

"Exploring Humanity" Informal Assignment # 6

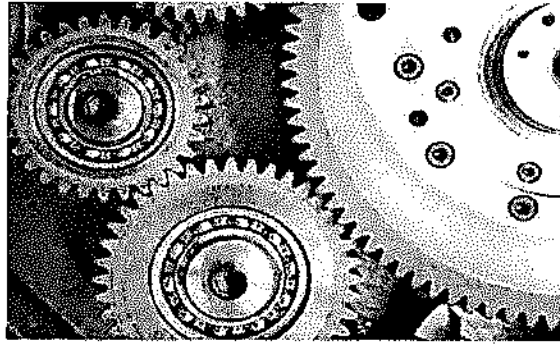
Submit Assignment

Due Saturday by 11:59pm **Points** 50 **Submitting** a text entry box

See "Exploring Humanity" guidelines document below, as this assignment is structurally the same as EH # 1 (the last informal assignment) and all of the others.

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“Exploring Humanities”

Informal Assignments Guidelines

This document provides guidelines necessary for completing ALL of the “Exploring Humanities” informal* assignments. While each of these will certainly be quite unique and distinct from each other in your own set, and all of your assignments will certainly be unique from all those of your peers, there will be one set of guidelines governing them.

**Informal = not concerned with demonstrating “correctness” of form (grammar/spelling) nor finding “correct” answers.*

I. General Overview

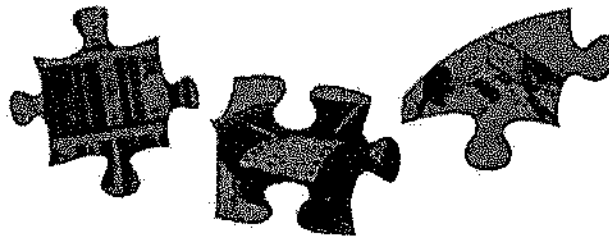
What These Assignments Are All About: Making Connections!

One of the greatest skills college graduates can possess, especially in the 21st century, is an ability to construct knowledge—not just absorbing and/or regurgitating information! In this regard, college and K-12 education could not be more different from each other, since providing regurgitated answers on standardized tests pretty much characterizes the highest goals K-12 institutions set for students (thus distorting the very concept of education and learning in the process). So, the ultimate goal of a college education is to teach students how to teach themselves by learning how to ask themselves good questions, make unique connections, state and defend original insights, and fully develop lines of thinking.

So, you might ask: how does one “construct knowledge?” While there are several factors involved with this cognitive activity, such as asking good questions and conducting effective research, a third factor consists of making strong, fresh connections between ideas and/or the content under discussion! In these informal exploratory assignments, especially because this is a Humanities class, making (strong) connections (and supporting them with equally strong rationale) is your primary goal! These assignments all require plenty of specific examples, especially since they will not be evaluated for correct/incorrect form or even “correct/incorrect” content! Rather, in addition to the development of ideas overall in these assignments, the primary basis of evaluation will be on the selection of your examples and the connectivity you demonstrate between them! This means using works of art (visual, literary, performing), philosophies/theories, historical events/documents, cultures, belief systems, and famous/infamous people in history.

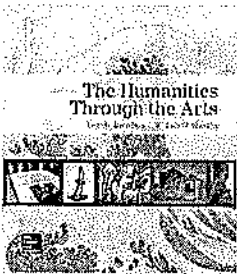
Again, I believe the academic skills I've described above apply to all students in all classes; however, a Humanities 1301 course—by definition and course description—is all about making connections between all the areas listed above and then some! So, the informal “Exploring Humanities” assignments should not only be the easiest to complete for HUMA 1301 students, but they should also be among the most interesting because of their eclectic nature!

Now, before we get to the specific prompts at the end of this handout, read the “Content Guidelines” below and be sure you understand how ALL three listed categories apply to ALL of the EH assignments.



II. Content Guidelines

What do these assignments contain?



1. Book Content: Humanities Through The Arts

As you read each specific assignment prompt in part III, you'll notice that **the primary source they address is your class text**. These “Exploring Humanities” assignments lose significant points, if they earn any points at all, when students either ignore our class text or write so generally that comments could refer to any book. OR they fail to provide plenty of specific examples from this book. Of course, you know from the description of these assignments in the syllabus that **the last thing I want to see in them is a mere retelling of the chapter contents, SO DO NOT RETELL WHAT THE BOOK SAYS!** *Chapters need to be analyzed and/or discussed critically (this means offering your interpretation and opinions about chapter contents—not just regurgitating them).* For each assignment, you will need to select a combination of **SIX or SEVEN works of art/specific examples** from **TWO or THREE CHAPTERS**.

III. Writing the Assignments

Now that you know how each informal assignment needs to contain the four components just discussed, you are probably asking what will specifically be the focus in each assignment.

So, here's what you do: you are free to select any one of the prompts below for any informal assignment when it is due, provided you do not duplicate them and that you use all of them among your six informal assignments! Likewise, do not duplicate any examples from the book either. In other words, simply use the course schedule (due dates) as your guide, but do not feel obligated to follow the thematic list as it appears below. Again, **YOU DO NOT NEED TO FOLLOW THE ORDER IN WHICH THE TOPICS ARE LISTED BELOW** in chronological order. It doesn't matter which prompt you select for any particular assignment, just as long as you use all of the prompts listed below and do not duplicate them. You also need to make sure you have included all of the assigned book chapters through these six informal assignments!

Each informal assignment should open with a statement that serves as a thesis—a “*main idea*” that captures the essence of your montage!

Very Important! Each assignment needs to be a minimum of 1.5 pages of paragraphed writing, and each assignment must have the following information listed separately and clearly BEFORE you begin writing the assignment:

1. The SIX or SEVEN examples you selected from TWO to THREE different BOOK CHAPTERS (provide the full names/titles of works or historical events you select, including page and chapter numbers in the book AS A LIST AT THE END OF EACH ASSIGNMENT); 2. The specific/full title of the TED Talk or RSA video you selected; and 3. The specific time eras, according to the Hicks videos, that apply to your selections from Sayre and the TED/RSA selections you make.

EXPLORING HUMANITY PROMPTS (In No Particular Order)

- a. EH # ?: Human Ability to Innovate, Create, and Generate
- b. EH # ?: Human Quest to Leave a Unique Legacy and/or to be Immortalized
- c. EH # ?: Human Need for Spiritual Transcendence Beyond this World/Life
- d. EH # ?: Human Appreciation for Beauty/Aesthetic
- e. EH # ?: Human Identification with Tragedy (Empathy) and Pathos
- f. EH # ?: Human Desire for Love, Companionship, and Eros
- g. EH # ?: Human Lust for Power and Influence
- h. EH # ?: Human Capacity to Reinvent, Reconstruct, and/or Re-imagine New Realities

FIGURE 12-7
Star Wars: The Force Awakens (2015).
 In the film, George Lucas used a
 number of powerful special effects,
 as in this thrilling attack with a
 light saber.

Photo 12/Alamy



PERCEPTION KEY Technique and Film

1. Are the technical triumphs of films such as *Star Wars* the means or ends? If they are the ends, when are they the subject matter? What kind of problem does such a possibility raise for our appreciation of the film?
2. In *Tom Jones* (1963), a technique called the "double take" was introduced. After searching for his wallet everywhere, Tom turns and looks at the audience and asks whether we have seen his wallet. Is this technique a gimmick or artistically justified? Could you make a defensible judgment about it without seeing the film?

VIOLENCE AND FILM

Because it is so easy to shoot a scene in various ways, a good director is constantly choosing the shot that he or she hopes has the most meaning within the total structure of the film. When Luis Buñuel briefly shows us the razoring of a woman's eyeball in *Un Chien Andalou* (1928) (it is really a slaughtered cow's eyeball), he is counting on our personal horror at actually seeing such an act, but the scene is artistically justifiable because Buñuel carefully integrated the scene into the total structure. Unfortunately, many films show sheer violence without any attempt to inform—for example, *Nightmare on Elm Street* (1985) and its many sequels, the Arnold Schwarzenegger film *Predator* (1988), and similar films. *Kill Bill* (2003, 2004), both volumes, as well as *A History of Violence* (2005) move in a somewhat different direction, in that they are not specifically horror films despite their depiction of violence. These have been nominated for a number of awards in recognition of their seriousness.

A film that was ahead of its time in portraying violence, *Reservoir Dogs* (1992), won Quentin Tarantino the respect of movie critics and the movie public. Tarantino followed up with *Pulp Fiction* (1994), three related tales set in Los Angeles and

Story for
picture #1



Picture #1

FIGURE 12-8
Jamie Foxx in *Django Unchained*
(2009). Quentin Tarantino has made
violence central to his work. His films
have also been widely praised.

©Columbia/The Weinstein Company/Kobal/
REX/Shutterstock

reminiscent of the pulp fiction novels of Dashiell Hammett. While somewhat cartoonish in places, and laced with unexpected comedic moments, the film was nominated for several awards, among them the Palme d'Or at Cannes. *Django Unchained* (Figure 12-8) continued Tarantino's commitment to artful violence.

Clever directors can easily shock their audiences. But the more complex responses, some of which are as difficult to control as they are to attain, are the aim of the enduring filmmakers. When Ingmar Bergman shows us the rape scene in *The Virgin Spring* (1959), he does not saturate us with horror. And the murder of the rapists by the girl's father is preceded by an elaborate purification ritual that relates the violence and horror to profound meaning. In any art, control of audience response is vital. We can become emotionally saturated just as easily as we can become bored. The result is indifference.

Story for
picture #1

PERCEPTION KEY Violence and Film

1. Many groups condemn violent films of the kind described as slasher films or films that gratuitously portray torture and gore. Do you agree with these groups? Do you feel that violent films affect viewers' behavior? How do they affect you? Is it possible to participate with a violent film?
2. Critics point to the fact that many of Shakespeare's plays—and the plays of his contemporaries—were often bloody and violent. They also say that violence in Shakespeare's plays is revelatory because it reveals the significance of the morality of his age. Do you feel that modern violent films are revelatory of the morality of our age?
3. Of the violent films you have seen, which one is certainly a work of art? Is violence the subject matter of that film? In what ways is the film revelatory?

SOUND

Al Jolson's *The Jazz Singer* (1927) introduced sound, although not everyone welcomed it. Sergei Eisenstein feared, as did many others, that sound might kill the artistic integrity of film because, with sound, no one would work with the images that create a film language and film would once again become subservient to drama. Eisenstein knew that images in motion could sustain the kind of dramatic tension that was once thought to be limited to the stage. This is a point of consummate importance. First of all, a film is images in motion. Great filmmakers may exploit sound and other elements, but they will never make them the basic ingredients of the film.

Sound in film involves much more than the addition of dialogue to the visual track. Music had long been a supplement of the silent films, and special portfolios of piano and organ music were available to the accompanist who played in the local theater while coordinating the music with the film. These portfolios indicated the kind of feelings that could be produced by merging special music with scenes, such as chase, love, or suspense. D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* features a "rescue" charge by the Ku Klux Klan, which was cut to the dynamics of Richard Wagner's *Die Walküre*. Francis Ford Coppola may have had that in mind when he made the incredible helicopter battle scene in *Apocalypse Now* (1979) to Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries." *Apocalypse Now*, a film about the Vietnam War, uses sound in exceptionally effective ways, especially in scenes such as the skyrocket fireworks battle deep in the jungle. But perhaps the most powerful cinematic sound produced so far occurs in the opening scenes of *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), directed by Steven Spielberg—the storming of the Normandy beach on D-day, June 6, 1944 (Figure 12-9).

Surround sound may intensify our experience of film. Not only do we expect to hear dialogue, but we also expect to hear the sounds we associate with the action on screen, whether it is the quiet chirping of crickets in a country scene in *Southern*



FIGURE 12-9
Saving Private Ryan (1998). The opening scene of Steven Spielberg's film depicts American soldiers storming Omaha Beach during World War II.

©Universal/Kobal/REX/Shutterstock

Story for
Picture #1

Picture #2

story for picture #2

313
CINEMA

(1972) or the dropping of bombs from a low-flying Japanese Zero in *Empire of the Sun* (1987). Subtle uses of sound sometimes prepare us for action that is yet to come, such as when in *Rain Man* (1989) we see Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise walking toward a convertible, but we hear the dialogue and road sounds from the next shot, when they are driving down the highway. That editing technique might have been very unsettling in the 1930s, but filmmakers have had eighty years to get our sensibilities accustomed to such disjunctions.

A famous disjunction occurs in the beginning of *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) when, watching images of one tribe of apes warring with another tribe of apes in prehistoric times, we hear the rich modern harmonies of Richard Strauss's dramatic tone poem *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. The music suggests one very sophisticated mode of development inherent in the future of these primates—whom we see in the first phases of discovering how to use tools. They already show potential for creating high art. Eventually the sound and imagery coincide when the scene changes to 2001, with scientists on the moon discovering a monolithic structure identical to one the apes had found on Earth.

PERCEPTION KEY Sight and Sound

1. In the next film you see, compare the power of the visuals with the power of the sound. Is there a reasonable balance between the two? Which one produces a more intense experience in you?
2. With Dolby sound systems in many movie houses, the use of sound is sometimes overwhelming. Which film of those you have recently seen has the most intense and powerful sound? Does it mesh well with the narrative line of the film? Why?
3. View an important film and turn off its sound for a period of time. Study the images you see and comment on their ability to hold your attention. Then turn on the sound and comment on how your experience of the film is altered. Go beyond the simple addition of dialogue. Try the experiment with a foreign film that has English subtitles.
4. View the same film and block the visual image by turning your back to it. Concentrate on the sound. To what extent is the experience of the film incomplete? How would you rate the relationship of sound to the visual images?

IMAGE AND ACTION

Most contemporary film is a marriage of sight and sound. Yet we must not forget that film is a medium in which the moving image—the action—is preeminent, as in Federico Fellini's *8½* (1963). The title refers to Fellini's own career, ostensibly about himself and his making a new film after seven and a half previous films. *8½* is about the artistic process. Guido, played by Marcello Mastroianni, brings a group of people to a location to make a film (Figure 12-10).

The film centers on Guido's loss of creative direction, his psychological problems related to religion, sex, and his need to dominate women. As he convalesces from his breakdown, he brings people together to make a film, but he has no clear sense of what he wants to do, no coherent story to tell. *8½* seems to mimic Fellini's situation so carefully that it is difficult to know whether Fellini planned out the film or

PERCEPTION KEY Early Situation Comedies

Because early comedies are widely available from downloads and on DVD, you may be able to view a sample episode from one of the series mentioned in the text, as well as from *Leave It to Beaver*, *Gilligan's Island*, *Father Knows Best*, *Happy Days*, *I Love Lucy*, or *M*A*S*H*, in order to respond to the following:

1. How does the structure of the situation comedy differ from that of a standard film?
2. Who are the characters in the comedy you have seen, and what is their social status? Is there any awareness of the political environment in which they live?
3. What are the ambitions of the families in any of these situation comedies? What are they trying to achieve in life? Are you sympathetic to the older characters? The younger characters?
4. Compare any one of these situation comedies with a comedy currently seen on TV. What are the obvious differences? Based on your comparison, how has society changed since the earlier situation comedy? Do any of the changes you note imply that these comedies have a content that includes a commentary on the social life of their times?
5. What are the lasting values—if any—revealed in the early situation comedies? If there are any, which ones seem to have changed profoundly?

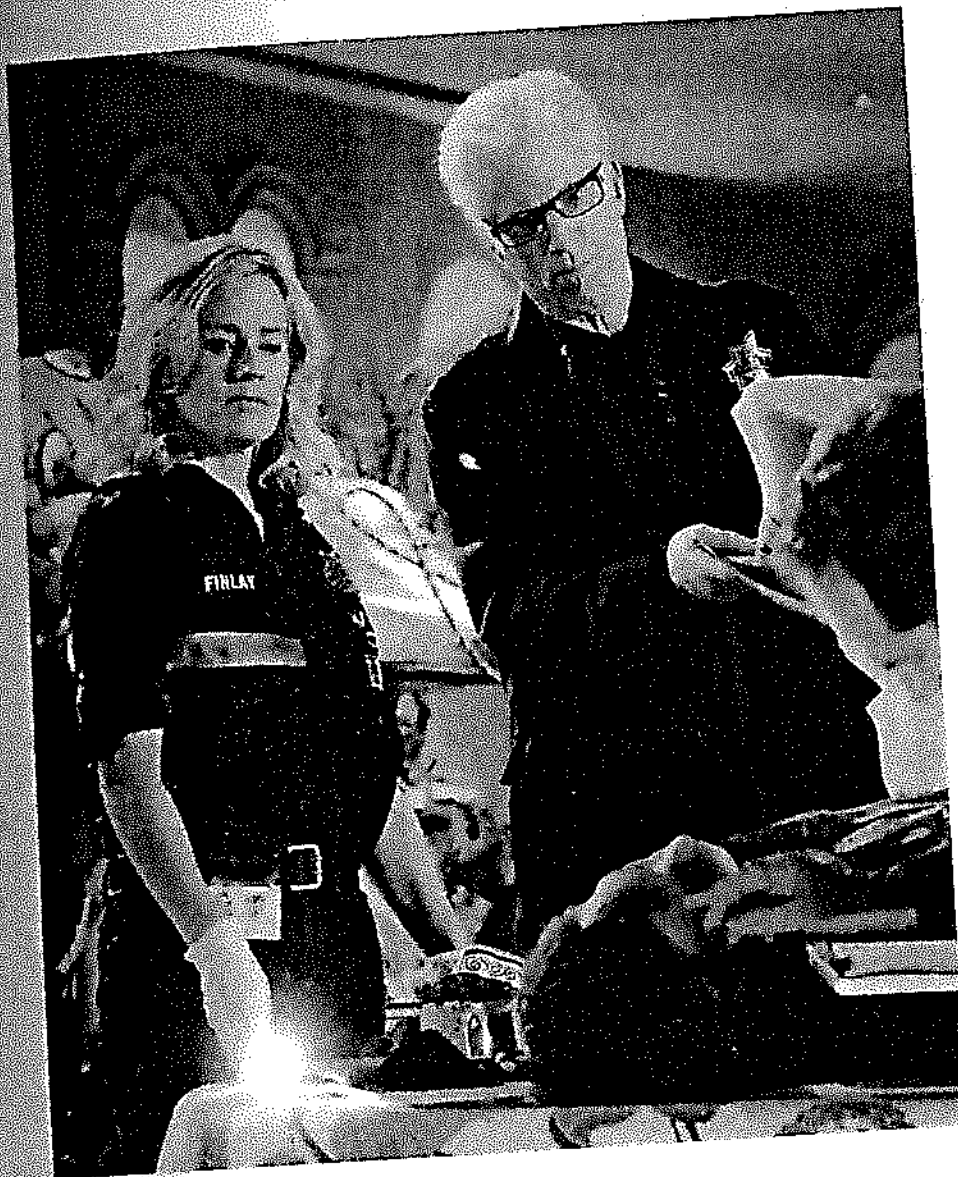
The Structure of the Self-Contained Episode

The early television series programs were self-contained half- or one-hour narratives that had a beginning, a middle, and an end. The episodes of each program were broken by commercial interruption, so the writers made sure you wanted to see what happened next by creating cliff-hangers. But each episode was complete in itself. Because there was no background preparation needed, the viewer could see the episodes in any order and be fully satisfied. Until late in the 1980s, that was the standard for a series. In the popular western series *Bonanza* (NBC, 1959–1973), the characters generally remained the same, the situations were familiar and appropriate to the locale, and the sense of completion at the end of each episode was satisfying, as it is, for instance, in most films.

The pattern was constant in most genres of dramas. Recent crime dramas, *Law and Order* (NBC, 1990–2010), *CSI* (CBS, 2000–2015), and each of their “branded” versions, follow the same pattern. Each of these successful series depends on a formula. *Law and Order*, the most successful show of its kind, relies on interpreting versions of recent crimes (“ripped from the headlines”). There is a clear-cut division between the police, who investigate a crime, and the prosecutors, who take the case to court. *CSI* (Figure 13-3) in its several versions usually follows two separate killings in each episode and spends a great deal of time in the lab, analyzing fingerprints and other forensic details. So far, these have held the attention of mass audiences. But the structure of these shows is predictable, and each episode is, for the most part, complete so that no one who comes to any episode needs to be “brought up to speed” in order to appreciate the action.

The important thing about the usual series episode on television is that it is self-contained. It does not need preparation in advance, nor does it need explanation. It is a “one-off” each time the program airs. What do not change—usually—are the characters, the locale, and the time when the program airs.

Story for
Picture #3



Picture #3

FIGURE 13-3
CSI, Crime Scene Investigation.
 Elizabeth Shue and Ted Danson
 have "a meeting of the minds" from
 an episode of one of the longest-
 running police procedural programs.

Photo by Michael Yarish/CBS/Courtesy
 Everett Collection

The Television Serial

One type of program with which commercial television has set itself apart from the standard production film is the serial. Whereas the standard production film is about 120 minutes long, a television serial production can be open-ended. Soap operas, daytime television's adaptation of radio's ongoing series, are broadcast at the same hour each weekday. Viewers can begin with any episode and be entertained, even though each episode has only a minor resolution. Early television soap operas such as *Another World* (NBC, 1964–1999), *The Secret Storm* (CBS, 1954–1974), and *Search for Tomorrow* (CBS, 1951–1986) were continuing stories focusing on personal problems involving money, sex, and questionable behavior in settings reflecting the current community. In Spanish-language programming, *telenovelas* do the same.

Story for
 Picture #3

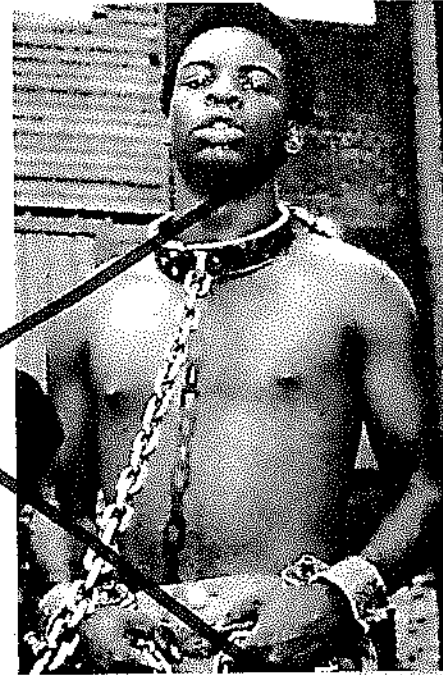


FIGURE 13-4

Roots. In this scene from Alex Haley's television miniseries, the most widely watched drama of its time, Kunta Kinte (LeVar Burton) represents Haley's ancestor as he is brought in chains from Africa.

Courtesy Everett Collection

Story for picture #3

In a sense, the structure of the soap opera contributed to television's development of the distinctive serial structure that remains one of the greatest strengths of the medium. Robert J. Thompson has said, "The series is, indeed, broadcasting a unique aesthetic contribution to Western art."¹ The British Broadcasting Corporation can be said to have begun the development of the serial show with historic epics such as the hugely popular open-ended *Upstairs, Downstairs* (BBC, 1971–1975) and twelve-part *I, Claudius* (BBC, 1976), both of which are now available from download sources and on DVD.

Roots: The Triumph of an American Family The first important serial program in the United States was *Rich Man, Poor Man* (ABC, 1976), a twelve-episode adaptation of a novel by Irwin Shaw. But the power of the serial was made most evident by the production of *Roots* (ABC, 1977), which was seen by 130 million viewers, the largest audience of any television series (Figure 13-4). More than 85 percent of all television households were tuned to one or more of the episodes.

The subtitle of the serial, *The Triumph of an American Family*, focused the public's attention on family and family values. Alex Haley's novel represented itself as a search for roots, for the ancestors who shaped himself and his family. African American slaves were ripped from their native soil, and the meager records of their travel to the West did not include information about their families. But Haley showed how, by his persistence, he was able to press far enough to find his original progenitor, Kunta Kinte, in Africa.

Roots, which lasted twelve hours, explored the moral issues relative to slavery as well as racism and the damage it does. The network was uneasy about the production

¹Quoted in Glen Creeber, *Serial Television* (London: British Film Institute, 2004), p. 6.

and feared it might not be popular, which is the primary reason the twelve episodes were shown on successive nights. The opening scenes of the program, not a Haley's novel, show white actor Ed Asner, then a popular television figure, as a conscience-stricken slave boat captain. This was intended to make the unpleasantness of the reality of slavery more tolerable to a white audience. The network executives were, as we know now, wrong to worry, because the series captured the attention of the mass of American television viewers. Never had so many people watched one program. Never had so many Americans faced questions related to the institution of slavery in America and what it meant to those who were enslaved. Books changed the way many people thought about African Americans, and it changed the way most Americans thought about television as merely entertainment.

Home Box Office: *The Sopranos* From 1999 to 2007, in eighty-six episodes, David Chase's epic portrait of Tony Soprano and his family riveted HBO cable viewers. Unlike all other shows in the gangster style, *The Sopranos* (Figure 13-5) portrayed Tony as a fragile, haunted man seeing a psychiatrist. His dysfunctional family attracted much more attention than any normal Mafia activities would ordinarily have done. Because of the show's quirkiness, the major networks, ABC, CBS, and Fox, rejected the series. Because HBO was a subscription service, and not available on the airwaves, *The Sopranos* had the advantage of being able to use language characteristic of mob characters, an advantage that made the series achieve more credibility. The *Sopranos*'s narrative line was extended throughout the six-season run of the show. The standard episodic self-contained structure was abandoned early on and, as a result, HBO established new expectations on the part of its audience. *The Sopranos* was

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picture #4

Picture #4

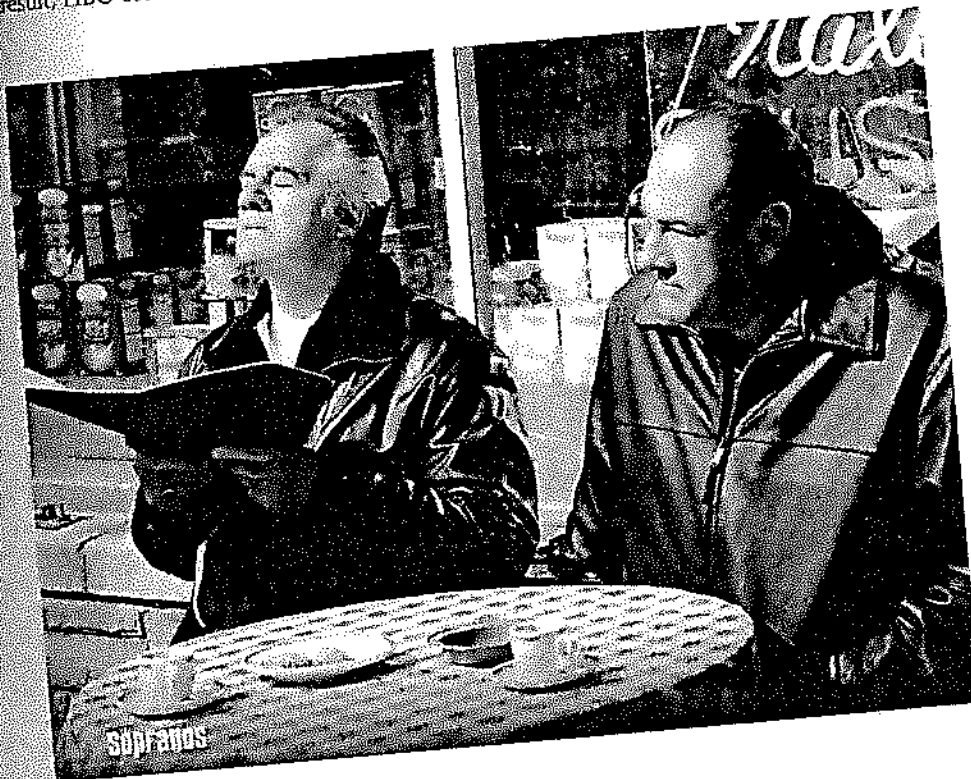


FIGURE 13-5
The Sopranos. Paulie Walnuts (Tony Sirico) and Tony Soprano (James Gandolfini) in front of their meeting place, Centanni's Meat Market. Paulie is getting a suntan.

Source: HBO

FIGURE 13-6

The Wire. In this scene from the final season of the series, Marlo Stanfield (Jamie Hector) and Felicia "Snoop" Pearson (Felicia Pearson) are young drug lords whose irrational violence alarms their older criminal counterparts, whose own behavior was murderous enough.

Source: HBO



the first major extended serial to change the way in which viewers received their dramatic entertainment. In 1999 that was completely new to television, but today it is common for viewers to wait before watching all the episodes of a given season. The term "bingeing" was applied to viewers who watched the first thirteen episodes of a Netflix release of *House of Cards*, a study of British politics, all at a marathon single sitting.

HBO has produced several extended series since *The Sopranos*, including *Deadwood* (2004–2006), *Boardwalk Empire* (2010–2014), and *Game of Thrones* (2011–present). None of these, however, rises to the artistic level of its finest production, *The Wire* (2002–2008).

Home Box Office: *The Wire* While *The Sopranos* portrayed the life of a Mafia family, another crime drama aimed at portraying the city of Baltimore as a way of demonstrating that all the segments of a community are interwoven. David Simon, formerly a reporter for a Baltimore newspaper, and Ed Burns, a former homicide detective, are responsible for creating the drama, drawing on their personal experience. *The Wire* is about the frustrations of a police unit that tries to use wiretapping to track the progress of street criminals deep in the drug trade (Figure 13-6). Their successes and failures are the primary material of the drama.

The Wire won many awards over its five seasons, although it never won an Emmy. Critics have described the drama as perhaps the best ever produced for television. Its success depended on a gritty realism that often introduced uncomfortable material. The drama focused on six segments of the community: the law, with police, both black and white, using sometimes illegal techniques in response to frustration; the street drug trade, largely dominated by young black men; the port of Baltimore, with its illegal immigration schemes and other criminal activity, run essentially by white union workers; the politicians of the city, all with their own compromises, both black and white; the public school system, which houses some of the criminals



FIGURE 13-7
The Wire. Omar Little (Michael Kenneth Williams), an avenging spirit, intends to wreak vengeance on Marlo and Snoop, who have killed his lover and his close friend.

Source: HBO

for a while; and the newspapers, whose news coverage turns out not always to be honestly produced.

The bleakness of the portrait of the city is a call to action. The real mayor of Baltimore approved the project and gave considerable support for its production in the face of a possibly damaging view of the city partly because cities like Baltimore all face the same range of problems. Seeing these problems for what they are helps to clarify the true values that all such cities must recognize. A true portrait is a first step in restitution.

Michael K. Williams, who plays Omar Little (Figure 13-7)—a gun-wielding thief who specializes in robbing criminals, who cannot go to the police—stated in an interview that “what *The Wire* is, is an American story, an American social problem. There’s a *Wire* in every . . . city.” Not every city is willing to face the truth. Omar Little is gay, dangerous, but living by a rigid code of his own design. He was in many of the sixty episodes. The NAACP presented him an award for his acting in *The Wire*.

The drama appeared, like *The Sopranos*, on Home Box Office. Numerous websites detail the episodes and provide information on each character in the drama as well as on the critical reception of the drama. The extent of the drama, which is serial rather than episodic, is much greater than what could be achieved in a feature film. The complexity of the issues that face the law, the horror of criminal life in the streets, and the machinations of high-level politicians facing the same problems most large American cities face needed an extensive and far-reaching drama perfectly suited to television.

Three Emmy Winners

In recent years most of the television programs that have won the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Drama Series have been serial in nature rather than self-contained single programs.

Story for
Picture #4

Milton's role in this historical event was as a representative of the British Protestant government, drafting and sending an official protest to the Duke of Savoy. Milton's poem was designed for his immediate English audience and ultimately for us. His detail and his metaphors reveal the significance, to him, of this terrible massacre of people, like sheep, who were unaware that the Duke's soldiers had come to kill them or convert them.

The Arts and Philosophy

Philosophy is, among other things, an attempt to give reasoned answers to fundamental questions that, because of their generality, are not treated by any of the more specialized disciplines. Ethics, *aesthetics*, and metaphysics (or speculative philosophy), three of the main divisions of philosophy, are closely related to the arts. Ethics is often the inquiry into the presuppositions or principles operative in our moral judgments and the study of norms or standards for value decisions. If we are correct, an ethic dealing with norms that fails to take advantage of the insights of the arts is inadequate. John Dewey even argued that

Art is more moral than moralities. For the latter either are, or tend to become, consecrations of the status quo, reflections of custom, reinforcements of the established order. The moral prophets of humanity have always been poets even though they spoke in free verse or by parable.¹

Sarah Norcliffe Cleghorn (1876-1959) was a friend of Robert Frost and a Vermonter most of her life. She was also an activist and deeply concerned with social issues. The New England in which she lived was filled with mills like those Lewis Hine photographed in North Carolina (Figure 16-2), producing the clothing and necessities

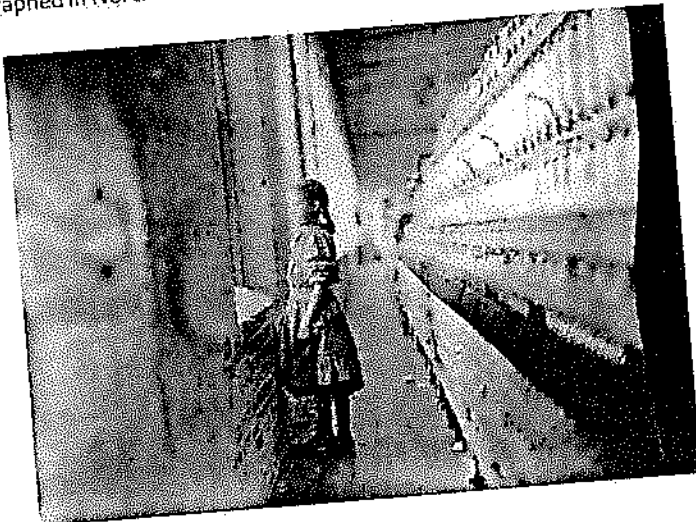


FIGURE 16-2
Lewis Hine (1874-1940), *Rhodes Mfg. Co., Lincolnton, NC. Spinner. A moment's glimpse of the outer world. Said she was 10 years old. Been working over a year. Location: Lincolnton, North Carolina. (Hine's title). 1908. National Archives.*

© Lewis Hine/The Image Works

¹John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Minton, Balch, 1934), p. 348.

continued

story

picture #5

probably right. Suffering, for ourselves and the others involved, is an experiential test that the normative values we chose were probably wrong. Experiential testing of normative values involves not only the immediacy of experience but also the consequences that follow. Science can also point out these consequences, of course, but science cannot make them so forcefully clear and present as the arts, thus so thoroughly understandable.

The arts are closely related to the other humanities, especially history, philosophy, and theology. In conclusion, we shall give only a brief sketch of these relationships, for they are very complex and require extensive analyses that we can only suggest.



FOCUS ON The Arts and History, the Arts and Philosophy, the Arts and Theology

The Arts and History

Historians try to discover the what and the why of the past. They need as many relevant facts as possible in order to describe and explain the events that happened. Often they may be able to use the scientific method in their gathering and verification of facts. But in attempting to give as full an explanation as possible as to why some of the events they are tracing happened, they function as humanists, for here they need understanding of the normative values or ideals of the society they are studying. Among their main resources are works of art. Often such works will reveal people's hopes and fears—their views of birth and death, blessing and disaster, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline, themselves and God, fate and what ought to be. Only with the understanding of such values can history become something more than a catalog of events.

In one of his most famous sonnets, John Milton immortalized a moment in 1655 by reference to history and the horrors of a single event. In "On the Late Massacre in Piedmont," Milton refers to a mass killing in a religious war in northern Italy carried out by the Catholic Duke of Savoy. He attacked a Protestant group called Waldensians, who had lived in the region peacefully for almost 200 years. The slaughter took place on April 24, 1655, close to Easter.

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian ~~woe~~.

[Note: "The triple Tyrant" refers to the pope, who wore a three-sectioned tiara; "the Babylonian woe" is Milton's reference to the Catholic Church.]

Story
for picture #
5

IS IT ART OR SOMETHING
LIKE IT?

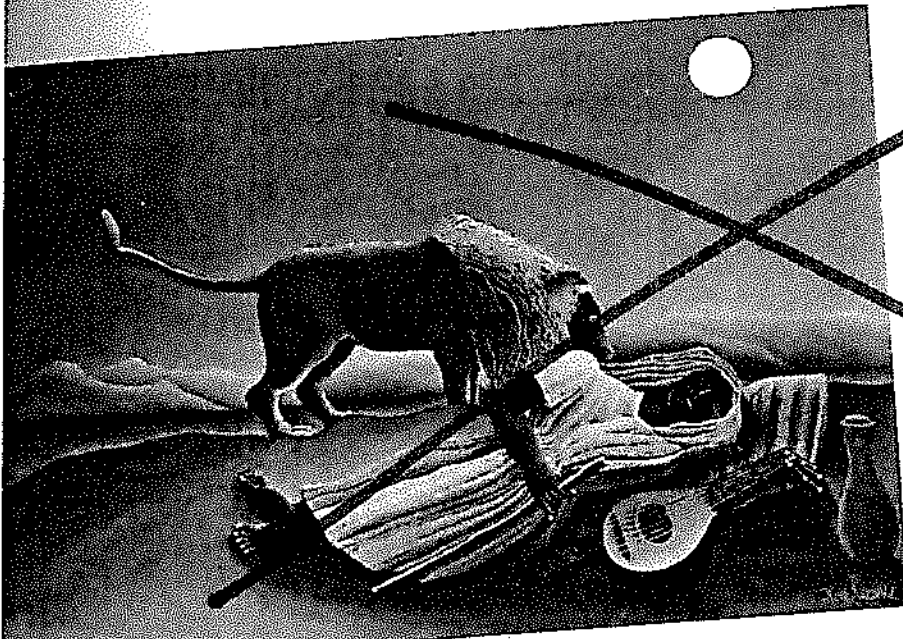


FIGURE 14-3

Henri Rousseau, *The Sleeping Gypsy*, 1897. Oil on canvas, 51 x 79 inches. Rousseau was a custom agent during the day but a painter in his free time. Although without training in art, he became one of the most original figures in modern art.

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4. Does translating a snapshot into an oil painting make a work of art? Does the painting make the snapshot a work of art? How does this painting affect your valuation of photography as an art form?
5. What does *Baby Doll* reveal as a painting that it would not reveal as a photograph?
6. In each painting, decide what the subject matter is. Then decide whether the form transforms the subject matter and creates content. Which painting has more interesting content? Why?

Popular Art

Popular art—a very imprecise category—encompasses contemporary works enjoyed by the masses. The masses love Norman Rockwell, dismiss Mondrian, and are puzzled by Picasso. In music Shostakovich and John Cage sometimes mystify the general public. But lovers of Beethoven string quartets often find it difficult to love heavy metal rock bands and rap music. The reverse is true, as well. The distinction between fine art and popular art does not always hold people back from enjoying both, but it seems to be rare.

The term "Pop" derives from Richard Hamilton's painting *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different so appealing?* (1956), of a nude muscle-builder holding a gigantic lollipop in a cluttered living room with a nude woman on a sofa wearing a lampshade for a hat. In the 1960s and 1970s, Pop Art was at the edge of the avant-garde, startling to the masses. But as usually happens, time makes the avant-garde less controversial, and in this case the style quickly became popular. The realistic showings of mundane objects were easily comprehended. Here was an

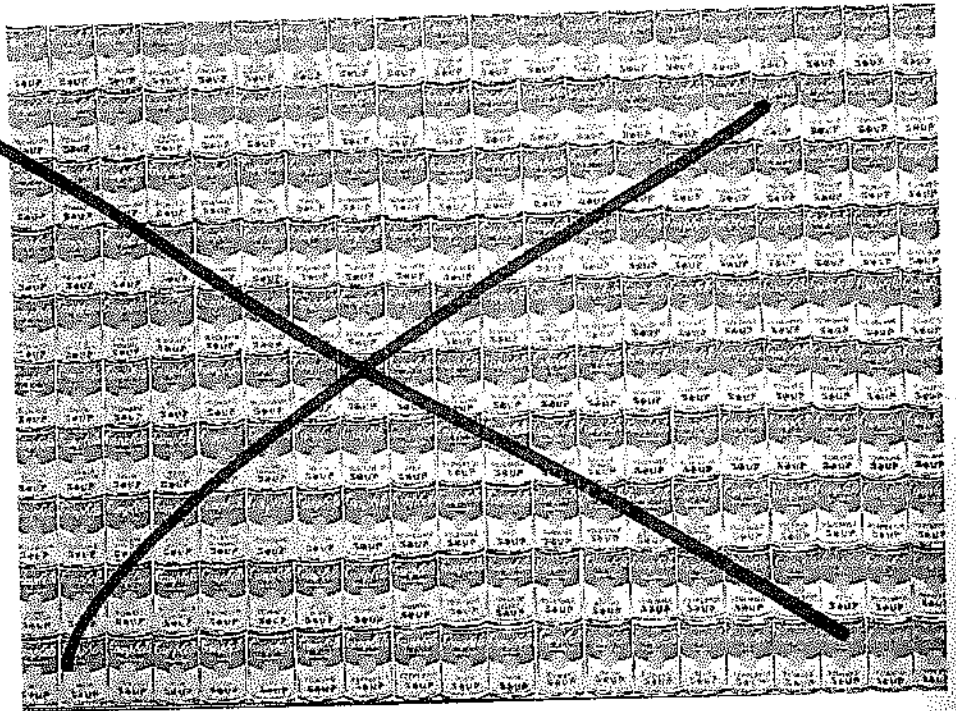
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FIGURE 14-4

Andy Warhol, *200 Campbell's Soup Cans*, 1962. Acrylic on canvas, 2 X 100 inches. The leader of the Pop Art movement, Warhol became famous for signing cans of Campbell's soup and fabricating individual cans of Campbell's soup. Every time, the soup can became an icon of Pop Art.

©2017 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: ©The Andy Warhol Foundation Inc./Trademarks, Campbell Soup Company



art people could understand without snobbish critics. We see the tomato soup cans in supermarkets. Andy Warhol helps us look at them as objects worthy of notice (Figure 14-4), especially their blatant repetitive colors, shapes, stacking, and simplicity. For the masses, we have an art that seems to be revelatory.

story

PERCEPTION KEY Pop Art

1. Is Warhol's painting revelatory? If so, about what?
2. Go back to the discussion of Duane Hanson's work. If you decide that the Warhol work is art, then can you make a convincing argument that *Woman with a Purse* helps us really see ordinary people and thus also is a work of art? These are controversial questions.

PERCEPTION KEY Norman Rockwell's *Freedom from Want*

Next to Andrew Wyeth, Rockwell is probably the most popular and beloved American painter. A very modest man, Rockwell always insisted that he was only an illustrator. He frequently worked from photographs. Does the folksy piety appear sentimental in *Freedom from Want* (Figure 14-5)? Is the scene superficial? Does the scene stir your imagination? Does the painting make any demand on you? Enhance your sensitivity to anything? Enlarge your experience? Is *Freedom from Want* art or illustration? Despite his popularity, Rockwell is almost universally described as an illustrator by the experts. They claim that his work is composed of pictorial clichés. Do you agree? Who appoints the experts?



Picture #6

FIGURE 14-5
Norman Rockwell, *Freedom from Want*, 1943. Oil on canvas, 45¼ x 35½ inches. An iconic representation of the American family during World War II, this image was parodied in the film *American Gangster*, with Denzel Washington at the head of the table.

From the Collection of The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge, Norman Rockwell Art Collection Trust. Printed by permission of the Norman Rockwell Family Agency. ©1943 the Norman Rockwell Family Entities

Professional work can be much more realistic than folk art. Professional technical training usually is a prerequisite for achieving the goal of very accurate representation, as anyone who has tried pictorial imitation can attest. Professionals who are realists are better at representation than folk painters, as Richard Estes's *Baby Doll Lounge* demonstrates. Realistic painting done by professionals is one of the most popular kinds of painting, for it requires little or no training or effort to enjoy. Often, very realistic paintings are illustrations, examples of the artlike. Sometimes, however, realistic painters not only imitate objects and events but also interpret what they imitate, crossing the line from illustration to art.

Spam

PERCEPTION KEY Estes and Rockwell

1. Does the sharp-focus realism (known as "photo-realism" because it is based on photography) of *Baby Doll Lounge* make it an illustration?
2. Note the reflections in the store windows. Do we ever see reflections quite like that? If not, then can one reasonably argue that by means of such transformation Estes heightens our awareness of such "things as they are" in the cityscape?
3. Do you think that Norman Rockwell worked from a photograph to paint *Freedom from Want*? Is cutting off the heads on each side of the painting typical of photographs of scenes such as this? How impressive is Rockwell's artistic technique? Does his technique make this a work of art?
4. In terms of realism, how realistic is this portrait of a family sitting down to a happy Thanksgiving Day meal? Is it possible that this is more of a fantasy than a reality? Is it possible that this painting might serve as propaganda for family values? How would that affect its value as a work of art?
5. Compare Richard Estes's *Baby Doll Lounge* with Norman Rockwell's *Freedom from Want*. Which seems more representative of the world in which you live? Which transforms its subject matter more? Which has a richer content?

Baby Doll Lounge, in our opinion, is a work of art. Estes worked from a series of photographs, shifting them around in order to portray interesting relationships of abstract shapes as well as the illusion of realism. Thus, the buildings in the left background are reflected in the glass in the right foreground, helping—along with the bright curving line on the dark roof of the building slightly left of center—to tie the innumerable rectangles together. A geometrical order has been subtly imposed on a very disorderly scene. Estes has retained so much realistic detail, totally unlike Mondrian in *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (see Figure 4-10), that initially we might think we are looking at a photograph. Yet, with a second look, it becomes apparent that this cannot be a photograph of an actual scene, for such a complete underlying geometry does not occur in city scenes. Moreover, people are totally absent, a possible but unlikely condition. An anxious, pervasive silence emanates from this painting. Despite the realism, there is a dreamy unreality. Take an early Sunday morning stroll in a large city, with the dwellers still asleep, and see if you do not perceive more because of Estes.

The line between realistic painting that is illustration and realistic painting that is art is particularly difficult to draw with respect to the paintings of Andrew Wyeth, hailed as the "people's painter" and arguably the most popular American painter of all time. His father, N. C. Wyeth, was a gifted professional illustrator, and he rigorously trained his son in the fundamentals of drawing and painting. Wyeth was also carefully trained in the use of tempera, his favorite medium, by the professional painter Peter Hurd, a brother-in-law. So although a nonacademic and although trained mainly "in the family," Wyeth's training was professional. Wyeth is not a folk painter.

Among the great majority of critics, Wyeth is not highly appreciated, although there are outstanding exceptions, such as Thomas Hoving, former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Wyeth is not even mentioned, let alone discussed, in Mahonri Young's *American Realists*. Clement Greenberg, one of the most respected

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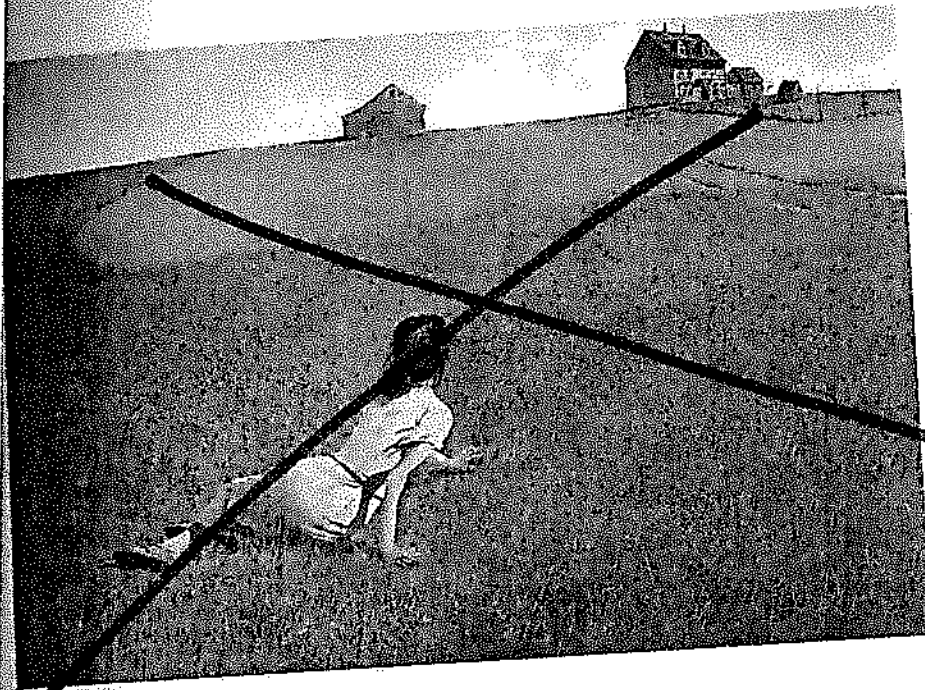


FIGURE 14-6

Andrew Wyeth, *Christina's World*, 1948. Tempera on gessoed panel, 32 1/4 x 47 1/4 inches. Wyeth was probably America's most popular artist of the second half of the twentieth century. This is his most famous painting.

©2017 Andrew Wyeth/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: ©The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, NY

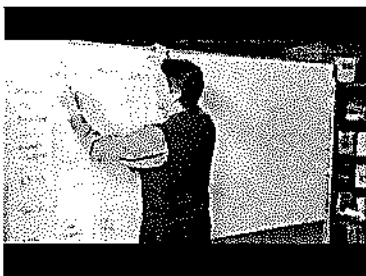
critics of recent times, asserted that realistic works such as Wyeth's are out of date and "result in second-hand, second-rate paintings." In 1987 an exhibition of Wyeth's work was held at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Some critics demurred: Wyeth makes superficial pictures that look like "the world as it is," except tidied up and sentimentalized. They claim that Wyeth is a fine illustrator, like his father, but that the National Gallery of Art should be used for exhibitions of art, not illustrations. Notice again, incidentally, the relevance of the question: What is art?

Wyeth's most beloved and famous painting is *Christina's World* (Figure 14-6). He tells us,

When I painted it in 1948, *Christina's World* hung all summer in my house in Maine and nobody particularly reacted to it. I thought is this one ever a flat tire. Now I get at least a letter a week from all over the world, usually wanting to know what she's doing. Actually there isn't any definite story. The way this tempera happened, I was in an upstairs room in the Olson house and saw Christina crawling in the field. Later, I went down on the road and made a pencil drawing of the house, but I never went down into the field. You see, my memory was more of a reality than the thing itself. I didn't put Christina in till the very end. I worked on the hill for months, that brown grass, and kept thinking about her in her pink dress like a faded lobster shell I might find on the beach, crumpled. Finally I got up enough courage to say to her, "Would you mind if I made a drawing of you sitting outside?" and drew her crippled arms and hands. Finally, I was so shy about posing her, I got my wife Betsy to pose for her figure. Then it came time to lay in Christina's figure against that planet I'd created for all those weeks. I put this pink tone on her shoulder—and it almost blew me cross the room.¹

¹Wanda M. Corn, *The Art of Andrew Wyeth* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1964), p. 38.

story



2. Time-Era Content: Stephen Hicks . . .

Stephen Hicks, Ph.D, is our resident philosopher-historian extraordinaire! More specifically, in his short video clips, Dr. Hicks explains the three time-eras into which all of world history can be divided: 1. the “*pre-modern*” age; 2. the “*modern*” age; and 3. the “*post-modern*” age. I’m sure you’ve either heard of or used these specific terms in your life at some point already. If not, no worries! Dr. Hicks will get you up to speed in his **short sequential videos**. Be sure to watch them in the order listed below; otherwise you will be confused (this is NOT the order in which they appear in the Canvas Media Gallery). *Note: The total number of minutes required to see all 9 clips is just under 1 hour.*

1. “What Modernism Is” – Clip 1 (5:32); Clip 2 (7:40)
2. “The Enlightenment Vision” Clip 1 (8:18); Clip 2 (6:00); Clip 3 (5:06)
3. “Postmodern Philosophy: Introduction” (3:14) + “Postmodernism’s Themes” Clip 1 (7:57), Clip 2 (7:06), Clip 3 (7:33)

3. Your Choice: 1. TED Talk Video OR RSA Video (Royal Society for the Arts)



Finally, there is one more thing you’ll need to add to the mix in each assignment: ONE VIDEO from either TED Talks or the RSA that YOU SELECT on your own, and which YOU BELIEVE applies beautifully to your already-selected collection of examples from the class text! Hence, the TED or RSA video you select should fit nicely into the theme/thesis for each assignment! In terms of applying the video to Hicks’ time era characteristics, it should simply be included with all of the other examples you selected and discussed accordingly.

So, to recap: I hope you see how each of the four aspects to these assignments play out in your informal “Exploring Humanities” assignments! Again: 1. The *Humanities Through the Arts* book is where specific content examples are selected and applied to each assignment; 2. Stephen Hicks provides you with the time era characteristics/context surrounding any/all examples you use; 3. In the same way you made choices regarding the examples you selected from the book chapters based on your theme or thesis, the video choice from either TED or the RSA (only 1 for each assignment) are entirely yours to make!