

1) Pico Della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*: “Neither an established place, nor a form belonging to you alone, nor any special function have We given to you, O Adam, and for this reason, that you may have and possess, according to your desire and judgment, whatever place, whatever form, and whatever functions you shall desire. The nature of other creatures, which has been determined, is confined within the bounds prescribed by Us. You, who are confined by no limits, shall determine for yourself your own nature, in accordance with your own free will, in whose hand I have placed you. I have set you at the center of the world, so that from there you may more easily survey whatever is in the world. We have made you neither heavenly nor earthly, neither mortal nor immortal, so that, more freely and more honorably the molder and maker of yourself, you may fashion yourself in whatever form you shall prefer. You shall be able to descend among the lower forms of being, which are brute beasts; you shall be able to be reborn out of the judgment of your own soul into the higher beings, which are divine” (Quoted in Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, pp 214-215).

2) Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Concerning the need for some noble Italian to reunify Italy and be the founder of a new Roman state like Moses was to the Israelites, Cyrus and the Persians, Theseus and Athens, “These men may be exceptional and remarkable; they were men none the less, and each of them had less opportunity than is offered now. Their enterprise was neither more must nor easier, and God was no more their friend than he is yours... the sea is divided, a cloud has shown you the way, water has gushed from the rock, it has rained manna; all things have conspired to your greatness. The rest is up to you. God does not want to do everything Himself, and take away from us our free will and our share of the glory which belongs to us.”

3) Gentrain Syllabus: “The idea of the worth of mankind and the value of its intelligence and capacity to do great works led to the development of the concept of ‘virtu,’ rooted in the word virtue but with a different meaning. Basically, virtu means the ‘assertion of the individual and his personal achievement in thought and action.’ In the late fourteenth century individual accomplishments became important. This eventually led to what has been called the Cult of Genius in the sixteenth century, the time of Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael, and Titian.”

4) Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*; “Thus, I would have our Courtier born of a noble and genteel family; because it is far less becoming

for one of low birth to fail to do virtuous things than for one of noble birth...noble birth is like a bright lamp that makes manifest and visible deeds both good and bad, kindling and spurring on to virtue as much for fear of dishonor as for hope of praise. And since this luster of nobility does not shine forth in the deeds of the lowly born, they lack that spur, as well as that fear of dishonor, nor do they think themselves obliged to go beyond what was done by their forebears; whereas to the wellborn it seems a reproach not to attain at least to the mark set them by their ancestors.”

5) Ficino, "You see, O my mind, you see that you are a mirror of God, when the ray of your intelligence in him was let loose to rebound from him. If you are a reflection (that is without a doubt) to him in the mirror and he to you, it follows that what is of God, that is within you is only the trace and shadow of the image of God in you is expressed more as a likeness, as was said with merit, it is in the image and likeness of God that you are created" (*De raptu Pauli*)

Some Questions to consider:

- 1) Why does Humanism begin where and when it does?
- 2) What influence did Christianity have upon Humanism? Since Christianity had been around for 1300 years, assuming it did have a positive influence, why didn't it do so earlier?
- 3) What influence did Classical civilization have upon it? As with Christianity, classicism had been around for a millennia, so why did it suddenly find fertile ground?
- 4) What are some of the cultural and institutional artifacts of humanism? (Universities; Art that is individual and not derivative; Freedom; Individualism; (others?))
- 5) What is the legacy of Humanism today?