RS Notes: The World of European Culture

**I. Mannerism** *(pages 448–449)*

**A.** The artistic Renaissance ended when the movement called **Mannerism** emerged in Italy in the 1520s and 1530s. The movement fit Europe’s climate of the time, as people grew uncertain about worldly experience and wished for spiritual experience.

**B.** Mannerism broke down the High Renaissance values of balance, harmony, moderation, and proportion. Elongated figures showed suffering, heightened emotions, and religious ecstasy.

**C.** Mannerism perhaps reached its height with the painter **El Greco** (”the Greek”). Born in Crete, he eventually moved to Spain. He elongated and contorted his figures, portraying them in unusual yellows and greens against a black background. The mood he depicts reflects well the tensions created by the religious upheavals of the Reformation.

**II. The Baroque Period** *(page 449)*

**A.** The **baroque** movement replaced Mannerism. It began in Italy at the end of the sixteenth century and was adopted by the Catholic reform movement. Hapsburg court buildings in **Madrid, Prague, Vienna,** and **Brussels** show this style.

**B.** Baroque artists tried to join Renaissance ideals with the newly revived spiritual feelings. Thus, the baroque was known for dramatic effects to arouse emotions.

**C.** Baroque art and architecture also reflected the seventeenth-century search for power. Churches and palaces were magnificent and richly detailed, giving off a sense of power.

**D.** The Italian architect and sculptor **Gian Lorenzo Bernini** is perhaps the greatest figure of the baroque period. He completed Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome where drama and exuberance mark his work. His wooden *Throne of Saint Peter* seems to hover in midair as rays of heavenly light drive a mass of clouds toward the spectator.

**E.** The best-known female artist of the seventeenth century was Artemisia Gentileschi. At the age of 23, she became the first woman elected to the Florentine Academy of Design. She is best known for a series of pictures of Old Testament heroines, especially *Judith Beheading Holofernes*.

**III. A Golden Age of Literature** *(pages 449–450)*

**A.** In both England and Spain, writing for the theater reached new heights between 1580 and 1640. Other kinds of literature also flourished.

**B.** England had a cultural flourishing during the Elizabethan Era. Most notable was the drama of the time, especially that of **William Shakespeare.** Elizabethan theater was very popular and a successful business before Shakespeare.

**C.** Shakespeare’s works were performed principally at the Globe Theater. The low admission charge allowed the lower classes to attend, and Shakespeare had to write plays pleasing to all classes and types. Shakespeare was an actor and shareholder in the acting company the Lord Chamberlain’s Men.

**D.** Shakespeare is viewed as a universal genius who combined masterful language skills with deep insight into human psychology and the human condition.

**E.** Drama flourished in Spain as well during the sixteenth century. Touring companies brought the latest Spanish plays to all parts of the Spanish Empire.

**F.** In the 1580s, **Lope de Vega** set the standards for Spanish playwriting. He wrote almost 1,500 plays. They are characterized as witty, charming, action-packed, and realistic.

**G.** Another great achievement of Spain’s golden age of literature was the novel *Don Quixote* by **Miguel de Cervantes.** Cervantes presents the dual nature of the Spanishcharacter in the novel’s two main characters. Don Quixote, the knight, is a visionarywith lofty ideals; his fat, earthy squire, Sancho Panza, is a realist. Each comes to see thevalue of the other’s perspective. Both vision and hard work are necessary to thehuman condition.

**IV. Political Thought** *(page 451)*

**A.** The seventeenth century was concerned with order and power. These concerns are reflected in the political philosophies of two different Englishmen.

**B.** England’s revolutionary upheavals alarmed **Thomas Hobbes.** He wrote a work on political thought, *Leviathan* (1651), to deal with the issue of disorder. He claimed that before society and politics, in what he called a “state of nature,” life is brutal and violent because human nature is self-interested. Life is not about morals, but self-preservation. To save people from destroying one another, people must form a state by agreeing to be governed by an absolute ruler with complete power. Only in this way could social order be preserved.

**C. John Locke** wrote a political work called *Two Treatises of Government (*1690). He argued against the absolute rule of one person. Locke believed that before the development of society and politics, people lived in a state of freedom and equality, not violence and war. In this state people had **natural rights**—rights with which people are born.

**D.** Locke believed, however, that in the state of nature people had trouble protecting their natural rights. They agree to establish a government to secure and protect these rights. The contract between people and government establishes mutual obligations. People should be reasonable towards government, and government should protect the people’s rights. If the contract is broken, people have a right to overthrow the government.

**E.** Locke’s ideas were important to the American and French Revolutions. They were used to support demands for constitutional government, the rule of law, and the protection of rights. Locke’s ideas are found in the American Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution.