

# CH. 28

## THEME: CHALLENGING TRADITION

FOCUS: Monet's *Impression, Sunrise*, Monet's *Gare St. Lazare*, Monet's *Rouen Cathedral Series*, Caillebotte's *Paris Street; Rainy Day*, Renoir's *Le Moulin de la Galette*

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/impressionism-france.html>

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/france-1848.html>

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/rouen-cathedral-series.html>

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/gustave-caillebotte-paris-street-rainy-day.html>

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luncheon\\_of\\_the\\_Boating\\_Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luncheon_of_the_Boating_Party)

READING ASSIGNMENT: KLEINER, pp. 799-806

POWERPOINT: EXPERIMENTATION and INNOVATION: IMPRESSIONISM (Monet, Caillebotte, and Renoir)

# 86

DATE DUE: \_\_\_\_\_

Citing specific visual evidence from the paintings shown, discuss ways in which these works by Impressionist artists broke away from traditional subjects and accepted styles of painting within the French Academy. Also, what were some reasons why these artists did so?



**Claude Monet. *Impression, Sunrise*, 1872, oil on canvas**

Ways in which this artist broke away from traditional subjects and accepted styles of painting:

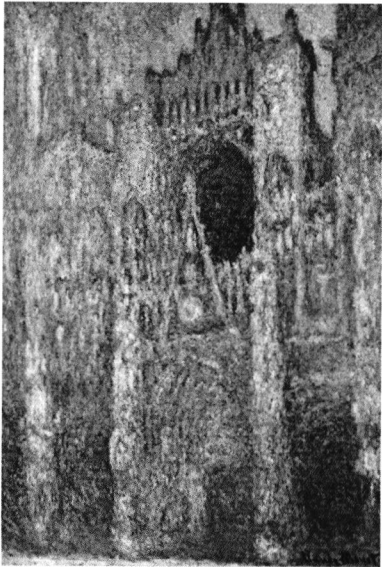
Why this artist broke away from traditional subjects and accepted styles of painting:

**Claude Monet. *Gare Saint-Lazare*, 1877, oil on canvas**

Ways in which this artist broke away from traditional subjects and accepted styles of painting:

Why this artist broke away from traditional subjects and accepted styles of painting:





**Claude Monet. Rouen Cathedral, The Portal at Midday, 1893, oil on canvas**

Ways in which this artist broke away from traditional subjects and accepted styles of painting:

Why this artist broke away from traditional subjects and accepted styles of painting:

**Gustave Caillebotte. Paris Street, A Rainy Day, 1877, oil on canvas**

Ways in which this artist broke away from traditional subjects and accepted styles of painting:

Why this artist broke away from traditional subjects and accepted styles of painting:



**Pierre-Auguste Renoir. Luncheon of the Boating Party, 1881, oil on canvas**

Ways in which this artist broke away from traditional subjects and accepted styles of painting:

Why this artist broke away from traditional subjects and accepted styles of painting:



## THEME: DOMESTIC LIFE and SURROUNDINGS

FOCUS: Degas's *Bellelli Family*, Degas's *The Tub*, Cassatt's *The Bath*, Cassatt's *The Coiffure*, Morisot's *The Mother and Sister of the Artist*, Caillebotte's *Man at his Bath*

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/the-bellelli-family.html>

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/cassatt-the-childs-bath.html>

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/cassats-the-coiffure.html>

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/morisots-mother-and-sister-of-the-artist.html>

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/man-at-his-bath.html>

READING ASSIGNMENT: KLEINER, pp. 807-809, 1015-1017

POWERPOINT: DOMESTIC LIFE and SURROUNDINGS:

IMPRESSIONISM (Degas, Cassatt, Morisot, and Caillebotte)

# 87

DATE DUE: \_\_\_\_\_

Analyze possible reasons why, in each of the following works, Impressionist artists were drawn to creating pictures of domestic life. How were they influenced by the modern sensibilities of fellow Impressionists (or other art forms such as photography) as well as the Japanese art of the Edo period?



Edgar Degas. *The Bellelli Family*, 1858-67, oil on canvas

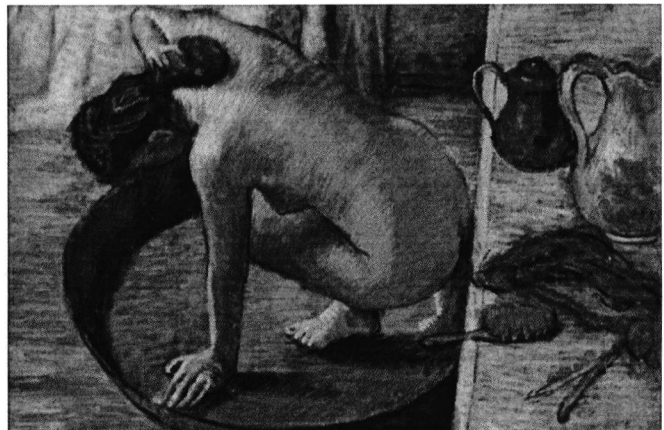
Why Degas was drawn to creating a scene from domestic life:

Artistic influences:

Edgar Degas. *The Tub*, 1886, pastel

Why Degas was drawn to creating a scene from domestic life:

Artistic influences:





**Mary Cassatt. *The Bath*, c. 1892, oil on canvas**

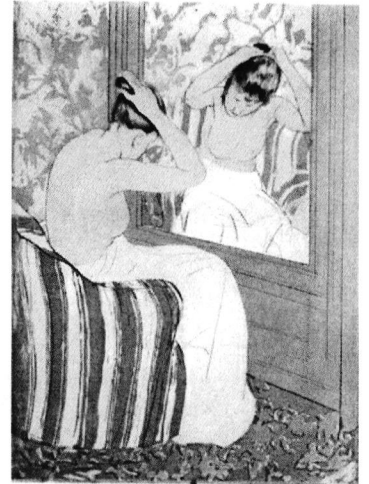
Why Cassatt was drawn to creating a scene from domestic life:

Artistic influences:

**Mary Cassatt. *The Coiffure*, 1890-91, drypoint and aquatint**

Why Cassatt was drawn to creating a scene from domestic life:

Artistic influences:



**Berthe Morisot. *The Mother and Sister of the Artist*, c. 1869-1870, oil on canvas**

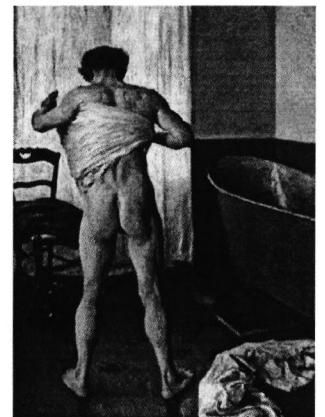
Why Morisot was drawn to creating a scene from domestic life:

Artistic influences:

**Gustave Caillebotte. *Man at his Bath*, 1884, oil on canvas**

Why Caillebotte was drawn to creating a scene from domestic life:

Artistic influences:



## THEME: DEATH and the AFTERLIFE

FOCUS: Van Gogh's *Starry Night*, Gauguin's *Spirit of the Dead Watching*, Gauguin's *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?*

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/van-goghs-the-starry-night.html>

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/gauguins-spirit-of-the-dead-watching-1892.html>

READING ASSIGNMENT: KLEINER, pp. 814-817 and *SEE BELOW*

POWERPOINT: DEATH and the AFTERLIFE: POST-IMPRESSIONISM (Van Gogh and Gauguin)

88

DATE DUE: \_\_\_\_\_

READ the FOLLOWING

### Vincent van Gogh. *The Starry Night*, 1889, oil on canvas

1. "One of the earliest and most famous examples of Expressionism is *The Starry Night*, which van Gogh painted from the window of his cell in a mental asylum. Above the quiet town is a sky pulsating with celestial rhythms and ablaze with exploding stars- clearly a record not of something seen but of what van Gogh felt. One explanation for the intensity of van Gogh's feelings in this case focuses on the then-popular theory that after death people journey to a star, where they continue their lives. Contemplating immortality in a letter, van Gogh wrote: 'Just as we take the train to get to Tarascon or Rouen, we take death to reach a star.' The idea is given visible form in this painting by the cypress tree, a traditional symbol of both death and eternal life, which dramatically rises to link the terrestrial with the stars. The brightest star is actually Venus, which is associated with love. Is it possible that the picture's extraordinary excitement also expresses van Gogh's euphoric hope of gaining the companionship that had eluded him on earth?" (Stokstad 1038-1039). "It was while he was a patient in the Saint-Rémy asylum that van Gogh produced *Starry Night*. He was painting in a 'dumb fury' during this period, staying up three nights in a row to paint because, as he wrote, 'The night is more alive and more richly colored than the day.' Yet, though in a fever of productivity, 'I wonder when I'll get my starry night done,' he wrote, 'a picture that haunts me always'" (Strickland 121-122).

2. "The picture conveys surging movement through curving brushwork, and the stars and moon seem to explode with energy. 'What I am doing is not by accident,' van Gogh wrote, 'but because of real intention and purpose.' For all the dynamic force of 'Starry Night,' the composition is carefully balanced. The upward thrusting cypresses echo the vertical steeple, each cutting across curving, lateral lines of hill and sky. In both cases, the vertical forms act as brakes, counterforces to prevent the eye from traveling out of the pictures. The dark cypresses also offset the bright moon in the opposite corner for a balanced effect. The forms of the objects determine the rhythmic flow of brushstrokes, so that the overall effect is of expressive unity rather than chaos" (122). "To Van Gogh it was the color, not the form, that determined the expressive content of his pictures... His personal color symbolism probably stemmed from discussions with Paul Gauguin... (Yellow, for example, meant faith or triumph or love to Van Gogh, while carmine was a spiritual color and cobalt a divine one. Red and green, on the other hand, stood for the terrible human passions.)" (Janson 744).

3. "Van Gogh considered *Olive Trees* an apt companion piece to the contemporaneous *Starry Night*. Although one is a sunlit landscape painted on the spot, the other a nocturnal vision shaped in the studio, he considered both 'exaggerations' with 'warped lines'. In *Olive Trees* Van Gogh took up a recent enthusiasm- trees he found typically Provencal and associated with earthly pain- but *Starry Night* marked his return to a poetic motif he had already explored in hopes of 'doing people's hearts good'. In Arles he had used a starry sky to expressive ends in *The Poet*; included the glimpse of one in his painting of a gas-lit restaurant terrace; and depicted an astral expanse in *Starry Night on the Rhone*, which he painted outdoors at night. Pleased with the absence of black in his Arlesien nocturnes, Van Gogh was especially proud of *Starry Night on the Rhone's* unconventional colorfulness" (Sund 253). "Though he may have been frustrated by asylum rules that prevented him from painting outdoors after dark (something he enjoyed immensely), this situation actually liberated Van Gogh. The 'night effect' that he was obliged to paint from memory is extravagantly animate and lushly hued, the sky's energetic unfurling dominating the picture in a way the luminous heavens of *Starry Night on the Rhone* do not. His longtime wish to free up his imagination- a faculty that 'can lead us to the creation of a more exalting and consoling nature' - found outlet in *Starry Night*, though Van Gogh was less impressed with the result than subsequent viewers have been" (257).

4. "Ironically, the painting his modern audience most readily associates with him is atypical of Van Gogh's oeuvre, and one he accorded scant mention in his letters. One of few landscapes he composed in the studio, *Starry Night* is an amalgam of previously observed and painted motifs, pieced together and aggrandized. Its brilliant, windblown sky, oddly shaped mountains, and bushy cypress reflect the artist's Provencal experience, while the spindly steeple at the village center is that of a Dutch church, inserted in the same spirit of retrieval that sparked *Memory of the Garden at Etten*. The orange moon is the sort of fat crescent Van Gogh favored, its points coming almost full circle and its corona- like those of the stars- fantastically large, colorful, palpable" (257). "In the context of Van Gogh's belief in the night sky's promise of life beyond 'this thankless planet', the celestial spectacle that comprises two-thirds of *Starry Night* may be seen to reflect dreams of enhance existence on star made accessible by death. The small, mostly dark village indicates earthly life's relative marginality within a grander scheme- and the limited enlightenment available to those caught up in it. In this respect, Van Gogh's vision compares to Caspar David Friedrich's Romantic evocations of miniscule mortals' inability to see beyond the fog of the mundane. Whereas Friedrich's ruined cathedrals bespeak the paltriness of human constructs in the face of God and self-renewing nature, the church in *Starry Night*, intact and upward-straining, may represent human attempts to touch the beyond through religious practice. The year before Van Gogh remarked that his own 'terrible need' of religion made him 'go outside at night to paint the stars'. The flamelike cypress, which extends well beyond the horizon, may represent the more effective means of accessing the 'other hemisphere of life'. Cypresses are fixtures of Mediterranean cemeteries, traditionally associated with mourning (by virtue of their darkness) and immortality (since they are aromatic evergreens). Van Gogh, who noted that cypresses were 'always occupying my thoughts' at Saint-Remy, considered them 'funereal', and probably intended the prominent specimen in *Starry Night* to emblemize death, the trainlike transport 'one takes... to reach a star', knowing 'we cannot get to a star while we're alive'. Like *The Reaper*, *Starry Night* manifests Van Gogh's attempts to come to terms with his mortality, a topic thrown into high relief by his illness. The sunlit picture personifies death as an 'almost smiling' laborer, intent on his job, and the moonlit one posits life beyond the dim and circumscribed earthly realm, in a limitless beyond that pulsates with energy and illumination" (257, 260).

5. "When van Gogh came to paint his new starry night, he did not follow his earlier procedure of doing it on the spot. Instead, he was forced to revert to the very convention he objected to. At the asylum, he had been given a room overlooking the garden to use as a studio. But from the studio, unlike the bedroom, he had no view of the Alpilles. In that studio in mid-June, several recently painted canvases were drying. From two of them, *Mountainous Landscape Behind the Asylum* and the *Wheat Field* now in Prague, van Gogh extracted elements that he then used in his new painting. From the one he took the outline of the Alpilles, and from the other he took the cypresses" (Pickvance 103). "And with its mixed genesis, its composite procedures, and its arbitrary collage of separate motifs, it is overtly stamped as an 'abstraction' of the kind he painted in Arles under the tutelage of Gauguin. Its complex and distinctive morphology bears little resemblance to the rest of his June oeuvre" (103, 106). "Van Gogh made a drawing after the painting sometime between 25 June and 2 July. It shows more changes from the parent painting than any of the other ten drawings sent to Theo on 2 July; in particular, many of the cottage roofs are now thatched and several chimneys emit long spirals of smoke, enhancing the Dutchness of the village. Additionally, there are only ten stars, not the eleven necessary for supporting the argument that the painting is an exegesis of Revelations. Proportionately, there is more sky in the drawing and the moon and stars are larger. The cypresses are opened out, like some strangely tentacled tropical plant" (106). "Thickly painted in a kind of whorling chain-stitch, the picture has the crafted surface of the 'crude things' Van Gogh admired most: 'common earthenware,' rush-seated chairs, and old pairs of workmen's shoes. Symbols are drawn from a well-thumbed dictionary of romantic anticapitalism: mournful cypress trees, church steeples, peasant cottages with glowing hearths, hills and stars and planets. Indeed, the work is in part a reverie upon a utopian future based on the imagined social integrity of a simpler past. Yet at the same time it is a modernist rejection of the pictorial conventions of Realism and Naturalism. The dichotomy was remarked on by Van Gogh: '[*Starry Night*] is not a return to romantic or religious ideas, no. Nevertheless, by going the way of Delacroix, more than is apparent, by color and a more spontaneous drawing than delusive precision, one could express the purer nature of a countryside compared with suburbs and cabarets of Paris.' In his painting of *Starry Night* and in his brief explanation of it to Theo, Van Gogh is revealed as a critical modernist as much as a romantic anticapitalist" (Eisenman 303).

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**Paul Gauguin. *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?*, 1897, oil on canvas**

1. "Seeking pure sensation untainted by 'sick' civilization, Gauguin spent his last ten years in the South Seas, where he felt, as he wrote, 'Free at last, without worrying about money and bale to love, sing and die.' He lived in a native hut with a 13-year old Tahitian mistress, turning out vividly hued, symbolic paintings, wood sculpture, and woodcuts" (Strickland 119). "His masterpiece ... is *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?*, painted as a summation of his art shortly before he was driving by despair to attempt suicide... Although Gauguin intended the surface to be the sole conveyer of meaning, we know from his letters that the huge canvas represents an epic cycle of life. The scene unfolds from right to left. It begins with the sleeping girl, continues with the beautiful young woman (a Tahitian Eve) in the center picking fruit, and ends with 'an old woman approaching death who seems reconciled and resigned to her thoughts.' Gauguin has cast the answer to his title in distinctly Western terms" (Janson 747). "His health suffered, and his art was not well received. In 1897, worn down by these obstacles, Gauguin decided to take his own life... From the title and based on Gauguin's state of mind, this painting can be read as a summary of his artistic methods (especially the use of flat shapes of pure unmodulated color) and his views of life" (Kleiner, Mamiya, and Tansey 919). "Gauguin's attempt to commit suicide was unsuccessful and he ultimately died a few years later, in 1903, in the Marquesas Islands" (920).
2. "The 'strange white bird' at lower left must once again be the bird of the devil, cawing, as mechanically as Poe's raven did its 'nevermore,' the fateful: 'What are we?' Judging from the allusion to original sin in the form of the adult man picking a red fruit from a tree in the center foreground, the answer would appear to be 'sinners'. Gauguin, it would seem, revealed once again the imprint of his early Catholic education. The cycle of life is laid out in the foreground, from the infant to the right to the mummy-like Eve on the left- the scene evolving under the protection of the Hina of Mercy, shown as a sculpture again, who ensures that the human spirit will survive through the achievements on earth. The psychological tensions occasioned by the contest between man's instinctual call and the forces of society are embodied in the juxtaposition between the 'enormous' figure who 'raises its arm' and the 'two personages who dare to think about their destiny'- the unsympathetic observers who will convert man's personal desire into a cause for religious and social opprobrium" (Dorra 254-256). "At about this time Gauguin wrote his angry anti-Catholic diatribe, *L'esprit moderne et le catholicisme*, eventually sent to the Catholic bishop of Atuona in the Marquesas, who sent him in exchange an expensive tome on French Catholic missionary schools" (256).
3. In this work and others, "Gauguin admits profound uncertainties about his own cultural heritage and posits the value of a new syncretic and international culture. In these works, Western illusionism is juxtaposed to non-European abstraction and patterning, Christian deities are paired with Hindu, Buddhist, or Tahitian gods, and European narratives of fall and redemption are transformed into parables of healthful eroticism and natural abundance. Moreover, native women are depicted in the works cited above as intellectual and contemplative people (a relative novelty in depictions of Europeans, much less Polynesians), and possessed of a powerful and independent sexuality. In this radical ethnographic endeavor (admittedly partial contradictory, and at times even wholly unsuccessful), Gauguin anticipated the stance of the Surrealist author Andre Breton who wrote fifty years after Gauguin's death: 'Surrealism is allied with peoples of color, first because it has sided with them against all forms of imperialism and white brigandage... and secondly because of the profound affinities between surrealism and primitive thought.' To the Surrealists and to their friend Levi-Strauss, 'primitive' art was the expression of an equilibrium between humans and nature which aboriginal cultures had achieved but which capitalism destroyed. The goal of the Surrealist movement, therefore, as Breton wrote, 'was the elaboration of a collective myth appropriate to our time' that could resurrect a primitive balance between nature and society, albeit at a much higher level of technological achievement and global interconnectedness" (Eisenman 336).
4. "Gauguin called this painting a philosophical work comparable to the themes of the Gospels. It was conceived and painted in a frenzy, in circumstances suspended between debilitating despair and the anticipation of relief by suicide, which Gauguin had planned to follow the completion of this testimonial to the futility of life. Over the following three years he gave an account of the painting's symbolism and its execution, primarily in letters to a friend in Paris, Daniel de Monfreid" (Andersen 238). "Both in composition and content, the painting is roughly symmetrical and pyramidal. At the center is a Garden of Eden motif, with a woman picking fruit from a tree that Gauguin identified as 'l'arbre de la vidence'; at the right is an infant near the domestic dog in a setting of family life; at the left there is old age. Thus the theme is cyclical and suggests the human life pattern of birth-sin-death. Gauguin has stated this traditional theme, however, in a particular and personal way, for the life course presented here is specifically that of woman. Innocence and girlhood are shown by the young girl near the kittens; in the center is the figure of Eve picking fruit, which symbolizes sin; motherhood and domestic submission are depicted through the family group at the right and the woman seated by the goat (both wearing symbols of submission, a collar and a bracelet); and finally there is old age at the extreme left" (238). "Presiding over this cycle is Hina, the Tahitian deity for woman and the mother of the gods; her attribute, the white bird, is taking the life of the lizard (analogous in Tahiti to the serpent), which, in addition to the 'futility of vain words', may also symbolize the absolution of carnal sin through motherhood" (238). "It is significant that in Gauguin's own description, the figure he repeatedly singled out is the old woman at the left; indeed, she is the key to the meaning. This symbolic figure has a recurring history in Gauguin's art and ultimately derives from a peculiar outside source that seems to have had special psychological significance for Gauguin. This source I have found to be a Peruvian mummy, which was on view in the Musée d'Ethnologie du Trocadéro in the

1880s. The legs and arms are drawn inward and bound, the feet are crossed, the head is tilted and couched in the hands; the posture and the expression suggest an image of anguish. Drawn into a fetal burial position, the figure is a fusion of birth and death, which can be interpreted both as the cycle of death-rebirth and as birth-sin-death" (238).

5. "During the research for his novel *The Way to Paradise*, which interweaves the life of Gauguin with that of his half-Peruvian grandmother Flora Tristan, the Peruvian writer visited Tahiti where he encountered the *mahu* – 'human beings of uncertain gender' who also feature in the artist's paintings. When Gauguin arrived in Tahiti for the first time, in June 1891, he had his hair down to his shoulders, wore a cockade with red fur, and his clothes were flamboyant and provocative. He had dressed like this ever since he had given up his career on the Stock Exchange in Paris. The indigenous people of Papeete were surprised at his appearance and believed he was a *mahu*, a rare species among the Europeans in Polynesia. The colonists explained to the painter that, in the Maori tongue, the *mahu* was a man-woman, a type that had existed from time immemorial in the cultures of the Pacific, but which had been demonized and banned by common consent by both Catholic and Protestant missionaries, engaged in a fierce battle to indoctrinate the native peoples, during the intense period of colonization in the mid-nineteenth century. However, it was proved well-nigh impossible to root out the *mahu* from indigenous society. Concealed in urban settlements, the *mahu* survived in the villages and even in the cities, and re-emerged when official hostility and persecution abated. Proof of this fact can be found in Gauguin's paintings in the nine years that he spent in Tahiti and the Marquesas Islands, which are full of human beings of uncertain gender who share equally masculine and feminine attributes with a naturalness and openness that is similar to the way in which his characters display their nakedness, merge with natural order or indulge in leisure" (Llosa). "The one thing Gauguin fails to tell us is that the fruit picker at the center—often mistaken for a woman—is in fact a *mahu*: one of a caste of effeminate men revered for their mystical powers. On arriving in Tahiti with shoulder-length hair, Gauguin had initially been taken for a *mahu* by a gang of giggling local girls. Although an obsessive womanizer, Gauguin was fascinated by these creatures and portrayed them in several works. Then as now, the end of the century coincided with a cult of the hermaphrodite" (Richardson).

6. "Inaugurating a variety of personal relationships with women and girls as young as thirteen years of age, Gauguin developed a view of the Tahitian woman as emblematic simultaneously of the culture, of a certain sort of innocence, and of a virtually transcendental sacredness. That these images might be though, naively, to have little to do with sensuality reflects the degree to which we fail to understand that for Gauguin, as for others after him, the sensual itself was sacred" (Duran 89). "In this realm of the exotic, the female is the archetypal figure for Gauguin not only because of proximity to nature (in the standard sort of view of things) but because- in Gauguin's experience – of her youth. The two factors converge to make the sexually accessible young female someone on whom the artist can focus all of his fantasies since she readily accedes to his wishes and is an accommodating model in more ways than one" (91-92). "The newborn, the Tahitian Adam, and the crone are not the only figures in the painting that have a symbolic meaning; perhaps all the figures do. Gauguin only provided explanations for some of these, however, and even these are so vague that they are open to a variety of interpretations" (Klein 8). The idol "represents Hina, the Tahitian goddess of the moon, a deity responsible for regeneration and rebirth (an allusion to the constant renewal of the moon). Her function in the left-hand panel... may be to underscore life's cyclicality. Of the strange white bird with a lizard in its claws at the crone's feet, Gauguin said that it represents the futility of vain words, but neglected to specify their nature. Is he referring to the hopelessness of seeking answers to questions posed by the painting's title? Or, perhaps, to the ruthlessness of the life cycle? We note also that a lizard symbolically represents the serpent before the Fall, and that in Polynesia, the nocturnal arboreal creatures were believed to be the spirits of the dead rustling in the trees. In the medieval church, the lizard stood for rebirth and resurrection and for hope of life beyond the grave" (8).

7. "For the presence of the dog, the peacock (if this really is the other bird), the cat, and the goat, Gauguin left no explanation. We note again that pure-bred, short-haired dogs were trusted companions of Polynesian navigators on their epic voyages to discover new lands. In this work the breed, which became extinct in Gauguin's time, may symbolize the lost, pre-European order. The peacock in Christian iconography was a symbol of the Resurrection, possibly because after molting it regains its feathery splendor again. A cat was traditionally associated with the moon, which waxes and wanes and disappears from the sky. More often, however, cats were regarded as the embodiment of evil, often representing the devil himself. As for the goat, in St. Matthew's Gospel, Jesus likens the righteous to sheep and the wicked to goats condemned to burn in the eternal fire. Some Gauguin scholars have attempted to impose another layer of symbolism on his masterpiece, one related to his own life history. They suggest that the crone is a reminder of his Peruvian ancestry on his mother's side; that the two figures seen in intimate conversation walking in the background are Gauguin and his daughter Aline; and that the little girl seen eating a fruit at Adam's feet in the foreground symbolizes his daughter by Pau'ura, his vahine in Tahiti (the child died a few days after birth)" (8). The ghostly, shadowy appearance of the figures may indicate that Aline is portrayed after death and that Gauguin is at death's door, resigned to killing himself after completion of the painting. They walk, or rather glide by, from left to right and so symbolically, in the context of the canvas, from Death to Birth" (8-9).

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1. One explanation for the intensity of van Gogh's expressive treatment of this nighttime sky has been explained by his statement, "Just as we take the train to get to Tarascon or Rouen, we take \_\_\_\_\_ to reach a star."

2. Van Gogh's personal color symbolism probably stemmed from discussions related to theosophy with the artist Paul Gauguin. The color \_\_\_\_\_ may have meant faith or triumph or love to Van Gogh, while carmine was a spiritual color and cobalt a divine one. Red and green, on the other hand, stood for the terrible human \_\_\_\_\_."

4. Cypress trees are fixtures of Mediterranean cemeteries, traditionally associated with \_\_\_\_\_ (by virtue of their darkness) and \_\_\_\_\_ (since they are aromatic evergreens). Van Gogh noted that cypresses were "always occupying my thoughts" at Saint-Remy, where this work was painted.



3. Although this work was painted while Van Gogh was living in an asylum in Provence, the quaint church and village appear to Dutch, not from the south of France. What might be a possible explanation for this artistic decision?

5. One of few landscapes Van Gogh composed in the studio, *Starry Night* is an amalgam of previously observed and painted motifs, pieced together and aggrandized. What interested him most in this composition may be detected in a drawing he made after creating the painting. What changes did he make in a drawing to the composition?

6. The brightest star in the sky may be \_\_\_\_\_, which is associated with love. This observation suggests that the picture's extraordinary excitement expresses Van Gogh's euphoric hope of gaining the companionship that had eluded him on earth.

7. The presence of the church appears intentional in that its \_\_\_\_\_ echoes the shape of the cypress trees. The year before Van Gogh painted this work, he remarked that his own "terrible need" of \_\_\_\_\_ made him "go outside at night to paint the stars".

8. Van Gogh's thick application of paint, known by the term \_\_\_\_\_, seems to suggest the artist's affinity with roughly textured objects associated with a humble adobe.

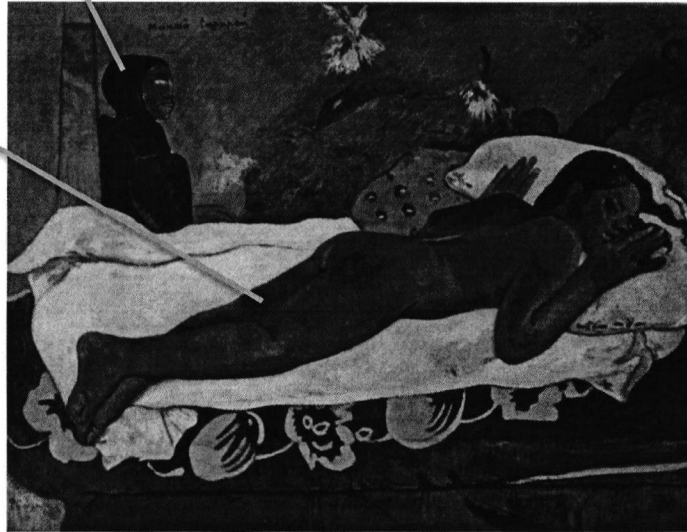
1. This painting depicts an adolescent girl (the model was Gauguin's Tahitian girlfriend

\_\_\_\_\_, who was only fourteen years old), lying belly down on a bed, her face staring out at the viewer with a fearful expression. The reason for her fear, according to Gauguin, was that she believed in tupapaus, the spirits of the

\_\_\_\_\_ who in Tahitian mythology inhabit the interior of the island and whose presence illuminates the forest at night.

5. This work painted as a summation of his art shortly before he was driving by despair to attempt \_\_\_\_\_.

2. The disproportionate scale of the figure in the background suggests that instead of being an old woman, it may be a carved \_\_\_\_\_. Some have theorized that it is the spirit of the \_\_\_\_\_ watching that the title of the painting refers to.

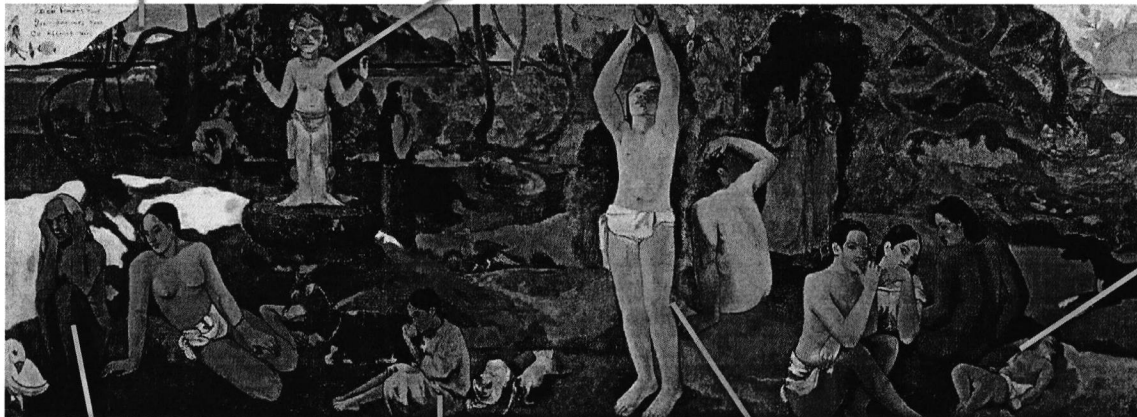


6. The scene evolves under the protection of the Tahitian deity, \_\_\_\_\_ of the moon, mercy, and regeneration, shown as a sculpture. She ensures that the human spirit will survive through the achievements on earth.

3. Although this painting was created in Tahiti, Gauguin brought it back to Europe to exhibit it in the city of \_\_\_\_\_

to hopefully make money for his family. His intent was also to creating a work that would shock his bourgeoisie audience.

4. How does the imagery in these two paintings offer clues as to why Gauguin left his home in France and traveled to the exotic island of Tahiti?



8. Drawn into a fetal burial position, the figure of the old woman is a fusion of birth and death, which can be interpreted both as the cycle of death-rebirth and as birth-sin-death. Her form appears to have been inspired from a Peruvian \_\_\_\_\_.

9. One interpretation of the painting suggests that the young girl eating a piece of fruit may refer to Gauguin's own \_\_\_\_\_. What might the cats and the goat next to her symbolize?

10. The fruit picker at the center—often talked of as a Tahitian Eve—may be a \_\_\_\_\_: one of a caste of effeminate men revered for their mystical powers. On arriving in Tahiti with shoulder-length hair, Gauguin had initially been taken for such an androgynous figure by a gang of giggling local girls.

7. The scene unfolds from right to left. It begins with the

\_\_\_\_\_ girl, continues with the figure in the center picking fruit, and ends with an old woman approaching death who seems reconciled and resigned to her thoughts. As such, it represents a cycle of life.

DATE DUE: \_\_\_\_\_

**THEME: INNOVATION and EXPERIMENTATION**

**FOCUS:** Seurat's *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*,  
Cézanne's *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, Cézanne's *Basket of Apples*,  
Cézanne's *The Bathers*

**ONLINE ASSIGNMENT:** <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/cezannes-mont-sainte-victoire.html>

**ONLINE ASSIGNMENT:** <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/still-life-with-basket-of-apples.html>

**READING ASSIGNMENT:** KLEINER, pp. 817-819 and *SEE BELOW*

**POWERPOINT:** EXPERIMENTATION and **INNOVATION:** POST-IMPRESSIONISM (Seurat and Cézanne)

READ the FOLLOWING

**Paul Cezanne. *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, 1902-04, oil on canvas**

1. "In 1874, a critic dismissed **Paul Cézanne** (1839-1906) as 'no more than a kind of madman, with the fit on him, painting the fantasies of delirium tremens.'... Although he began by exhibiting with the Impressionists (after being rejected by the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the Salon) and was tutored in open-air painting by Pissarro, Cézanne was too much of a loner to join any group. Encouraged to come to Paris from his native Aix-en-Provence by the novelist Zola, a childhood friend, Cézanne always felt alien in the city. Even among the Impressionists he was considered beyond the pale. Manet called him a 'farceur' (a joke); Degas though he was a wild man because of his provincial accent, comical clothes, and unorthodox painting style" (Strickland 116). "Stung by ridicule, Cézanne retreated to Aix in 1886 and devoted himself tirelessly to his art. Obscure until his first one-man show in 1895, after which he was revered as a 'Sage' by the younger generation of artists, Cézanne gained a reputation as an unapproachable hermit, almost an ogre" (116). "What made Cézanne's art so radical in his day and appreciated in ours was his new take on surface appearances. Instead of imitating reality as it appeared to the eye, Cézanne penetrated to its underlying geometry. 'Reproduce nature in terms of the cylinder and the sphere and the cone,' he advised in a famous dictum. By this he meant to simplify particular objects into near-abstract forms fundamental to all reality. 'The painter possesses an eye and a brain,' Cézanne said. 'The two must work together'" (117). "In *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, a landscape he painted more than thirty times, Cézanne portrayed the scene like a geodesic pyramid, defining surface appearance through colored planes. To create an illusion of depth, he placed cool colors like blue, which seem to recede, at rear and warm colors like red, which to advance, in front. Cézanne believed that beneath shifting appearances was an essential, unchanging armature. By making this permanent geometry visible, Cézanne hoped to 'make of Impressionism,' he said, 'something sold and durable, like the art of museums, to carve out the underlying structure of things'" (117). "Picasso, Braque, and others would later view this move from descriptive accuracy of evidence of Cézanne's revolutionary conception of painting as an aesthetically pleasing arrangement of colored forms on a canvas support, but that was never Cézanne's intention. Cézanne became the originator of what became known as abstraction, but he was an abstractionist in the literal sense of the term: Cézanne *abstracted* what he considered nature's deepest truth- its essential tension between stasis and change" (Stokstad 1035).

2. "His *Mont Sainte-Victoire seen from Les Lauves* strongly implies the hand of God at work in it. Its hierarchical arrangement (with the mountain dominating the scene) and its sheer richness of coloration all suggest a power at work in nature, organizing it vigorously and according to a purpose. Cézanne expressed precisely this idea in a letter to Bernard of April 1904, when he described the landscape as 'the sight which the eternal, omnipotent Father spreads out before our eyes'" (Smith 109-110). "For all its architectural stability, the scene is alive with movement. For all its architectural stability, the scene is alive with movement. But the forces at work here have been brought into balance, subdued by the greater power of the artist's will. This disciplined energy, distilled from the trials of a stormy youth, gives Cézanne's mature style its enduring strength" (Janson 737). "Cézanne eschewed the great subjects of the Salon painters, preferring landscape, portraiture and genre subjects" (Bolton 104). "When Cézanne wrote of his goal of 'doing Poussin over entirely from nature,' he apparently meant that Poussin's effects of distance, depth, structure, and solidity must be achieved not by traditional perspective and chiaroscuro but in terms of the color patterns an optical analysis of nature provides" (Kleiner, Mamiya, and Tansey 922). Like Poussin, "his method of working was ... painstaking and slow, rather than quick and spontaneous" (Bolton 104). "The idea of Cézanne as the father of abstract art is based on his remark that one must detect in Nature the sphere, the cone, and the cylinder. What he meant by that is anyone's guess, since there is not a single sphere, cone, or cylinder to be seen in Cézanne's work. What is there, especially in the work of the last decade and a half of his life- from 1890 onwards, after he finally abandoned Paris and settled in solitude in Aix- is a vast curiosity about the relativity of seeing, coupled with an equally vast doubt that he or anyone else could approximate it in paint" (Hughes, *Shock of the New* 18). "This process of

seeing, this adding up and weighing of choices, is what Cezanne's peculiar style makes concrete: the broken outlines, strokes of pencil laid side by side, are emblems of scrupulousness in the midst of a welter of doubt. Each painting or watercolor is about the motif. No previous painter had taken his viewers through this process so frankly. But Cezanne takes you backstage; there are the ropes and pulleys, the wooden back of the Magic Mountain, and the theatre- as distinct from the single performance- becomes more comprehensible. The Renaissance admired an artist's certainty about what he saw. But with Cézanne, as the critic Barbara Rose remarked in another context, the statement: 'This is what I see', becomes replaced by a question: 'Is this what I see?' You share his hesitations about the position of a tree or a branch; or the final shape of Mont Ste-Victoire, and the trees in front of it. Relativity is all. Doubt becomes part of the painting's subject. Indeed, the idea that doubt can be heroic, if it is locked into a structure as grand as that of the paintings of Cezanne's old age, is one of the keys to our century, a touchstone of modernity itself. Cubism would take it to an extreme" (18). "As is so often the case with Cézanne's paintings, it is impossible to say what time of day, or what season, this picture depicts. The evergreen vegetation, the even, passionless light and the understated atmosphere make it impossible to ascribe it to a particular moment. It is as though Cézanne has removed any distractions which could make the subject of the painting unclear in any way, so that the reality of nature can speak for itself. This reality is not the reality of the moment, of a momentary 'being thus', but rather one which embodies the experience of immutability and permanence, of simply 'being there'. This is what Cézanne meant when he said that he wanted to make Impressionism into something permanent, like art in museums" (Becks-Malorny 70, 72).

3. "After exhibiting with the Impressionists in their third group exhibition in 1877, Cézanne essentially struck off on his own. Though he kept in occasional contact with members of the group (especially Renoir) he needed no further lessons from them. Nor did he try to exhibit with them; for seven out of the next eight years he tried in vain to show at the Salon, his only success coming in 1882 when he was admitted as a "pupil" of the charitable juror Antoine Guillemet. His few press notices were as uncomprehending and patronizing as they had been when he first exhibited with the Impressionists as they had been when he first exhibited with the Impressionists nearly a decade earlier" (Eisenman 345). "Increasingly melancholic and reclusive, Cézanne was fast fading from public view and becoming legendary. In 1885, Gauguin professed admiration for his art but called him 'that misunderstood man, whose nature is essentially mystical... he spends whole days on the tops of mountains reading Virgil and gazing at the sky' " (345). "At the same time that he was suffering alienation from both avant-garde and academic Paris, Cézanne suffered a number of personal blows that further affected his art. In 1885, an unconsummated passion for a maid from his parent's house at Aix left him angry and confused. The same year, Zola's cruel portrayal of him in *L'Oeuvre* ended the only friendship he ever had. In April 1886, Cézanne grudgingly married Hortense Fiquet (they were already living apart), and six months later attended his father's funeral. This latter event secured him financially but exhausted him emotionally. Convinced by all that had transpired by the futility of human intercourse, and certain that his own death was at hand, Cézanne now worked ceaselessly and with unprecedented dedication. His landscapes, still lifes, and figure paintings progressed apace, and his style quickly achieved the complexity and resolve that a later generation would see as the foundation for its own modern and abstract art" (345). "Linear perspective and tonal modeling would detract from the truth of his optical impressions and were therefore to be avoided. 'Color must reveal every interval in depth,' he said, through the recession of cool colors, the advance of warm colors and variations in intensity. The challenge this presented released all the boldness and largeness of his vision. It was partly in response to it that he began, after about 1882, to paint more thinly with a restricted palette of pale greens, earth colors and a wide range of blues, with which limited means the scenery of his native Provence- scenery which had hardly ever been painted before- was endowed with all the nobility of a Classical landscape" (Honour and Fleming 732).

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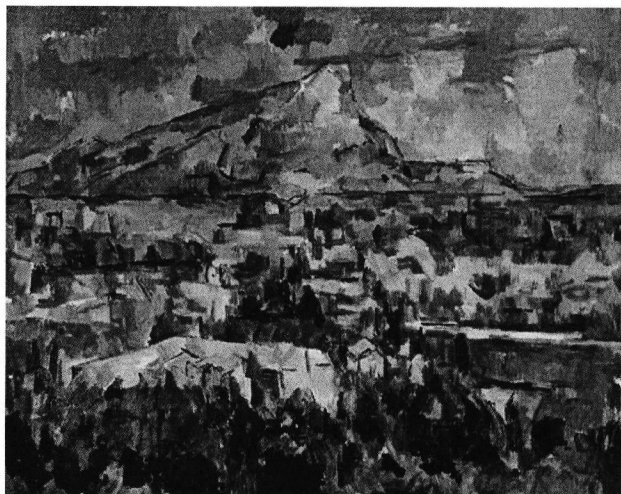
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Analyze ways in which Cézanne demonstrates an interest in experimentation and innovation in painting landscapes and still lifes.



**Paul Cézanne. *Mont Sainte-Victoire*. 1902-04, oil on canvas**

1. How is this landscape by Cézanne similar to the experimental works of the Impressionists?

2. How is this landscape by Cézanne innovatively different from the work of the Impressionists?

3. HOW did landscapes by Cézanne, similar to the one above, become influential in later experimental modernist works of the twentieth century?

4. WHY did landscapes by Cézanne, similar to the one above, become influential in later experimental modernist works of the twentieth century?



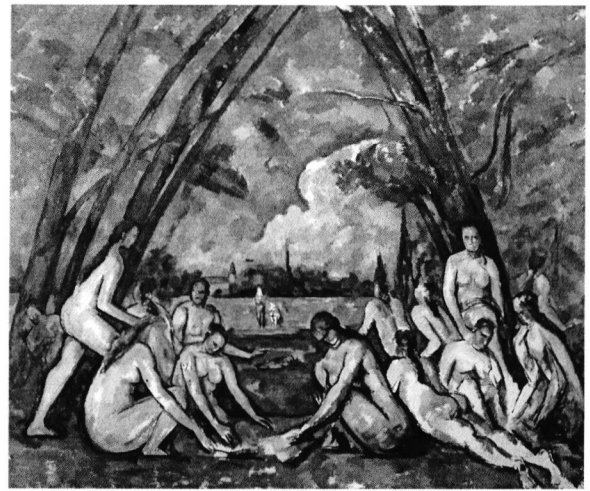
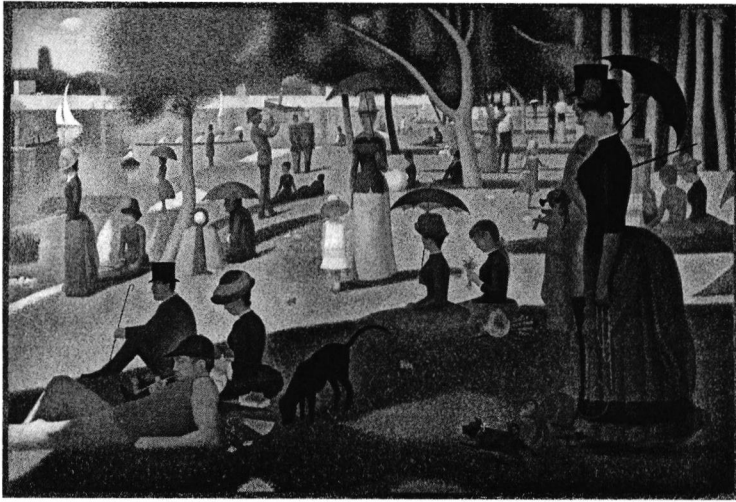
**Paul Cézanne. *The Basket of Apples*. 1895, oil on canvas**

1. How is this still life by Cézanne similar to the experimental works of the Impressionists?

2. How is this still life by Cézanne innovatively different from the work of the Impressionists?

3. HOW did still lifes by Cézanne, similar to the one above, become influential in later experimental modernist works of the twentieth century?

4. WHY did still lifes by Cézanne, similar to the one above, become influential in later experimental modernist works of the twentieth century?



**Georges Seurat. *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. 1884-1886, oil on canvas**

1. How is this painting by Seurat similar to the experimental works of the Impressionists?

2. How is this painting by Seurat innovatively different from the work of the Impressionists?

3. HOW did paintings by Seurat, similar to the one above, become influential in later experimental modernist works of the twentieth century?

4. WHY did paintings by Seurat, similar to the one above, become influential in later experimental modernist works of the twentieth century?

**Paul Cézanne. *The Bathers*. 1898-1905, oil on canvas**

1. How is this painting by Cézanne similar to the experimental works of the Impressionists?

2. How is this painting by Cézanne innovatively different from the work of the Impressionists?

3. HOW did paintings by Cézanne, similar to the one above, become influential in later experimental modernist works of the twentieth century?

4. WHY did paintings by Cézanne, similar to the one above, become influential in later experimental modernist works of the twentieth century?

## THEME: ART and HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY

FOCUS: Ensor's *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889*, Munch's *The Scream*, Munch's *Dance of Life*, Klimt's *The Kiss*, Klimt's *Death and Life*

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/munchs-the-scream.html>

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: [http://www.edvard-munch.com/backg/essays/danceOfLife\\_essay.htm](http://www.edvard-munch.com/backg/essays/danceOfLife_essay.htm)

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/gustav-klimts-the-kiss.html>

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/klimt-death-and-life.html>

READING ASSIGNMENT: KLEINER, pp. 821-823

POWERPOINT: ART and HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY: SYMBOLISM (Ensor, Munch, and Klimt)

90

DATE DUE: \_\_\_\_\_

Analyze how each of these works addresses human emotions in innovative, expressive ways and why.



**James Ensor. *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889*, 1888, oil on canvas**

HOW this work addresses human emotions in innovative, expressive ways:

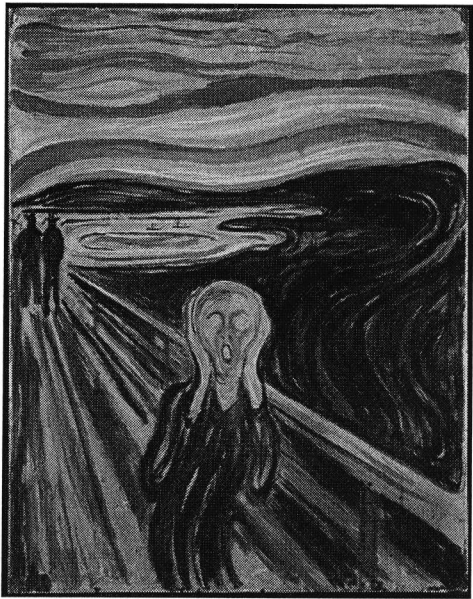
WHY this work addresses human emotions in innovative, expressive ways:

**Edvard Munch. *Dance of Life*, 1899, oil on canvas**

HOW this work addresses human emotions in innovative, expressive ways:

WHY this work addresses human emotions in innovative, expressive ways:





**Edvard Munch, *The Scream*, 1893, tempera and pastels on cardboard**

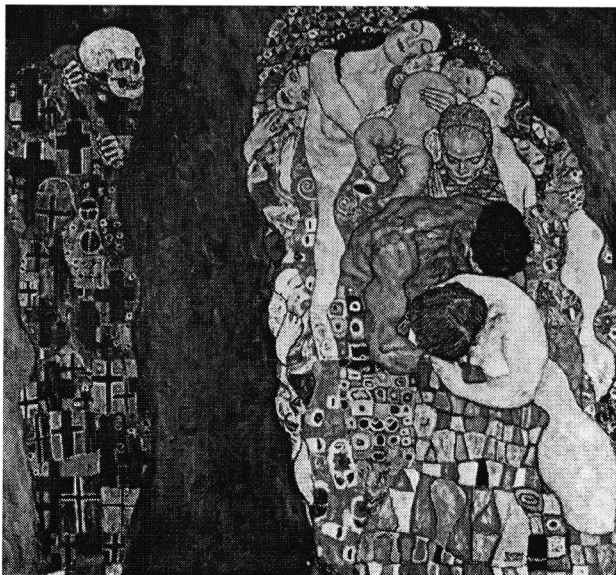
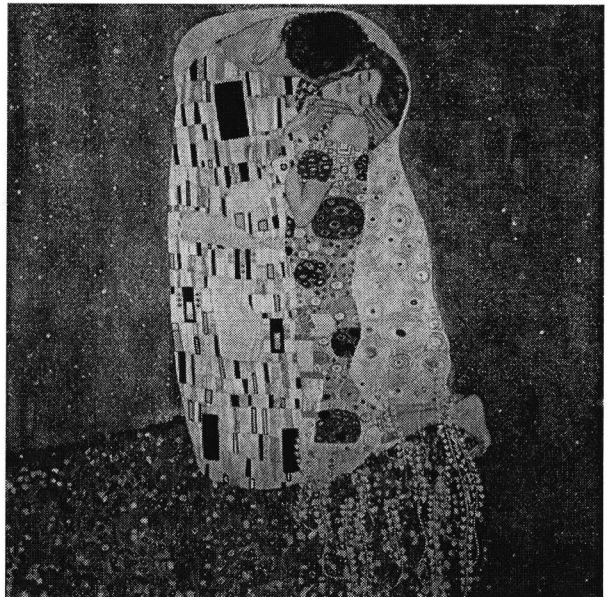
HOW this work addresses human emotions in innovative, expressive ways:

WHY this work addresses human emotions in innovative, expressive ways:

**Gustav Klimt. *The Kiss*, 1907-1908, oil on canvas**

HOW this work addresses human emotions in innovative, expressive ways:

WHY this work addresses human emotions in innovative, expressive ways:



**Gustav Klimt. *Death and Life*, 1916, oil on canvas**

HOW this work addresses human emotions in innovative, expressive ways:

WHY this work addresses human emotions in innovative, expressive ways:



## THEME: CHALLENGING TRADITION

FOCUS: Rodin's *Walking Man*, Rodin's *Gates of Hell*, Rodin's *Burghers of Calais*, Brancusi's *The Kiss*, Brancusi's *Bird in Space*

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/rodins-the-gates-of-hell.html>

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/rodins-burghers-of-calais.html>

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT:

<http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/51306.html>

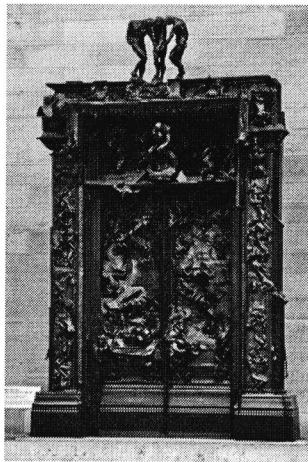
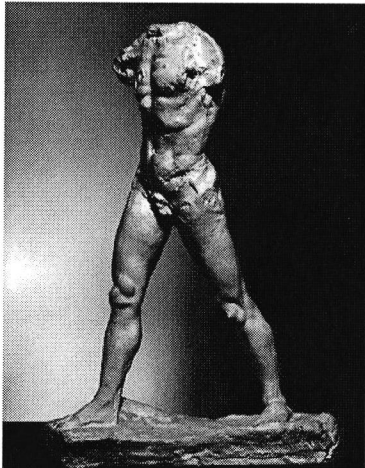
ONLINE ASSIGNMENT: <http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/sculpture-brancusi-bird-in-space.html>

READING ASSIGNMENT: KLEINER, pp. 825-827, 881-882

POWERPOINT: CHALLENGING TRADITION: LATE 19<sup>th</sup> and EARLY 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY SCULPTURE (Rodin and Brancusi)

91

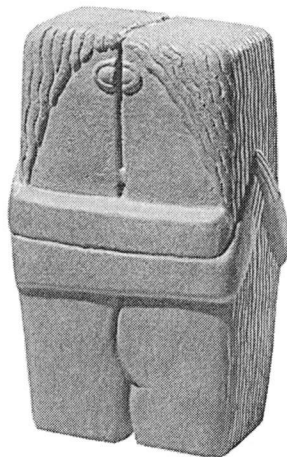
DATE DUE: \_\_\_\_\_



1. The leading French sculptor of the later 19<sup>th</sup> century was Auguste Rodin (1840-1917). The human body in \_\_\_\_\_ fascinated Rodin, as it did Eakins and Muybridge. Although color was not a significant factor in Rodin's work, the influence of Impressionism is evident in the artist's abiding concern for the effect of \_\_\_\_\_ on sculpted surfaces.
2. In *Walking Man*, a preliminary study for the sculptor's *St. John the Baptist Preaching*, Rodin succeeded in representing a fleeting moment in cast \_\_\_\_\_. He portrayed a headless and armless figure in midstride at the moment when weight is transferred across the pelvis from the back leg to the front.
3. Rodin selected *The Gates of Hell*, based on Dante's \_\_\_\_\_ and Lorenzo

- Ghiberti's \_\_\_\_\_, which he had seen in Florence. The dreamlike (or rather, nightmarish) vision connects Rodin with the \_\_\_\_\_. This effect was achieved by varying the height of the relief and using variegated surfaces. The figures appear to be in \_\_\_\_\_, moving in and out of an undefined space in a reflection of their psychic turmoil.
4. Rodin's *Burghers of Calais* commemorates an event from the \_\_\_\_\_. This narrative depicts six prominent members of the city council who volunteer to give up their lives to save the inhabitants of their city. The leader of the group was \_\_\_\_\_, who Rodin depicted with a bowed head and bearded face towards the middle of the gathering. Rodin does not, however, make it clear who the leader is. He stretches his composition into a \_\_\_\_\_ so that no one man serves as the focal point of the figural grouping.
  5. The patrons of the *Burghers of the Calais* wanted to place Rodin's sculpture on a high \_\_\_\_\_ so that it would have a heroic quality. Rodin created a second version, one without the \_\_\_\_\_ so that his viewers would feel more connected with the men depicted.
  6. The drapery of the burghers appears to be almost fused to the ground, conveying the conflict between the men's desire to \_\_\_\_\_ and the need to save their city. They are drawn together not through physical or verbal contact, but by their slumped shoulders, bare feet, and an expression of utter anguish.
  7. Rodin's ability to capture the quality of the transitory through his highly \_\_\_\_\_ surfaces while revealing larger themes and deeper, lasting sensibilities is one of the reasons he had a strong influence on 20<sup>th</sup>-century artists. Because many of his works, such as *Walking Man*, were deliberate fragments, he was also instrumental in creating a taste for the \_\_\_\_\_, an aesthetic many later sculptors embraced enthusiastically.
  8. Brancusi's juxtaposition of smooth and rough surfaces paired with the dramatic simplification of the human figures in *The Kiss*, which are shown from the waist up, may suggest Brancusi's awareness of "primitive" \_\_\_\_\_ sculpture and also of the Cubist works of his contemporaries.
  9. The cutting away at stone or wood conveyed the immediacy and authenticity Brancusi sought as he eschewed the "refined" Western tradition of \_\_\_\_\_ in plaster or \_\_\_\_\_ in bronze.

10. Brancusi's work moved beyond the verisimilitude and melodrama exemplified by Rodin. Brancusi sought inspiration in ancient, folk, and exotic precedents that preceded or bypassed the classical Western tradition of sculpture. What are some specific examples of these influences?
11. Constantin Brancusi's *Bird in Space* is not a literal depiction of a bird. He started with the image of a bird at \_\_\_\_\_ with its wings folded at its sides and ended with a gently curving columnar form sharply tapered at each end. Despite the abstraction, the sculpture retains the suggestion of a bird about to soar in free flight through the heavens.
12. The highly \_\_\_\_\_ surface of the polished bronze does not allow the viewer's eye to linger on the sculpture itself (as , do for example, Rodin's agitated and textured surfaces). Instead, the eye follows the gleaming reflection along the delicate curves right off the tip of the work, thereby inducing a feeling of \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Brancusi is noted for saying, "Simplicity is not an objective in art, but one achieves simplicity despite oneself by entering into the \_\_\_\_\_ of things... What is real is not the external form but the \_\_\_\_\_ of things. Starting from this truth it is impossible for anyone to express anything essentially real by \_\_\_\_\_ its exterior surface."



ADDITIONAL NOTES on RODIN and BRANCUSI