

Impact of Renaissance on Modern World

Dr. Saroj Bala

M.A.,M.Phil.,Ph.D (A.I.H)

Abstract

Renaissance is one of the important movements in the history of English Literature that brought drastic and major changes in the whole society of the world. Renaissance means re-birth and re-awakening of the dramatic and cultural activities not only in the European countries but also all over the world. Various intellectual thinkers contributed a great deal to the development of this movement. Humanism is one of the chief traits of renaissance that affected many thinkers of the world during this period of time.

Paper

The Renaissance brought about a rebirth and an expansion of cultural experience. It included those outside the elite classes, and it directed society toward more humanist and realistic perspectives. Without the Renaissance, we might not preserve and appreciate the fine arts as we do today. Science, too, might not have developed in the same way without such Renaissance men as Leonardo da Vinci. Cristopher Hibbert says in this connection, "It was a kind of re-birth and re-awakening in the modern age with the advent of Renaissance."

The Renaissance brought about a rebirth and an expansion of cultural experience. It included those outside the elite classes, and

it directed society toward more humanist and realistic perspectives. Without the Renaissance, we might not preserve and appreciate the fine arts as we do today. Science, too, might not have developed in the same way without such Renaissance men as Leonardo da Vinci.

This cultural expansion and the new directions of ideas in the Renaissance did much to introduce and awaken many who heretofore either had no interest or were not included in the expression of and the appreciation of the arts.

One of the Renaissance authors who set the stage for literary realism was Giovanni Boccaccio, who wrote *The Decameron*. This work contains settings and characters that were recognizable to many readers. In addition, there is a short heading that serves as an explanation of each tale. Readers could connect with these personages and enjoy the literary work. Even today, this style of writing is popular.

The new humanist viewpoint of the Renaissance also turned societies toward an interest in scientific research and inventions. Of course, one of the greatest contributors to the development of the arts and sciences was Leonardo da Vinci. He introduced realism

into the portrayal of the human form because he combined science with his art as he drew anatomically correct human forms. This is not to say that he did not take artistic license as, for instance, he did with his sculpture of David, which has the right arm constructed on a larger scale. Ferdinand Schevill rightly puts it as, "With the Renaissance, there was enlightening and light of knowledge and cultural activities."2

During the Renaissance the printing press was created, followed by other inventions and scientific discoveries. As there were more developments in science and thought, more mobility was witnessed in Europe. And with more interest in humanism, the Roman Catholic religion waned in its power. Along with this lessening of the power of the Church, Rome's prominence as the cultural and intellectual center of Europe was reduced. Therefore, Renaissance scholars began traveling throughout Europe, and they brought with them the preservation of the classics and their artistic and humanist ideals, which then became prevalent in other countries. Indeed, the Renaissance was extremely influential in developing the cultures of Europe because it ignited the lost human spirit.

Because of the revival of and great interest in the fine arts and the sciences during the Renaissance, modern society is enriched with classical and humanistic works and ideas. Without doubt, these advancements of the Renaissance have enriched modern societies socially, culturally, intellectually, and scientifically. Paul Stranthern says

rightly, "During Renaissance period, there were a number of books on humanism enriched with the intellectual ideas."3

Many of the innovations of the Renaissance have shaped contemporary society. Perhaps the most important innovations were the beginnings of modern science. The Renaissance marks the development of the heliocentric theory of the universe, the discovery of gravitation, and the invention of the telescope, all improving navigation and laying the groundwork for space travel. Experiments on cadavers increased understanding of human anatomy. Harvey's discovery of the mechanism of circulation of blood is one of the foundational advances in medicine. In religion, the Reformation marked the origin of Protestantism, and a growth in religious liberty and diversity in Europe, although not complete freedom of religion.

The Renaissance was a great age of colonization and exploration, with Europeans visiting North and South America, many parts of Africa, and Asia. Trade and colonies swiftly followed these discoveries.

The Renaissance marked the rise of the vernacular in the arts, government, law and religion, along with the growth of the middle class. Both these have shaped contemporary society, in which Latin is almost unknown, and many art forms cater to a broadly educated middle class rather than a small aristocracy.

The Renaissance was inspired by the Classical World of Ancient Greece and Rome. However, until the fifteenth century, the Italian humanists only knew of Ancient Greece and the great works of Plato and the other great Greeks through the Romans. Cosimo the Elder helped to introduce Ancient Greek manuscripts and culture into Italy. Cosimo the Elder sought to end the schism in the Christian Church. He helped to negotiate the union of the Catholic and the Orthodox Church that was formalized at the Council of Florence in 1439. This Union ultimately failed but it was to have a profound impact on the development of the Renaissance. All of the de Medici had an interest in the arts in the fifteenth century. This was in order to legitimize the rule of the family. The works commissioned by the family often sought to raise the status of the family in the city. They used art to fortify their position in Florentine Society. However, the family was also genuinely fond of art, architecture, and literature. Cosimo was very knowledgeable about architecture and Lorenzo the Magnificent was a connoisseur of paintings and sculptures. Lauro Martines puts as, "There was growth in the field of painting and art as well as in sculptures."⁴

The Medici's used their lavish wealth to patronize many of the greatest artists of the time. The family was directly responsible for some of the greatest works in the Renaissance. Cosimo the Elder was the patron of the great architect Brunelleschi and it was under De Medici orders that he built the great Medici Sacristy in the Church

of San Lorenzo. It was Cosimo who ordered the building of the great De Medici Palace with its magnificent paintings by Uccello. It was Cosimo who also commissioned Donatello's, Bronze of David, one of the most influential pieces of sculpture in the period. Lorenzo was equally lavish in his patronage of artists and the commissioning of great works of art.

The de Medici during their rule of Florence in the fifteen century did much to influence the Renaissance and to enable the great artists, humanists, and writers, to produce their works that have been so influential down the centuries. The family brought stability and peace to the city of Florence. This was crucial in the cultural flourishing in the city in the fifteenth century. The de Medici largely peaceful rule did much to promote the Renaissance in the city. They also in their relations with the other city-states did much to bring peace to North Italy. Then the de Medici was very instrumental in the growing interest in Greek culture and history. Cosimo de Medici and his policies promoted, unintentionally, the study of the works of the Greeks. This was to move the Renaissance in new directions, especially under the influence of Neo-platonism. Then there was the patronage of the de Medici, the family directly helped many great artists to produce many new and great works of art. Lorenzo the Magnificent especially helped to raise the status of the artists in Florentine society. By the time of their expulsion in 1494, the family had made a significant contribution to the development

of the Renaissance, which has been crucial in the evolution of the modern world.

REFERENCES:

1. Hibbert, Christopher. *The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall* (London, Morrow, 1975)p.67
2. Ferdinand Schevill, *History of Florence: From the Founding of the City Through*
3. Paul Strathern, *The Medici—Godfathers of the Renaissance* (London, Pimlico, 2005), p. 213
4. Lauro Martines, *April Blood: Florence and the Plot Against the Medici*(Oxford, Oxford University Press 2003), p. 114

the Renaissance (London, Frederick Ungar, 1936), p. 113