

# Renaissance humanism assignment

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BUSTER**

David C Literature 12 November 4th, 2013 Humanism of the renaissance period was the predominant movement that revolutionized philosophical, intellectual, and literary customs. It first originated in Italy during the fourteenth century and eventually spread to other major areas in Europe such as Greece. One of the most important changes humanism introduced was a secular viewpoint of history; this was done so by endorsing a nonreligious perspective on history. Humanism not only ended the dominance of the church, but it also eventually had a profound impact on everyday life, especially education.

Individualism, humanist philosophy, and the printing press were major components of humanism that made it a crucial influence on Europe during the renaissance period. Without the introduction of a revolutionary movement like humanism, Europe may have continued to remain stagnant with its development in terms of philosophy, literature, and the arts (Humanism in the Renaissance). The period from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth advocated the liberation of individuals, which meant that more emphasis was placed on personal beliefs.

This led to a more diverse spectrum of ideas in society and increased personal development, hence the ERM “ individualism”. Individualism first began when city-states of northern Italy had come into contact with the diverse customs of the East, which gradually permitted expression “ in terms of taste and dress” (Krebs). This eventually resulted in the ascendancy of honest doubt and curiosity over unreasoning faith. However, it is not completely warranted to believe that individualism was wholly beneficial to people.

However, the fact remains that individualism went against the “sovereignty of tyrant, feudal lord, class, corporation, and tradition” (Krebs) and has had a tremendous influence on the subsequent history of Europe. Because of individualism, freedom of individual expression and opposition to authority was brought to the surface and soon became an integral part of the western intellectual tradition. In context, individualism was in direct opposition to the ideals of medieval Christianity, which restricted personal expression, fostered self-annihilation, and demanded implicit faith and unquestioning obedience.

Individualism not only resulted in a less powerful church, but it also triggered an immense change from strict obedience to increased personal expression (Krebs). As a result of the increase of individual expression, new ideas were formed that led to the development of “humanist philosophy” (Cline).

Humanist philosophy soon became an intrinsic component of renaissance life, as there was an increased emphasis on the importance of education. It became necessary for people to learn ancient Greek and Latin in order to even begin to understand the ancient manuscripts.

This led to extended education in the arts and philosophies and even the ancient sciences that had had been unprecedented burst of scientific and technological development during the incessant that Europe had not witnessed in centuries (Cline). Additionally, the aforementioned individualism was naturally one of the most crucial components of humanist philosophy, for much of the basis of this type of philosophy was formed from a secular approach (Krebs).

One of the most important early humanists was an Italian poet named Petrarch who applied the ideas and values of ancient Greece and Rome to questions about Christian doctrines and ethics that were central topics during the renaissance period. Interestingly enough, many famous humanists like Petrarch were members of the church; however, they were mostly secular rather than spiritual, exhibiting much more interest in literature, art, and philosophy than in theology. To say the least, renaissance humanism was a “ revolution in thinking and feeling which left no part of society, not even the highest levels of Christianity, untouched” (Cline).

Finally, the ideas of humanism would not have spread like it did without the use of the printing press, which was invented by a man named Johannes Gutenberg in 1445. Previously, bookmaking entailed copying word-by-word and all the illustrations by hand. As a result of the tedious labor, the price was often very expensive. With the advent of Guttenberg printing press, books could be produced much quicker and with relatively little effort, which made bookmaking much less expensive, allowing more people to buy reading material.

The printing press’ ability to spread new ideas was soon put to the test with the newly developed humanist philosophy. As previously mentioned, one of the main concepts behind humanist philosophy was the idea of a nonreligious viewpoint on everyday life matter, which proved to be quite opposite to the ideals of the church. With humanists rediscovering ancient writings and adopting new forms of philosophy, literature and art, the printing press became a highly useful tool to spread information to various people across Europe (Renaissance – Printing and Thinking).

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With this, many entrepreneurs began printing editions of ancient philosophy and literature in Greek, Latin, and Italian for a mass audience, leading to a dissemination of information and ideas “ much wider than previously thought possible” (Cline). Without the invention of the press, newly formed ideas like individualism and other philosophical concepts would to have made a huge impact on Europe the way it did during the renaissance, regardless of its potency (Cline).

The introduction of humanism was a revolutionary movement during the renaissance period that propelled Europe in the direction of steady development. This was seen with the influences of individualism, humanist philosophy, and the printing press on Europe during the renaissance period. The ramifications of these not only included changes in the way people viewed the church, but they also influenced people to place more emphasis on literature, education, and the arts. With individualism, European society began to question implicit obedience to the church and instead, viewed the matter with a more secular approach.

Humanist philosophy caused an increase in emphasis on education and led to extended education in the arts, philosophies, and sciences that resulted in a boom in scientific and technological progress during the renaissance. However, these newly developed humanistic ideas would not spread and become popular without the invention of the printing press, which became a highly useful tool in meeting revolutionary that resulted in important changes during the renaissance period.

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