

THE ART OF RENAISSANCE AND BAROQUE ERAS

Your Name

Course #, Critical Thinking

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The ability to create art is a gift from God, and many consider that everything that is God-given has power; therefore, it is no surprise that what artists create has an impact on people's daily lives. Art can impact the mind, emotions, or even an entire country's culture. Scholars through the years have come to understand culture as the behavior patterns, art, institutions, and beliefs that comprise the social work and thoughts expressed within a well-defined community or time period.

Art is considered to be a type of communication as it can tell a story, convey an emotion, reveal the unseen, or in other ways communicate thoughts, feelings, and ideas in a unique way¹. Most people can attest that what they think or feel was influenced by the messages communicated to them through art. In today's world, advertising and marketing professionals have taken advantage of this with the main goal of stimulating consumer responses through the use of artistic elements, color, graphics, sound, video or even music. It is miraculous how concepts of thought and emotion leap from the intangible state of mind to the physical world.

To better explain the power of art on culture or the power of culture on art, an individual must examine the Renaissance and Baroque Eras. These are two distinctive historical periods that each had a significant impact on art and culture. Works created during these periods are commonly regarded as similar but with distinctive features². There have been debates on which time period produced the most influential art. These debates are still in progress with followers coming from both camps and having strong and compelling arguments to support their positions. The best way to view the contributions of both eras is by examining the differences between the two.

¹ Hatcher, Evelyn P. *Art As Culture: An Introduction to the Anthropology of Art*. Westport, Conn [u.a.]: Bergin & Garvey, 1999. Print. P. 36.

² Gross, Alex, and Bruce Sterling. *The Art of Alex Gross: Paintings and Other Works*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2007. Print. P. 26.

In today's world, Italy and France are considered the main capitals of art. The art period of Renaissance began in Italy around the 1400s. In Europe's history, this time marked the transition to the early modern age from the medieval times. The development of modern art, culture, and societies had a profound impact on the Renaissance period. The Renaissance time focused on humanism which experienced the subsequent turning from dominant ideals and norms put forth by the church. Despite religion having a greater impact on this era, western civilization recognized the potential of humans and scientific inquiry. This insight is still treasured in today's world and influences modern culture. Art and literature produced within this period were based on the principles of realism that are still vital in western societies. Historical figures such as Da Vinci, Boccaccio, and others still live on and influence modern day perspectives.

Initially, before the Renaissance period, writers had a tendency to focus on religious-centered issues. They produced innumerable instructions and texts that instructed readers on living pious lives based on Christian heroes³. The Renaissance period influenced new writers and artists to break from tradition by presenting practical versions of life. Many Renaissance authors still enjoy a significant influence on today's society in terms of literal style, meaning, and political views. Through the introduction of realism during the Renaissance period, the common people grew to enjoy tales, which have continued to enjoy popularity through the ages.

In contribution to modern society, prominent Renaissance figures, such as Leonardo da Vinci, were revolutionary thinkers and artists who pioneered and advocated for many advances that are today ignored or even taken for granted. As an artist, da Vinci represents realism. Most

³Marraro, Howard R. *The World and Its Peoples: Italy*. New York, N.Y: Greystone Press, 1964. Print. P. 276.

notable are human figures that are deviations from the lofty, grandiose religious figures he often was sought to convey in his works. In modern culture, one such painting that still commands attention is the *Mona Lisa*; a painting easily recognized in today's society.

Many consider Leonardo da Vinci as the first person to utilize realistic elements in his paintings. This tradition has survived and can be identified in artworks around the world. Da Vinci paintings relate scientific observations. Da Vinci is among the first pioneers of human anatomy studies as well as other numerous scientific developments. In summary, Da Vinci's work demonstrates empirical power, including his essentially creative works. He engineered the combination of both art and science, making reflection easy for a person on which to reflect. His artful use of science can be seen in modern technologies like realistic video games that have high definitions and practical character simulations. With emphasis on the Renaissance, humanism introduced a new and more balanced approach in handling religion. This forged the way for artists and writers, like Da Vinci, to combine the value of art and science. Without figures such as Da Vinci and Francis Bacon, who introduced the power of analytical thinking and experimentation, one can imagine the kind of society one might live in today. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize that the Renaissance period brought about the freedom of experimentation and of innovative thinking. People learned to observe as well as to read and consider art as a true reflection of reality. An example is the Vitruvian man drawings, which depict the proportionate man. Da Vinci illustrated the effect of antiquity writers on Renaissance thinkers.

The baroque art has general characteristics like sense of motion, energy, and tension which were either real or implied in the paintings and sculptures. Baroque art applies the use of sound, contrasting light, and shadowy effects that enhance dramatic illusions in many of the paintings and even in sculptures. This form of art was used on buildings and had an effect of undulating walls

that had decorative surfaces, implying motion that contracted with light and color. This style of artwork often had intense spirituality presentation in Catholic practicing countries. It had representations in different forms (ecstasy sceneries, martyrdoms, and in some case, miraculous apparitions). In Baroque, art realism is the integral part as paintings have individuals with personalities, but are not projected as types. Artists from this period were concerned with the inner workings of the mind, and they created portraits presenting passion on sculptured and painted artwork.

There have been strong contentious issues among many art lovers acknowledging there was no art value during the Baroque period. However, disputes arise through the works of artists such as Bernini and Caravaggio. The reason many art lovers dislike Baroque artwork is that numerous painters and sculptors of that time period strove to recreate the previous artwork of Renaissance masters. However, it can be stated that Baroque art depicted life in art with a tendency to focus on the subject's drama, whereas Renaissance art fails to capture human emotions in paintings and sculptors. A good example is the statue sculpted by Michelangelo depicting the statue of David heading into battle with Goliath, created during the Renaissance era⁴. However, a Bernini's work done using the baroque technique shows great parity between the two sculptors as the second shows David keen to fight a giant; These artworks show the disparity of the two eras.

One has to admit that art work can both be affected and influenced by culture, and vice versa. It can be noted that both eras had influences from either a political or religious standing point. This has paved the way for today's differing culture in that baroque artwork is loved and cherished in European countries.

⁴Marraro, Howard R. *The World and Its Peoples: Italy*. New York, N.Y: Greystone Press, 1964. Print. P. 276.

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