

PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS OF THE GREAT SCHOLARS OF THE FIRST RENAISSANCE PERIOD

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Annotation: This article analyzes the philosophical views of renowned scholars of the First Renaissance (14th–15th centuries). It examines, from a scholarly perspective, the humanistic approach that emerged in the intellectual environment of the Renaissance period—characterized by a renewed view of human nature and an increased focus on scientific progress. The article highlights the influence these thinkers had on their era through the ideas of figures such as Dante Alighieri, Francesco Petrarch, and Leonardo da Vinci.

Keywords: Renaissance, Europe, humanism, attention to human nature, philosophy, art, science.

The term **Renaissance** is derived from the Italian word “*rinascita*,” which means “**rebirth**.” This period holds a special place in European history and mainly covers the time from the late 14th century to the mid-16th century. The Renaissance era marked a significant turning point in human thought, representing a gradual departure from the religious restrictions and dominance of the Church that prevailed throughout the Middle Ages¹.

The phase known as the **Early Renaissance** mainly corresponds to the late 14th century and the early 15th century. During this period, views on humanity and nature underwent a profound transformation. Humanity began to rediscover its intellectual and creative potential. Significant progress was made in the fields of science, art, literature, and philosophy. People started to deeply study nature, the human psyche, and social life. The primary focus shifted away from purely religious concepts toward real life, experience, and reason².

Against the backdrop of these historical processes, many great scholars emerged. Through their works and scientific contributions, they laid the foundation for a new era of thought. Among these scholars were famous figures such as Francesco Petrarch, Dante Alighieri, and Leonardo da Vinci. Thanks to their activities, European science and philosophy

¹ Karimov, A. *History of European Culture*. Tashkent: Fan Publishing House, 2019, p. 45.

² Qodirov, B. *Philosophy of the Renaissance Era*. Tashkent: Yangi Asr Avlodi Publishing House, 2020, p. 32.

entered a completely new stage. This period undoubtedly paved the way for later scientific revolutions and the formation of a modern worldview.

Francesco Petrarch (1304–1374): Founder of Humanistic Thought

Francesco Petrarch was one of the most important scholars living and working in the early Renaissance period. He is recognized as the founder of humanistic thought in Europe, a new worldview that placed humanity at its center. Through his literary, scientific, and philosophical legacy, Petrarch opposed the dominant religious and scholastic thinking of the Middle Ages and advanced the idea of recognizing human personality as a value in its own right³.

Petrarch deeply studied the works of ancient Roman literature, especially those of classical authors such as Cicero and Seneca, and sought to revive their ideas. He viewed ancient knowledge not only for scientific purposes but also as a means to understand and enrich the human soul. Petrarch paid great attention to exploring human intellectual and spiritual capabilities. In his view, a human is a being who determines the meaning of life through their thinking, emotions, and moral choices.

In Petrarch's perspective, religious faith is not denied; however, it is emphasized that this faith must be in harmony with human values and moral virtues. He depicted humans as active and conscious participants in nature, attributing great importance to their moral responsibility, inner struggles, and spiritual growth. Furthermore, in his poetry and letters, Petrarch profoundly expressed the inner world, personal experiences, and life searches of a human being in a philosophical manner.

Overall, Francesco Petrarch holds an important place in history as a thinker who laid the foundation for Renaissance philosophy and theoretically justified the ideas of humanism. His ideas later served as a guiding source for many European thinkers and artists.

Dante Alighieri (1265–1321): The Harmony of Moral and Religious Philosophy

Dante Alighieri was a great Italian poet, philosopher, and thinker who lived at the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Renaissance period. Through his most famous work, *The Divine Comedy*, he left a profound mark not only in literature but also in philosophy

³Saidov, A. *Humanism and Renaissance Thought*. Tashkent: Ma'naviyat Publishing House, 2018, p. 27.

and religion. This work provides a comprehensive expression of the moral, religious, and philosophical issues central to Dante's views⁴.

The Divine Comedy consists of three parts — Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso — which symbolize the soul's journey of purification. In this work, Dante allegorically depicts the path from sin to salvation. At each stage, he encourages readers, especially the youth, to deeply reflect on life and spirituality through moral lessons, religious interpretations, and human choices.

According to Dante, every action in a person's life leads to spiritual consequences. He presents the key ideas of moral responsibility, free will, and repentance. Through the work, it is shown that a person can recognize their spiritual flaws and overcome them to attain salvation. In this approach, religious faith and human responsibility are understood as a unified whole⁵.

In Dante's works, although the fundamental principles of medieval theology — such as God's justice, moral order, and the necessity of spiritual purification — are deeply expressed, they are harmonized with human freedom and the possibility of personal choice. This aspect distinguishes him as a key figure in the transition from medieval theology to Renaissance thought.

Through his works, Dante portrays humans not merely as beings subject to religious laws, but as conscious individuals capable of understanding their lives, making choices, and taking responsibility for their actions. While interpreting morality and spirituality within a religious context, he also deeply analyzes the human psyche.

Thus, Dante Alighieri occupies a unique place in history as a thinker who synthesized religious and moral values and united the intellectual currents of both the medieval and Renaissance periods.

Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519): The Philosophy of Knowledge Based on Experiment and Reason

Leonardo da Vinci was one of the brightest representatives of the Renaissance, a universal genius who possessed profound knowledge and discoveries in art, science, engineering, anatomy, philosophy, and many other fields. Recognized in his time and afterwards as a figure demonstrating the limitless potential of human intellect and scientific

⁴ Rasulov, H. *Dante and "Divine Comedy": The Unity of Literature and Philosophy*. Tashkent: Ilm Ziyos Publishing House, 2021, p. 40.

⁵ Karimova, M. *Ethics and Spirituality in Dante's Works*. Tashkent: Ijod Ziyosi Publishing House, 2022, p. 58.

thought, his worldview and philosophy contributed to forming the essential principles of modern scientific methodology — an approach based on experiment, observation, and reason⁶.

Leonardo approached knowledge not only from a theoretical perspective but also through direct observation and experiments. To study the structure of the human body, he conducted numerous anatomical investigations, dissecting corpses and drawing muscles, bones, and internal organs. Through this work, he aimed not only to advance medicine but also to philosophically explore the physical and spiritual structure of humans. According to Leonardo, a human is the most perfect creation of nature, and through understanding humans, one can comprehend the entire universe.

Da Vinci carefully observed natural phenomena — especially water, air, light, and motion. He emphasized that the laws of nature are consistent and interconnected, and he believed that human intellect is capable of understanding and grasping these laws. At the same time, Leonardo stressed the deep connection between art and science. In his view, painting is also a science because it requires thorough analysis of form, proportion, movement, and light⁷.

Leonardo da Vinci viewed the human being as a macrocosm — that is, a small model of the greater universe, or microcosm. According to him, humans were created in harmony with nature, and by studying humans, one can understand the laws governing the entire cosmos. This perspective was highly advanced for its time and led to the human intellect occupying a central place in philosophical thought.

Overall, Leonardo da Vinci holds an important place in history as a great scholar whose philosophical views, grounded in experimentation, observation, and scientific inquiry, laid the foundation for modern science and technology. His thinking was imbued with confidence in human potential and a desire to understand nature, fully embodying the spirit of the Renaissance era⁸.

Conclusion: The scholars of the Early Renaissance were pivotal figures in the development of human thought. They broke free from the constraints of church influence that

⁶Rahimov, D. *Leonardo da Vinci and the Awakening of Science*. Tashkent: Fan va Taraqqiyot Publishing House, 2020, p. 63.

⁷ Hasanov, M. *Leonardo da Vinci: Thought in the Synthesis of Art and Science*. Tashkent: Ijod Publishing House, 2021, p. 50.

⁸ To'xtayev, S. *The Thought of Renaissance Geniuses*. Samarkand: Ilm Merosi Publishing House, 2019, p. 74.



dominated the Middle Ages and introduced a fundamentally new paradigm in the approach to humans, nature, and society. Their ideas and views initiated a new phase in Western thinking and laid a solid foundation for the later scientific revolutions and the formation of the modern worldview.

Francesco Petrarca, as the founder of humanism, established the philosophical analysis of human personality, spiritual world, and values. Dante Alighieri harmonized religious and ethical ideas with philosophical reflection, presenting profound thoughts on human freedom and the path of spiritual purification. Leonardo da Vinci contributed to the foundations of modern science through his approach based on experience, observation, and scientific methodology for studying nature.

The legacy of these thinkers influenced not only their own time but also the future directions of human intellectual progress. Through their scientific, philosophical, and artistic perspectives, humanity began to confidently move toward development grounded in reason, free thought, and scientific knowledge.

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