

When in Rome

As it is suggested, "When in Rome", Italians lived on the very ground that the ancient Greeks and Romans had inhabited ten centuries earlier. At the end of the late Middle Ages, during poor economical and political times in Italy, Petrarch found the writings of Cicero. This made him think of the times before the Middle Ages. At this point, Petrarch began to spend his life advocating the knowledge and beliefs of the ancients. This gave rise to a intellectual revolution of the minds of Italy. This time was known as the Renaissance.

The Renaissance (French for "rebirth") started in the fourteenth century in northern Italy and spread to Northern Europe by the fifteenth century. The interest in the classical literature of the ancient Greeks and Romans established a new lifestyle in Italy. It was a time of reinstatement and great accession. The Renaissance reconstructed the education and therefore, the culture of Italy and eventually all of Europe.

In addition, the Renaissance evolved around secular ideas which were coined *humanism*. This "human-centered" prospective allowed people to take credit and enabled them to have dignity in being a human. It emphasized the classics. It also focused on skills that helped society intellectually. Artists, and writers came about in a more worldly atmosphere.

Accordingly, humanism made impacts in the realm of education as well. Peter Paul Vergerio was the first to implement ideas in this particular area. He focused on "sound learning" in which he felt that everyone's most significant need in life is quality, early childhood learning. He emphasized the liberal arts and suggested that history and philosophy were key ingredients in

a proper education. Vergerio believed that this would free people from a mental slavery from understanding the mistakes of the past in order to learn how to apply them in the present. He also suggested that a vital part of this educational development is eloquence. He believed that the way people carried themselves were imperative to the information and ideas that were expressed in various art forms.

Also, although humanism was secular, it was not anti-religious. Artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino (better known as Raphael), Donatello di Niccolo and Michelangelo Buonarroti created a vast amount of artwork that portrayed Christianity in a new and interesting way. The depiction of Mother Mary, King David, Jesus Christ and others changed significantly, but the art that adorns the hallways and ceilings of cathedrals nowadays, were painted during the Renaissance. Although the depiction of such historic figures is different from the commonplace Middle Ages, the themes of both the Torah and New Testament were intertwined with classical Greek and Roman thought. Jesus was often illustrated as a baby, Mother Mary as a young woman and Michelangelo was the first artist to draw a painting that included the image of the Christian God, himself.

In conclusion, the Renaissance is considered a departure from the Middle Ages and the beginning of modernity for several reasons. As Petrarch saw it, it seemed the Middle Ages were merely a lapse between the vitalization of humanity itself. Religion and Authoritarian regimes stymied the passion that lay beneath the rubble from the collapse of the Roman Empire hindered humanity to rise to its true potential. The constrictions that people had placed on themselves were to a degree, unbearable and restricted them from seeing the true potential of human creativity and intelligence. Reviving the classics paved the way for new ways of thought; not only in the arts, but education, economics and politics. Once thriving empires, the Greeks and

Romans were not lost, but laid dominant alike a sleeping giant, waiting to be awoken in a future time wherein they could pour into the hearts and souls of new generations all the way into the present day. The classics are the very building blocks on which new knowledge and learning are placed each and every day, from the Socratic Method in classrooms to the empirical and analytic thought of Aristotle. The governance of land and notion of sovereignty of state is owed to the ancients. This was a time that significantly shaped the way of things to come. It was the Renaissance that began a time of global understanding that connected peoples together in ways that were unknown before the time. Humanism brought direction to people, spread culture and development new ways of communication that were worldly recognized. The Renaissance is the beginning of modernity because this was a time when humanity took life into its own hands and never looked back.