

The evolution of Rationalism and Humanism in the period of Renaissance and its impact in the present era

Aswini. S & Keerthana. R

MA English

PG Department of English

Don Bosco College, Yelagiri Hills

Abstract: *All the creatures in this cosmos has some purpose to exist. Each one has got its own capacity to think and act according to that. Human beings are specially created by the creator. It all depends on the ideologies of each person. Before the renaissance period could occur, man had a great thirst and search for the ultimate purpose and the primordial cause for all. It was a great search being made by the man kind, during the classical period. Lots of myths and stories being created. Then as the years passed by, during the period of Medieval, new ideologies emerged amidst the human kind. God is the ultimate cause for all things. Monasteries and the monks who lived in that time were given much more important. People blindly believed on the teaching of the church, (Catholicism – emerged a lot). There were lot of fake understandings being emerged and provoked by the church authorities. As the years passed by there came a big evolution in the period of Renaissance.*

Rationalism gave raise for the mankind based on Human thinking. It was during this period the capacity of human thinking ejaculated with new ideologies, especially on the perspective on the growth of Religion and growth of Science. It gave rise to the humanism, which indicates the rise for natural thoughts that emerged from the thinkers of this period. There were philosophers and the scientists emerged with new ideas, based on reasons and facts. They came out with lot of facts, but there were sceptics who were not ready to accept the reality (Medieval thinkers – Church authorities). This was a period of enormous transition in Religious, Political and Social terms. The systems and function of the society had a great changes during this period. This paper speaks about the great changes and the ideologies emerged in the society. And its impact for us people living in this present era. The paper explains on the following ideas, on arts, literature, education and history. It explains on the meaning for rationalism, the new thoughts that had emerged from the philosophers and authors of that time, the changes and the revolutions that had occurred. And how is helps us during this present scenario, were technologies and the rationality had grown a lot. The positive aspects and the challenges of the renaissance impulse on today's generation.

Keywords: *Rationalism, Rebirth, Ideologies, Reformation, Geocentric, Heliocentric, Humanism.*

The Meaning of Renaissance

The great cultural movement that began in Italy during the early 1300s and spread all over Europe is known as the Renaissance. The changes that were brought about by the Renaissance were gradual and hardly affected the people. However, it influenced future generations in many areas such as art, literature, education and history. The word 'Renaissance' is derived from the Latin word, '*rinascere*' which means the act of being reborn. It is an appropriate name for the movement since many European scholars and artists of that period turned to ancient Greek and Roman cultures. The Renaissance is an important landmark in the history of the world since it marked the end of the Middle Ages. Many of the concepts and ideas of the Middle Ages. Renaissance brought lot of differences in the society as well the thinking capacity of the Human beings improved a lot. Before renaissance, people of the middle ages believed that praying to God is the ultimate knowledge that one can attain. Getting the knowledge of the world is considered as the evil or temptation. Society was believed to be full of temptations. Renaissance thinkers, on the contrary, believed sincerely that the people owed a responsibility to the society in which they lived. Society was not seen as an evil temptation but as a civilising factor. This period had brought lot of changes towards the society both in thinking and acting according to their ideologies.

On the aspect of Religion

The religion that was emerging during this period was Catholicism. When Henry VII ascended to the throne in 1485, England was part of Catholic Europe. Pilgrims travelled to shrines in Britain and abroad, religious drama such as miracle, mystery and saints' play were being energetically supported by religious, civil and parish authorities as extension of worship on particular saints' days and festivals, such as that of the *Corpus Christi*. Mass was celebrated up and down the land in churches and recalled the Passion of Christ. The consecrated bread and wine used in the service was thought to undergo a miraculous transformation (transubstantiation): when raised above the priest's head ('elevation of the host'), they became the flesh and blood of the crucified Christ returned to earth to wash away the sins of the praying congregation. Only rare laity were allowed to take part to receive the body and blood of Christ Jesus. There were lots of rituals that emerged during this period. People were blindly believed in the teachings of the church. Because the ultimate reason is God was the centre of all things. There were sacraments which implemented for receiving the grace from god as well as for purification of soul. The sacraments was described as the external sign on inverted grace. Spiritual blessings were dispensed through sacraments such as baptism, marriage, ordination and extreme unction.

There were also practices such as paying for the pulmonary indulgence for the church. It was during this time the wealth of the church had gone in an unlimited manner. There were rules and regulations being created by the church authorities, which made lot of disadvantages among the humanity. It caused lots of problems amidst the people. The study of theology, which was an important subject in the Middle Ages, was replaced by the study of humanity. The Renaissance thinkers spent their time studying the achievements of different cultures. This led the people towards the act of Reformation and counter-reformation. The religious movement of the 1500s that led to Protestantism is known as the Reformation. The Reformation brought about great changes in the social, political and economic life of the people of Europe. This revolution, which tore the Church of Rome apart, has shaped the course of English history from the day to the present time. The movement began in 1517 when Martin Luther, a German monk, criticised certain practices of the Roman Catholic Church. The

Catholic Church, with its headquarters in Rome, was one of the oldest continuous religious institutions in the world. The heads of the church started to grow in abundance. But the teachings of the Bible has not reached to all the people. So the heads of the church took advantage and started to cheat the church in paying for their indulgence. But people paid for that. It was after the Reformation of Martin Luther that the church had a new understanding and the rationality of the people and the Humanism in the aspect of Religion had come into existence and lots of awareness being created on it.

On the aspect of Arts

Arts itself is a beautiful art of talent that man could ever had within himself. Before the period of Renaissance, there was no thought being provoked among the people. During the period on Middle Ages, the artists and sculptures came out only on the religious concept. So the people with arts had given the pictures with stiffness and no lives being presented in them. There were lot of restrictions being imposed on the life of human aspects. There was a revolution in the field of arts also. Medieval artists painted human figures that looked stiff and artificial. Renaissance artists focused upon the beauty of the human body. Their paintings and sculptures were life like. The Renaissance began in Italy. Petrarch and Boccaccio were the first Renaissance Humanists. These two scholars recovered many ancient manuscripts during the 1300s. They studied and imitated the ancient writings. Much importance was given to style. Petrarch, through his poetry, and Boccaccio, through his stories, tried to describe human feelings. They felt that understanding and dealing with human problems was more important than trying to understand the mysteries of God's will.

In the field of art also, Italy was the pioneer. During the early 1300s, the Florentine painter Giotto became the first artist to portray nature realistically. Art during the late 1400s and early 1500s, was dominated by three men – Michelangelo, Raphael and Leonard da Vinci. The focus of Renaissance art was on realism. They tried to make their work as life like as possible. Michelangelo's statue of Moses, his paintings on the ceiling of the Sistine chapel, Raphael's portrait of the Madonna, and Leonard da Vinci's The Last Supper and Mona Lisa rank among the greatest achievements of Renaissance art. It is on the field of arts that the whole humanity began to admire the beauty of the world. It was from this period that the feeling of aesthetic emerged among the people.

On the aspect of Science and Intellectual Influence

It was blind belief of the people during the Middle Age that God is the centre of all things. They had no other options to reveal themselves and the science was nullified during the dark ages. The reason why middle age is being mentioned as Dark Age is because there was lack of awareness and the rational thinking was less among the people. The growth of science and technology was completely erased from the mind of the people. The Dark ages was smashed by the enlightenment of the great philosophers like Rene Descartes, Francis Bacon, and George Berkley and so on. They came out with the new ideas of Rationalism, Existentialism, and Empiricism and to other sciences.

Of course, the thoughts or the ideas of may not be accepted by all. But for us that thought would be our life principle. We should not take funny decisions, but we as rational beings must have the good thinking capacity. If we don't have the aspect to think then we are not worth enough to exist on this cosmos. The great philosopher Rene Descartes said, "*cogito ergo sum*," meaning "I think therefore I exist". It is the aspect of thinking that gives rise to the humanity and bring the humanism to the higher. The rationality is the God given gift for each Human person. The growth of science had not been utilized during the period of middle ages. The concept of geocentric and heliocentric had come into existence during this time.

Lots of ideas had been emerged. The valid concepts on Heliocentric being found by the Nicolaus Copernicus. This concept explains that sun is the centre and the other planets are revolving around the sun. But there were lot of facts and proofs for it even though people were not ready to believe in that. Galileo proved that earth is round in shape but there was nobody to believe at last they burned him alive. But this facts are still alive and lively today. The period of Renaissance, filled with its love for education, gave rise to an interest in science. In the Middle ages, people meekly accepted the scientific theories of the ancients. For Centuries, hardly any scientific discoveries were made. Modern science began its history with the Renaissance. Some of the important inventions which contributed to the spread of the Renaissance were the printing press, invented by John Gutenberg, the mariner's compass and the telescope. While the printing press make books freely available, the mariner's compass encouraged sea travel. In the field of geographical discovery, no other age in the history of the world had made so much progress. Christopher Columbus discover America. Vasco da Gama found the sea route to India via the Cape of Good Hope; and Ferdinand Magellan was the first to sail around the world. some of the well-known British mariners to travel around the globe.

The economic conditions of the people had gone to tremendous growth. The population increased. Due to new technologies the growth of the people emerged in a large manner. There were lot of discoveries in the geographical aspects gave dignity and confidence amidst the humanity and the respect for the human being had gone very high. Thus the Humanism was given lot of importance in this period. The men of renaissance lived life to the full. People started to emerge in lot of activities.

The impact of Renaissance in the present era

"Every equal reaction has got its own opposite reaction," said by Albert Einstein. The present era is being placed with lot of challenges and positive aspects is all because of the inventions and the influence of thinking among the Human race. This thing is being connected with the writings of H.D Thoreau. In Thoreau's view, technology also provoked an excitement that was counterproductive because it served as a distraction from the important questions of life. Perhaps we are led oftener by the love of novelty, and a regard for the opinions of men, in procuring it, than by a true utility. Our inventions are wont to be pretty toys, which distract our attention from serious things. They are but improved means to an unimproved end, an end which it was already but too easy to arrive at; as railroads lead to Boston or New York. We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas; but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate. The railroad was made the symbol of technology, and the language Thoreau uses to describe it expressed his ambivalence.

The growth of industrialization had grown a lot. There are lot of positive aspects as well as challenges to this society. There is lot of importance being given in expressing the feelings of the individuals and at the same time respecting the dignity of humanity. There are lots of positive aspects that emerged in the society. For example the growth of technology in this present time. Communications are done in a very fast from one place to another. Traveling from one place to another is also made in a swift manner. The freedom of thinking for man had become wider and wider. But at the same time there are lot of drawbacks being attained by man. All the new inventions are sometimes destroys the humanity. Not that it destroys, the main point that is being mentioned here is it all depends on the individual freedom and responsibility. Renaissance helped the people to grow deeper in intellectual influence. These contributions of our ancestors should lead the

humanity to growth not towards the fall of humanism. Today the growth of humanism consist on the hands of each individuals. It is responsibility of each person to help the society to grow.

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