Savonarolan Simplicity in Botticelli’s Late Work

By the end of the 15th century, the seed of the Renaissance had sprouted thrivingly on the ground of Florence. During later Quattrocento, Sandro Botticelli came to the front stage as a brilliant master, and he became a crucial part of the force that pushed Early Renaissance to the High. Botticelli stayed active for more than two decades, but the amount of his works had dropped from the 1490s until his death in 1510. Savonarola, a Dominican friar who preached in Florence for more than ten years, was responsible for this decline in number. What’s more, Botticelli’s painting style changed significantly under the influence of Savonarola: He abandoned the ornamental beauty that he was famous for, and focused more on simplicity and spirituality instead.

Born in 1445, Botticelli was the son of a tanner. His intellect was revealed when he was a schoolboy. After Botticelli left school, he was first trained as a goldsmith. Several years later, the family started a business and Botticelli was allowed to become an assistant of Fra Filippo Lippi, from whom he learned the graceful and decorative style of painting. Since the Medici family was an important patron of Lippi’s work, Botticelli might have been introduced to the Medici’s by him. After spending a few years in Lippi’s workshop, Botticelli left his master and started his own studio, and most of his works at
this time were either portraits or religious paintings.

In 1481, Botticelli was called by the Pope to fresco the Sistine Chapel with other Florentine masters, and he stayed in Rome for less than a year. When he returned to Florence, the most active period of his career arrived. He created a large amount of works in the 1480s, including both religious paintings and secular paintings. Among these works, *Primavera* and *Birth of Venus* are the two that gave him the highest fame, and they represent of his mature style as an independent master. Botticelli did not intend to do either three-dimensional illusion or convincing anatomy. Rather, he focused on creating pure visual pleasure for the spectators. Idealized bodies are revealed under the translucent drapery and perfect oval faces are shown with limpid eyes, which reflect light gleamingly. The figures are either balanced in contrapposto as in Ancient Roman statues or dancing gracefully. Their garments are decorated with rich textiles and delicate floral patterns. The dream-like landscape is filled of colorful flowers and exotic trees. Everything is absolutely beautiful and pleasant. However, the sharp turning point appeared around 1490. The artist’s painting style experienced important changes largely due to the arrival of a prominent preacher, Savonarola.

Fra Girolamo Savonarola was born in 1452 in a Northern Italian city called Ferrara. In his early 20s he entered the Dominican Order, a Christian order of the intellectuals and scholars founded by Saint Dominique. Since then, he had devoted himself to preaching and charity with great passion. The friar was first sent to Florence in 1482, but no one actually paid attention to his preaching. Yet when Savonarola came back to Florence for
the second time, he was able to stir up radical reforms in both religion and patronage of art. Simone, Botticelli’s brother, was a zealous follower of Savonarola, and Botticelli was unavoidably influenced by the friar. Savonarola rejected the extravagant life style, the popularity of Paganism, and ornamental arts, so he asked people to burn the materials that were associated with vanity. Not surprisingly, Botticelli destroyed many of his works in this religious movement.

After the Medici Family was expelled from Florence in 1494, Savonarola became even more powerfully and his religious ideas prevailed in the city. After Savonarolan beliefs dominated Florence for years, the Florentines eventually got tired of him. The Pope excommunicated Savonarola in 1497, and he was executed in Florence the year after it. Although Savonarola’s era came to the end, his impact on Botticelli’s work lasted after his death.

**LAST COMMUNION OF SAINT JEROME**

Dominican Order has an emphasis on scholasticism. Friars were trained to defeat heresy through preaching and debating. They were required to study theology, logics, and philosophy at studium led by professors. In 1482, Savonarola arrived in Florence as the lector of San Marco, and the church was under the control of the Medici at the time. He preached in this very same way that he was trained, but his audiences were not fond of it at all. Weinstein gives two reasons that account for his failure in catching people’s attention: “His first audiences in Florence were put off by his ‘foreign’, that is Ferrarese, speech and his gravelly voice. Besides, they—and increasingly himself—were impatient
with the pedantic scholastic style of preaching in which he ha been trained, and the
systematic propounding of the various senses—literal, moral, allegorical, and so on—in
turn” (Weinstein 34). The disciplinary style of Dominican preaching was not expressive
enough for Savonarola to deliver his passion. According to Weinstein, the friar then left
Florence for the Bologna studium to pursue a master degree in sacred theology
(Weinstein 75). After he finished his studies, the friar returned to San Marco in the early
summer of 1490. This time, he stood out to oppose the Medici ruling over Florence.

Savonarola now discarded the conventional way of preaching. Instead, he invented a
brand new approach by combining his speech with image illustration. Burke explains
why this preaching style is more effective:

“With an image it is possible for the devotee to lift his or her eyes to consider
invisible things, which are too vast to comprehend without this starting point.
Also, through describing this image and placing it in the mind's eyes of his reader
or listener, the message of his sermon will be consistently remembered and
pondered”. (Burke 170)

In this way, his preaching became very impressive. Not only scholars and elites
understood complicated texts and theories, but the uneducated could also do so.

In Savonarola’s sermons, death was mentioned frequently as an important topic. He
encouraged the Florentines to think of death all the time, so that they could die well. He
mentioned that visiting tombs and dying people could help people prepare for the
inevitable ending. According to Burke, Savonarola also suggested people to have three
images as the reminder of death. The first one should show the Paradise above and the Hell below, the second one should show a man lying on his deathbed, and the third one a man at the moment of death. (Burke 184) Woodcuts were made to illustrate the friar’s words. Botticelli’s *Last Communion of Saint Jerome* (Figure 1) is not a direct illustration, but it is clearly related to Savonarola’s preaching on dying well.

![Botticelli. Last Communion of Saint Jerome. 1494-1495. Tempera on panel. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.](image)

The painting was done for a wealthy wool merchant, who was also a follower of Savonarola. It depicts the last moment of St. Jerome’s life. The saint is a scholar who lived in the fourth and fifth century, and his greatest achievement is translating Old Testament to Latin from Hebrew. Lightbown tells the story of St. Jerome’s death, “They (his disciples) lay him on the ground and cover him with a linen cloth. After exhorting and consoling them, he gives them the kiss of peace, followed by instructions for his burial, and then asks them to bring him the body of Christ” (Lightbown 226). A priest in red robe is shown sending a piece of bread into the mouth of St. Jerome, who is kneeling
on the ground and supported by two brethren. After the communion, the saint sings the canticle of Simeon and he died serenely when the song ends.

The painting resonates with Savonarola’s “three-point plan” of dying well. The saint contemplates his death and always uses Jesus’ death to remind himself. When the time comes, he prays along with the people around him and confesses his sins in front of God. In this way, he will be accepted into the heaven. As Burke pointed out: “(The painting) would have acted as a permanent reminder of both texts, of the martyrdom that all beleaguered people can achieve through contemplation of suffering, and of the need to eschew all worldly distractions to concentrate on the salvation of one’s soul” (Burke 186). Both aspects are achieved by Botticelli’s prominent adoption of simplicity.

The scene takes place in a simple shed, as the one often appears in Nativity scenes despite the side windows. The front wall is removed, so that the spectators can witness it. The interior is wattled and only a bed and an altar appear as furniture. The figures are divided into two groups: the saint with the two brethren and the priest with two candle-holding boys. The two groups are facing each other in opposite direction, and the gap between the central figures leads to the wooden crucifix surrounded by palm leaves on the back wall, reminding viewers of Jesus’ sacrifice.

The drapery is austere and thick. Folds are casted by light and shadow, and only little pattern is used. Large fields of color are applied on drapery. The white cloth of St. Jerome and the brown garments of the brethren respond to the dressing of the two boys on the other side. The priest red cape matches the scarlet cardinal’s hat, which really
stands out in the dark background. Figures are not as weightless as in Botticelli’s earlier works; rather they are heavy and solid. However, some elements from his early style still exist here. The figures’ faces are graceful, calm, but very expressive. The piety of the saint and the respect of the priest are shown in profiles. The brethren are weeping with lowered head and downward cast eyes, while the two boys are more remote to this sacred moment.

**MYSTIC CRUCIFIXION**

The 1490s Florence is marked with troubled political and economic situation, but it also created the opportunity for Savonarola to obtain great power. In the late fall of 1493, the French army led by King Charles VIII marched towards Florence from the north. Piero de’ Medici went to negotiate with the king, but he failed unfortunately. Then it was reported that Piero turned to the French and he traded Florence with Charles for his own benefit. The Florentines were disappointed by the Medici, and their anxiety pushed them to Savonarola.

The friar preached in the Florence Cathedral. He told the public the way to save themselves was to build a Noah’s Ark with the belief in God. Weinstein describes the friar’s teaching, “They (the Florentines) must do penance, pray, humble themselves before God and do justice. They must fight the devil by giving up the false doctrines of the astrologers, poets, and philosophers and by resisting his libidinous temptations” (Weinstein 112). Only God could help them survive the Flood, in this case, the French invasion. The “Flood” did reach Florence, but Charles decided not to invade the city.
because of the Florentines’ strong opposition. The Florentines regarded the peaceful departure of the French as the mercy of God and they attributed the miracle to Savonarola.

![Botticelli, Mystic Crucifixion, 1497. Tempera and oil on canvas. The Harvard Art Museum, MA](image)

During this time period, the economy of Florence was not prosperous either: wage rates were low but unemployment was high. After he was relieved of the French army’s threat, Savonarola tried to relieve the sufferings that the Florentines had to experience from the depressed economy. Weinstein notes that Savonarola suggested reducing taxes as well as using the public money to support the poor. The friar also wanted to open workshops so that the poor could earn money.

The unsuccessful invasion of the French and his own intention of pull the Florentine economy out of depression gave Savonarola both religious authority and political power. He became influential in the Florentine society, and the number of his followers, called the *piagnone*, was increasing rapidly. Vasari, the 16th century painter and art historian
claimed that Savonarola actually became a piagnone. Lightbown points out, “Some modern scholars reject the story, arguing that Vasari confused Sandro with his brother Simone, who without doubt was an obstinate piagnone” (Lightbown 242). People tend to overemphasize the importance of the name piagnone, as Weinstein notes, “the name stuck—the label of scorn to his critics, a badge of pride to his devotes” (Weinstein 78).

Whether Botticelli was a piagnone or not does not matter much, what more important is that changes in his painting style clearly draw on the influence of Savonarola’s social activities.

Botticelli’s Mystic Crucifixion (figure 2) is likely inspired by the departure of the French army. In this image, Jesus is crucified on a cross set outside of Florence. Buildings in the background cityscape are identifiable Florentine architectures. The work is painted very loosely. Both figures and objects are in very simple forms, and the elegancy and sophistication often seen in Botticelli’s earlier works have nearly disappeared. A white loincloth covers Jesus’ lower body. The image is violent: blood comes out from his head, wounds, and side and drips all over the place, highlighting his suffering. His head is lowered while a triumphant smile emerging on his face.

The figures are very flat, since neither the anatomy nor the posture is convincing. The woman embracing the foot of the cross in a different posture is Mary Magdalene. Lightbown points out that she symbolizes penitent Florence, who will be saved in Jesus’s blood. The two animals associate with violence, avarice, and fraud comes out from her dress because she repents of her sins. (Lightbown 244) The angel catches the
lion-like animal and is about to slay it with the sword lifted with his right hand. The painting carries the religious message that God will remove all the threatening evil forces if people hold the belief in God and do penance. The figures are simply dressed, and the perfect oval faces are replaces with a more simplified shape, but still remains expressive. The mystical smile of Jesus, the intense gaze of Mary Magdalene, and the coldness of the angel are easy to catch.

The sky behind the cross is split into two sides: heavenly blue sky and dark clouds. Demons hiding in the clouds are throwing burning torches town to the earth. The city of Florence is standing below the blue sky in serene. Jesus is placed between the two, and he is keeping the demons' attack away with his own body. In the upper left corner, God the father sits in a mandorla. Angels are sent by the God to protect the city with crossed white shields, and it emphasizes salvation once more. The painting has the Savonarolan connotation that people can be saved through repenting to God and leading a simple life, because Jesus already sacrifice himself on the cross to bear our sins. The simplified way of presenting the scene encourages the viewers to focus on the spirituality and to think about the implicit religious meaning.

AGONY IN THE GARDEN

Many wealthy Florentines have long believed that commission artworks and purchasing chapels could ensure the acceptance into Heaven. Yet Savonarola strongly opposed wasting money on the production of arts that were lavishly decorative. According to Hall’s studying, Savonarola did not condemn luxury itself but the fact that
it creates “a diversion of needed resource” (Hall 497). The rich would spend money on a chapel, but they were not willing to use the money to help the poor. They could never enter Heaven by doing this, since they only honored themselves but not God. Nonetheless, Savonarola knew the importance of art as an effective teaching tool, and it was just a matter of how to use it wisely. “He called for a reordering of priorities and for a return to simplicity... In a plea that anticipates the Decrees of the Council of the Trent, Savonarola calls for painting in which nothing gratuitous is added which will distract from the religious content” (Hall 497). He regarded simplicity as the key to inner cultivation, for that it allowed people to stay away from worldly distraction and hence concentrate on the spiritual contemplation in obedience to God’s will.

Savonarola suggested that paintings should emphasize the spiritual quality instead of merely trying to make religious figures pleasing to the eyes. Hall introduces Savonarola’s view on beauty, “‘Creatures are beautiful in proportion to their participation in the nearness and beauty of God. And the body is more beautiful that houses a beautiful soul.’ Ideal beauty then could represent the spirituality of the Madonna and saints” (Hall 499). The artists at the time tried hard to create 3-D illusion on paper, and they tended to make the figures ideal while dressing them in wealthy fashion. Savonarola criticized the artists and their patrons for that the religious figures looked too worldly in their work. For Savonarola, “the spiritual dimension” is what separates God and saints from ordinary people, and the way to suggest the difference is to simplify both the body and the dressing of figures.
A woodcut illustration (Figure 3) of Savonarola’s sermon *Trattato dell’orazione* depicting the Agony in the Garden was published around 1495 to supplement his preaching on the significance of “mental prayer”. The Agony in the Garden is an event recorded in the Bible that takes place right after the Last Supper. Jesus has foreseen the betrayal of Judas, the denial of Peter, and his own coming death, so he falls in deep sorrow and anguish. Accompanied by Peter, John, and James, he then goes to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray to God the Father. He tells the three apostles to pray with him, but they eventually fall asleep. Jesus prays for three times in the Garden and professes his obedience to God’s will. When they leave the Garden, the multitude led by the high priest come to arrest him with the identifying kiss of Judas.

As Lightbown points out, the subject became popular for small devotional paintings
in the later fifteenth century Florence because it could evoke pious meditation on Christ’s suffering, which fits the religious climate at the time. (Lightbown 254) Small in scale, Botticelli’s *Agony in the Garden* (Figure 4) is his only work that went outside of Italy during his lifetime. The painting was used at the Spanish Royal Chapel to decorate the shutter of a reliquary commission by Queen Isabella the Catholic. (Carratù 158) It is likely that Botticelli was inspired by the illustrative woodcut when he painted it, since the two works share many similar features: in both image Jesus is put at the upper half and the three apostles occupy the space under him. Also, postures of figures and the depiction of the garden in the two are very alike.

Trying to create a sense of spirituality, Botticelli paints the figures in a simplified manner. Physicality and modeling of human body are not what he pays much attention to. The three apostles lie casually across the bottom of the image, and it seems that they are very distant from the sacred event that is going on above them. Peter, who sleeps on the left, is frowning in his dream, and he might be thinking about Jesus’ foretelling of his denial. Carratù mentions that the figure of Peter resembles Joseph, Jesus’ earthly father, who is always shown as sleeping and marginalized. Compared to Peter, John and James are sleeping more carelessly, even though John is facing upward to Jesus, who is kneeling right above him. Jesus is dressed in red, which is associated with the blood he is going to sacrifice for human salvation. He is the only one who is shown with a halo, and the halo is transparent and foreshortened. An angel is flying to him in a slightly awkward pose. According to the Bible, an angel is sent to comfort Jesus. However, the
angel here is “forcing the cup on him” while his arms are crossed in acceptance (Carratù 158). The chalice reminds the viewers of Jesus’s sacrifice again and connects the moment with Eucharist. The faces of both Jesus and the angel are shown in profile, which highlights the confrontation and creates a dramatic effect. In addition, all the faces are simplified and nearly flattened, unlike the beautiful faces Botticelli has done before. The soft and flowing quality of drapery often appears in Botticelli’s earlier works has also been taken away: the folds are shown more roughly and rigidly, and round bodies are not revealed under the garment. Although the luminous surface of the clothing does not differ much from the early style, he is no longer interested in creating three-dimensional illusion by playing with light shadow.

In this image, the setting is almost as dominant as the figures, which is rarely seen in his earlier paintings. Jesus is lifted on the Mount of Olives, and the fences enclosing the garden further separate the apostles from Jesus and the angel. Beneath the mount there is a sarcophagus within a tomb-like cave, and the sarcophagus is again a reminder of Jesus’s suffering and sacrifice. As the symbol of resurrection, sprouting olive trees are placed flanking the opening of the cave and also to the right of the mount. Jesus’ red robe really stands out because the vegetation makes green the base hue of the background. The detailed way that Botticelli depicts the vegetation remains unchanged, but he becomes less concerned with perspective. The size of trees and bushes does not change in response to the deepening of space.

Simple, austere, and contemplative, Botticelli’s *Agony in the Garden* definitely meets
Savonarola’s expectation as a good artwork.

*Mystic Nativity*

Savonarola was executed at the Piazza della Signoria on May 23, 1498 as a heretic. According to Lightbown, Doffo Spini, “one of the friar’s most violent enemies and one of the seventeen examiners appointed to try him after his arrest”, felt deeply guilty after Savonarola’s death. He talked to Botticelli for several times and confessed that they never found any sin in him, but they still made him die shamefully because they were afraid of that the public would kill them if the friar did not die (Lightbown 247). When he knew the truth behind Savonarola’s death, Botticelli was upset, and he had more respect toward Savonarola. Not under any commission, Botticelli did the apocalyptic painting *Mystic Nativity* (Figure 5) for himself or as a gift (Hatfield 89). Drawing on the influence of Savonarola’s life and death, this work is the most important late Botticelli.

The inscription written in Greek at the top of the painting is critical to understand work. Written in Greek, it says: “The picture I, Alessandro, painted at the end of the year 1500, in the troubles of Italy, in the half-time after the time, during the fulfillment of the eleventh of John, in the second woe of the Apocalypse, in the loosing of the devil for three and a half year. Afterward he shall be chained according to the twelfth and we shall see him as in this picture” (Lightbown 251). Hatfield interprets the passage as an implication of the coming Millennium. (Hatfield 106) Millennium is mentioned in the Bible as the one-thousand-year period when Satan is chained by the angel and kept in the bottomless pit. When the thousand years is fulfilled, he must be loosed for a short
time and he will be chained again. In the thousand years, the faithful could live and reign with Christ. Deception will pervade during the time when the chain is loosened.

The troubled social and economic situation at the end of the fifteenth century made Savonarola believe that corruption and deception were invading, and then he prophesied the coming new era. Weinstein talks about the friar's early prophetic vision in 1492: “The Fifth Age is approaching... This is the time of the terrible beast (Job 40:15), of false saints and false religion, of the persecution of truth speaking preachers... Still, the Church will be renewed, and in the next age the infidel will convert to Christ. When this will happen he cannot say, nor can he say how much time will pass between the conversion and the next era, when Anti-Christ appears” (Weinstein 88). Savonarola asserted that devils would control the world in the coming age, but he also believed that God would defeat them and lead the Church into renewal. Yet he was not clear about how long the devil’s age would last: it could be short as several years or long for centuries.

Figure 5. Botticelli. *Mystic Nativity*. 1501. Tempera on Canvas. The National Gallery, London.
The *Mystic Nativity* (Figure 5) was painted as a celebration for the upcoming renewal of the Church. In her article, Kroegel argues that Botticelli’s *Mystic Nativity* was definitely influenced by the friar’s belief: “The work more than any other reflects a now unconditional acceptance of the apocalyptic prophesies for which the friar had paid with his life, and in its cryptic character nevertheless becomes a manifesto of the anguished climate in which Florence and Italy faced the century” (Kroegel 67). Although it is a very refined work, the painting shows Savonarola simplicity strongly.

In the center of the image, the kneeling Virgin is adoring the Child under the shed in front of a cave. The Child is very infantile, shown by the way he is always depicted in Botticelli’s work. His right hand is holding a bunch of grapes while the left is stuffing the grape into his mouth. The Child’s face is shown in profile, which echoes the Virgin’s sorrowful face interactively. The white cloth along with the tomb-like cave reminds the viewers of Christ’s death. In his preaching of 1496, Savonarola mentioned that the iconography of the Virgin should have a spiritual dimension instead of lavish exterior: “Do you imagine that the Virgin Mary would go about dresses as you painted her? I say to you that she was dressed like a poor girl, simply, and covered up so that you could hardly see her face.” (Hall 500) Here, the Virgin wears austere red and blue garments, which associate with blood and heaven respectively. According to Kroegel, the Virgin is less a woman and more and more Ecclesia. In this picture, she represents “the renewed Church” as well as the “bear of hope” (Kroegel 67). In the image, Mary is hieratically
larger than everyone else, and the Church representation therefore explains this monumental size.

Botticelli's old way of depicting figures seems to experience a return in this painting, Under the golden dome of the heaven, twelve dancing angels are dancing in circle. Each of them is holding olive branch coiled with scroll and a crown hanging at the end. The garments are in red, white, and brown alternatively. The drapery is flowing in the air, and the bodylines are revealed beneath the garments gracefully. The bodies of the angels are round and full, yet they still appeal to be weightless. The three angels holding a book on the roof, the two angels presenting the nativity scene, and the three angels embracing with men are done in the similar manner, as if they are also dancing.

Human figures are shown in a more earthly way. Their drapery is thicker and more solid, and only a few simple lines are used to suggest folds. Human figures are wearing olive wreaths, and again olive appears several times as a symbol of mercy and peace. Lacking in the beauty and tightness of his earlier style, the faces of both angels and men are simplified. Yet the faces still remain expressive. The figure in yellow to the left of the shed opens his mouth slightly in amaze, and the shepherd in green puts his hand on the head as if he cannot believe his eyes. Around the embracing angels and men, there are five devils that are sunk into the underground, which indicates the victory of Christ over Satan and the coming of renovation. Strong emotion emerges on the faces: joy of victory with the fatigue from fighting against the devil, and it deepens dramatic effect of the celebration.
The zigzag path makes the change from foreground to background less abrupt, and it leads the viewers’ eyes to the most important part of the scene smoothly. The land is cover with vegetation, which is done in detail. Here, Botticelli still keeps his old way of painting the vegetation over black background. Figures are placed in groups and groups are separated from one another by the landscape. The symmetrical composition of the picture suggests underlined order as well as the profound harmony, and the celebrative atmosphere is highlighted again.

Before the turning point came, Botticelli had been putting efforts in creating paintings with highly poetic quality. This attempt achieved the peak when he painted the mythological pictures at the beginning of the 1480s. In those paintings, gorgeous figures are put in dream-like settings. Enjoyment is the only concern and nothing else should be worried. Subtle details are well planned to elevate the sense of harmony and pleasure.

However, Savonarola’s impact wiped away most of the elements that the artist treasured at an early age. Almost everything visible was simplified, including human bodies, drapery, and environmental settings. Yet the invisible sides, in particular religious connotations and symbolic meanings, were deepened profoundly. The religious paintings done during Botticelli’s late years successfully met Savonarola’s standards for good artwork: the simplicity in these pictures allows the viewers to stay away from the distraction of visual pleasure and therefore they can explore more on the underlying religious significance as well as the spirituality of figures.
The evolution of the artist’s style has remained controversial ever since the beginning. Many people agree that it is a total reverse of his skills, and Hall in particular asserts that this change in style under the influence of the friar is disappointing: “I believe that the failure to find a form appropriate to the content—a form combing admonition with celebration—was both the problem that dogged Savonarola’s preaching and the reason for the failure of the art produced under his aegis” (Hall 503). Botticelli’s change in style is thought to be a failure because the aesthetic value of his later works slides down compared to his mythological and earlier religious paintings.

It is true that Botticelli’s splendid sense of beauty vanished as he tried to achieve a spiritual height following Savonarola’s teaching. Yet art is not all about visual pleasure. When an artist already masters the base skills and firmly develops his or her own style, exploring new ways is always a better approach to improve than sticking to a single style. Also, aging is a procession in which a person’s values and belief system change. As the artist grew older, he gradually figured out that it was pious spiritual cultivation that mattered the most, so he painted in a new style. It might fail to appeal to the viewers, but a spontaneous revealing of the true feeling, natural rather than artificial.

It is Savonarolan simplicity that makes Botticelli’s late paintings distinct from his other works. The friar’s fanatical beliefs cannot change art itself. Instead, they altered the way in which the artist connected their 2-D space on paper to the real world. For Botticelli, being able to create the breath-taking beauty was not the highest realm of art, but the ability of injecting spirits into the lifeless painted figures. If the Savonarola had
never came to Florence, Botticelli's art career would have gone into a much difference direction.
Works Cited


