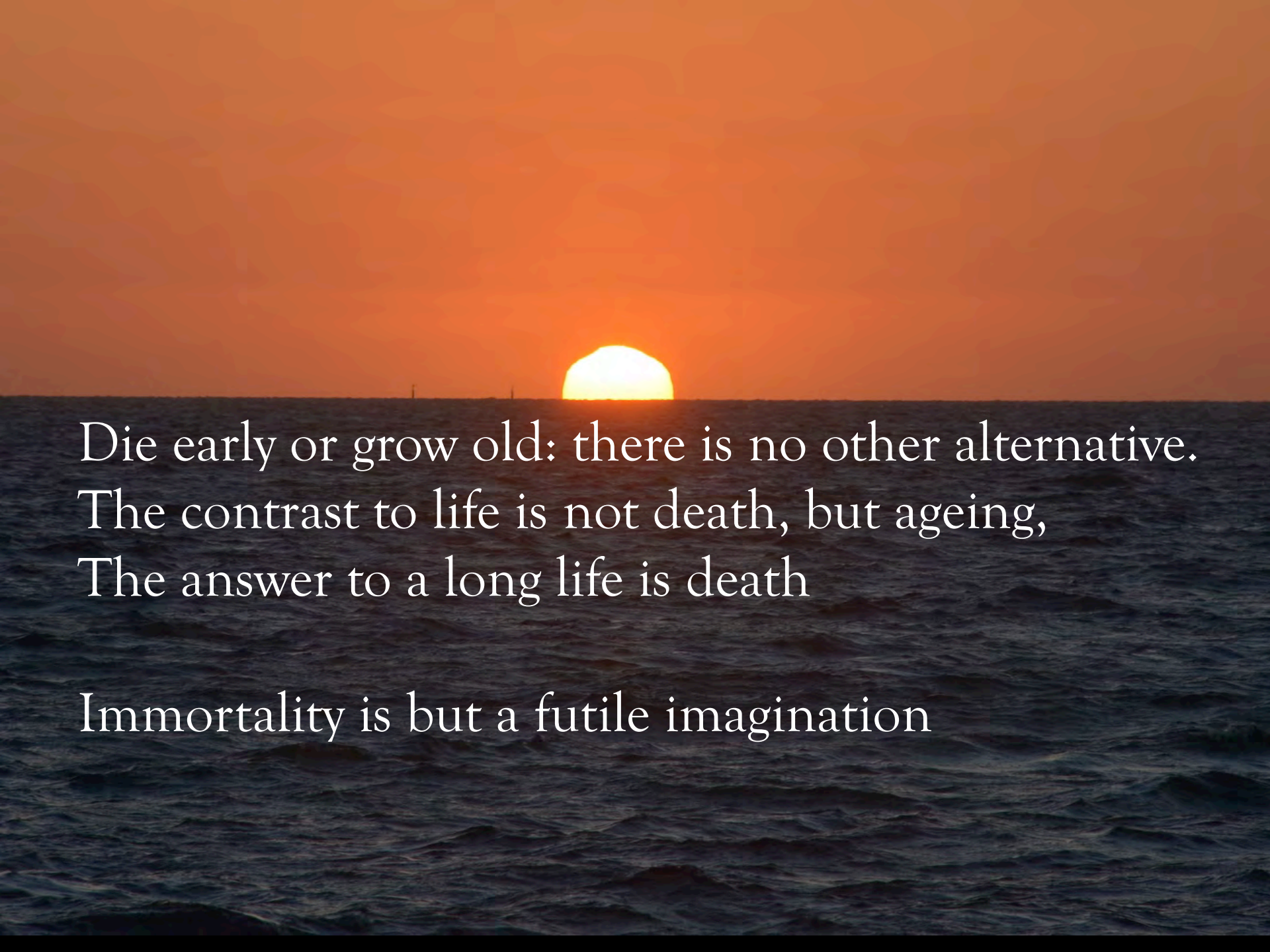
## On the Philosophy of Ageing: Cicero: *de Senectute*

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March 19, 2016 Cho Yiu Hall

# THE THIRD AGE

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Hong Kong, at sunset. The sun is a bright orange orb on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the water and the city. The city's dense skyline of skyscrapers is visible on the left, and the harbor is filled with numerous boats and ships. The sky transitions from a pale blue to a deep orange near the horizon.

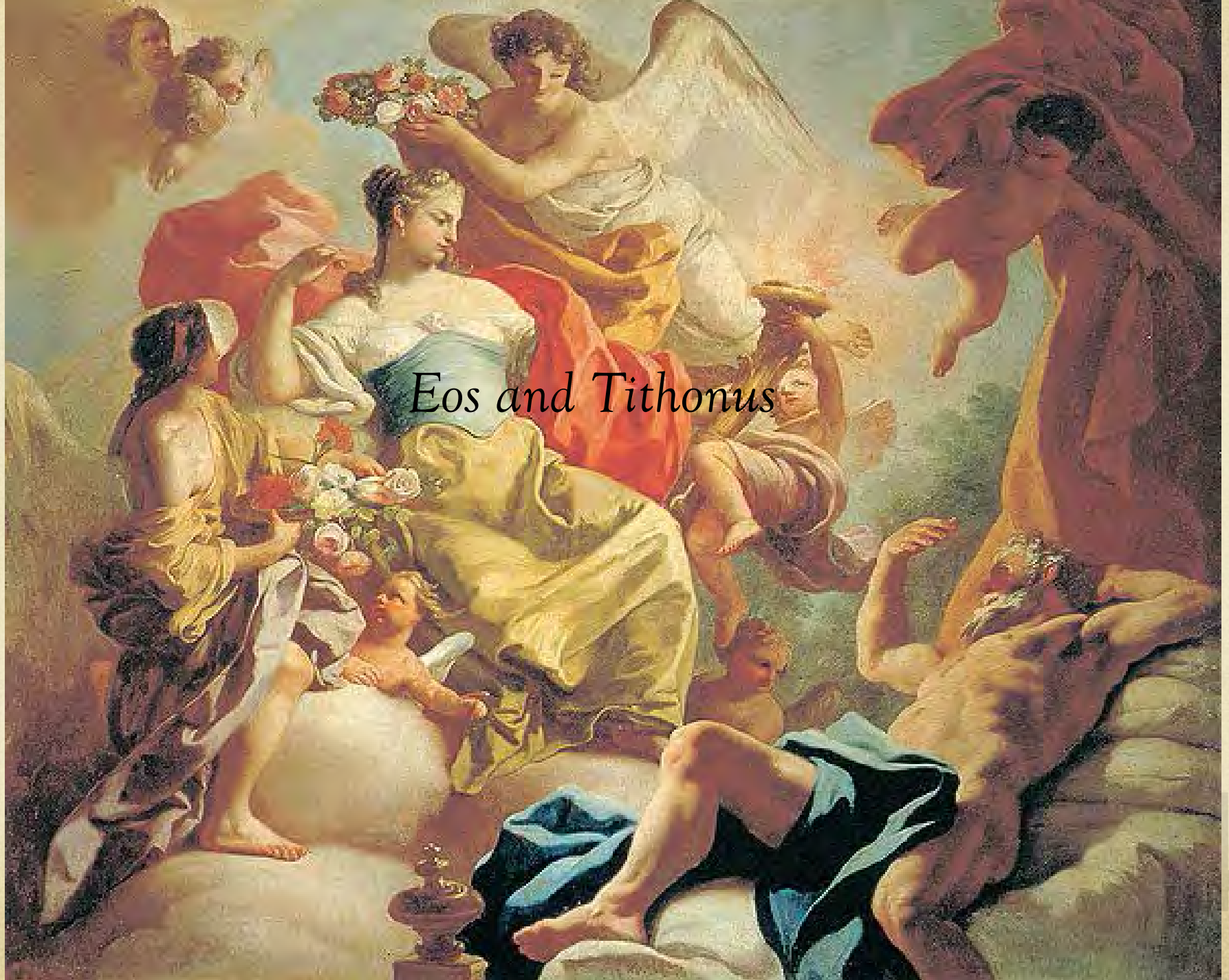
夕陽無限好， 只是近黃昏

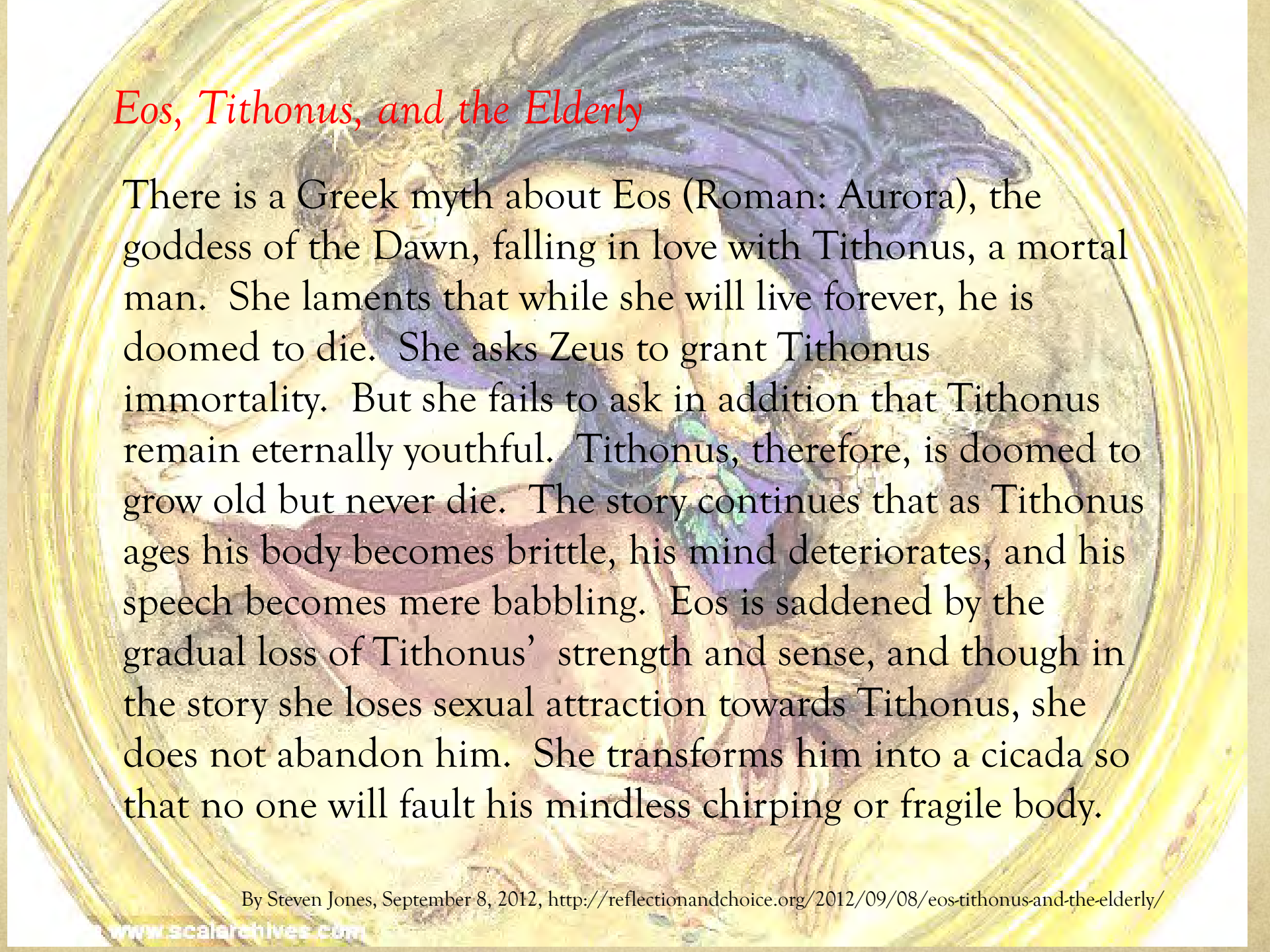


Die early or grow old: there is no other alternative.  
The contrast to life is not death, but ageing,  
The answer to a long life is death

Immortality is but a futile imagination

*Eos and Tithonus*





## *Eos, Tithonus, and the Elderly*

There is a Greek myth about Eos (Roman: Aurora), the goddess of the Dawn, falling in love with Tithonus, a mortal man. She laments that while she will live forever, he is doomed to die. She asks Zeus to grant Tithonus immortality. But she fails to ask in addition that Tithonus remain eternally youthful. Tithonus, therefore, is doomed to grow old but never die. The story continues that as Tithonus ages his body becomes brittle, his mind deteriorates, and his speech becomes mere babbling. Eos is saddened by the gradual loss of Tithonus' strength and sense, and though in the story she loses sexual attraction towards Tithonus, she does not abandon him. She transforms him into a cicada so that no one will fault his mindless chirping or fragile body.



Tithonus (originally written in 1833, completed in 1859)

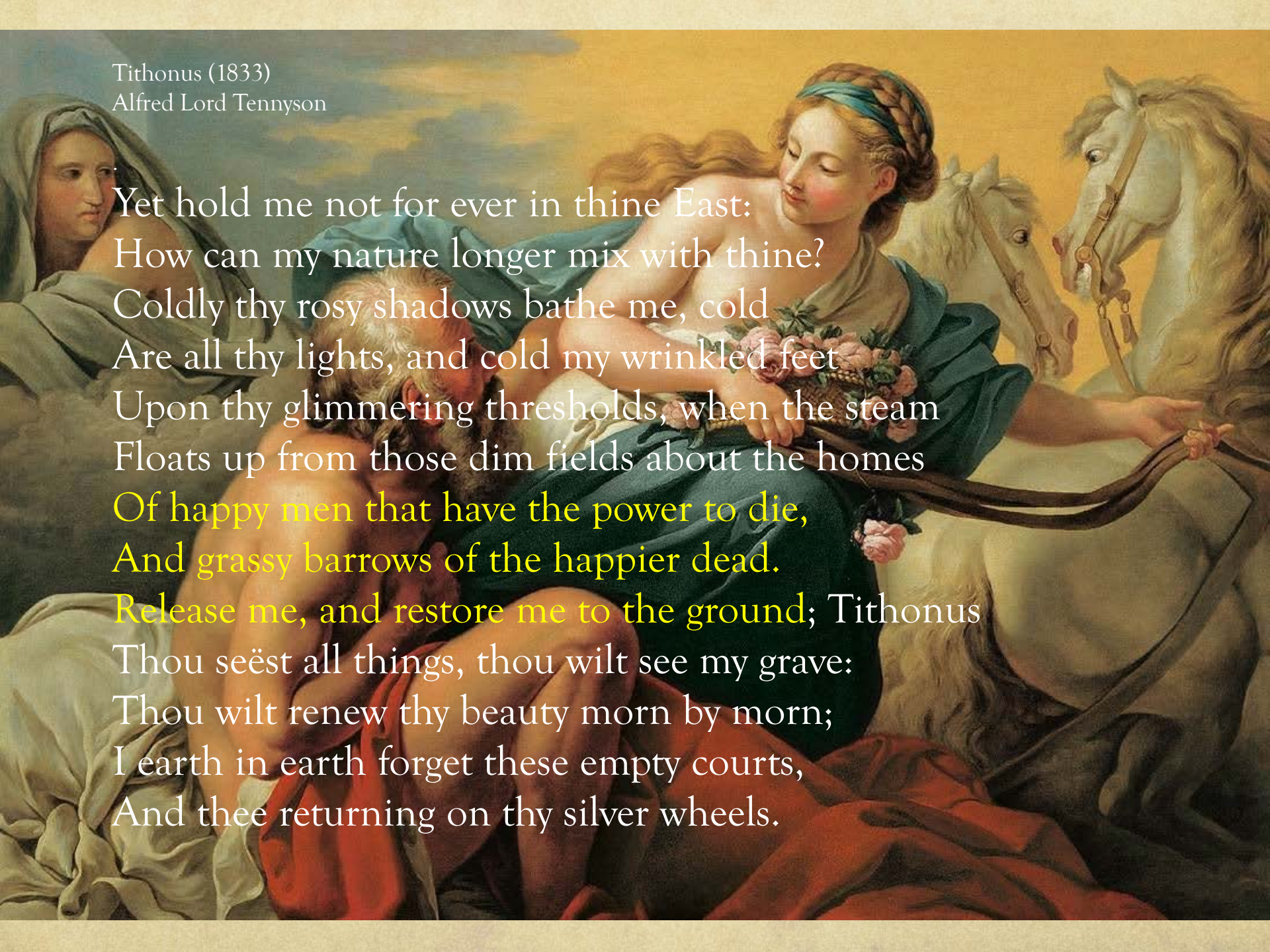
Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,  
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,  
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,  
And after many a summer dies the swan.

Me only cruel immortality  
Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,  
Here at the quiet limit of the world,  
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream  
The ever-silent spaces of the East,  
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

.....

(Tennyson died at the age of 83)



Tithonus (1833)  
Alfred Lord Tennyson

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East:  
How can my nature longer mix with thine?  
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold  
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet  
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam  
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes  
Of happy men that have the power to die,  
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.  
Release me, and restore me to the ground; Tithonus  
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave:  
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;  
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,  
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

五悦景区连锁

蔣捷 虞美人(聽雨)

少年聽雨歌樓上，紅燭昏羅帳。壯年聽雨  
客舟中，江闊雲低斷雁叫西風。而今聽雨  
僧廬下，鬢已星星也。悲歡離合總無情，  
一任階前點滴到天明

(蔣捷死時 56 歲)



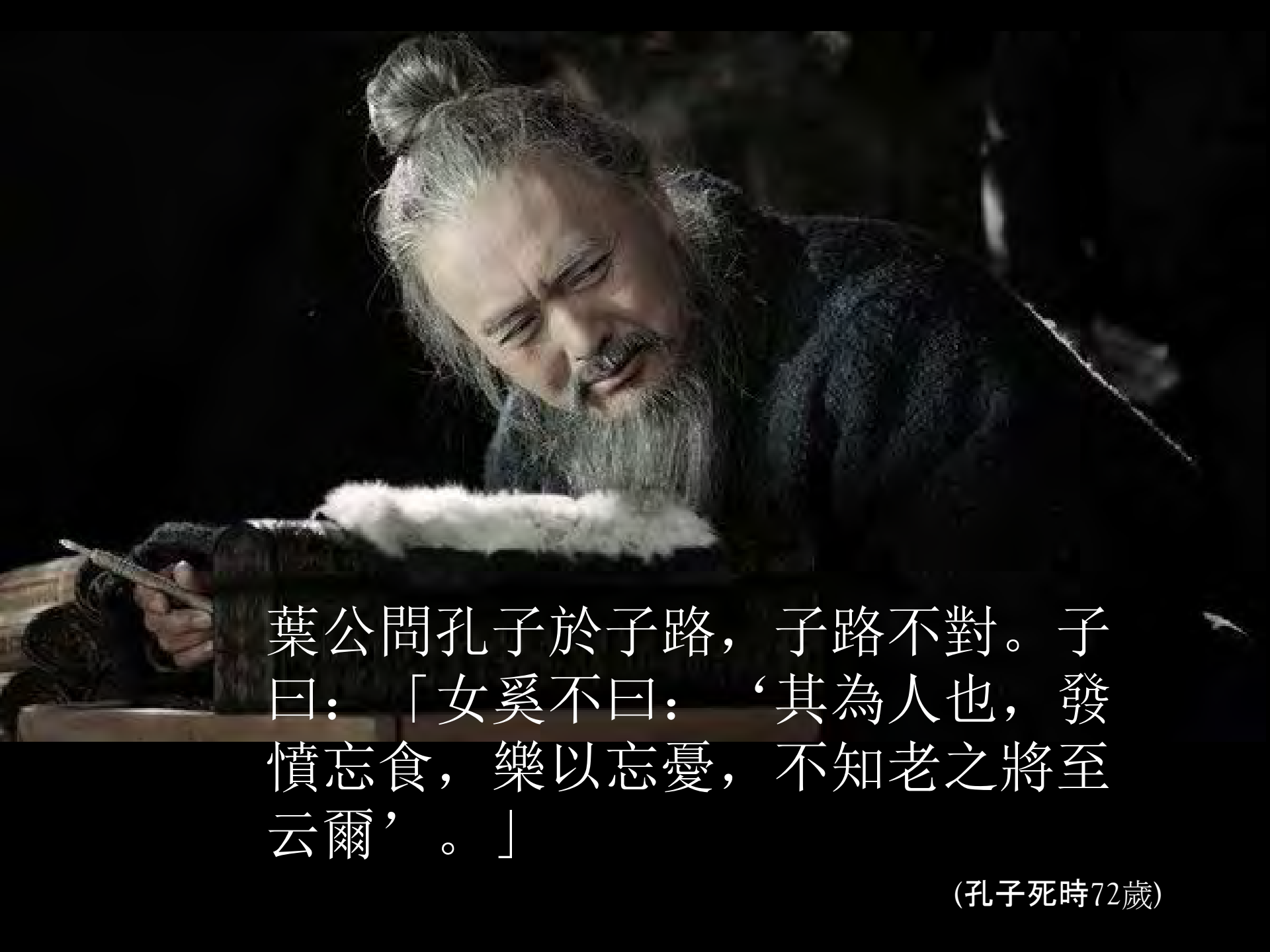


范仲淹

## 剔銀燈·與歐陽公席上分題

昨夜因看蜀志，笑曹操孫權劉備。用盡機關，徒勞心力，只得三分天地。屈指細尋思，怎如共、劉伶一醉？人世都無百歲，少痴騃、老成尪悴。只有中間，些子少年，忍把浮名牽系？一品與千金，問白髮、如何迴避？

(范仲淹死時63歲)



葉公問孔子於子路，子路不對。子曰：「女奚不曰：『其為人也，發憤忘食，樂以忘憂，不知老之將至云爾』。」

(孔子死時72歲)

龜雖壽

神龜雖壽，猶有竟時。  
騰蛇乘霧，終為土灰。  
老驥伏櫪，志在千里。  
烈士暮年，壯心不已。  
盈縮之期，不但在天。  
養怡之福，可以永年。

曹操

癸未年



“老驥伏櫪，志在千里。烈士暮年，壯心不已。”

What is Old Age ?  
Ageing ?  
Getting Old?



SALVADOR DALI - Oil painting "Old Age, Adolescence, Infancy" (The Three Ages)  
(Dali died at the age of 85)

Hong Kong Population is ageing

Aged 65 or above will grow from 13% (876,000 persons) in mid-2009 to 21% (1,610,000 persons) in mid-2024 and 28% (2,380,000 person) in mid-2039

(Census and Statistics Department, July 2010)



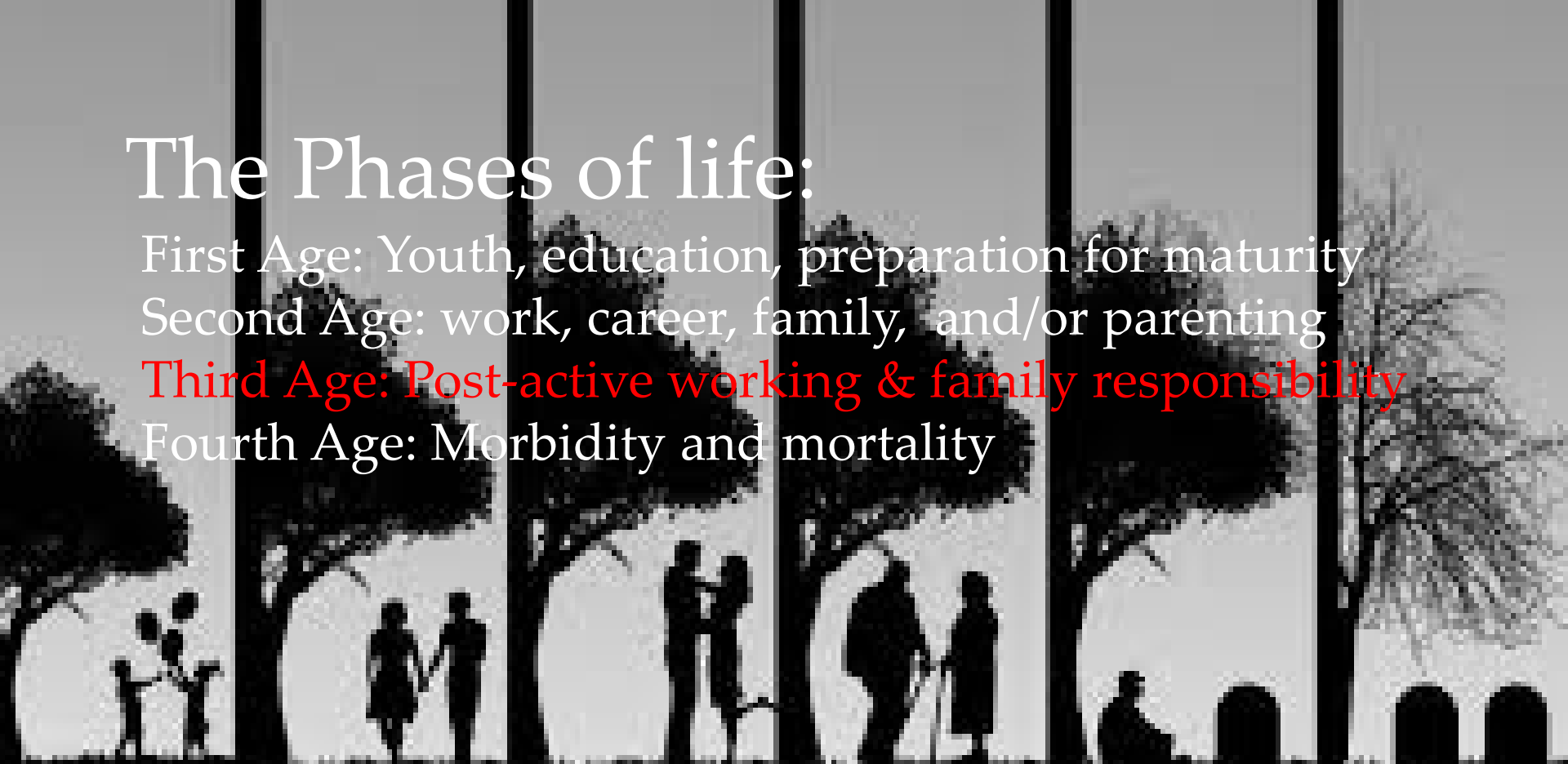
# The Phases of life:

First Age: Youth, education, preparation for maturity

Second Age: work, career, family, and/or parenting

Third Age: Post-active working & family responsibility

Fourth Age: Morbidity and mortality



No definite Chronological / Biological age limit

Living Age: Contrast to Physical / Mental Age

# Third Age = Getting Old

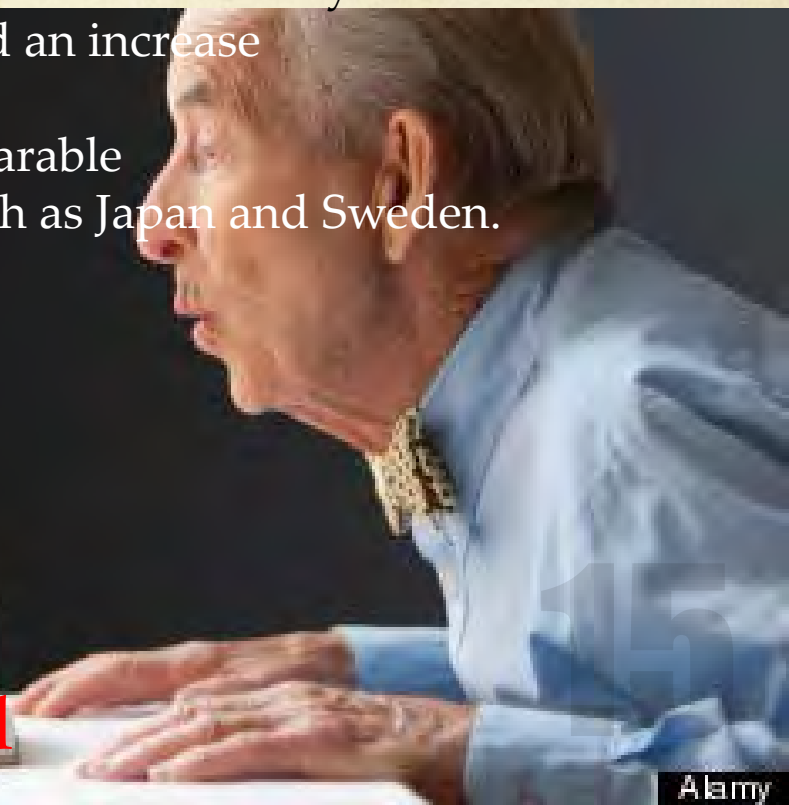
Hong Kong people have a very long life expectancy.

In 2012, the expectancy of life at birth for men and women was 81 years and 86 years respectively. Both figures represented an increase of some 8 years compared with 30 years ago.

The life expectancy at birth in Hong Kong is comparable to those economies experiencing low mortality such as Japan and Sweden.

(Census and Statistics Department, 2013)

approx. 10 to 15 years or beyond





**Irony ends in pathos** in Saul Steinberg's 'Untitled, 1954', a version of the traditional diagram of the Ages of Man. The successful man rises from infant, through boy scout, academic, business man, tycoon to... playboy on a beach in Florida, retired, relaxed, happy but – useless.





# Youth and Beauty

Jack Kirkland's collection reveals his ability to co-optivate disparate pieces with ease. Twentieth-century paintings of abstracts, Hellenistic bronzes, a Caravag portrait and an Egyptian science baboon. He talks to Apollo about the evolution of his eclectic collection

WRITER: OSCAR DOMÍNGUEZ  
PHOTOGRAPHS: GARY HESTER

**T**he term 'young collector' can suggest impetuosity, even rashness, but here we're talking about a qualification, the inference being that only with the passing of years may one graduate to legitimate connoisseurship. Jack Kirkland, at 31, is undeniably young, but his collection and his collecting process would better have a sophisticated and mature feel, perhaps among the first rank of British collectors. His Hyde Park Gardens apartment represents a disarmingly elegant coming together of his interests, which at first seem unconnected: modern British art, Hellenistic photography, antiquities and contemporary Latin American and international art. There's such a broad range of periods and styles, given an impression of chronological levity!

Indeed, the long and white die-cast sculpture for white, suspended by thin metal and ashblak.

In his living room we find a recent monochromatic painting by Bridget Riley, *View with Windows* (1961, Fig. 7); a portrait of a child man by Antonio Caracciolo, 1595; Fig. 41; a Josef Albert Grosse and Franz Anton Bustelli, an Egyptian bronze, *Seated male figure*, and a bronze *Seated male figure*, and a bronze *Seated male figure*, and a bronze *Seated male figure*. Interestingly, Mr Kirkland has already been collecting for 35 years. "The first sculpture I really fell in love with pleasure," he recalls, "was when I saw at the Peggy Guggenheim museum with my parents as a teen and I saw that room full of ancient Hellenic art spread with that view in the grand canal. I repeat here is that room." Soon after, on his 16th birthday, his father gave him

\$50 to help a work of art which he called *Two Boys*. "I bought a copy of *The Old and the New* and I think I could, visiting all of the galleries, and people really have been nice to me. I remember the Museum [of Modern Art] showing me *Two Boys* and the drawing of *Two Boys* by Michelangelo. "Can I buy that for the grand?" I said, and they'd be like, "We do 7.2 million!" I ended up buying a work by an American artist called Tom Friedman; it was originally on an engraved plate. My dad thought I was crazy, but then when I got into a museum show he thought maybe I might know what I was doing!"

In buying a highly successful work, Mr Kirkland begins to see the end, so to speak, rather than following the chronology of art history through to the point. Though at Oxford he read history, and history of art, he had always



How to defy Ageing and stay young forever



# The elixir of youth



# Geras

In Greek mythology, **Geras** (Ancient Greek: Γῆρας, *Gēras*) was the god of old age. It was considered a virtue whereby the more *gēras* a man acquired, the more *kleos* (fame) and *arete* (excellence and courage) he was considered to have. According to Hesiod, *Gēras* was a son of Nyx. Hyginus adds that his father was Erebus. He was depicted as a tiny shriveled-up old man. *Gēras*'s opposite was Hebe, the goddess of youth. His Roman equivalent was **Senectus**. He is known primarily from vase depictions that show him with the hero Heracles; the mythic story that inspired these depictions has been entirely lost.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geras>

Hence: Gerontology, Geriatrics



Geras, detail of an Attic red-figure pelike, ca. 480 BC–470 BCE, Louvre

# Old Age =

Illness, Liability,  
Marginalization,  
Dementia,  
Uselessness,  
Helplessness,  
Ugliness,  
Loneliness,  
Hopelessness,  
Despair,  
Nuisance,  
Social waste?







三等老人：  
等食、等睡、等死



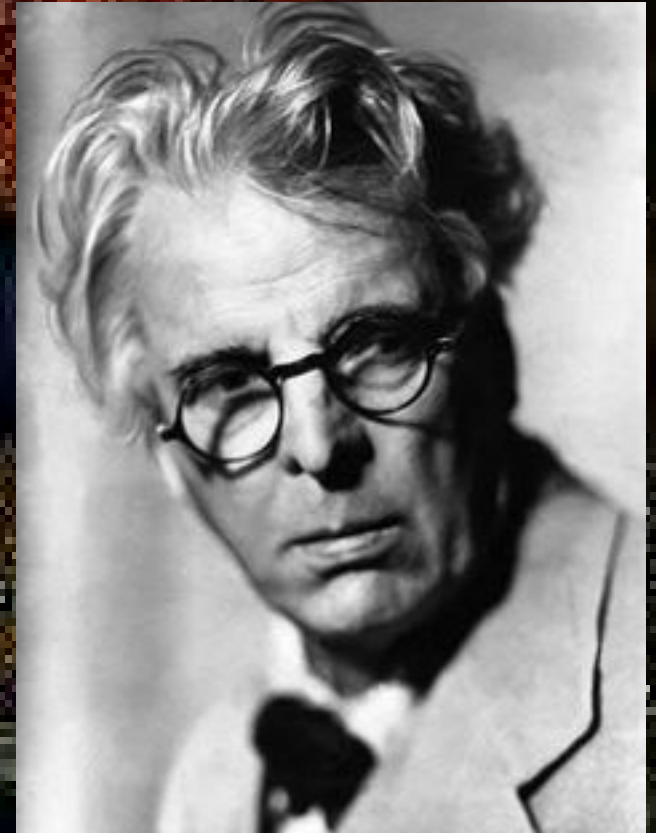


## Sailing to Byzantium (1926)

W. B. Yeats, 1865 - 1939

That is no country for old men. The young  
In one another's arms, birds in the trees  
—Those dying generations—at their song,  
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,  
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long  
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.  
Caught in that sensual music all neglect  
Monuments of unageing intellect.

An aged man is but a paltry thing,  
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless  
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing  
For every tatter in its mortal dress,  
Nor is there singing school but studying  
Monuments of its own magnificence;  
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come  
To the holy city of Byzantium.



(Yeats died at the age of 74)

O sages standing in God's holy fire  
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,  
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,  
And be the singing-masters of my soul.  
Consume my heart away; sick with desire  
And fastened to a dying animal  
It knows not what it is; and gather me  
Into the artifice of eternity.

Once out of nature I shall never take  
My bodily form from any natural thing,  
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make  
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling  
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;  
Or set upon a golden bough to sing  
To lords and ladies of Byzantium  
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

Written in 1926 (when Yeats was 60 or 61), "Sailing to Byzantium" is Yeats' definitive statement about the agony of old age and the imaginative and spiritual work required to remain a vital individual even when the heart is "fastened to a dying animal" (the body). Yeats's solution is to leave the country of the young and travel to Byzantium, where the sages in the city's famous gold mosaics could become the "singing-masters" of his soul.

# ECCLIESIASTES


12:1-4 So remember your Creator while you are still young, before those dismal days and years come when you will say, “I don’t enjoy life.” That is when the light of the sun, the moon, and the stars will grow dim for you, and the rain clouds will never pass away. Then your arms, that have protected you, will tremble, and your leg, now strong, will grow weak. Your teeth will be too few to chew your food, and your eyes too dim to see clearly. Your ears will be deaf to the noise of the street. You will barely be able to hear the mill as it grinds or music as it plays, but even the song of a bird will wake you from sleep.

# ECCLESIASTES

12:5-8 You will be afraid of high places, and walking will be dangerous. Your hair will turn white; you will hardly be able to drag yourself along, and all desire will be gone. We are going to our final resting places, and then there will be mourning in the street. The silver chain will snap, and the golden lamp will fall and break; the rope at the well will break, and the water-jar will be shattered. Our bodies will return to the dust of the earth, and the breath of the will go back to God, who gave it to us.

Useless, useless, said the Philosopher. It is useless.

*Good News Bible*



Ageing, unlike death has never been an important theme for philosophy

Death: Certainty

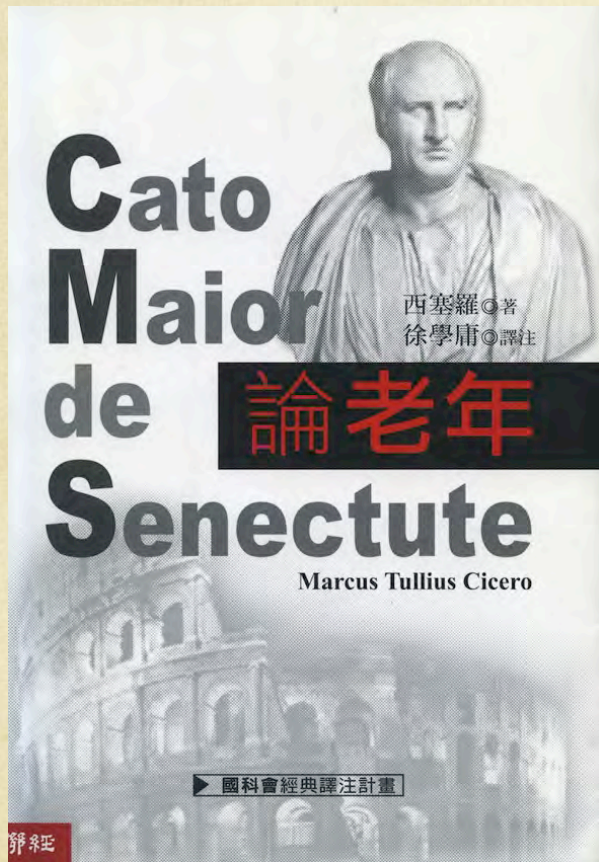
Ageing: Contingency

All men are mortal

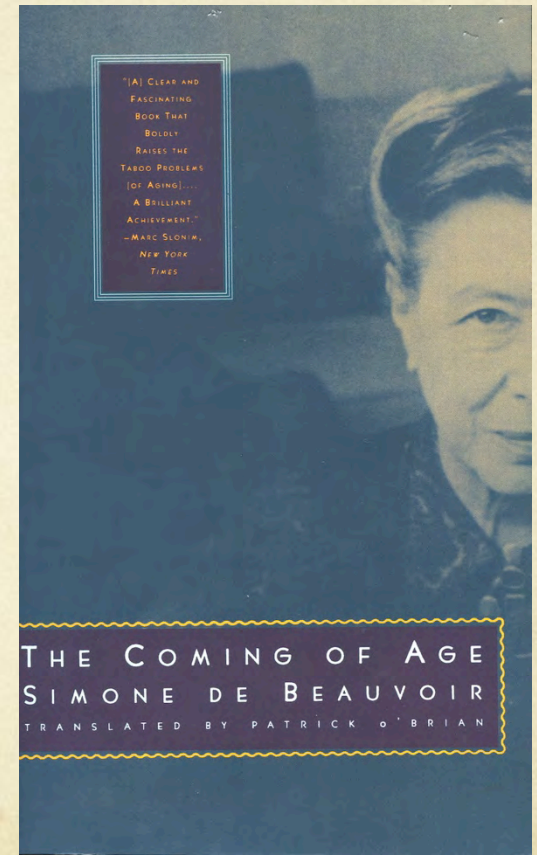
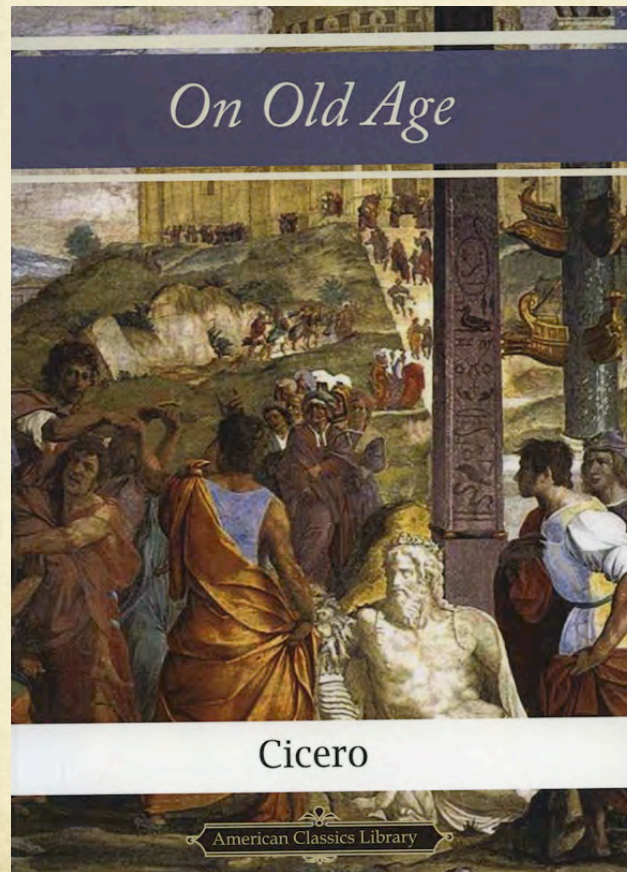
Not everyone lives to be old

when only a few people in a society reach “old age” but death is a threat at all ages, death will attract more attention than ageing. In the work of the eminent philosophers of the past we find references to ageing only in the margins of their work.

# Only TWO books on the philosophy of SENECTITUDE (Old Age)



44 BCE



La Vieillesse 1970

Old Age ( UK) Coming of Age (USA)

**Marcus Tullius Cicero** (106 -  
43 BCE)

Roman philosopher,  
politician, lawyer, orator,  
political theorist, consul and  
constitutionalist.

“...the greatest of Roman  
orators...”

Cicero died at the age of 63



## Cicero: *de Senectute*

Philosophical Background:

Eclectic: Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus and the Stoics

“Cicero made no claim to originality as a philosopher, nor even to complete acquaintance with every detail of the Greek systems. In early life he had studied with enthusiasm and success all the learning of the Greeks, but especially in the two departments of Rhetoric and Philosophy, then closely connected, or rather hardly distinguished.”

James S. Reid (1882) Introduction to *de Senectute*



# Cicero: *de Senectute*

Cicero wrote philosophical works mostly in 41 BCE in retirement and after the death of his daughter Tullia:

*De Consolatione, Academica, De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum, Disputationes Tusculanae, De Natura Decorum, De Fato, Cato Maior de Senectute, De Officiis..*

Earlier works: *De Oratore, De Legibus, De Amiticia...*

*Phillippicae* 14 speeches condemning Mark Antony in 44-43 BCE: the “crime” led to his murder in 43 BCE

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

Cicero's last words are said to have been:

"There is nothing proper about what you are doing, soldier, but do try to kill me properly."

According to Plutarch, Herennius first slew him, then cut off his head. On Antony's instructions his hands, which had penned the Philippics against Antony, were cut off as well; these were nailed along with his head on the Rostra in the Forum Romanum according to the tradition of Marius and Sulla, both of whom had displayed the heads of their enemies in the Forum.

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

“The *Cato Maior* is a popular essay in Ethics, applying the principles of philosophy to the alleviation of one of life's chief burdens, old age. In ancient times, when philosophy formed the real and only religion of the educated class, themes like this were deemed to afford a worthy employment for the pens even of the greatest philosophers. Such essays formed the only substitute the ancients had for our Sermons. There can be no doubt of Cicero's sincerity when he says that the arguments he sets forth in the treatise had given him real comfort.”

# Cicero: *de Senectute*

Like most Cicero's philosophical writings, is cast in the form of a dialogue

Personages:

1. *Cato*. Marcus Porcius Cato was born at Tusculum in Latium, probably 234 BCE and died at the age of at least 85 years. "As regards versatility of endowment, number and diversity of official trusts, ability and faithfulness as a servant of the public, and influence - unspent by death - over the Senate and the people, Cato had no equal in the history of Rome."

A. Peabody (1887) p. 11

James S. Reid (1882) Introduction to *de Senectute*

# Cicero: *de Senectute*

2. *Laelius*: Caisu Laelius Sapiens, of a distinguished patrician family, born in Rome 186 BCE. Imitate friend of Scipio. Cicero: the type of a man of culture

3. *Scipio*: Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus Minor, was born about 185 BCE. Cicero points to Scipio as the ideal statesman, or an almost perfect Roman

No historical certainty about the friendship and intimacy between Cato Major and the two younger Romans.

# Cicero: *de Senectute*

Structure of the dialogue:

23 Chapters or 85 paragraphs

James S. Reid (1882) Introduction to *de Senectute*

# Cicero: *de Senectute*

## 1. General View.

The *Cato Maior* falls naturally into three parts:

Preliminary, dedication to Atticus, §§ 1-3;

Introductory Conversation, §§ 4-9;

Cato's Defence of Old Age, §§ 10-85.

After § 9 Cato continues to express his views on old age without interruption to the end, and the dialogue thus becomes really a monologue.

# Cicero: *de Senectute*

## 2. Analysis

### Preliminary ... 1-3.

Cicero, addressing Atticus, states his purpose in writing the book and the effect of the work on himself (1, 2), the reasons for putting the sentiments on old age into the mouth of Cato, and the circumstances of the supposed conversation (3).



# Cicero: *de Senectute*

## Introductory Conversation ... 4-9.

Scipio declares his admiration of Cato's vigorous and happy old age. Cato replies that the secret lies in following the guidance of Nature (4, 5). Laelius then asks Cato to point out the road to such an old age as his own (6). This the old man promises to do, but “first remarks that the faults charged against old age are generally due to defects of character (7). Laelius suggests that prosperity makes Cato's declining years pleasant. Cato admits that there may be some truth in this, but maintains that right character alone can make old age tolerable (8, 9).

# Cicero: *de Senectute*

## Introductory Conversation ... 4-9.

“The **best-fitting defensive armour of old age**, Scipio and Laelius, consists in the **knowledge and practice of the virtues**, which, assiduously cultivated, after the varied experiences of a long life, are wonderfully fruitful, not only because they never take flight, not even at the last moment, - although this is not a consideration of prime importance, - but because the consciousness of a well-spent life and a memory rich in good deeds afford supreme happiness.” (9)

# Cicero: *de Senectute*

## Cato's Defence of Old Age ... 10-85

A. Introductory argument from fact. Account of celebrated old men whose lives till death were useful and happy ... 10-14

(a). Fabius Maximus ... 10-12

(b). Plato; (c). Isocrates; (d). Gorgias ... 13

(e). Ennius ... 14”



# Cicero: *de Senectute*

## Cato's Defence of Old Age ... 10-85

“There is however, a calm and serene old age, which belongs to a life passed peacefully, purely, and gracefully, such as we learn was the old age of Plato, who died while writing in his eighty-first year; or that of Isocrates...” (13)

# Cicero: *de Senectute*

## B. Refutation of charges made against old age ... 15-85

the four charges commonly made against old age:

- a) it withdraws men from **active life**,
- b) it weakens the **physical powers**,
- c) it takes away capacity for **enjoyment**,
- d) it involves the anticipation of **death** ... 15

# Cicero: *de Senectute*

- a) Refutation of the first charge, that old age withdraws from active life.
  - (i). There are employments suited to old age which are as necessary to the well-being of society as those which require greater physical powers ... 15-20”
  - (ii). The special objection that old men have weak memories is answered by showing that this is due either to an original defect or to insufficient exercise ... 21-22”
  - (iii). Argument from fact: instances of old men in public and in private life who till death were actively at work ... 23-26”

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

a) Refutation of the first charge, that old age withdraws from active life.

“The old man does not do what the young men do, but he **does greater and better things**. Great things are accomplished, not by strength, or swiftness, or suppleness of body, but by **counsel, influence, deliberate opinion**, of which old age is not wont to bereft, but, on the other hand, to possess them abundantly.” (17)

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

a) Refutation of the first charge, that old age withdraws from active life.

“Old men have their powers of mind unimpaired, when they do not suspend their usual pursuits and their habits of industry. Nor is this the case only with those in conspicuous stations and in public office; it is equally true in private and retired life. Sophocles in extreme old age still wrote tragedies.” (22)



## Cicero: *de Senectute*

a) Refutation of the first charge, that old age withdraws from active life.

“This, however, is not so surprising in them; for no one is so old that he does bestow greatness not expect to live a year longer. But the same persons pains in labour from which they know that they shall derive any benefit:

‘He plants

Tree to bear fruit when he shall be no more’ “ (24)

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

b) Rebuttal of the second charge, that old age weakens the physical powers.

(i). Old age does **not desire nor require the strength of youth**, because it may exert influence through other means. Instances cited to show this ... 27-32”

(ii). Temperate habits will retain a good measure of strength till old age (33, 34); many instances of weakness in old age may be attributed to **ill-health, which is common to all periods of life** (35); **proper care will greatly retard decay ... 33-38”**

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

b) Rebuttal of the second charge, that old age weakens the physical powers.

“Old age. Laelius and Scipio, should be resisted, and its deficiencies should be supplied by faithful effort. Old age, like disease, should be fought against. **Care must be bestowed upon health; moderate exercise must be taken; the food and drink should be sufficient to recruit the strength, and not in such excess as to become oppressive.** Nor yet should the body alone be sustained in vigor. But much more the powers of mind; for these too, unless you pour oil into the lamp, are extinguished by old age.” (36)

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

b) Rebuttal of the second charge, that old age weakens the physical powers.

“If I were too feeble to pursue this course of life, I still on my bed should find pleasure in thinking out what I could no longer do; but that I am able still to do, as well as to think, is the result of my past life. One who is always occupied in these studies and labors is unaware when age creeps upon him. Thus one grows old gradually and unconsciously, and life is not suddenly extinguished, but closes when by length of time it is burned out.”

(38)

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

c) Refutation of the third charge, that old age takes away the capacity for enjoyment

(i). The pleasures in which youth finds its keenest enjoyment are in themselves bad, and old age is beneficent in **freeing from their allurements ... 39-44**”

(ii). Old age has pleasures far **more refined and satisfying** than those of sense ... 45-64 Such as, those of conversation and literature (45-50); especially those of agriculture (51-61); and lastly, the exercise of influence, which old age will always possess if a rightly spent youth has preceded ... (62-64).”

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

c) Refutation of the third charge, that old age takes away the capacity for enjoyment

“But to what purpose am I saying so much about pleasure? Because it is not only no reproach to old age, but even its highest merit, that it does not severely feel the loss of bodily pleasure. But you may say, it must dispense with sumptuous feast, and loaded tables, and oft-drained cups. True, but it equally dispenses with sottishness, and indigestion, and troubled dreams. But if any license is to be given to pleasure, seeing that we do not easily resist its allurements, ~ insomuch that Plato calls **pleasure the bait of evil**, because, forsooth, men are caught by it as fished by the hook, ~ old age, while it dispenses with excessive feasting, yet can find delight in moderate conviviality.” (44)

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

c) Refutation of the third charge, that old age takes away the capacity for enjoyment

“But of what immense worth is it for the soul to be with itself, to live, as the phrase is, with itself, discharged from the service of lust, ambition, strife, enmities, desires of every kind! If one has some provision laid up, as it were, of study and learning, **nothing is more enjoyable than the leisure of old age.**” (49)

# Cicero: *de Senectute*

c) Refutation of the third charge, that old age takes away the capacity for enjoyment

(iii). The special objection that old men's tempers spoil their enjoyments is met by the statement that this is the **fault of character, not of age ... 65**”



## Cicero: *de Senectute*

c) Refutation of the third charge, that old age takes away the capacity for enjoyment

“But remember that in all that I say I am praising the old age that has laid its foundations in youth. Hence follows the maxim to which I once gave utterance with the assent of all who heard me: ‘Wretched is the old age which has to speak in its own defence.’ white hairs or wrinkles cannot usurp authority; but an early life well spent reaps authority as the fruit of its age.” (62)

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

c) Refutation of the third charge, that old age takes away the capacity for enjoyment

“But it is said that old men are morose, and uneasy, and irritable, and hard to please; and were we to make the inquiry, we might be told that they are avaricious. **But these are faults of character, not of age...** So it is in society; for as it is not wine of every vintage, so it is not every temper that grows sour with age. I approve of gravity in old age, so it be not excessive; for moderation in all things is becoming: but for bitterness I have no tolerance. As for senile avarice, I do not understand what it means; for can anything be more foolish than, in proportion as there is less of the way to travel, to seek the more provision for it” (65)

*de Senectute*, trans Andrew P Peabody, 1887

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

d) Refutation of the fourth charge, that old age is unhappy because it involves the anticipation of death.

(i). Since the **right aim of life is to live not long but well**, death ought not to be dreaded at any age ... 66-69”

(ii). Old men, especially those of learning and culture, ought not to fear death ... 70-76 Because, that which is according to nature is good, **and it is natural for old men to die** (70-73); the process of dying is brief and almost painless (74); even young men and those without learning often set the example of despising death (75); and old age, just as the other periods of life, has finally its season of ripeness and satiety (76).

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

d) Refutation of the fourth charge, that old age is unhappy because it involves the anticipation of death.

“O wretched old man, not to have learned in so long a life that death is to be despised! Which manifestly ought to be regarded with indifference if it really puts an end to the soul, or to be even desired if at length it leads the soul where it will be immortal; and certainly there is no third possibility that can be imagined.”(67).

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

d) Refutation of the fourth charge, that old age is unhappy because it involves the anticipation of death.

“...that death is common to all ages. **But it is said, the young man hopes to live long, while the old man can have no such hope.** The hope, as any rate, is unwise; for what is more foolish than to take things uncertain for certain, false for true? Is it urged that the old man has absolutely nothing to hope? For the very reason he is in a better condition than the young man, because what the youth hopes he has already obtained. **The one wishes to live long, the other has already lived long.**”(68).

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

d) Refutation of the fourth charge, that old age is unhappy because it involves the anticipation of death.

“But to me no life seems long that has any end. For when the end comes, then that which had passed has flowed away; that alone remains which you have won by virtue and by a good life. Hours, indeed, and days, and months, and years, guide by, nor does the past ever return, nor yet can it be known what is to come. Each one should be **content with such time as it is allotted to him to live.**”(69).

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

d) Refutation of the fourth charge, that old age is unhappy because it involves the anticipation of death.

“The close of other ages is definitely fixed; but old age has no fixed term, and one may fitly live in it so long as he can observe and discharge the duties of his station, and yet **despise death**. Old age, fearless of death, may transcend youth in courage and in fortitude.”(72).

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

d) Refutation of the fourth charge, that old age is unhappy because it involves the anticipation of death.

“There are certain pursuits belong to boyhood; do grownup young men therefore long for them? There are others appertaining to early youth; are they required in the sedate period of life which we call middle age? This too, has its own pursuit, and they are not sought in old age. As the pursuits of earlier period of life fail, so in like manner do those of old age. When this period is reached, **satiety of life brings a season ripe for death.**”(76).



## Cicero: *de Senectute*

(iii) Death is probably the gateway to a happy immortality ... 77-85

Tending towards proof of this are the arguments stated in Plato; viz. the rapidity of the mind's action, its powers of memory and invention, its self-activity, indivisible nature and pre-existence (78); also the arguments, attributed to Cyrus, based upon the soul's immateriality, the posthumous fame of great men and the likeness of death to sleep (79-81); the instinctive belief in immortality, so strong as even to form an incentive for action (82); and, finally, the speaker's own longing after immortality and hope of union with those whom he once knew and loved (83-85).”

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

“...but the soul alone is invisible, alike when it is present in the body and when it departs. You see nothing so nearly resembling death as sleep. Now in sleep souls most clearly show their divineness; for when they are thus relaxed and free, they foresee the future. From this we may understand what they will be when they have entirely released themselves from the bonds of the body. Therefore, if these things are so, reverence me as a divine being. If, however, the soul is going to perish with the body, you still, revering the gods who protect and govern all this beautiful universe, will keep my memory in pious and inviolate regards.” (81).

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

“Old age sits lightly upon me. Not only is it not burdensome ; it is even pleasant. But if I err in believing that the souls of men are immortal, I am glad thus to err, nor am I willing that this error in which I delight shall be wrested from me so long as I live; while if in death, as some paltry philosophers think, I shall have no consciousness, the dead philosophers cannot ridicule this delusion of mine. But if we are not going to be immortal, it is yet desirable for man to cease living in his due time; for nature has its measure, as of all other things, so of life. **Old age is the closing act of life, as of a drama, and we ought in this to avoid utter weariness, especially if the act has been prolonged beyond its due length.** – I had these things to say about old age, which I earnestly hope that you may reach, so that you can verify be experience what you have heard from me ” (83).

## Cicero: *de Senectute*

*“Ita enim senectus honesta est, si se ipsa defendit, si ius suum retinet, si nemini emancipata est, si usque ad ultimum spiritum dominatur in suos.” 11:38*

- *Old age will only be respected if it fights for itself, maintains its rights, avoids dependence on anyone and asserts control over its own to its last breath.*
- *Old age, indeed, is worthy of honour only when it defends itself, when it asserts its right, when it comes into bondage to no one, when even to the last breath it maintains its sway over those of its own family. (trans. Andrew P. Peabody, 1887 )*
- *The Fact is that old age is respectable just as long as it asserts itself, maintains its proper rights, and is not enslaved to any one. (trans. E. S. Shuckburgh 2012)*

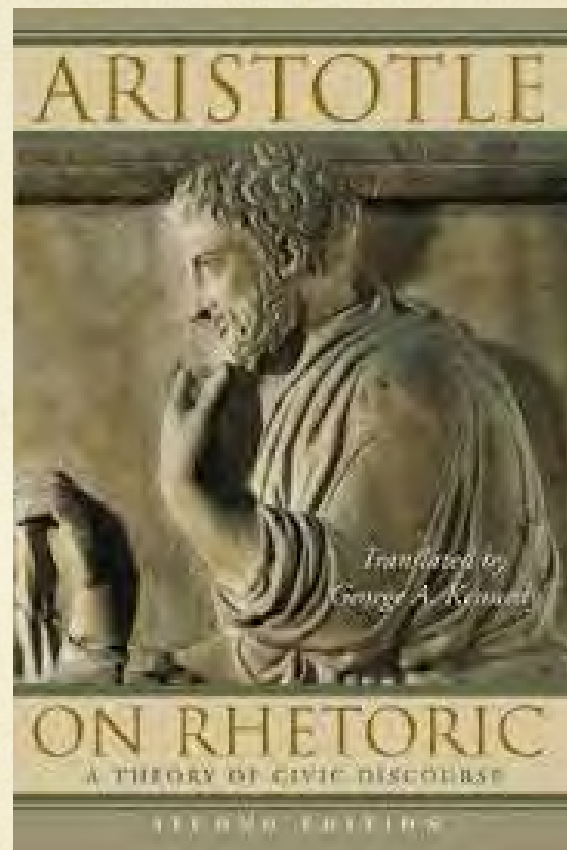
# Cicero: *de Senectute*

- A positive defense for Senectitude (Old age)
- Not reality, a possibility and a hope (May be and not Should be)
- Optimism on the will and intellect of the self
- For elite class, male with adequate resources. Not common people
- Stoic attitude: Focus only on oneself, rather than living with other people

## Aristotle: *Rhetoric* Bk II:13

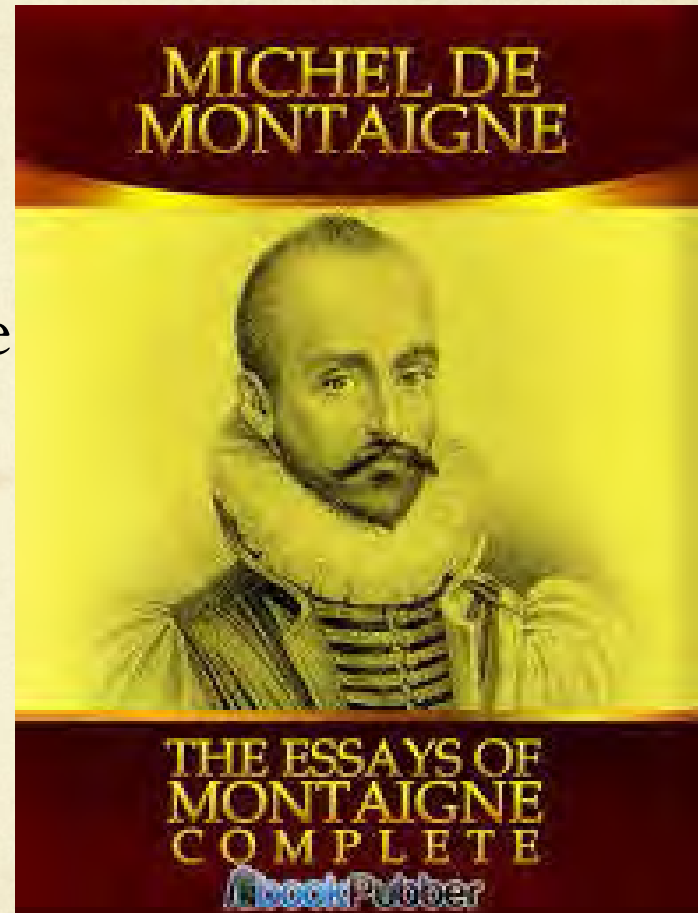
The character of elderly men – men who are past their prime – ...They think, but they never know...they are cynical...they are small-minded...they are not generous...they are cowardly...they are too fond of themselves...they are not shy, but shameless rather, caring less for what is noble...they lack confidence in the future...they live by memory rather than by hope. Their sensual passions have either altogether gone or have lost their vigour. Old men may feel pity, as well as young men, but not for the same reason. Young men feel it out of kindness; old men out of weakness, imagining that befalls anyone else might easily happen to them...

(Aristotle, 384-322 BCE, died at the age of 62)



# Montaigne “On the Length of Life”

“dying of old age is a rare death, unique and out of the normal order and therefore less natural than the others. It is the last, the uttermost way of dying; the farther it is from us, the less we can hope to reach it.”



(Montaigne, 1533-1592, died at the age of 59)



“[A] CLEAR AND  
FASCINATING  
BOOK THAT  
BOLDLY  
TACKLES  
TABOO PROBLEMS  
[OF AGING]...  
A BRILLIANT  
ACHIEVEMENT.”  
—MARC SLONIM,  
NEW YORK  
TIMES

Simone de Beauvoir: *La Vieillesse* 1970

“Die early or grow old: there is no other alternative. And yet, as Goethe said, ‘Age takes hold of us by surprise.’ For himself each man is the sole, unique subject, and we are often astonished when the common fate becomes our own – when we are struck by sickness, a shattered relationship, or bereavement.” (283)





[A] CLEAR AND  
FASCINATING  
BOOK THAT  
BOLDLY  
TACKLES  
TABOO PROBLEMS  
[OF AGING]...  
"BRILLIANT  
ACHIEVEMENT."  
—MARC SLORN,  
NEW YORK  
TIMES

## Simone de Beauvoir: *La Vieillesse* 1970

“Old age is not a necessary end to human life...However, it is an empiric and universal truth that after a certain number of years the human organism undergoes a decline. The process is inescapable. At the end of a certain time, it results in a reduction in the individual’s activities; very often it also brings about a diminution in his faculties and an alteration in his attitude towards the world.” (339)



Simone de Beauvoir: *La Vieillesse* 1970

“And indeed, it is old age, rather than death, that is to be contrasted with life. Old age is life’s parody, whereas death transforms life into a destiny: in a way it preserves it by giving it the absolute dimension – ‘As into himself eternity changes him at last.’ Death does away with time.” (539)



[A] CLEAR AND  
FASCINATING  
BOOK THAT  
BOLDLY  
TACKLES  
TABOO PROBLEMS  
[OF AGING]...  
"ACHIEVEMENT"  
—MARC SLONIM,  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

## Simone de Beauvoir: *La Vieillesse* 1970

“Yet there are also clear-minded and peaceful deaths: When all desire to live is physically and spiritually gone, the old person prefers an everlasting sleep to the daily struggle or boredom. The proof that in **old Age** death does not appear as the greatest of evils is the number of old people who decided ‘to put an end it all’. In the condition that society provides for them today, **living on is a pointless trial**, and it is understandable that many should choose to shorten it.”

(447)

The image shows the cover of the book 'La Vieillesse' by Simone de Beauvoir. The cover is dark with gold lettering. At the top, it says '[A] CLEAR AND FASCINATING BOOK THAT BOLDLY RAISES THE TABOO PROBLEMS [OF AGING]...'. Below that, it says 'ACHIEVEMENT IN - MARC SLOHIM, NEW YORK'. The title 'La Vieillesse' is written in a large, elegant font.

## Simone de Beauvoir: *La Vieillesse* 1970

“There is only one solution if old age is not be an absurd parody of our former life, and that is to go on pursuing ends that give our existence a meaning - devotion to individuals, to groups or to causes, social, political, intellectual or creative work. In spite of the moralists’ opinion to the contrary, in old age we should wish still to have passions strong enough to prevent us in turning in upon ourselves. One’s life has value so long as one attributes value to the life of others, by means of love, friendship, indignation, compassion. When this is so, then there are still valid reasons for activity or speech...It is far better not to think about it too much, but to live a fairly committed, fairly justified life so that one may go on in the same path even when all illusions have vanished and one’s zeal for life has died away.”

(541)

JEAN PAUL SARTRE  
1905 - 1980  
—  
SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR  
1908 - 1986  
—

CAHEN

J P Sartre, aged 75

S de Beauvoir, aged 78

# Existential Crisis

A stone sculpture of a man in a contemplative pose, with a skull in the foreground. The man's head is bowed, and his hand is near his face. The skull is positioned in the lower left foreground, resting on a rock. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a natural setting like a cave or a forest.

- Why should I die?
- Why was I given to live?
- Why should I become old to know my fragility?
- The Pending of Death /Dying
- Death and Finitude of Life

# Existential Crisis

A stone sculpture of a man in a contemplative pose, with a skull resting on a rock in the foreground. The man's face is turned downwards, and his hand is near his chin. The skull is positioned in the lower left, looking towards the right. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a natural or outdoor setting.

- What have I done in **my life** ?
- Have I had a **TRUE** and **AUTHENTIC** life ?
- What is the **meaning of old age** in my whole life?
- Is there a **meaning** of my life?

A stone sculpture of a person lying down, possibly a reclining figure, with a skull in the foreground. The scene is set outdoors with natural lighting and shadows.

# Existential Crisis

The Problem of Loss

Physical conditions: Health, Memory  
Mobility, Impotence,  
Intellectual capacity

Inter-human relationship: Death of  
friends, family members,

Loneliness and Emptiness



# Philosophy of Ageing

Understanding of old age , we have to think more fundamentally about what it means to be a person, to have a life, to have a good life, to be part of a just society.

Helen Small, *The Long Life*, 2007

# Philosophy of Ageing

In search of meaning and Identity within human limitation  
The role of ageing plays in life

## Epicurus (341-270 BCE) to Menoeceus, greetings:

Let no one be slow to seek wisdom when he is young nor weary in the search of it when he has grown old. For no age is too early or too late for the health of the soul. And to say that the season for studying philosophy has not yet come, or that it is past and gone, is like saying that the season for happiness is not yet or that it is now no more. Therefore, both old and young alike ought to seek wisdom, the former in order that, as age comes over him, he may be young in good things because of the grace of what has been, and the latter in order that, while he is young, he may at the same time be old, because he has no fear of the things which are to come. So we must exercise ourselves in the things which bring happiness, since, if that be present, we have everything, and, if that be absent, all our actions are directed towards attaining it.

(Epicurus died at the age of 71)



## Seneca (4 BCE- 65 CE): *De Brevitate Vitae*

See how they desire to live long! Worn-out old men pray like street-beggars for the addition of a few years; they pretend to be younger than they are; they flatter themselves with lies and get as much pleasure from self-deception as if they were deceiving fate as well as themselves. When finally some weakness has reminded them of their mortality, how fearfully they meet death, as though they are not quitting life but been dragged away from it! They shout repeatedly that they have been fools, as they have not really lived...That is when they reflect on how pointlessly they have toiled to gain what they did not enjoy, how all their effort has been utterly wasted. (Seneca died at the age of 69)



On the Shortness  
of Life

Seneca

## Conclusion:

Aristotle said the aim of war is peace, whereas that of work is leisure. The Greek word for leisure, *scholé*, is the origin of the Latin *scola*, which became *school* in English. The *Scholé* or *scola*, as an institution of education and learning, is therefore founded on “leisure”. The “Third Age” is not defined by the chronological age of 60 or 65, but understood as the stage following the First Age of preparation and education, and the Second Age devoted to work, career and family. The Third Age or “The Third Living Age” is a stage that human beings enter upon after years of work, and a period of freedom and leisure. Hence it does not necessarily mean retirement but an open possibility for reflecting on and rethinking one’s own life. The Third Ager refers to anyone who has reached the stage of leisure and can afford the freedom to engage in serious learning and thinking.



# The Third Age to The Fourth Age



“Amour” 2012 film directed by Michael Haneke

# The Fourth Age

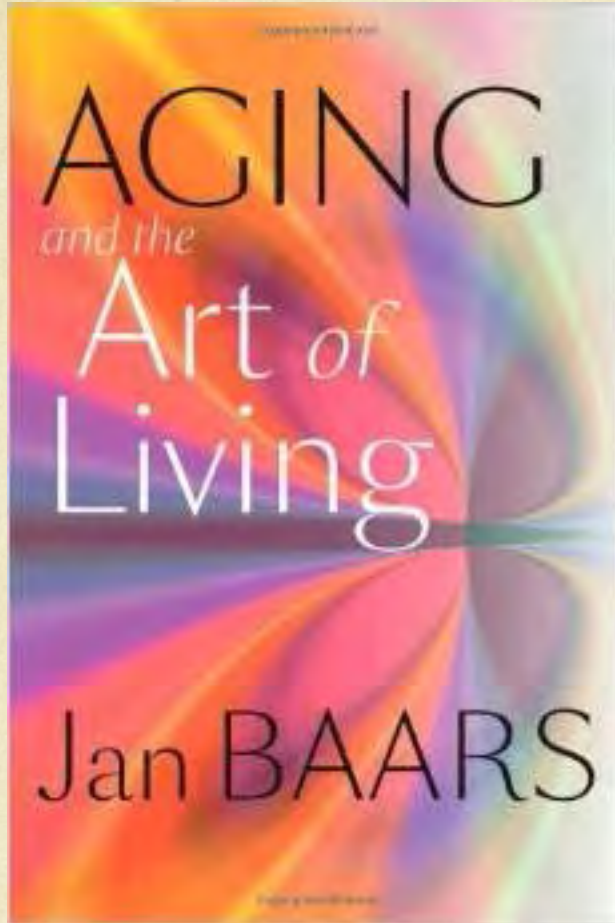
Amour (2012) - Official Trailer [HD]

02:00

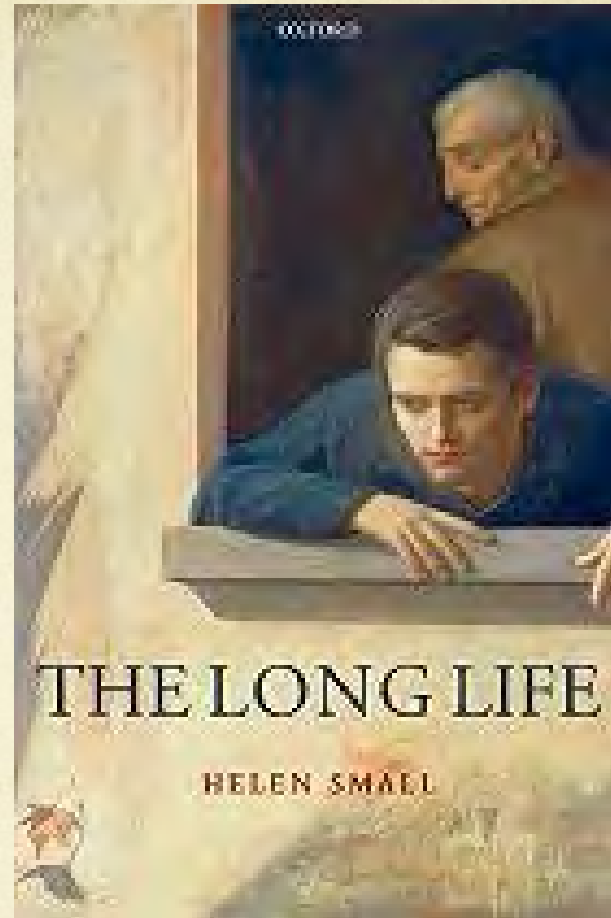


<http://youtube.com/watch?v=F7D-Y3T0XFA>

Most recent books on Philosophy of Ageing:



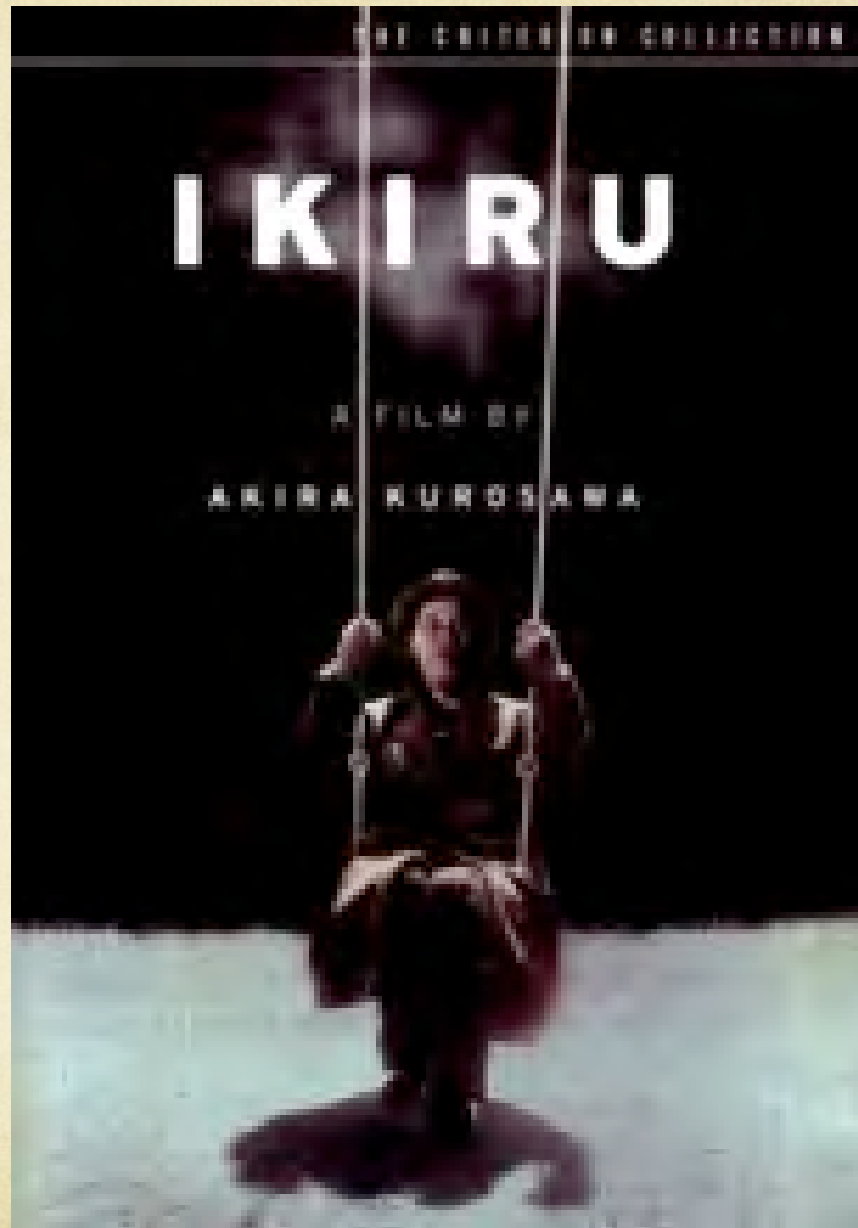
The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012



Oxford University Press 2008



Films of Ageing

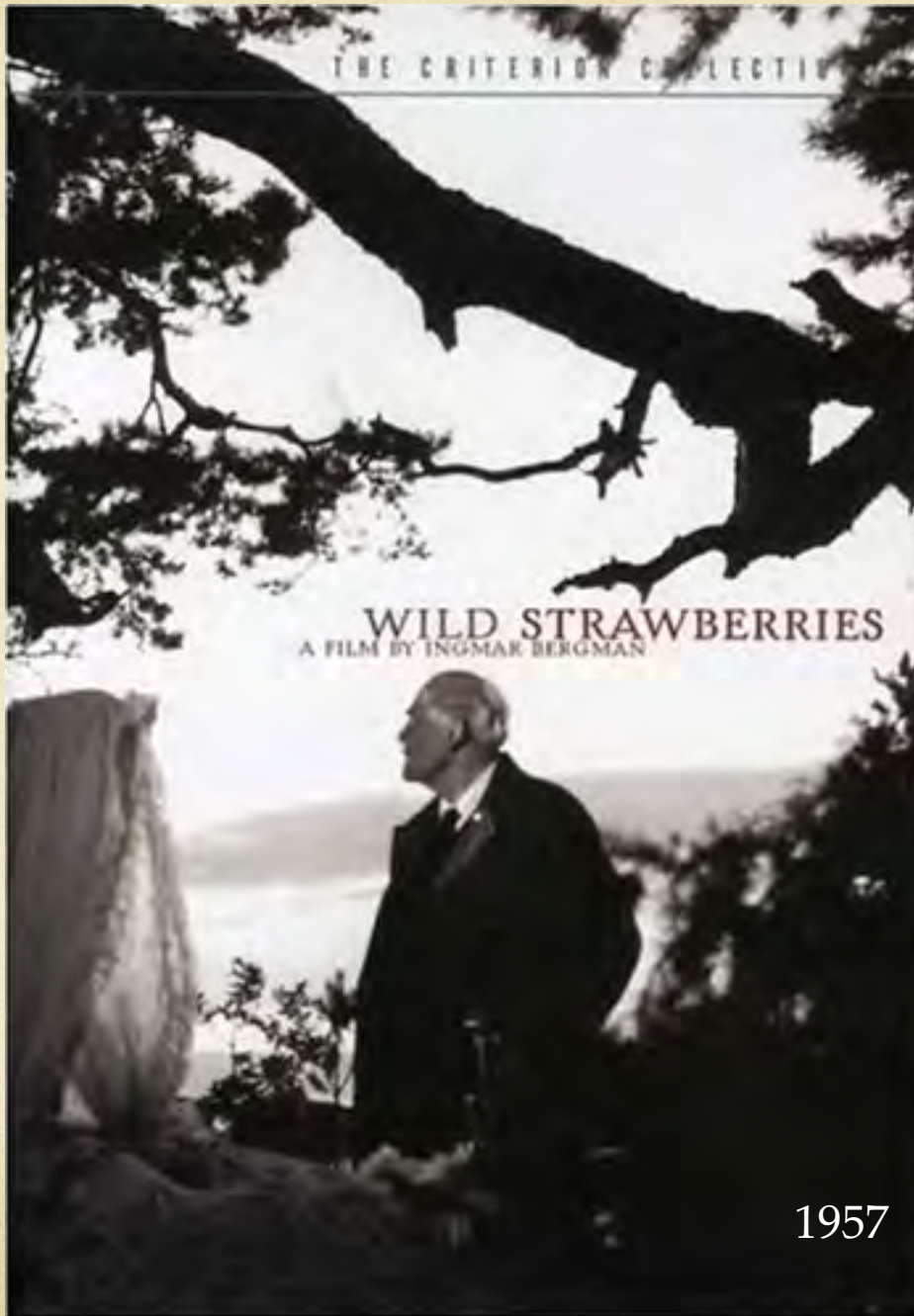


1952



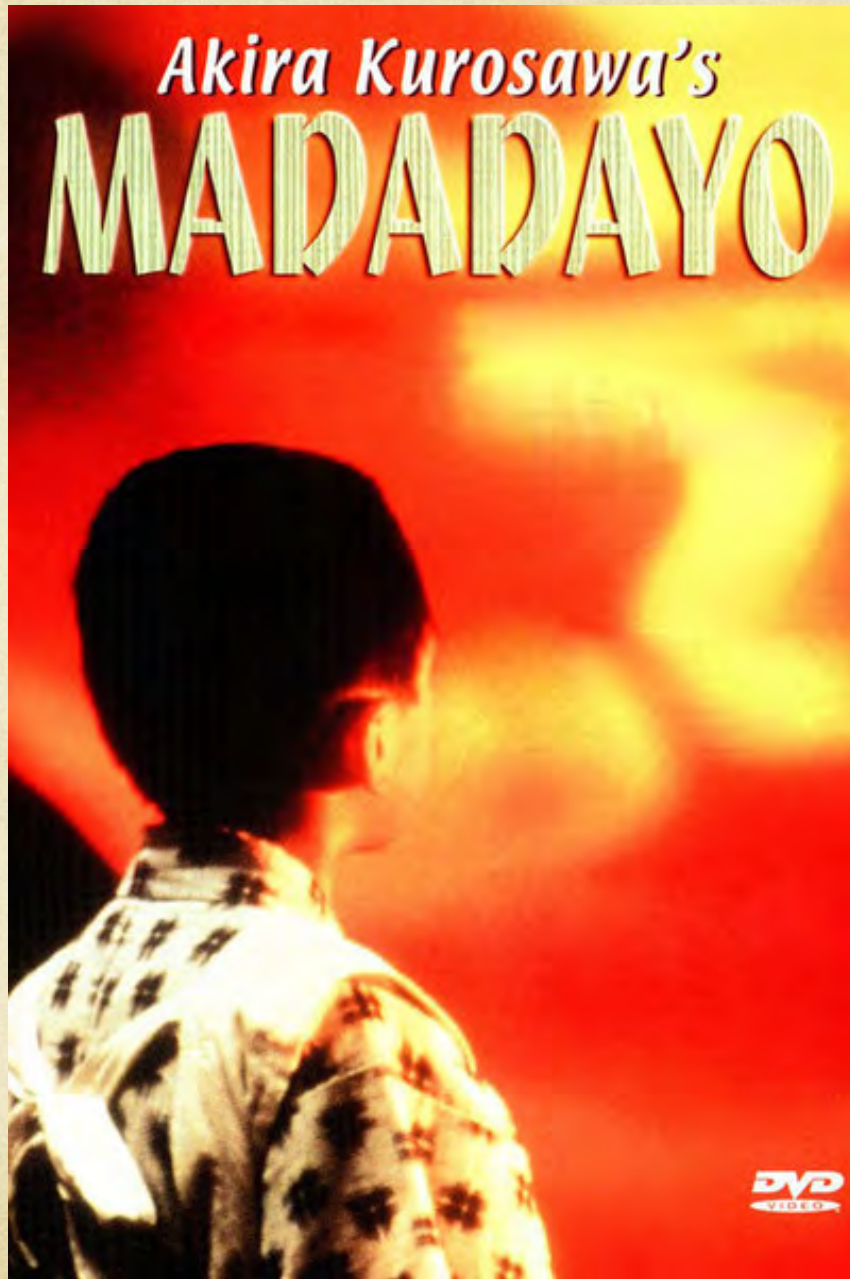
1953

小津安二郎 (1903 - 1963) died aged 60



Ingmar Bergman  
(1918-2007)

Died aged 89



1993. Last film by Akira Kurosawa 黒澤明 when he was 83, died 1998. Madadayo means "Not Yet" died aged 88



2002





**DOUGLAS  
DE NIRO  
FREEMAN  
KLINE**

# LAST VEGAS

IT'S GOING TO BE LEGENDARY

CBS FILMS and GOOD UNIVERSE present a LAURENCE MARK production a JON TURKELTAUB film MICHAEL DOUGLAS ROBERT DE NIRO MORGAN FREEMAN KEVIN KLINE "LAST VEGAS" MARY STEENBURGEN COSTUME DESIGNER FRANCINE MAISLER EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MELISSA KOSTERBAUDER PRODUCED BY MARK MOTTEFSCHAUGH DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY DAVID HENNING EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS DAVID HENNING PRODUCED BY NATHAN KAHANE JEREMIAH SANDWELL LAURENCE GREY WRITTEN BY LAURENCE MARK DIRECTED BY AMY BAER EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JUAN ESCOBAR PRODUCED BY JON TURKELTAUB



**NOVEMBER**  
[www.lastvegasmovie.com](http://www.lastvegasmovie.com)



**CBS FILMS**

2013



若不能一起變老，  
愛就失去了它的意義

2015

HARRISON FORD BLAKE LIVELY MICHEL HUISMAN

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WRITTEN BY J. MILLS GOODLOE SALVADOR PASKOWITZ CINEMATOGRAPHY DAVID LANZENBERG

LAKESHORE ENTERTAINMENT SIDNEY KIMMELENTERTAINMENT SIERRA / AFFINITY



## John Lennon - Grow Old With Me



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfOeURWq\\_kI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfOeURWq_kI)

John Lennon (1940-1980), died aged 40

Rabbi Ben Ezra

BY ROBERT BROWNING

Grow old along with me!

The best is yet to be,

The last of life, for which the first was made:

Our times are in His hand

Who saith "A whole I planned,

Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"

• • • • •

(Robert Browning 1812-1889, died aged 77)



Thank You