

The Ethics of Eternal Youth: Cosmetic Interventions and Societal Norms

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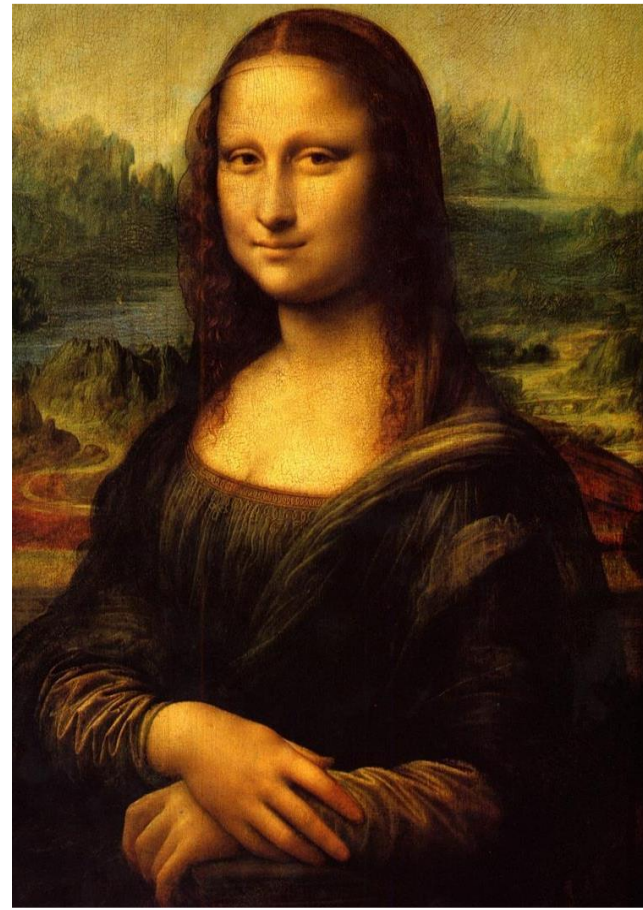
Background

Human fascination with youthfulness permeates art, literature, and societal norms: Cranach's *The Fountain of Youth* (1546) portrays rejuvenation through mythical means. [1,2,3]

Painting

Youth as a symbol of vitality, strength, and success.

Ancient myth – modern reality?



Society's desire for youthful appearance

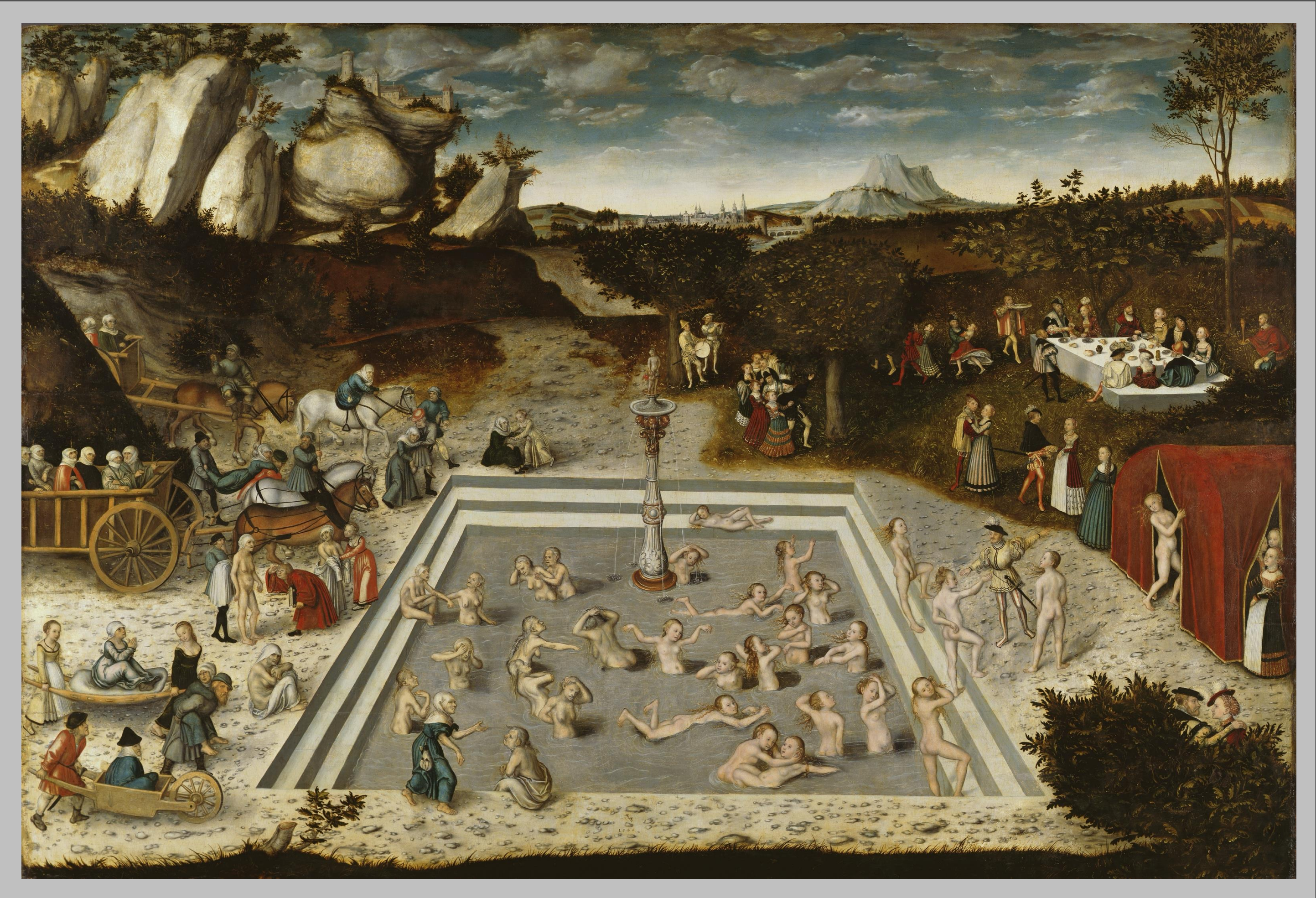
- medicalized
- commercialized

Cosmetic dermatological interventions:

- Botulinum toxin
- Hyaluronic acid fillers

→ promise of aesthetic enhancement,
→ complex ethical & psychosocial questions [3,4,5]





Lucas Cranach The Elder: The Fountain Of Youth, 1546

Material & Methods

Table 1: Beauchamp & Childress’ 4 medical ethical principles, 1979 [6,7]

Principles	Patient	Therapist
Autonomy [7]	elective aesthetic procedure → personal autonomy & self-care,	unattainable beauty standards,
	pathology of natural physiologic processes leading to psychological vulnerabilities.	normalization of aging commodification, choice of treatment.
Beneficence [7]	vital, beauty, success.	economic benefit, cultural& societal benefit
Non-maleficence [7]	potential side effects psychological illnesses.	safe, responsibility to discern body dysmorphophobia.
Justice [7]	fair healthcare resource allocation.	cheap versus expensive.

Theology – spiritual lens

Christian scripture has no reference to Jesus’ beauty.

- ❖ Isaiah 53:2: He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had **no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.**
- ❖ Revelation 1:14-15 Jesus's skin was a darker hue, and his hair was woolly in texture. The hairs of his head, it says, "were white as white wool, white as snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace.

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Dysmorphia / Dysmorphophobia

Definition mental disorder:

An overwhelming preoccupation with a perceived flaw in one's physical appearance [8].

Enrico Morselli 1886:

Disorder termed dysmorphophobia:



“Feeling of being ugly, even though nothing is wrong with the person’s appearance.”

Body Dysmorphia Disease

frequently comorbid with

- anxiety,
- depression,
- psychotic, or bipolar spectrum disorders.

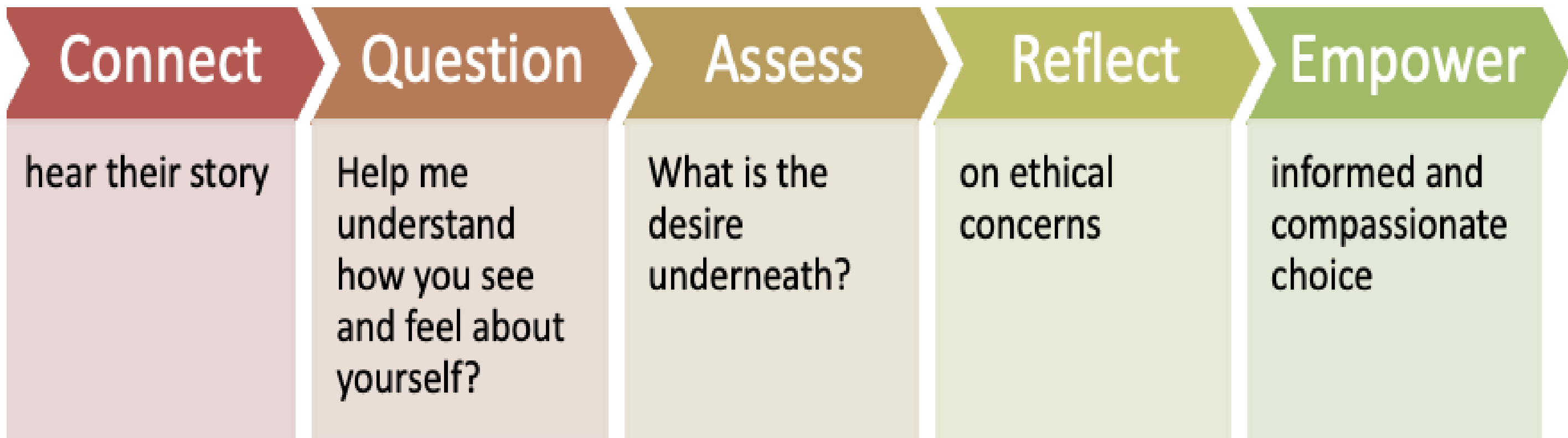


Discussion

Fletcher Ethics Agape, ancient Greek is “the highest form of Love, Charity” care ethics → People seek care, not correction.

Real need: Love & Acceptance

- Therapist: active listening, understanding the patient’s needs, considering cultural & economic influences [6,7].



Conclusion

- Aesthetic intervention accessible to everyone (justice), respecting individual choice whether to use it or not (autonomy).
- Set boundaries for pathological disorders (dysmorphia), refer to a specialist [5,7]
- Goal: honest, evidence-based education & psychological support, contrary to commercial marketing.
- Support well-being & not perpetuate harmful societal standards.

Questions to the audience:

Are we medicalizing normal aging?

Is cosmetic intervention empowering or enslaving?

What role should ethics play in beauty?

References

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