

# The concept of renaissance humanism in botticelli's 'madonna and child with adori...

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Humanism was one of the major facets of the Renaissance period that lasted from 1400 to 1650. Originating in Italy, humanism movement during the renaissance reveals human shift from the medieval tradition that was strongly linked to pious religious motivation in arts and literature to adopt a new way of life in which secularism and materialism were appreciated (Davies, Hofrichter, Jacobs, Roberts and Simon 71).

Money and enjoyment of life replaced pious attachment to the religion. In ‘Madonna and a Child with an Angel’, Botticelli appears to have deviated from the early art styles that were largely influenced by the religion. In this case, it is worth noting that the use of lines, colors, shades and shapes are renaissance in nature, the theme is religious but a number of aspects provide evidence of humanism in the work.

Popularly known as Botticelli, Allesandro Filipepi was a renowned painter born in Florence, Italy, around 1444 and died in the same city in 1510. This painting is one of his early works, which provide evidence of his experimentation with new ideas during the renaissance. Developed in 1468, the painting measures 35 by 26-3/4 inches and consists of paint on panel. At first look, the audience understands that the main subject matter is Mary holding Baby Jesus in an affectionate manner while an angle adoringly looks at them.

Humanism is evident in this painting in a number of ways. In the medieval presentation of Jesus and Madonna, artists were obliged to abide with the religious aspects of the event. For instance, baby Jesus is leaning close to the

mother, while Mary is holding the child affectionately, which reveals the presence of a normal relationship between a mother and a child.

In addition, the baby is in a light garment rather than being naked while the mother is in soft but seemingly expensive attire. The angel is also in clothes common during the renaissance rather than those worn in the biblical times. In addition, the angel appears female rather than a male.

The figures are shown in an expensive room where an oval window made of glass leads the eyes to the background objects. Below the figures is a vase that appears expensive and attractive. In the background, a meandering river cuts across rounded hills, which provide evidence of a beautiful scenario. All these aspects largely reveal humanistic concept of renaissance, which advocated for materialistic and joy of human life.

By using these aspects, Botticelli has diverted from the medieval religious influence of art to a more humanistic approach for a number of reasons. First, most religious paintings avoided using a variety of colors to depict the scene and both Jesus and Mary. The belief that Jesus was a holy figure required artists to include a number of aspects borrowed from the descriptions in the Bible.

For example, most medieval paintings of Jesus as a child portrayed a naked child held on the arms rather than leaning on the mother (Berry and Wernick 49). In addition, there would be a large circular but virtual enclosure around the child's head, which would be bright and glittering as an indication of the child's holiness.

Moreover, previous paintings of Jesus attempted to avoid use of colors, lines and items that would display any human or materialistic aspect of the picture ((Davies, et al 121). In addition, the baby and the mother were supposed to have one bright color to display holiness and righteousness (Berry and Wernick 54). The angel was supposed to be a male preferably with wings. However, Botticelli fails to include these aspects, which indicates his ability to include humanistic approach to religious work in the renaissance era.

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Berry, Philippa and Andrew Wernick. *The Shadow of Spirit: Post-Modernism and Religion*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2006. Print.

Davies, Penelope, Frima Fox Hofrichter, Joseph Jacobs, Ann Roberts and David Simon. *Janson's Basic History of western art*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice, 2014. Print.