



Greek civilization—that it is so interesting. Do not tell me only, say human nature, of the magnitude¹ of your industry and commerce²; of the beneficence³ of your institutions, your freedom, your equality; of the great and growing number of your churches and schools, libraries, and newspapers; tell me also if your civilization—which is the grand name you give to all this development— tell me if your civilization is interesting.

↗ Matthew Arnold (1822-1888):
Civilization in the United States ★

Comprehension

🍁 According to Matthew Arnold, what are the elements of a civilization?

1. magnitude ['mæɡnɪtʊd] (n.) greatness of size or extent
2. commerce ['kɑːməːrs] (n.) the buying and selling of things on a large scale, which involves transportation from place to place
3. beneficence [bɪ'nefɪsəns] (n.) the quality of being kind or doing good



Knowledge is happiness, because to have knowledge—broad, deep knowledge—is to know true ends from false, and lofty¹ things from low. To know the thoughts and deeds that have marked man's progress is to feel the great heartthrobs² of humanity through the centuries; and if one does not feel in these pulsations³ a heavenward⁴ striving⁵, one must indeed be deaf to the harmonies of life.

➤ Helen Keller (1880-1968):

The Story of My Life ★

Comprehension



What is “knowledge” according to Keller?

1. lofty ['lɔːfti] (a.) exalted and refined
2. heartthrob ['hɑːrtθrɔːb] (n.) heartbeat, the throb of a heart
3. pulsation [pʌl'seɪʃən] (n.) rhythmic beating or vibrating
4. heavenward ['hevənwɜːd] (a.) toward or in the direction of heaven
5. striving [straɪvɪŋ] (n.) an effortful attempt to attain a goal

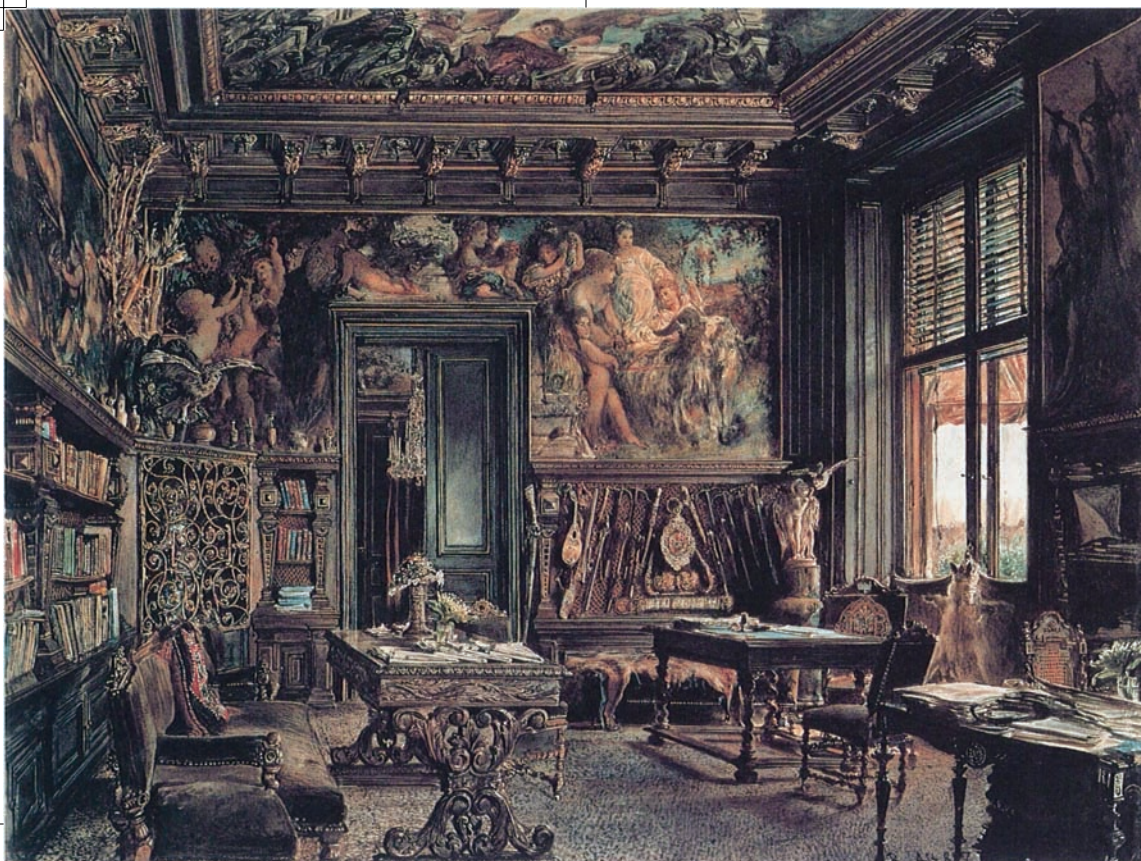
I go into my library, and all history unrolls before me. I breathe the morning air of the world while the scent¹ of Eden's roses yet lingered² in it, while it vibrated only to the world's first brood³ of nightingales⁴, and to the laugh of Eve. I see the pyramids building; I hear the shoutings of the armies of Alexander⁵.

➤ Alexander Smith (1948-):
Books and Gardens ★

Comprehension

- 🍁 According to the passage of Ralph Waldo Emerson, why do you have to be careful about the library?
- 🍂 Why can a library turn our “inside out or outside in”? What does the expression mean here?
- 🍀 What did Alexander Smith learn in the library?

1. scent [sent] (n.) a distinctive, often agreeable odor or smell
2. linger ['lɪŋgə] (v.) to be slow in parting, hesitate in leaving
3. brood [bruːd] (n.) a group of young birds all born at the same time
4. nightingale ['naɪtɪŋgeɪl] (n.) a European songbird (*Luscinia megarhynchos*) with reddish brown plumage known for its sweet songs of the male at night during the breeding season
5. Alexander: the king of Macedon who conquered Greece, Egypt, and Persia (356-323 BC); also known as Alexander the Great



The library in Palais Dumba (Carl Ritter von Dombrowski, 1872-1951)

2 Library



Be a little careful about your library. Do you foresee what you will do with it? Very little to be sure. But the real question is, what it will do with you? You will come here and get books that will open your eyes, and your ears, and your curiosity, and turn you inside out or outside in.

➤ Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882): *Journals* ★



It is not all books that are as dull as their readers. There are probably words addressed to our condition exactly, which, if we could really hear and understand, would be more salutary¹ than the morning or the spring to our lives, and possibly put a new aspect on the face of things for us. How many a man has dated a new era in his life from the reading of a book. The book exists for us perchance² which will explain our miracles and reveal new ones. The at-present unutterable³ things we may find somewhere uttered. These same questions that disturb and puzzle⁴ and confound⁵ us have in their turn occurred to all the wise men; not one has been omitted; and each has answered them, according to his ability, by his words and his life.

↗ Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862): *Walden* ★

Comprehension

🍁 According to Henry Thoreau, what are the benefits of reading a book?

🍂 What can books tell us about the history and the future?

1. salutary ['sæljʊteri] (a.) promoting good health
2. perchance [pər'tʃæns] (adv.) perhaps; maybe
3. unutterable [ʌn'ʌtəərbəl] (a.) beyond the power of words
4. puzzle ['pʌzəl] (v.) to confuse somebody by being difficult or impossible to understand
5. confound [kən'faʊnd] (v.) to cause confusion or mix up