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The Humanistic Tradition 2

From the Renaissance
to the Enlightenment

人文传统 (二)

文艺复兴——启蒙运动

(美) Gloria K. Fiero 著
孙有中 王红欣 张 军 导读/注释

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Gloria K. Fiero

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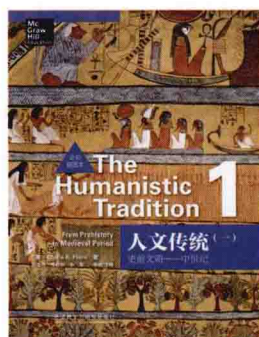
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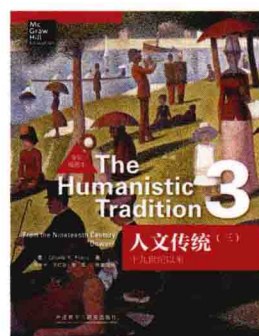


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出版说明

《人文传统》(The Humanistic Tradition, Sixth Edition)系列丛书自麦格劳-希尔教育集团(The McGraw-Hill Education)引进,为更好地满足国内读者的需要,对内容的编排作了适当调整。

本系列原英文版为六卷本(Preface为原版序),中文注释版将其合并为三卷,分卷名为:《史前文明——中世纪》、《文艺复兴——启蒙运动》和《十九世纪以来》。每卷卷首由北京外国语大学英语学院院长孙有中教授撰写中文导读,简述该卷述及历史时期人文世界主要变化及其特征。北京外国语大学王红欣博士和张军博士为每章编写文前导读和文后注释。此外,在本系列编辑过程中,编者对原版存在的少量讹误进行了校订。

《人文传统》系列丛书以其跨学科的知识谱系、全球化的学术视角、图文并茂的表达方式,已被多所世界知名大学作为教材使用,在读者中享有很高的评价。本中文注释版的出版旨在向读者呈现“人文”作为一门独立学科的整合之美,为通识教育的推进贡献绵薄之力。

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Preface

Each generation leaves a creative legacy, the sum of its ideas and achievements. This legacy represents the response to our effort to ensure our individual and collective survival, our need to establish ways of living in harmony with others, and our desire to understand our place in the universe. Meeting the challenges of *survival*, *communality*, and *self-knowledge*, we have created and transmitted the tools of science and technology, social and political institutions, religious and philosophic systems, and various forms of personal expression—the totality of which we call *culture*. Handed down from generation to generation, this legacy constitutes the humanistic tradition, the study of which is called *humanities*.

The Humanistic Tradition originated more than two decades ago out of a desire to bring a global perspective to my humanities courses. My fellow humanities teachers and I recognized that a Western-only perspective was no longer adequate to understanding the cultural foundations of our global world, yet none of the existing texts addressed our needs. At the time, the challenge was daunting—covering the history of Western poetry and prose, art, music, and dance was already an ambitious undertaking for a survey course; how could we broaden the scope to include Asia, Africa, and the Americas without over-packing the course? What evolved was a thematic approach to humanities, not as a collection of disciplines, but as a discipline in itself. This thematic approach considers the interrelatedness of various forms of expression as they work to create, define, and reflect the unique culture of a given time and place. It offers a conceptual framework for students to begin a study of the humanistic tradition that will serve them throughout their lives. I am gratified that others have found this approach to be highly workable for their courses, so much so that *The Humanistic Tradition* has become a widely adopted book for the humanities course.

The Sixth Edition of *The Humanistic Tradition*

While the sixth edition of *The Humanistic Tradition* contains a number of new topics, images, and selections, it remains true to my original goal of offering a manageable and memorable introduction to global cultures. At the same time, I have worked to develop new features that are specifically designed to help students master the material and critically engage with the text's primary source readings, art reproductions, and music recordings. The integration of literary, visual, and aural primary sources is a hallmark of the text, and every effort has been made to provide the most engaging translations, the clearest color images, and the live-liest recorded performances, as well as the most representative selections for every period. The book and companion supplements are designed to offer all of the resources a student and teacher will need for the course.

New Features that Promote Critical Thinking

New to the sixth edition are special features that emphasize

connections between time periods, styles, and cultures, and specific issues of universal significance. These have been added to encourage critical thinking and classroom discussion.

- **Exploring Issues** focuses on controversial ideas and current debates, such as the battle over the ownership of antiquities, the role of the non-canonical Christian gospels, the use of optical devices in Renaissance art, the dating of African wood sculptures, and creationism versus evolution.
- **Making Connections** brings attention to contrasts and continuities between past and present ideas, values, and styles. Examples include feudalism East and West, Classical antiquities as models for Renaissance artists, and African culture as inspiration for African-American artists.

New Features that Facilitate Learning and Understanding

The sixth edition provides chapter introductions and summaries that enhance the student's grasp of the materials, and a number of features designed to make the materials more accessible to students:

- **Looking Ahead** offers a brief, preliminary overview that introduces students to the main theme of the chapter.
- **Looking Back** closes each chapter with summary study points that encourage students to review key ideas.
- **Iconographic “keys”** to the meaning of images have been inset alongside selected artworks.
- **Extended captions** to illustrations throughout the text provide additional information about artworks and artists.
- **Chronology boxes** in individual chapters place the arts and ideas in historical background.
- **Before We Begin** precedes the Introduction with a useful guide to understanding and studying humanities.

Organizational Improvements and Updated Content

The sixth edition responds to teachers' requests that the coverage of Mesopotamia precede Egypt and other ancient African cultures in the opening chapters. The global coverage has been refined with revised coverage of the early Americas, new content on archeological discoveries in ancient Peru, a segment on the role of the West in the Islamic Middle East, and a discussion of China's global ascendance. Chapters 36 through 38 have been updated and reorganized: Ethnicity and ethnic identity have been moved to chapter 38 (Globalism: The Contemporary World), which brings emphasis to recent developments in digital technology, environmentalism, and global terrorism. Other revisions throughout the text also respond to teacher feedback; for example, a description of the *bel canto* style in music has been added; Jan van Eyck's paintings appear in both chapters 17 and 19 (in different contexts); and T. S. Eliot's works are discussed in both chapters 32 and 35.

Among the notable writers added to the sixth edition are William Blake, Jorge Luis Borges, Seamus Heaney, and John Ashbury. New additions to the art program include works by Benozzo Gozzoli, Buckminster Fuller, Kara Walker, Jeff Wall, Damien Hirst, El Anatsui, and Norman Foster.

Music Listening Compact Discs



Two audio compact discs have been designed exclusively for use with *The Humanistic Tradition*. CD One corresponds to the music listening selections discussed in Books 1–3 (Volume I), and CD Two contains the music in Books 4–6 (Volume II). Music logos (left) that appear in the margins of the text refer to the Music Listening Selections found on the audio compact discs. The compact discs can be

packaged with any or all of the six books or two-volume versions of the text.

Online Learning Center

A complete set of web-based resources for *The Humanistic Tradition* can be found at

www.mhhe.com/fieroht6e

Materials for students include an audio pronunciation guide, a timeline, research and writing tools, links to select readings, and suggested readings and websites. The instructor side of the Online Learning Center includes discussion and lecture suggestions, music listening guides, key themes and topics, and study questions for student discussion and review and written assignments.

Acknowledgments

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—Gloria K. Fiero

BEFORE WE BEGIN

Studying humanities engages us in a dialogue with *primary sources*: works original to the age in which they were produced. Whether literary, visual, or aural, a primary source is a text; the time, place, and circumstances in which it was created constitute the context; and its various underlying meanings provide the subtext. Studying humanities from the perspective of text, context, and subtext helps us understand our cultural legacy and our place in the larger world.

Text

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

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

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

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

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

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

Music and Dance: The medium of music is sound. Like literature, music is durational: it unfolds over the period of time in which it occurs. The major elements of music are melody, rhythm, harmony, and tone color—formal elements that also characterize the oral life of literature. However,

while literary and visual texts are usually descriptive, music is almost always nonrepresentational: it rarely has meaning beyond sound itself. For that reason, music is the most difficult of the arts to describe in words.

Dance, the artform that makes the human body itself the medium of expression, resembles music in that it is temporal and performance-oriented. Like music, dance exploits rhythm as a formal tool, and like painting and sculpture, it unfolds in space as well as in time.

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

Context

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

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

Subtext

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

Summary of the Renaissance and the Reformation

The following paragraphs provide an overview of the Renaissance and Reformation, the two movements that ushered in the modern era in the West. This summary of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century culture offers some background to the materials contained in the following chapters, which deal with the modern era in a global context.

Classical Humanism

The effort to recover, edit, and study ancient Greek and Latin manuscripts, a movement known as Classical humanism, first occurred in fourteenth-century Italy, where it marked the beginnings of the Renaissance. This revival of Greco-Roman culture was to spread throughout Western Europe over the following 300 years. Petrarch, the father of humanism, provided the model for Renaissance scholarship and education. He promoted the study of the classic Greek and Latin writers, especially Cicero, encouraged textual criticism, and wrote introspective and passionate sonnets that were revered and imitated for centuries to come.

The city of Florence was the unrivaled center of Classical humanism in the first 150 years of the Renaissance. A thriving commercial and financial center dominated by a well-to-do middle class, Florence found political and cultural leadership in such wealthy and sophisticated families as the Medici. Classical humanism helped to cultivate a sense of civic pride, a new respect for oral and written eloquence, and a set of personal values that sustained the ambitions of the rising merchant class.

Fifteenth-century humanists carried on Petrarch's quest to recover the Classical past. Ficino translated the entire body of Plato's writings, while Pico's investigations in Hebrew and Arabic led him to believe that the world's great minds shared a single, universal truth. Pico's *Oration on the Dignity of Man* proclaimed the centrality of humankind and defended the unlimited freedom of the individual within the universal scheme.

Renaissance humanists cultivated the idea of the good life. Following Alberti's maxim, "A man can do anything he wants," they applied the moral precepts of the Classical past to such contemporary pursuits as diplomacy, politics, and the arts. While Petrarch and his peers were concerned primarily with the recovery of Classical manuscripts and the production of critical editions, Alberti, Castiglione, and Machiavelli infused scholarship with action. Allying their scrutiny of the past with an empirical study of the present, they fostered a heroic ideal of the individual that surpassed all Classical models. For Alberti, wealth and authority proceeded from the

exercise of *virtù*; for Castiglione, the superior breed of human being was *l'uomo universale*, the well-rounded person; for Machiavelli, only a ruthless master of power politics could ensure the survival of the state. Alberti, Castiglione, and Machiavelli were representative of the larger group of Renaissance humanists who envisioned self-knowledge and individualism as crucial to success in the secular world. Their views shaped the modern character of the humanistic tradition in the European West.

Renaissance Artists

The artists of the Renaissance brought a scientific curiosity to the study of the natural world and untiringly investigated its operations. Such Early Renaissance artists as Donatello, Pollaiuolo, Masaccio, and Brunelleschi studied the mechanics of the human body, the effects of light on material substances, and the physical appearance of objects in three-dimensional space. At the same time, Renaissance artists were masters of invention: they perfected the technique of oil painting, formulated the laws of perspective, and applied the principles of Classical art to the representation of Christian and contemporary subjects. Patronized by a wealthy middle class, they revived such this-worldly genres as portraiture and gave new attention to the nude body as an object of natural beauty.

The art of the High Renaissance marks the culmination of a hundred-year effort to wed the techniques of naturalistic representation to Classical ideals of proportion and order. Leonardo da Vinci, the quintessential artist-scientist, tried to reconcile empirical experience with abstract principles of design. The compositions of Raphael, with their monumental scale and unity of design, became standards by which Western paintings would be judged for centuries. The multitalented Michelangelo brought a heroic idealism to the treatment of traditional Christian and Classical themes. In Venice, Titian's painterly handling of the reclining female nude represented a new and more sensuous naturalism. The centrally planned buildings of Bramante and Palladio realized the architectural ideals of harmony, balance, and clarity pursued in the Early Renaissance by Brunelleschi and Alberti.

The Renaissance produced an equally splendid flowering in music, especially among Franco-Flemish composers. Secular compositions began to outnumber religious ones. The techniques of imitation and word painting infused both religious and secular music with homogeneity and increased expressiveness. Printed sheet music helped to popularize the madrigal and other secular, vernacular song forms. Instrumental music and dance now emerged as independent genres. Like their Classical predecessors, Renaissance artists placed human concerns and feelings at the center of their creative efforts. A spirit of

optimism, combined with intellectual curiosity and increasing worldliness, fueled the early modern era in the West.

Shattering the Old Order: Protest and Reform

The sixteenth century was a time of rapid change marked by growing secularism, advancing technology, and European overseas expansion. It was also an age of profound religious and social upheaval. Northern humanists led by Erasmus of Rotterdam studied early Christian literature and urged a return to the teachings of Jesus and the early church fathers. Demands for Church reform went hand in hand with the revival of early Christian writings to culminate in the Protestant Reformation.

Aided by Gutenberg's printing press, Martin Luther challenged the authority of the Church of Rome. He held that Scripture was the sole basis for religious interpretation and emphasized the idea of salvation through faith in God's grace rather than through good works. As Lutheranism and other Protestant sects proliferated throughout Europe, the unity of medieval Christendom was shattered.

The music and the art of the Northern Renaissance reflect the mood of religious reform. In music, the Lutheran chorale became the vehicle of Protestant piety. In art, the increasing demand for illustrated devotional literature and private devotional art stimulated the production of woodcuts and metal engravings. The works of Dürer and Grünewald exhibit the Northern Renaissance passion for realistic detail and graphic expression, while the fantastic imagery of Hieronymus Bosch suggests a pessimistic and typically Northern concern with sin and death. Bosch's preoccupation with the palpable forces of evil found its counterpart in the witch hunts of the

sixteenth century. In painting, too, such secular subjects as portraiture, landscapes, and scenes of everyday life mirrored the tastes of a growing middle-class audience for an unidealized record of the visual world.

Northern Renaissance writers took a generally skeptical and pessimistic view of human nature. Erasmus, More, and Rabelais lampooned individual and societal failings and described the ruling influence of folly in all aspects of human conduct. In France, Montaigne devised the essay as an intimate form of rational reflection. In Spain, Cervantes' novel, *Don Quixote*, wittily attacked outmoded feudal values and ideals. The most powerful form of literary expression to evolve in the late sixteenth century, however, was secular drama. In the hands of William Shakespeare, the play became the ideal vehicle for reconciling personality and circumstance. Shakespeare's tragedies (as opposed, for instance, to Montaigne's essays) reveal the human condition through overt action, rather than through private reflection.

By the end of the sixteenth century, national loyalties, religious fanaticism, and commercial rivalries for control of trade with Africa, Asia, and the Americas had splintered the European community. These conditions rendered ever more complex the society of the West. And yet, on the threshold of modernity, the challenges to the human condition—economic survival, communality, self-knowledge, and the inevitability of death—were no less pressing than they had been 2000 years earlier. If the technology of the sixteenth century offered greater control over nature than ever before, it also provided more devastating weapons of war and mass destruction. In the centuries to come, the humanistic tradition would be shaped and reshaped by changing historical circumstances that would put the West in a position of increasing world dominance.

导 读

公元1300年至1600年在西欧历史上是一个动荡不安而又生机勃勃的三百年。它是一道门槛，西方社会由此告别中世纪，迈入现代文明；它是一座熔炉，古典文明、基督教文明、封建传统和新兴商业资本主义元素在这里相互碰撞、融合，最终锻造出日益强盛、称霸全球的“西方列强”。

14、15、16这三个世纪，西欧社会急剧转型。在经济领域，庄园经济让位于资本主义；在政治领域，罗马教皇的基督帝国被日益集权和强盛的民族国家所取代；在国际关系领域，中世纪相对内敛、平静和稳定的秩序从此一去不复返，取而代之的是西欧内部剑拔弩张、旷日持久的英法百年战争和英西海上霸权之争，以及遍及各国的狂热的宗教战争。与此同时，伴随着航海探险和地理大发现，西欧国家开始了野蛮的殖民扩张，用血与火开辟了不可逆转的环球贸易和全球市场。

进入15世纪，在资本主义首先发展的意大利北部的佛罗伦萨和威尼斯等城市，文艺复兴作为一种文化和生活潮流蔚然成风，并逐步传播到西欧各国。文艺复兴以复兴古代希腊罗马的文艺为旗号，通过发现、整理、学习和模仿古典文艺，实现了西方文化的划时代创新。在价值观念层面，文艺复兴抛弃了“神本位”的世界观，确立了“人本位”的世界观，从此西方人对现世功业和世俗幸福的追求取代了对来世获救的迷恋，个人主义价值观逐步确立。

在文化层面，文艺复兴时期的艺术家虽然视古典文艺作品为典范，但是却能推陈出新，超越先贤。他们的肖像画和风景画更加栩栩如生，逼近自然；他们的雕塑作品展示了更加自信的个人英雄主义；他们的建筑受惠于中世纪的教堂艺术，在结构和装饰上均大大超越了古典建筑的纯朴。在科学领域，哥白尼提出“日心说”，推翻了古老的“地心说”，确立了现代宇宙观。

16世纪，文艺复兴的春风已吹遍西欧大地。这时，在中世纪文明最坚固的堡垒内部爆发了又一场惊天动地的变革，这就是最终彻底改变基督教世界的宗教改革。宗教改革的内因是教会的腐败和专制，其重要外

因之一则是文艺复兴新思潮对宗教界的洗礼。具有文艺复兴价值取向的宗教界知识分子主张回到《圣经》中去获取基督的真谛，抨击教会对教徒的奴役和剥削，指责罗马教皇把信仰变成了教条和繁琐的圣礼。最终，在罗马教皇有些鞭长莫及的德国，马丁·路德于1517年把《九十五条论纲》贴到了教堂的大门上。路德相信人是有原罪的，但无论是个人的行善还是教皇的恩准都无法使有罪之人最终获救。路德坚信，基督徒的获救完全是上帝的恩惠，个人唯有通过坚定的信仰才能得到拯救。路德的思想在北欧各国迅速传播，成为宗教个人主义的源头，因为它把信仰的责任完全放到个人的肩上，把信仰变成了个人的良知。受路德思想的启发和鼓舞，越来越多的宗教派别举起抗议的旗帜，与罗马天主教庭决裂，自行解释福音的真意，形成了各具特色的新教团体，最终导致基督教世界的大分裂，其影响及于今日。

人类不同文明之间的交流源远流长。大约公元1000年后，长途贸易、宗教朝圣、传教活动、地理探险，使东西方之间的交流日益频繁。阿拉伯商人控制了北非的贸易通道，把伊斯兰文化传播到了西非；接受伊斯兰信仰的土耳其人和蒙古人把穆斯林的信仰带入印度和小亚细亚地区；丝绸之路贯通欧亚大陆；马可·波罗长途跋涉到达中国，在《马可波罗行纪》中记录了当时元大都等城市的繁华胜景；而15世纪初中国的航海家郑和则率领当时世界上最先进的庞大船队，远涉重洋，途经亚、非三十多个国家和地区，最远抵达非洲东海岸；1453年，土耳其人建立的奥斯曼帝国一举攻克君士坦丁堡，结束了千年拜占庭帝国，促进了东欧和西亚的交流；更有甚者，后来居上的西方列强为攫取黄金、香料和奴隶，通过贸易和殖民，一步步占领了非洲和美洲的大片土地，使印第安文明毁于一旦，同时却把西方文化扩散到全球。

通过文艺复兴、宗教改革和海外扩张，西方国家在公元1500年前后实现了内部的裂变和外部的崛起，从此将日益强势地影响乃至支配人类文明的格局和进程。

公元1600年至1800年,文艺复兴和宗教改革所释放的巨大能量在西欧社会持续喷发。17世纪的上半叶,宗教改革引发的教派之争与国家之间为攫取土地和权力而展开的角逐交织在一起,导致了天主教徒和新教徒之间充满血腥的“三十年战争”,多达500万基督徒在宗教战争中丧生。

不过,天下大乱转为天下大治。1648年西欧国家之间签署的《威斯特伐利亚合约》从此确立了维系西方主权国家关系的所谓“威斯特伐利亚体系”,即,在主权范围内,国家拥有至高无上的权威。

在经济领域,1660年后,商业资本主义在西欧国家迅猛发展,推动其进一步的海外扩张,在亚洲、非洲和美洲的广阔天地抢夺更大份额的产品与原料市场,使欧洲与世界其他地区的文化交流更加频繁。

17、18世纪是西欧社会持续剧烈转型的时代。西方人根深蒂固的宗教情结与方兴未艾的科学与理性世界观和思维方法形成冲突;新兴的宪政观念与专制君主的“君权神授”主张展开竞争;正在上升但数量尚微的新富尚无法抵消社会的普遍贫困和旧贵族阶级的特权。

在此风云际会的大背景下,巴洛克艺术气势恢宏地登上了西方文化的大舞台。巴洛克绘画起源于意大利,戏剧性强,场面宏大,明暗对照,色彩华丽,布局不对称,产生强烈的视觉效果。巴洛克艺术一方面反映了科学革命所倡导的运动变化的新宇宙观,另一方面表现了天主教改革所激发的强烈的宗教情绪。巴洛克风格的雕塑与建筑和巴洛克绘画一道,共同为反宗教改革的天主教堂营造出具有强烈的视觉冲击力和感染力的戏剧性宗教氛围,为天主教在新教分裂势力的猛烈冲击下站稳阵脚,发挥了独特作用。

与巴洛克艺术有异曲同工之妙的是17世纪贵族风格的艺术。法国的路易十四建立了欧洲登峰造极的专制君主制度。为了维护和彰显帝王的绝对权威,路易

十四积极鼓励和支持艺术事业,推动了具有贵族气派的新古典主义的绘画、雕塑、音乐、文学和舞蹈的大发展,使凡尔赛成为欧洲文化的重镇。与欧洲专制君主制度下的贵族艺术遥相呼应,东方的奥斯曼帝国、印度的莫卧儿王朝、中国的明清王朝和日本的德川幕府,都促成了帝王文化的繁荣。

在科学领域,17世纪的欧洲迎来了科学革命的春天。欧洲人因为基督教的天堂指向,似乎对宇宙现象有更浓厚的兴趣。中世纪的欧洲人以地球为中心,极力想象了一个由地狱到人间到天堂的封闭的、静止的环形圈层宇宙系统。16世纪中叶的哥白尼依据数学推理,大胆挑战传统观念,提出了石破天惊的“日心说”。科学革命时期的科学家进一步借助望远镜,用实证的方法支持了这一新的宇宙观。在前辈科学家的研究基础上,牛顿进一步实现了划时代的科学综合,提出了影响深远的万有引力学说。不仅如此,科学革命在思维方法上为人类文明做出了重大贡献。培根提出了基于经验的归纳推理法,笛卡尔首倡基于数学的演绎推理法,两人共同促进了以怀疑、思辨、实证、求知为根本特征的西方现代人文传统的形成。

18世纪的启蒙运动哲人把科学革命的思维方法和世界观运用于社会问题的剖析,开启了彪炳千古的理性时代。他们所建构的一系列核心概念——自然法则、政治自由、自由企业、社会契约、社会平等、人类进步——奠定了西方现当代社会的价值根基,直接催生了美国革命和法国大革命,影响了整个人类历史的演进方向。

18世纪的欧洲也取得了辉煌灿烂的艺术成就。洛可可艺术以其富贵华丽和对感官享乐的生动刻画而著称;新古典主义的建筑、雕塑、绘画则艺术地表现了启蒙运动的理性精神和社会理想。这一世纪也诞生了灿若群星的音乐天才。海顿、莫扎特等一大批音乐家把西方古典交响乐推向前所未有的高度。

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