RENAISSANCE
LITERATURE AND
HUMANISM
LITERATURE

NATURE OF MAN, HUMANISM, ITALIAN LITERATURE AND NORTHERN LITERATURE
Medieval Man

Old concept of man

1. Strive for a better life after death
2. Celibate life was highest life
3. Clergy better
4. Mans will and intellect will lead him to doom
5. Poverty-great respect
Renaissance Man

1. This world is full of Joy
2. Life was a period of adventure
3. Lay-Clergy were equal
4. Man had tremendous powers
5. Active involvement in the world
6. Praise of properly enjoyed wealth
   a. ideas of civic and public duty
   b. Cult of the great individuals
Ren. Individualism-Emphasis on outstanding attainments. The great individual shaped his own destiny in a world governed by fortune.
HUMANISM
Renaissance Humanism is the spirit of learning that developed at the end of the middle ages with the revival of classical letters and a renewed confidence in the ability of human beings to determine for themselves truth and falsehood.
Christian Humanism is defined by as "a philosophy advocating the self-fulfillment of man within the framework of Christian principles." This more human-oriented faith is largely a product of the Renaissance and is a part of what made up Renaissance humanism.
Literary Humanism
is a devotion to the humanities or
literary culture.
Cultural Humanism is the rational and empirical tradition that originated largely in ancient Greece and Rome, evolved throughout European history, and now constitutes a basic part of the Western approach to science, political theory, ethics, and law.
Modern Humanism, also called Naturalistic Humanism, Scientific Humanism, Ethical Humanism and Democratic Humanism is defined by one of its leading proponents, Corliss Lamont, as "a naturalistic philosophy that rejects all supernaturalism and relies primarily upon reason and science, democracy and human compassion." Modern Humanism has a dual origin, both secular and religious, and these constitute its sub-categories.
Secular Humanism

is an outgrowth of 18th century enlightenment rationalism and 19th century freethought. Many secular groups, such as the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism and the American Rationalist Federation, and many otherwise unaffiliated academic philosophers and scientists, advocate this philosophy.
Religious Humanism emerged out of Ethical Culture, Unitarianism, and Universalism. Today, many Unitarian-Universalist congregations and all Ethical Culture societies describe themselves as humanist in the modern sense.
Medieval Literature

A. Technical-Theology, Philosophy, Law
B. Informational-Chronicles, Histories, Geography
C. Hymns
D. Religious Plays
E. Arthurian Legends-Roland, epic poetry
Modern (Renaissance) Literature
(14th and 15th century Italian, written in classical Latin)

A. Professional writers
B. Wrote either for themselves or for a larger public
C. Dealt with general questions
D. Examined states of mind
E. Resolve difficulties
F. Used words to achieve artistic effects
G. Please or amuse the reader
H. Satire

Classical Latin - Cicero, Livy. Classical influence returned

Two cultures
A. Humanistic
B. Scientific
ITALIAN HUMANISTS

MIRANDOLO-“ORATION ON THE DIGNITY OF MAN”

DANTE- “THE DIVINE COMEDY”

PETRARCH-FATHER OF ITALIAN HUMANISM
 “PRINCE OF ITALY”
BOCCACCIO - "THE DECAMERON"

VALLA - PROVED DONATION OF CONSTANTINE WAS A FRAUD

MACHIAVELLI - "THE PRINCE"
Renaissance Outside of Italy
Pagan Humanism---Italian Humanism
Christian Humanism---Northern Humanism

Northern Humanists
1. Study of Hebrew and Greek Bible Text
2. Read about the church fathers
   A. To depend their understanding of Christianity
   B. Restore moral vitality

Humanists considered old universities to be centers of old learning (scholastic) so many founded new universities (Spain, Fr., Scotland, Scand., and Germany)
Germany and the Northern Renaissance

1. Economy-busy towns and trade
2. Giant German banking powers (FUGGERS) had more money than the rest of Europe
3. Technical invention alive
4. Mining developed
5. First books made from movable type
6. Art
7. Intellectuals
   A. Regiomontanus - Math concept of the universe
   B. Cusa - Math and Science
   C. Copernicus - Heliocentric Theory
   D. Beham - Schoner - maps
   E. Paracelsus
   F. Dr. Faust (First dramatized by C. Marlowe 1593)
ERASMUS

GREATEST NORTHERN HUMANIST WRITER
Erasmus regarded

A. Middle ages as benighted
B. Ridiculed scholastic philosophers
C. Studied deeply the classical writers
D. Unpolitical in his outlook (Greatest mistake)
E. Saw a need for Church reform
   1. Put faith in education
   2. Enlightened discussion
   3. Gradual moral improvement
F. Was against violence and fanaticism
G. Made New Greek and Latin New Testament editions
H. Never questioned the essence and principle of the Roman Catholic Church but regaled against church abuses and moral and financial corruption of the clergy within the church
“Education of a Christian Prince” - peace and harmony of nations and an ethical society will result from a new system of education.

“Praise of Folly” - Satirized worldly pretensions and ambitions particularly among the clergy.

(From text except-practices criticized)
1. Veneration of saints
2. Burning candles
3. Buying indulgences to pardon one of sin
4. Veneration of saints as patrons against disease, etc.
5. More pray to the virgin than her son
6. High living church and her high officials

“Handbook of a Christian Knight” - How men might take part in the world while remaining a Christian (Erasmian) Virtues = Mildness, Tolerance, Restraing, Scholarly understanding, Love of peace, Hate nobody, Avoid shouting, and control ones temper

“Julius Exclusus” - satire on Pope Julius II
Life's Work-Application of the best humanistic learning to the study and explanation of the Bible
"I brought it about that humanism, which among the Italians...savoured nothing but pure paganism, began nobly to celebrate Christ"

Two fundamental themes found in all of Erasmus works

A. Education was the means to reform, the key to moral and intellectual improvement (core ed. = study bible and classics)

B. Philosophy of Christ-Christianity is an inner attitude of the heart and the spirit (Sermon on the Mount for Erasmus expressed the heart of the Christian Message.)
RABELAIS
“GARGANTUA AND PANTAGRUEL”
MORE-
“UTOPIA”
COLET-
BETTER BIBLE TRANSLATIONS
Jacques Lefevre D'Etaples (1455-1536)

1. First to apply humanist learning to religious problems

2. Believed accurate texts of the Bible would lead people to live better lives

3. This man's texts were used by Martin Luther in his classes
Renaissance Education and Manners

Secondary Education - - Prep for the University or for life
Different age groups or levels in separate classes
Periodic promotion from one level to the next
Latin and Greek taught
Ability to express oneself
Emphasis on classical literature - to form character, moral impact, produce a balanced person

Vittorino - "All face a life of social duty."

Castigliones - Book of the Courtier - A code for consideration of others feelings
Incorporated moral ideas of Humanists
Customs/Etiquette List (Task 4 help)

1. Guests should be provided with well-washed and scented linens.
2. Guest rooms should be carefully inspected to insure they are free from any traces of insects.
3. Children should be kept away from guests and put in the care of their nurse.
4. It is proper to wash one’s hands several times during the meal, using finger bowls.
5. Two napkins will be of value during the meal: one large, one small. The large will be placed on the lap, the small kept on the table for use in wiping the mouth and fingers.
6. It is customary to throw one’s bones and leftovers under the table for the dogs.
7. Husband and wife may share the same banquet goblet and plate, should one be used, or if directed by the hostess, be seated on opposite sides of the table.
8. It is forbidden to serve rare and costly game or expensive fish and excesses in sweets.
9. It is good manners to offer wine as a gift. One should, however, be sure that such wine is of a drinkable quality.
10. Women should never touch the box or purse in which her husband keeps his money.
11. Women should not desire to know too much. It is unseemly for women to know as much as men.
12. It is a serious offense for a number of people to gnaw on a bone and then put it back in the dish.
13. It is considered offensive to fall upon the dish like a swine while eating, snorting disgustingly and smacking the lips.
14. One is not to spit over the table.
15. If you must blow your nose or cough, it is proper to turn so that nothing falls on the table.
16. Do not blow your nose into the tablecloth or coat sleeve; instead, it is acceptable to blow into the fingers.
17. It is a bad habit to poke your teeth with your knife.
18. One should never put back on your plate what has been in your mouth.
19. It is not proper to chew anything you have to spit out again.
20. It is not proper to dip one’s food into the salt.

Erasmus of Rotterdam had additional advice in his book of etiquette, which became a standard school text and a best-seller in its time:

21. “Do not be afraid of vomiting if you must; for it is not vomiting but holding the vomit in your throat that is foul.”
22. It is not seemly, after wiping your nose to look at what you have as if pearls and rubies might have fallen out of your head.