

Slavery in renaissance essay

[Economics](#), [Trade](#)



Europe in the 14th to 16th century was marked by Renaissance.

Renaissance which means “ rebirth” began in Italy and later on expanded into different countries like England, France, including Germany. Within those three centuries, Renaissance reached other parts of Europe. In these years, the focus of study turned into morality of human actions rather than the usual religious issues(Encarta, 2007). It was in this era when Humanism was introduced which is based on the Philosophy that all people are rational beings thus, everyone possesses the capacity of goodness and the truth.

Furthermore, Humanism gives emphasis to the worth of an individual. While the Italian Renaissance represents the best of Europe, there are different practices that were made that conflicts Humanism. Renaissance was the same period wherein rediscovery of slavery happened (Hooker, 1996).

Slavery dates back to the pre-historic times but it was in the 12th century when Human Slave Labor was rediscovered in Europe.

On 1444, Portugal started to import slaves due to lack of agricultural workers while Spain followed in the 16th century and England joined the trade in the latter part of the 16th century. (Hooker, 1996) Slavery was defined as an involuntary or forced form of human servitude wherein most services are obtained through force and slaves were considered as property of owner. These slaves are considered as things and they were being traded, bought, sold or payment for a debt and also serve as a gift. Slaves during these times were obtained either by raid or conquest of other people within or from other society. During Renaissance, the fast growing Italian City-Estates demand for more slaves and was later on considered as the largest

consumer of human slave. Slaves in Italy are mostly domestic servants and every wealthy family in the city have at least one slave for household.

(Hooker, 1996) While Humanists were proposing to educate the whole person of an individual, including the physical and moral development aside from intellectual achievement, a new type of slave was introduced in the purpose of economical reasons. Plantation slaves were the cheapest labor that is possible during that time. (Encarta, 2007) The existence of slavery during the Renaissance wherein the emphasis on the worth of people was highly regarded, was quite conflicting to each other but, it is evident in the accounts of Renaissance that slavery is really visible and there is a very large amount of victims of slavery. This Human Slave Trade and the presence of the “ Plantation Slaves” was due to the growing needs of the plantations especially the sugar plantations for workers that will be paid in a small amount. Plantation Slave was caused by the economic stability of Italy and the growing plantations. Hence, the conflict on slavery and humanism started.

(Hooker, 1996) References “ Renaissance” Microsoft Encarta Online Encyclopedia. (2007). <http://encarta.msn.com> Hooker, Richard. (1996). retrieved April 29, 2008. Early Modern Renaissance. www.wsu.edu/~dee/REN/BACK/HTM