



# THE HUMANITIES

Louise Dudley  
Austin Faricy

*Revised by*

James G. Rice  
*Department of Humanities  
Stephens College*

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# PREFACE

*The social sciences attempt to see human beings in the mass, as subjects for generalizations, their behavior being a fit subject for prediction. The individual tends to be buried in the mass, of which he forms an element. The humanities, on the other hand, are far more concerned with the individual, and especially with unique creations of the individual imagination which we call works of art.*

—Frank Willett\*

Today we think of the humanities as a loosely defined group of cultural subject areas rather than as scientific, technical, or even socially oriented subjects. Thus, by the term *humanities* we generally mean art, literature, music, and the theater—areas in which human values and individual expressiveness are celebrated.

The humanities engage both our intellectual and our intuitive, emotional selves. They do so intentionally and without apology. It is this which sets them apart from those areas which aim at being rigidly empirical, objective, factual. Delight and pleasure in the arts can arise from casual sensualism in the aural, tactile, or visual experiences they evoke. But the knowledge of how the works which afford us these pleasures come into being, the understanding of the artist's use of a medium in making a personal statement, and the sharing of that experience—these deepen and broaden our enjoyment at both the level of understanding and the level of feeling.

\* Frank Willett, "African Arts and the Future: Decay or Development?" in *African Themes* (Northwestern University Studies, 1975), p. 213.

That is what this book is about. It is not a history of the arts, setting out neatly defined periods, influences of one artist on another, or even influences of one art on another. It is not simply a book of illustrations which engage our senses. It focuses, rather, on that most human act, an artist interacting with an experience or subject, translating it into a medium, using the elements of the medium and the techniques for working in it to produce the finished work. This is the critical moment in the experience of the humanities. If the artist is unequal to creating that which was felt or if we, as the artist's audience, are unequal to recreating what is presented to us, communication fails, community is diminished, our humanity is untouched.

In a sense, this book may be looked upon as a check on poorly rationalized surveys or histories of the humanities. It hopes to place the reader in a position of examining with some sophistication the primary materials from which scholars' categories and historical periods have been derived.

The approach to the study of the humanities in this edition is the one pioneered by Dr. Louise Dudley many years ago. It is perhaps even more significant for students now than it was then. Developments in the humanities since the first edition was published some thirty years ago have made it even more necessary that students acquire, keep, and use the information that allows them to examine works of art personally and at first hand, and to make their own evaluations and judgments of them.

The originality of Dr. Dudley's approach consists of (1) studying all the arts together, stressing those principles which they have in common and those aspects which separate and make them uniquely special kinds of expression; (2) centering attention on individual works of art themselves and the ways in which the experience of an artist, interacting with a medium, becomes significant for us; (3) cultivating students' confidence in their personal responses and perceptions rather than in learned canons of aesthetics, categories, period styles, and the like, from which they deduce what they are supposed to think and feel; (4) outlining a process of interacting with the arts in which students can start with their own observations and intuitive responses and enter into a dialogue with the arts, beginning with surfaces and pursuing their study as deeply and widely as they can.

Historians have always known that historical writing, whether of the arts, the sciences, or politics, is a mere matter of selection and arrangement in some elegant scheme which has coherence and is satisfying to the writer and his or her immediate public. In the past two decades, however, two dramatic instances have made this insight common knowledge: all histories have had to be rewritten, and the events upon which they were based reevaluated, to integrate

the contributions of blacks to our culture; and at the moment they are being rewritten again to reflect the new assessment of women's contributions to all aspects of civilization. Now, therefore, more than ever students need to be able to examine and evaluate the facts and artifacts of the humanities on their own—for understanding, for enjoyment, and as a safeguard against accepting too readily whatever generalizations and formulations concerning human activity have been or will be made.

The approach and framework of this sixth edition of *The Humanities* are the same as in previous editions. However, many new materials have been added to bring the sixth edition abreast of the times and to increase its appeal and usefulness. Some of the changes made are as follows:

- 1 Greater emphasis has been placed on the combined arts of film, dance, and opera.
- 2 For the first time, photography is included among the visual arts.
- 3 Twentieth-century arts are dealt with in more detail, and more illustrations of them have been included.
- 4 The chapters on music have been completely revised, with sensitivity to the fact that music is always a difficult subject for students and teachers who have not studied it previously.
- 5 Marginal quotations from a variety of sources have been included where they provide a kind of dialogue with the text, reinforce a point made in the text, or shed light on particular illustrations.
- 6 A Glossary has been added for ready reference to technical terms and matters touched upon only lightly in the text proper. Since its purpose is sensory recognition as well as cognition, wherever possible it refers to specific illustrations in the text.
- 7 The Bibliography has been completely updated, and the section on teaching materials has been expanded and updated.
- 8 A students' workbook and a complete teachers' resource manual, with suggestions for tests, have been prepared to accompany this edition.

Professor James Shirky, my colleague at Stephens College, has my special thanks for revising the chapters on music. I wish also to thank the following persons, who provided me with useful comments as this revision progressed: Robert Douglas, Anchorage Community College; Homer F. Edwards, Jr., Wayne State University; Arthur R. Bassett, Brigham Young University; Faye-Ellen Silverman, Peabody Conservatory; Glenda Jones, Lake City Junior College; Peter Gano, The Ohio State University; Elmore Giles, Community College of San Francisco; Richard Byrne, University of Minnesota; and Carl Sclarenco, Indiana State University.

*James G. Rice*

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

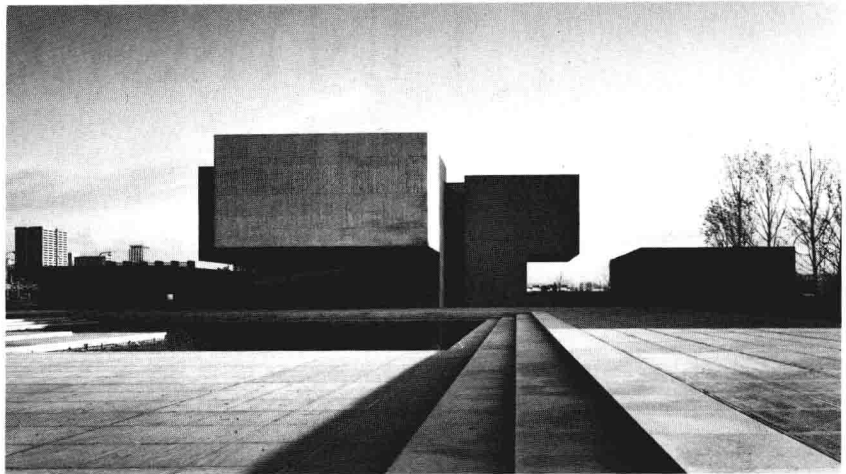
## REMINDERS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Basic human needs stand at the center of the art experience. What these needs are may be debated and rationalized, but their existence cannot be questioned. The need for a sense of identity reinforced by signs and symbols, the need for confirmation of our inner perplexities, the need to be reassured that inner ambivalences, doubts, and anxieties can be given shape: these needs are so much a part of our humanity that they function at an unconscious level.

This book has to do with the understanding and enjoyment of the arts—a subject which concerns all of us, for every day we are consciously and unconsciously having our values shaped by the art around us, and every day we make decisions and judgments that are determined by our understanding of the arts and our sensitivity to them.

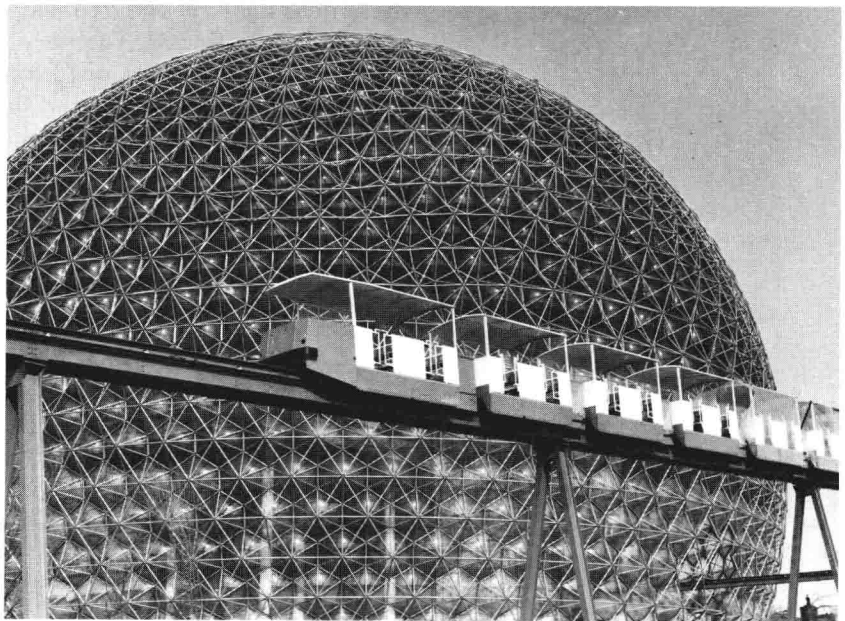
In diverse situations connected with our work and other activities, we encounter the arts in various forms; and to the extent that we respond to them, liking or disliking one or another art object, we are all critics of the arts. We pass judgment, express opinions about art; but because we do not know the principles with which works of art may be judged, we are likely to feel somewhat insecure in doing so, knowing our preferences are personal, but not feeling confident that they are valid in terms of art criticism.

**Figure 1-1.** I. M. Pei (1917– ), American architect. Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, N.Y. (1961–1968). (Bush-hammered reinforced concrete using cantilever construction principle. 60,000 square feet, 120 by 255 feet below grade, 130 by 140 feet above grade.)



The three buildings shown in Figures 1-1, 1-2, and 1-3 are well-known examples of some current trends in architecture made possible by the development of new building materials, engineering principles, and prevailing aesthetic tastes in the culture. You have probably seen photographs of them, and you have certainly seen buildings with profiles similar to them in many, many places. Perhaps you simply dismissed them as “modern architecture,” as “different,” without reflection on what made these new shapes on the landscape

**Figure 1-2.** Buckminster Fuller (1895– ), American architect. United States Pavilion at Expo 67, Montreal. (Geodesic dome constructed of steel tubes and covered with transparent acrylic; 250 feet in diameter. Canadian Consulate General, New York.)



**Figure 1-3.** Jørgen Utzon (1918– ), Danish architect. Sydney Opera House, Australia (1959–1972). (Reinforced concrete shell construction. Australian Tourist Commission.)



possible, on the many, many decisions made in adapting the materials and techniques to creating living-working spaces for particular functions, or on the aesthetic decisions involved in arriving at the proportions and relationships of the various parts. Still, such buildings are a part of our everyday environment; they are a part of the artificial environment of shapes, textures, and colors which is our daily living space on earth.

Most people know that they are not getting all the pleasure they could from art. They know others who are getting greater pleasure than they from concerts, paintings, plays, and poetry; and whether or not they realize it, they would like to share these pleasures themselves. In the realm of art, they feel like the inhabitants of the world before Prometheus brought them the divine fire:

Though they had eyes to see, they saw to no avail; they had ears, but understood not; but, like to shapes in dreams, throughout their length of days, without purpose they wrought all things in confusion.

—Aeschylus (fifth century B.C., Greek dramatist),  
*Prometheus Bound*, 447–451 B.C., Trans. Herbert Weir Smyth

For many of us such feelings are justified. Rudolf Arnheim, the most important perceptual psychologist of our century, has called us “a generation that has lost touch with its senses”:

We have become callously and casually blind. More broadly, you might say we suffer from perceptual pellegra—a disease caused by the deficiency of our

sensory experience. . . . A child who enters school today faces a 12- to 20-year apprenticeship in alienation. He learns to manipulate a world of words and numbers, but he does not learn to experience the real world.<sup>1</sup>

*What is more important now is to recover our senses. We must learn to see more, to hear more, to feel more. . . . The aim of all commentary on art now should be to make works of art—and by analogy, our own experience—more, rather than less, real to us. The function of criticism should be to show how it is what it is, rather than to show what it means.*

—Susan Sontag<sup>3</sup>

To become whole again, we must learn to use and enjoy our senses. An education in the arts is an education of the senses. Artists have always known this. Joseph Conrad makes his purpose as a novelist quite clear:

My task which I am trying to achieve is, by power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all, to make you *see*.<sup>2</sup>

And D. W. Griffith, the great American film director whose life was devoted to developing motion pictures into a significant art form, is reported to have summed up his life work in a simple sentence: “What I am trying to do above all is to make you see.”

Indeed, our culture and society have not created an environment in which we have been encouraged to feel and experience spontaneously. This is especially true in the arts. We have been conditioned and educated to feel that the world of art is a kind of magic circle which only the initiated can penetrate.

We are alienated from the arts as a source of personal enjoyment. They are felt to be the remote and mysterious province of an élite element in our society, of a technically trained coterie of critics who accept without modesty, perhaps even with pride, the designation “arbiters of public taste,” with the authority to say what is art and what is not. Further, our education system tends to deal with art which has been so designated and with official statements about it. Art is thereby removed from the activities and enjoyment of the average person in the street, rather than being continuous with the experiences and activities of all humankind. We should, therefore, constantly remind ourselves that so-called “good art” and “bad art” are not really kinds of arts, but simply categories representing the judgment of some person or groups of persons.

With the development of mass communications and travel, people are no longer so isolated from the arts and culture generally as they used to be. In the course of reading, traveling, and conversing with friends and acquaintances, people come into contact with many different artistic stimuli that provoke questions they are not always able to handle or feelings they do not necessarily understand.

Never have the opportunities for coming to know and appreciate the arts been greater. Fine reproductions of masterpieces of art

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by James R. Peterson in “Eyes Have They, but They See Not: A Conversation with Rudolf Arnheim,” *Psychology Today*, June 1972, p. 65. Reprinted by permission of Psychology Today Magazine. Copyright © 1972 Ziff-Davis Publishing Company.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in George Bluestone, *Novels into Film* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1957), preface.

<sup>3</sup> Reprinted with the permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc. (New York), from *Against Interpretation* by Susan Sontag, copyright © 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966 by Susan Sontag.

and recordings of the world's great music have put us into a position of veritably living in a museum or a concert hall in which we have at our fingertips the great art and music of the world.

The mass media, particularly magazines and television, stress more and more the importance, even the newsworthiness, of what is going on in the arts. A significant feature of both *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines is the in-depth articles they carry about exhibits, concerts, art movements, artists, and art events, frequently accompanied by several pages of quite good color reproductions. One of the best short histories of photography as an art was a twenty-page illustrated article in *Newsweek*. The inauguration of a new museum by I. M. Pei in Syracuse, New York (Figure 1-1), becomes the occasion for an article; a new school of artists—the color-field painters—is worth a feature article; the British Broadcasting Corporation in England co-operates with American television (with help from the Xerox Corporation) to produce an outstanding cultural program, “Civilisation” (1971–1972), featuring the distinguished art critic Kenneth Clark. Undoubtedly, such events are of great cultural and artistic importance, for mass media are eager to take advantage of them. But for many people, young and old, these very occasions raise as many questions as they answer. Kenneth Clark and his views do not interest everybody, and although presented with the best will in the world, his erudition cannot reach the so-called “average person,” in spite of its enormous value. Similarly, color-field painting will not mean the same thing to every person who sees the articles in *Time* and *Newsweek*, and to many readers it will mean scarcely anything at all. Pei’s “brutalist” museum in Syracuse will have a different impact on different people, and on many people it will have very little impact. These various reactions suggest that there are still many people who cannot participate fully and confidently in the culture of which they are a part.

This book has to do with the appreciation of the arts as normal human activity—not as puzzles to which a few people who label themselves “critics” have the key. But before beginning our formal examination of the arts, some reflection on the role which art has played in all cultures and among all people should reassure us of our right and privilege to enjoy the arts as the very human creations of very human beings like ourselves.

### *The Universality and Importance of Art*

The psychologist J. C. Flugel, in his book *The Psychology of Clothes*,<sup>5</sup> has concluded that “the three basic motives for clothing ourselves are for *protection*, for *modesty*, and for *decoration*.” Amassing evidence

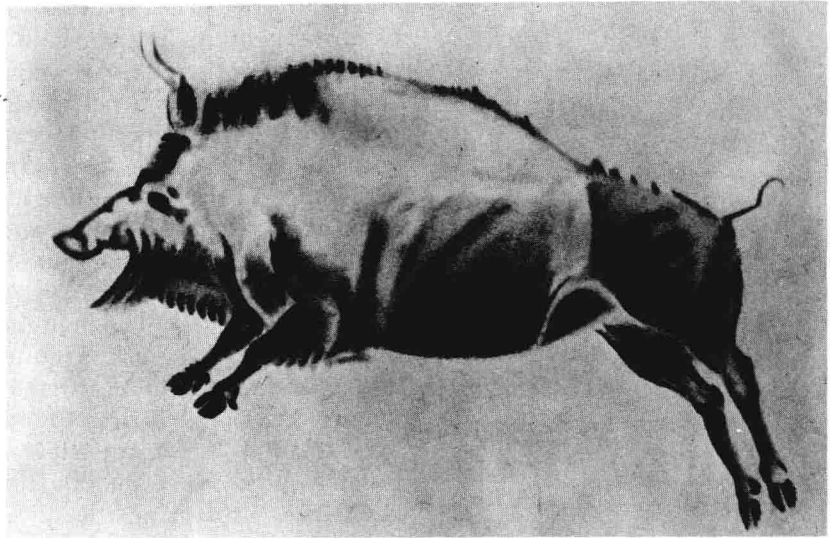
<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Clark, “In the Beginning: The Mystery of Ancient Egypt,” *Readers Digest*, June 1975, p. 91; condensed from a television script.

<sup>5</sup> London: The Hogarth Press, Ltd., 1950.

*Technology is not going to remove our deep-seated need for order and harmony; or the feeling of sympathy for our fellow creatures, both human and animal; or the belief, for which we have no rational grounds, that some part of us is immortal.*

—Kenneth Clark<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 1-4.** *Galloping Wild Boar.* (Found in the caves of Altamira, Spain. Photograph courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History, New York.)



from various geographical regions and primitive peoples, he finds—surprisingly—that the most important of these three motives is *decoration*. By “important” he means pervasive. There are many examples of clothing worn in severe climates which is not protective; and *modesty* is an extremely relative term—dress considered modest in one culture or geographic region is frequently considered immodest or indecent in another. This line of reasoning leads Flugel to the conclusion that when the wish to be attractive—that is, to adorn oneself in keeping with the aesthetic ideals of one’s society—comes into conflict with the need for comfort and protection, it is the impulse to decoration that wins. Similarly, Franz Boas, in his book *Primitive Art*, points out that “there are no people known to the anthropologist, no matter how close to the level of mere survival, that do not put into art energies that they can ill afford to subtract from their struggle against nature.”<sup>6</sup>

The arts constitute one of the oldest and most important means of expression developed by human beings. Even if we go back to those eras called “prehistoric” because they are older than any periods of which we have written records, we find works to which we give an important place in the roster of the humanities. In 1879 a Spaniard, accompanied by his little daughter, was exploring a cave in Altamira, in northern Spain. Suddenly she began to cry, “Bulls! Bulls!” He turned his lantern so that the light fell on the ceiling of the cave, and there he saw the pictures of wild boar, hind, and bison which we now know as the Altamira cave paintings (Figure 1-4).

<sup>6</sup> Quoted from Eliseo Vivas, “The Function of Art in the Human Economy,” in Julian Harris (ed.), *The Humanities: An Appraisal* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1962), p. 128.

*This is it: if you look at walls covered with many stains or made of stones of different colors, with the idea of imagining some scene, you will see in it a similarity to landscapes adorned with mountains, rivers, rocks, trees, plains, broad valleys, and hills of all kinds.*

—Leonardo da Vinci, *Notebooks*

**Figure 1-5.** *Apollo with Kithara*, Greek lekythos from the middle of the fifth century B.C. (Red-figured lekythos. Terra-cotta. Height: 15 inches. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art; gift of Mr. and Mrs. Leon Pomerance, 1953.)



Since that time, some similar paintings have been found in other caves, and the experts have given their judgment that these belong to the Upper Paleolithic Age, 10,000 to 20,000 years before Christ.

—Even at this early stage, one senses the basic rooting of art in the human psyche: the seeking and making of external images for inner feelings and emotions. Sitting in a cave in flickering firelight, the early artist sees or finds—taking shape in the shadows playing along the rough, rocky walls—images from daily activities. Outlining with charcoal or other colored material helps define these forms so that they become recognizable to all. In some of the cave paintings, jutting rocks serve as hip-bones, heads, or other parts of animals; in flickering light, they give the paintings a sense of movement and three-dimensionality. Our need to give objective, physical form to what we dream, feel, or imagine is the source of creativity. The development and use of skills in doing this give us art. —

Throughout history, artists of whatever degree of sophistication have frequently found that the impulse to compare visually similar things is a spur to creating satisfying objective images for their feelings.

In almost every country the earliest art goes back to prehistory. The Greek Homeric epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, probably date back to a time before the beginning of recorded history. These poems may have been put together between the twelfth and the ninth centuries B.C., but it is generally believed that they are collections of earlier tales which were known and sung for many years before that time.

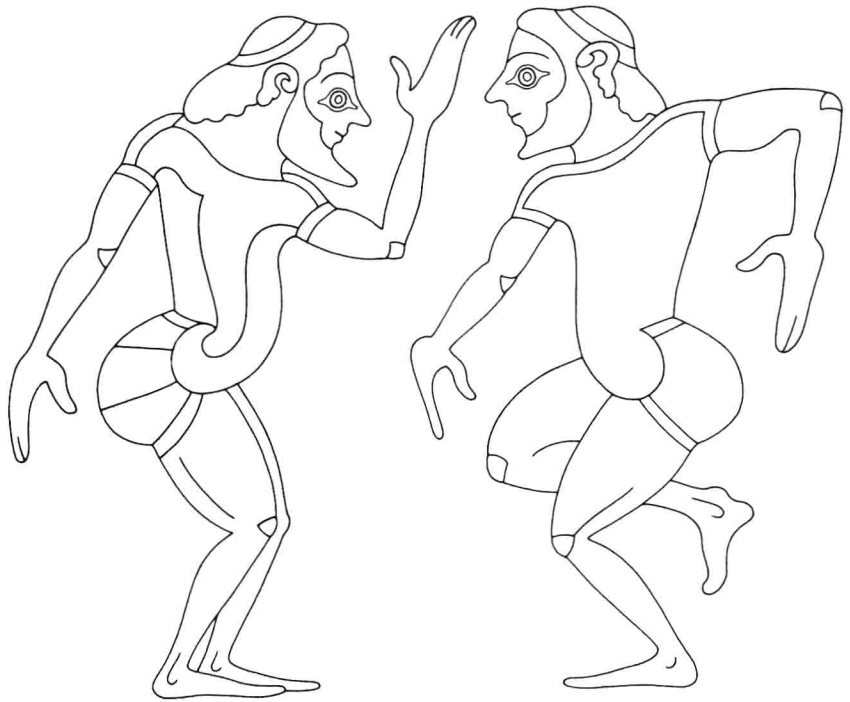
We do not have any examples of music and dancing at such early dates, because for a long time there were no adequate means of notation for these arts; but we do know that music and dance were important very early in human history. In 586 B.C., for example, the Greeks held a festival or competition at which one man played a composition for the aulos—a double-pipe reed instrument. There are pictures of instruments and dancers on early Greek vases. On a lekythos (oil container) from the middle of the fifth century B.C., there is a painting of Apollo holding a kithara (Figure 1-5)—the most important of the Greek instruments and the precursor of the modern harp.<sup>7</sup> And copies of two drawings of dancers from Greek vases are reproduced in this book. Figure 1-6 depicts two dancers in movements which seem similar to those seen in folk dances of our time; and Figure 16-1 shows a follower of Dionysus in a religious dance.

The Old Testament refers often to musical instruments. In II Samuel 6:5 we are told that when the ark was brought home, “David

<sup>7</sup> Donald J. Grout, *A History of Western Music*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1964), pp. 5-7.



**Figure 1-6.** "An ancient dance."  
Drawing from a Corinthian black-figure  
cup in the National Museum, Copen-  
hagen. (From *A Coloring Book of Ancient  
Greece*, Bellerophon Books, San  
Francisco, 1974.)



and all the house of Israel were dancing lustily before the Eternal and singing with lutes, with lyres, with drums, with rattles, and with cymbals" (Moffatt translation). Moreover, the Hebrews had a song-book, the Psalms, which in its present form probably dates from the second century B.C., though many of the songs are older. It is divided into five books, each closing with a doxology. Often there are definite directions as to how the song is to be sung. Psalm 9 is to be sung by a choir of boy sopranos. Psalm 12 is for bass voices. Psalms 54, 55, and 67 are to be accompanied by stringed instruments. Psalm 5 is to have a flute accompaniment. At times the tune is given; and a favorite tune may be used for several poems, as at the present time. Psalms 57, 58, 59, and 75 are to be sung to the tune "Destroy it not" (Moffatt translation).

Not only is art found in all ages; it is found also in all the countries of the world. Stonehenge (Figure 4-2) is in England; the beautiful head of Nefertiti (Color Plate 1; Color Plates 1 through 10 follow page 56) is from Egypt; Aesop's *Fables* are Greek, as is this little song of Sappho, a poet of the fifth century B.C.:

Mother, I cannot mind my web today  
All for a lad who has stolen my heart away.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Translated by Marjorie Carpenter.



The *Arabian Nights* tales, which came to us from Persia or one or the other of the Arabic-speaking countries, eventually go back to ancient India. The *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam, from the eleventh century after Christ, is Persian, though it is best known to us in the quatrains of FitzGerald, of which the following is possibly the most famous:

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,  
A Jug of Wine, a loaf of Bread—and Thou  
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—  
Ah, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

It seems very modern, as does this later short poem from the Chinese:

What life can compare with this? Sitting quietly by the window,  
I watch the leaves fall and the flowers bloom, as the seasons  
come and go.<sup>9</sup>

No matter what age or country we consider, there is always art. And this art is not good because it is universal, but universal because it is good. Old songs and stories, old pictures and statues, have been preserved because they are alive, because they meet the needs of people, because they are liked. There is a timelessness about art which makes us feel it is not old; that is, it does not grow old.

When we recite the Psalms—"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want," or "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion"—we do so because we find in them something that fits our needs.

A familiar tune is the one to which we sing both "We won't go home until morning" and "For he's a jolly good fellow." Early French lyrics of the song began: "*Malbrouk s'en va-t-en guerre*" ("Marlborough is off to the wars"); these lyrics date from about 1709, when the Duke of Marlborough was fighting in Flanders. The song is said to have been a favorite of Marie Antoinette about 1780. It was introduced into Beaumarchais's comedy *Le Mariage de Figaro* in 1784. The tune itself, however, is much older. It was well known in Egypt and the East, and is said to have been sung by the Crusaders. But none of us who sing it today think of these aspects of the song. We sing it because we like the song, because it fits our mood when we want a jolly, rollicking air.

Suppose it is a more modern poem we are thinking about:

<sup>9</sup> Quoted from the Chinese of Seccho by Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy* (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1972), p. 63.