

# Humanism: high renaissance assignment

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Humanism is a philosophy that was born during the Renaissance, beginning in Florence in the last decades of the 14th century. The theory introduced new ways of thinking that allowed people to question and interpret the Bible anyway they wish. Prior to Humanism, people lived their lives under the impression that it was all to serve god. It wasn't until people began taking an interest in the work of Greek philosophers that true appreciation of human life became apparent. Humanism inspired people to believe that their life was meaningful and that they were capable of more than just working to please God.

The key principle of the theory was that “ human beings are not subject to God or any divine agency. They have no obligation to love, fear or obey any such supernatural agent. ” (Victor A. Gunrunners) When the importance of human life prevailed, there was no longer a strained religious perception of earth and society and this is when the freedom of art and self- expression truly took form. Art was no longer a way of glorifying God, but a way of showing individualism and creativity within ones self.

The origins of Humanism can be found in the Golden Age of Greek Philosophy. Xenophobes (580 BCC) said, “ If cattle had hands and drew pictures of Gods, Gods would look like cows” making it patent that Gods are of our own making. When Propagators (450 BCC) wrote, “ Man is the measure of all things, of things that are that they are, and of things that are not that they are not. ” he was accused of impiety and was banished for creating such freethinking sentiments that would be considered thoroughly unorthodox for his time.

His words are metaphorical of us ' knowing the world by our own proportion, from our point of view. ' He crafted the idealistic principle of human perception that shaped the humanism philosophy we know today. Humanism was not limited to mental thoughts and ideas on the value of human life, but shown physically through a spectrum of art mediums. The theory shaped various aspects of Renaissance art including the content, style and subject matter of all art forms. During the middle ages, well before Humanism took form, art was notable for glorifying and praising God.

During this time, all art was assigned from the church and so the subject matter consisted of mainly biblical themes, stories and characters. Within these paintings, man wasn't portrayed with anatomical accurateness, but as a small, off scale and minor element next to a much larger religious figure. Within almost all of Middle Age artworks, biblical figures were seen as the most powerful and most important; and so they were made to look exceedingly larger than people or children, who were painted on a much smaller scale.

The importance of these religious figures was also shown through height and placement within the picture. They were often painted higher than other figures, adding to the overall impersonal religious, people weren't able to connect and view art for the purpose of enjoyment, but for worshipping a higher presence. Take the Assassination Madonna (1310) for example. The painter, Ghetto, depicts Mary and her son with saints surrounding them. They're portrayed as very large, while everyone else in the painting is very small.

Neither of the two are life size nor are they anatomically accurate. However the most obvious aspect within the painting is the overstated size of the two most important biblical figures, Mary and Jesus. This was the conventional style of Middle Age art. The value of human life was never considered, nor was it illustrated through paintings or sculpture. During the late 14th century, Artists began looking at natural depictions of the world and ancient pagan culture.

The notion of human form that characterized medieval art was supplanted with the concept of full anatomical accuracy. With the celebration of human life, precision of the human body within paintings and sculptures became a crucial part of depicting the realistic perception within art, one that was not justified by any singular religious context but ones desire for perfection. People began painting secular subjects and portraying man with the same importance that was used for religious figures within the Middle Ages.

When the prominence of human life prevailed, people began taking an interest in the accurate portrayal of human characters. This provoked a range of pictorials to be created in parallel with the human form, reflecting the balanced and symmetrical form of the human body in art. Artists began creating precise proportions or the ‘golden mean’ in order to establish symmetrical and harmonious composition within a varied spectrum of art mediums. The Golden Mean is the desirable middle between two extremes and is given the number Phi(= 1. 618033988749895... Commonly known as the ‘divine proportion’ to Renaissance artists, the Golden Mean was used for atheistic appeal and balance within architecture, but was often used effectively for other visual art forms, such as nettings or sculptures.

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Collective to the Greek mentality, the golden mean was considered an attribute of beauty that included symmetry, proportion and harmony. The Golden Mean can “ be derived with a number of geometric constructions, each of which divides a line segment at the unique point where: the ratio of the whole line (A) to the large segment (B) is the same as the ratio of the large segment (B) to the small segment (C). ([http://www. Goldenberg. Net/golden-section/](http://www.Goldenberg.Net/golden-section/)) Paintings, buildings and sculptures adapted and drew inspiration from classical roman trustees (a time when the Golden Mean was recognized To Greeks as dividing a line in the extreme and mean ratio) during the High Renaissance period in order to interlace the crucial ascetic appeal that was desired when Humanism was at great interest. High Renaissance style architecture conventionally begins with Donato Bramante (1444-1514) who built the Tempietto at S. Pietro in Montorio, Rome in 1510. The Tempietto ; is an attempt at reconciling Christian and humanist ideals”.

Michelangelo's David in (1501) is a perfect example of its boundless effect on accurately conveying the human body with precise proportions and measurements. Other works relating to Humanism included The Birth of Venus (1485), by Botticelli. Prior to Humanism, the majority of art appeared two dimensional or flat. These artists were one of the first to begin adding vast details and highlighting the illusion of space, form and dimension in all art mediums. Combining these and taking into mind perspective (the notable technique of all Renaissance artworks) they ultimately crafted the image of humanist art; molding the backbone of the High Renaissance.

In order to embrace this philosophy within art, artists needed to explore the relationship between the human body and mathematics. These artists are <https://assignbuster.com/humanism-high-renaissance-assignment/>

one of the many from the High Renaissance period to articulate this relationship physically through multiple art forms. Before the High Renaissance, there was Early Renaissance. During the mid 14th century, architects such as Leon Battista Alberti and Filippo Brunelleschi began taking an interest in proportion.

The concept was that a building should be “fitted together with such proportion and connection, that nothing could be added, diminished or altered, but for the worse.” (Alberti) The rising theory of proportions was looked into by a number of artists and many architects such as Alberti and Brunelleschi over a long period of time, but it wasn't until Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man (1490) that people started to take it seriously. Not limiting himself to just art, but exploring the realms of math, music and science, da Vinci used his experience and knowledge to establish the link between art and mathematics.

Some would say that his work acted as a catalyst towards the start of the High Renaissance and that he was able to pave the way for painters, sculptures and architects that were interested in creating realistic dynamics of human proportion within their art medium. When Michelangelo was commissioned in 1501 by the Board of Works for Florence Cathedral to sculpt David from marble, he used the opportunity to illustrate the true growth of the art movement and the influence of Humanism on various art forms. Michelangelo works against the medieval concept of humanity, a time where man was seen as sinful, immoral and ‘born of dirt’.

He shows David before the fight, highlighting his ability as a human to make conscious decisions and a choice to commit himself to act. This depiction of man is one who can become godlike through his own intellect and power of will. Compare this David to Tangelo's David, made out of bronze during the sass's. Donated depicts David as a young boy, looking ether effeminate in a shepherd hat and boots. He's shown with a smug smile and his foot on Goliath severed head subsequent to the battle. Tangelo's version of David is an interpretation of the biblical text.

His feminine like physic serves the purpose of clarifying that his triumph in throwing the stone at Goliath was not of his own doing, but rather God's will. He is created very close to the biblical story, having hat and boots typical of a shepherd, where as Michelangelo Davit's complete nudity shows how he has stripped almost all biblical context from him, focusing entirely on the human entity. He is no young, scrawny boy that follows God blindly, but a man with the ability to make his own choices and fight his own battles.

His full nudity shows his work shaped the perception of humanity through symbolic catalysts, but through the riveting recreation of the human form with accurate proportions, illustrating the perfect use of the golden mean. It is clear that a grave amount of thought and work went into creating an accurate insight towards the human body. Davit's hands and upper body are made slightly larger in order for the human form to look accurate and proportional when seen from the ground. The truthful portrayal of vein and cycle within the body highlights the humanistic elements within the sculpture.

In contrast to this, Tangelo's David looks quite unusual and incongruous, although he was sculpted at a younger age than Michelangelo David, their anatomical differences are distinct in a way that can't go unrecognized. Tangelo's work shows shoulders and a chest that are diminutive and slightly disproportion's to the rest of the body. Prior to Humanism, there wasn't this striving focus for anatomical excellence within art for anyone unless they were a religious character holding the supremacy over man kind that everyone once believed they had.

His work on David provided the humanist vision with its first and most prevailing artistic expression. He's shown as a strong and heroic man, not a smug boy as shown in Tangelo's sculpture. The Birth of Venus, painted by Poetically in 1486 is a celebration of Renaissance Humanism, depicting the classical myth. The picture is very calming and somber, focusing on the true beauty of Venus with warm and soft tones. Venus, Goddess of Love, is shown emerging from the sea on a shell, parallel to the story of her birth. There is an emphasis on sea imagery that was used to please church authorities.

Zephyr and Colorist are blowing her to the shore with wind, amongst a shower of flowers, while a Nymph, Flora, is reaching out to cover her naked body with a cloak. The nudity of Venus was very unconventional at the time; primarily, pictorials of naked women were only shown through portrayals of Eve; but here Venus stands; completely naked and not in a biblical context. In a time when almost all artwork was of Christian theme, the honest portrayal of Venus and the secular imagery had a crucial impact on High Renaissance art and was a catalyst for other artists to explore humanistic elements within their work.

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Venus, the goddess of love is depicted in human form with such magnificence and accuracy that humanist themes are not suggested, but a manifest to Botulism's audience. Godly figures began taking form of earthly beings and showing the true exquisiteness of the female body. There is a De-emphasis of deep space in order to stress the sense of pattern and beauty that defines the painting. Flora is not giving the cloth for Just modesty, but giving her the Veil of wisdom'. She shows us how great intellectual gifts are always concealed from plain sight.

Botulism's portrayal of the female body is used to further drive ideas of Humanism. Her physique is quite an accurate and refreshing portrayal compared to earlier years where nudity was not yet established in non biblical paintings. Her stomach is a truthful portrayal of what a women with some muscle tone in her abdomen would have, the legs and arms are somewhat shapely, showing the female body in its most natural form. Venus in this painting is both humble and pure. It's the idea of beauty.

The picture has a decorative quality to it; not only does it showcase the substantial change in art during the High Renaissance, but its symbolic of a rich classical history, reinvention and an earthly world view. It is through The Birth of Venus, and many other High Renaissance paintings, where the true impact of Humanism is made clear. Artists would incorporate Greek and Roman mythology as apposed to writing and painting about biblical texts. This was because humanists turned to the classics for inspiration, and so these were often the themes of High Renaissance art.

The inspiration of Greek Philosophers inspired those within this period to strive less for divinity. This painting is one of the many to depict Roman or Greek deities, other famous works include Mars and Venus and The School of Athens. One of the most outstanding changes during the High Renaissance period was Architecture. The statement that man is the measure of all things is mirrored within different art mediums, showing a great point of difference within humanist and non- humanist architecture. Humanism meant that architects built not only churches, but palaces and buildings exposing ideals of classical styles.

Humanism gave people a chance to look for inspiration from ancient Greeks and thus buildings took influence from the Ancient Classic period. One of the highlights in High Renaissance Architecture is the Temperate, built in 1502 by Donato Bramante. The building marks the crucifixion site of St Peter and follows selected traditions from the Christian building the Martyr while employing classical principles that create a geometric ideal. Both ancient Greeks and ancient Romans employed the circular plan that governs the perception of the Temperate.

The devotion to symmetrical perfection makes it clear of Bramante's conscious decision to recreate this in a way that is not only true to the humanist theory, but one that depicts the thoughts of the ancient roman writer Vitruvius, who studied and wrote about architecture and correct proportions within it. Bramante is really following this line of thought with the Temperate. He's created a radial building with a round structure that is very dissimilar to the traditional crucifix form of church, which is based on the ancient basilica.

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His work is considered almost nothing short of architectural brilliance, due to his innovative techniques at changing the orthodox designs of churches and buildings. The building is the perfect example of the relationship between ideal ancient geometry and the divine. Geometry was thought by the ancient Greeks and again later in the Renaissance to be a vehicle in which we can imagine the perfection of even. The Temperate is a building that truly celebrates Humanism. It's believed to show how man can produce exemplars on earth of the perfection of the heavenly, using correct geometrical structures and symmetrical portrayals.

This is similar to that of the golden mean, while relating to the work of Michelangelo and Poetical, where Humanism was celebrated through the accurate portrayal of the human form. He drew inspiration from classical traditions while making his own original decisions to enhance the symmetrical nature of the Temperate. His work is similar to that of lassie origins, but he allowed for variation. Greek and Romans would not put pilaster that pairs with the columns of the building, however Aberrant did.

By aligning the true columns with the false columns, he was able to maximize the radial quality and overall centrifugal theme of the building. The Temperate shows a rhythm, one that was definitely inspired by classical antiquity, the Doric Order in particular. The columns of the Temperate are a roman variant of the first level of the Coliseum. Depicting the styles of the Doric Order, there are triptychs and mottoes above the columns. Mitchell Bagley was literal when he wrote; " The emphasis here is on the harmony of proportions, the simplicity of volumes (cylinder, hemisphere) and the sobriety of the Doric Order.

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The circular plan symbolizes divine perfection. Inspired by ancient temples, the Temperate is both a homage to antiquity and a Christian memorial. ”

Humanism affect on architecture was one of the largest. Despite differing in architectural elements, different styles of columns were explored throughout all High Renaissance architecture, utilizing techniques that show proportion and highlighting themes of classical tradition. Nearly all buildings constructed after Humanism follow these principles and show a vivid influence of ancient Greek and Roman cultures.

The Humanist movement allowed architects to make changes in what they were creating. They drew inspiration from classical architecture, traditions and even philosophies and refrigerated it within new architectural masterpieces that shaped the Humanist theory in many inconceivable ways. Alberta and Brutishness’s were a crucial aspect in the innovation of humanist architecture. They were no Greek philosophers, however they employed the idea of symmetrical excellence and inspired the creations of many renowned and prominent buildings including the Temperate itself.

Many great architects of the high renaissance period such as Aberrant and Michelangelo were captivated by this idea and were thus able to shape traditions and techniques to produce the conventional high renaissance architecture style that we’re accustomed to today. Inclusive to classical traditions, architects began taking the beauty of human proportions and reflecting it through architecture, similar to the way humanist painters and sculptors depicted the human form with symmetrical perfection. Humanism was noted for 3 things.

The revival of classical Greek/Roman art forms and styles, faith in the nobility of man as apposed to pure worship of religious or god-like figures; and finally the appreciation of the human body, that influenced almost all artists and architects of the era to portray this accurately in their work.

Humanism shaped the art of the High Renaissance period through a change in architectural style and content; subject matter of paintings and sculptors; and a difference in the anatomical structure and proportions of man.

People became important and an appreciation for human life fell apparent through a range of art where human history and perspective was no longer considered sinful, but was explored multiple mythological traditions.

Paintings began to depict Roman or Greek deities. Biblical figures no longer subjugated artworks with height and proportion, but became equal to man.

Sculptors began creating humanist characters that were strong and noble, architects began referring to classical and ancient antiquity for new innovation towards humanist architecture... The freedom of thought and self expression was at its highest.