



Volume

SEVENTH EDITION

# III The Humanistic Tradition

The Early Modern World to the Present **GLORIA K. FIERO**



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Volume

II

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to the Present







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# The Humanistic Tradition

**The Early Modern World  
to the Present**

**Gloria K. Fiero**



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THE EARLY MODERN WORLD TO THE PRESENT  
SEVENTH EDITION

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Toshusai Sharaku, *Bust Portrait of the Actor Segawa Tomisaburo as Yadorigi, the Wife of Ogishi Kurando* (detail), 1794–1795. Woodblock print, 14½ × 9¼ in.

Chuck Close, *Self-Portrait* (detail), 1991. Oil on canvas, 100 × 84 in.

Judith Leyster, *Self-Portrait* (detail), ca. 1630. Oil on canvas, 29¾ × 25¾ in.

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Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Swing*, 1768–1769. Oil on canvas, 32 × 25½ in.

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Pieter de Hooch, *Portrait of a Family Making Music* (detail), 1663. Oil on canvas, 38¾ × 45¼ in.

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Thomas Phillips, *Lord Byron Sixth Baron in Albanian Costume* (detail), 1813. Oil on canvas, 50 × 40 in.

*page 351*  
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Various instructor resources are available for *The Humanistic Tradition*. These include an instructor’s manual with discussion suggestions and study questions, music listening guides, lecture PowerPoints, and a test bank. Contact your McGraw-Hill sales representative for access to these materials.





# Letter from the Author

*The Humanistic Tradition* originated more than two decades ago. As a long-time humanities instructor, I recognized that the Western-only perspective was no longer adequate to understanding the cultural foundations of our global world. However, none of the existing humanities textbooks served my needs. The challenge was daunting—covering the history of Western literature, philosophy, art, music, and dance was already an ambitious undertaking for a humanities survey; how could I broaden the scope to include Asia, Africa, and the Americas without over-loading the course?

I found the solution in my classroom: Instead of assuming a strictly historical approach to the past, (as I did in my history classes), I would organize my humanities lectures topically, focusing on universal themes, major styles, and significant movements—gods and rulers, classicism, imperialism, the Romantic hero, racial and sexual equality, globalism—as they reflected or shaped the culture of a given time or place. What evolved was *The Humanistic Tradition*, a thematic, yet global and chronological approach to humanities, one that provokes thought and discussion without burying students under mountains of encyclopedic information.

Now in its seventh edition, *The Humanistic Tradition* continues to celebrate the creative mind by focusing on how the arts and ideas relate to each other, what they tell us about our own human nature and that of others on our planet. Its mission remains relevant to the present, and essential (I would hope) to enriching the future of each student who reads its pages.

## The Seventh Edition of *The Humanistic Tradition*

To the seventh edition of *The Humanistic Tradition* I have added a new feature: **Looking Into** is a diagrammatic analysis of key works, such as Neolithic stone circles (including the latest archeological discoveries in Southeast Turkey), the Parthenon, the sonnets of Petrarch and Donne, *Shiva: Lord of the Dance*, Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Double Portrait*, and Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party*.

The new edition expands two popular features that promote critical thinking: **Exploring Issues**,

which focuses on controversial ideas and current debates (such as the battle over the ownership of antiquities, and creationism versus evolution); and **Making Connections**, which brings attention to contrasts and continuities between past and present. To **Exploring Issues**, I have added the debate over the origins of India's Vedic culture (chapter 3). To **Making Connections** I offer a novel illustration of the contemporary affection for Chinese landscape painting (chapter 14).

The chapter-by-chapter integration of literary, visual, and aural primary sources remains a hallmark of *The Humanistic Tradition*. In an effort to provide the most engaging and accessible literary works, some selected readings in this edition appear in alternate translations. **Marginal logos** have been added to direct students to additional literary resources that are discussed but not included in the text itself.

Additions to the art program include the Nebra Sky Disk, Hellenistic mosaics, Delacroix's *Women of Algiers*, Oceania's art of tattoo, Japan's Amida Buddha, Charles Willson Peale's *Portrait of Yarrow Mamout* (the earliest known portrait of a Muslim in America), Ai Wei Wei's *Forever Bicycle*, Ernesto Neto's *Anthropodino*, and Zaha Hadid's Heydar Aliyev Center. Chapters 37 and 38, which treat the Information Age and Globalism, have been updated to present a cogent overview of contemporary issues, including terrorism, ecological concerns, ethnic conflict, and the digital arts.

*The Humanistic Tradition* pioneered a flexible six-book format in recognition of the varying chronological range of humanities courses. Each slim volume was also convenient for students to bring to classes, the library, and other study areas. The seventh edition continues to be available in this six-book format, as well as in a two-volume set for the most common two-term course configuration.

In preparing the seventh edition, I have depended on the excellent editorial and production team led by Donald Dinwiddie at Laurence King Publishing. Special thanks also go to Kara Hattersley-Smith at LKP and Sarah Remington at McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Gloria K. Fiero

## BEFORE WE BEGIN

Studying humanities engages us in a dialogue with primary sources: works original to the age in which they were produced. Whether literary, visual, or aural, a primary source is a text; the time, place, and circumstances in which it was created constitute

the context; and its various underlying meanings provide the subtext. Studying humanities from the perspective of text, context, and subtext helps us understand our cultural legacy and our place in the larger world.

### Text

The *text* of a primary source refers to its medium (that is, what it is made of), its form (its outward shape), and its content (the subject it describes).

**Literature:** Literary form varies according to the manner in which words are arranged. So, *poetry*, which shares rhythmic organization with music and dance, is distinguished from *prose*, which normally lacks regular rhythmic patterns. Poetry, by its freedom from conventional grammar, provides unique opportunities for the expression of intense emotions. Prose usually functions to convey information, to narrate, and to describe.

*Philosophy* (the search for truth through reasoned analysis) and *history* (the record of the past) make use of prose to analyze and communicate ideas and information.

In literature, as in most forms of expression, content and form are usually interrelated. The subject matter or form of a literary work determines its *genre*. For instance, a long narrative poem recounting the adventures of a hero constitutes an *epic*, while a formal, dignified speech in praise of a person or thing constitutes a *eulogy*.

**The Visual Arts:** The visual arts employ a wide variety of media, ranging from the traditional colored pigments used in painting, to wood, clay, marble, and (more recently) plastic and neon used in sculpture, to a wide variety of digital media, including photography and film. The form or outward shape of a work of art depends on the manner in which the artist manipulates the elements of color, line, texture, and space. Unlike words, these formal elements lack denotative meaning.

The visual arts are dominantly spatial, that is, they operate and are apprehended in space. Artists manipulate form to describe or interpret the visible world (as in the genres of portraiture and landscape), or to create worlds of fantasy and imagination. They may also fabricate texts that are nonrepresentational, that is, without identifiable subject matter.

**Music and Dance:** The medium of music is sound. Like literature, music is durational: it unfolds over the period of time in which it occurs. The major elements of music are melody, rhythm, harmony, and tone color—formal elements that also characterize the oral life of literature. However, while literary and visual texts are usually descriptive, music is almost always nonrepresentational: it rarely has meaning beyond sound itself. For that reason, music is the most difficult of the arts to describe in words.

Dance, the artform that makes the human body itself the medium of expression, resembles music in that it is temporal and performance-oriented. Like music, dance

exploits rhythm as a formal tool, and like painting and sculpture, it unfolds in space as well as in time.

Studying the text, we discover the ways in which the artist manipulates medium and form to achieve a characteristic manner of execution or expression that we call *style*. Comparing the styles of various texts from a single era, we discover that they usually share certain defining features and characteristics. Similarities between, for instance, ancient Greek temples and Greek tragedies, or between Chinese lyric poems and landscape paintings, reveal the unifying moral and aesthetic values of their respective cultures.

### Context

The *context* describes the historical and cultural environment of a text. Understanding the relationship between text and context is one of the principal concerns of any inquiry into the humanistic tradition. To determine the context, we ask: In what time and place did our primary source originate? How did it function within the society in which it was created? Was it primarily decorative, didactic, magical, or propagandistic? Did it serve the religious or political needs of the community? Sometimes our answers to these questions are mere guesses. For instance, the paintings on the walls of Paleolithic caves were probably not “artworks” in the modern sense of the term, but, rather, magical signs associated with religious rituals performed in the interest of communal survival.

Determining the function of the text often serves to clarify the nature of its form, and vice-versa. For instance, in that the Hebrew Bible, the *Song of Roland*, and many other early literary works were spoken or sung, rather than read, such literature tends to feature repetition and rhyme, devices that facilitate memorization and oral delivery.

### Subtext

The *subtext* of a primary source refers to its secondary or implied meanings. The subtext discloses conceptual messages embedded in or implied by the text. The epic poems of the ancient Greeks, for instance, which glorify prowess and physical courage, suggest an exclusively male perception of virtue. The state portraits of the seventeenth-century French king Louis XIV bear the subtext of unassailable and absolute power. In our own time, Andy Warhol’s serial adaptations of Coca-Cola bottles offer wry commentary on the commercial mentality of American society. Examining the implicit message of the text helps us determine the values of the age in which it was produced, and offers insights into our own.



Chapter  
**19**

# Protest and Reform: The Waning of the Old Order

ca. 1400–1600

*"Now what else is the whole life of mortals but a sort of comedy, in which the various actors, disguised by various costumes and masks, walk on and play each one his part, until the manager waves them off the stage?"*

Erasmus



**Figure 19.1 ALBRECHT DÜRER**, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, ca. 1496. Woodcut, 15½ × 11 in. This illustration from the Revelation of Saint John, the last book of the New Testament, might be considered a grim prophecy of the sixteenth century, in which five million people would die in religious wars.



## LOOKING AHEAD

By the sixteenth century, the old medieval order was crumbling. Classical humanism and the influence of Italian Renaissance artist-scientists were spreading throughout Northern Europe (Map 19.1). European exploration and expansion were promoting a broader world-view and new markets for trade. The rise of a global economy with vast opportunities for material wealth was inevitable. Europe's population grew from 69 million in 1500 to 188 million in 1600. As European nation-states tried to strengthen their international influence, political rivalry intensified. The "superpowers"—Spain, under the Hapsburg ruler Philip II (1527–1598), and England, under Elizabeth I (1533–1603)—contended for advantage in Atlantic shipping and trade. In order to resist the encroachment of Europe's stronger nation-states, the weaker ones formed balance-of-power alliances that often provoked war. The new order took Europe on an irreversibly modern course.

While political and commercial factors worked to transform the West, the event that most effectively destroyed the old medieval order was the Protestant Reformation. In the wake of Protestantism, the unity of European Christendom would disappear forever. Beginning in the fifteenth century, the Northern Renaissance, endorsed by middle-class patrons and Christian humanists, assumed a religious direction that set it apart from Italy's Classical revival. Its literary giants, from Erasmus to Shakespeare, and its visual artists, Flemish and German, shared little of the idealism of their Italian Renaissance counterparts. Their concern for the reality of human folly and for the fate of the Christian soul launched a message of protest and a plea for Church reform expedited by way of the newly perfected printing press.

## The Temper of Reform

### The Impact of Technology

In the transition from medieval to early modern times, technology played a crucial role. Gunpowder, the light cannon, and other military devices made warfare more impersonal and ultimately more deadly. At the same time, Western advances in navigation, shipbuilding, and maritime instrumentation propelled Europe into a dominant position in the world.

Just as the musket and the cannon transformed the history of European warfare, so the technology of mechanical printing revolutionized learning and communication. Block printing originated in China in the ninth century and movable type in the eleventh, but print technology did not reach Western Europe until the fifteenth century. By 1450, in the city of Mainz, the German goldsmith Johannes Gutenberg (ca. 1400–ca. 1468) perfected a printing press that made it possible to fabricate books more cheaply, more rapidly, and in greater numbers than ever before (Figure 19.2). As information became a commodity for

mass production, vast areas of knowledge—heretofore the exclusive domain of the monastery, the Church, and the university—became available to the public. The printing press facilitated the rise of popular education and encouraged individuals to form their own opinions by reading for themselves. It accelerated the growing interest in vernacular literature, which in turn enhanced national and individual self-consciousness. Print technology proved to

### Science and Technology

- 1320** paper adopted for use in Europe (having long been in use in China)
- 1450** the Dutch devise the first firearm small enough to be carried by a single person
- 1451** Nicolas of Cusa (German) uses concave lenses to amend nearsightedness
- 1454** Johannes Gutenberg (German) prints the Bible with movable metal type



**Figure 19.2** An early sixteenth-century woodcut of a printer at work.



**Map 19.1**  
Renaissance Europe,  
ca. 1500.

be the single most important factor in the success of the Protestant Reformation, as it brought the complaints of Church reformers to the attention of all literate folk.

### Christian Humanism and the Northern Renaissance

The new print technology broadcast an old message of religious protest and reform. For two centuries, critics had attacked the wealth, worldliness, and unchecked corruption of the Church of Rome. During the early fifteenth century, the rekindled sparks of lay piety and anticlericalism spread throughout the Netherlands, where religious leaders launched the movement known as the *devotio moderna* (“modern devotion”). Lay Brothers and Sisters of the Common Life, as they were called, organized houses in which they studied and taught Scripture. Living in the manner of Christian monks and nuns, but taking no monastic vows, these lay Christians cultivated a devotional lifestyle that fulfilled the ideals of the apostles and the church fathers. They followed the mandate of Thomas à Kempis (1380–1471), himself a Brother of the Common Life and author of the *Imitatio Christi* (*Imitation of Christ*), to put the message of Jesus into daily practice. After the Bible, the *Imitatio Christi* was the most frequently published book in the Christian West well into modern times.

The *devotio moderna* spread quickly throughout Northern Europe, harnessing the dominant strains of

anticlericalism, lay piety, and mysticism, even as it coincided with the revival of Classical studies in the newly established universities of Germany. Although Northern humanists, like their Italian Renaissance counterparts, encouraged learning in Greek and Latin, they were more concerned with the study and translation of Early Christian manuscripts than with the Classical and largely secular texts that preoccupied the Italian humanists. This critical reappraisal of religious texts is known as Christian humanism. Christian humanists studied the Bible and the writings of the church fathers with the same intellectual fervor that the Italian humanists had brought to their examination of Plato and Cicero. The efforts of these Northern scholars gave rise to a rebirth (or renaissance) that focused on the late Classical world and, specifically, on the revival of church life and doctrine as gleaned from Early Christian literature. The Northern Renaissance put Christian humanism at the service of evangelical Christianity.

The leading Christian humanist of the sixteenth century—often called “the Prince of Humanists”—was Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536; Figure 19.3). Schooled among the Brothers of the Common Life and learned in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, Erasmus was a superb scholar and a prolific writer (see Reading 19.2). The first humanist to make extensive use of the printing press, he once dared a famous publisher to print his





**Figure 19.3 ALBRECHT DÜRER, *Erasmus of Rotterdam*, 1526.** Engraving, 9¼ × 7½ in. The Latin inscription at the top of the engraving reports that Dürer executed the portrait from life. The Greek inscription below reads, “The better image [is found] in his writings.” The artist wrote to his friend that he felt the portrait was not a striking likeness.

words as fast as he could write them. Erasmus was a fervent Neoclassicist—he held that almost everything worth knowing was set forth in Greek and Latin. He was also a devout Christian. Advocating a return to the basic teachings of Christ, he criticized the Church and all Christians whose faith had been jaded by slavish adherence to dogma and ritual. Using four different Greek manuscripts of the Gospels, he produced a critical edition of the New Testament that corrected Jerome’s mistranslations of key passages. Erasmus’ New Testament became the source of most sixteenth-century German and English vernacular translations of this central text of Christian humanism.

## The Protestant Reformation

During the sixteenth century, papal extravagance and immorality reached new heights, and Church reform became an urgent public issue. In the territories of Germany, loosely united under the leadership of the Holy Roman emperor Charles V (1500–1558), the voices of protest were more strident than anywhere else in Europe. Across Germany, the sale of indulgences (see chapter 15) for the benefit of the Church of Rome—specifically for the rebuilding of Saint Peter’s Cathedral—provoked harsh criticism, especially by those who saw the luxuries of the papacy as a betrayal of apostolic ideals. As with

most movements of religious reform, it fell to one individual to galvanize popular sentiment. In 1505, Martin Luther (1483–1546), the son of a rural coal miner, abandoned his legal studies to become an Augustinian monk (Figure 19.4). Thereafter, as a doctor of theology at the University of Wittenberg, he spoke out against the Church. His inflammatory sermons and essays offered radical remedies to what he called “the misery and wretchedness of Christendom.”

Luther was convinced of the inherent sinfulness of humankind, but he took issue with the traditional medieval view—as promulgated, for instance, in *Everyman*—that salvation was earned through the performance of good works and grace mediated by the Church and its priesthood. Inspired by the words of Saint Paul, “the just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17), Luther argued that salvation could be attained only by faith in the validity of Christ’s sacrifice: human beings were saved by the unearned gift of God’s grace, not by their good works on earth. Purchasing indulgences, venerating relics, making pilgrimages, and seeking the intercession of the saints were useless, because only the grace of God could save the Christian soul. Justified by faith alone, Christians should assume full responsibility for their own actions and intentions.

In 1517, in pointed criticism of Church abuses, Luther posted on the door of the collegiate church at Wittenberg a list of ninety-five subjects he intended for dispute with the leaders of the Church of Rome. The *Ninety-Five Theses*, which took the confrontational tone of the sample below, were put to press and circulated throughout Europe:



**Figure 19.4 LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER, *Portrait of Martin Luther*, 1533.** Panel, 8 × 5¼ in.



27 They are wrong who say that the soul flies out of Purgatory as soon as the money thrown into the chest rattles.

32 Those who believe that, through letters of pardon [indulgences], they are made sure of their own salvation will be eternally damned along with their teachers.

37 Every true Christian, whether living or dead, has a share in all the benefits of Christ and of the Church, given by God, even without letters of pardon.

43 Christians should be taught that he who gives to a poor man, or lends to a needy man, does better than if he bought pardons.

44 Because by works of charity, charity increases, and the man becomes better; while by means of pardons, he does not become better, but only freer from punishment.

45 Christians should be taught that he who sees any one in need, and, passing him by, gives money for pardons, is not purchasing for himself the indulgences of the Pope but the anger of God.

49 Christians should be taught that the Pope's pardons are useful if they do not put their trust in them, but most hurtful if through them they lose the fear of God.

50 Christians should be taught that if the Pope were acquainted with the exactions of the Preachers of pardons, he would prefer that the Basilica of Saint Peter should be burnt to ashes rather than that it should be built up with the skin, flesh, and bones of his sheep.

54 Wrong is done to the Word of God when, in the same sermon, an equal or longer time is spent on pardons than on it.

62 The true treasure of the Church is the Holy Gospel of the glory and grace of God.

66 The treasures of indulgences are nets, wherewith they now fish for the riches of men.

67 Those indulgences which the preachers loudly proclaim to be the greatest graces, are seen to be truly such as regards the promotion of gain.

68 Yet they are in reality most insignificant when compared to the grace of God and the piety of the cross.

86 . . . why does not the Pope, whose riches are at this day more ample than those of the wealthiest of the wealthy, build the single Basilica of Saint Peter with his own money rather than with that of poor believers? . . .

Luther did not set out to destroy Catholicism, but rather to reform it. Gradually he extended his criticism of Church abuses to criticism of Church doctrine. For instance, because he found justification in Scripture for only two Roman Catholic sacraments—baptism and Holy Communion—he rejected the other five. He attacked monasticism and clerical celibacy. (Luther himself married, and fathered six children.) Luther's boldest challenge to the old medieval order, however, was his unwillingness to accept the pope as the ultimate source of religious

authority. Denying that the pope was the spiritual heir to Saint Peter, he claimed that the head of the Church, like any other human being, was subject to error and correction. Christians, argued Luther, were collectively a priesthood of believers; they were "consecrated as priests by baptism." The ultimate source of authority in matters of faith and doctrine was Scripture, as interpreted by the individual Christian. To encourage the reading of the Bible among his followers, Luther translated the Old and New Testaments into German.

Luther's assertions were revolutionary because they defied both church dogma and the authority of the Church of Rome. In 1520, Pope Leo X issued an edict excommunicating the outspoken reformer. Luther promptly burned the edict in the presence of his students at the University of Wittenberg. The following year, he was summoned to the city of Worms in order to appear before the Diet—the German parliamentary council. Charged with heresy, Luther stubbornly refused to back down, concluding, "I cannot and will not recant anything, for to act against our conscience is neither safe for us, nor open to us. On this I take my stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen." Luther's confrontational temperament and down-to-earth style are captured in this excerpt from his *Address to the German Nobility*, a call for religious reform written shortly before the Diet of Worms and circulated widely in a printed edition.

### READING 19.1 From Luther's *Address to the German Nobility* (1520)

It has been devised that the Pope, bishops, priests, and monks are called the *spiritual estate*; princes, lords, artificers, and peasants are the *temporal estate*. This is an artful lie and hypocritical device, but let no one be made afraid by it, and that for this reason: that all Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them, save of office alone. As Saint Paul says (1 Cor.:12), we are all one body, though each member does its own work, to serve the others. This is because we have one baptism, one Gospel, one faith, and are all Christians alike; for baptism, Gospel, and faith, these alone make spiritual and Christian people.

As for the unction by a pope or a bishop, tonsure, ordination, consecration, and clothes differing from those of laymen—all this may make a hypocrite or an anointed puppet, but never a Christian or a spiritual man. Thus we are all consecrated as priests by baptism. . . .

And to put the matter even more plainly, if a little company of pious Christian laymen were taken prisoners and carried away to a desert, and had not among them a priest consecrated by a bishop, and were there to agree to elect one of them, born in wedlock or not, and were to order him to baptize, to celebrate the Mass, to absolve, and to preach, this man would as truly be a priest, as if all the bishops and all the popes had consecrated him. That is why in cases of necessity every man can baptize and absolve, which would not be possible if we were not all priests. . . .

[Members of the Church of Rome] alone pretend to be considered masters of the Scriptures; although they learn nothing of them all their life. They assume authority, and juggle before us with impudent words, saying that the Pope cannot err in matters of faith, whether he be evil or good, albeit they cannot prove it by a single letter. That is why the canon law contains so many heretical and unchristian, nay unnatural, laws. . . .

And though they say that this authority was given to Saint Peter when the keys were given to him, it is plain enough that the keys were not given to Saint Peter alone, but to the whole community. Besides, the keys were not ordained for doctrine or authority, but for sin, to bind or loose; and what they claim besides this from the keys is mere invention. . . .

Only consider the matter. They must needs acknowledge that there are pious Christians among us that have the true faith, spirit, understanding, word, and mind of Christ: why then should we reject their word and understanding, and follow a pope who has neither understanding nor spirit? Surely this were to deny our whole faith and the Christian Church. . . .

Therefore when need requires, and the Pope is a cause of offence to Christendom, in these cases whoever can best do so, as a faithful member of the whole body, must do what he can to procure a true free council. This no one can do so well as the temporal authorities, especially since they are fellow-Christians, fellow-priests, sharing one spirit and one power in all things. . . . Would it not be most unnatural, if a fire were to break out in a city, and every one were to keep still and let it burn on and on, whatever might be burnt, simply because they had not the mayor's authority, or because the fire perchance broke out at the mayor's house? Is not every citizen bound in this case to rouse and call in the rest? How much more should this be done in the spiritual city of Christ, if a fire of offence breaks out, either at the Pope's government or wherever it may! The like happens if an enemy attacks a town. The first to rouse up the rest earns glory and thanks. Why then should not he earn glory that decries the coming of our enemies from hell and rouses and summons all Christians?

But as for their boasts of their authority, that no one must oppose it, this is idle talk. No one in Christendom has any authority to do harm, or to forbid others to prevent harm being done. There is no authority in the Church but for reformation. Therefore if the Pope wished to use his power to prevent the calling of a free council, so as to prevent the reformation of the Church, we must not respect him or his power; and if he should begin to excommunicate and fulminate, we must despise this as the doings of a madman, and, trusting in God, excommunicate and repel him as best we may.

**Q Which of Luther's assertions would the Church of Rome have found heretical? Why?**

**Q Which aspects of this selection might be called anti-authoritarian? Which might be called democratic?**

## The Spread of Protestantism

- 30 Luther's criticism constituted an open revolt against the institution that for centuries had governed the lives of Western Christians. With the aid of the printing press, his "protestant" sermons and letters circulated throughout Europe. His defense of Christian conscience worked to justify protest against all forms of dominion. In 1524, under the banner of Christian liberty, German commoners instigated a series of violent uprisings against the oppressive landholding aristocracy. The result was full-scale war, the so-called Peasant Revolts that resulted in the bloody defeat of thousands of peasants. Although Luther condemned the violence and brutality of the Peasant Revolts, social unrest and ideological warfare had only just begun. His denunciation of the lower-class rebels brought many of the German princes to his side; and some used their new religious allegiance as an excuse to seize and usurp Church properties and revenues within their own domains. As the floodgates of dissent opened wide, civil wars broke out between German princes who were faithful to Rome and those who called themselves
- 40 Lutheran. The wars lasted for some twenty-five years, until, under the terms of the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, it was agreed that each German prince should have the right to choose the religion to be practiced within his own domain. Nevertheless, religious wars resumed in the late sixteenth century and devastated German lands for almost a century.

## Calvin

- 60 All of Europe was affected by Luther's break with the Church. The Lutheran insistence that enlightened Christians could arrive at truth by way of Scripture led reformers everywhere to interpret the Bible for themselves. The result was the birth of many new Protestant sects, each based on its own interpretation of Scripture. In the independent city of Geneva, Switzerland, the French lawyer and theologian John Calvin (1509–1564) set up a government in which elected officials, using the Bible as the supreme law, ruled the community.
- 70 Calvin held that Christians were predestined from birth for either salvation or damnation, a circumstance that made good works irrelevant. The "Doctrine of Predestination" encouraged Calvinists to glorify God by living an upright life, one that required faith, obedience, and abstention from dancing, gambling, swearing, drunkenness, and all forms of public display. Although one's status was known only by God, Protestant Christians manifested that they were among the "elect" by their display of moral rectitude. Further, since Calvin taught that wealth was a sign of God's favor, Calvinists extolled the "work ethic" as consistent with the divine will. Calvin's treatise *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536) was hugely influential in transforming Luther's teachings into a rational legal system, while his model city, Geneva, became a missionary center for Calvinist followers in Germany, England, the Netherlands, Scotland, and elsewhere.

## Humanism and Religious Fanaticism: The Persecution of Witches

The age of Christian humanism witnessed the rise of religious fanaticism, the most dramatic evidence of which is the witch hunts that infested Renaissance Europe and Reformation Germany. While belief in witches dates back to humankind's earliest societies, the practice of persecuting witches did not begin until the late fourteenth century. Based in the medieval practice of finding evidence of the supernatural in natural phenomena, and fueled by the popular Christian belief that the Devil is actively engaged in human affairs, the first mass persecutions occurred at the end of the fifteenth century, reaching a peak approximately one hundred years later. Among Northern European artists, witches and witchcraft became favorite subjects (Figure 19.5).

In 1484, two German theologians published the *Malleus Maleficarum* (*The Witches' Hammer*), an encyclopedia that described the nature of witches, their collusion with the Devil, and the ways in which they might be recognized and punished. Its authors reiterated the traditional claim that women—by nature more feeble than men—were dangerously susceptible to the Devil's temptation. As a result, they became the primary victims of the mass hysteria that prevailed during the so-called age of humanism. Women—particularly those who were single, old, or eccentric—constituted four-fifths of the roughly 70,000 witches put to death between the years 1400 and 1700. Females who served as midwives might be accused of causing infant deaths or deformities; others were condemned as witches at the onset of local drought or disease. One recent study suggests that witches were blamed for the sharp drops in temperature that devastated sixteenth-century crops and left many Europeans starving.

The persecution of witches may be seen as an instrument of post-Reformation religious oppression, or as the intensification of antifemale sentiment in an age when women had become more visible politically and commercially. Nevertheless, the witchcraft hysteria of the early modern era dramatizes the troubling gap between humanism and religious fanaticism.



**Figure 19.5** HANS BALDUNG ("Grien"), *Witches*, 1510. Chiaroscuro woodcut, 15 $\frac{1}{8}$  × 10 $\frac{1}{4}$  in. Three witches, sitting under the branches of a dead tree, perform a black Mass. One lifts the chalice, while another mocks the Host by elevating the body of a dead toad. An airborne witch rides backward on a goat, a symbol of the Devil.

### The Anabaptists

In nearby Zürich, a radical wing of the Protestant movement emerged: the Anabaptists (given this name by those who opposed their practice of "rebaptizing" adult Christians) rejected all seven of the sacraments (including infant baptism) as sources of God's grace. Placing total emphasis on Christian conscience and the voluntary acceptance of Christ, the Anabaptists called for the abolition of the Mass and the complete separation of Church and state: holding individual responsibility and personal liberty as fundamental ideals, they were among the first Westerners to offer religious sanction for political disobedience. Many Anabaptist reformers met death at the

hands of local governments—the men were burned at the stake and the women were usually drowned. English offshoots of the Anabaptists—the Baptists and the Quakers—would come to follow Anabaptist precepts, including the rejection of religious ritual (and imagery) and a fundamentalist approach to Scripture.

### The Anglican Church

In England, the Tudor monarch Henry VIII (1491–1547) broke with the Roman Catholic Church and established a church under his own leadership. Political expediency colored the king's motives: Henry was determined to leave England with a male heir, but when eighteen years of



marriage to Catherine of Aragon produced only one heir (a daughter), he attempted to annul the marriage and take a new wife. The pope refused, prompting the king—formerly a staunch supporter of the Catholic Church—to break with Rome. In 1526, Henry declared himself head of the Church in England. In 1536, with the support of Parliament, he closed all Christian monasteries and sold Church lands, accumulating vast revenues for the royal treasury. His actions led to years of dispute and hostility between Roman Catholics and Anglicans (members of the new English Church). By the mid-sixteenth century, the consequences of Luther’s protests were evident: the religious unity of Western Christendom was shattered forever. Social and political upheaval had become the order of the day.


### Music and the Reformation

Since the Reformation clearly dominated the religious and social history of the sixteenth century, it also touched, directly or indirectly, all forms of artistic endeavor, including music. Luther himself was a student of music, an active performer, and an admirer of Josquin des Prez (see chapter 17). Emphasizing music as a source of religious instruction, he encouraged the writing of hymns and reorganized the German Mass to include both congregational and professional singing. Luther held that all religious texts should be sung in German, so that the faithful might understand their message. The text, according to Luther, should be both comprehensible and appealing.

Luther’s favorite musical form was the **chorale**, a congregational hymn that served to enhance the spirit of Protestant worship. Chorales, written in German, drew on Latin hymns and German folk tunes. They were characterized by monophonic clarity and simplicity, features that encouraged performance by untrained congregations. The most famous Lutheran chorale (the melody of which may not have originated with Luther) is “Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott” (“A Mighty Fortress is our God”)—a hymn that has been called “the anthem of the Reformation.” Luther’s chorales had a major influence on religious music for centuries. And although in the hands of later composers the chorale became a complex polyphonic vehicle for voices and instruments, at its inception it was performed with all voices singing the same words at the same time. It was thus an ideal medium for the communal expression of Protestant piety.

Other Protestant sects, such as the Anabaptists and the Calvinists, regarded music as a potentially dangerous distraction for the faithful. In many sixteenth-century churches, the organ was dismantled and sung portions of the service edited or deleted. Calvin, however, who encouraged devotional recitation of psalms in the home, revised church services to include the congregational singing of psalms in the vernacular.

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 This Lutheran chorale inspired Johann Sebastian Bach’s Cantata No. 80, an excerpt from which is included among the Listening Selections for Chapter 22.

## Northern Renaissance Art

### Jan van Eyck

Prior to the Reformation, in the cities of Northern Europe, a growing middle class joined princely rulers and the Church to encourage the arts. In addition to traditional religious subjects, middle-class patrons commissioned portraits that—like those painted by Italian Renaissance artists (see chapter 17)—recorded their physical appearance and brought attention to their earthly achievements. Fifteenth-century Northern artists, unlike their Italian counterparts, were relatively unfamiliar with Greco-Roman culture; many of them moved in the direction of detailed Realism, already evident in the manuscript illuminations of the Limbourg brothers (see Figure 15.1).

The pioneer of Northern realism was the Flemish artist Jan van Eyck (ca. 1380–1441). Van Eyck, whom we met in chapter 17, was reputed to have perfected the art of oil painting (see Figure 17.11). His application of thin glazes of colored pigments bound with linseed oil achieved the impression of dense, atmospheric space, and simulated the naturalistic effects of light reflecting off the surfaces of objects. Such effects were almost impossible to achieve in fresco or tempera. While van Eyck lacked any knowledge of the system of linear perspective popularized in Florence, he achieved an extraordinary level of realism both in the miniatures he executed for religious manuscripts and in his panel paintings.

Van Eyck’s full-length double portrait of 1434 is the first painting in Western art to have portrayed a secular couple in a domestic interior (see LOOKING INTO, Figure 19.6). The painting has long been the subject of debate among scholars who have questioned its original purpose, as well as the identity of the sitters. It was long thought to represent the marriage of Giovanni di Nicolao Arnolfini (an Italian cloth merchant who represented the Medici bank in Bruges) to Jeanne Cenami, but it has recently been discovered that Jeanne died in 1433, a year before the date of the painting. Since so many elements in the painting suggest a betrothal or wedding vow, however, it is speculated that Giovanni, who knew van Eyck in Bruges for many years, might have remarried in 1434 and commissioned the artist to record the union.

In the painting, the richly dressed Arnolfini raises his right hand as if to greet or vow, while the couple joins hands, a gesture traditionally associated with engagement or marriage. Behind the couple, an inscription on the back wall of the chamber reads “*Johannes de Eyck fuit hic*” (“Jan van Eyck was here”); this testimonial is reiterated by the presence of two figures, probably the artist himself and a second observer, whose painted reflections are seen in the convex mirror below the inscription. Van Eyck’s consummate mastery of minute, realistic details—from the ruffles on the young woman’s headcovering to the whiskers of the monkey-faced dog—demonstrate the artist’s determination to capture the immediacy of the physical world. This attention to detail and deliberate

## LOOKING INTO

### Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Double Portrait*

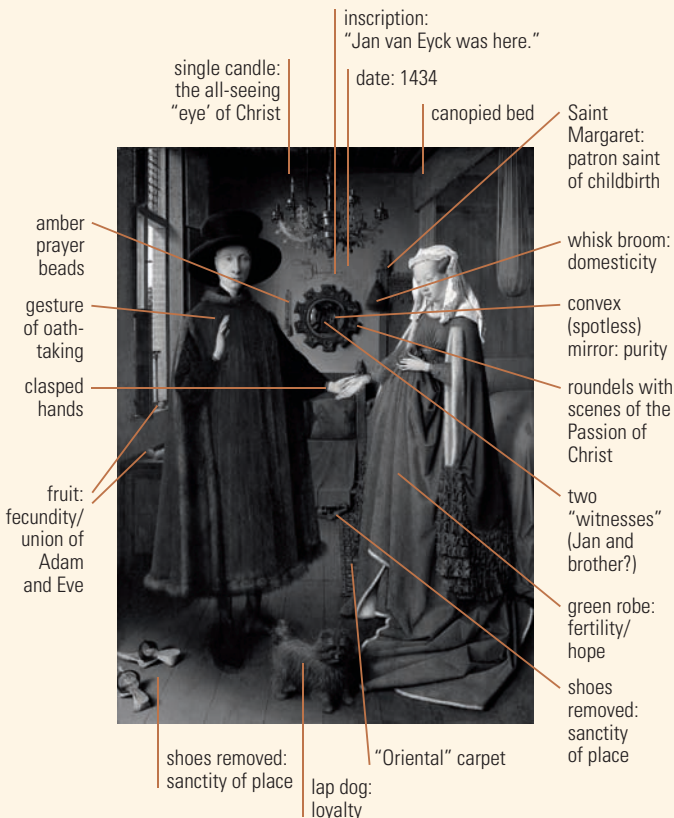




**Figure 19.6 JAN VAN EYCK, *Arnolfini Double Portrait*, 1434.**  
Tempera and oil on panel, 32¼ × 23½ in.

The *Arnolfini Double Portrait* is typical of the Northern sensibility in the way in which the physical details “speak” to the function of the painting as a visual document related to marriage: the burning candle (traditionally carried to the marriage ceremony by the bride) suggests the all-seeing presence of Christ; the ripening fruit lying on and near the window sill both symbolizes fecundity and alludes to the union of the First Couple in the Garden of Eden; the carved image on the chairback near the bed represents Saint Margaret, the patron saint of childbirth.

The objects in this domestic interior suggest a world of material comfort and pleasure: the brass chandelier, convex mirror, and oriental carpet were luxuries in fifteenth-century Flanders, while the ermine and sable-trimmed outer garments and the very abundance of rich fabrics worn by both the merchant and his partner would have been recognized as signs of great wealth and prosperity. At the same time, however, many of these details make symbolic reference to a less tangible, spiritual reality. In this effort to reconcile the visible world with the invisible legacy of faith, van Eyck anticipated the unique character of Northern Renaissance art.



lack of idealization, typical of Northern painting, sets it apart from most Italian Renaissance art.

## Bosch

The generation of Flemish artists that followed Jan van Eyck produced one of the most enigmatic figures of the Northern Renaissance: Hieronymus Bosch (1460–1516). Little is known about Bosch’s life, and the exact meaning of some of his works is much disputed. His career spanned the decades of the High Renaissance in Italy, but comparison of his paintings with those of Raphael or Michelangelo underscores the enormous difference between Italian Renaissance art and that of the European North: whereas Raphael and Michelangelo elevated the natural nobility of the individual, Bosch detailed the fallibility of humankind, its moral struggle, and its apocalyptic destiny.

Bosch’s most famous work, the triptych known as *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (Figure 19.7), was executed around 1510, the very time that Raphael was painting *The School of Athens*. A work of astonishing complexity, the imagery of Bosch’s painting has baffled and intrigued viewers for centuries. For, while it seems to describe the traditional Christian theme of the Creation, Fall, and Punishment of humankind, it does so by means of an assortment of wildly unconventional images. When the wings of the altarpiece are closed, one sees an image of God hovering above a huge transparent globe: the planet earth in the process of creation. An accompanying inscription reads: “He spoke, and it came to be; he commanded and it was created” (Psalm 33.9). When the triptych is opened, the left wing shows the Creation of Eve, but the event takes place in an Eden populated with fabulous and predatory creations (such as the cat at lower left). In the central panel, amidst a cosmic landscape, hordes of youthful nudes cavort in a variety of erotic and playful pastimes. They frolic with oversized flora and fruit, real and imagined animals, gigantic birds, and strangely shaped vessels. In the right wing, Bosch pictures Hell as a dark and sulfurous inferno where the damned are tormented by an assortment of sinister creatures and infernal machines that inflict punishment on sinners appropriate to their sins (as in Dante’s *Inferno*; see chapter 12). The hoarder (at the lower right), for instance, pays for his greed by excreting gold coins into a pothole, while the nude nearby, punished for the sin of lust, is fondled by demons.

*The Garden of Earthly Delights* has been described by some as an exposition on the decadent behavior of the descendants of Adam and Eve, but its distance from conventional religious iconography has made it the subject of endless scholarly interpretation. Bosch, a Roman Catholic, seems to have borrowed imagery from a variety of medieval and contemporary sources, including the Bible, popular proverbs, marginal grotesques in illuminated manuscripts, and pilgrimage badges, as well as the popular pseudo-sciences of his time: astrology, the study of the influence of heavenly bodies on human affairs (the precursor of astronomy); and alchemy, the art of transmuting base metals into gold (the precursor of chemistry). The egg-shaped vessels, beakers, and transparent tubes that appear in all parts of the