

A close-up photograph of the marble bust of Michelangelo's David. The sculpture is shown from the chest up, with the head turned slightly to the left. The hair is thick and curly, and the face has a contemplative expression. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the marble.

CULTURE

LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM JOHN J. REICH LOIS FICHER-RATHUS EIGHTH EDITION

& VALUES

A SURVEY OF THE WESTERN HUMANITIES

CULTURE & VALUES

A SURVEY OF THE HUMANITIES

EIGHTH EDITION

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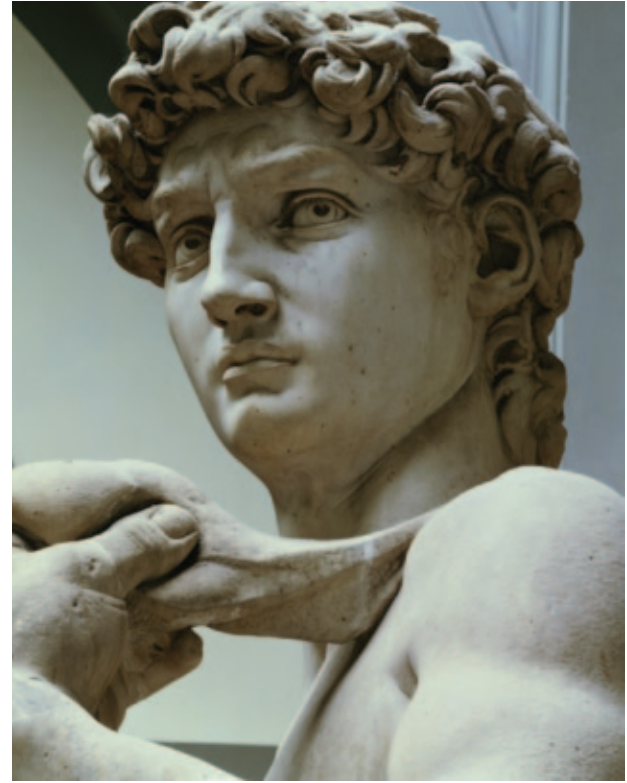
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About the Cover

When Michelangelo took on the commission to portray the young David, the biblical slayer of Goliath, he was 26 years old—just 4 years younger than David was when he was anointed King of Israel. The project was not without its challenges: The colossal block of marble from which the figure would be carved had lain untouched for years after it had been abandoned by another artist. But it was this work that would secure Michelangelo's standing as a sculptor and would launch a career that impacted not only the art of his era, but also the course of the history of art. It was this sculpture that would give form to Michelangelo's notion that the idea of a work resided within the stone and that it was left to the artist to release the idea—and thus the figure—by removing everything else. And it is in this sculpture that we see reflected, for the first of many times, the conflict between Michelangelo's ideals of calm and beauty and his own pent-up frustrations and emotions.

Michelangelo's *David* (Fig.12.10) has become an indisputably iconic work of art and an emblem of Western culture—the embodiment of a worldview in which human beings, with all of their capabilities and culpabilities, occupy center stage. Humanism was widely embraced in the circles in which Michelangelo moved—from princes to popes. It would be reasonable to assume, then, that his vision of David was shaped by a philosophy that extolled the human virtues of moral duty, civic responsibility, and the desire to meet or exceed one's potential as an individual. If we look for these things in David's face, we will find them.

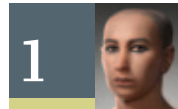


▲ Michelangelo, *David*, 1501-1504. Marble, 17' (5.17 m) high. Gallerie dell'Accademia, Florence Italy.

Contents

PREFACE xxi

THE ARTS: AN INTRODUCTION xxvii



Beginnings 3

Before History 4

Paleolithic Developments 4

Neolithic Developments 6

Mesopotamia 10

Sumer 10

Akkadian and Babylonian Culture 15

The Assyrians 17

Persia 18

Ancient Egypt 18

Egyptian Religion 19

Old Kingdom 20

Middle Kingdom 25

New Kingdom 25

The Prehistoric Aegean 32

The Cycladics 32

The Minoans 34

The Mycenaeans 37

COMPARE + CONTRAST

Mystery Ladies of the Ancient World 8

VALUES

On Righteousness as the Path to Emerging Forth into the Light 21

VOICES

Instructions to a Son 26

Glossary 41

THE BIG PICTURE 42



The Rise of Greece 45

Early Greece 46

The Early History of Greece 46

The Heroic Age (ca. 1000 BCE–750 BCE) 47

Religion 48

The Homeric Epics 49

Geometric Art 56

The Age of Colonization (ca. 750 BCE–600 BCE) 58

Orientalizing Art 59

The Archaic Period (ca. 600 BCE–480 BCE.) 59

Archaic Art 61

Temple Architecture 66

Music and Dance 68

Literature 70

Lyric Poetry 71

Philosophy 72

Herodotus: The First Greek Historian 74

COMPARE + CONTRAST

Gods into Men, Men into Gods 50

VALUES

Fate, Chance, and Luck 54

COMPARE + CONTRAST

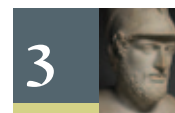
Unraveling Penelope 57

VOICES

Life and Death in the World of Homer 58

Glossary 76

THE BIG PICTURE 77



Classical Greece and the Hellenistic Period 79

Classical Civilization in Ancient Greece 80

The Classical Ideal 80

Pericles and the Athenian Acropolis 83

Parthenon Architecture 84

Parthenon Sculpture 84

Temple of Athena Nike 88

The Visual Arts in Classical Greece 88

Classical Sculpture 88

Vase Painting 91

Philosophy in Classical Greece 92

Protagoras 92

Socrates 93

Plato 94
Aristotle 96

Music in Classical Greece 97

Theater in Classical Greece 98

The Drama Festivals of Dionysus 98
The Athenian Tragic Dramatists 99
Aristophanes and Greek Comedy 106

The Late Classical Period 106

Late Classical Sculpture 107
Late Classical Architecture 109

The Hellenistic Period 110

VALUES

Civic Pride 101

VOICES

Kerdo the Cobbler 112

Glossary 114

THE BIG PICTURE 115



Rome 117

The Etruscans (ca. 700 BCE–89 BCE) 118

Etruscan Art and Architecture 119

Republican Rome (509 BCE–27 BCE) 124

Republican Literature 125
Roman Philosophy 127
Roman Law 129
Roman Religion 129
Republican Art and Architecture 130
Roman Music 132

Imperial Rome (27 BCE–337 CE) 132

Imperial Literature 136
The Art of Imperial Rome 141
Imperial Architecture 144
The End of the Roman Empire 153
Late Roman Art and Architecture 154

VALUES

Roman Ideals as Seen Through the Prism of the Aeneid 139

COMPARE + CONTRAST

Stadium Designs: Thumbs-Up or Thumbs-Down? 146

VOICES

Correspondence Between Pliny the Younger and the Emperor Trajan About Christians 150

Glossary 156

THE BIG PICTURE 156



The Rise of the Biblical Tradition 159

Abraham 160

Judaism and Early Christianity 161

Biblical History 162
The Hebrew Bible and Its Message 163
Dura-Europus 168

The Beginnings of Christianity 169

The Spread of Christianity 171

Early Christian Art 174

Frescoes 175
Sculpture 176

Early Christian Architecture 178

Early Christian Music 180

VALUES

Revelation 169

VOICES

Vibia Perpetua 174

Glossary 182

THE BIG PICTURE 183



Early Christianity: Ravenna and Byzantium 185

The Transformation of Rome 186

The Council of Nicaea 186
Literature, Philosophy, and Religion 188

Byzantium 192

Constantinople 194

Ravenna 198

Mosaics 199
Baptisteries 199
Sant'Apollinare Nuovo 201
San Vitale 201
Saint Catherine's Monastery at Mount Sinai, Egypt 205

The Legacy of Byzantine Culture 207

Russia 207
Italy 207
Byzantine Art 207
The Literary, Philosophical, and Theological Aspects of Byzantine Culture 208

COMPARE + CONTRAST

Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* and Marcus Aurelius's
Meditations 193

VALUES

The Greens and the Blues: A Clash of Values 195

VOICES

Procopius of Caesarea 197

VALUES

Autocracy and Divine Right 200

Glossary 208

THE BIG PICTURE 209

**Islam** 211

“The lamps are different, but the light is the same” 212

Muhammad and the Birth of Islam 212

Sunni, Shia, Sufi 216

The Growth of Islam 216

The Umayyad Caliphate 217

Architecture 217

The Golden Age of Islam 222

Islamic Literature 225

The Qur'an 225

The Thousand and One Nights 227

Omar Khayyam 227

Sufi Writings 228

Islamic Arts 230

Calligraphy 230

Mosaics 230

Ceramics 232

Fiber Arts 232

Islamic Music 232

The Culture of Islam and the West 236

The House of Wisdom 236

English Words from the Islamic World 237

VALUES

The Five Pillars of Islam 213

COMPARE + CONTRAST

Journeys of Faith 214

VOICES

Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi on the Three Blind Men and the
Elephant 229

Glossary 238

THE BIG PICTURE 239

**The Rise of Medieval Culture** 241

The Middle Ages 242

Migrations 242

Charlemagne 243

Charlemagne and Islam 244

Charlemagne and Economics 245

Learning in the Time of Charlemagne 248

Carolingian Culture 248

Monasticism 249

The Rule of Saint Benedict 250

Women and Monastic Life 250

Music 251

Gregorian Chant 251

The Liturgical Trope 252

Literature 252

Venerable Bede 252

Beowulf 253

Hildegard of Bingen 254

The Nonliturgical Drama of Roswitha 255

The Morality Play: *Everyman* 257

The Song of Roland 257

Visual Arts 259

The Illuminated Book 259

Carolingian Architecture 261

Ottonian Art 264

Romanesque Art 265

The Legend of Charlemagne 269

VALUES

Feudalism 245

COMPARE + CONTRAST

Four Paintings of Saint Matthew 246

VOICES

An Abbot, an Irish Scholar, and Charlemagne's Biographer 249

Glossary 270

THE BIG PICTURE 271

**The High Middle Ages** 273

Paris 274

The Gothic Style 274

Saint-Denis 275

Characteristics of the Gothic Style 277
 The Mysticism of Light 282
 Sculpture 285
 The Many Meanings of the Gothic Cathedral 286

Music of the School of Notre-Dame 290

Scholasticism 291
 The Rise of the Universities 291

Literature 294
 Troubadours and Trobairitz 295
 Carmina Burana 297
 The Romance of the Rose 298

Religion, Philosophy, and Writing 298

Moses Maimonides 298
 Francis of Assisi 299
 Thomas Aquinas 303

VALUES

Dialectics 291

VOICES

The Medieval Parent and Student 295

VALUES

Chivalry and Courtly Love 296

COMPARE + CONTRAST

*The Old Woman in the Romance of the Rose and
 The Wife of Bath in The Canterbury Tales* 300

Glossary 306

THE BIG PICTURE 307



The Fourteenth Century: A Time of Transition 309

The Fourteenth Century 310

The Great Schism 310
 The Hundred Years' War 311
 The Black Death 311

Literature 314

Dante Alighieri 314
 Francesco Petrarca 318
 Geoffrey Chaucer 319
 Christine de Pisan 322

Art in Italy 324

Italo-Byzantine Style 324
 Painting in Florence: A Break with the Past 325

Painting in Siena 328

Late Medieval Architecture 334

Secular Architecture 334
 Cathedral Architecture 335

A New Musical Style—Ars Nova 336

Guillaume de Machaut 337
 Francesco Landini 339

VOICES

Giovanni Boccaccio, Witness to the Black Death 312

VOICES

John Ball 324

COMPARE + CONTRAST

Scenes from the Passion of Christ by Giotto and Duccio 330

Glossary 340

THE BIG PICTURE 341



The Fifteenth Century 343

Toward the Renaissance 344

Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Art in Northern
 Europe 345

Florence and the Renaissance 350

The Medici Era 352

Lorenzo de' Medici ("The Magnificent") 353

Girolamo Savonarola 354

Renaissance Humanism 354

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola 355

A High-Tech Revolution: The Export of Humanist Learning 356

Women and the Renaissance in the 15th Century 359

Humanism in Italy and the North: Two Sides
 of a Single Coin 360

Renaissance Art in Italy 364

Florence 364

Sculpture 364

Painting 370

Architecture 378

Music 382

Music in Medici Florence 383

VALUES

Intellectual Synthesis 352

VOICES

Fra Savonarola 355

COMPARE + CONTRAST

The Davids of Donatello, Verrocchio, Michelangelo, and Bernini 368

Glossary 384

THE BIG PICTURE 385



The High Renaissance and Mannerism in Italy 387

The 16th Century in Italy: of Politics, Popes, and Patronage 388

The Visual Arts 390

The New Saint Peter's 405

The High Renaissance in Venice 406

Painting in Venice 408

Mannerism 411

Music 418

Music at the Papal Court 418

Venetian Music 419

Literature 419

VOICES

Donna Vittoria Colonna and Michelangelo 400

VALUES

Patronage 410

COMPARE + CONTRAST

Courtesans, East and West 422

Glossary 428

THE BIG PICTURE 429



The High Renaissance in the North 431

Humanism Travels North 432

France 432

Germany 433

The Netherlands 433

England 433

The Reformation 435

Consequences of Luther's Challenge 436

Causes of the Reformation 438

Renaissance Humanism and the

Reformation 438

The Cultural Significance of the

Reformation 441

The Growth of Science 442

The Visual Arts in Northern Europe 443

Painting in Germany 443

Painting in the Netherlands 449

Art and Architecture in France 452

Elizabethan England 454

Art in Elizabethan England 455

Music 456

Music in France and Germany 456

Elizabethan Music 457

Literature 459

English Literature 460

Drama in Elizabethan England 462

Plutarch 470

From Parallel Lives, "Marcus Antonius" (XXVI) 470

Antony and Cleopatra, act 2, scene 2, lines 192–206 470

VOICES

Katherine Zell 483

VALUES

Reform 441

COMPARE + CONTRAST

Plutarch and Shakespeare's Description of Cleopatra on the Barge 470

Glossary 472

THE BIG PICTURE 473



The Seventeenth Century: The Baroque Era 475

The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation 476

Il Gesù 477

The Baroque 478

The Baroque Period in Italy 478

Saint Peter's 478

Baroque Sculpture and Architecture in Rome 480

Baroque Painting in Rome 484

The Baroque Period Outside Italy 490

Spain 490

Flanders 492
 The Dutch Republic (Holland) 494
 France 501
 New England 504

Baroque Music 507
 The Birth of Opera 507
 Baroque Instrumental and Vocal Music 509
 Johann Sebastian Bach 510
 Antonio Vivaldi 511

Philosophy and Science in the Baroque Period 512
 Galileo Galilei 512
 René Descartes 513
 Thomas Hobbes 514
 John Locke 515

Literature in the 17th Century 516
 French Baroque Comedy and Tragedy 516
 Cervantes and the Spanish Novel 516
 English Literature 518

VOICES

Giambattista Passeri 485

COMPARE + CONTRAST

*Vision and Difference: Three Paintings Entitled **Susanna and the Elders*** 498

VALUES

Scientific Truth 517

Glossary 522

THE BIG PICTURE 523



The Eighteenth Century 525

The Age of Enlightenment 526

The Visual Arts in the 18th Century 528

The Rococo 529
 Rococo Painting in France 529
 England and America 534
 Rococo Architecture 536
 Neo-Classicism 538
 Neoclassical Painting and Sculpture 538
 Neo-Classical Architecture 542

Classical Music 545

The Classical Symphony 546
 Franz Joseph Haydn 548
 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 548

Literature in the 18th Century 550

Intellectual Developments 550

Rational Humanism: The Encyclopedists 555
 Voltaire's Philosophical Cynicism: *Candide* 556

The Late 18th Century: Time of Revolution 559

The French Revolution 559
 Revolution in America 561

COMPARE + CONTRAST

(Re)framing History: The Assertion and Subversion of Power in Iconic Imagery 540

VOICES

A Visit to the Court of Louis XV 551

VALUES

Revolution 557

Glossary 562

THE BIG PICTURE 563



Romanticism, Realism, and Photography 565

The 19th Century 566

London 566
 Paris 567
 The United States 568

The Intellectual Background 569

Other Intellectual Developments 672

From Neo-Classicism to Romanticism: Art Under Napoléon 573

Romanticism 578

Romantic Art in Spain and France 580
 Romantic Art in the United Kingdom and Germany 584

Romantic Literature 587

Romantic Poetry 588
 The Romantic Novel 595

Romantic Music 598

Romantic Musicians 599
 The Instrumental Virtuosos 602
 Music and Nationalism 603
 Opera 604

Realism 606

Realist Art 606
 Realist Literature 608

The Humanities in the United States 611

U.S. Literature 612

U.S. Art and Architecture 618

Photography 623

VOICES

Charles Baudelaire: A View of the Modernization of Paris 569

COMPARE + CONTRAST

Women, Art and Power: Ideology, Gender Discourse, and the Female Nude 576

VALUES

Culture and Nationalism 603

VALUES

Transcendentalism 613

Glossary 626

THE BIG PICTURE 627



**Toward the Modern Era:
1870–1914** 629

The Birth of the Modern Era 630
 Social and Political Developments 630
 The Spirit of the Age 630
 The Women’s Movement 632
 The Arts 633

The Visual Arts 633

Academic Art 633
 From Realism Toward Impressionism 634
 Impressionism 638
 American Expatriates 643
 Americans in America 644
 Postimpressionism 645
 The Birth of Modern Sculpture 652
 The Fauves 654
 Expressionism 656
 Cubism 659
 Futurism 663
 Architecture 664

Music 668

Opera 669
 Light Opera 669
 Orchestral Music 671
 The Search for a New Musical Language 675

Literature 676

The Role of Women 681

Toward a World at War 683

VALUES

Imperialism 632

COMPARE + CONTRAST

The Politics of Sexuality: The Female Body and the Male Gaze 636

VOICES 673

Gustav Mahler 673

Glossary 684

THE BIG PICTURE 685



The World at War 687

The Great War (World War I) 688

Art Out of the Ashes 691
 The Lost Generation 692
 Photography 694

Literature 694

The Visual Arts 700

Abstract Art 700
 De Stijl or Neo-Plasticism 702
 Dada 704
 Surrealism 704
 The Harlem Renaissance 710
 Figurative Art in the United States 713
 Film 714

Music in the Jazz Age 718

Ragtime 718
 The Emergence of Jazz 718
 Jazz as Swing 719
 The Influence of Jazz 720

Ballet 721

Architecture 722

World War II 725

VALUES

Disillusionment 691

VOICES

Virginia Woolf 697

COMPARE + CONTRAST

Mona Lisa: From Portrait to Pop Icon 706

Glossary 728

THE BIG PICTURE 729



The Contemporary Contour 731

Toward a Global Culture 732

The Demand for Rights 733

The 1960s 733

The Intellectual Background 733

Visual Arts 736

Postwar Expressionism: Existentialism in the
Visual Arts 737

The New York School: The First Generation 737

The New York School: The Second Generation 743

Minimal Art 744

Conceptual Art 745

Site-Specific Art 748

Pop Art 752

Superrealism 756

Art, Identity, and Social Consciousness 757

Sculpture 764

Architecture 768

Modern Architecture 768

Postmodern Architecture 771

Deconstructivist Architecture 773

Video 776

Some Trends in Contemporary Literature 779

American Literature 780

African American Literature 781

Feminist Perspectives 783

Music 784

The New Minimalists 786

Traditional Approaches to Modern Music 787

Modern Approaches to Traditional Music Genres 787

Popular Music 789

A Note on the Postmodern Sensibility 791

VOICES

Woody Allen's *Universe: On Being, Nothingness, and Laughter* 735

VALUES

Liberation 736

COMPARE + CONTRAST

Heizer's *Rift #1* with Libeskind's *Jewish Museum* 750

Glossary 792

THE BIG PICTURE 793

GLOSSARY 795

PHOTO CREDITS 807

LITERARY CREDITS 811

INDEX 815

Reading Selections

1

Reading 1.1 *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

Enkidu's dream of the afterlife,
Tablet 3 14

Reading 1.2 *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

Advice to Gilgamesh from the tavern
keeper, Siduri 14

Reading 1.3 *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

The flood 14

Reading 1.4 *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

The death of Gilgamesh 15

Reading 1.5 *The Law Code of Hammurabi*

Selected provisions, including “an eye for
an eye and a tooth for a tooth” 17

Reading 1.6 Akhenaton

From “Hymn to the Sun” 28

Reading 1.7 The Leiden Hymns

From “God is a master craftsman” 30

Reading 1.8 Love Songs

“Love, how I'd love to slip down to the
pond” 31

Reading 1.9 Love Songs

From “My love is one and only, without
peer” 31

Reading 1.10 Love Songs

“I think I'll go home and lie very still” 32

2

Reading 2.1 Homer

The *Iliad*, book 16 53

Reading 2.2 Homer

The *Odyssey*, book 1, lines 406–419 55

Reading 2.3 Homer

The *Odyssey*, book 2, lines 89–112 55

Reading 2.4 Homer

The *Odyssey*, book 2, lines 289–297 55

Reading 2.5 Homer

The *Odyssey*, book 5, lines 32–47 55

Reading 2.6 Homer

The *Odyssey*, book 24, lines 562–570 56

Reading 2.7 Homer

The *Iliad*, book 16, lines 71–76 65

Reading 2.8 Homer

The *Iliad*, book 18, lines 721–737 70

Reading 2.9 Hesiod

Theogony, lines 25–42 70

Reading 2.10 Hesiod

Theogony, lines 690–697 and
705–717 70

Reading 2.11 Sappho

“Like the very gods in my sight is he” 71

Reading 2.12 Sappho

“Age and Light” 71

Reading 2.13 Parmenides

From the Way of Truth 73

Reading 2.14 Herodotus

Histories, book 7 75

3

Reading 3.1 Thucydides

From *History of the Peloponnesian War* 82

Reading 3.2 Thucydides

From *History of the Peloponnesian
War*, chapter III, “Congress of the
Peloponnesian Confederacy at
Lacedaemon” 82

Reading 3.3 Thucydides

History of the Peloponnesian War, Pericles's
funeral oration, Book II 83

Reading 3.4 Galen

De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis, 5 90

Reading 3.5 Plato

From the *Apology* 93

Reading 3.6 Plato

Republic, book 7, “The Allegory of the
Cave” 95

Reading 3.7 Aristotle

Nicomachean Ethics, book 7, “The Nature
of Happiness” 96

Reading 3.8 Aristotle

Politics, 1340a and 1340b 97

Reading 3.9 Plato

Protagoras, 326a 98

Reading 3.10 Aeschylus

Agamemnon, lines 250–255 100

Reading 3.11 Aeschylus

Agamemnon, lines 218–226 100

Reading 3.12 Aeschylus

The Eumenides, lines 473–485 100

Reading 3.13 Aeschylus

The Eumenides, lines 693–697 101

Reading 3.14 Sophocles

Antigone, lines 555–574 102

Reading 3.15 Sophocles

Antigone, lines 1394–1402, 1394–1402,
1467–1471 102

Reading 3.16 Sophocles

Oedipus the King, lines 215–241 103

Reading 3.17 Sophocles

Oedipus the King, lines 404–412 103

Reading 3.18 Sophocles

Oedipus the King, lines 1148–1152 103

Reading 3.19 Aristotle

From *Poetics*, 14 104

Reading 3.20 Euripides

The Suppliant Women, lines 293–319 104

Reading 3.21 Euripides

The Suppliant Women, lines 339–355 105

Reading 3.22 Euripides

The Suppliant Women,
lines 430–454 105

Reading 3.23 Euripides

The Suppliant Women,
lines 1080–1090 105

Reading 3.24 Aristophanes

From *Lysistrata*, lines 124–127, 129–134,
138–140, 152–161 106

Reading 3.25 Pliny

On Lysippus 108

4

Reading 4.1 Julius Caesar

*Commentaries on the Civil Wars (De bello
civilis)*, book 1, passage 64 (45 BCE) 125

Reading 4.2 Cicero

On Duties, book 3, passages 5 and 6 126

Reading 4.3 Catullus

Lyrics to his lover Lesbia 126

Reading 4.4 Lucretius

On the Nature of Things (50 BCE), from Book V 127

Reading 4.5 Seneca

On the Tranquility of Mind 128

Reading 4.6 Epictetus

Enchiridion 128

Reading 4.7 Marcus Aurelius

Meditations 128

Reading 4.8 Pliny the Younger

Letter to Tacitus on the eruption of Vesuvius 135

Reading 4.9 Virgil

The Aeneid, book 4, lines 397–404 138

Reading 4.10 Virgil

The Aeneid, book 4, lines 520–526 138

Reading 4.11 Virgil

The Aeneid, book 6, lines 238–260 138

Reading 4.12 Virgil

The Aeneid, book 6, lines 661–669 138

Reading 4.13 Virgil

The Aeneid, book 8, lines 608–618 138

Reading 4.14 Sulpicia

“Love has come at last” 140

Reading 4.15 Horace

“Carpe Diem” (Seize the Day) 140

Reading 4.16 Juvenal

From *Satire III*, lines 376–399 140

Reading 4.17 Ovid

“The Tale of Pyramus and Thisbe,” *Metamorphoses*, book 4” 141

5

Reading 5.1 The Hebrew Bible

Genesis 22:1–18 161

Reading 5.2 The Hebrew Bible

Genesis 1 and 2:1–25 164

Reading 5.3 The Hebrew Bible

Exodus 20:1–17 (the Decalogue) 166

Reading 5.4 The Hebrew Bible

From *Job* 38 and 40 167

Reading 5.5 The Christian Bible, New Testament

Matthew 5:1–48 170

Reading 5.6 The Christian Bible, New Testament

Matthew 6:1–15 172

Reading 5.7 The Christian Bible, New Testament

1 Corinthians 13:1–13 173

Reading 5.8 Tacitus

From *Annals* 15 173

6

Reading 6.1 Saint Augustine

From *Confessions*, book 8, chapter 12 189

Reading 6.2 Saint Augustine

The City of God, book 19, chapter 7 190

Reading 6.3 Saint Augustine

The City of God, book 19, chapter 12 191

Reading 6.4 Saint Augustine

From “The Literal Interpretation of Genesis” 1:19–20, chapter 19 191

Reading 6.5 Boethius

From *Consolation of Philosophy*, book 1, chapter 1 192

7

Reading 7.1 The Qur’an

Sura 1, The Opening, revealed at Mecca 226

Reading 7.2 The Qur’an

Sura 5, The Table Spread, revealed at al-Madīnah [Medina] 226

Reading 7.3 The Thousand and One Nights

From “The Tale of the Porter and the Young Girls” 227

Reading 7.4 The Thousand and One Nights

From “Conclusion” 227

Reading 7.5 Omar Khayyam

From *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* 228

Reading 7.6 Omar Khayyam

“Into this Universe, and Why not knowing” 228

Reading 7.7 Rabi’ah al-‘Adawiyah al-Qaysiyya

228

Reading 7.8 Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi

“Only Breath” 230

8

Reading 8.1 Venerable Bede

The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation, book 1, chapter 2 253

Reading 8.2 Beowulf, lines 79–81 253

Reading 8.3 Beowulf, lines 92–110 253

Reading 8.4 Beowulf, lines 664–685, 722–733 254

Reading 8.5 Hildegard of Bingen

Scivias, Vision One: God Enthroned Shows Himself to Hildegard 255

Reading 8.6 Hildegard of Bingen

Causae et Curae, Women’s Physiology, On Intercourse 255

Reading 8.7 Roswitha

From *The Conversion of the Harlot Thais*, scene 3 256

Reading 8.8 Everyman, lines 22–35

[GOD SPEAKETH] 257

Reading 8.9 The Song of Roland, lines 532–557, 627–657

The Death of Roland 258

9

Reading 9.1 Geoffrey Chaucer

The Canterbury Tales, General Prologue, lines 285–308 294

Reading 9.2 Guillem de Peiteus

“A New Song for New Days,” lines 1–6, 19–25 295

Reading 9.3 Bernart de Ventadorn

“When I See the Skylark Moving,” lines 25–32 296

Reading 9.4 Beatriz, Comtessa de Dia

“My Heart Is Heavy,” lines 17–24 296

Reading 9.5 Bertran de Born

“I Love the Glad Time of Easter,” lines 21–30, 37–40 298

Reading 9.6 Moses Maimonides

A letter to Shmuel ibn Tibbon 299

Reading 9.7 Saint Francis of Assisi

“The Canticle of Brother Sun” 302

Reading 9.8 Thomas Aquinas

From *Summa theologica*, Article 1 303

10

Reading 10.1 Dante

The Divine Comedy, Inferno, canto 1, The Dark Wood of Error, lines 1–6 316

Reading 10.2 Dante

The Divine Comedy, Inferno, canto 3, The Vestibule of Hell, lines 1–9 316

Reading 10.3 Dante

The Divine Comedy, Inferno, canto 5, Circle Two, lines 49–69 316

Reading 10.4 Dante

The Divine Comedy, Inferno, canto 5, Circle Two, lines 124–140 317

Reading 10.5 Dante

The Divine Comedy, Paradiso, canto 33, The Empyrean, lines 97–108 317

Reading 10.6 Petrarch

Canzoniere, Sonnet XIV 319

Reading 10.7 Petrarch

Canzoniere, Sonnet XVIII 319

Reading 10.8 Chaucer

The Canterbury Tales, General Prologue, lines 1–10, 16–18, in Middle and Modern English 322

Reading 10.9 Christine de Pisan

From *The Book of the City of Ladies*, chapters 30 and 36 323

11**Reading 11.1 Lorenzo de' Medici**

“The Song of Bacchus” 354

Reading 11.2 Giovanni Pico della Mirandola

From *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, introduction 356

Reading 11.3 Laura Cereta

From Letter to Bibulus Sempronius: A Defense of the Liberal Education of Women 358

Reading 11.4 Laura Cereta

From Letter to Lucilia Vernacula: Against Women Who Disparage Learned Women (1487) 359

Reading 11.5 Laura Cereta

On the death of her husband 360

Reading 11.6 Niccolò Machiavelli

From *The Prince*, chapter 18, “Concerning The Way In Which Princes Should Keep Faith” 361

Reading 11.7 Niccolò Machiavelli

From *The Prince*, chapter 17, “Concerning Cruelty and Clemency, And Whether It Is Better To Be Loved Than Feared” 361

Reading 11.8 Desiderius Erasmus

From *The Praise of Folly* (on theologians) 363

12**Reading 12.1 Leonardo da Vinci**

Letter of Application to Ludovico Sforza (ca. 1481) 391

Reading 12.2 Michelangelo 420**Reading 12.3 Vittoria Colonna**

Sonnet IX 420

Reading 12.4 Baldassare Castiglione

From *The Book of the Courtier*, book 3, “The Perfect Lady” 421

Reading 12.5 Baldassare Castiglione

From *The Book of the Courtier*, book 3, “The Perfect Lady,” continued 424

Reading 12.6 Veronica Franco

From *Poems in Terza Rima*, chapter 2, lines 34–39, 154–171 424

Reading 12.7 Veronica Franco

From letter 22, “A Warning to a Mother Considering Turning Her Daughter into a Courtesan” 424

Reading 12.8 Benvenuto Cellini

From *The Autobiography*, Casting Perseus 426

13**Reading 13.1 Martin Luther**

From *Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences* (1517) 435

Reading 13.2 John Calvin

From *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, on predestination 436

Reading 13.3 Jonathan Edwards

From “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” 1741 437

Reading 13.4 Martin Luther

From *The Small Catechism*, preface 439

Reading 13.5 William Shakespeare

Richard II, act 2, scene 1, lines 39–50 455

Reading 13.6 Michel de Montaigne

From “On Cannibals,” the meaning of *barbarous* 459

Reading 13.7 Michel de Montaigne

From “On Cannibals,” on warfare, cannibalism, and other barbaric acts 460

Reading 13.8 Thomas Wyatt

“Whoso List to Hunt?” 461

Reading 13.9 Edmund Spenser

Amoretti, sonnet 79 461

Reading 13.10 Queen Elizabeth I

“On Monsieur’s Departure,” ca. 1582 461

Reading 13.11 Christopher Marlowe

The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus, scene 14, lines 87–94 463

Reading 13.12 Christopher Marlowe

“The Passionate Shepherd to His Love,” lines 1–4, 9–12, and 17–20 463

Reading 13.13 William Shakespeare

Romeo and Juliet, act 2, scene 2, lines 2–6, 33–44 464

Reading 13.14 William Shakespeare

Henry IV, Part 1, act 1, scene 2, lines 1–13 466

Reading 13.15 William Shakespeare

Julius Caesar, extracts 466

Reading 13.16 William Shakespeare

Hamlet, act 2, scene 2, lines 315–319 467

Reading 13.17 William Shakespeare

Hamlet, act 2, scene 2, lines 555–581 467

Reading 13.18 William Shakespeare

Hamlet, act 3, scene 1, lines 55–87 468

Reading 13.19 William Shakespeare

Sonnet 18 469

Reading 13.20 William Shakespeare

Sonnet 29 469

Reading 13.21 William Shakespeare

Sonnet 55 469

13.22 William Shakespeare

Sonnet 116 469

Reading 13.23 William Shakespeare

Sonnet 130 471

Reading 13.24 William Shakespeare

The Tempest, act 4, scene 1, lines 148–158 471

14**Reading 14.1 Anne Bradstreet**

“The Prologue,” lines 1–6 506

Reading 14.2 Anne Bradstreet

“A Letter to Her Husband, Absent upon Public Employment,” lines 1–8 506

Reading 14.3 René Descartes

From *Discourse on the Method of Rightly*

Conducting the Reason and Seeking the Truth in the Sciences, part 4, book 4 514

Reading 14.4 Thomas Hobbes
From *Leviathan*, part 1, chapter 13 515

Reading 14.5 John Locke
From *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, book 1, “Of Innate Notions,” chapter 2: No Innate Principles in the Mind 515

Reading 14.6 Molière
Tartuffe, act 3, scene 2, lines 1–16 516

Reading 14.7 Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra
From *Don Quixote*, part 2, chapter 10 518

Reading 14.8 John Donne
“The Canonization,” lines 1–9 519

Reading 14.9 Richard Crashaw
“On the Wounds of Our Crucified Lord,” lines 1–8 519

Reading 14.10 Andrew Marvell
To His Coy Mistress (ca. early 1650s) 520

Reading 14.11 John Milton
Paradise Lost, book 1, lines 1–27 521

Reading 14.12 John Milton
Paradise Lost, book 1, lines 84–94 521

15

Reading 15.1 Alexander Pope
An Essay on Man, lines 17–28 551

Reading 15.2 Alexander Pope
An Essay on Man, lines 289–294 552

Reading 15.3 Jonathan Swift
From *A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People from Being a Burthen to Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Publick* 552

Reading 15.4 Robert Burns
“To a Mouse,” lines 1–6, 37–48 554

Reading 15.5 Mary Wollstonecraft
From *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Introduction 554

Reading 15.6 Mary Wollstonecraft
From *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, chapter 2 555

Reading 15.7 Jean Jacques Rousseau
From *The Social Contract*, book 1, section 4: Slavery 556

Reading 15.8 Voltaire
From *Candide*, chapter 5 558

Reading 15.9 French National Assembly
From the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen 559

Reading 15.10 Probable principal author: Thomas Jefferson
From *The Declaration of Independence* (1776) 560

Reading 15.11 The Bill of Rights
The Preamble to The Bill of Rights 561

16

Reading 16.1 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels
From *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) 571

Reading 16.2 Charles Darwin
From *On the Origin of Species*, Ch. 14, “Recapitulation and Conclusion” (1859) 572

Reading 16.3 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
From *Faust, Part One*, Night, lines 266–274 (1808) 588

Reading 16.4 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
From *Faust, Part One*, Martha’s Garden, lines 3089–3115 (1808) 588

Reading 16.5 William Wordsworth
From “Preface to Lyrical Ballads” (1800) 589

Reading 16.6 William Blake
“The Lamb,” from *Songs of Innocence* (1789) 589

Reading 16.7 William Blake
“The Tyger,” from *Songs of Experience* (1794) 591

Reading 16.8 William Wordsworth
“Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye During a Tour” (1798), lines 1–22 591

Reading 16.9 William Wordsworth
“My Heart Leaps Up” (1802) 593

Reading 16.10 Samuel Taylor Coleridge
From *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1797), part 1, lines 51–66 593

Reading 16.11 Samuel Taylor Coleridge
The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (1797), part 2, lines 115–126 593

Reading 16.12 George Gordon, Lord Byron
“She Walks in Beauty” (1814) 594

Reading 16.13 George Gordon, Lord Byron
Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage (1812–1818), canto 4, verse 137 594

Reading 16.14 George Gordon, Lord Byron
Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage (1812–1818), canto 4, verse 140 594

Reading 16.15 Percy Bysshe Shelley
“Ozymandias” (1818) 595

Reading 16.16 Percy Bysshe Shelley
Adonais (1821), verse 55, lines 487–495 595

Reading 16.17 John Keats
“Ode to a Nightingale” (1819) 596

Reading 16.18 Jane Austen
From “Plan of a Novel, According to Hints from Various Quarters” (1816) 597

Reading 16.19 Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley
From *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus*, chapter 18 598

Reading 16.20 Victor Hugo
From *Les Misérables*, volume 1, book 1, chapter 4 598

Reading 16.21 Gustave Flaubert
From *Madame Bovary*, part 1, chapter 9 608

Reading 16.22 Honoré de Balzac
From *Le Père Goriot*, part 1 609

Reading 16.23 George Sand
From *Lélia* (1833), II [Sténio to Lélia] 610

Reading 16.24 George Sand
From *Lélia* (1833), XXXIV 610

Reading 16.25 Charles Dickens
From *A Tale of Two Cities*, chapter 15 (1859) 611

Reading 16.26 Charles Dickens
From *Oliver Twist* (1837–1839), chapter 1 611

Reading 16.27 Ralph Waldo Emerson
From “Self-Reliance” (1841) 612

Reading 16.28 Henry David Thoreau
From *Walden* (1854) 614

Reading 16.29 Edgar Allan Poe
From “The Raven,” lines 1–12 614

Reading 16.30 Walt Whitman
From “Song of Myself,” *Leaves of Grass*
(1881–1882 edition) 615

Reading 16.31 Emily Dickinson
Poems 258 (ca. 1861) and 712 (ca. 1863) 616

Reading 16.32 Nathaniel Hawthorne
From *The Scarlet Letter* (1850),
chapter 2 617

Reading 16.33 Herman Melville
From *Moby-Dick* (1851), chapter 135 618

17

Reading 17.1 Gertrude Stein
From *The Autobiography of Alice B.*
Toklas 660

Reading 17.2 W. S. Gilbert
From *H.M.S. Pinafore*, “When I Was a
Lad” 671

Reading 17.3 Marcel Proust
From *Remembrance of Things Past, Vol. I:*
Swann’s Way 677

Reading 17.4 Mark Twain
From *Roughing It*, “The Story of
Grandfather’s Old Ram” 678

Reading 17.5 Mark Twain
From *The Mysterious Stranger* 679

Reading 17.6 Émile Zola
From *Au Bonheur des Dames (The Ladies’
Delight)* 680

Reading 17.7 Oscar Wilde
From Preface to *The Picture of Dorian
Gray* 680

Reading 17.8 Mona Caird
From “Marriage” *Westminster
Review* 680

Reading 17.9 A. E. Housman
“When I was one-and-twenty” 681

Reading 17.10 Rudyard Kipling
“The Ballad of East and West,”
lines 1–4 681

Reading 17.11 Rudyard Kipling
“If,” lines 1–8, 31–32 681

Reading 17.12 Henrik Ibsen
A Doll’s House, act 3, final scene,
lines 1–38 682

Reading 17.13 Kate Chopin
From “The Story of an Hour” 683

18

Reading 18.1 Rupert Brooke
“The Soldier” 692

Reading 18.2 Isaac Rosenberg
“Dead Man’s Dump,” lines 1–13, 39–54,
63–71 693

Reading 18.3 Ernest Hemingway
From “In Another Country” 694

Reading 18.4 James Joyce
From *Ulysses*, episode 18, “Penelope” 696

Reading 18.5 Franz Kafka
From *The Trial*, chapter 9, “In the
Cathedral, Before the Law” 697

Reading 18.6 Virginia Woolf
From *A Room of One’s Own* 698

Reading 18.7 Sinclair Lewis
From *Babbitt*, chapter 6 699

Reading 18.8 Sinclair Lewis
From *Babbitt*, chapter 16 699

Reading 18.9 Aldous Huxley
From *Brave New World*, chapter 16 699

Reading 18.10 Sigmund Freud
From *The Interpretation of Dreams*,
VI. The Dream Work (continued). E.
Representation in Dreams by Symbols:
Some Further Typical Dreams 705

Reading 18.11 Langston Hughes
“I, Too, Sing America” 711

19

Reading 19.1 Jean-Paul Sartre
From “Existentialism Is a
Humanism” 734

Reading 19.2 Jack Kerouac
From *On the Road* 736

Reading 19.3 Sol LeWitt
From “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art” 746

Reading 19.4 Paul Celan
From “Death Fugue,” lines 28–35 764

Reading 19.5 Norman Mailer
From *The Naked and the Dead*,
chapter 1 778

Reading 19.6 Elie Wiesel
From *Night* 779

Reading 19.7 John Updike
From *Rabbit, Run* 780

Reading 19.8 Ralph Ellison
From *Invisible Man* 782

Reading 19.9 Gwendolyn Brooks
“The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of
Emmett Till” 782

Reading 19.10 Maya Angelou
From *I Know Why the Caged Bird
Sings* 782

Reading 19.11 Toni Morrison
From *The Bluest Eye*, chapter 1 783

Reading 19.12 Sylvia Plath
From *The Bell Jar* 784

Reading 19.13 Anne Sexton
In Celebration of My Uterus 785

Playlists by Chapter

8

Gregorian chant: “Victimae paschali Laudes”
Gregorian Chant for Easter
 Capella Antiqua Munich

9

Léonin: “Viderunt omnes
 fines terre”
Léonin: Magister Leoninus, Vol. 1
 Red Byrd and Cappella Amsterdam

10

Guillaume de Machaut: Messe de Notre Dame: III.
 Credo
Machaut: Messe de Notre Dame
 Hilliard Ensemble; Paul Hillier, conductor

12

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina: Missa Papae Marcelli: III. Credo
Allegri, Palestrina & Mundy—The Tallis Scholars
 Tallis Scholars; Peter Phillips, conductor

13

Thomas Morley: “Now Is the Month of Maying”
The Art of Alfred Deller: The Counter-Tenor Legacy
 Alfred Deller

14

Claudio Monteverdi: “Quel Sguardo Sdegnosetto”
Claudio e Francesco Monteverdi—Scherzi e Arie
 Emanuela Galli

Georg Frideric Handel: *Messiah*: “Hallelujah Chorus”
Handel: Great Choruses from the Messiah
 Jean-Claude Malgoire, La Grande Écurie et la Chambre du Roy &
 Worcester Cathedral Choir

Johann Sebastian Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 in F Major,
 BWV 1047: III. Allegro assai
Bach: Six Brandenburg Concertos, BWV 1046–1051
 Tafelmusik & Jeanne Lamon

Antonio Vivaldi: Concerto No. 1 in E Major, RV 269 “La
 primavera” Spring
 Tafelmusik & Jeanne Lamon

15

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Symphony No. 40 in G Minor, K.
 550: IV. Finale. Allegro assai
Mozart: Symphonies No. 35 in D Major, K. 385, No. 39
in E-Flat Major, K. 543, & No. 40 in G Minor,
K. 550
 George Szell & Cleveland Orchestra

16

La Marseillaise
 French Military Band

Ludwig van Beethoven: Piano Sonata No. 8 in C Minor, Op. 13
 (“Pathétique”): III. Rondo. Allegro.
Beethoven: Sonatas for Piano Nos. 14, 8, & 23 (Expanded Edition)
 Rudolf Serkin

Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67: I.
 Allegro con brio
Beethoven: Complete Symphonies, Overtures, Incidental Music
(The Original Jacket Collection)
 George Szell & Cleveland Orchestra

Hector Berlioz: *Symphonie fantastique*, Op. 14: V. Songe d’une nuit
 du sabbat (Dream of a Witches’ Sabbath.)
Bernstein Century—Berlioz: Symphonie Fantastique, Op. 14, Berlioz
Takes a Trip
 Leonard Bernstein & New York Philharmonic

Giuseppe Verdi: *La traviata*: “Ah, for’s è lui
 che l’anima”
Verdi: La traviata
 Silvestro Sammaritano, Roberto Alagna, Enzo Capuano, Orazio
 Mori, Nicoletta Curiel

Richard Wagner: *Die Walküre (The Valkyries)*: Act 3,
 “The Ride of the Valkyries”
Wagner: Orchestral Music from The Ring of the Nibelung
 Cleveland Orchestra & George Szell

17

Georges Bizet: *Carmen*, Opera Suite No. 2:
 II. Habanera (Act 1)
Bizet: Carmen, Opera Suite No. 2 & L’Arlesienne Op. 23, Suite No. 2
 London Festival Orchestra & Cesare Cantieri
 William S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan: *HMS Pinafore*:
 “When I Was a Lad”

Gilbert & Sullivan: *HMS Pinafore (1948 Version)*
Martyn Green, Darrell Fancourt & D'Oyly Carte
Opera Company

Piotr Ilych Tchaikovsky: *The Nutcracker*, Op.71: XIII.
Waltz of the Flowers
Tchaikovsky: The Nutcracker
Orchestra of the Kirov Opera, St. Petersburg & Valery Gergiev

Piotr Ilych Tchaikovsky: *The Nutcracker*, Op.71: XIIb. Character
Dances: Coffee (Arabian Dance).
Tchaikovsky: The Nutcracker
Orchestra of the Kirov Opera, St. Petersburg & Valery Gergiev

Claude Debussy: *Suite bergamasque*: “Claire de lune”
The Debussy Collection
Paul Crossley

Arnold Schoenberg: *Pierrot Lunaire*, Op. 21: I. “Mondestrunken”
Schoenberg: Pierrot Lunaire
Ensemble Musique Oblique, Marianne Pousseur &
Philippe Herreweghe

Igor Stravinsky: *Le Sacre du printemps* (The Rite of Spring):
“Danses des adolescentes”
Stravinsky: Pétrouchka, Rite of Spring
Cleveland Orchestra & Pierre Boulez

18

Scott Joplin: “Maple Leaf Rag”
Scott Joplin: Piano Rags
Alexander Peskanov
Joe “King” Oliver: “West End Blues”
Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five

Ella Fitzgerald: “Blue Skies”
Ella Fitzgerald: Gold
Ella Fitzgerald

Billy Strayhorn: “Take The ‘A’ Train”
Duke Ellington Plays Billy Strayhorn
Duke Ellington & His Orchestra

Benny Goodman: “Sing, Sing, Sing”
The Essential Benny Goodman (Remastered)
Benny Goodman

Glenn Miller: “In the Mood”
In the Mood—The Very Best of Glenn Miller
Glenn Miller

Lotte Lenya: *Threepenny Opera*: “Mack the Knife”
Sony Classical—Great Performances, 1903–1998
Lotte Lenya

George and Ira Gershwin: *Porgy and Bess*: Summertime
Classical Gershwin
Anna Moffo, Lehman Engel Chorus, Lehman Engel & Lehman
Engel Orchestra

19

John Cage: Sonata #2
John Cage: Sonatas & Interludes for Prepared Piano
Joshua Pierce

Steve Reich: *The Desert Music*: Third Movement,
Part One (slow); *The Desert Music*: Third Movement,
Part Two (moderate)
Steve Reich: Works—1965–1995
Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra & Michael
Tilson Thomas

Philip Glass: *Music in 12 Parts, Part 1*
Glass: Music in 12 Parts—Part 1
Philip Glass Ensemble

Dmitri Shostakovich: Symphony No. 13, “Babi Yar”:
II. Humour
The Very Best of Shostakovich
Eder Quartet & Dmitri Shostakovich
Andrew Lloyd Webber: *Jesus Christ Superstar*: “Superstar”
Jesus Christ Superstar (20th Anniversary London Cast Recording)
Andrew Lloyd Webber

Claude-Michel Schönberg: *Miss Saigon*: “The Heat Is On
in Saigon”
Miss Saigon
London Theatre Orchestra and Cast

Rodgers and Hammerstein II: *South Pacific*: “You’ve Got to Be
Carefully Taught”
South Pacific (The New Broadway Cast Recording)
Matthew Morrison

“Hair”

Hair (The New Broadway Cast Recording)

Gavin Creel, Will Swenson & Tribe

Jonathan Larson: *Rent*: “One Song Glory”

Rent (1996 Original Broadway Cast)

Original Broadway Cast

Elvis Presley, written by Mae Boren Axton and Tommy Durden:
“Heartbreak Hotel”

The Essential Elvis Presley (Remastered)

Elvis Presley

John Lennon and Paul McCartney: “I Want to Hold Your Hand”

1

The Beatles

John Lennon and Paul McCartney: “Back in the U.S.S.R.”

The Beatles (White Album)

The Beatles

Brian Wilson and Mike Love: “California Girls”

Sounds of Summer—The Very Best of The Beach Boys

The Beach Boys

Steven Tyler and Joe Perry: “Walk This Way”

Ultimate Run-D.M.C.

Run-D.M.C.

Rod Temperton: “Thriller”

Thriller

Michael Jackson

Preface to the Eighth Edition

The eighth edition of *Culture & Values: A Survey of the Western Humanities* continues in its mission to teach students about the history of the Western world through the lens of the humanities—language and literature, art and architecture, music, philosophy, and religion. It is through the study of the humanities that we aim not only to *know* but also to *understand*—to consider what humans across time and lands have thought about, how they have felt or acted, how they have sought to express or come to terms with their relationship to the known and unknown, to their values, their spirituality, their inner selves. *Culture & Values* encourages students to place their own backgrounds and beliefs in context and to consider how understanding their heritage contributes to becoming a true citizen in the 21st century.

A NEW EDITION

Users of the book will find that the eighth edition is familiar, yet, in many respects, quite new.

New Coverage

The eighth edition contains:

- More than 200 new works of art, from historic landmarks to the arts of the 21st century.
- Enhanced discussion of architecture, from the ancient walls of Jericho and the mosques of the Islamic caliphates to the Postmodern and Deconstructivist movements.
- Dozens of new literary works, including women writers such as the Roman poet Sulpicia and the Venetian courtesan Veronica Franco; artist–poet William Blake; Mary Shelley and Edgar Allen Poe; Oscar Wilde; Gertrude Stein and Ernest Hemingway; Ralph Ellison; John Updike; Jack Kerouac; Maya Angelou and Toni Morrison; and excerpts from *The Thousand and One Nights* and Omar Khayyam.
- More works by women, and by artists, writers, and musicians of color.
- Expanded coverage of photography, film, and video art, beginning with photographers such as Niépce and Daguerre and including contemporary artists such as Cindy Sherman, Matthew Barney, and Bill Viola.
- Enhanced discussion of opera and musical theatre, including the works of Bizet (*Carmen*); Puccini (*Madame Butterfly*, *La Bohème*, *Tosca*); and Gilbert and Sullivan (*H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Mikado*); and the 20th-century musical theatre phenomena *Hair* and *Rent*.
- Students are now directed with “Go Listen!” icons to download sections from the iTunes playlist. Instructors also have an extended playlist for use in the classroom.

New Features

A DYNAMIC, ELEGANT, AND ACCESSIBLE NEW DESIGN features enlarged, high-quality images: brilliant, accurate-color reproductions of works of art, in many cases half- to full-page width or depth, along with large-format reproductions of original pages of literary works such as Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*, the Limbourg brothers’ *Les Très riches heures du duc de Berry*, and the original Gutenberg Bible. Students will be better able to fully appreciate the visual impact of these works and may be inspired to seek out art in museums and to visit historic sites.

NEW CHAPTER PREVIEWS draw students into each chapter by connecting intriguing chapter-opening works of art and other images with the ideas and ideals that permeate the eras under discussion. From the opening chapter—in which students discover how contemporary technologies are used to reconstruct the human past—to the last—in which the emergence of new media chart multiple cultural and artistic directions in the 21st century—students are encouraged to face each new period with curiosity and anticipation. At the same time, the previews reinforce connections to the knowledge students have accumulated from previous chapters.

NEW COMPARE + CONTRAST features present two or more works of art or literature side by side and encourage students to focus on stylistic, technical, and cultural similarities and differences. The features promote critical thinking by encouraging students to consider the larger context in which works were created, honing their interpretive skills, and challenging them to probe for meaning beyond first impressions. Compare + Contrast parallels the time-honored pedagogy of analyzing works of art, texts, and ideas by describing their similarities and differences.

A sample of COMPARE + CONTRAST topics follows:

- “Unraveling Penelope,” in the chapter called “The Rise of Greece,” examines the magnetism of the Homeric hero Odysseus’s wife as a poetic subject, asking students to think about what prevailing contemporary gender ideologies might have been when the texts were authored and, more generally, about gendered representation in the arts.
- “Stadium Designs: Thumbs-Up or Thumbs-Down?” in the chapter on Rome asks students to consider the style, function, and message behind each of four stadiums, including the famous Roman Colosseum and Hitler’s 1936 Olympic Stadium in Berlin.
- “Journeys of Faith,” in the expanded chapter on Islam, asks students to explore the geographical and theological

intersections among pilgrimage routes and destinations sacred to Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

- “Courtesans, East and West” compares and contrasts the gender and societal roles of courtesans in Renaissance Venice and Japan, and explores correspondences between diverse cultural perspectives on gender equality and the female body.
- “Vision and Difference: Three Paintings Entitled *Susanna and the Elders*” raises student awareness of the ways in which, in familiar narratives, gender ideology both reflects and constructs societal attitudes.
- “Mona Lisa: From Portrait to Pop Icon” asks students to reflect on factors that contribute to iconic status and the power of iconic imagery as a vehicle for social commentary.

READINGS PLACED WITHIN THE RUNNING NARRATIVE, rather than clustered in sections or at the ends of chapters, maintain the flow of the discussion of material and are chosen to succinctly illustrate major points. As an example, five brief extracts from the *Epic of Gilgamesh* are woven into the discussion of ancient Sumer in chapter 1. Similarly, five excerpts from the *Aeneid* by Virgil are interspersed in the coverage of that epic’s content and the context in which it was written.

NEW CLEAR AND CONCISE TIMELINES early in each chapter give students a broad framework for the periods under discussion by highlighting seminal dates and events.

NEW END-OF-CHAPTER GLOSSARIES provide students with an easy way to access and review key terms and their meanings.

THE BIG PICTURE, new to the eighth edition, these bring each chapter to a close by gathering summaries of the cultural events and achievements that shaped the character of each period and place. Organized into categories (Language and Literature; Art, Architecture, and Music; Philosophy and Religion), the Big Picture reinforces for students the simultaneity of developments in history and the humanities.

WHAT’S NEW IN THE EIGHTH EDITION—CHAPTER BY CHAPTER

1 Beginnings

- New chapter preview on methods used to reconstruct the face of the pharaoh Tutankhamen
- Twenty-one new figures and works of art, including a 100,000-year-old bowl for mixing paints and a 35,000-year-old bone flute
- New Compare + Contrast feature on ancient fertility goddesses: “Mystery Ladies of the Ancient World”

- New Values feature on Egypt: “Righteousness as the Path to Emerging Forth into the Light”
- New readings from the Law Code of Hammurabi, Akhenaton (“Hymn to the Sun”), the Leiden Hymns, and ancient Egyptian love songs

2 The Rise of Greece

- New chapter preview on the Shield of Achilles as a microcosm of Greek culture and values
- Six new figures and works of art
- New Compare + Contrast feature on images of Zeus and of George Washington: “Gods into Men, Men into Gods”
- New Compare + Contrast Feature, “Unraveling Penelope,” with traditional and more feminist views of Penelope’s travails as she awaits the return of Odysseus from the Trojan War
- New Values feature: “Fate, Chance, and Luck”
- New Voices feature: “Life and Death in the World of Homer”

3 Classical Greece and the Hellenistic Period

- New chapter preview on Aeschylus and *The Persians*
- Expanded coverage of early Greek philosophers
- New readings from the drama of Aeschylus

4 Rome

- New chapter preview on Aeneas as the embodiment of Roman virtues of seriousness of purpose, duty, dignity, and courage
- Twelve new figures and works of art
- New Compare + Contrast feature on stadium designs past and present: “Stadium Designs: Thumbs-Up or Thumbs-Down?”
- New Values feature: “Roman Ideals as Seen Through the Prism of the *Aeneid*”
- New Voices feature: “Correspondence Between Pliny the Younger and the Emperor Trajan About Christians”
- New readings from the works of Julius Caesar, Cicero, Lucretius, Seneca, Epictetus, Sulpicia, Horace, and Ovid

5 The Rise of the Biblical Tradition

- New chapter preview on the *Sacrifice of Isaac*

6 Early Christianity: Ravenna and Byzantium

- New chapter preview on Saint Augustine
- New Compare + Contrast feature: “Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy* and Marcus Aurelius’s *Meditations*”
- New Values feature: “The Greens and the Blues: A Clash of Values”

7 Islam

- New chapter preview on Muhammad's Night Journey
- Sixteen new figures and works of art
- New Compare + Contrast feature on pilgrimages in the three Abrahamic religions: "Journeys of Faith"
- New coverage of Islamic music
- New Values feature: "The Five Pillars of Islam"
- New Voices feature: "Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi on the Three Blind Men and the Elephant"
- New coverage of styles of calligraphy
- New coverage of *The Thousand and One Nights* and *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*

8 The Rise of Medieval Culture

- New chapter preview on Hildegard of Bingen
- Seven new figures and works of art
- New coverage of *Beowulf*
- New Compare + Contrast feature: "Four Paintings of Saint Matthew"

9 The High Middle Ages

- New chapter preview on jousting—in the Middle Ages and today
- New Compare + Contrast feature: "The Old Woman in the *Romance of the Rose* and The Wife of Bath in *The Canterbury Tales*"
- New coverage of the *Romance of the Rose*
- New Values feature: "Chivalry and Courtly Love"
- New coverage of troubadours and troubairitz, with poems by Guillem de Peiteus; Bernart de Ventadorn; Beatriz, Comtessa de Dia; and Bertran de Born
- New coverage of Moses Maimonides

10 The 14th Century

- New chapter preview on Dante and Giotto
- New Compare + Contrast feature: "Scenes from the Passion of Christ by Giotto and Duccio"
- New Voices feature: "Giovanni Boccaccio, Witness to the Black Death"

11 The 15th Century

- New chapter preview on Botticelli
- New reading by Lorenzo de' Medici

12 The High Renaissance and Mannerism in Italy

- New chapter preview on Pope Julius II and Michelangelo

- Five new figures and works of art
- New Compare + Contrast feature: "Courtesans, East and West"
- New coverage of the writing of Leonardo da Vinci ("Letter of Application to Ludovico Sforza") and the poetry of Michelangelo, Vittoria Colonna, and Veronica Franco

13 The High Renaissance in the North

- New chapter preview on Shakespeare as the epitome of northern Renaissance humanism
- New Compare + Contrast feature: "Plutarch and Shakespeare's Descriptions of Cleopatra on the Barge"
- New coverage of the poetry and drama of Thomas Wyatt, Edmund Spenser, Queen Elizabeth I, and Christopher Marlowe
- New readings from several of Shakespeare's plays, including *Romeo and Juliet*; *Henry IV, Part 1*; *Julius Caesar*; and *Antony and Cleopatra*
- New inclusion of Shakespeare's sonnets

14 The 17th Century

- New chapter preview on *The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*
- Seven new figures and works of art
- Two new Compare + Contrast features: "The Davids of Donatello, Verrocchio, Michelangelo, and Bernini" and "Vision and Difference: Three Paintings Entitled *Susanna and the Elders*"
- New Voices feature on Giambattista Passeri describing the suicide of Francesco Borromini
- New coverage of the poet Andrew Marvell

15 The 18th Century

- New chapter preview on Jacques-Louis David
- Five new figures and works of art
- New Compare + Contrast feature: "David's *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* with Wiley's *Napoleon Leading the Army Over the Alps*"
- New coverage of Robert Burns and Mary Wollstonecraft

16 Romanticism, Realism, and Photography

- New chapter preview on *A Tale of Two Cities*
- New chapter directions: chapter retitled "Romanticism, Realism, and Photography"
- Nineteen new figures and works of art
- New Compare + Contrast feature: "Women, Art, and Power: Ideology, Gender Discourse, and the Female Nude"
- New Values feature: "Transcendentalism"

- New Voices feature: “Charles Baudelaire: A View of the Modernization of Paris”
- New coverage of the poets and novelists William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Jane Austen, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Henry David Thoreau, Edgar Allan Poe, and Nathaniel Hawthorne
- New section on the development of photography

17 Toward the Modern Era: 1870–1914

- New chapter preview on Édouard Manet and Émile Zola
- Seventeen new figures and works of art
- New Compare + Contrast feature: “The Politics of Sexuality: The Female Body and the Male Gaze”
- New coverage of the opera composers Georges Bizet and Giacomo Puccini
- New coverage of light opera, with a focus on Gilbert and Sullivan
- New coverage of the writers Mark Twain, Émile Zola, Oscar Wilde, Mona Caird, A. E. Housman, and Rudyard Kipling

18 The World at War

- New chapter preview on the bombing of Guernica
- New discussion of the history of World Wars I and II
- Sixteen new figures and works of art
- New Compare + Contrast feature: “Mona Lisa: From Portrait to Pop Icon”
- New coverage of the poets and writers Rupert Brooke, Isaac Rosenberg, Ernest Hemingway, and Sinclair Lewis

19 The Contemporary Contour

- New chapter preview on Jackson Pollock and his legacy
- Forty new figures and works of art
- New sections: “The 1960s,” “The Feminist Perspective,” “Minimal Art,” “Conceptual Art,” “Site-Specific Art,” “Pop Art,” “Art, Identity, and Social Consciousness,” “Sculpture,” and “Video”
- New Compare + Contrast feature on “Heizer’s Rift with Libeskind’s Jewish Museum”
- New Voices feature: Woody Allen’s Universe: On Being, Nothingness, and Laughter
- New coverage of the poets and writers Jack Kerouac, Paul Celan, Kurt Vonnegut Jr., John Updike, Edward Albee, Ralph Ellison, Maya Angelou, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton
- New coverage of rock opera, musical theater, rock and roll, hip-hop and rap, and the music video

THE CONTINUING PEDAGOGICAL TRADITIONS OF CULTURE & VALUES

THE WRITING STYLE of the eighth edition of *Culture & Values* retains its vivid, personal character and incisive presentation of key historic events. Comprehensive yet purposeful in its coverage, the first goal of *Culture & Values* remains *accessibility*.

THE POPULAR “VOICES” FEATURES capture the sense of real people in real time—their reactions to and thoughts about the cultural events of their day. The features foster critical thinking by asking students to reflect on the uniqueness and universality of some human traits and behavior, and the ways in which beliefs and mores influence actions. Topics new to the eighth edition include the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE as seen through the eyes of Pliny the Younger, whose uncle and thousands of others perished in the disaster that buried Pompeii; and the ravages of the Black Plague of 1348, described first hand by the Italian writer Boccaccio in the *Decameron*.

THE FEATURES ON “VALUES” PROVIDE the seeds for deeper discussions of cultural values that have contributed to people’s views of right and wrong, good and evil, and what inspires them to achieve.

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RESOURCES

For Faculty

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The Arts: An Introduction

One way to see the arts as a whole is to consider a widespread mutual experience: a church or synagogue service or the worship in a Buddhist monastery. Such a gathering is a celebration of written literature done (at least in part) in music in an architectural setting decorated to reflect the religious sensibilities of the community. A church service makes use of visual arts, literature, and music. While the service acts as an integrator of the arts, each art, considered separately, has its own peculiar characteristics that give it shape. The same integration may be seen, of course, in an opera or in a music video.

Music is primarily a temporal art, which is to say that there is music when there is someone to play the instruments and sing the songs. When the performance is over, the music stops.

The *visual arts* and *architecture* are spatial arts that have permanence. When a religious service is over, people may still come into the building to admire its architecture or marvel at its paintings or sculptures or look at the decorative details of the building.

Literature has a permanent quality in that it is recorded in books, although some literature is meant not to be read but to be heard. Shakespeare did not write plays for people to read, but for audiences to see and hear performed. Books nonetheless have permanence in the sense that they can be read not only in a specific context but also at one's pleasure. Thus, to continue the example of the religious service, one can read the psalms for their poetry or for devotion apart from their communal use in worship.

What we have said about a religious service applies equally to anything from a rock concert to grand opera: artworks can be seen as an integrated whole. Likewise, we can consider these arts separately. After all, people paint paintings, compose music, or write poetry to be enjoyed as discrete experiences. At other times, of course, two (or more) arts may be joined when there was no original intention to do so, as when a composer sets a poem to music or an artist finds inspiration in a literary text or, to use a more complex example, when a ballet is inspired by a literary text and is danced against the background or sets created by an artist to enhance both the dance and the text that inspired it.

However we view the arts, either separately or as integrated, one thing is clear: they are the product of human invention and human genius. When we speak of *culture*, we are not talking about something strange or highbrow; we are talking about something that derives from human invention. A jungle is a product of nature, but a garden is a product of culture: human ingenuity has modified the vegetative world.

In this book we discuss some of the works of human culture that have endured over the centuries. We often refer to these works as *masterpieces*, but what does the term mean? The issue

is complicated because tastes and attitudes change over the centuries. Two hundred years ago the medieval cathedral was not appreciated; it was called *Gothic* because it was considered barbarian. Today we call such a building a masterpiece. Very roughly, we can say that a masterpiece of art is any work that carries with it a surplus of meaning.

Having a surplus of meaning means not only that the work reflects technical and imaginative skill, but also that its very existence sums up the best of a certain age, which spills over as a source of inspiration for further ages. As one reads through the history of Western humanistic achievements, it is clear that certain products of human genius are looked to by subsequent generations as a source of inspiration; they have a surplus of meaning. Thus the Romans' achievement in architecture with the dome of the Pantheon both symbolized their skill in architecture and became a reference point for every major dome built in the West since. The dome of the Pantheon finds echoes in 7th-century Constantinople (the Hagia Sophia); in 15th-century Florence (the Duomo); in 16th-century Rome (St. Peter's Basilica); and in 18th-century Washington, DC (the Capitol).

The notion of a surplus of meaning provides us with a clue as to how to study the humanistic tradition and its achievements. Admittedly simplifying, we can say that such a study has two steps that we have tried to synthesize into a whole in this book.

THE WORK IN ITSELF. At this level we are asking the question of fact and raising the issue of observation: what is the work and how is it achieved? These questions include not only the basic information about, say, what kind of visual art this is (sculpture, painting, mosaic) or what its formal elements are (Is it geometric in style? bright in color? very linear? and so on), but also questions of its function: Is this work an homage to politics? For a private patron? For a church? We look at artworks, then, to ask questions about both their form and their function.

This is an important point. We may look at a painting or sculpture in a museum with great pleasure, but that pleasure would be all the more enhanced were we to see that work in its proper setting rather than as an object on display. To ask about form and function, in short, is to ask equally about context. When reading certain literary works (such as the *Iliad* or the *Song of Roland*), we should read them aloud, since in their original form they were written to be recited, not read silently on a page.

THE WORK IN RELATION TO HISTORY. The human achievements of the past tell us much about earlier cultures both in their differences and in their similarities. A study of the tragic plays that have survived from ancient Athens gives us a glimpse into Athenians' problems, preoccupations, and

aspirations as filtered through the words of Sophocles or Euripides. From such a study we learn both about the culture of Athens and something about how the human spirit has faced the perennial issues of justice, loyalty, and duty. In that sense we are in dialogue with our predecessors across the ages. In the study of ancient cultures we see the roots of our own.

To carry out such a project requires a willingness to look at art and closely read literature with an eye equally to the aspect of form and function and to the past and the present. Music, however, requires a special treatment because it is the most abstract of arts (How do we speak about that which is meant not to be seen but to be heard?) and the most temporal. For that reason, a somewhat more extended guide to music follows.

HOW TO LOOK AT ART

Anyone who thumbs through a standard history of art can be overwhelmed by the complexity of what is discussed. We find everything from paintings on the walls of caves and huge sculptures carved into the faces of mountains to tiny pieces of jewelry or miniature paintings. All of these are art, because they were made by human hands in an attempt to express human ideas or emotions. Our response to such objects depends a good deal on our own education and cultural biases. We may find some modern art ugly or stupid or bewildering. We may think of all art as highbrow or elitist despite the fact that we like certain movies (film is an art) enough to see them over and over. At first glance, art from unfamiliar traditions may seem odd simply because we do not have the reference points with which we can judge it as good or bad.

Our lives are so bound up with art that we often fail to recognize how much we are shaped by it. We are bombarded with examples of graphic art (television commercials, magazine ads, DVD covers, displays in stores) every day; we use art to make statements about who we are and what we value in the way we decorate our rooms and in the style of our clothing. In all of these ways, we manipulate artistic symbols to make statements about what we believe in, what we stand for, and how we want others to see us. The many sites on the Web bombard us with visual clues that attempt to make us stop and find out what is being offered or argued.

The history of art is nothing more than the record of how people have used their minds and imaginations to symbolize who they are and what they value. If a certain society in a certain age spends enormous amounts of money to build and decorate churches (as in 12th-century France) and another spends the same kind of money on palaces (like 18th-century France), we learn about what each values the most.

The very complexity of human art makes it difficult to interpret. That difficulty increases when we are looking at art from a much different culture or a far different age. We may admire the massiveness of Egyptian architecture but find it hard to appreciate why such energies were used in the cult of the dead. When confronted with the art of another age (or

even our own art, for that matter), a number of questions we can ask of ourselves and of the art may lead us to greater understanding.

What Is the Purpose of This Work of Art?

This is essentially a question of *context*. Most of the religious paintings in museums were originally meant to be seen in churches in very specific settings. To imagine them in their original setting helps us to understand that they had a devotional purpose that is lost when they are seen on a museum wall. To ask about the original setting, then, helps us to ask further whether the painting is in fact devotional or meant as a teaching tool or to serve some other purpose.

Setting is crucial. A frescoed wall on a public building is meant to be seen by many people, while a fresco on the wall of an aristocratic home is meant for a much smaller, more elite class of viewer. The calligraphy decorating an Islamic mosque tells us much about the importance of the sacred writings of Islam. A sculpture designed for a wall niche is going to have a different shape from one designed to be seen by walking around it. Similarly, art made under official sponsorship of an authoritarian government must be read in a far different manner than art produced by underground artists who have no standing with the government. Finally, art may be purely decorative or it may have a didactic purpose, but (and here is a paradox) purely decorative art may teach us, while didactic art may end up as no more than decoration.

What, If Anything, Does This Work of Art Hope to Communicate?

This question is one of *intellectual* or *emotional* context. Funeral sculpture may reflect the grief of the survivors, commemorate the achievements of the deceased, affirm what the survivors believe about life after death, or fulfill a combination of these purposes. If we think of art as a variety of speech, we can then inquire of any artwork: what is it saying?

An artist may strive for an ideal (“I wish to paint the most beautiful woman in the world,” or “I wish my painting to be taken for reality itself,” or “I wish to move people to love or hate or sorrow by my sculpture”), illustrate the power of an idea, or capture the power of the spirit world for religious or magical purposes.

An artist may well produce a work simply to demonstrate inventiveness or to expand the boundaries of what art means. The story is told of Pablo Picasso’s reply to a woman who said that her 10-year-old child could paint better than he. Picasso replied, “Congratulations, madame. Your child is a genius.” We know that before he was a teenager, Picasso could draw and paint with photographic accuracy. He said that during his

long life, he tried to learn how to paint with the fresh eye and spontaneous simplicity of a child.

How Was This Work of Art Made?

This question inquires into both the materials and the skills the artist employs to turn materials into art. Throughout this book we will speak of different artistic techniques, like bronze casting or etching or panel painting; here we make a more general point. Learning to appreciate the craft of the artist is a first step toward enjoying art for its worth as art—to developing an eye for art. This requires *looking* at the object as a crafted object.

We might stand back to admire a painting as a whole, but then looking closely at one portion of it teaches us the subtle manipulation of color and line that creates the overall effect.

What Is the Composition of This Work of Art?

This question addresses how the artist composes the work. Much Renaissance painting uses a pyramidal construction so that the most important figure is at the apex of the pyramid and lesser figures form the base. Some paintings presume something happening outside the picture itself (such as an unseen source of light); a Cubist painting tries to render simultaneous views of an object. At other times, an artist may enhance the composition by the manipulation of color with a movement from light to dark or a stark contrast between dark and light, as in the chiaroscuro of Baroque painting. In all of these cases the artists intend to do something more than merely depict a scene; they appeal to our imaginative and intellectual powers as we enter into the picture or engage the sculpture or look at the film.

Composition, obviously, is not restricted to painting. Filmmakers compose with close-ups or tracking shots just as sculptors carve for frontal or side views of an object. Since all

of these techniques are designed to make us see in a particular manner, only by thinking about composition do we begin to reflect on what the artist has done. If we do not think about composition, we tend to take an artwork at face value, and as a consequence are not training our eye. Much contemporary imagery is made by the power of mixing done on the computer.

What Elements Should We Notice About a Work of Art?

The answer to this question is a summary of what we have already stated. Without pretending to exclusivity, we should judge art on the basis of the following three aspects.

Formal elements. What kind of artwork is it? What materials are employed? What is its composition in terms of structure? In terms of pure form, how does this particular work look when compared to a similar work of the same or another artist?

Symbolic elements. What is this artwork attempting to say? Is its purpose didactic, propagandistic, pleasurable, or what? How well do the formal elements contribute to the symbolic statement being attempted in the work of art?

Social elements. What is the context of this work of art? Who paid for it and why? Whose purposes does it serve? At this level, many different philosophies come into play. A Marxist critic might judge a work in terms of its sense of class or economic aspects, while a feminist critic might inquire whether it affirms women or acts as an agent of subjugation or exploitation.

It is possible to restrict oneself to formal criticism of an artwork (Is this well done in terms of craft and composition?), but such an approach does not do full justice to what the artist is trying to do. Conversely, to judge every work purely in terms of social theory excludes the notion of an artistic work and, as a consequence, reduces art to politics or philosophy. For a fuller appreciation of art, then, all of these elements need to come into play.

An Exercise in Looking at Art

When we view a work of art, we need to consider the subject matter (what is being depicted), the elements of art (line, shape, and so on), the symbolism of the work (possible underlying meanings), and the social and cultural environment in which the work was created. The composition of the work—the organization of the visual elements—is also important. Consider Leonardo da Vinci's *Madonna of the Rocks* (Fig. 12.4a).

Subject Matter

A representational depiction of the Virgin Mary with the Christ Child, young John the Baptist, and an angel in a rocky landscape.

Art Elements

The elements of art include line; shape, volume, and mass; light and value; color; texture; space; and time and motion.

In *Madonna of the Rocks*, light is the most important element, affecting all the others. The light is very dramatic, and its source appears to be from the upper left, off the canvas. The light defines everything; it illuminates and focuses the viewer's attention on the figures. The light affects the colors and creates the warm feeling of flesh against the coldness of the rocky landscape of great depth. This use of light is called *chiaroscuro*, a contrast of very dark to very light values in the brightness of a color. Chiaroscuro creates the atmosphere, the shape and volume of the figures, and the space they occupy, a vast landscape in which real people exist.

Symbolism

Absent a halo or a regal crown, Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus is portrayed not as the queen of heaven but as an ordinary mother, reflecting Leonardo da Vinci's humanistic perspective. A number of interpretations of the symbolism have been based on the interactions among the principal characters, although none is substantiated. It has been suggested that the tension in Mary's fingers as she reaches toward her son presages her inability to protect him from harm. Her wistful expression and downcast eyes add an almost somber tone that contrasts with the otherwise lively interactions among the figures.



▲ Leonardo da Vinci, *Madonna of the Rocks*, 1483. Oil on panel, transferred to canvas, 78 1/4" × 48" (199 × 122 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Social Elements

Leonardo created the *Madonna of the Rocks* in the city of Milan, within a couple of years after he left Florence to work for Ludovico Sforza, the Duke of Milan. The painting was commissioned by the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception for a chapel in the church of San Francesco Grande.

Composition

Background: A landscape of great depth with rock formations and valleys with light from the setting sun.

Middle ground: A naturalistic landscape of plants and vegetation among the rocks with a canopy of rock formations suggesting a grotto and plants that encircle the group.

Foreground: Four figures are seated along a rocky edge of land with very naturalistic plants and grasses. The Virgin is seated in the center and dominates the group. Her right hand reaches around the young John the Baptist, who kneels on one knee and looks to the Christ Child seated to Mary's front left-hand side. Jesus is seated in a three-quarter profile to the viewer and directly under Mary's blessing left hand. To the right is a seated angel who looks out at the viewer while pointing to John. The figural group forms a pyramidal or triangular composition with the Madonna at the apex (see [Fig. 12.4B](#) on page 422).

HOW TO LISTEN TO MUSIC

The sections of this book devoted to music are designed for readers who have no special training in music theory or practice. Response to significant works of music, after all, should require no more specialized knowledge than should the ability to respond to *Oedipus Rex*, say, or a Byzantine mosaic. Indeed, many millions of people buy recorded music in one form or another, or enjoy listening to it on the radio, without the slightest knowledge of how the music is constructed or performed.

The gap between the simple pleasure of the listener and the complex skills of the composer and performer often prevents the development of a more serious grasp of music history and its relation to the other arts. The aim of this section is to help bridge that gap without trying to provide too much technical information. After a brief survey of music's role in Western culture, we shall look at the language used to discuss musical works—both specific terminology, such as *sharp* and *flat*, and more general concepts, such as line and color.

Music in Western Culture

The origins of music are unknown, and neither the excavations of ancient instruments and depictions of performers nor the evidence from modern societies gives any impression of its early stages. Presumably, like the early cave paintings, music served some kind of magical or ritual purpose. This is borne out by the fact that music still forms a vital part of most religious ceremonies today, from the hymns sung in Christian churches and the solo singing of the cantor in an Orthodox Jewish synagogue to the elaborate musical rituals performed in Buddhist or Shinto temples in Japan. The Hebrew Bible makes many references to the power of music, most notably in the famous story of the Battle of Jericho, and it is clear that by historical times music played an important role in Jewish life, both sacred and secular.

By the time of the Greeks, the first major Western culture to develop, music had become as much a science as an art. It retained its importance for religious rituals; in fact, according to Greek mythology the gods themselves invented it. At the same time, the theoretical relationships between the various musical pitches attracted the attention of philosophers such as Pythagoras (ca. 550 BCE), who described the underlying unity of the universe as the “harmony of the spheres.” Later 4th-century BCE thinkers, like Plato and Aristotle, emphasized music's power to affect human feeling and behavior. Thus for the Greeks, music represented a religious, intellectual, and moral force. Once again, music is still used in our own world to affect people's feelings, whether it be the stirring sound of a march, the solemnity of a funeral dirge, or the eroticism of much modern pop music (which Plato would have thoroughly disapproved of).

Virtually all of the music—and art, for that matter—that survived from the Middle Ages is religious. Popular secular

music certainly existed, but since no real system of notation was invented before the 11th century, it has disappeared without a trace. The ceremonies of both the Western and the Eastern (Byzantine) church centered around the chanting of a single musical line, a kind of music that is called *monophonic* (from the Greek for “single voice”). Around the time musical notation was devised, composers began to become interested in the possibilities of notes sounding simultaneously—what we would think of as harmony. Music involving several separate lines sounding together (as in a modern string quartet or a jazz group) became popular only in the 14th century. This gradual introduction of *polyphony* (“many voices”) is perhaps the single most important development in the history of music, since composers began to think not only horizontally (that is, melodically), but also vertically, or harmonically. In the process, the possibilities of musical expression were immeasurably enriched.

The Experience of Listening

Richard Wagner, one of the greatest of all composers, described the power of music to express universal emotions:

What music expresses is eternal, infinite, and ideal. It does *not* express the passion, love, or longing of this or that individual in this or that situation, but passion, love, or longing in itself; and this it presents in that unlimited variety of motivations which is the exclusive and particular characteristic of music, foreign and inexpressible in any other language.

Yet for those unaccustomed to serious listening, it is precisely this breadth of experience with which it is difficult to identify. We can understand a joyful or tragic situation. Joy and tragedy themselves, though, are more difficult to comprehend.

There are a number of ways by which the experience of listening can become more rewarding and more enjoyable. Not all of them will work for everyone, but over the course of time they have proved helpful for many newcomers to the satisfactions of music.

1. *Before listening to the piece you have selected*, ask yourself some questions: What is the historical context of the music? For whom was it composed—for a general or an elite audience?

Did the composer have a specific assignment? If the work was intended for performance in church, for example, it should sound very different from a set of dances. Sometimes the location of the performance affected the sound of the music: composers of masses to be sung in Gothic cathedrals used the buildings’ acoustical properties to emphasize the resonant qualities of their works.

With what forces was the music to be performed? Do they correspond to those intended by the composer? Performers of medieval music, in particular, often have to reconstruct much that is missing or uncertain. Even in the

case of later traditions, the original sounds can sometimes be only approximated. The superstars of the 18th-century world of opera were the *castrati*, male singers who had been castrated in their youth and whose soprano voices had therefore never broken; contemporaries described the sounds they produced as incomparably brilliant and flexible. The custom, which seems to us so monstrous, was abandoned in the 19th century, and even the most fanatic musicologist must settle for a substitute today. The case is an extreme one, but it proves that even with the best of intentions, modern performers cannot always reproduce the original sounds.

Does the work have a text? If so, read it through before you listen to the music; it is easiest to concentrate on one thing at a time. In the case of a translation, does the version you are using capture the spirit of the original? Translators sometimes take a simple, popular lyric and make it sound archaic and obscure in order to convey the sense of old music. If the words do not make much sense to you, they would probably seem equally incomprehensible to the composer.

Is the piece divided into sections? If so, why? Is the relationship of the sections determined by purely musical considerations—the structure of the piece—or by external factors—the words of a song, for example, or the parts of a Mass?

Finally, given all these considerations, what do you expect the music to sound like? Your preliminary thinking should have prepared you for the kind of musical experience in store for you. If it has not, go back and reconsider some of these points.

2. *While you are listening to the music*, Concentrate as completely as you can. It is virtually impossible to gain much from music written in an unfamiliar idiom unless you give it your full attention. Read written information before you begin to listen, as you ask yourself your preliminary questions—not *while* the music is playing. If there is a text, keep an eye on it but do not let it distract you from the music.

Concentrating is not always easy, particularly if you are mainly used to listening to music as a background, but there are some ways in which you can help your own concentration. To avoid visual distraction, fix your eyes on some detail near you—a mark on the wall, a design in someone’s clothing, the cover of a book. At first this will seem artificial, but after a while your attention should be taken by the music. If you feel your concentration fading, do not pick up a magazine or gaze around; consciously force your attention back to the music and try to analyze what you are hearing. Does it correspond to your expectations? How is the composer trying to achieve an effect? By variety of instrumental color? Are any of the ideas, or tunes, repeated?

Unlike literature or the visual arts, music occurs in the dimension of time. When you are reading, you can turn backward to check a reference or remind yourself of a character’s identity. In looking at a painting, you can

move from a detail to an overall view as often as you want. In music, the speed of your attention is controlled by the composer. Once you lose the thread of the discourse, you cannot regain it by going back; you must try to pick up again and follow the music as it continues—and that requires your renewed attention.

On the other hand, in these times of easy access to recordings, the same pieces can be listened to repeatedly. Even the most experienced musicians cannot grasp some works fully without several hearings. Indeed, one of the features that distinguishes “art” music from more “popular” works is its capacity to yield increasing rewards. On a first hearing, therefore, try to grasp the general mood and structure and note features to listen for the next time you hear the piece. Do not be discouraged if the idiom seems strange or remote, and be prepared to become familiar with a few works from each period you are studying.

As you become accustomed to serious listening, you will notice certain patterns used by composers to give form to their works. They vary according to the styles of the day; throughout this book there are descriptions of each period’s musical characteristics. In responding to the general feeling the music expresses, therefore, you should try to note the specific features that identify the time of its composition.

3. *After you have heard the piece*, ask yourself these questions: Which characteristics of the music indicated the period of its composition? Were they due to the forces employed (voices or instruments)? How was the piece constructed? Did the composer make use of repetition? Was there a change of mood, and if so, did the original mood return at the end? What kind of melody was used? Was it continuous or did it divide into a series of shorter phrases? If a text was involved, how did the music relate to the words? Were they intelligible? Did the composer intend them to be? If not, why not?

Were there aspects of the music that reminded you of the literature and visual arts of the same period? In what kind of buildings can you imagine it being performed? What does the music tell you about the society for which it was written?

Finally, ask yourself the most difficult question of all: What did the music express? Wagner described the meaning of music as “foreign and inexpressible in any other language.” There is no dictionary of musical meaning, and listeners must interpret for themselves what they hear. We all understand the general significance of words like *contentment* or *despair*, but music can distinguish between a million shades of each.

Concepts in Music

There is a natural tendency in talking about the arts to use terms from one art form to describe another. Thus most people would know what to expect from a “colorful” story or

a painting in “quiet” shades of blue. This metaphorical use of language helps describe characteristics that are otherwise often very difficult to isolate, but some care is required to remain within the general bounds of comprehension.

LINE. In music, *line* generally means the progression in time of a series of notes: the melody. A melody in music is a succession of tones related to one another to form a complete musical thought. Melodies vary in length and in shape and may be made up of several smaller parts. They may move quickly or slowly, smoothly or with strongly accented (stressed) notes. Some melodies are carefully balanced and proportional, others are irregular and asymmetrical. A melodic line dictates the basic character of a piece of music, just as lines do in a painting or the plotline does for a story or play.

TEXTURE. The degree to which a piece of music has a thick or thin *texture* depends on the number of voices or instruments involved. Thus the monophonic music of the Middle Ages, with its single voice, has the thinnest texture possible. At the opposite extreme is a 19th-century opera, where half a dozen soloists, a chorus, and a large orchestra are sometimes combined. Needless to say, thickness and thinness of texture are neither good nor bad in themselves, merely simple terms of description.

Composers control the shifting texture of their works in several ways. The number of lines heard simultaneously can be increased or reduced—a full orchestral climax followed by a single flute, for example. The most important factor in the texture of the sound, however, is the number of combined independent melodic lines; this playing (or singing) together of two or more separate melodies is called *counterpoint*. Another factor influencing musical texture is the vertical arrangement of the notes: six notes played close together low in the scale will sound thicker than six notes more widely distributed.

COLOR. The *color*, or *timbre*, of a piece of music is determined by the instruments or voices employed. Gregorian chant is monochromatic, having only one line. The modern symphony orchestra has a vast range to draw upon, from the bright sound of the oboe or the trumpet to the dark, mellow sound of the cello or horn. Different instruments used in Japanese or Chinese music will result in a quite distinct and very different timbre. Some composers have been more interested than others in exploiting the range of color that instrumental combinations can produce; not surprisingly, Romantic music provides some of the most colorful examples.

MEDIUM. The *medium* is the method of performance. Pieces can be written for solo piano, string quartet, symphony orchestra, or any other combination the composer chooses. A prime factor will be the importance of color in the work. Another is the length and seriousness of the musical material. It is difficult, although not impossible, for a piece written for solo violin to sustain the listener’s interest for half an hour. Still another factor is the practicality of performance. Pieces using large or unusual combinations of instruments stand less

chance of being frequently programmed. In the 19th century, composers often chose a medium that allowed performance in the home, thus creating a vast piano literature.

FORM. *Form* is the outward, visible (or hearable) shape of a work as opposed to its substance (medium) or color. This structure can be created in a number of ways. Baroque composers worked according to the principle of unity in variety. In most Baroque movements, the principal melodic idea continually recurs in the music, and the general texture remains consistent. The formal basis of much Classical music is contrast, where two or more melodies of differing character (hard and soft, or brilliant and sentimental) are first laid out separately, then developed and combined, then separated again. The Romantics often pushed the notion of contrasts to extremes, although retaining the basic motions of Classical form. Certain types of work dictate their own form. A composer writing a requiem mass is clearly less free to experiment with formal variation than one writing a piece for symphony orchestra. The words of a song strongly suggest the structure of the music, even if they do not impose it. Indeed, so pronounced was the Baroque sense of unity that the sung arias in Baroque operas inevitably conclude with a repetition of the words and music of the beginning, even if the character's mood or emotion has changed.

Thus music, like the other arts, involves the general concepts described earlier in this introduction. A firm grasp of them is essential to an understanding of how the various arts have changed and developed over the centuries and how the changes are reflected in similarities—or differences—between art forms. The concept of the humanities implies that the arts did not grow and change in isolation from one another or from around the world. As this book shows, they are integrated among themselves and with the general developments of Western thought and history.

HOW TO READ LITERATURE

“Reading literature” conjures up visions of someone sitting in an armchair with glasses on and nose buried in a thick volume—say, Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. The plain truth is that a fair amount of the literature found in this book was never meant to be read that way at all. Once that fact is recognized, reading becomes an exercise in which different methods can serve as a great aid to both pleasure and understanding. That becomes clear when we consider various literary forms and ask ourselves how their authors originally meant them to be encountered. Let us consider some of the forms that will be studied in this volume to make the point more specifically.

Dramatic Literature

Drama is the most obvious genre of literature that calls for something more than reading the text quietly. Plays—ancient, medieval, Elizabethan, or modern—are meant to be acted, with living voices interpreting what the playwright wrote in the

script. What seems to be strange and stilted language as we first encounter Shakespeare becomes powerful and beautiful when we hear his words spoken by someone who knows and loves language.

A further point: Until relatively recent times, most dramas were played on stages nearly bare of scenery and, obviously, extremely limited in terms of lighting, theatrical devices, and the like. As a consequence, earlier texts contain a great deal of description that in the modern theater (and, even more, in a film) can be supplied by current technology. Where Shakespeare has a character say “But look, the morn in russet mangle clad / Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill,” a modern writer might simply instruct the lighting manager to make the sun come up.

Dramatic literature must be approached with a sense of its oral aspect as well as with awareness that the language reflects the intention of the author to have the words acted out. Dramatic language is meant to be *heard* and *seen*.

Epic

Like drama, epics have a strong oral background. It is commonplace to note that before Homer's *Iliad* took its present form, it was memorized and recited by a professional class of bards. Similarly, the *Song of Roland* was probably heard by many people and read by relatively few in the formative decades of its composition. Even epics that are more consciously literary echo the oral background of the epic; Virgil begins his elegant *Aeneid* with the words “Of arms and the man I sing,” not “Of arms and the man I write.” The Islamic scriptures—the Qur'an—is most effectively recited.

The practical conclusion to be drawn from this is that these long poetic tales take on a greater power when they are read aloud with sensitivity to their cadence.

Poetry

Under the general heading of poetry we have a very complicated subject. To approach poetry with intelligence, we need to inquire about the kind of poetry with which we are dealing. The lyrics of songs are poems, but they are better heard sung than read in a book. On the other hand, certain kinds of poems are so arranged on a page that not to see them in print is to miss a good deal of their power or charm. Furthermore, some poems are meant for the individual reader, while others are public pieces meant for the group. There is, for example, a vast difference between a love sonnet and a biblical psalm. Both are examples of poetry, but the former expresses a private emotion while the latter most likely gets its full energy from use in worship: we can imagine a congregation singing a psalm, but not the same congregation reciting one of Petrarch's sonnets to Laura.

In poetry, then, context is all. Our appreciation of a poem is enhanced once we have discovered where the poem belongs: With music? On a page? With an aristocratic circle of intellectuals? As

part of a national or ethnic or religious heritage? As propaganda or protest or an expression deep emotions?

At base, however, poetry is the refined use of language. The poet is the maker of words. Our greatest appreciation of a poem comes when we say to ourselves that this could not be said better. An authentic poem cannot be edited or paraphrased or glossed. Poetic language, even in long poems, is economical. One can understand that by simple experiment: take one of Dante's portraits in the *Divine Comedy* and try to do a better job of description in fewer words. The genius of Dante (or Chaucer in the General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*) is his ability to sketch out a fully formed person in a few stanzas.

You can go to the following URL to learn more about "How to Read a Poem."

<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/19882>

Prose

God created humans, the writer Elie Wiesel once remarked, because he loves a good story. Narrative is as old as human history. The stories that stand behind the *Decameron* and the *Canterbury Tales* have been shown to have existed not only for centuries, but in widely different cultural milieus. Stories are told to draw out moral examples or to instruct or warn, but by and large, stories are told because we enjoy hearing them. We read novels in order to enter into a new world and suspend the workaday world we live in, just as we watch films. The difference between a story and a film is that one can linger over a story; in a film there is no second look.

Some prose obviously is not fictional. It can be autobiographical like Augustine's *Confessions*, or it may be a philosophical essay like Jean-Paul Sartre's attempt to explain what he means by existentialism. How do we approach that kind of writing? First, with a willingness to listen to what is being said. Second, with a readiness to judge: Does this passage ring true? What objections might I make to it? And so on. Third, with an openness that says, in effect, there is something to be learned here.

A final point has to do with attitude. We live in an age in which much of what we know comes to us in very brief

sound bites via television, and much of what we read comes to us in the disposable form of newspapers and magazines and inexpensive paperbacks. To read—*really* to read—requires that we discipline ourselves to cultivate a more leisurely approach to that art. There is merit in speed-reading the morning sports page; there is no merit in doing the same with a poem or a short story. It may take time to learn to slow down and read at a leisurely pace (leisure is the basis of culture, says Aristotle), but if we learn to do so we have taught ourselves a skill that will enrich us throughout our lives. A good thought exercise is to ask whether reading from a computer screen is a different exercise than reading from a book.

HOW TO READ MAPS

Maps may serve various functions. In the ancient world a *mappa mundi* illustrated the imagined size of the known world. In military campaigns maps serve to illustrate the location of the enemy and the physical obstacles ahead of the army's march. Most maps today show political and natural boundaries or, more usefully, the route from one place to another.

The maps in this book have a more restricted purpose. They are meant to illuminate the points made in the text. For example, when the text speaks of the Hellenistic world, the map shows us the extent of that world. When the text speaks of the rapid expansion of Islam after its founding, the map shows the geographical areas and rapidity of its expansion. Students will gain the most benefit from the maps in this book by looking at them with a few pertinent questions in mind:

- How does the map relate to the text? Does the information available in the map enhance the discussion in the text? Does the map shed light on discussions in earlier chapters?
- How does a map illustrate the power and movement of ideas or artistic styles discussed in this book?
- If a map shows the expansion of a certain movement, what can we say about the area shown outside that movement?

Finally, it is very productive to think of each map as another kind of text and not merely as an illustration. By that approach we soon learn not to look at maps but to read them.

