

INTRODUCTION TO THE RENAISSANCE "REBIRTH"

Renaissance

- Roughly between 1300-1600
- An attempt to bring back to life the classical culture of Greece and Rome
- Time of great intellectual and artistic creativity

Italy offered new opportunity

- Renaissance began in the city-states of northern Italy
- These region was much different than the rest of Europe
- Milan, Venice, and especially Florence were centers of a new creativity that would later spread to the rest of Europe
- Google Earth

Why Northern Italy?

Highly urban region

- Populations averaged around 100,000
- City-states served as the centers for trade
- The rest of Europe was still mostly rural
- Many of these urban regions were able to bounce back from the Black Death quickly

Why Northern Italy?

Power of the Merchants

- Wealthy merchants dominated politics, society, and business
- Each city-state had it's own army
- Success depended on the individual's ability to make his own fortune (recurring theme)
- Served as patrons of the arts

Born in N. Italy contd.

- Competitive: Merchants competed for profits and for patronage of the arts
- Trend towards Secular Society: Worldly viewpoint. Less reliance on church teachings and a belief in Alberti's ideals of "Men can do all things if they will"

Celebration of the Individual

- Celebration of the Individual: Artist of the middle ages created images to glorify God
- Many of the artist of the Renaissance created great works to be remembered as individuals.
- Fame was the final reward for individual talent
- Self Portraits and autobiographies were manifestations of the celebration of the individual

Individualism

- Renaissance thought is characterized by the thinkers awareness and celebration of his own importance.
- "I think therefore I am" *Descartes*

Love of Classical Learning

- Renaissance scholars despised the works of the middle ages
- Petrarch coined the phrase “Dark Ages” for the medieval period
- Renaissance writers embraced the works of classic Roman and Greek scholars & artists
- Those who studied classic Roman and Greek works were called Humanists

Humanism

- The humanists believed that the Greek and Latin classics contained all the lessons one needed to lead a moral and effective life
- Their studies included:
 - Grammar, moral philosophy, history, and poetry (a.k.a. The Humanities)

Shift to Worldly Pleasures

- Enjoyment of Worldly Pleasures:
- Music, Clothing, Perfumes,
- Middle Ages=Piety, simple living.
- Renaissance=Opulence, extravagance, materialism

Idealism

- Living a life that is well rounded
- Athletic, Educated, Charming, Polite, Witty
- Men should expect to be all of this and more
- Women were expected to know the classics, write well, paint, make music, and be charming.

Idealism Continued

- Human Perfectibility
- Man is capable of defining his own nature, and of fulfilling that nature’s noblest potential.
- Living a life that is well rounded
- Castiglione
- Castiglione’s Courtier is an illustration of a man aspiring to discover his own limits by daring to surpass them
- Considered the grandfather of the “Self-Help” book
- The study of the gentlemen’s proper role in society as defined, not by tradition or law, but by the gentlemen himself

Giotto

- Painted on wet plaster walls
- Style known as fresco painting
- Created human figures that looked real and life like.
- Created an illusion of depth in his paintings
- Painted bible scenes at the Arena Chapel

Dante and Beatrice

- Dante met an 8 year old girl at the age of 9
- Although he would not see her again for 10 years she became her spiritual ideal
- She rarely saw or spoke to Dante, but she was his spiritual love from afar
- Beatrice was his muse or guiding genius of his writing

Dante: The Divine Comedy

- Renaissance Poet who wrote the Divine Comedy
- Inferno: Hell
- Purgatory: Between Heaven and Hell
- Paradise: Guided by St. Bernard where he eventually meets Beatrice
- Wrote in the Vernacular
- Showed the religious aspect of the middle ages while also addressing the worldly concerns of the renaissance.
- Philosophic bridge between Europe's past and it's future

Petrarch

- Instead of the complexity of medieval poetry Petrarch strove for a new idea of beauty and simplicity in his writings.
- Wrote Sonnets to a mysterious woman named "Laura"
- Wrote in Vernacular and Latin

Florence Leads the Way

The Quattrocento (1400's)

The Strength of Florence

- Textiles were the heart of Florentine industry and economy
- The riches of the textiles helped to start the banking industry which thrived in Florence
- The "Florin" became the most powerful currency in Europe
- Power rested with the Merchant elite although socially Florence was very democratic

Medici Rule Florence

- Made their fortune in trade and banking
- Cosimo de Medici was the wealthiest man of his time
- 1434 he gained control of Florence politics and became the virtual dictator of Florence
- Spent 400,000 Florin on artistic and scholarly projects

Lorenzo "The Magnificent" de Medici

- Ruled with absolute power
- Held the goodwill of his people with balls, festivals, carnivals, and celebrations
- Considered one of the great patrons of the arts

High Renaissance

Artists Beautified Florence

- Contests were often held in Florence and determined which artists would work their craft throughout the city
- One example is the Doors of the Baptistery
- Ghiberti won the contest and spent the next 50 years creating the doors
- Michelangelo likened them to the “gates of paradise”
- Doors were divided into panels showing scenes from the Bible
- Ghiberti died just 3 years after finishing the doors
- “Stop and look at what I have created”

Brunelleschi

- Architect that designed the Duomo or Dome at the Cathedral of Florence
- Built from 1420-1436 such a dome had not been built since Roman times
- Cosimo de Medici supported Brunelleschi
- To this day it is seen as an architectural marvel

Donatello

- 1386-1466
- Worked in Ghiberti workshop
- Visited Rome and became inspired
- Strived for realism and life in his sculptures
- “Speak to me!”

Donatello's David

- First European sculptor since ancient times to make a large free standing nude figure

Massaccio

- Giotto gave painting a sense of depth and roundness to his paintings
- Massaccio carried the revolution further by using perspective (giving objects the appearance of distance)
- He has been called the father of modern painting for his use of perspective

Machiavelli

- Make his reader more equipped for the jungle where effectiveness is determined by the brutal laws of necessity
- Studied by Napoleon, Mussolini, Lenin, and Stalin
- First fully realistic vision of human nature

ROME

- By early 1400's Rome had fallen into disrepair
- Pope Martin V returned the Papacy to Rome in 1420
- Julius II was determined to glorify the church and make Rome the artistic capital of the world 1503-1513
- Ordered St. Peter's Basilica to be torn down and rebuilt
- Enlisted Michelangelo to create great works

Michelangelo

- Born in 1475 he lived with Lorenzo de Medici at the age of 13
- Moved to Rome in 1496 and in 1498 he created the Pieta
- 1504 He created the David
- 1508-1511 He painted the Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel
- 1534 Created the Last Judgment at the Alter of the Sistine Chapel

The Pieta

- Single block of marble
- Young Mary
- Feeling of sorrow, peace along with a sense of human worth and divine majesty

David

- 16 feet tall
- Muscles ripples with power, while his face radiates strength and determination
- Expresses Renaissance belief in human dignity and greatness

Sistine Chapel Ceiling

- Worked on the Ceiling for 3 years
- 300 human figures 5,800 square feet
- Painted many bible scenes and “faux architecture”
- God infusing Adam with life

The Last Judgement

- A majestic Christ
- Judged souls rise on one side and fall on the other

Raphael

- 1508 Raphael was commissioned by Julius II to paint the Pope’s private library
- Raphael’s assignment was to celebrate both Christian and classical knowledge
- Raphael had a pleasant personality and an easy temper
- One of his most famous works is the “School of Athens”