



*Bridging theory and practice for effective
communications during infectious disease
crises*

Venice, December 5th, 2014

Figures of fear and empathy:

**Perception of epidemics and representation of the
behavioral responses to them in literature, art and music**

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Centre collaborateur OMS

pour la recherche historique en santé publique

The use of history

- Learn lessons from past experiences
- Compare historical and contemporary responses to severe health problems :
A 'long durée' analysis helps in evaluating the political, economic, and social determinants of epidemics and the responses to them.
- Assess long-term efficacy of health interventions, political strategies and communication campaigns.

Communication in epidemics

- *The strategy:*
 - Clear, accurate and rational information
 - Clear and simple information
 - Explanation and transparency
- *The problem:*
 - During a severe outbreak, the people attitudes and actions are rarely determined by rational thinking and evaluations
 - More often emotions play the leading role. As a consequence metaphoric thinking and narratives, based on them, could be more effective

A rational approach to communication ?

- This could be a wrong strategy, because in a very risky situation, people usually don't behave rationally, but are dominated by emotions.
- Proper and well grounded reactions are replaced by
 - over-reactions or
 - no-reactions
(i.e. negation of the risks, as at the beginning of Ebola epidemics)
- Emotions become the overcoming force controlling all behavior

Reason and Emotion

- An effective communication strategy must take into account the emotional life of individuals and collectivities
- Reason and emotion must be combined in effective communication.

The complexity of emotion

- Each emotion is mediated by the subject's character, situation, desires, and beliefs
- There are many ways in which an emotion can be manifested in behavior
- An emotion can be mistaken or lack an adequate justification. The reaction can be inappropriate and a person's emotions can be misdirected, unreasonable, excessive or insufficient.
- At the same time, emotions can be used to direct people's attitudes and behaviors toward wrong objectives

Metaphoric Images of Ebola

- A bloody disease.
- Images of death: « you feel death everywhere ».
- To bleed out.
- Ancestral fear linked to the body destruction and annihilation.
- The false image of people melting down.

Images and symbols play a fundamental role

- The historical case of rabies
 - Social panic for just a few cases provoked by a very high mortality rate but also by the dramatic, terrible way of dying.
 - The control of rabies, through Pastorian vaccination, became a positive message, conveyed by literature and art
(Axel Munthe, *The book of San Michele*,
Press campaigns,
Statue at the Pasteur Institute)

Darwin, 1872

The expression of the emotions is a form of communication

EXPRESSION

OF THE

EMOTIONS

DARWIN



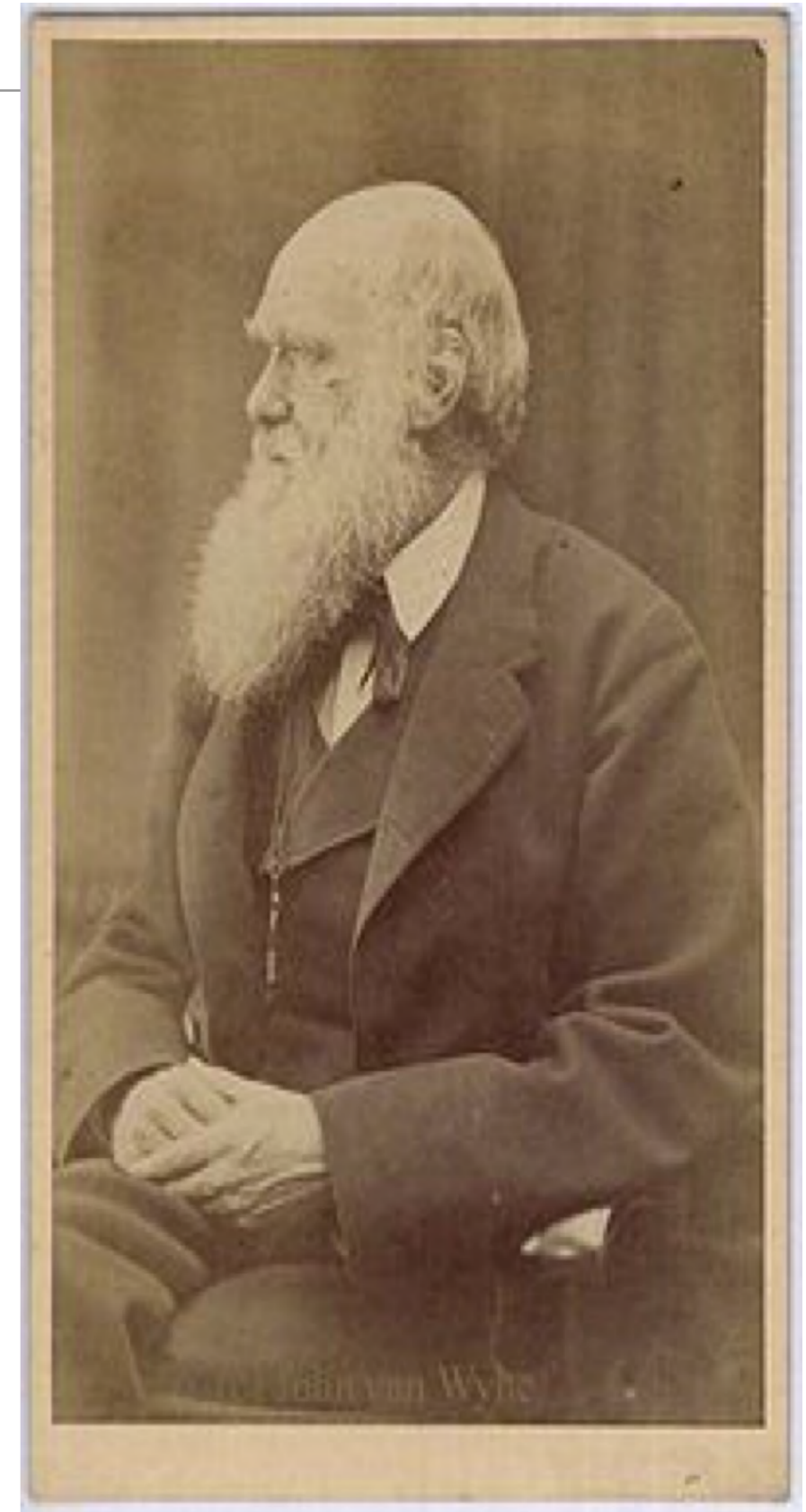
LONDON
JOHN MURRAY

THE
EXPRESSION OF THE EMOTIONS
IN
MAN AND ANIMALS.

BY CHARLES DARWIN, M.A., F.R.S., &c.

WITH PHOTOGRAPHIC AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1872.



Sorrow communicates a
request for help and comfort

la Tristesse

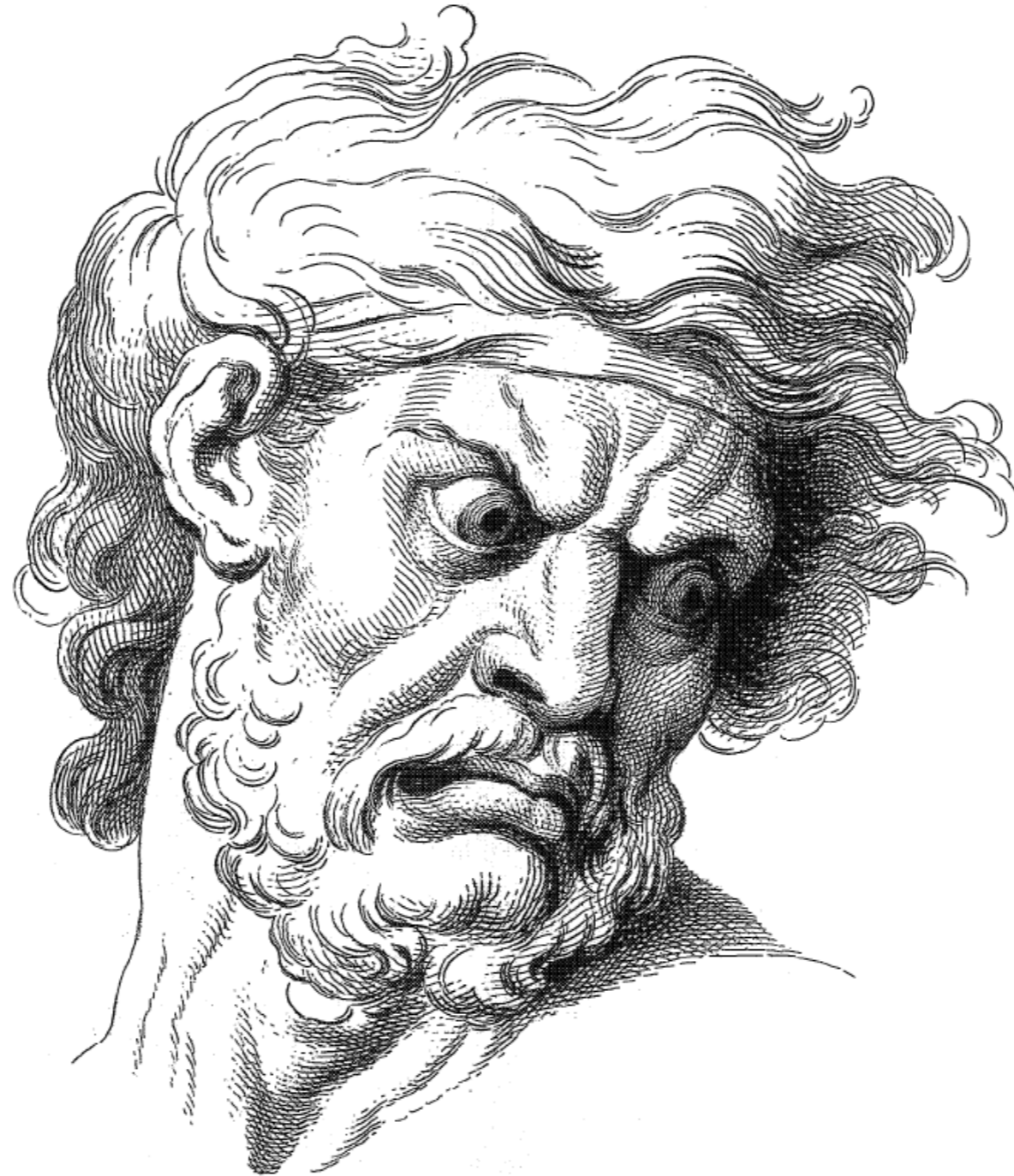
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An angry face asks you to pay attention to the consequences of your actions or words

la Colere

18



Emotions, Epidemics, and The Arts

- There is another domain where emotions play a fundamental and constitutive role, the arts, and especially music.
- What you can observe in the artistic representations of the epidemics of the past are not the rational behavior, but the expression of emotions and the bodily feelings
- In the past, images and metaphors were the only tools for communicate values and models

Symbols and messages



Liberia, Septembre 2014

Collecting dead bodies





Very emotional reaction to the pictures of the 'corps collectors'.

You can easily explain why the historical artistic representations of plague in literature, art and music insists on this aspect.



Plague and the origins of modern culture



The same horrifying images





Ah! sans l'heureux secours des mille démentis !

Ah! sans l'heureux secours des mille démentis !



non essent registrantes que non viderunt nec sciauit.



Alteraocca



229 ALTEROCCA - TERNI

RE UMBERTO I visita i colerosi a Napoli - 1884

NINO CARNEVALI DIP.

PINACOTECA DI CAPODIMONTE

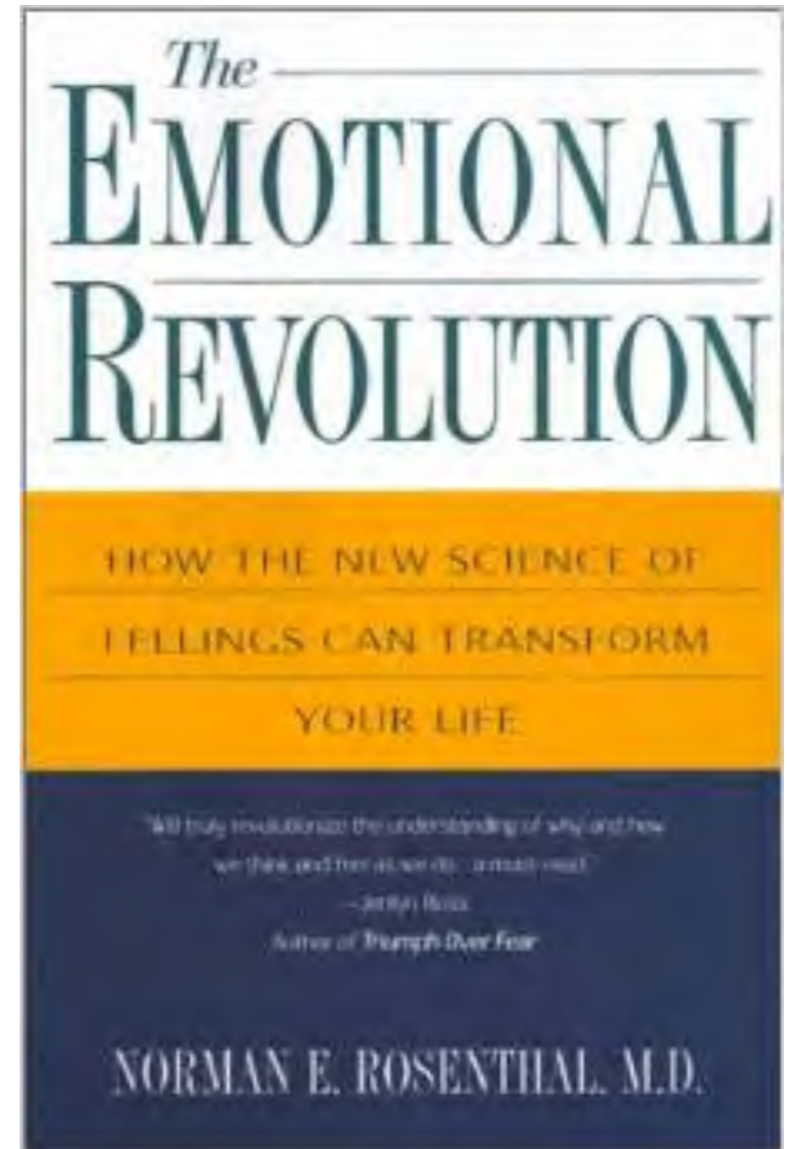
Discontinuities and permanences

The Plague Doctors

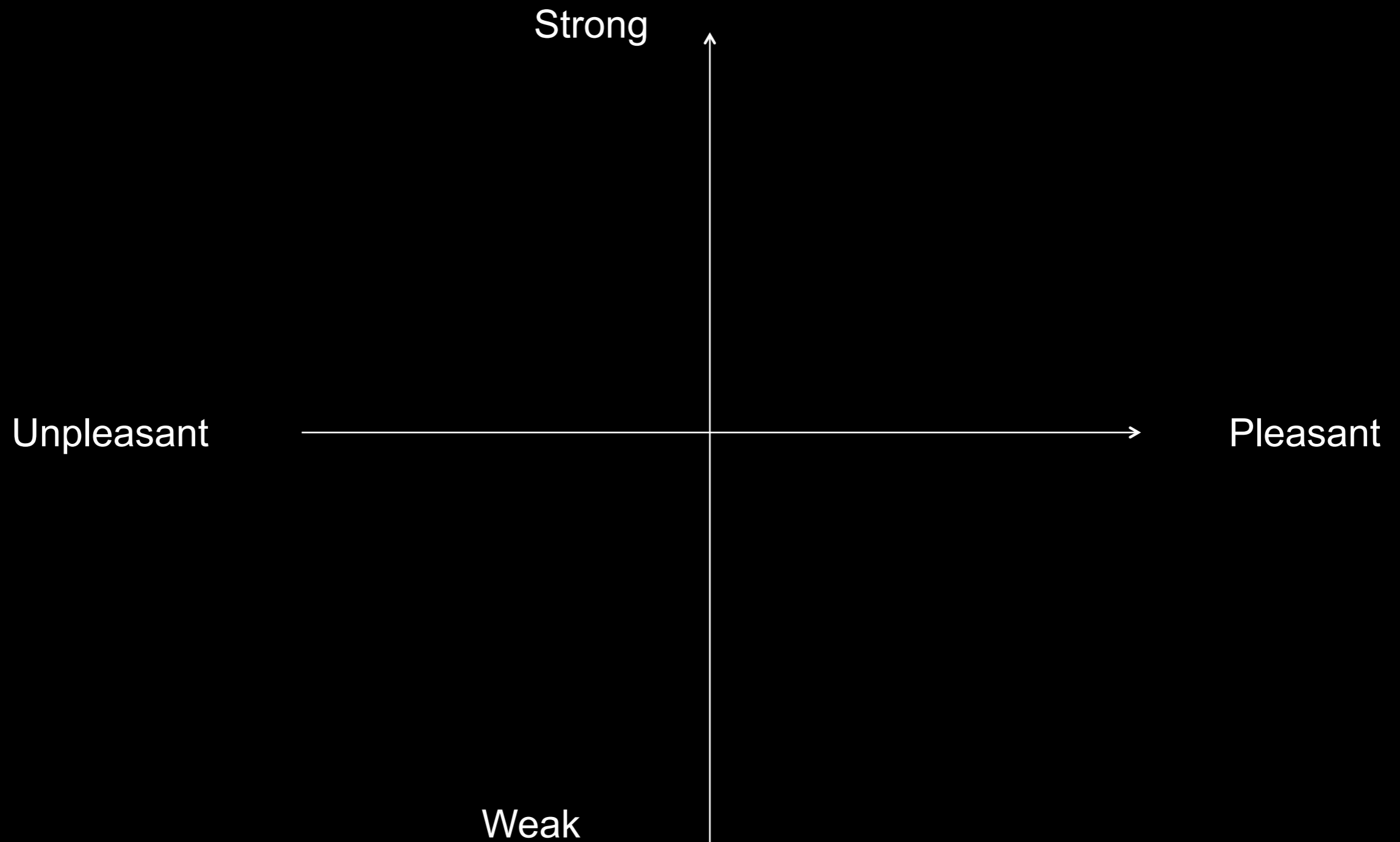


The Emotional Revolution

The relevance of emotions
in everyday life, and especially
in critical situation



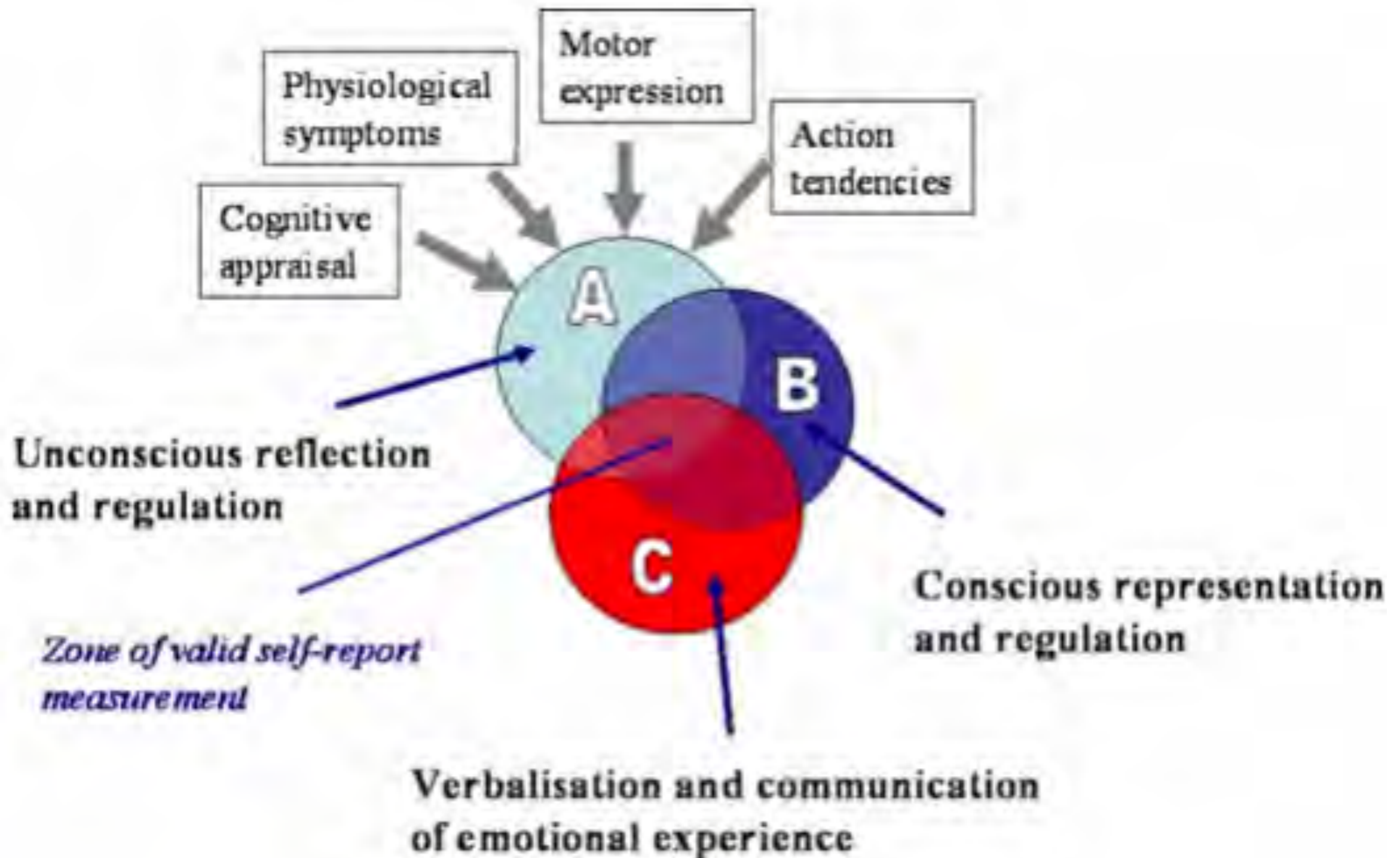
The emotional gradients



The emotional plan



The complex structure of the emotional response



Emotions and Epidemics

- The emotions linked to epidemic crises are situated in the extreme parts of the 'emotional plan'
- Their consequences on individual and collective behavior are very strong (positively or negatively)
- Epidemics is a extreme situation when the feelings and emotions, negative and then positive are exalted.
- This constitute also a very rich field of research for the historian of emotions

Epidemics and Emotions

Four main families

Fear	Grief	Hope	Empathy
Surprise	Sorrow	Expectancy	Solidarity
Horror	Despair	Religious attitude	Brotherhood
Panic	Concern		Acceptance
Terror			Resilience

The main emotions

- Fear
- Terror
- Panic

producing abandon,
discrimination, ostracism,
and stigmatisation



The main emotions

- Grief
- Despair





Luca Signorelli



The main emotions

- Empathy
 - *Pietas*
 - *Misericordia*
- producing solidarity,
brotherhood,
resilience



Piero della Francesca
Madonna della Misericordia

Arts and Epidemics

- Art and music have an extraordinary power of emotions elicitation and control
- The study the history of art and music in relation to epidemics is therefore a good way to understand the complexity of the individual and social responses to epidemics.
- Conversely, it is relevant to study the role of art, literature, and music in canalizing reactions, and coordinate the behavior of individuals and collectivities in concrete historical situations

Leo Tolstói

What is Art ? (trans, A. Maude, London, 1959, p. 123

« Art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously by means of certain external signs, hand on to others feeling he has lived through, and that other are infected by these feelings and also experience them ».

The emotional contagion.

The Black Death and the Arts

- The appearance of plague was a terrifying experience, especially because it killed rapidly and in a very short time a great number of people.
- When plague stroked Europe at the end of the 14th century it shocked European society at every social, cultural and political level.
- The horrors of the black death pervaded all aspects of Medieval culture and especially art. The effects were lasting, bringing a somber darkness to visual art, literature, and music.

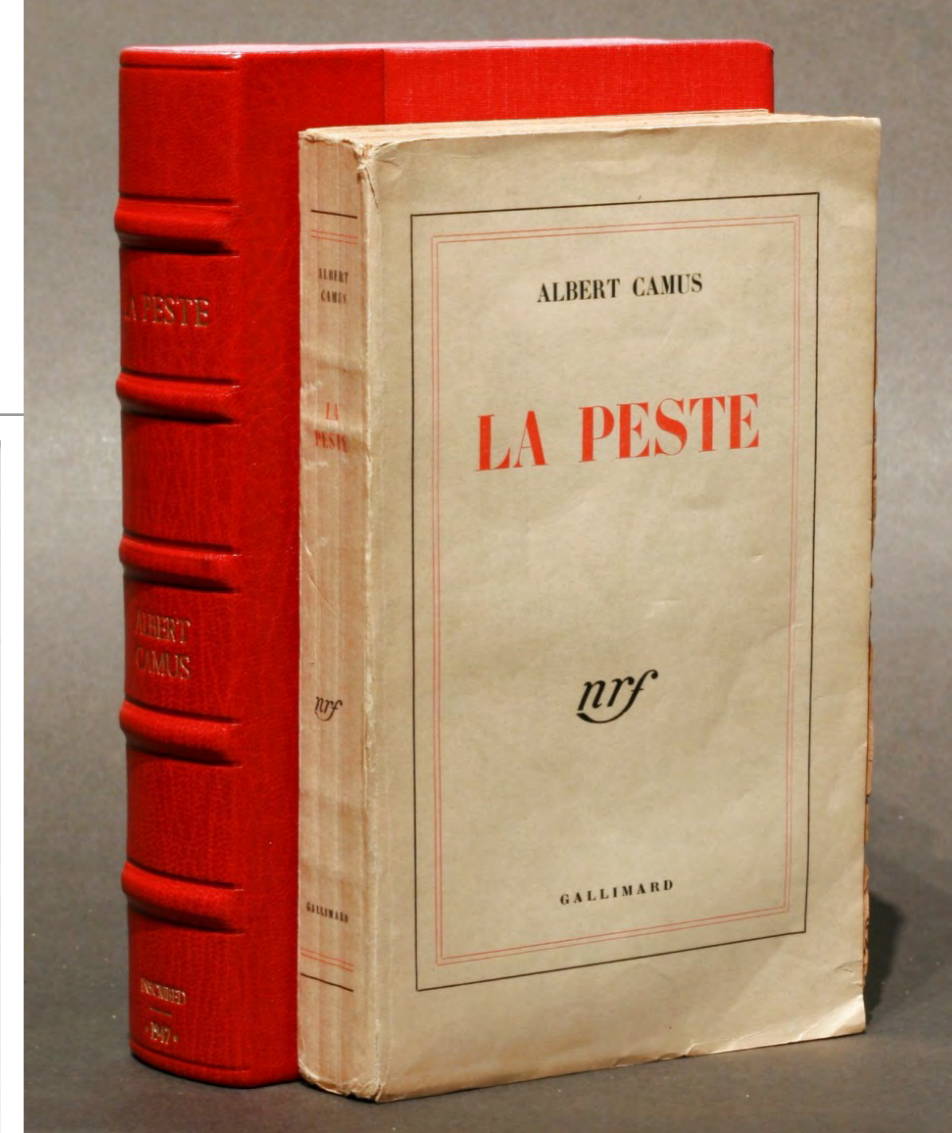
Literature

Many literary products

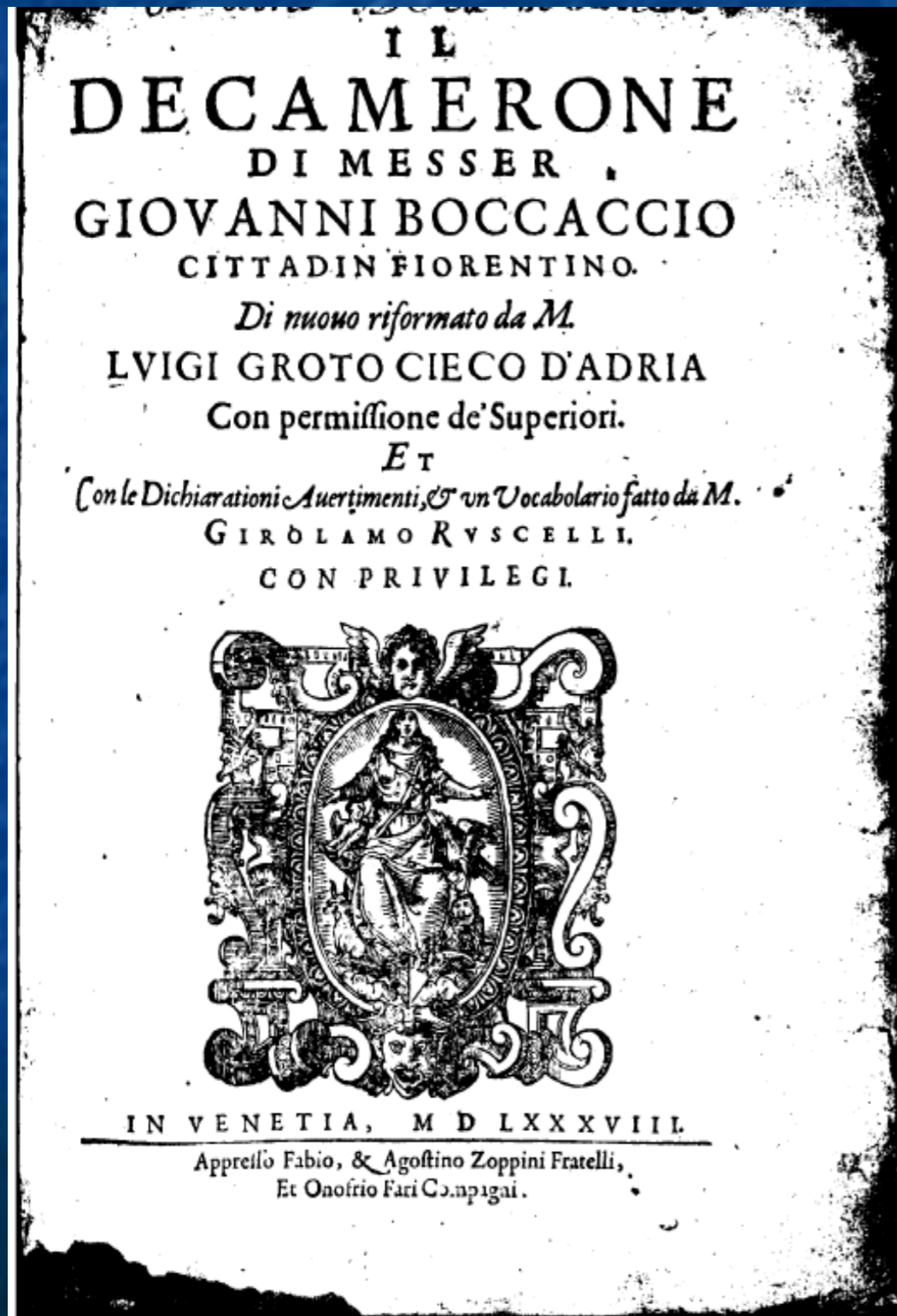
A
JOURNAL
OF THE
Plague Year:
BEING
Observations or Memorials,
Of the most Remarkable
OCCURRENCES,
As well
PUBLICK *as* PRIVATE,
Which happened in
L O N D O N
During the last
GREAT VISITATION
In 1665.

Written by a **CITIZEN** who continued all the
while in *London*. Never made publick before

L O N D O N :
Printed for *E. Nutt* at the *Royal-Exchange*; *J. Roberts*
in *Warwick-Lane*; *A. Dodd* without *Temple-Bar* ;
and *J. Graves* in *St. James's-street*. 1722.



Giovanni Boccaccio (Florence o Certaldo, 1313 Certaldo, 1375). Il Decamerone (1353)



Boccaccio, *Decameron*, First Day

« No doctor's advice, no medicine seemed to be of any help. Either the disease was incurable or the doctors simply didn't know how to cure it. Many tried, though. The number of doctors became huge as a multitude of people, male and female, with no medical training whatsoever took their place alongside those who were properly educated. But no one knew the cause of the pestilence and thus no one could do much about curing it, so not only were few people healed but most of them died by the third day after the aforementioned signs appeared, some a bit sooner or a bit later ».

Boccaccio, *Decameron*, First Day

The permanent images and metaphors of an outbreak

« This pestilence was so powerful that it spread from the ill to the healthy like fire among dry or oily materials. It was so bad that it could be communicated not only through speaking or associating with the sick, but even by touching their clothing or anything else they had touched ».

« As our city sunk into this affliction and misery the reverend authority of the law, both divine and human, sunk with it and practically disappeared ».

Boccaccio, *Decameron*, First Day

The role of emotions

« This tribulation struck such **fear** in the hearts of men and women that one brother abandoned another, uncles abandoned nephews, sisters abandoned brothers, often wives abandoned their husbands, and (a greater thing and barely believable) fathers and mothers abandoned their children, as if they were not even theirs ».

« There were dead bodies all over, and all were treated in pretty much the same manner by their neighbors, who were moved no less by fear that the corrupted bodies would infect them than by any **pity** they felt toward the deceased ».

Architecture

The creation of new public spaces aimed at rebuilding social identity after the disruption caused by a severe outbreak.

New ways of being together, for religious and social reasons.

- New places
- New ceremonies
- New traditions

Il Redentore - 1577



La Chiesa della Salute

The most recent
of the plague-
churches

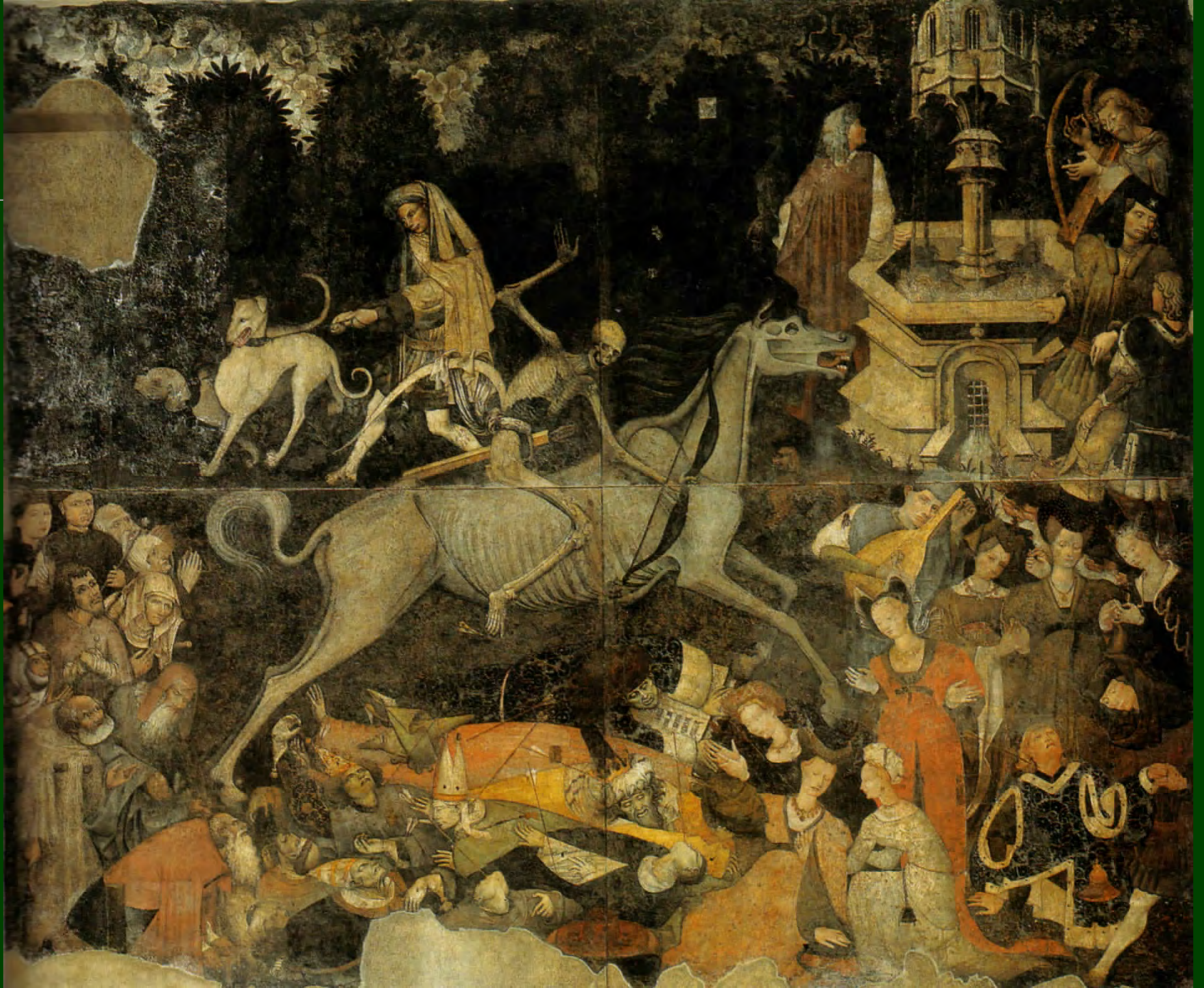


Painting and engraving

The most effective communication tools in Middle Ages and Renaissance

The Triumph of Death



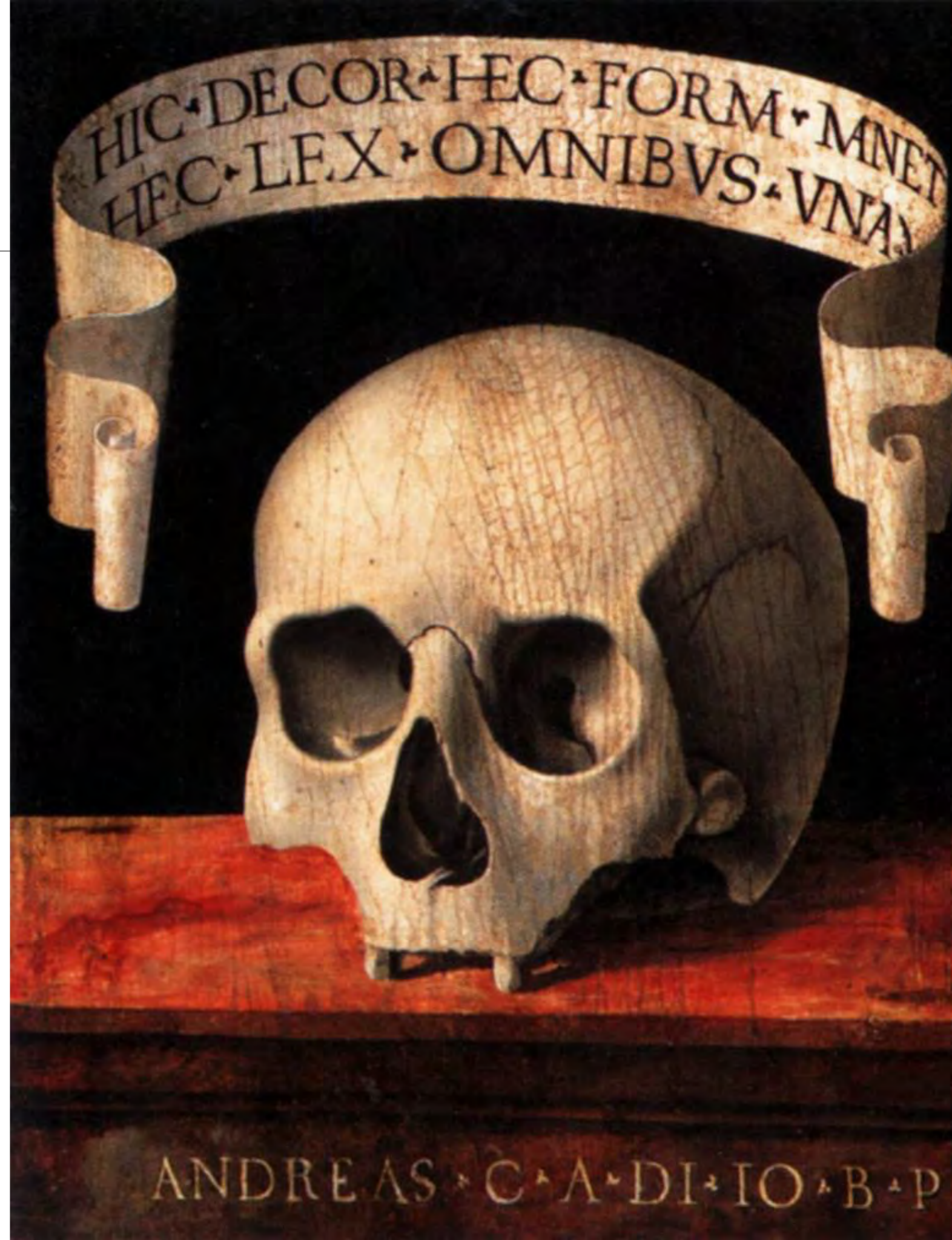


Memento mori



Andrea Previtali
Memento Mori

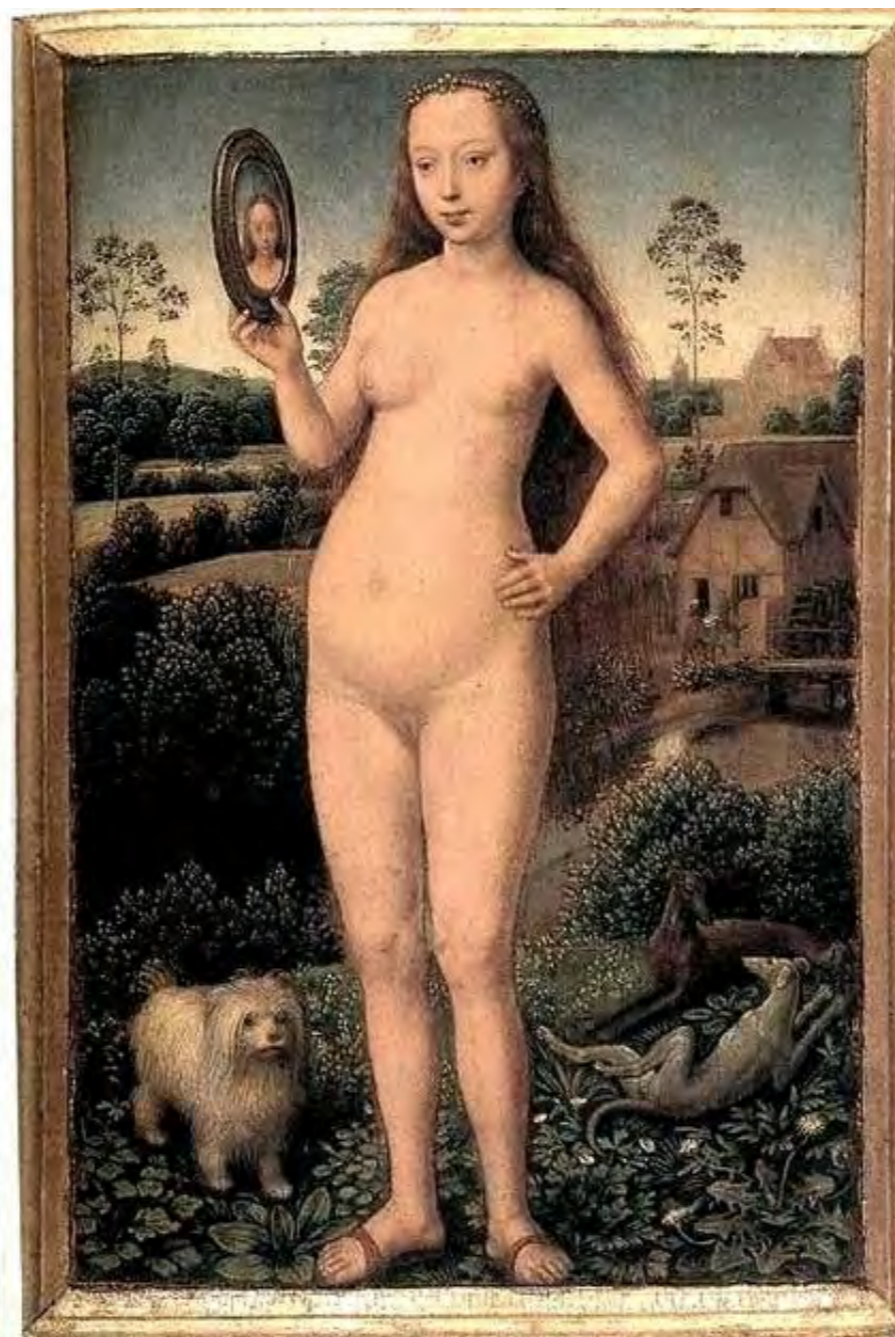
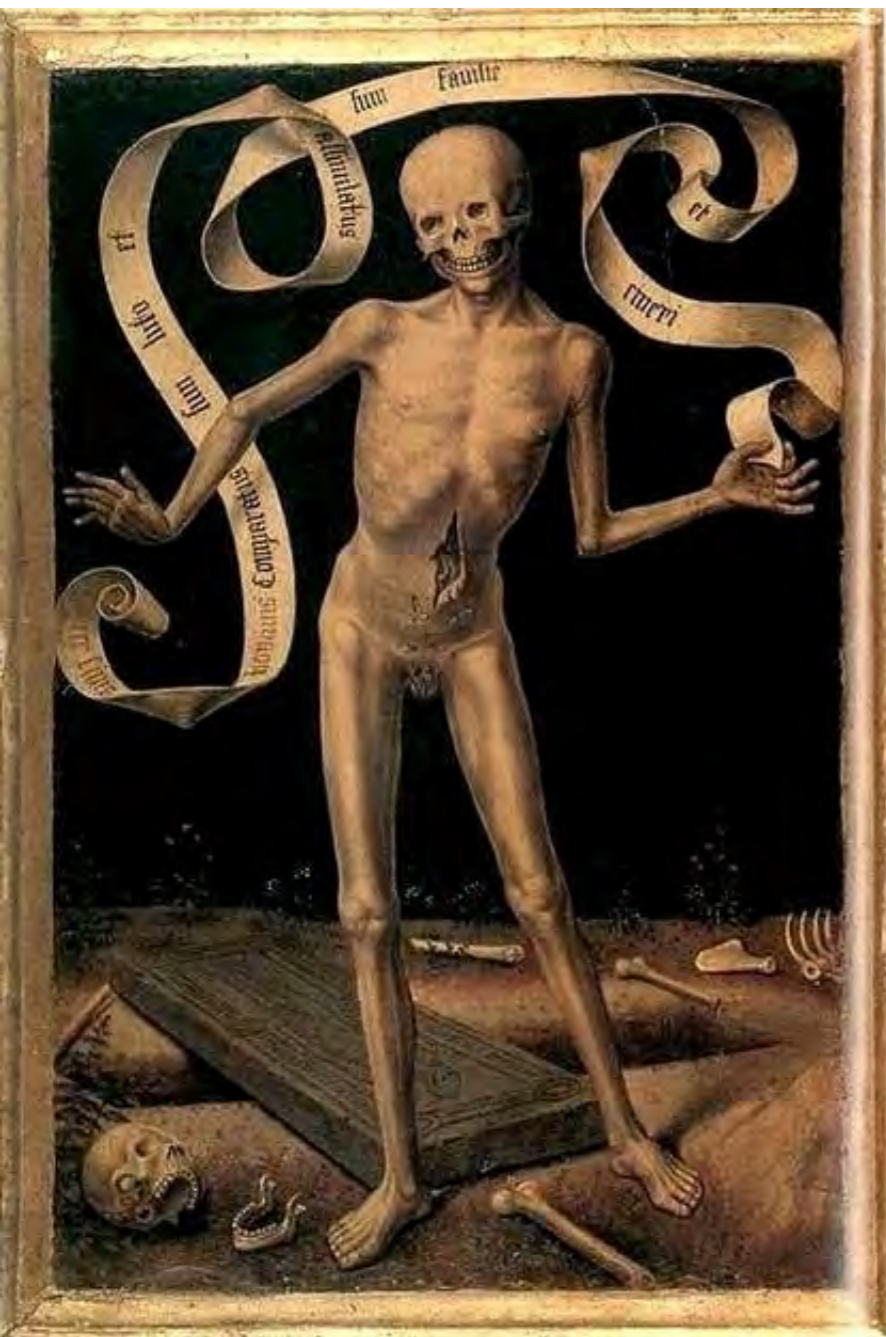
*This is beauty, and this what remains of it.
This law applies to all human beings*



ANDREAS C A DI IO B P

Hans Memling: *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* (circa 1485)

This triptych contrasts earthly beauty and luxury with the prospect of death and hell



Death and the Maiden



Death and the Maiden



Hans Baldung Grien
Death and the Maiden
1518 – 1520



Hans Baldung Grien,
Der Tod und das
Mädchen, 1517

Charles Munch
*The Death and the
young girl* (1893)



Egon Schiele

Death and the Maiden (1915-16)



The three living and the three dead



Affreschi della Chiesa di Nostra Signora di Regnos Altos, Castello Malaspina, Bosa (Sardegna)



Vanitas



Vanitas vanitatis - Guercino



Tiziano
Pietà, 1576



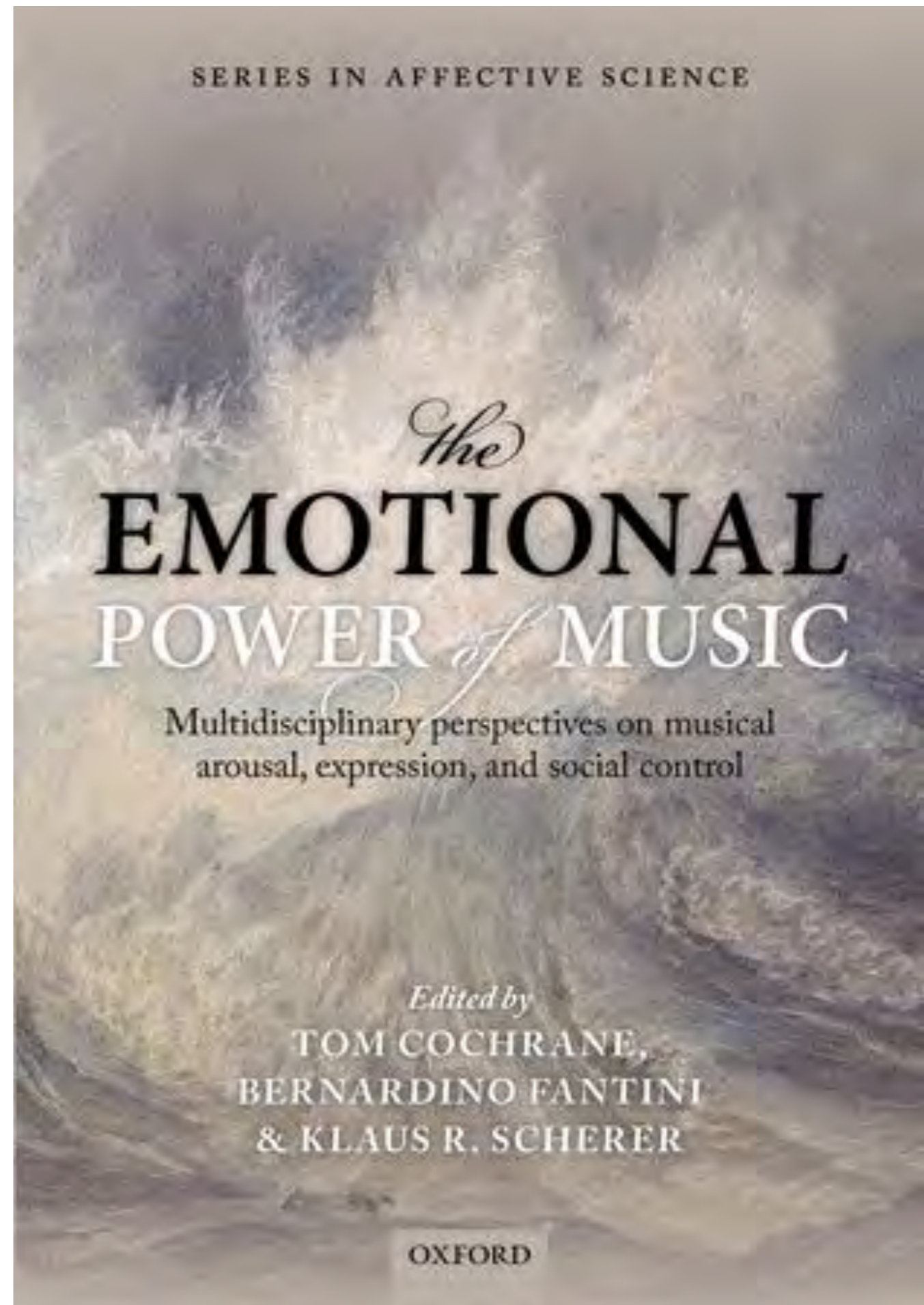
Tiziano's obsequies, 1576



Music

The Emotional Power of Music
Multidisciplinary perspectives on musical
arousal, expression, and social control

Edited by **Tom Cochrane, Bernardino Fantini,**
and **Klaus R. Scherer**
Oxford University Press, 2013



Music and Emotions

- Each piece of music can be said to possess a particular emotional quality or to be expressive of an emotional process
- Music can modify the emotional processes of individual and collectivities (song, military march, funeral music, lullabies, etc.)
- Music has a strong effect in underlying the emotional valence of particular moment of an individual life
- Many pieces of music acquire their special importance from their symbolic function of an emotional process

Music and emotions

- The form and the composition of a musical work represent or resemble to same components of emotional life, in the sense that it can have :
 - the same temporal structure
 - The same dynamics and mode of development
 - the same 'movement' (e-movere), patterns of motion and rest, tension and release, etc.

A bidirectional research project

- A. To understand the emotions evoked or controlled by music during and after epidemics
- B. To study the musical productions during and after an epidemic crisis, in order to understand the reasons for the emotional power of music.
 - The emotional figures and structures contained in the music
 - The expression of emotions in music performance
 - The emotional involvement of the public

A Medieval Song about the Plague

"A sickly season," the merchant said,

"The town I left was filled with dead,

and everywhere these queer red flies

crawled upon the corpses' eyes,

eating them away."

"Fair make you sick," the merchant said,

"They crawled upon the wine and bread.

Pale priests with oil and books,

bulging eyes and crazy looks,

dropping like the flies."

"I had to laugh," the merchant said,

"The doctors purged, and dosed, and bled;

"And proved through solemn disputation

"The cause lay in some constellation.



Dance macabre

Danse macabre - Totentanz



Stella celi estirpavit

Stella caeli exstirpavit quae lactavit Dominum
Mortis pestem quam plantavit primus parens hominum.
Ipsa stella nunc dignetur sidera compescere,
Quorum bella plebem caedunt dirae mortis ulcere.

O gloriosa stella maris, a peste succurre nobis:
Audi nos, nam te filius nihil negans honorat.
Salva nos, Jesu! Pro quibus virgo mater te orat.

The star of heaven who suckled the Lord
Has rooted out the plague of death which the first parent of men planted.
May that very star now deign to restrain the constellations
Whose wars kill the people with the sore of terrible death.

O glorious star of the sea, save us from the plague.
Hear us, for thy Son honours thee, refusing thee nothing.
Save us, Jesus, on whose behalf the virgin mother beseeches thee

Stella celi (So ys emprentid)

1

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with two staves. The first system is marked 'Belli' and includes a 'C' time signature. The second system is marked 'II'. The third system is marked 'III'. The fourth system is marked 'IV'. The notation includes various rhythmic values and rests, typical of a medieval manuscript transcription.

Marc-Antoine Charpentier

Pestis Mediolanensis (La Peste de Milan (H.398))

Dramatic Motet for Soloists, Double Chorus, Woodwinds, Strings, and Continuo



Music in time of plague in Venice

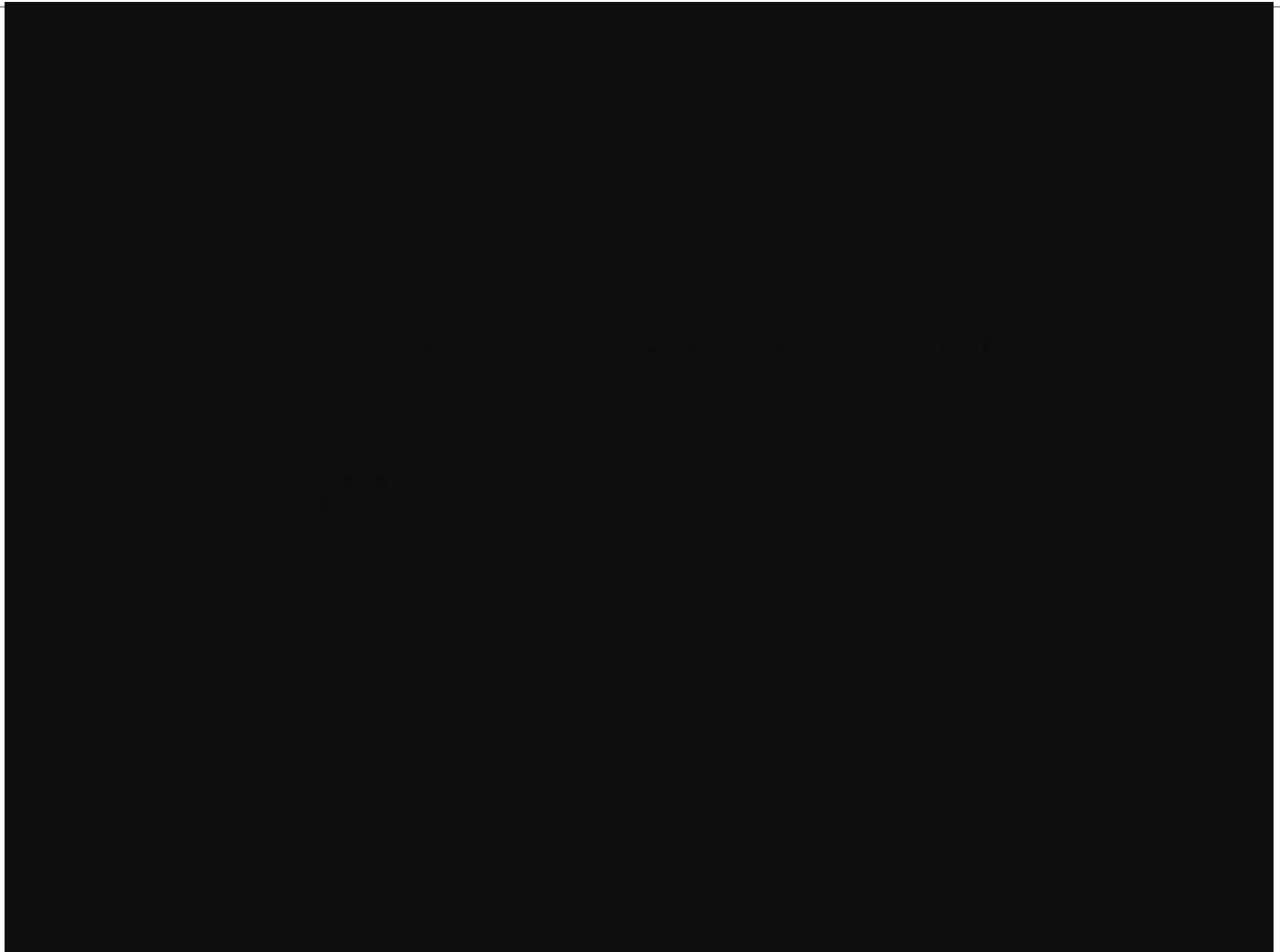


Claudio Monteverdi - 1631

Zefiro torna - *Zephir returns and with it, great times*



Giacomo Carissimi, *Vanitas Vanitatis*



Stefano Landi - *Memento mori*

Remember that you must die, and you don't know when!

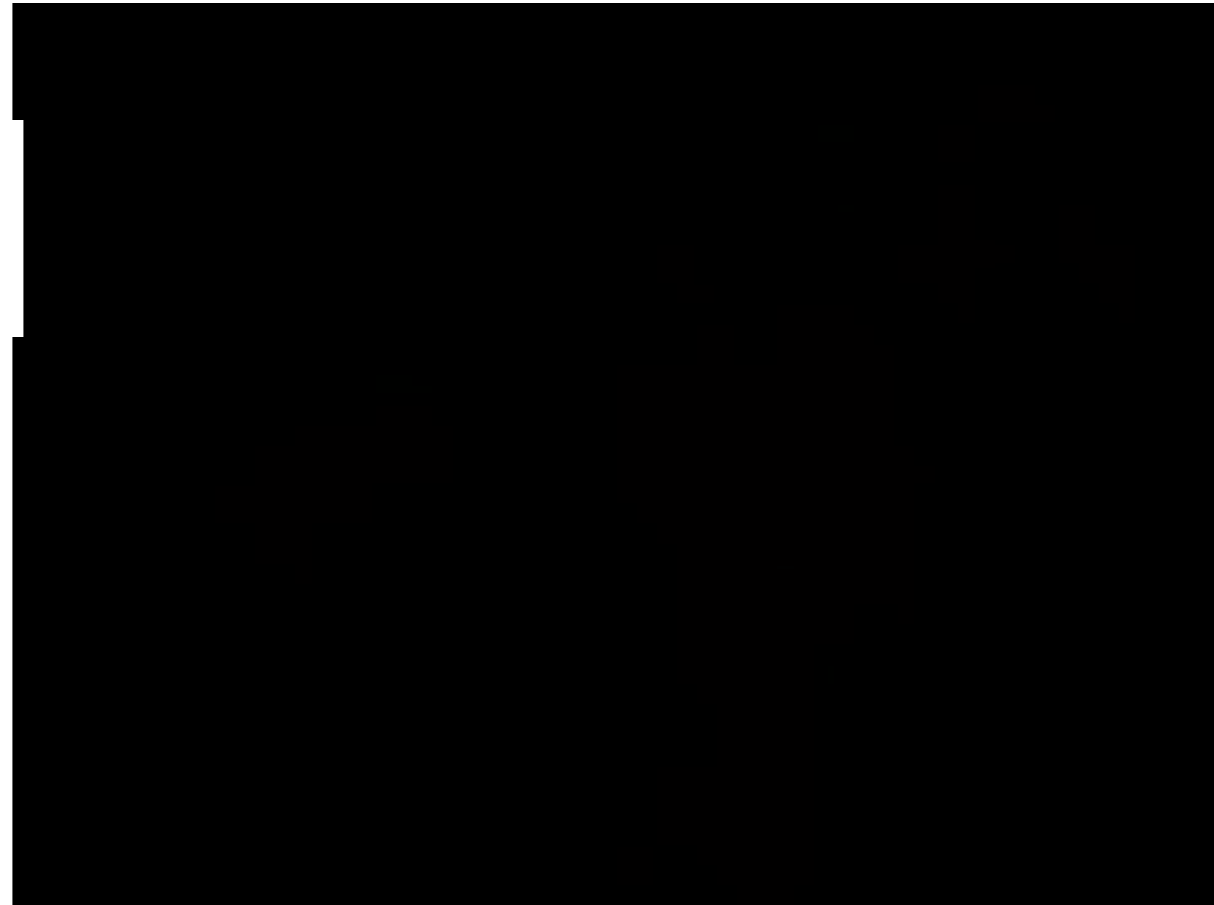


Johann Sebastian Bach

Cantata Nimm von uns Herr du treuer Gott BWV 101

[Take from us, O Lord, thou faithful God
The heavy punishment and great distress
That we with our numberless sins

Have only too well deserved,
Preserve us against war and famine,
Plague, fire and devastation.]



Specific musical figures evoke punishment, distress, war, famine, and plague.
Semitone clashes, false relations, non-harmonic tones, expressive 'sigh' motives