

The Renaissance

Old Meets New

Renaissance n.

The revival of European art and literature under the influence of classical models in the 14th–16th centuries.

The culture and style of art and architecture developed during the Renaissance.

Etymology

From French renaissance, from re- ‘back, again’ + naissance ‘birth’ (from Latin nascentia, from nasci ‘be born’)

Forms

Sonnet

Utopia

Play

Masque

Elegy, Ode, Narrative Poem

Encomium, Novel

Techniques

Soliloquy

Irony

Allusion

Argument

Paradox

ANGELO

From thee, even from thy virtue!
What's this, what's this? Is this her fault or mine?
The tempter or the tempted, who sins most?
Ha!
Not she: nor doth she tempt: but it is I
That, lying by the violet in the sun,
Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,
Corrupt with virtuous season. Can it be
That modesty may more betray our sense
Than woman's lightness? Having waste ground enough,
Shall we desire to raze the sanctuary
And pitch our evils there? O, fie, fie, fie!
What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?
Dost thou desire her foully for those things
That make her good? O, let her brother live!
Thieves for their robbery have authority
When judges steal themselves. What, do I love her,
That I desire to hear her speak again,
And feast upon her eyes? What is't I dream on?
O cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint,
With saints dost bait thy hook! Most dangerous
Is that temptation that doth goad us on
To sin in loving virtue: never could the strumpet,
With all her double vigour, art and nature,
Once stir my temper; but this virtuous maid
Subdues me quite. Even till now,
When men were fond, I smiled and wonder'd how.

(Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, II. 4)

Encomium: Erasmus, *Praise of Folly* (1511)

1. Folly as a universal condition

They abound in so many forms of folly and devise so many new ones every day that a thousand Democrituses wouldn't be enough to laugh at them, and we'd always have to call in one Democritus more. Its hardly believable how much laughter, sport and fun you poor mortals can provide the gods every day. ..they settle down on some promontory of heaven and lean over to watch the goings-on of mankind, a show they enjoy more than anything. Heavens, what a farce it is, what a motley crowd of fools!

2. The folly of the wise

self-love ..enables [fools] to dwell in a sort of third heaven, looking down from aloft, almost with pity, on all the rest of mankind as so many cattle crawling on the face of the earth

3. Christian Folly

Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. (KJV, 1 Corinthians 1:25)



Thomas More *Utopia* (1516)



Sonnets

Petrarchan Sonnet (1304-1374)

Doth any maiden seek the glorious fame (A)
Of chastity, of strength, of courtesy? (B)
Gaze in the eyes of that sweet enemy (B)
Whom all the world doth as my lady name! (A)
How honour grows, and pure devotion's flame, (A)
How truth is joined with graceful dignity, (B)
There thou may'st learn, and what the path may be (B)
To that high heaven which doth her spirit claim; (A)
There learn soft speech, beyond all poet's skill, (C)
And softer silence, and those holy ways (D)
Unutterable, untold by human heart. (E)
But the infinite beauty that all eyes doth fill, (C)
This none can copy! since its lovely rays (D)
Are given by God's pure grace, and not by art. (E)

Spenserian Sonnet (1569-1599)

My love is like to ice, and I to fire: (A)
how comes it then that this her cold so great (B)
is not dissolv'd through my so hot desire, (A)
but harder grows, the more I her entreat? (B)
Or how comes it that my exceeding heat (B)
is not delayed by her heart frozen cold, (C)
but that I burn much more in boiling sweat, (B)
and feel my flames augmented manifold? (C)
What more miraculous thing may be told (C)
that fire, which all thing melts, should harden ice: (D)
and ice which is congealed with senseless cold, (C)
should kindle fire by wonderful device? (D)
Such is the pow'r of love in gentle mind (E)
that it can alter all the course of kind. (E)

Shakespearean Sonnet (1564-1616)

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? (A)
Thou art more lovely and more temperate: (B)
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, (A)
And summer's lease hath all too short a date; (B)
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, (C)
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd; (D)
And every fair from fair sometime declines, (C)
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd; (D)
But thy eternal summer shall not fade, (E)
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st; (F)
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade, (E)
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st: (F)
 So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, (G)
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. (G)

Essays (circa 1580)

[W]hat in those nations we see by experience, doth not only exceed all the pictures wherewith licentious Poesie hath proudly imbellished the golden age, and all her quaint inventions to faine a happy condition of man, but also the conception and desire of Philosophy. They could not imagine a genuitie so pure and simple as we see it by experience; nor ever beleeeve our societie might be maintained with so little art and humane combination. It is a nation, would I answer *Plato*, that hath *no kinde of traffike, no knowledge of Letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate, nor of politike superioritie; no use of service, of riches or of povertie; no contracts, no successions, no partitions, no occupation but idle; no respect of kindred, but common, no apparell but naturall, no manuring of lands, no use of wine, corne, or mettle*. The very words that import lying, falshood, treason, dissimulations, covetousnes, envie, detraction, and pardon, were never heard of amongst them. [...] I finde (as farre as I have beene informed) that there is nothing in that nation [America] that is either barbarous or savage, unless men call that barbarisme which is not common to them. As indeed, we have no other ayme of truth and reason, than the example and Idea of the opinions and customes of the countrie we live in.

(Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*, trans. John Florio (1606))