Close ties among the arts occur because artists share a special purpose: the revelation of values. Furthermore, every artist must use some medium, some kind of "stuff" that can be formed to communicate that revelation (content) about something (subject matter). All artists share some elements of media, and this sharing encourages their interaction. For example, painters, sculptors, and architects use color, line, and texture. Sculptors and architects work with the density of materials. Rhythm is basic to the composer, choreographer, and poet. Words are elemental for the poet, novelist, dramatist, and composer of songs and operas. Images are basic to the painter, filmmaker, videographer, and photographer. Artists constitute a commonwealth—they share the same end and similar means.

The interrelationships among the arts are enormously complex. We hope the following classification of appropriation, synthesis, and interpretation will clear some paths through the maze.

**Appropriation**

Artistic appropriation occurs when (1) artists combine their basic medium with the medium of another art or arts but (2) keep their basic medium clearly dominant. For example, music is the basic medium for composers of opera. The staging may include
architecture, painting, and sculpture. The language of the drama may include poetry. The dance, so dependent on music, is often incorporated in opera, and sometimes in contemporary opera so are photography and even film. Yet music almost always dominates in opera. We may listen to Beethoven's *Fidelio* or Bizet's *Carmen* time after time. Yet it is hard to imagine anyone reading the librettos over and over again. Although essential to opera, the drama, along with the staging, rarely dominates the music. Often the librettos by themselves are downright silly. Nevertheless, drama and the other appropriated arts generally enhance the feelings interpreted by the music.

**PERCEPTION KEY Opera**

Attend an opera or watch a video of an opera by Puccini, perhaps *La Bohème*.

1. Read the libretto. Is it interesting enough to achieve participation, as with a good poem or novel? Would you want to read it again?
2. Have you experienced any opera in which the drama dominates the music? Wagner claimed that in *The Ring* he wedded music and drama (and other arts as well) so closely that neither dominates the Gesamtkunstwerk (complete artwork). Read the libretto of one of the four operas that constitute *The Ring*, and then go to or listen to the opera. Do you agree with Wagner's claim?
3. Go to Verdi's *Otello*, one of his last operas, or watch a video. Shakespeare's drama is of the highest order, although much of it is lost, not only in the very condensed libretto, but also in the translation into Italian. Does either the music or the drama dominate? Or is there a synthesis?

Except for opera, architecture is the art that appropriates the most. Its centering of space makes room for the placement of sculpture, painting, and photography; the reading of poetry; and the performance of drama, music, and dance. The sheer size of architecture tends to make it prevail over any of the incorporated arts, the container prevailing over the contents. The obvious exceptions occur when the architecture functions mainly as a place to show painting or sculpture.

The architecture of Gaudí's Sagrada Familia (Figures 6-15 to 6-17) is certainly not nondescript. Yet, despite its great size and powerful vertical stretches—surely a sky-oriented building—a good case can be made, perhaps, that the sculpture is just as compelling.

**PERCEPTION KEY Architecture**

1. Review the photographs of buildings in Chapter 6. Are there any in which the included arts appear to dominate the architecture?
2. Try to visit Wright's Guggenheim Museum in New York City (Figures 6-7 and 6-8) or study more photographs of the interior. Does the architecture tend to dominate the exhibited paintings and sculpture? If so, is that a proper function for the architecture of a museum? Note that as you walk on the ramps, you view the paintings and sculptures from a slanted position. Note also that often you can easily view the paintings and sculptures that are both near and far across the whirling space.
3. Do you know of any works of architecture that are completely free of the other arts and would seem to resist the incorporation of the other arts? Any buildings that are pure, so to speak?
SYNTHESIS

By synthesis, we mean relatively equal combining of the media of one or more arts—for example, architecture and sculpture in Gaudí's Sagrada Familia. Perhaps the most obvious synthesis occurs with dance and music. Very few dances work without music. And many times, the music is just as important as the dance. Stravinsky's music for the Firebird, Petrouchka, and The Rite of Spring offers marvelous revelations of feelings and states of mind, but so do the dances. The music supports the dance and vice versa. On the other hand, the pretexts of the narratives are not very interesting, more appropriated than synthesized.

Music and poetry sometimes are combined synthetically. The old Cathedral of Coventry, destroyed in World War II, was redesigned, rebuilt, and dedicated in 1959. For that dedication, Benjamin Britten composed the famous War Requiem, basing his music on the bitterly sad poems of Wilfred Owen, killed in the trenches just before the end of World War I. The music and poems, we think, are inextricably melded.

PERCEPTION KEY Music and Poetry

1. Listen to Britten's War Requiem. Do you agree that the music and the poetry are a synthesis?
2. Listen to Britten's Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings, which includes Blake's "The Sick Rose" (page 194). Does Britten appropriate Blake's poem, or is there a synthesis?
3. Read Goethe's poem "Erlkonig" ("The Earl King") at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Der_Erlk%C3%B6nig and then hear Jessye Norman sing it in German at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8noeFpdfWcQ. Comment on the synthesis of words and music in this song. Do you experience a sense of participation once you know the meaning of the poem and see Norman's expression of the music?
4. See if you can find a synthesis of music and words in any of the species of popular music, such as folk, jazz, country, soul, rock, and rap.

PERCEPTION KEY Literature

Examine the poems in Chapter 7.

1. Would any be enriched by the inclusion of other arts? For example, do any of the poems lend themselves to song or dance? If so, would such mixing be more of an appropriation or a synthesis? Explain.
2. Emily Dickinson's "After Great Pain, a Formal Feeling Comes" (page 188) would seem to be a good candidate for a song. Or do you think musical accompaniment would distract from the power of the poem? Explain.

Painting and sculpture have been combined more and more in recent years. Synthesis, however, is rarely achieved. Despite the sharing of line, color, and texture, the imaginary space created by painters tends to resist equal mixing with the enlivening of real space created by sculptors. Thus there is a strong tendency toward appropriation by either art. Despite the use of the lovely white in Hepworth's
Pelagos (Figure 5-14), it would be strange to describe the work as a painting. The grain and density of the wood and the push and pull of curved “real space” subordinate any suggestion of “imaginary space.” And this would seem to remain true even if Hepworth had painted a beautiful landscape on the white.

The photographer's media—light, line, texture, shapes, and color—are close to the painter’s. And the interaction between these two arts also is close. For example, the pictorial tradition in photography was directly influenced by painting, and painting was directly influenced by the realistic detail produced by photography (see Chapter 11).

**Interpretation**

When a work of art takes another work of art as its subject matter, the former is an *interpretation* of the latter. Thus Zeffirelli’s film *Romeo and Juliet* takes Shakespeare’s drama for its subject matter. The film interprets the play. It is fascinating to observe how the contents—the meanings—differ because of the different media. We will analyze a few interesting examples. Bring to mind other examples as you read the text.

**Film Interprets Literature: Howards End**

E. M. Forster’s novel *Howards End* (1910) was made into a remarkable film in 1992 (Figures 15-1 and 15-2) by producer Ismail Merchant and director James Ivory. Ruth Prawer Jhabvala wrote the screenplay. The film stars Anthony Hopkins and

**FIGURE 15-1**

Anthony Hopkins and Emma Thompson in *Howards End*.

Henry Wilcox (Hopkins) and Margaret Schlegel (Thompson), now married, react to bad news.
Emma Thompson who, along with Jhabvala, won an Academy Award. The film was nominated as best picture, and its third Academy Award went to the design direction of Luciana Arrighi and Ian Whittaker.

The team of Merchant-Ivory, producer and director, has become distinguished for period films set in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Part of the reputation won by Merchant-Ivory films is due to their detailed designs. Thus in a Merchant-Ivory film one expects to see Edwardian costumes meticulously reproduced, period interiors with prints and paintings, authentic architecture, both interior and exterior, and details sumptuously photographed so that the colors are rich and saturated and the atmosphere appropriately reflecting the era just before and after 1900.

All of that is true of the production of *Howards End*. But the subtlety of the interplay of the arts in the film is intensified because of the subtlety of the interplay of the arts in the novel. Forster wrote his novel in a way that emulates contemporary drama, at least in part. His scenes are dramatically conceived, with characters acting in carefully described settings, speaking in ways that suggest the stage. Moreover, Forster’s special interest in music and the role culture in general plays in the lives of his characters makes the novel especially challenging for interpretation by moving images.

The film follows Forster’s story faithfully. Three families at the center of the story stand in contrast: the Schlegel sisters, Margaret and Helen; a rich businessman, Henry Wilcox, his frail wife Ruth, and their superficial, conventional children; and a poor, young, unhappily married bank clerk, Leonard Bast, whom the Schlegel sisters befriend. Margaret and Helen are idealistic and cultured. The Wilcoxes, except for Ruth, are uncultured snobs. When Ruth dies, Henry proposes to and is accepted...
by Margaret. Her sister Helen, who detests Henry, is devastated by this marriage and turns to Leonard Bast. The story becomes a tangle of opposites and, because of the stupidity of Henry's son Charles, turns tragic. In the end, thanks to the moral strength of Margaret, reconciliation becomes possible.

Read the novel first, and then see the film. In one scene early in the novel, some of the protagonists are in Queen’s Hall in London listening to Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony. Here is Forster’s wonderful description:

It will be generally admitted that Beethoven’s *Fifth Symphony* is the most sublime noise that has ever penetrated into the ear of man. All sorts and conditions are satisfied by it. Whether you are like Mrs. Munt, and tap surreptitiously when the tunes come—of course, not so as to disturb the others; or like Helen, who can see heroes and shipwrecks in the music’s flood; or like Margaret, who can only see the music; or like Tibby, who is profoundly versed in counterpoint, and holds the full score open on his knee; or like their cousin, Fräulein Mosebach, who remembers all the time that Beethoven is “echt Deutsch” [pure German]; or like Fräulein Mosebach’s young man, who can remember nothing but Fräulein Mosebach: in any case, the passion of your life becomes more vivid, and you are bound to admit that such a noise is cheap at two shillings.

Now that is a passage surely worth recording. But how could you get it into a film unless by a “voiceover,” an awkward technique in this context. Observe how this scene is portrayed in the film. Also observe in the film the awkward drawn-out scenes of Leonard Bast pursuing Helen in the rain (she inadvertently had taken his umbrella when leaving the concert hall). One keeps wondering why the soaking Leonard does not simply run and catch up with Helen. In the novel, these events are much more smoothly handled. In such portrayals, written language has the advantage.

Conversely, the film captures something in 1992 that the novel could not have achieved in its own time—the sense of loss for an elegant way of life in the period before World War I. The moving images create nostalgia for a past totally unrecoverable. Nostalgia for that past is, of course, also created by Forster’s fine prose, but not with the power of moving images. Coming back to the novel after its interpretation by the film surely makes our participation more complete.

**PERCEPTION KEY  *Howards End***

1. Do the filmic presentations of Margaret Schlegel and Henry Wilcox “ring true” to Forster’s characterizations? If not, what are the deficiencies?
2. Is the background music effective?
3. What kind or kinds of cuts are used in the film (page 307)? Are they effectively used? Explain.
4. In which work, the novel or the film, are the social issues of greater importance? Which puts more stress on the class distinctions between the Basts and both the Schlegels and the Wilcoxes? Which seems to have a stronger social message?
5. How does the film—by supplying the images your imagination can only invent in reading the novel—affect your understanding of the lives of the Schlegels, Wilcoxes, and Basts?
6. Is it better to see the film first, or to read the novel first? What informs your decision?
Music Interprets Drama: The Marriage of Figaro

Perhaps in the age of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791), the opera performed a function for literature somewhat equivalent to what the film does today. Opera—in combining music, drama, sets, and sometimes dance—was held in highest esteem in Europe in the eighteenth century. And despite the increasing competition from film and musical comedy, opera is still performed to large audiences in theaters and larger audiences on television. Among the world’s greatest operas, few are more popular than Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro* (1786), written when Mozart was only thirty.

Mozart’s play interprets the French play *The Marriage of Figaro* (1784), by Pierre Augustin de Beaumarchais, a highly successful playwright friendly with Madame Pompadour, mistress of Louis XVI at the time of the American Revolution. Beaumarchais began as an ordinary citizen, bought his way into the aristocracy, survived the French Revolution, went into exile, and later died in France. His plays were the product of, yet comically critical of, the aristocracy. *The Marriage of Figaro*, written in 1780, was held back by censors as an attack on the government. Eventually produced to great acclaim, it was seditious enough for later commentators to claim that it was an essential ingredient in fomenting the French Revolution of 1789.

Mozart, with Lorenzo Da Ponte, who wrote the libretto, remained generally faithful to the play, although changing some names and the occupations of some characters. They reduced the opera from Beaumarchais’s five acts to four, although the entire opera is three hours long.

In brief, it is the story of Figaro, servant to Count Almaviva, and his intention of marrying the countess’s maid Susanna. The count has given up the feudal tradition, which would have permitted him to sleep with Susanna first, before her husband. However, he regrets his decision because he has fallen in love with Susanna and now tries to seduce her. When his wife, the countess, young and still in love with him, discovers his plans, she throws in with Figaro and Susanna to thwart him. Cherubino, a very young man—sung by a female soprano—feels the first stirrings of love and desires both the countess and Susanna in turn. He is a page in the count’s employ, and when his intentions are discovered, he is sent into the army. One of the greatest arias in the opera is “Non piú andrai” (“From now on, no more gallivanting”), which Figaro sings to Cherubino, telling him that his amorous escapades are now over. The nine-page aria is derived from part of a single speech of Beaumarchais’s Figaro:

No more hanging around all day with the girls, no more cream buns and custard tarts, no more charades and blind-man’s-bluff; just good soldiers, by God: weatherbeaten and ragged-assed, weighed down with their muskets, right face, left face, forward march.¹

Mozart’s treatment of the speech demonstrates one of the resources of opera as opposed to straight drama. In the drama, it would be very difficult to expand Figaro’s speech to intensify its emotional content, but in the opera the speech

FIGURE 15-3
An arpeggio from “Non più andrai” (“From now on, no more gallivanting”), from the end of act 1 of The Marriage of Figaro.

Figaro sings a farewell aria to Cherubino, who has been sent to the army because of his skirt chasing. It can be heard on YouTube.

or parts of it can be repeated frequently and with pleasure, since the music that underpins the words is delightful to hear and reheat. Mozart’s opera changes the emotional content of the play because it intensifies feelings associated with key moments in the action.

The aria contains a very simple musical figure that has nonetheless great power in the listening. Just as Mozart is able to repeat parts of the dialogue, he is able to repeat notes, passages, and patterns. The pattern repeated most conspicuously is that of the arpeggio, a chord whose notes are played in quick succession instead of simultaneously. The passage of three chords in the key of C expresses a lifting feeling of exuberance (Figure 15-3). Mozart’s genius was marked by a way of finding the simplest, yet most unexpected, solutions to musical problems. The arpeggio is practiced by almost every student of a musical instrument, yet it is thought of as something appropriate to practice rather than performance. Thus Mozart’s usage comes as a surprise.

The essence of the arpeggio in the eighteenth century was constant repetition, and in using that pattern, Mozart finds yet another way to repeat elements to intensify the emotional effects of the music. The listener hears the passage, is captured, yet hardly knows why it is as impressive and as memorable as it is. There are ways of doing similar things in drama—repeating gestures, for example—but there are very few ways of repeating elements in such close proximity as the arpeggio does without risking boredom.

The plot of the opera, like that of the play, is based on thwarting the plans of the count with the use of disguise and mix-ups. Characters are hidden in bedrooms, thus overhearing conversations they should not hear. They leap from bedroom windows, hide in closets, and generally create a comic confusion. The much older Marcellina and her lawyer Bartolo introduce the complication of a breach of promise suit between her and Figaro just as Figaro is about to marry. The count uses it to his advantage while he can, but the difficulty is resolved in a marvelously comic way: Marcellina sees a birthmark on Figaro and realizes he is her son and the son of Bartolo, with whom she had an affair. That finally clears the way for Figaro and Susanna, who, once they have shamed the count into attending to the countess, can marry.

Mozart’s musical resources include techniques that cannot easily be duplicated in straight drama. For example, his extended use of duets, quartets, and sextets, in which characters interact and sing together, would be impossible in the original drama. The libretto gave Mozart a chance to have one character sing a passage while another filled in with an aside. Thus there are moments when one character sings what he thinks others want him to say, while another character sings his or her inner thoughts, specifically designed for the audience to hear. Mozart reveals the duplicity of characters by having them sing one passage “publicly” while revealing their secret motives “privately.”
The force of the quartets and the sextets in *The Marriage of Figaro* is enormous, adding wonderfully to the comic effect that this opera always achieves. Their musical force, in terms of sheer beauty and subtle complexity, is one of the hallmarks of the opera. In the play, it would be impossible to have six characters speaking simultaneously, but with the characters singing, such a situation becomes quite possible.

The resources that Mozart had in orchestration helped him achieve effects that the stage could not produce. The horns, for example, are sometimes used for the purpose of poking fun at the pretentious count, who is a hunter. The discords found in some of the early arias resolve themselves in later arias when the countess smooths them out, as in the opening aria in act 2: “Porgi Amor” (“Pour forth, O Love”). The capacity of the music to emulate the emotional condition of the characters is a further resource that permits Mozart to emphasize tension, as when, for example, dissonant chords seem to stab the air to reflect the anxiety of the count. Further, the capacity to bring the music quite low (pianissimo) and then contrast it with brilliant loud passages (fortissimo) adds a dimension of feeling that the play can barely even suggest.

Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro* also has been successful because of its political message, which is essentially democratic. The opera presents us with a delightful character, Figaro, a barber become a servant, who is level-headed, somewhat innocent of the evil ways of the world, and a smart man when he needs to be. He loves Susanna, who is much more worldly-wise than he, but who is also a thoughtful, intelligent young woman. In contrast, the count is an unsympathetic man who resents the fact that his servant Figaro can have what he himself wants but cannot possess. The count is outwitted by his servant and his wife at almost every turn. The countess is a sympathetic character. She loves her husband, knows he wants to be unfaithful, but plays along with Susanna and Figaro in a scheme involving assignations and disguises in order to shame him into doing the right thing. The audiences of the late 1700s loved the play because they reveled in the amusing way that Figaro manipulates his aristocratic master. Beaumarchais’s play was as clear about this as the opera. Mozart’s interpretation of the play (his subject matter) reveals such a breadth and depth of feeling that now the opera is far more appreciated than the play.

**PERCEPTION KEY** Beaumarchais’s and Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro*

Read Beaumarchais’s play and Da Ponte’s libretto, and see or listen to Mozart’s opera. Several videos are available of the Beaumarchais play as well as of Mozart’s opera. The Deutsche Grammophon version of the opera, with Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau as the count, is excellent and has English subtitles. Listening to the opera while following the libretto is also of great value. Listen for the use of individual instruments, such as the clarinets on the off-beat, the power of horns and drums, and the repetition of phrases. Pay attention especially to the finale, with its power, simplicity, and matchless humor.

1. Compare the clarity of the development of character in both play and opera. What differences in feelings do the respective works produce?
2. Is character or plot foremost in Beaumarchais’s work? Which is foremost in Mozart’s?
3. Suppose you know nothing about the drama and listen only to the music. Would your participation be significantly weakened?
Poetry Interprets Painting: The Starry Night

Poets often use paintings, especially famous ones, for their subject matters. Since paintings are wordless, they tend to invite commentary. Vincent van Gogh was a tormented man whose slide into insanity has been chronicled in letters, biographies, romantic novels, and films. His painting *The Starry Night* (Figure 15-4) is an eloquent, tortured image filled with dynamic swirls and rich colors, portraying a night that is intensely threatening. He wrote, “Exaggerate the essential and leave the obvious vague.”

The first poem, by Robert Fagles (1933–2008), speaks from the point of view of van Gogh, imagining a psychic pain that has somehow been relieved by the act of painting:

THE STARRY NIGHT
Long as I paint
I feel myself
less mad
the brush in my hand
a lightning rod to madness

But never ground that madness
execute it ride the lightning up

FIGURE 15-4

Van Gogh’s most famous painting represents the view outside the window of his sanitarium room—painted in daylight as a night scene.
from these benighted streets and steeple up
with the cypress look its black is burning green

I am that I am it cries
it lifts me up the nightfall up
the cloudrack coiling like a dragon’s flanks
a third of the stars of heaven wheeling in its wake
wheels in wheels around the moon that cradles round the sun

and if I can only trail these whirling eternal stars
with one sweep of the brush like Michael’s sword if I can
cut the life out of the beast—safeguard the mother and the son
all heaven will hymn in conflagration blazing down
the night the mountain ranges down
the claustrophobic valleys of the mad

Madness
is what I have instead of heaven
God deliver me—help me now deliver
all this frenzy back into your hands
our brushstrokes burning clearer into dawn

Anne Sexton (1928–1975) is one of America’s most powerful poets, but her life was cut short by insanity and then suicide. She may have seen the painting as an emblem of madness from a perspective that most sane people cannot. In light of her personal journey, it is especially fascinating to see how she interprets the painting:

THE STARRY NIGHT
That does not keep me from having a terrible need of—shall I say the word—religion. Then I go out at night to paint the stars.

Vincent van Gogh in a letter to his brother Theo.

The town does not exist
except where one black-haired tree slips
up like a drowned woman into the hot sky.
The town is silent. The night boils with eleven stars
Oh starry starry night! This is how
I want to die.

It moves. They are all alive.
Even the moon bulges in its orange irons
to push children, like a god, from its eye.
The old unseen serpent swallows up the stars.
Oh starry starry night! This is how
I want to die:

into that rushing beast of the night,
sucked up by that great dragon, to split
from my life with no flag,
no belly,
no cry.
Both poets offer only the briefest description of the painting. A reader who had not seen it could not know quite what the painting looks like. Yet both poets move directly to the emotional core of the painting, its connection with madness and psychic pain. For Fagles, the effort was intensely imaginative. For Sexton, perhaps less so. Shortly before she wrote her poem, her father died and she had an illegal abortion because she feared the baby she was about to have was not fathered by her husband. Her personal life was terribly tormented for several months before she wrote the poem, but she continued to write all the time, producing her most widely read volume, *All My Pretty Ones*, which, for a book of modern poetry, had extraordinary sales and popularity. Interestingly, both poets see in the painting the form of a dragon, the biblical beast that hounded humanity to make a hell of life.

**PERCEPTION KEY** Fagles's and Sexton's “The Starry Night”

1. How relevant is the imagery of the beast in the poems to an understanding of the content of the painting?
2. Do the poems help you interpret the imagery of the painting in ways that are richer than before you read the poems? Or do the poems distract you from the painting?
3. How effective would the poems be if there were no painting for their subject matter? Could they stand on their own, or must they always be referenced to the painting?
4. Do you understand the painting better because of these poems?
5. Don McLean wrote music and lyrics for a song inspired by van Gogh’s painting. The lyrics and music for “Vincent (Starry Starry Night)” can be heard on YouTube; search Don McLean Starry Starry Night. What effect does the addition of music have on you? How does it help you interpret the painting better or more fully?
6. Try writing your own song or your own poem as an interpretation of van Gogh’s painting.

**Sculpture Interprets Poetry: Apollo and Daphne**

The Roman poet Ovid (43 BCE–17 CE) has inspired artists even into modern times. His masterpiece, *The Metamorphoses*, includes a large number of myths that were of interest to his own time and that have inspired readers of all ages. The title implies changes, virtually all kinds of changes imaginable in the natural and divine worlds. The sense that the world of Roman deities intersected with humankind had its Greek counterpart in Homer, whose heroes often had to deal with the interference of the gods in their lives. Ovid inspired Shakespeare in literature, Botticelli in painting, and, perhaps most impressively, the sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680).

Bernini’s technique as a sculptor was without peer in his era. His purposes were quite different from those of most modern sculptors in that he was not particularly interested in “truth to materials” (pages 109–110). If anything, he was more interested in showing how he could defy his materials and make marble, for example, appear to be flesh in motion.
Apollo and Daphne (1622–1625) represents a section of The Metamorphoses in which the god Apollo falls in love with the nymph Daphne (Figure 15-5). Cupid had previously hit Apollo’s heart with an arrow to inflame him, while he hit Daphne with an arrow designed to make her reject love entirely. Cupid did this in revenge for Apollo’s having killed the Python with a bow and arrow. Apollo woos Daphne fruitlessly, she resists, and he attempts to rape her. As she flees from him, she pleads with her father, the river god Peneius, to rescue her, and he turns her into a laurel tree just as Apollo reaches his prey. Here is the moment in Ovid:

The god by grace of hope, the girl, despair,
Still kept their increasing pace until his lips
Breathed at her shoulder; and almost spent,
The girl saw waves of a familiar river,
Her father’s home, and in a trembling voice
Called, “Father, if your waters still hold charms
To save your daughter, cover with green earth
This body I wear too well,” and as she spoke
A soaring drowsiness possessed her; growing
In earth she stood, white thighs embraced by climbing
Bark, her white arms branches, her fair head swaying
In a cloud of leaves; all that was Daphne bowed
In the stirring of the wind, the glittering green
Leaf twined within her hair and she was laurel.
1. If you had not read Ovid’s *The Metamorphoses*, what would you believe to be the subject matter of Bernini’s *Apollo and Daphne*? Do you believe it is a less interesting work if you do not know Ovid?

One obvious issue in looking at this sculpture and considering Ovid’s treatment of Apollo and Daphne is that today very few people will have read Ovid before seeing the sculpture. In the era in which Bernini created the work, he expected it to be seen primarily by well-educated people, and in the seventeenth century, most educated people would have been steeped in Ovid from a young age. Consequently, Bernini worked in a classical tradition that he could easily rely on to inform his audience.

Today that classical tradition is essentially gone. Few people, comparatively, read Roman poets, yet the people who see this sculpture in the Galleria Borghese in Rome respond powerfully to it, even without knowing the story it portrays. Standing before this work, one is immediately struck by its size, eight feet high, with the figures fully life-size. The incredible skill of the sculptor is apparent in the ways in which the fingers of Daphne are becoming the leaves of the plant that now bears her name—she is metamorphosing before our eyes, even if we do not know the reference to Ovid’s *The Metamorphoses*. The question aesthetically is how much difference does our knowledge of the source text for the sculpture make for our responses to and participation with the sculpture? The interesting thing about knowledge is that once one has it, one cannot “unhave” it. Is it possible to set apart enough of our knowledge of Ovid to look at the sculpture the way we might look at a sculpture by Henry Moore or David Smith? Without knowledge of Ovid one would see figures in action impressively represented in marble, mixed with important but perhaps baffling vegetation. Visitors to the sculpture seem genuinely awed by its brilliance, and just being told that it portrays a moment in Ovid hardly alters their response to the work. Only when they read Ovid and reflect on the relationship of text to sculpture do they find their responses altered.

2. What does Bernini add to your responses to Ovid’s poetry? What is the value of a sculptural representation of a poetic action? What are the benefits to your appreciation of either Bernini or Ovid?

3. Bernini’s sculpture is famous for its virtuoso perfection of carving. Yet in this work, “truth to materials” is largely bypassed. (Compare Michelangelo’s *Pietà*, Figure 5-5.) Does that fact diminish the effectiveness of the work?

Ovid portrays the moment of metamorphosis as a moment of drowsiness as Daphne becomes rooted and sprouts leaves. It is this instant that Bernini has chosen, an instant during which we can see the normal human form of Apollo, while Daphne’s thighs are almost enclosed in bark, her hair and hands growing leaves. The details of this sculpture, whose figures are life-size, are extraordinary. In the Galleria Borghese in Rome, one can walk around the sculpture and examine it up close. The moment of change is so astonishingly wrought, one virtually forgets that it is a sculpture. Bernini has converted the poem into a moment of drama through the medium of sculpture.

Certainly, Bernini’s sculpture is an “illustration” of a specific moment in *The Metamorphoses*, but it goes beyond illustration. Bernini has brought the moment into
a three-dimensional space, with the illusion of the wind blowing Apollo's garments and with the pattern of swooping lines producing a sense of motion. From almost any angle, this is an arresting interpretation, even for those who do not recognize the reference to Ovid.

FOCUS ON  Photography Interprets Fiction

Although a great many classic paintings were stimulated by narratives, such as Bible stories, Homeric epics, and Ovidian romances, the modern tradition of visual art interpreting fiction has been limited to illustration. Illustrations in novels usually provided visual information to help the reader imagine what the characters look like and what the setting of the novel contributes to the experience of reading. The traditional novelist usually provided plenty of description to help the reader visualize the scenes. The cinema and television images have substituted for the traditional illustrations because people know what England, France, Ireland, Asia, and Africa look like, and the actors playing the roles of Heathcliff, Anne Elliot, Cleopatra, Hamlet, Macbeth, Jane Eyre, Anna Karenina, and many more have provided indelible images that make book illustration superfluous.

The tradition, common in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, of producing adult fiction that included plentiful illustrations has virtually stopped. One of the most famous early-twentieth-century illustrators of fiction was N. C. Wyeth, the father of Andrew Wyeth (see Christina's World, Figure 14-6).

Book illustrators attempted to capture the dramatic moment that would stimulate the reader to imagine a scene with more emotional intensity. N. C. Wyeth's illustrations were such that they out-did the authors of the books he interpreted. When readers visualized Treasure Island, they were not referring to the book but, rather, to Wyeth's paintings (Figure 15-6). Brilliant as they are, without the texts to which they refer, the illustrations are less than revelatory. They are realistic and almost photographic in their detail, but they need the texts in order to be meaningful. It is likely that if you were not told Wyeth was illustrating Treasure Island, you would have no way of knowing how the subject matter was being transformed into a form-content. What is Wyeth revealing in One More Step, Mr. Hands?

Jeff Wall, a Canadian photographer, is known for his careful preparation of the scenes that he photographs. For example, he spent almost two years putting together the materials for his photograph of After "Invisible Man" by Ralph Ellison, the Prologue (Figure 15-7). Ralph Ellison's novel, Invisible Man (1952), concerns a character known only as the invisible man. The invisible man is a young African American who realizes, in the 1940s, that he is invisible to the general American public. He explains in the prologue to his story that after beating a white man who insulted him, he relents, realizing that the man probably never even saw him. As an African American, he realizes...
that he has no status in the community, no real place in his own country because of the power of racism. Ellison's novel, widely considered the best American novel of the mid-twentieth century, exposes the depth of racism and how it distorts those who are its victims.

Jeff Wall concentrates on a single moment in the book, in the prologue in which the invisible man explains how he has tried to make himself visible to his community.

Without light I am not only invisible, but formless as well; and to be unaware of one's form is to live a death. I myself after existing some twenty years, did not become alive until I discovered my invisibility.

That is why I fight my battle with Monoplated Light & Power. The deeper reason, I mean: It allows me to feel my vital aliveness. I also fight them for taking so much of my money before I learned to protect myself. In my hole in the basement there are exactly 1,369 lights. I've wired the entire ceiling, every inch of it. And not with fluorescent bulbs, but with the older, more-expensive-to-operate kind, the filament type. An act of sabotage, you know. I've already begun to wire the wall. A junk man I know, a man of vision, has supplied me with wire and sockets. Nothing, storm or flood, must get in the way of our need for light and ever more and brighter light. The truth is the light and the light is the truth.

Jeff Wall has done what the invisible man has done. He has installed 1,369 filament lights in the space he has constructed to replicate the basement that the invisible man refers to as his "hole." It is his safe place, where he can go to write down the story that is the novel, Invisible Man. Critics at the Museum of Modern Art contend that Wall has completely rewritten the rules for illustrating fiction by his efforts at making us come close to feeling what the invisible man's lighted place means to him. Illustrators usually select moments and aspects of the fiction's description, but Wall tries to include everything in the basement, even beyond the text's detail. Photography is celebrated often for its ability to document reality; Wall uses photography to document unreality, the only partly described basement room. In this sense, the photograph is hyper-real and thereby reveals the values in the novel in a new way.

**FIGURE 15-7**

The invisible man sits in his underground room where even all the lighting he has assembled cannot make him visible to the community of which he is an important part.

**PERCEPTION KEY** Focus on Photography Interprets Fiction

1. What are the chief differences between Wyeth's painting of a scene from a novel and Wall's photograph of a scene from a novel?
2. The Museum of Modern Art says that Wall's approach to illustrating fiction essentially reinvents the entire idea of illustration. To what extent do you agree or disagree? Could the same be said of Wyeth's painting?
3. We suggested that Wyeth’s painting needs Stevenson’s novel for it to be fully understood. Is the same true of Wall’s photograph? Assuming that you have not read either novel, which of these visual images could better stand on its own?

4. Wall’s photograph does not have all the bulbs lighted. In fact, he has chosen to light only some of the bulbs in order to improve the lighting for his photograph. Is that decision a defect in his effort to interpret the novel, or is it the very thing that makes his interpretation more dramatic and more likely to produce a response in the viewer? Comment on the formal qualities of the photograph, the organization of visual elements, the control of color, the position of the figure of the invisible man. How strong is this photograph?

5. After reading *Invisible Man* (if you have the opportunity), what do you feel the photograph adds to your understanding of Ellison’s character and his situation?

### Architecture Interprets Dance: National Nederlanden Building

In what may be one of the most extraordinary interactions between the arts, the celebrated National Nederlanden Building in Prague, Czech Republic, by the modernist architect Frank Gehry, seems to have almost replicated a duet between Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. The building in Prague has been called “Ginger and Fred” since it was finished in 1996 (Figure 15-8). It has also been called “the dancing building,” but everyone who has commented on the structure points to its rhythms, particularly the windows, which are on different levels throughout the exterior. The building definitely reflects the postures of Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire as they appeared in nine extraordinary films from 1933 to 1939 (Figure 15-9). Gehry is known for taking considerable chances in design...

**FIGURE 15-8 (left)**

Widely known as “Ginger and Fred,” the building’s design was inspired by the dancers Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire, whose filmed dance scenes are internationally respected.

**FIGURE 15-9 (right)**
Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire in one of their nine films together. Their configuration closely resembles the form of the building in Prague known as “Ginger and Fred.”
of buildings (such as the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Figures 6-24 to 6-26). The result of his effort in generally staid Prague has been a controversial success largely because of its connection with Rogers’ and Astaire’s image as dancers.

**Painting Interprets Dance and Music: The Dance and Music**

Henri Matisse (1869–1954) was commissioned to paint *The Dance* and *Music* (both 1910) by Sergey Shchukin, a wealthy Russian businessman in Moscow who had been a longtime patron. The works were murals for a monumental staircase and, since the Russian Revolution of 1917, have been at the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg. In Matisse’s time, Shchukin entertained lavishly, and his guests were sophisticated, well-traveled, beautifully clothed patrons of the arts who went regularly to the ballet, opera, and lavish orchestral concerts. Matisse made his work stand in stark contrast to the aristocratic world of his potential viewers.

According to Matisse, *The Dance* (Figure 15-10) derived originally from observation of local men and women dancing on the beach in a fishing village in southern France where Matisse lived for a short time. Their *sardana* was a stylized and staid traditional circle dance, but in the Matisse the energy and joy are wild. *The Dance* interprets the idea of dance rather than any particular dance. Moreover, it is clear that Matisse reaches into the earliest history of dance, portraying naked women and a man dancing with abandon on a green mound against a dark blue sky. Their sense of movement is implied in the gesture of each leg, the posture of each figure, and the instability of pose. The figures have been described as primitive, but their hairdos suggest that they might be contemporary dancers returning to nature and dancing in accord with an instinctual sense of motion.

**FIGURE 15-10**

Decorative panel, oil on canvas, 102\(\frac{3}{4}\) × 125\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches. The Hermitage, St. Petersburg.

Painted for a Russian businessman, this hymn to the idea of dance has become an iconographic symbol of the power of dance.
Music is similarly primitive, with a fiddler and a pipes player (who look as if they were borrowed from a Picasso painting) and three singers sitting on a mound of earth against a dark blue sky (Figure 15-11). They are painted in the same flat reddish tones as the dancers, and it seems as if they are playing and singing the music that the dancers are themselves hearing. Again, the approach to the art of music is as basic as the approach to the art of dance, except that a violin, of course, would not exist in a primitive society. The violin represents the strings and the pipes the woodwinds of the modern orchestra, whereas the other musicians use the most basic of instruments, the human voice. The figures are placed linearly as if they were notes on a staff, a musical phrase with three rising tones and one falling tone (perhaps C A B C G). Music is interpreted as belonging to a later period than that of the dance.

The two panels, The Dance and Music, seem designed to work together to imply an ideal for each art. Instead of interpreting a specific artistic moment, Matisse appears to be striving to interpret the essential nature of both arts.

**PERCEPTION KEY** Painting and the Interpretation of The Dance and Music

1. *Must these paintings (Figures 15-10 and 15-11)—which are close in size—be hung near each other for both to achieve their complete effect? If they are hung next to each other, would they need to have their titles evident for the viewer to respond fully to them?*

2. *What qualities of The Dance make you feel that kinetic motion is somehow present in the painting? What is dancelike here?*

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**FIGURE 15-11**

This painting hangs near Matisse's The Dance in the Hermitage. The five figures are placed as if they were notes on a music staff.
3. What does Matisse do to make Music somehow congruent with our ideas of music? Which shapes within the painting most suggest music?

4. Suppose the figures and the setting were painted more realistically. How would that stylistic change affect our perception of the essential nature of dance and music?

5. Does participating with these paintings and reflecting on their achievement help you understand and, in turn, enjoy dance and music?

It is fitting to close this chapter with questions arising from a film and an opera that take as their subject matter the same source: Thomas Mann’s famous novella *Death in Venice*, published in 1911. Luchino Visconti’s 1971 film interprets the story in one way; Benjamin Britten’s 1973 opera interprets the story in a significantly different way. Both, however, are faithful to the story. The difference in media has much to do with why the two interpretations of Mann’s story are so different despite their basically common subject matter.

**EXPERIENCING *Death in Venice*: Three Versions**

Read Mann’s novella *Death in Venice*. This is a haunting tale—one of the greatest short stories of the twentieth century—of a very disciplined, famous writer who, in his fifties, is physically and mentally exhausted. Gustav von Aschenbach seeks rest by means of a vacation, eventually coming to Venice. On the beach there, he becomes obsessed with the beauty of a boy. Despite Aschenbach’s knowledge of a spreading epidemic of cholera, he remains, and being afraid the boy will be taken away, withholds information about the epidemic from the boy’s mother. Casting aside restraint and shame, Aschenbach even attempts, with the help of a barber, to appear youthful again. Yet Aschenbach, a master of language, never speaks to the boy, nor can he find words to articulate the origins of his obsession and love. Collapsing in his chair with a heart attack, he dies as he watches the boy walking off into the sea. Try to see Visconti’s film, starring Dirk Bogarde. And listen to Britten’s opera with the libretto by Myfanwy Piper, as recorded by London Records, New York City, and starring Peter Pears.

1. Which of these three versions do you find most interesting? Why?

2. Does the film reveal insights about Aschenbach (and ourselves) that are missed in the novella? Does the opera reveal insights that escape both the novella and the film? Be specific. What are the special powers and limitations of these three media?

3. In both the novella and the opera, the opening scene has Aschenbach walking by a cemetery in a suburb of Munich. The film opens, however, with shots of Aschenbach coming into Venice in a gondola. Why do you think Visconti did not use Mann’s opening? Why, on the other hand, did Britten use Mann’s opening?

4. In the film, Aschenbach is portrayed as a composer rather than a writer. Why?

5. In the opera, unlike the film, the dance plays a major role. Why?

6. The hold of a boy over a mature, sophisticated man such as Aschenbach may seem at first highly improbable and contrived. How does Mann make this improbability seem plausible? Visconti? Britten?
7. Is Britten able to articulate the hidden deeper feelings of Aschenbach more vividly than Mann or Visconti? If so, how? What can music do that these other two media cannot do in this respect? Note Aschenbach’s thought in the novella: “Language could but extol, not reproduce, the beauties of the sense.” Note also that Visconti often uses the music of Gustav Mahler to help give us insight into the depths of Aschenbach’s character. Does this music, as it meshes with the moving images, do so as effectively as Britten’s music?

8. Do you think that seeing Britten’s opera performed would add significantly to your participation? Note that some opera lovers prefer only to hear the music and shut their eyes most of the time in the opera house.

9. Do these three works complement one another? After seeing the film or listening to the opera, does the novella become richer for you? If so, explain.

10. In the novella, Socrates tells Phaedrus, “For beauty, my Phaedrus, beauty alone, is lovely and visible at once. For, mark you, it is the sole aspect of the spiritual which we can perceive through our senses, or bear so to perceive.” But in the opera, Socrates asks, “Does beauty lead to wisdom, Phaedrus?” Socrates answers his own question: “Yes, but through the senses . . . and senses lead to passion . . . and passion to the abyss.” Why do you think Britten made such a drastic change in emphasis?

11. What insights into our lives are brought to us by these works? For example, do you have a better understanding of the tragedy of beauty and of the connection between beauty and death? Again, do we have an archetype?

Summary

The arts closely interrelate because artists have the same purpose: the revelation of values. They also must use some medium that can be formed to communicate that revelation, and all artists use some elements of media. Furthermore, in the forming of their media, artists use the same principles of composition. Thus interaction among the arts is easily accomplished. The arts mix in many ways. Appropriation occurs when an artist combines his or her medium with the medium of another art or arts but keeps the basic medium clearly dominant. Synthesis occurs when an artist combines his or her medium in more or less of a balance with the medium of another art or arts. Interpretation occurs when an artist uses another work of art as the subject matter. Artists constitute a commonwealth—sharing the same end and using similar means.
Chapter 16

THE INTERRELATIONSHIPS OF THE HUMANITIES

THE HUMANITIES AND THE SCIENCES

In the opening pages of Chapter 1 we defined the humanities as that broad range of creative activities and studies that are usually contrasted with mathematics and the advanced sciences, mainly because in the humanities strictly objective or scientific standards typically do not dominate.

Most college and university catalogs contain a grouping of courses called "the humanities." First, studies such as literature, the visual arts, music, history, philosophy, and theology are almost invariably included. Second, studies such as psychology, anthropology, sociology, political science, economics, business administration, and education may or may not be included. Third, studies such as physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, and engineering are never included. The reason the last group is excluded is obvious—strict scientific or objective standards are clearly applicable. With the second group, these standards are not always so clearly applicable. There is uncertainty about whether they belong with the sciences or the humanities. For example, most psychologists who experiment with animals apply the scientific method as rigorously as any biologist. But there are also psychologists—C. G. Jung, for instance—who speculate about such phenomena as the "collective unconscious" and the role of myth (Chapter 8). To judge their work strictly by scientific methods is to miss much of their contributions. Where
then should psychology and the subjects in this group be placed? In the case of the first group, finally, the arts are invariably placed with the humanities. But then so are history, philosophy, and theology. Thus, as the title of this book implies, the humanities include subjects other than the arts. Then how are the arts distinguished from the other humanities? And what is the relationship between the arts and these other humanities?

These are broad and complex questions. Rigorous objective standards may be applied in any of the humanities. Thus painting can be approached as a science—by the historian of medieval painting, for example, who measures, as precisely as any engineer, the evolving sizes of halos. On the other hand, the beauty of mathematics—its economy and elegance of proof—can excite the lover of mathematics as much as, if not more than, painting. Edna St. Vincent Millay proclaimed that “Euclid alone has looked on beauty bare.” And so the separation of the humanities and the sciences should not be observed rigidly. The separation is useful mainly because it indicates the dominance or the subordinance of the strict scientific method in the various disciplines.

**The Arts and the Other Humanities**

Artists are humanists. But artists differ from the other humanists primarily because they create works that reveal values. Artists are sensitive to the important concerns of their societies. That is their subject matter in the broadest sense. They create artistic forms that clarify these values. The other humanists—such as historians, philosophers, and theologians—reflect upon, rather than reveal, values. They study values as given, as they find them. They try to describe and explain values—their causes and consequences. Furthermore, they may judge these values as good or bad. Thus, like artists, they try to clarify values, but they do this by means of analysis (see Chapter 3) rather than artistic revelation.

In their studies, the other humanists do not reveal values. However, they may take advantage of the revealing role of the arts. Their studies will be enhanced because they will have a deeper understanding of the values they are studying. This is basically the help that the artists give to the other humanists. Suppose, for example, a historian is trying to understand the bombing of Guernica by the Fascists in the Spanish Civil War. Suppose he or she has explored all factual resources. Even then, something very important may be left out: a vivid awareness of the suffering of the noncombatants. To gain insight into that pain, Picasso’s *Guernica* (Figure 1-4) may be very helpful.

**Conception Key Other Humanists and Artists**

1. Is there anything that Picasso may have learned from historians that he used in painting *Guernica*?
2. Picasso painted a night bombing, but the actual bombing occurred in daylight. Why the change? As you think about this, remember that the artist transforms in order to inform.
Modern medicine provides doctors with an array of sophisticated machines that collect and present data about their patients, but the human eye is an invaluable yet often underappreciated diagnostic tool.

To address that, a new collaboration of Jefferson Medical College and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts has been created to teach aspiring doctors to closely observe, describe and interpret the subtlest details with the eye of an artist.

The art-and-medicine program kicked off its first workshop Friday with a group of 18 white-coated medical students visiting the academy’s museum and a dynamic representation of their chosen profession: Thomas Eakins’s masterwork *The Gross Clinic*, which depicts an operation in progress.

The first- and second-year med students heard how to take a “visual inventory”—paying attention to overall elements of the painting, like texture and brightness, and specifics such as body language and facial expressions.

Besides the two-hour Visual Perception workshop, others slated for the 2007-2008 school year are Accuracy and Perception, Hand-Eye Coordination, Art in Healing, and Sculpture and Surgery. The courses are a mix of demonstrations, lectures and hands-on art lessons.

A 2001 study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that medical students in a similar Yale University program acquired more astute observational skills than their colleagues who didn’t take the courses. In addition to assessing a patient’s well-being during an office visit, finely honed visual abilities can also allow doctors to spot subtle changes in a patient’s X-rays over time, for example.

Increasingly, medical schools nationwide are incorporating humanities courses to their curricula.

According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, 89 of the country’s 125 medical schools have humanities as an educational element included in a required course, and 66 have it as an elective. (There’s overlap because some schools have both.) The figures include all humanities, not just visual arts, spokeswoman Nicole Buckley said. Other humanities studies in medical schools include literature, performing arts, and music.¹

1. Eakins’s *The Gross Clinic* portrays Samuel D. Gross, a famous surgeon, supervising an operation on a man’s left thigh (Figure 16-1). Judging from the expressions on the faces of those involved in the operation, what might a medical student learn about the values that most interested the painter? You can see this painting in greater detail at [www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/299524.html](http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/299524.html).

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2. It seems clear that painting can be important to the humanities education of medical students. However, it is also clear that other arts can contribute to the medical students' program. Which of the arts do you think would be most effective in revealing humanistic values for a medical doctor?

3. What values does Thomas Eakins's *The Gross Clinic* reveal that could have an impact on students of medicine?

4. How might historians of medicine interpret Eakins's *The Gross Clinic*?

5. What might a medical student learn from this painting that could make the student a better doctor?

Other humanists, such as critics and sociologists, may aid artists by their study of values. For example, we have concerned ourselves in some detail with criticism—the description, interpretation, and evaluation of works of art. Criticism is a humanistic discipline because it usually studies values—those revealed in works of art—without strictly applying scientific or objective standards. Good critics aid our understanding of works of art. We become more sensitively aware of the revealed values. This deeper understanding brings us into closer rapport with artists, and such rapport helps sustain their confidence in their work.

Artists reveal values; the other humanists study values. That does not mean, of course, that artists may not study values but, rather, that such study, if any, is subordinated to revealing values in an artistic form that attracts our participation.

**Values**

A value is something we care about, something that matters. A value is an object of an interest. The term "object," however, should be understood as including events or states of affairs. Positive values are those objects of interest that satisfy us or give us pleasure, such as good health. Negative values are those objects of interest that dissatisfy us or give us pain, such as bad health.

When the term "value" is used alone, it usually refers to positive values only, but it may also include negative values. In our value decisions, we generally seek to obtain positive values and avoid negative values. But except for the very young child, these decisions usually involve highly complex activities. To have a tooth pulled is painful, a negative value, but doing so leads to the possibility of better health, a positive value. **Intrinsic values** involve the feelings—such as pleasure and pain—we have of some value activity, such as enjoying good food or experiencing nausea from overeating. **Extrinsic values** are the means to intrinsic values, such as making the money that pays for the food. **Intrinsic-extrinsic values** not only evoke immediate feelings but also are means to further values, such as the enjoyable food that leads to future good health.

Values, we propose, involve a valuer and something that excites an interest in the valuer. **Subjectivist theories of value** claim, however, that it is the interest that projects the value on something. The painting, for example, is positively valuable only because it satisfies the interest of someone. If no one is around to project interest, then there are no valuable objects. Value is entirely relative to the valuer. Beauty
CONCEPTION KEY Participation with Art and Values

1. Do you think the value of a participative experience with a work of art is basically intrinsic, extrinsic, or intrinsic-extrinsic? Explain.

2. Dr. Victor Frankl, a medical doctor and psychiatrist, writes in *The Doctor and the Soul*,

   The higher meaning of a given moment in human existence can be fulfilled by the mere intensity with which it is experienced, and independent of any action. If anyone doubts this, let him consider the following situation. Imagine a music lover sitting in the concert hall while the most noble measures of his favorite symphony resound in his ears. He feels that shiver of emotion which we experience in the presence of the purest beauty. Suppose now that at such a moment we should ask this person whether his life has meaning. He would have to reply that it had been worthwhile living if only to experience this ecstatic moment.²

   Do you agree with Frankl, or do you consider this an overstatement? Why?

3. It has been reported that some of the most sadistic guards and high-ranking officers in the Nazi concentration camps played classical music during or after torturings and killings. Goering was a great lover of excellent paintings. Hitler loved architecture and the music of Wagner. What do you make of this?

   is in the eye of the beholder. *Objectivist theories of value* claim, conversely, that it is the object that excites the interest. The painting is positively valuable even if no one has any interest in it. Value is in the object independently of any subject. Jane is beautiful even if no one is aware of her beauty.

   The *relational theory of value*—which is the one we have been presupposing throughout this book—claims that value emerges from the relation between an interest and an object. A good painting that is satisfying no one’s interest at the moment nevertheless possesses potential value. A good painting possesses properties that under proper conditions are likely to stimulate the interest of a valuer. The subjectivist would say that this painting has no value whatsoever until someone projects value on it. The objectivist would say that this painting has actualized value inherent in it whether anyone enjoys it or not. The relationalist would say that this painting has potential value, that when it is experienced under proper conditions, a sensitive, informed participant will actualize the potential value. To describe a painting as “good” is the same as saying that the painting has positive potential value. For the relationalist, value is realized only when objects with potential value connect with the interests of someone.

   Values are usually studied with reference to the interaction of various kinds of potential value with human interests. For example, criticism tends to focus on the intrinsic values of works of art; economics focuses on commodities as basically extrinsic values; and ethics focuses on intrinsic-extrinsic values as they are or ought to be chosen by moral agents.

   Values that are described scientifically as they are found we shall call *value facts*. Values that are set forth as norms or ideals or what ought to be we shall call

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normative values. Smoking cigarettes is, for some people, a source of satisfaction, both physically and socially. The value facts known about smoking cigarettes tell us that they are destructive to one’s health. They damage one’s lungs and ultimately cause heart attacks and several forms of cancer. Smoking cigarettes conjures a conflict between the intrinsic value of satisfaction and the extrinsic value of early, painful death. Normative values tell us what our behavior should be. An ideal position on the smoking of cigarettes would tell us that good health in the future is to be preferred to pleasant satisfaction in the present.

The arts and the other humanities often have normative relevance. They may clarify the possibilities for value decisions, thus clarifying what ought to be and what we ought to do. And this is an invaluable function, for we are beings who must constantly choose among various value possibilities. Paradoxically, even not choosing is often a choice. The humanities can help enlighten our choices. Artists help by revealing aspects and consequences of value phenomena that escape scientists. The other humanists help by clarifying aspects and consequences of value phenomena that escape both artists and scientists. For example, the historian or sociologist might trace the consequences of value choices in past societies. Moreover, the other humanists—especially philosophers—can take account of the whole value field, including the relationships between factual and normative values. This is something we are trying to do, however briefly and oversimply, right here.

CONCEPTION KEY Value Decisions

1. You may have made a judgment about whether or not to smoke cigarettes. Was there any kind of evidence—other than the scientific—that was relevant to your decision? Explain.

2. Reflect about the works of art we have discussed in this book. Have any of them clarified value possibilities for you in a way that might helpfully influence your value decisions? If so, how? Be as specific as possible. Do some arts seem more relevant than others in this respect? If so, why? Discuss with others. Do you find that people differ a great deal with respect to the arts that are most relevant to their value decisions? If so, how is this to be explained?

3. Do you think that in choosing its political leaders, a society is likely to be helped if the arts are flourishing? As you think about this, consider the state of the arts in societies that have chosen wise leaders, as well as the state of the arts in societies that have chosen unwise leaders.

4. Do you think that political leaders are more likely to make wise decisions if they are sensitive to the arts? Back up your answer with reference to specific leaders.

5. Do you think there is any correlation between a flourishing state of the arts and a democracy? A tyranny? Back up your answers with reference to specific leaders.

Factual values can be verified experimentally, put through the tests of the scientific method. Normative values are verified experientially, put through the tests of good or bad consequences. Satisfaction, for ourselves and the others involved, is an experiential test that the normative values we chose in a given instance were 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 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 two hundred 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.]
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, reenforcements 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 necessaries

![Image](image-url)


of much of the nation. Young children worked regularly in those mills, especially up in the top floors where there was less room for adults to stand upright. The wealthy men who owned the mills worked the laborers intensely while they sometimes enjoyed their recreations. Cleghorn’s poem, published in 1916, has no title because it is a quatrains from a longer poem, but it has been widely quoted as it is here:

The golf links lie so near the mill
That almost every day
The laboring children can look out
And see the men at play.

For Cleghorn, the irony of men at play while children work, like the girl looking out the window in Hine’s photograph, was an ethical issue. The labor system of the day saw no problem with what she described, but she wrote this poem in protest.

Throughout this book we have been elaborating an aesthetics, or philosophy of art. We have been attempting to account to some extent for the whole range of the phenomena of art—the creative process, the work of art, the experience of the work of art, criticism, and the role of art in society. On occasion we have avoided restricting our analysis to any single area within that group, considering the interrelationships of these areas. And on other occasions we have tried to make explicit the basic assumptions of some of the restricted studies. These are typical functions of the aesthetician, or philosopher of art. For example, much of our time has been spent doing criticism—analyzing and appraising particular works of art. But at other times, as in Chapter 3, we tried to make explicit the presuppositions or principles of criticism. Critics, of course, may do this themselves, but then they are functioning more as philosophers than as critics. Furthermore, we have also reflected on how criticism influences artists, participants, and society. This, too, is a function of the philosopher.

Finally, the aim of the metaphysicians, or speculative philosophers, roughly speaking, is to understand reality as a totality. Therefore they must take into account the artifacts of the artists as well as the conclusions and reflections of other humanists and scientists. Metaphysicians attempt to reflect on the whole of experience in order to achieve some valid general conclusions concerning the nature of reality and our position and prospects in it. A metaphysician who ignores the arts will have left out some of the most useful insights about value phenomena, which are a fundamental part of our reality.

The Arts and Theology
The practice of religion, strictly speaking, is not a humanistic activity or study, for basically it neither reveals values in the way of the arts nor studies values in the way of the other humanities. A religion is an institution that brings people together for the purpose of worship. These people share beliefs about their religious experiences. Since the beliefs of various people differ, it is more accurate to refer to religions than to religion. Nevertheless, there is a commonsense basis, reflected in our ordinary language, for the term “religion.” Despite the differences about their beliefs, religious people generally agree that their religious values—for example, achieving, in some sense, communion with the sacred—are ultimate, that is, more important than any other values. They have ultimate concern for these values. Moreover, religious people seem to share a common nucleus of experience: (1) uneasy awareness of the limitations of human moral and theoretical powers; (2) awe-full awareness of a further reality, a majestic mystery, beyond or behind or within the world of our sense experience; (3) conviction that communion with this further reality is of supreme importance.
Theology involves the study of religions. As indicated in Chapter 1, the humanities in the medieval period were studies about humans, whereas theology and related studies were studies about God. But in present times, theology, usually broadly conceived, is placed with the humanities. Moreover, for many religious people today, ultimate values or the values of the sacred are not necessarily ensconced in another world "up there." In any case, some works of art—the masterpieces—reveal ultimate values in ways that are relevant to the contemporary situation. Theologians who ignore these revelations cannot do justice to their study of religions.

The Jesuit priest, Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–1889), was a theologian who wrote some of the best religious poetry of his time. He did not publish while he lived, and wrote relatively little, but his work has been considered of the first order of Victorian poetry. His theology included an appreciation of the value of sensory experience. His poem "Pied Beauty," published in 1918, praises God for the beauty perceptible in the natural world, especially in animals and objects whose markings may seem to imply that they are imperfect.

PIED BEAUTY
Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-color as a brinded cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
   Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls, finches' wings;
   Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;
   And all trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
   With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
   Praise him.

Hopkins, like the metaphysicians, attempts to reflect on the whole of experience by his meditation on the "thisness" of physical experience through the senses that leads him to a deeper understanding of the spiritual qualities of beauty, which he connects directly to God. Hopkins destroyed his early poetry, and stopped writing for many years because he thought writing poetry was inappropriate to his calling as a theologian. But his studies of the early church theologian Duns Scotus (1265/66–1308), who promoted the concept of "thisness," freed Hopkins to begin writing again. Scotus's concept of "thisness" gave Hopkins permission to write about the physical world as he does in "Pied Beauty." Hopkins takes pleasure in sensual experience in the fashion of most observant poets. The quality of "mountainness" in Cézanne's Mont Sainte-Victoire and Ansel Adams's Half Dome owes something to Hopkins's apprehension of holiness in the beauty of the world.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in one of his last letters from the Nazi prison of Tegel, noted that "now that it has become of age, the world is more Godless, and perhaps it is for that very reason nearer to God than ever before." Our artists, secular as well as religious, not only reveal our despair but also, in the depths of that darkness, open paths back to the sacred.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Matthew Arnold intimated that the aesthetic or participative experience, especially of the arts, would become the religious experience. We do not think this transformation will happen, because the participative...
experience lacks the outward expressions, such as worship, that fulfill and in turn
distinguish the religious experience. But Arnold was prophetic, we believe, in sensing
that increasingly the arts would provide the most direct access to the sacred. Iris
Murdoch, the late Anglo-Irish novelist, describes such an experience:

Dora had been in the National Gallery a thousand times and the pictures were almost
as familiar to her as her own face. Passing between them now, as through a well-
loved grove, she felt a calm descending on her. She wandered a little, watching with
compassion the poor visitors armed with guidebooks who were peering anxiously at
the masterpieces. Dora did not need to peer. She could look, as one can at last when
one knows a great thing very well, confronting it with a dignity which it has itself con-
firmed. She felt that the pictures belonged to her. ... Vaguely, consoled by the presence
of something welcoming and responding in the place, her footsteps took her to various
shrines at which she had worshipped so often before.4

Such experiences may be rare. Most of us still require the guidebooks. But one
hopes the time will come when we no longer just peer but also participate. And when
that time comes, a guide to the guidebooks like this one may have its justification.

4The Bell, by Iris Murdoch, copyright © 1958 by Iris Murdoch. Reprinted by permission of The Viking Press,

CONCEPTION KEY The Arts and History

Suppose an ancient town were being excavated, but, aside from architecture, no works
of art had been unearthed. And then some paintings, sculpture, and poems come to
light—all from the local culture. Is it likely that the paintings would give information
different from that provided by the architecture or the sculpture? Or what might the
poems reveal that the other arts do not? As you reflect on these questions, reflect also
on the following description by Martin Heidegger of a painting by van Gogh of a pair
of peasant shoes:

From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toilsome tread of the
worker stares forth. In the stiffly rugged heaviness of the shoes there is the accu-
mulated tenacity of her slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever-uniform
furrows of the field swept by a raw wind. On the leather lie the dampness and richness
of the soil. Under the soles slides the loneliness of the field-patch as evening falls. In
the shoes vibrates the silent call of the earth, its quiet gift of the ripening grain and
its unexplained self-refusal in the fallow desolation of the wintry field. This equipment
is pervaded by uncomplaining anxiety as to the certainty of bread, the wordless joy of
having once more withstood want, the trembling before the impending childbed and
shivering at the surrounding menace of death. This equipment belongs to the earth,
and it is protected in the world of the peasant woman.5

CONCEPTION KEY  "On the Late Massacre in Piedmont"
1. Search for details of the massacre and decide what Milton adds to the historical record.
2. How does Milton’s art reveal values that a historical record does not?
3. What, in the poem, tells you that Milton is deeply aware of history?

CONCEPTION KEY  Ethics and the Arts
1. In the quotation above, Dewey might seem to be thinking primarily of poets when he speaks of the contribution of artists to the ethicist. Or do you think he is using the term “poets” to include all artists? In any case, do you think that literature has more to contribute to the ethicist than do the other arts? If so, why?
2. Reflect on the works of art we have discussed in this book. Which ones do you think might have the most relevance to an ethicist? Why?
3. What seem to be the ethical issues that concern Lewis Hine?
4. What seem to be the ethical issues that concern Sarah Norcliffe Cleghorn?
5. How do Hine’s photograph and Cleghorn’s poem contribute to a humanist’s understanding of values?
6. In what ways are Hine’s photograph and Cleghorn’s poem revelatory? Do they transform their subject matter?

CONCEPTION KEY  "Pied Beauty"
1. What makes this poem theological? Is it clearly a religious poem?
2. How does “Pied Beauty” connect the idea of God to the world at large? How does the poem connect the idea of God to art?
3. What theological values does the poem clarify and reveal?
4. How does “Pied Beauty” celebrate the concept of “thisness”?

SUMMARY
The arts and the other humanities are distinguished from the sciences because in the former, generally, strictly objective or scientific standards are irrelevant. In turn, the arts are distinguished from the other humanities because in the arts values are revealed, whereas in the other humanities values are studied. Furthermore, in the arts perception dominates, whereas in the other humanities conception dominates.

In our discussion about values, we distinguish between (1) intrinsic values—activities involving immediacy of feeling, positive or negative; (2) extrinsic values—activities that are means to intrinsic values; and (3) intrinsic-extrinsic values—activities that not only are means to intrinsic values but also involve significant immediacy of
feeling. A value is something we care about, something that matters. The theory of value presupposed in this book has been relational; that is, value emerges from the relation between a human interest and an object or event. Value is not merely subjective—projected by human interest on some object or event—nor is value merely objective—valuable independently of any subject. Values that are described scientifically are value facts. Values set forth as norms or ideals or what ought to be are normative values. The arts and the other humanities often have normative relevance: by clarifying what ought to be and thus what we ought to do.

Finally, the arts are closely related to the other humanities, especially history, philosophy, and theology. The arts help reveal the normative values of past cultures to the historian. Philosophers attempt to answer questions about values, especially in the fields of ethics, aesthetics, and metaphysics. Some of the most useful insights about value phenomena for the philosopher come from artists. Theology involves the study of religions, and religions are grounded in ultimate concern for values. No human artifacts reveal ultimate values more powerfully to the theologian than works of art.