

Taylor Chapter 8 Reading Guide

This will seem like a more difficult chapter because Taylor talks a lot about the history of art and poetry and in doing so drops a lot of names that may be unfamiliar. Don't be phased. His central idea can be understood without knowledge of the artists he writes of.

Study Questions

1. What does Taylor mean when he writes of the tendency toward "subjectivation" in the modern era?
2. A key to this chapter is Taylor's insistence that subjectivation be recognized as having two different facets. What are the two facets of this movement and how do they differ from one another?
3. Why does Taylor argue that confusing the two facets of subjectivism described above "is catastrophic" (82)? How does this connect to his larger argument regarding how we understand or misunderstand authenticity?
4. Taylor describes a shift in art that takes place at the end of the 19th century. What is this shift? How does the shift mirror the shift in patterns of recognition described in chapter V? Your answer should be thorough and should address the following:
 - A. What is the difference between Mimesis and Poesis?
 - B. What does Taylor mean when he says that, in modern times, artists cannot "draw on the simple acceptance of formerly public doctrines" (83)?
 - C. What Taylor means when he speaks of "triangulation" and the meaning of art.
 - D. What the Earl Wasserman quote on pp. 84-85 means.
5. How does Taylor use the shift in art to help illustrate the point he raised regarding the two aspects of subjectivation (question 2 above)?
6. Using the art reproduced below, illustrate and explain the point that Taylor makes with regard to the shift in art from the pre modern (A, B, C) to the modern era (D, E, F). I have used the work of Caspar David Friedrich which is referenced by Taylor in this chapter.
7. What does Taylor mean by "subtler languages?"
8. At the end of the chapter, Taylor makes an argument that the central distinction that he makes in this chapter is critical to us today for some very practical reasons. He cites the current environmental crisis as an example. How does our failure to make the distinction outlined in this chapter affect our ability to deal with this crisis?

- A- Botticelli - The Birth of Venus
- B - Raphael - Transfiguration
- C - Raphael - Madonna of the Meadows
- D - Turner - Rain, Steel and Speed
- E - Friedrich - Wanderer above a Sea of Fog
- F. Friedrich - Tree of Crows



B



C



D



E



F

