CHAPTER-III

LITERARY HUMANISM: A HISTORICAL SURVEY

I.I. Origin and meaning of the term Humanism

The term "humanism" was first employed (as humanismus) by the nineteenth century German scholars to refer to education which were pursued and endorsed by the fifteenth century educators known as "Umanisti" i.e. professors and students of classical literature. The term "umanisti" was derived from the word "Studia Humanitatis" meaning a course of classical studies consisting of grammar, poetry, rhetoric, history and moral philosophy and an equivalent to Greek "Paideia" or in general terms "the liberal arts". The understanding of humanism demands an understanding of the word "humanitas" that meant the development of human virtues in all its forms fully. It implies qualities as are associated with the modern word 'humanity" i.e. understanding, benevolence, compassion, mercy etc. It also implied fortitude, judgement, prudence, eloquence, and love of honour. As a result, the possessor of humanitas could not be sedentary and isolated philosopher but was necessarily a participant in active life. Insight without action was considered to barbarous and action without insight was rejected as barren and imperfect. Humanitas, thus, called for a perfect balance of action and contemplation, a balance born not of compromise but of complementarity: "Man is the measure of all things" certainly, but man as a rational being, not as a bundle of particular sensations, subjective impressions, impulses, irrational prejudices, selfwill, mere eccentricities, oddities, foibles and
fancies (Stance, 162, 123)." The goal of such fulfilled and balanced virtue was political in broadest sense and included not only the education of the young but also the guidance of the adults including the rulers via philosophical poetry and strategic rhetoric, realistic social criticism along with Utopian hypotheses, painstaking reassessments of history and bold reshaping of the future. This called for the comprehensive reform of culture, the transfiguration of the passive and ignorant society of the "Dark Ages" into a new order that might reflect and encourage the grandest human potentialities. Besides, humanism had an evangelical dimension that sought to project humanitus from the individual into the state at large. In other words: "Humanism in its broadest sense is a concept as old as classical Greece and as modern as twentieth century. Subject to a wide diversity of expression it is a philosophical outlook centred on the autonomy of the human being as a dignified, rational being, possessing the source truth and right. Humanism's final court of appeal is human reason rather than any external authority and its goal is the greatest good in this finite existence. Humanism may or may to be linked with religion, science or any specific political system. Its spirit is secular, liberal and tolerant, its method: education, free enquiry and enlightenment. (Kumar, Arjun, Mittapally, R. et. al, 2001, 1.)." The word "humanism" has freely been applied to a variety of beliefs, methods and philosophies that places central emphasis on man. It has frequently been used with reference to a system of education and mode of inquiry that developed in northern Italy during the fourteenth century and spread through Europe and England. It is also known as "Renaissance Humanism", a programme that was so
broadly and profoundly influential that it is viewed as a distinct historical period. The term "Renaissance" is of recent coinage but the fundamental idea of the period as one of renewal and reawakening is humanistic in origin. Humanism sought its own philosophical bases in far earlier times and continued to exert some of its powers long after the end of the Renaissance. The source of "humanitus" was classical literature. Greek and Roman thoughts were available through rediscovered or newly translated manuscripts, which provided humanism with its basic structure and method. Renaissance humanists were guided by the writings of Plato, Cicero, or Livy- works which had a fresh radical and almost avant-garde tonality. They considered that the recovery of the classics was the recovery of reality; the classical philosophy, rhetoric and history were the model for proper method- an effort to come to terms with perceived experience. Classical thought lacked the inhibiting dualism of the mediavalar thought occasioned by the conflicting demands of secularism and Christian spirituality. Classical literature was rich in eloquence. Cicero was considered the pattern of refined and copious discourse. Humanists found an exclusively aesthetic quality in eloquence, a pure power, and an effective means of moving leaders or fellow citizens towards one political course or another. Protagoras' Famous aphoris that "man is the measure of all things" divided Greek philosophy from theology and cosmology to men and sowed the seed of humanism. The axiom of Socrates- "know thyself" conjoined Greek Philosophy of man with the eternal. Plato advocates the development of mind's highest faculties and symmetry of life, the establishment of proper balance between reason, spirit and desire. Human
wellbeing was at the centre of ethical teachings of both Socraties and Plato. Aristotle considered reason to be man's highest attribute and glory and that man must be viewed as man neither as an angel nor as a dust: "His (Aristotle's) is the most urban kind of humanis, on the candidly names as its object an attainable good (Baker, 1961,63)." The Greek view of humanism was: "To understand his own morphology and and that of the universe is ma's highest function, and leads to the state of wellbeing which is virtue. This is the apogee of humanism which, for the greeks, was an attitude and habit of mind rather than a system or a cult (ibid.,104)." A strain of humanism runs through most of the classical Greek literature that shows man in constant struggle against the inevitable cosmic forces. Sophocles attached a special importance to man in his dramas who said: "Wonders are many, and none is more wonderful than man." They cultivated rhetoric as the medium through which all other virtues could be communicated and fulfilled. The central focus of Renaissance Humanism was, quite simply, human beings. Humans were praised for their achievements — achievements attributed to human ingenuity and human effort rather than divine grace. Humans were regarded optimistically in terms of what they could do, not just in the arts and sciences but even morally. Human concerns were given greater attention, leading people to spend more time on work that would benefit people in their daily lives rather than the otherworldly interests of the Church. The starting point for the Humanism of the Renaissance was Italy. This was most likely due to the ongoing presence of a commercial revolution in the Italian city-states of the era. At this time, there was a tremendous increase in the number of rich individuals
with disposable income that supported a luxurious lifestyle of leisure and arts. The spirit of humanism had crossed the Alps into Germany, France, and into England. By the second half of the 15th Century, cultural activities were gaining ground in Germany. Agricola (1443-1485) was appointed professor of classical literature at Heidelberg University. Erasmus observed that “he was the first to bring us out of Italy a breath of higher culture.” Reuchlin (1455-1522) was first great German scholar of the classics. The revival of learning in Germany was unproductive in art and literature. The Germans attempted to connect humanism and theology and to instill the spirit of reform into classical learning that has consummation in Luther’s conflict with the papacy. The intellectual revival began to manifest itself in France at the beginning of 16th century. Charles VIII led an army into Naples where he made contacts with the learning of Italy. Several important scholars, including Erasmus were attracted to Paris and became University professors there. Chaucer was a leader in the cultural revival in England. Oxford and Cambridge Universities were the centres of cultural activities. John Colet (1466-1517) sought the regeneration of religion from the allegorical interpretation of Medieval theology. The spirit of humanism sought a simpler and more restrained art than that of the Medieval Ages. There was an adoption of classical art form for Christian use. This spirit prevailed in painting though the subject matter was distinctly Christian. The concept of unity in the Middle Ages was attacked by humanism and by the spirit of individualism. The Renaissance rebelled against intellectual unity and centralized control. The rise of the national state shattered the Medieval concept of a universal state. The final
assault was the Reformation that attacked the monopolistic power of the universal church. This great religious upheaval was not only the evidence of great religious changes, but also proclaimed the dawn of a new era. The earliest humanists were the librarians, secretaries, teachers, courtiers, and privately supported artists of these wealthy businessmen and merchants. Over time, the label *Literae humaniores* was adopted to describe the classic literature of Rome — a contrast to the *Literae sacrae* of the church's scholastic philosophy. Another factor, which made Italy a natural place for launching the humanist movement, was its obvious connection to ancient Rome. Humanism was very much an outgrowth of increased interest in the philosophy, literature, and historiography of ancient Greece and Rome, all of which offered a stark contrast to what had been produced under the direction of the Christian Church during the Middle Ages. Italians of the time felt themselves to be the direct descendants of the ancient Romans, and thus believed that they were the inheritors of Roman culture — an inheritance which they were determined to study and understand. Of course, this study led to admiration that, in turn, also led to imitation. An important feature of these developments was simply finding the material to work with. Much had been lost or was languishing in various archives and libraries, neglected and forgotten. It is because of the need to find and translate ancient manuscripts that so many early humanists were deeply involved with libraries, transcription, and linguistics. New discoveries for works by Cicero, Ovid, or Tacitus were incredible events for those involved. Again, because this was their cultural inheritance and a link to their past, it was of the utmost importance that the material be found, preserved, and
provided to others. Over time, they also moved on to ancient Greek works — Aristotle, Plato, the Homeric epics, and more. This process was hastened by the continuing conflict between the Turks and Constantinople, the last bastion of the ancient Roman Empire and the center of Greek learning. In 1453, Constantinople fell to Turkish forces, causing many Greek thinkers to flee to Italy where their presence served to encourage the further development of humanistic thinking. One consequence of the development of humanist philosophy during the Renaissance was the increased emphasis on the importance of education. People needed to learn ancient Greek and Latin in order to begin to understand the ancient manuscripts. This, in turn, led to further education in the arts and philosophies which went along with those manuscripts and finally the ancient sciences which had for so long been neglected by Christian scholars. Renaissance writers search for a path that focuses on this earth rather than the imaginary world or the world beyond. This makes them feel the need to save the planet and to focus on the respect for individual choice. It values reason rather than fanaticism. The renaissance thinkers find it impossible to believe in supernatural beings, and difficult to conceive of anything more worthy of reverence than the beauty of Nature or the power of the universe. As a consequence of their utmost concern for this world and the life on it, the renaissance humanists felt a deep sense of peace and belonging and wonder in the midst of nature. Humanist writers and thinkers were charmed with a sense of awe when they looked up at the sky to see the Milky Way. These turned to be a source of immense joy and inspired scientific inquiry. As a result, there was a burst of scientific and technological development
during the Renaissance unlike anything seen in Europe for centuries. Earlier, education was limited primarily to aristocrats and men of financial means. Indeed, much of the early humanist movement had a rather elitist air about it. Over time, however, the courses of study were adapted for a wider audience — a process that was greatly hastened by the development of the printing press and began printing editions of ancient philosophy and literature in Greek, Latin, and Italian for a mass audience, leading to a dissemination of information and ideas much wider than previously thought possible. The most important thing to remember about Renaissance Humanism, however, is that its most important characteristics lie not in its content or its adherents, but in its spirit. To understand Humanism, it must be contrasted with the piety and scholasticism of the Middle Ages, against which Humanism was regarded as a free and open breath of fresh air. Indeed, Humanism was often critical of the stuffiness and repression of the Church over the centuries. Arguing that humans needed more intellectual freedom in which they could develop their faculties. Sometimes Humanism appeared quite close to ancient paganism, but this was usually more a consequence of the comparison to medieval Christianity than anything inherent in the beliefs of the Humanists was. Nevertheless, the anti-clerical and anti-church inclinations of the humanists were a direct result of their reading ancient authors who did not care about gods, did not believe in any gods, or believed in gods who were far and remote from anything that the humanists were familiar with. They dwelt among the beauties and mysteries of the earth and were never alone or weary of life. They contemplated the beauty of the earth and found reserves of strength that would
endure as long as life lasts. They focused man's attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about him. It is perhaps curious, then, that so many famous humanists were also members of the church papal secretaries, bishops, cardinals, and even a couple of popes. These were secular rather than spiritual leaders, exhibiting much more interest in literature, art, and philosophy than in sacraments and theology. Renaissance Humanism was a revolution in thinking and feeling which left no part of society, not even the highest levels of Christianity, untouched. The return to favour of the pagan classics stimulated the philosophy of secularism, the appreciation of worldly pleasures, and above all intensified the assertion of personal independence and individual expression. Zeal for the classics was a result as well as a cause of the growing secular view of life. Expansion of trade, growth of prosperity and luxury, and widening social contacts generated interest in worldly pleasures, in spite of formal allegiance to ascetic Christian doctrine. Men thus affected -- the humanists -- welcomed classical writers who revealed similar social values and secular attitudes. Humanistic contributions to science consisted mainly in the recovery of Greek scientific literature that evinced a more accurate and acceptable body of facts and ideas than most medieval scientific works. The purpose this life, they thought, is to "Live, love, laugh, play, and rejoice." They took to explore, to discover the wonders of nature and reflect them. They believed in man's capacity to create, and conserve nurture. Sharing, helping and inspiring the fellow beings were the common instinct of man. These are some of the ways man felt about life.
The Latin *ars* was applied indiscriminately to the verbal disciplines, mathematics, music and science (the "liberal arts"), as well as to painting, sculpture, and architecture. It also could refer to technological expertise, magic, and to alchemy. Any discipline involving the cultivation of skill and excellence was, by virtue, an art. To the Renaissance, all arts were "liberal" in their capacity to *free* their practitioners to function effectively in specific areas. The art of rhetoric empowered the rhetoricians to convince; the art of perspective empowered the painter to create visual illustration; the art of physics empowered the scientist to predict the force and motion of objects. "Art" was no more or less than articulate power, the technical and intellectual analogy to the political power of the monarch and the divine power of the god. The historical importance of this equation cannot be overestimated.

The Renaissance humanists and painters assigned themselves consciously heroic roles: in their artistic ability to delight, to captivate, to convince, they saw themselves as enfranchised directors and makers of culture. One may also understand why a humanist-artist-scientist as Albert would have seen no real distinction between the various disciplines he practiced. As profoundly interconnected means of understanding nature and humanity, and as media for effective reform and renewal, these disciplines were all components of an encompassing art. Machiavelli wrote a book about the "art" of warfare and used history and logic to develop an art of government or about the brilliant polymath
Paracelsus who spent his whole career perfecting an art that should comprehend all matters and all spirit. Gallilio, the scientist put classical and mediaval science for a winnowing fan, keeping only search components as allowed for physically reproducible results. It was completely appropriate that science should leave its previously contemplative rule and focus upon the conquest of nature. Humanism benefited the development of science in a number of more specific ways. Alberti's technological appropriation of mathematics, and his influential statement that mathematics was the key to all science, grew out of his humanistic education at Padua. Vittorino, another student at Padua, went on to make mathematics a central feature of his educational programme. Gerolamo Cardano, a scholar of renowned humanistic skills, made major contribution to the development of algebra. The importance of mathematics in humanistic pedagogy and the fact that major humanists like Vittorino and Alberti were also mathematicians may be seen as contributing to the science. Humanistic philology supplied scientists with clean texts and clear Latin translation of the classical works of Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Archimedes and Ptolemy that furthered their studies. The richness of classical heritage in science is often underestimated. Gallilio considered Archimedes his mentor and prized the dialogue of Plato particularly the Meno. Humanism may also be seen as offering, of itself, methods and attitudes suitable for application in non-humanistic fields. The revolutionary social science of Machiavelli and Juan Luis Vives was due in large measures to their application of humanistic technique to fields that lay outside the normal purview of humanism. But most of all it was the general spirit of humanism – critical, questing, ebullient, precise, focused on
the physical world, and passionate in its quest for results— that fostered the
development of the scientific spirit in social studies and natural philosophy.

III.2. Renaissance Humanism

Renaissance is a collective term used to refer to the intellectual changes
that were evident at the close of the Middle Ages and at the beginning of the modern
times. It includes much that was not found in art and literature. The simple
agricultural ways of the manor were altered by commerce and industry. The
manor, the nobleman’s castle, and the bishop’s palace gave way to the crowded
and busy towns. There emerged a new political consciousness manifested in the
decline of the papacy and the empire. Nationalism came into prominence.
Astronomy, physiology, and medicine were investigated with sound scientific
procedure in place of old method of theological scholasticism. Man was in the
process of making a fundamental change in his attitude towards himself and the
world he lived in which is commonly called humanism. The humanists were
primarily interested in classical literature which brought in the revival of the study
of the Greek and Latin languages. It focused attention on things of this world and
an exaltation of human nature. The natural, the human, and the sensual were given
precedence over the ascetical, the human, the supernatural, and the theological.

Renaissance Humanism is applied to the philosophical and cultural
movement that swept across Europe from the 14th through 16th centuries,
effectively ending the Middle Ages and leading into the modern era. Pioneers of Renaissance Humanism were inspired by the discovery and spread of important classical texts from ancient Greece and Rome that offered a different vision of life and humanity than what had been common during previous centuries of Christian domination. The central focus of Renaissance Humanism was, quite simply, human beings. Humans were praised for their achievements — achievements attributed to human ingenuity and human effort rather than divine grace. Humans were regarded optimistically in terms of what they could do, not just in the arts and sciences but even morally. Human concerns were given greater attention, leading people to spend more time on work that would benefit people in their daily lives rather than the otherworldly interests of the Church. The starting point for the Humanism of the Renaissance was Italy. This was most likely due to the ongoing presence of a commercial revolution in the Italian city-states of the era. At this time, there was a tremendous increase in the number of rich individuals with disposable income that supported a luxurious lifestyle of leisure and arts. Renaissance humanism was an intellectual impulse, a cultural and educational programme to mould man in the fashion that glorified men in the Classics. It turned man's attention from the life after death to the life "here" and "now; the earthly life: "Thus, it was that Western Europe awoke to the possibilities latent in the natural man, and that the individual became actually self conscious and engrossed with his own particular temperament and capacities and with the problems and means of expressing them to the utmost. For this reason, the epoch is known as the Renaissance, or the period of rebirth, and its preoccupation with
the development of human self realization here and now, in this world, within the limit set by birth and death, has given to its spirit the name of 'Humanism' (Fuller, 1964, 2).”

Historians tend to agree that Middle Ages ended around 1500 and were followed by the early Modern period of European history. About 1350 in Italy, representatives of a new cultural movement called, the “Renaissance”, began to challenge certain basic mediavel assumptions and offered alternatives to them. By around 1500, Renaissance ideals triumphed fully in Italy and spread to Northern Europe where they were reconceived to produce the highly influential movement of “Christian Humanism”. The otherworldly emphasis of the mediaval thought was given place to optimistic humanism of the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation challenged the authority of the Christian Church. This stimulated a spirit of individual independence, changing man to be more mobile and adventurous and more confident of their own powers. Humanistic contributions to science consisted mainly in the recovery of Greek scientific literature, which evinced a more accurate and acceptable body of facts and ideas than most mediaval scientific works. However, we should not exaggerate the humanist contribution in this field. Everything of value, for instance, in Galen (c.130-201) had long been incorporated into mediaval medicine. The scientific treatises of Aristotle, Euclid, and Ptolemy were translated into Latin and known to scholars before the Renaissance. Moreover, Islamic scholars had already introduced most
Attic and Hellenistic science into Western Europe, often with vast improvements on the original. Humanism embodied the mystical and aesthetic temper of a pre-scientific age. It did not free the mind from subservience to ancient authority.

If the humanists revered Aristotle less than the Schoolmen did, they worshipped Neoplatonism, the Cabala, and Cicero more. They shifted authorities rather than dismissed them. Even Aristotle, the greatest of Scholastic authorities, did not lack humanist admirers. The great libraries assembled by wealthy patrons of literature like Cosimo de' Medici, Pope Nicholas V, and the Duke of Urbino, devoted much space to the Church Fathers and the Scholastic philosophers. The humanists, however, read their authorities for aesthetic pleasure as well as moral uplift. The intellectuals of antiquity, in contrast to the Christians, were relatively unconcerned about the supernatural world and the eternal destiny of the soul. They were primarily interested in a happy, adequate, and efficient life here on earth. Hellenic philosophy was designed to teach man how to live successfully rather than how to die with the assurance of ultimate salvation. This pagan attitude had been lost for about one thousand years, when Europe followed the warning of Augustine against becoming too engrossed in earthly affairs, lest assurance of successful entry into the New Jerusalem be jeopardized. Humanism directly and indirectly revived the pagan scale of virtues. When men like Petrarch and his fellow humanists read pagan literature, they were infected with the secular outlook of the Greeks and Romans. Even rather pious humanists became
enamored of what Augustine branded the City of Man. During early Middle Ages intellectual and aesthetic activities had been dominated by religious belief and the world was regarded in glomy terms. The way of thinking of the Middle Ages was unscientific. Nature was viewed teleologically i.e. God created nature with a purpose behind it. Human life was considered incapable of achieving happiness in this world because of the original sin committed by the first parents. The earthly life was considered to be meant for spiritual preparation for the life to come and the ascetic life of the monk was considered the ideal form of life. It was believed that human society should be conform to the divine law, which is also a law of nature and reason, and it should be a binding upon individuals: "Religious humanisms is a movement developed from Unitarianism and is best defined in the Humanist Manifesto 1933: Religion consists of those actions, purpose and experiences which are humanity significant. Nothing human is alien to the religious" (World University Encyclopaedia, vol. 8 Washington, New York, Book Ink, 1968)." Humanism is the term generally applied to the predominant social philosophy and intellectual and literary currents of the period from 1400 to 1650. The return to favour of the pagan classics stimulated the philosophy of secularism, the appreciation of worldly pleasures, and above all intensified the assertion of personal independence and individual expression. Beauty was believed to afford at least some glimpse of a transcendental existence. This goes far to explain the humanist cult of beauty and makes plain that humanism was, above everything else, fundamentally an aesthetic movement. Human experience, man himself, tended to become the practical measure of all things. The ideal life
was no longer a monastic escape from society, but a full participation in rich and varied human relationships. The dominating element in the finest classical culture was aesthetic rather than supernatural or scientific. In the later Middle Ages urban intellectuals were well on the road to the recovery of an aesthetic and secular view of life even before the full tide of the classical revival was felt. It was only natural, then, that pagan literature, with its emotional and intellectual affinity to the new world view, should accelerate the existing drift toward secularism and stimulate the cult of humanity, the worship of beauty, and especially the aristocratic attitude. Almost everywhere, humanism began as a rather pious, timid, and conservative drift away from medieval Christianity and ended in bold independence of medieval tradition. Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), one of the greatest humanists, occupied a position midway between extreme piety and frank secularism. Francesco Petrarch (1304-1374) represented conservative Italian humanism. Robust secularism and intellectual independence reached its height in Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) and Francesco Guicciardini (1483-1540). Rudolphus Agricola (1443-1485) may be regarded as the German Petrarch. In England, John Colet (c.1467-1519) and Sir Thomas More (1478-1535) were early or conservative humanists; Francis Bacon (1561-1626) represented later or agnostic and skeptical humanism. In France, pious classicist Lefèvre d'Étaples (1453-1536) was succeeded by frank, urbane, and devout skeptics like Michel Montaigne (1533-1592) and bold anti-clerical satirists like François Rabelais (c.1495-1533). Humanism embodied the mystical and aesthetic temper of a pre-scientific age. It did not free the mind from subservience to ancient authority. If
the humanists revered Aristotle less than the Schoolmen did, they worshipped Neoplatonism, the Cabala, and Cicero more. They shifted authorities rather than dismissed them. Even Aristotle, the greatest of Scholastic authorities, did not lack humanist admirers. The great libraries assembled by wealthy patrons of literature like Cosimo de' Medici, Pope Nicholas V, and the Duke of Urbino, devoted much space to the Church Fathers and the Scholastic philosophers. The humanists, however, read their authorities for aesthetic pleasure as well as moral uplift. The intellectuals of antiquity, in contrast to the Christians, were relatively unconcerned about the supernatural world and the eternal destiny of the soul. They were primarily interested in a happy, adequate, and efficient life here on earth. Hellenic philosophy was designed to teach man how to live successfully rather than how to die with the assurance of ultimate salvation. This pagan attitude had been lost for about one thousand years, when Europe followed the warning of Augustine against becoming too engrossed in earthly affairs, lest assurance of successful entry into the New Jerusalem be jeopardized. Humanism directly and indirectly revived the pagan scale of virtues. When men like Petrarch and his fellow humanists read pagan literature, they were infected with the secular outlook of the Greeks and Romans. Even rather pious humanists became enamored of what Augustine branded the City of Man. Petrarch, a devout Christian, worshipped the pagan eclecticism of Cicero. Erasmus suggested that such titles as St. Socrates and St. Cicero were not inappropriate or sacrilegious, and openly preferred the pagans to the Schoolmen. "Whatever is pious and and corporate liberty rather than individual freedom. In commercial relations, group
life was paramount, in both the town guilds and the peasant villages on manorial estates. Law and custom regulated everything. The individual who attempted to challenge authority and tradition, in matters of thought or action, was either discouraged or crushed. The period from the 14th century to the 17th worked in favor of the general emancipation of the individual. The city-states of northern Italy had met the diverse customs of the East, and gradually permitted expression in matters of taste and dress. The writings of Dante, and particularly the doctrines of Petrarch and humanists like Machiavelli, emphasized the virtues of intellectual freedom and individual expression. In the essays of Montaigne, the individualistic view of life received perhaps the most persuasive and eloquent statement in the history of literature and philosophy. Individualism and the instinct of curiosity were vigorously cultivated. Honest doubt began to replace unreasoning faith. The skeptical viewpoint proposed by Abelard reached high development and wide acceptance among the humanists. Finally, the spirit of individualism to a certain degree incited the Protestant revolt, which, in theory at least, embodied a thorough application of the principle of individualism in religion. It need not be supposed that the emancipation of the ego was wholly beneficial to the human race. Yet, that aspect of humanism that combated the sovereignty of tyrant, feudal lord, class, corporation, and tradition, has, for better or worse, had a tremendous influence upon the subsequent history of Europe. Indeed, it was during the humanist era that the freedom of individual expression and opposition to authority was first brought to the surface and became an integral part of the western
intellectual tradition conduces to good manners ought not to be called profane," he wrote.

The first place must indeed be given to the authority of the Scriptures; but, nevertheless, I sometimes find some things said or written by the ancients, nay, even by the heathens, nay, by the poets themselves, so chastely, so holily, and so divinely, that I cannot persuade myself but that, when they wrote them, they were divinely inspired, and perhaps the spirit of Christ diffuses itself farther than we imagine; and that there are more saints than we have in our catalogue. To confess freely among friends, I can't read Cicero on Old Age, on Friendship, his Offices, or his Tusculan Questions, without kissing the book, without veneration towards the divine soul. On the contrary, when I read some of our modern authors, treating of Politics, Economics, and Ethics, good God! how cold they are in comparison with these! Nay, how do they seem to be insensible of what they write themselves! So that I had rather lose Scotus and twenty more such as he (fancy twenty subtle doctors!) than one Cicero or Plutarch. Not that I am wholly against them either; but, because, by the reading of the one, I find myself become better, whereas I rise from the other, I know not how coldly affected to virtue, but most violently inclined to cavil and contention. The leading intellectual trait of the era as the recovery, to a certain degree, of the secular and humane philosophy of Greece and Rome. Another humanist trend that cannot be ignored was the rebirth of individualism, which, developed by Greece and Rome to a remarkable degree,
had been suppressed by the rise of a caste system in the later Roman Empire, by
the Church and by feudalism in the Middle Ages. The Church asserted that
rampant individualism was identical with arrogance, rebellion, and sin. Medieval
Christianity restricted individual expression, fostered self-abnegation and self-
annihilation, and demanded implicit faith and unquestioning obedience.
Furthermore, the Church officially ignored man and nature. In other ways,
medieval civilization suppressed the ego. In the feudal regime, the isolated
individual had little standing. He acquired status and protection mainly as a
member of a definite group, whether lordly or servile. The manorial system
revolved around the community rather than the individual. When the cities
through off the yoke of feudalism, they promised collective and corporate liberty
rather than individual freedom.

As opposed the Mediavel way of life and thinking, the Renaissance figures
delighted in intellectual and aesthetic explorations and emphasized on the earthly
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the yoke of feudalism, they promised collective and corporate liberty rather than
individual freedom. In commercial relations, group life was paramount, in both
the town guilds and the peasant villages on manorial estates. Law and custom regulated everything. The individual who attempted to challenge authority and tradition, in matters of thought or action, was either discouraged or crushed. Petrarch, a devout Christian, worshipped the pagan eclecticism of Cicero. Erasmus suggested that such titles as St. Socrates and St. Cicero were not inappropriate or sacrilegious, and openly preferred the pagans to the Schoolmen. "Whatever is pious and conduces to good manners ought not to be called profane," he wrote. Humanist scholars turned back to the study of classics in order to escape from the other worldliness of the Medieval thinking and to recapture more optimistic view of human life. They believed that education should promote an all-round development of all sides of human nature and that this could best be accomplished through the study of the classics. Whereas, in Italy the Renaissance led to paganism, in England and other northern countries, it led to "Christian humanism" that placed the classics almost on a level with the Bible and regarded the relational appreciation and improvement of life in this world as consistent with devout religious belief: "The word renaissance signifies the rebirth of man which had been fettered and imprisoned during the Middle Ages. It is a re-entrance into the world of secular, self-reliant spirit that characterized the life and the culture of classical antiquity (Swain, J.E. 1992, 7)."

The Renaissance brought in a new approach to natural sciences and people were beginning to see the natural world as a complex of forces operating by
immutable chairs of cause and effect and to realize that exact measurement was
the key to its interpretation. The significance of the individual enhanced and the
importance of the feudal lords diminished. An individuals in the Feudal world
was like a bucket of water, while during Renaissance vast importance was
attached to an individual and he was considered to be an ocean having infinite
possibilities: "There can be no doubt that a kind of assertive individualism was
admired and practiced by humanists in sharp contrast with the self-abnegation
of the mediaval monk, who without personal property or family, was vowed to
obedience and humanity (Hayes, Carlton, J.H., 1950, 106)." Zeal for the classics
was a result as well as a cause of the growing secular view of life. Expansion of
trade, growth of prosperity and luxury, and widening social contacts generated
interest in worldly pleasures, in spite of formal allegiance to ascetic Christian
doctrine. Men thus affected -- the humanists -- welcomed classical writers who
revealed similar social values and secular attitudes. Historians are much agreed on
the general outlines of those mental attitudes and scholarly interests, which are
assembled under the rubric of humanism. The most fundamental point of
agreement is that the humanist mentality stood at a point midway between
medieval supernaturalism and the modern scientific and critical attitude.
Medievalists see humanism as the terminal product of the Middle Ages. Modern
historians are perhaps more apt to view humanism as the germinal period of
modernism. Perhaps the most we can assume is that the man of the Renaissance
lived, as it were, between two worlds. The world of the medieval Christian
matrix, in which the significance of every phenomenon was ultimately determined
through uniform points of view, no longer existed for him. On the other hand, he had not yet found in a system of scientific concepts and social principle stability and security for his life. In other words, Renaissance man may indeed have found himself suspended between faith and reason. As the grip of medieval supernaturalism began to diminish, secular and human interests became more prominent. The facts of individual experience in the here and now became more interesting than the shadowy afterlife. Reliance upon faith and God weakened. Chance gradually replaced Providence as the universal frame of reference. The present world became an end in itself instead of simply preparation of a world to come. Indeed, as the age of Renaissance humanism wore on, the distinction between this world and the next the City of God tended to disappear.

Francis Petrarch (1304-1374), the earliest of the humanists, thought that the Christian writers must cultivate literary eloquence so that he could inspire the readers to do good. The best model for such eloquence; he thought is the classical literature. Petrarch dedicated himself to the searching for undiscovered ancient Latin texts and writings, his own moral treatises in which he imitated classical style and quoted classical phrases. Being a traditional Christian, his ideal for human life was solitary contemplation and asceticism: "Within the range of its knowledge, his acute mind discriminated justly. His idol in prose was Cicero; through long study and devotion he seemed to himself to have attained a personal intimacy with him. Yet, as it was only in middle life that he found a manuscript of
Cicero's letters, he did not form his own epistolary style on them. In fact, Seneca influenced him as much as they influenced Cicero. One may remark that not only in the Middle Ages, but from Petrarch's time onward through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, humanists look kindly to the Latin writers of the silver and even the brass age, and when they came to know Greek, they preferred the later Greek authors. Some reasons for this are clear. Both the Late Latin and Late Greek writers were more cosmopolitan and the easier to appreciate than their greater and often-austere predecessors. The Romans themselves had not cared for Aeschylus and Aristophanes, who, like Plato, were distinguished by a sublime provincialism. The Hellenistic Plutarch offered more promiscuous and readily tangible human affinities. For analogous reasons, Seneca was the popular moralist, and continued so through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. He was closer to the Christian mood, and at so many points touched the commonplace nature of man. Thus, we may also see why Petrarch sought moral instruction from Ovid's Elegies, while he revered and imitated Virgil." (Taylor, H. O, 1962, 30-31)."

Petrarch applied the ideas and values of ancient Greece and Rome and questions about Christian doctrines and ethics, which were being asked in his own day. Many tend to mark the beginning of Humanism with the writings of Dante (1265-1321). Yet, though Dante certainly presaged the coming revolution in thinking, Petrarch first really set things in motion. Petrarch was among the first to work to unearth long-forgotten manuscripts. Unlike Dante, he abandoned any concern with religious theology in favour of ancient Roman poetry and philosophy. He also focused upon Rome as the site of a classical civilization, not
as the center of Christianity. Finally, Petrarch argued that our highest goals should not be the imitation of Christ, but rather the principles of virtue and truth as described by the ancients. Although many humanists were literary figures like Petrarch or Dante, many others were actually political figures that used their positions of power and influence to help support the spread of humanist ideals. Coluccio Salutati (1331-1406) and Leonardo Bruni (1369-1444), for example, became chancellors of Florence. It was because of their skill in using Latin in their correspondence and speeches, a style which became popular as part of the effort to imitate the writings of antiquity before it was deemed even more important to write in the vernacular so as to reach the wider audience of common people. Salutati, Bruni, and others like them worked to develop new ways of thinking about Florence’s republican traditions and engaged in a great deal of correspondence with others to explain their principles. In other ways, medieval civilization suppressed the ego. In the feudal regime, the isolated individual had little standing. He acquired status and protection mainly as a member of a definite group, whether lordly or servile. The manorial system revolved around the community rather than the individual. The cities promised collective and corporate liberty rather than individual freedom. In commercial relations, group life was paramount, in both the town guilds and the peasant villages on manorial estates.
But from 1400 to 1450, a member of Italian thinkers and scholars called “civic humanists” like Florentine Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444) and Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472) believed that man’s nature is equipped for action and usefulness for his family and society. They considered that man’s ambition for glory and noble impulses are to be encouraged and they refused to condemn the striving for material possessions. They argued that the history of human progress is inseparable from human success in gaining mastery over the earth and its resources. They succeeded in opening up the field of the Byzantine scholars, migrated to Italy in first half of the 15th century: “In 1423, one Italian humanist, Giovanni Aurispa alone brought back 238 manuscripts including the works of Sophocles, Euripides and Thucydides. In this way, Plato, the dramatists, and the historians were first made available to western Europe (Burns, Edward Mac Nall et al., 1991, 603).” From about 1450, a sort of blending of the thought of Plato, Plotinus and various ancient mysticism with Christianity called “Neoplatonism” dominated over the thinking of the people of Italy that lasted up to 1600. Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola were the members of the Platonic Academy, founded by Casimo de Medici in Florence. Ficino translated the works of Plato and made them available to the western Europeans for the first time. It is not certain whether Ficino’s philosophy can be called humanistic as he turned from ethics to metaphysics. He observed: “The immortal soul is always miserable in its mortal body. “On the other hand, Pico della Mirandola was not a civic humanist who believed that “there is nothing more wonderful than man.” He believed that man has the capacity to achieve
communion with God, if he wills. Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), a class by himself, was cynical in his views of human nature. He maintained that man is promoted exclusively by motives of self-interests, particularly by the desire for personal power and material prosperity. Castiglion's "The Book of the courtier (1516)" supplied a code of conduct of a Renaissance man as against the republican practices advocated by Bruni and Alberti. Castiglion popularized the ideal of the 'Renaissance man', one who is accomplished in many different pursuits and who is brave, witty and "courteous", "meaning civilized and learned." He did not ignore the role of the female sex in 'health and home'. Castiglion is the first European male writer to offer woman an independent role outside home. Sixteenth century Italians were highly accomplished in the writing of imaginative prose and verse. Mechiavelli, the great political thinker wrote a delightful short story "Belfagor" and an engaging bawdly play "Mandragola." Michelangelo, the famous artist wrote many moving sonnets. Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso" made the readers laugh and also charmed them with felicitous descriptions of the quiet splendour of nature and the passion of love, "in Florence beings as the world has rarely seen the whole population formed an aristocracy of genius (Swain, 1992, 9)."

The Renaissance in the northern Europe was the product of an engrafting of certain Italian Renaissance ideals upon the pre-existing northern tradition. This is popularly known as ' Christian Humanism'. Erasmus (1467-1536) 'the prince' of Christian humanists past most of his long and studious life in Germany,
Franch, England, Italy and Switzerland. A doctor of theology, a lover of books, a prolific writer and a sociable being, Erasmus was in terms of personal friendship with Aldus Manutius, Sir Thomas More, Pope Leo-X, Holy Roman Emperor, with the Kings of England and France. As a writer of prose, he was matchless since the days Cicero. Extraordinarily learned and witty, he tailored his mode of expression to suit his subjects. He excelled in the deft use of irony, poking fun at all and sundry, even at himself: "Kings make war, Priests strive to line their pockets, theologians invent syllogisms, monks roam outside cloisters, the commons riot and Erasmus writes colloques (Burns, et. al., 1991, 619)." The political and social development of England differed in significant ways from that of other continental countries. The government of England was less authoritarian and the class distinction less rigid. Henery-VIII (1509-1547) and Elizabeth-I (1558-1603) enforced order into the country, prompted commerce, and made themselves the focus of national loyalty. Queen Elizabeth-I patronized men of letters and encouraged literary activities. Her political policies resulted in both internal peace and the freedom from the fear of external aggression that prompted art and literature. Thomas More (1478-1535) was a close friend of Erasmus. He published his "Utopia" in 1516, which expressed an Erasmian critique of the contemporary society with all its abuses. The implication of "Utopia" is that if the Utopians could manage to live so happily without any Gospel, the Europeans who have the Gospel aught to do even better. The inhabitants of Utopia "hold all their goods in common, work only six hours a day so that all may have leisure for intellectual pursuits and practice the natural virtues of wisdom, moderation,
fortitude and justice. Iron is the most precious metal because it is useful, war and monasticism are abolished and toleration is granted to all who recognize the existence of God and the immortality of soul (Burns, et. al., 1991: 622).” Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586) and Edmund Spenser (1554-1586) borrowed both the subjects and the style of literary innovations of Italy. Sir Thomas Elyot (1490-1546) wrote “The Book of the Governor (1530)”, the first English book on education where the author shows the place of literature in Education, which is unmistakably a Renaissance spirit. This book on education was followed by another by Roger Ascham (1516-1568), a friend of Elyot, “The scholemaster” which is a practical advice about educating young people. Julius Caesar Scaliger (1485-1558) wrote “Politics (1570)”, one of the series of sixteenth century books that retold the critical ground covered by Aristotle and Horace where he regards Aristotle as the perpetual lawgiver of poetry. Sir John Harington (1561-1612) wrote his translation of Ariosto’s “Orlando Furioso” in 1591. George Chapman (1559-1634) translated Homer’s “Iliad” in 1578. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) wrote “The Advancement of Learning (between 1603 and 1605)”, in the second book of which he makes a systematic survey of the various branches of learning. Ben Jonson (1572-1637), a poet and dramatist of great fertility, was also a scholarly, magisterial and combative person. In his Prologue to “Everyman in his Humour (1600)” presented the theory of the comedy of humours in classical Roman model though the theory has a Medieval base. Thomas Wyatt (1503-1541) and Earl of Surrey (1516-47) were man of the new culture of Renaissance who pioneered the vogue of sonnet writing. Italian humanist, Petrarch, influenced
them. It had become a fashion to write songs and sonnets during Elizabethan time. England had become the nest of singing birds. The university Wits wrote dramas on Renaissance ideals of glorifying human achievements, life and body. Marlowe (1564-93) presented colossal figures with insatiable thirst for earthly achievements. Shakespeare (1564-1616), the universally recognized great poet wrote with wide miscellaneous knowledge of many things, accumulated by an extraordinarily assimilative mind when all social intercourse and all literature were alike saturated with the classicism of the Renaissance.

The Renaissance literature was attended by unfailing performance for the natural, trust, the human and the sensual, against the supernatural, theological or the ascetic. The Renaissance humanists considered satisfaction and self-gratification preferable to sacrifice and self-denial. Self-introspection and observing the fellow beings had been given more importance which stimulated scholarly research and collection of ancient texts. The leading intellectual trait of the era as the recovery, to a certain degree, of the secular and humane philosophy of Greece and Rome. Another humanist trend, which cannot be ignored, was the rebirth of individualism, which, developed by Greece and Rome to a remarkable degree, had been suppressed by the rise of a caste system in the later Roman Empire, by the Church and by feudalism in the Middle Ages. The Church asserted that rampant individualism was identical with arrogance, rebellion, and sin. Medieval Christianity restricted individual expression, fostered self-abnegation and self-annihilation, and demanded implicit faith and unquestioning obedience.
Furthermore, the Church officially ignored man and nature. The Mediavel Ages were regarded as "Dark Ages", the scholastic philosophy was rejected as arid and futile, Mediavel Latin as monkish, and Mediavel intellectuals as ignorant and stupid. Skepticism, individualism, materialism, emancipation of human mind, freedom of self-expression, a wholesale criticism and a quick inquiry are the general characteristics of Renaissance literature: "Typically Renaissance humanism assumed the dignity and central position of human beings in the universe, emphasized the importance in education of studying classical imaginative and philosophical literature, although with emphasis on its moral and practical rather than its aesthetic values; and insisted on the primary, on ordering human life, of reason (considered the distinctively human faculty) as opposed to the instinctual appetites and the "animal " passions. Many humanists also stressed the need for a rounded development of an individual's diverse power, physical, mental, artistic, and moral, as opposed to merely a technical or specialized kind of training. In our time the term, "humanists" often connotes those thinkers who base truth on human experience and reason and base values on human nature and culture, as distinct from those who regard religious revelation as the warrant for all truth and values. With few exception, however, Renaissance humanists were pious Christians who incorporated the concept and ideals inherited that they tended to emphasize the values achievable by human being in this world, and to minimize the earlier Christian emphasis on the innate corruption of human beings and on the ideals of asceticism and of withdrawal from this world in a preoccupation with the world hereafter. It has become
common to refer to this synthesis of classical and Christian views, typical of writers such as Sir Phillip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, and John Milton, as Christian humanism (Abrams, M, H, 2001, 116).”

The period from the 14th century to the 17th worked in favor of the general emancipation of the individual. The city-states of northern Italy had met the diverse customs of the East, and gradually permitted expression in matters of taste and dress. The writings of Dante, and particularly the doctrines of Petrarch and humanists like Machiavelli, emphasized the virtues of intellectual freedom and individual expression. In the essays of Montaigne, the individualistic view of life received perhaps the most persuasive and eloquent statement in the history of literature and philosophy. Individualism and the instinct of curiosity were vigorously cultivated. Honest doubt began to replace unreasoning faith. The skeptical viewpoint proposed by Abelard reached high development and wide acceptance among the humanists. Finally, the spirit of individualism to a certain degree incited the Protestant revolt, which, in theory at least, embodied a thorough application of the principle of individualism in religion. It need not be supposed that the emancipation of the ego was wholly beneficial to the human race. Yet, that aspect of humanism that combated the sovereignty of tyrant, feudal lord, class, corporation, and tradition, has, for better or worse, had a tremendous influence upon the subsequent history of Europe. Indeed, it was during the humanist era that the freedom of individual expression and opposition to authority
was first brought to the surface and became an integral part of the western intellectual tradition.

III.III. American New Humanism

The movement in the literary and the critical circle in America during 1910-33, under the leadership of Irving Babbit and Paul Elmer More, is popularly known as 'New Humanism'. They respected the humanism advocated by Mathew Arnold almost an ethical preoccupation with the responsibility of arts to teach man how to behave in society. They were committed to the normative aesthetic of Alexander Pope, to the instance that literature has a serious public responsibility of arts to teach man how to behave in society. They were committed to the normative aesthetics of Alexander Pope, to the instance that literature has a serious public responsibility to teach while pleasing and also that "the proper study of mankind is man". The New Humanists were anti-romantic, anti-realistic and anti-naturalist with a programme to uphold human dignity and normally correct behaviour and attitude. Both Babbit and More were men of wide learning. Babbit was a more aggressive controversialist while More had more literary sensitivity. Their insistence was that civilization depended on the maintenance of strong ethical prohibition, manifested in men's 'inner check' and 'will to refrain'. They condemned literature that encouraged the free expression of emotional drives. They were opposed to the romantic ideal of placing the individual above society without responsibility and to the naturalistic tendency of debasing man to
the position of animals. New Humanism is far broader than that: "it drew from sources as widely separated as the Aristotelian ethic and the Oriental religions, finding authority and sustenance wherever doctrine of moderation, the dignity of human will, the sense of permanent values, a perception of dualistic order or the existence were upheld, and maintaining steady opposition to intemperance, materialistic determinism, relativism or nihilism, mystical monism or any other ism that failed to see that man and things are forever twain (Kumar, Arjun, ed., Mittapally, 2001, 11)." The New Humanism of Irving Babbit and Paul Elmer More achieved much success in shaping American literary education in Arnoldian line through their followers like Stuart Pratt Sherman and Norman Forester. Humanism for Forester is: "--------in its broadest signification, it denote a belief that the proper study of mankind is man, and that this study should enable mankind to perceive and realize its humanity, since man may be conceived as being on three plains, the natural, the human and the religious, the content of the middle term will frequently tend to be invaded by that of the extremes-the word humanism should be confirmed to a working philosophy seeking to make a resolute distinction between man and nature and between man the divine (Kumar, Arjun, ibid., 11 )." Democratic Humanism and American Literature illustrates the interplay between democratic assumptions and literary performance in the America's classic nineteenth-century writers--Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, Cooper, Poe, Whitman, Twain, and James. Harold Kaplan suggests that these major figures' works are linked by the myths of genesis of a new political culture challenged by the democratic ideal, and committed to it.
They wrote prophetic books in the American liberal tradition and endowed its ethical intelligence. The task of stating a new and undefined freedom was always implicit and often in the foreground of the writing of these nineteenth-century giants. As the author describes the situation, "the free man had to decide in what sense he was bound by nature or could master it; in what sense he was committed to his society and could reconcile his freedom with it." These classic writers devoted their work to examining this dialectic of values: Kaplan sees their complex and polarized democratic consciousness as seminal in the imaginative tradition they generated. What is unique in that tradition of values is the rivalry of criticism with affirmations of faith: "the highly original ethical trait involved here is based on the capacity of a political society to use its negations against itself and survive." The author suggests that in our own time moral judgments are more likely to be the province of activist politics than literature. His new introduction relates the theme of the book to cultural and political developments in the American experience of modernity and adds a discussion of Wallace Stevens and William Carlos Williams to the figures treated in the original edition. Since tendencies to develop ideological and idiosyncratic responses to extrinsic events have grown stronger over time, it is more important than ever for scholars and students alike to recover a "moral imagination"--the force that gave rise to the great literary works of the nineteenth century. To describe that force is Harold Kaplan's goal in Democratic Humanism and American literature. Meanwhile a broader and more formidable conservative movement was taking place of which T.S. Eliot was the most influential representative. Believing in the Christian
doctrine of original sin, he agreed with Henry Adams regarding the Catholic and the authoritarian society of the Middle Ages as the high point of western civilization. He was of the opinion that not all the hopes of the humanity can be placed on institutions like the Catholic Church as Babbit’s humanism does. Humanism neither is an alternative nor is ancillary to religion. He could not agree with Foester’s enjoining the virtue of humility with religion: “My objection is not humanism; but to Mr. Forester for not being humanistic enough; and for playing the games of philosophy and theology without knowing the rules (Kumar, Arjun, ibid, 12).” Eliot’s humanism concerned less with reason than commonsense, which is directed against fanaticism. Unlike Babbit, Eliot thinks that humanism without religion is impossible. In this age of Commercialism, Colonialism, and Imperialism, there is a constant uprooting of love, justice, humanity, tolerance, truth, beauty and all other values of culture and civilization. Eliot felt the necessity of a fresh code of conduct for ourselves based on tolerance, mutual trust and understanding. Present day humanism reaffirms the spirit of cosmopolitanism of international friendship and goodwill. It has emerged as a profound philosophy of humankind: “Humanism believes in the beauty of love and the love of beauty. It exults in the pure magnificence of external Nature. All the many-sided possibilities for good in human living... the humanist would weave into a sustained pattern of happiness under the guidance of reason (Corliss, L, 1962, cited, ibid, 15).” Starting in 1915, Van Wyck Brooks (1886-1963) opened a period of self-criticism in which writers looked at what was wrong with the nation and its literature. This resulted into a kind of ‘new realism’ that lasted up to
1950's. He provided the American writers with usable past i.e. he reviewed and recognized the history of American literature. Around 1913, the new critics—Brooks, Mencken and Hanna Larson began celebrating the death of Puritanism. Larson wrote in 1913: "American fiction was so moral to be immoral, because it had no place for truth."

There was a 'double standard' in both private and public life. People were talking in one way while acting completely in a different way. Edith Wharton (1862-1937) in her direct style could describe a whole way of life by describing a few details. In "The House of Mirth" (1905) Lily Bart looks down from a stairway into the main hall of a large house: "the great central lantern overhead shed a brightness on the women's hair and struck sparks from their jewels as they moved." She catches the personality of one of her upper class characters: "She had a way of looking at you that made you feel as if there was something wrong with your hat." Undine Spragg, the heroine of "The Custom of The Country" (1913) is quite about her sexual desires. Wharton is attacking here the Victorian world of her own youth. Even the slightest suggestion of sexuality had to be hidden. The upper classes claimed to be highly moral but their action towards woman and business was quite immoral. Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945), the greatest of the American naturalist writers did not attack the nation's puritanical moral code, he simply ignored it. Ellen Glasgow (1874-1945) was a rebel against the old tradition of the south. The society of her male characters
humiliates women and keeps them in ignorance. Like their husbands, the wives in that society are "capable of dying for an idea but not of thinking of one." Edgar Lee Master (1869-1950) began the "Revolt from the Village" movement. In each of his 243 poems in "Spoon River Anthology", a dead person from the towns of Spoon River speaks from the grave. Here is a wide variety of social types: upper class women, prostitutes, Christians, teachers, scientists, and shy people. The poet goes on to attacks the "narrow and cruel" Puritanism of small town America:

"What is the use of knowing the evil of the world?

............... I could never make you see

That no one knows what is good

Who knows not what is evil;

And no one knows what is true

Who knows not what is false."

Sherwood Anderson (1876–1941) brought the technique of modernism to American fiction. William Faulkner called Anderson "the father of my generation of writers" and Thomas Wolfe said, "the only man in America who ever taught me anything". His "Winesburg Ohio" (1919) shows the lonely souls, cut off from other people and cannot communicate what is in their hearts. In his autobiography "A story teller's Story (1924), Anderson explains his technique: "I have come to think that the true history of life is a history of moments. It is only at rare moments that we live." Eventually, the "Revolt from the village" became a revolt against the new commercial culture of post-war America. Sinclair Lewis (1885-
1951)' purpose was satire and sometimes pure comedy in his most exciting work "Main Street (1920)". Lewi's main subjects are American culture: "Our comfortable tradition and sure faith". His method is a kind of 'photographic realism' and the scenes are usually "catalogues" of details. His famous novel "Babbit (1922)" is the story of the perfect conformist, a man who tries to act the same way everybody does. Babbitt is a typical small businessman for whom machines are "symbols of truth and beauty." He (Babbitt) believes in "pep, punch, Vigour, enterprise, Red Blood, He-Man, Fair women, Americanism and pointing with pride." H.L. Mencken (1880-1956), America's most powerful social and literary critic heated the middle class whom he called the 'booboisie'. The 1920's were decade of a 'lost generation' of American writers when the nation's best minds were moving away to foreign countries. Those who stayed in the country were deeply disappointed with their society that did not learn to value its artists and intellectuals. This made them lonely and angry. 'Aloneness' is common theme in poetry of Robert Frost (1874-1963) who believed that a good poem 'begins in delight and ends in wisdom.' His philosophy has much in common with Emerson's idea of 'self-reliance'. "The Road not Taken (1916)" shows how individuals are forced to make choice in their lives. His language is 'unliterary' and he used it to exhibit the "lover's quarrel with this world." He is well known for his nature poetry having a surface smoothness and simplicity. His "Stopping by The Woods on a Snowy Evening (1923)" creates in the reader the feeling like reading a story with a deeper meaning. Carl Sandburg (1878-1967) used the free verse to treat many unpoetical subjects. He loved the everyday life of the common
people. Like Whitman he exclaims: “I am the people, the Mob!” Gertrude Stein (1874-1946) had her own war with civilization. T.S. Eliot (1888-1965) and Ezra Pound (1885-1972) were traditionalists who believed in the ‘historical sense’ and ‘impersonalism’ in literature. Eliot’s “The Waste Land (1920)” and Pound’s “Hugh Selvyn Mauberty (1920)” describe the spiritual emptiness of the world after World War I. Pound was a leader of the Imagist School of Poetry that believed that good poetry is based in images. Hilda Dolittle (1886-1961) and Amy Lowell (1874-1925) were two other important imagists of the period. Amy took quickly the leadership of the Imagist Movement away from Pound. Her most famous poem “Patterns (1915)” ends with her remembering of her lover, who died in the war:

“Fighting with the duke in Flanders,

In a pattern called a war.

Christ! What are patterns for?”

Marianne Moore (1887-1972) always used images that are “hard, clear, cold, exact and real.” She said that genuine poetry shows us “imaginary gardens with real toads in them.” Williams Carlos Williams (1883-1963) was influenced by the impersonal theory of T.S. Eliot. His poems have a warm feeling for real people and real life, which makes his poetry more interesting to the average reader. Until the new critical revolution signaled by “Understanding Poetry” and
"Theory of Literature", the ethical Neo-Humanism of Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More—through disciples like Sherman, Norman Foerster and many others at universities had much success in shaping American literary education along Arnoldian lines: "In our own century the American movement of 1910-33 known as the New Humanism, under the leadership of Irving Babbit and Paul Elmer More, argued strongly for a return to primarily humanistic education, and for very conservative view of moral, political, and literary values that is grounded mainly on classical literature (Irving Babbit Literature and the American College, 1908, and Norman forester, ed. Humanism and America, 1930)." But in the present age of proliferating demands for specialists in the sciences, technology, and the practical arts, the broad humanistic base for a general education has been greatly eroded. In most colleges the earlier humanistic view of education survives mainly in the requirement that all students in the liberal arts must take at least six hours in the group called the humanities, which comprises literature, philosophy, music, languages, and sometimes history (Abrams, 2001, 118)

The term humanism is subject to a wide variety of application—humanism as classicism, as referring to modern concept of the humanities, and as human-centeredness. The notion of Renaissance humanism was that it is simply a return to the classics, a revival and that St. Augustine, Alcuin and the scholars of 12th century charters are the humanists. This is a self-conscious view equally
applicable to the New Humanism, a movement in literary criticism in the early 20th century. The term also refers to the non-scientific scholarly disciplines: language, literature, rhetoric, philosophy, art, history and so on. Thus, it is customary to refer to the scholars in these fields as humanists and to their activities as humanistic. The term humanism also applied to modern doctrines and techniques based on the centrality of human experience. The pragmatic of humanism of Ferdinand C.S. Schiller, the Christian humanism of Jacques Maritain and the secular humanism show their anthropocentric emphasis despite their differences: “Humanism is a highly contentious term. As Barnaeur and Mahon point out, for example, ‘Christianity’, the critique of Christianity, science, anti-science, Marxism, existentialism, personalism, National socialism, and Stalinism have each won the label “humanism” for a time’ (Bemauer & Mahon 1994, 141-2). These various humanisms are, however, unified in their belief that underlying the diversity of human experience it is possible, first, to discern a universal and given human nature, and secondly, to find it revealed in the common language of rationality. In defence of this belief, Marxist exponents of humanistic principles, such as Noam Chomsky, Fredric Jameson and Jurgen Habermas have argued that humanism holds out the possibility of a rational and universal consensus between responsible individuals with regard to the conceptualization of a humane, progressive and just social order. In contrast, poststructuralist and postmodernist anti-humanists maintain that any universal or normative postulation of rational unanimity is totalitarian and hostile to the challenge of otherness and difference (Gandhi, L., 2004, 27).”
III.IV. Renaissance Humanism in India

Renaissance humanism in India came through the contact with English literature and European culture from the early part of the 19th century. It gave a new course to the literature of modern Indian literature that first began in Bengali literature. By the middle of the 19th century Bengali writers had already adopted the European method of literary approach in drama, novel, short story and essay and the Bengali prose style became established during the sixties of the century. An astonishing flowering of literature began to shape the mind of “intelligensia” first in Bengali and then in other Indian languages. India became linked up with modern world in physical science, in literature and the Humanities and the human Sciences also: “Rabindranath Tagore, awarded the Noble prize for literature in 1913, became the symbol of this new spirit in Indian literature, as Jagadish Chandra Bose became in science. Our intimate contact with English literature has been of greatest value in modernizing the mind of India and in Developing modern Indian literature (Chatterjee, S.K., 1963,106).” Bengali literature immensely influenced other Indian literatures through its own contact with the cultural Renaissance of the west and the great heritage of Sanskrit literature. Sanskrit has become for India her “symbol of seniority among people of the world.” The attitude of the best-thought leaders in India contributed to and in great deal for India’s modern creative literature combining the best in both Indian and European civilization that resulted in a higher form of humanism: “to remain firm, so far as India is concerned, in the Weltanschauung created by her philosophers, poets and men of letters, and at the same time to receive of the best,
not only from the intellectual and the scientific but also from the artistic and the spiritual achievements of Europe and America: and to hold up the mirror to the nations the ideals of India as something which the thinking part of the world cannot ignore: India's sense of an Ultimate Reality behind life, and her conviction that this Reality in its essential nature cannot be dogmatized in a hide-bound theological system, her acknowledgement of sorrow and suffering, which it is the avowed duty of philosophy to try to remove, her faith in the freedom of mind and thought, and her repugnance to the use of force or fraud to bring about conformity to any set ideology, her conviction that different religious experiences are true and great and useful as different paths to the Ultimate Truth, her insistence upon the diversity of paths in the quest, whether of knowledge or faith, or work, or self-discipline, as being all for the same goal, her practical work of bringing together peoples of various degrees of progress into one composite, integrated whole, her sense of the sacredness of all life, and in need for an all-embracing Mercy and an active Good-doing, all these leading to a spirit of universalism and to a great Tolerance in the domain of thought and action, from the passive spirit of Non-injury (Ahimsa), to the active spirit of pity and love (Karuna), and of good-doing (Maitri) to all living creatures (Chatterjee, S.K, 1963, 107)."
and permanent human reality. But possessing a text and understanding of it were not considered to be enough, an analytic ability and a questioning attitude were necessary as a pre-requisite to enter into the council of the great holding secrets and the knowledge of which could transform life from a chaotic miscellany into a crucially heroic experience. Classical thought offered insight into the heart of things, and suggested method by which human reality could be transformed from an accident of history into an artifact of will. Antiquity was rich in examples-actual or poetic, of epic action, victorious eloquence, and applied understanding. Classical rhetoric could implement enlightened policy, which classical poetics could carry into the very souls of men. Humanists associated classicism with the future, which seems paradoxical to modern mind but a fact as real as human life itself. "There are vast difference between the literary humanism of sixteenth century Florence and the scientific humanism of eighteenth century Europe. Nevertheless, both types of humanism are unanimous in their anthropocentricism or categorical valorization of the human subject. Man, as Diderot observes in the mood of his Renaissance predecessor Petrarch, 'is the single place from which we must begin and to which we must refer everything... It is the presence of man which makes the existence of being meaningful' (cited in Gay 1977, p. 162) Correspondingly, the status of human-ness is intimately bound up with question of knowledge. Both thinkers presuppose a symbolic and reciprocal relationship between what man is (and I use man advisedly) and what man knows- with one crucial difference of emphasis. Renaissance inheritors insist that man is made human by the things he knows, that are by the curricular content of his knowledge
and education. Accordingly, it is predominantly concerned with the role and function of pedagogy. In contrast, enlightenment humanism and its legatees take ‘humanity’ to be a function of the way in which man knows things. Its concern, accordingly, is with the structure of epistemology or the basis and validity of knowledge. The enlightenment, as Charles Taylor writes, generates ‘an epistemological revolution with anthropological consequences’ (Taylor 1975, p. 5). It changes the way in which we have come to know the notion of self. It furnishes, in other words, the modern understanding of subjectivity (Gandhi, L., 2004, 29).”

Early humanists shared a realism that rejected traditional assumptions and aimed at the objective analysis of perceived experience. Modern social science not as an academic discipline but as a practical instrument of social self-inquiry owes much to humanism for its rise. Reading history avidly, teaching it to their young students and more importantly writing it themselves were the practices of the humanists. They were confident that proper historical method would enhance their grasp of human reality. Leon Battista Alberti’s dictum is that an essential form of wisdom could be found only “at marketplace, in the theatre and in people’s homes.” Francisco Guicciardini observes: “I, for my part, know no greater pleasure than listening to an old man of uncommon prudence speaking of public and political matters that he has not learnt from books of philosophers but from experience and action, for the later are the only genuine method of learning
anything." Renaissance realism also examines human uncertainty, folly and immorality. Critical treatment of society from a humanistic perspective was produced by Erasmus, More, Castiglion, Rabelais and Montaine. But typical of humanism that this moral criticism did not postulate, conversely, an ideal of absolute purity. The humanists asserted the dignity of normal earthly activities and endorsed the pursuit of fame and acquisition of wealth. They emphasized on a mature and healthy balance between mind and body and that the passions should become objects of systematic investigation. The humanists questioned the Roman Catholic Church not as a theological structure but as a political institution neither radical nor destructive. Humanism did not aim to remake humanity but to reform social order through an understanding of something and inalienably human. Humanistic realism made a comprehensively critical attitude, constituted a manifesto of independence from all preoccupations and all inherited programmes. It was cognate with a new specificity, the precise details of perceived phenomena that took hold across the arts and the literary and historical disciplines and would have profound effects on the rise of modern science. The testament to this development was the increasing prominence of mathematics as an artistic principle and academic discipline. Humanism was characterized by a sense of personal autonomy. The humanists thought that a free intelligence and intellectual virtue could analyse experience and go into the conquering of fortune. The idea of the dignity of man raised parallel to individualism that betrayed the emphasis of earlier humanists on balance and moderation. The humanists emphasized on virtuous actions as the goal of learning. The just and beneficent action was the
purpose of humanistic education that believes: "happiness cannot be gained without works and just and righteous deeds . . . . . . The best works are those that benefit many people (Alberti, Dellafamiglia, OnFamily, Humanism, Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol.20, 667)."