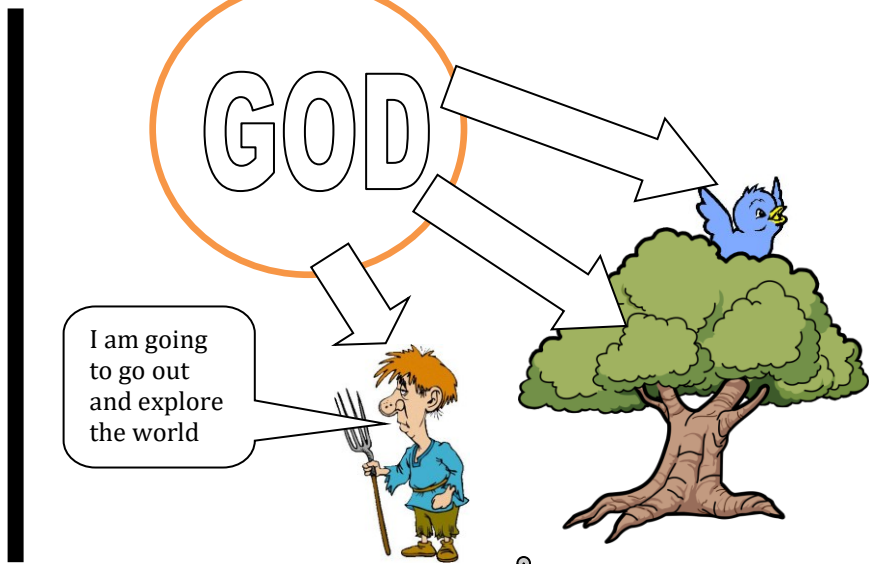


# A Crash Course in Humanism and its Effects

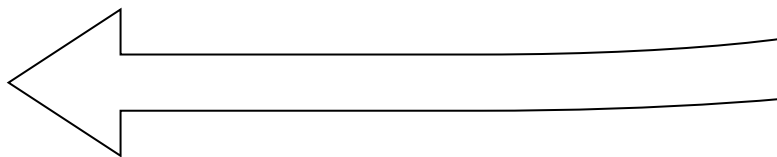


Pre-Humanism



Post-Humanism

- ❖ Humanism emerges in the 1400s, Renaissance-Europe. Humanism involved the study of the liberal arts, including history, literature and moral philosophy.
- ❖ IMPORTANT: Humanists had nothing to do with the secular and often anti-religious interests of movements that go under the name humanism today: to the contrary, Renaissance humanists were deeply committed to Christianity.



- ❖ By studying Greek, Roman, Islamic and other classical literature, as well as original translations of books like the Christian bible, Europeans were “returning to the sources.” While they did this, scholars tried to harmonize ancient histories with Christian beliefs.
  - Islam had a huge influence on the Renaissance. *Studies in Islamic Civilization: The Muslim Contribution to the Renaissance* explains.

Islam formed a unique bridge between the civilizations of the East and the West. Muslim scholars rescued knowledge that would have been lost for centuries, and brought something new to light each time . . .

. . . . Muslims borrowed from preceding cultures, as did all non-Muslim civilizations, then made their own contributions and created a unique civilization. In turn, other civilizations, especially the nascent civilization of Europe, borrowed ideas and materials from the Islamic civilization. Islam produced another historical continuation by supplementing the development of Judaism and Christianity, and provided the foundation of the next dominant civilization: the West.<sup>1</sup>

The great importance of classical Arabic, the linguistic basis of Islam and its civilization, needs more emphasis than it has received in the West. During Europe's Middle Ages, Arabic dominated the Muslim world and was present in Europe. It was used in some European universities until Latin replaced it. The dictionary and basics of Arabic grammar also served as a resource for Jewish philology. Almost from its inception, the Muslim community considered the ability to read as one of its major needs, and established schools of all kinds, while in Europe literacy was a monopoly of the clergy. This was a unique society with widespread focus on literacy. Muslim scholars in the early centuries of Islam strongly believed that diligence, knowledge, and piety improved life on earth and in the Hereafter. Learning was emphasized in the Qur'an and by the teachings and practices of the Prophet Muhammad and his immediate Successors.<sup>2</sup>

- ❖ At the same time came the advent of the mechanical printing press – allowing for the mass production of literature.
- ❖ To have knowledge (previously almost exclusively a domain of the religious orders) became fashionable. Europeans began exploring the world around them – in pre-humanist Europe the most honourable calling was that of monks and nuns who withdrew from the world and dedicated their lives to prayer, contemplation, and the glorification of God. Renaissance humanists argued that it was perfectly honourable for Christians to enter into marriage, business relationships, and public affairs. Humanists were active participants in their communities.
- ❖ Leads to applications of Rationalism, Science, Philosophy and subject-specific study.

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmed Essa with Othman Ali, *Studies in Islamic Civilization: The Muslim Contribution to the Renaissance*, (International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2012), 7-8.

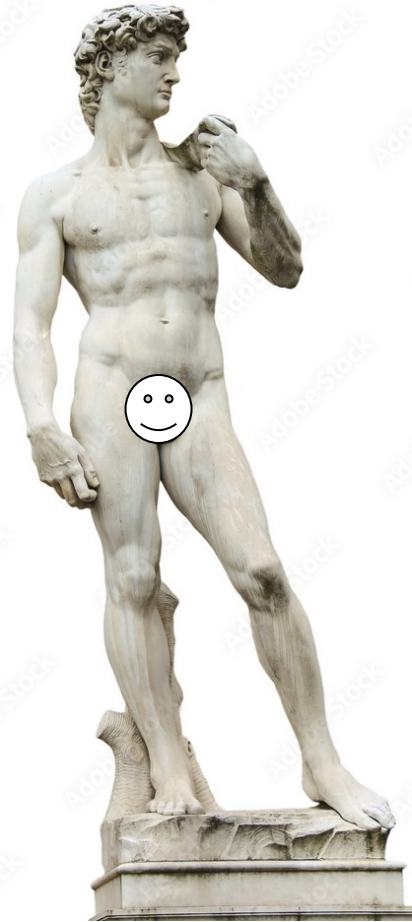
<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 10-11.

Humanism in Art:

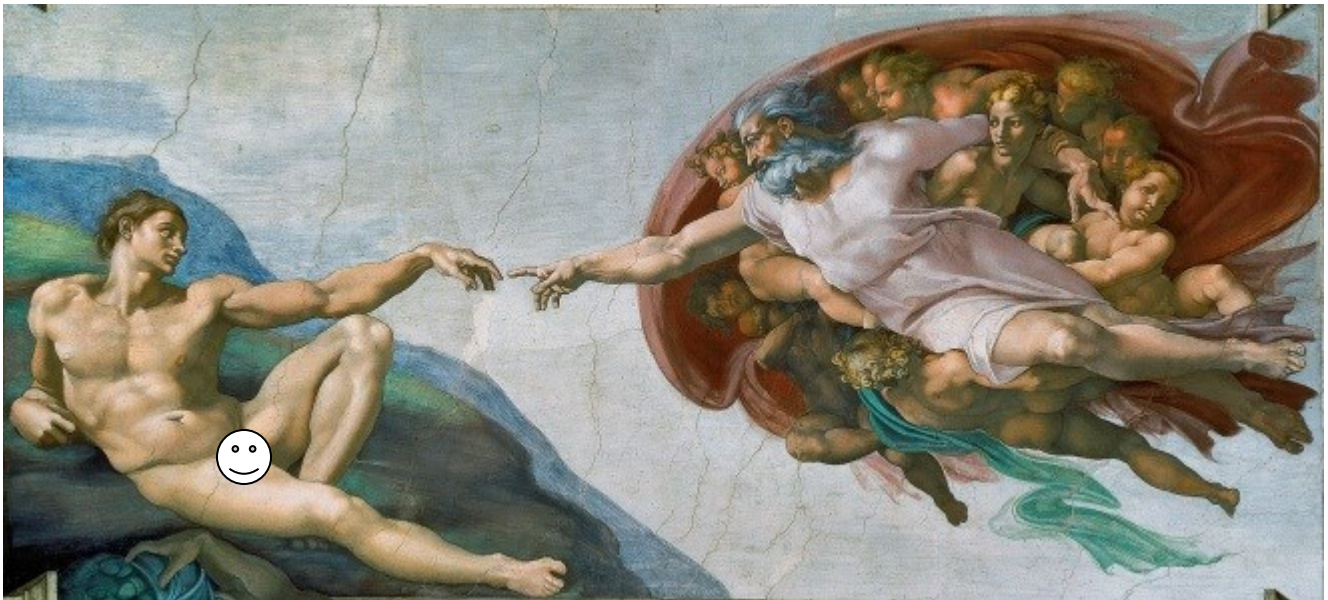


Donatello's David

VS.

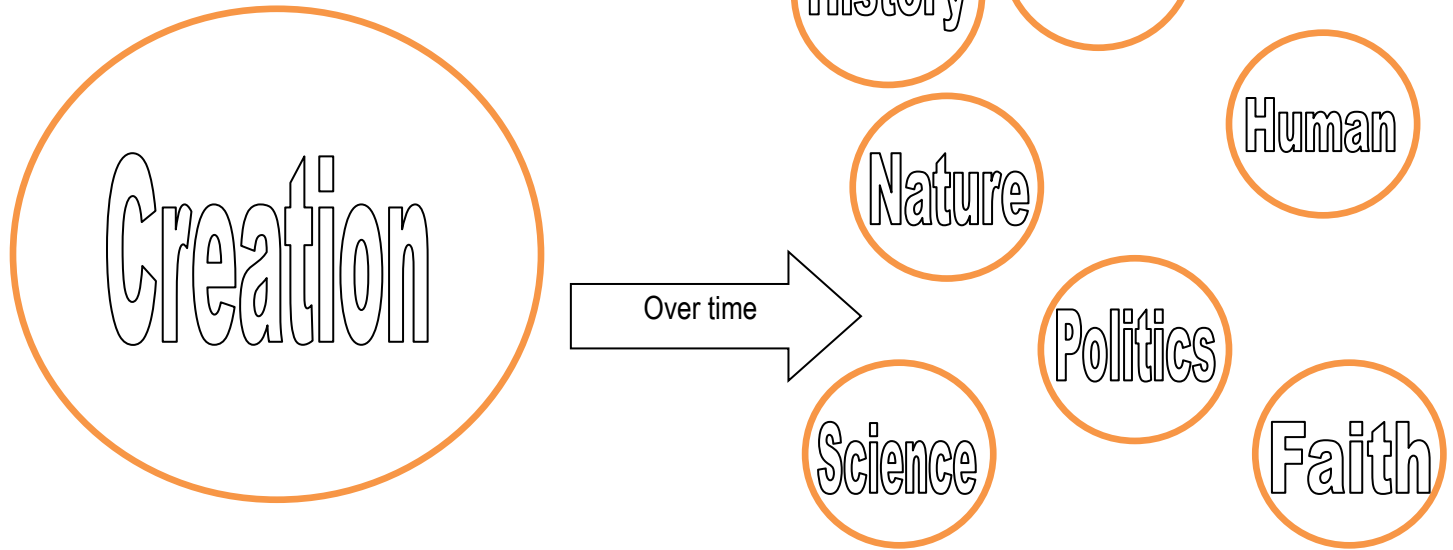


Michelangelo's David



Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam*

Humanism & Education (really boiled down):



❖ This exploration of the world had a dramatic impact on the course of European development.

### 1. The Reformation & Religious Crises

### 2. The rise of the nation-state & Absolutism (Example: France under Louis XIV)

