

Painting #1:

Fra Angelico,

Madonna and Child
(1433).

This painting depicts Mary and her son, Jesus Christ. It was one of many such depictions painted in Italy at a time when the Catholic Church was the dominant cultural institution. Paintings like these were hung in churches, and figured prominently in religious services.

What is the function of a painting like this? How does the way these characters are depicted relate to the painting's function?





Painting #2: Francis Winterhalter, *The Royal Family* (1846)

This is the official royal portrait of Queen Victoria and her family, painted at the height of the British Empire's power, when it truly was the first global Empire. As the "official" portrait of the royal family, a painting like this would serve a very public function. What is the function of a painting like this, and what is it trying to communicate about the Empire, and its Royal family?

Painting #3:

William Homan Hunt: **The Awakening Conscience** (1853)

You have to look carefully at this painting; there are a lot of details, and it depicts a particular moment of an incident, a small ongoing drama.

It might be useful to know that the Victorian period, when this painting was popular, was an era when sexual impropriety for a woman was extremely dangerous. Even the perception of being sexually “improper” could ruin your social capital.

What’s happening here, and what’s the function of this painting? Hint: Don’t forget to pay attention to the title.





Painting #4: Claude Monet, *Charing Cross Bridge* (1903)

Pretty, huh? Monet was one of those famous Impressionists, and he painted this on a trip to London. Charing Cross bridge is right downtown in London, which at the time was the most heavily industrialized city in the world. The famous “London Fog” was to a large extent smog, caused by the coal which powered industry at the time. As we all know here in California, smoke produces some beautiful sunrises and sunsets.

What function do you think this painting serves? What is your “Affective Response” to it?

Painting #5:

Chaim Soutine, *Carcass of Beef* (1925)

I think the date of a painting like this is revealing. It was painted shortly after the end of World War One.

The first world war came as a huge surprise for everyone, and was incredibly traumatic. In August 1914, when it broke out, everyone was pretty excited and convinced they'd all be home for Christmas.

Instead, due to all the new technology for killing, like machine guns, artillery and poison gas, the war ground into a stalemate where armies obliterated soldiers in the hundreds of thousands. Again and again, for four years, soldiers would charge enemy trenches, only to be pulverized in machine gun fire and blown to pieces by artillery.

So... use your affective response technique on this one. What is the function of a painting like this?

