



CCA Speaker Series #16

Reza Hosseini

The relation between moral and nonmoral values
Wednesday, 12 August 2015, 4.30 pm

Opening note by Nkule Mabaso,
curator of the 'Earth Bound' film series

Michaelis Lecture Theatre

Michaelis School of Fine Art
Hiddingh Campus
31 – 37 Orange Street
Cape Town

A key feature of the literature on life's meaning is raising awareness to the significance of non-moral values in our appraisal of a good life and, more importantly, pointing out that for too long moral values have been given too much over-riding weight, too much coercive force which are crowding out non-moral virtues and values. (Williams 1981, Frankfurt 2004, Wolf 2010, 2015, Metz 2013). The main task among these philosophers is to flesh out the idea that nonmoral values could be as overriding as moral values in both the course of actions we take and on our judgment of these actions. It would be problematic, and unfair, to assume that moral values should always have the upper hand and take absolute precedence over

non-moral values. Specifically, a state of rivalry has been declared by Frankfurt and Wolf between moral and non-moral values. By focusing on Wolf's *The Variety of Values* (2015), I argue that even though her emphasis on the role of non-moral values in the constitution of a good life is well-taken, the relationship between moral and non-moral values is not that of rivalry but often that of intertwinement. I argue that Wolf's view ignores the fundamental ways one's moral perspectives inform and even shape one's non-moral perspectives. For example, *Guernica* is not merely an aesthetic representation of the state of war in nature. Instead, it is deeply informed and shaped by a resolute moral stance against the sufferings inflicted upon animals (humans included). Other examples will be discussed too.

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Image: Anna Zavileiskaia, *The Camera and the Kid*, Moscow, 1967

