
History And Characteristics Of Western Civilization

Western civilization is a period that Europe was experiencing tremendous changes in various aspects of life such as philosophy, individualism, capitalism, equality, appreciation of art, and scientific knowledge. Civilization of the west occurred over many centuries to become what it is today. Primarily, it forms the basis of much of our modern culture (Assmann, 2011). The current society is based on history that connects back to the period of the ancient Romans civilization. The Greeks and the Roman are credited to have immensely contributed to the roman civilization. The roman civilization is developed from a series of events, protestant reformation, enlightenment and the scientific revolution, renaissance, and first industrialization forms some of the major incidences of the roman civilization.

Protestant reformation took place in the year 1517, where martin Luther king wrote ninety five complaints to a church of Wattenberg, Germany. His move resulted to a protestant reformation; this was an anti-catholic revolution and one of the greatest religious reform movements that took place in Europe (Assmann, 2011). The movement disrespected the authority of the Catholic Church, many people resulted to formation of new protests Christianity sects. Nonetheless, the movement also resulted to social, political, and intellectual reforms. For instance, the themes of democracy, and individualism became more prominent in Europe. The reformation involved all ranks of the society, the poor, the rich, clergy, and peasants among others. It was the first time in Europe that the church was separated in Europe to accommodate divergent views and ideas (Hayes, 2012). Protestant reformation was caused by activities that occurred earlier in the medieval Europe such as the Black Death, which made people to question the authority of the church to solve the problems in the society. Protestantism, which is one of the major brunches of Christianity, was an aftermath of the protestant reformation.

Scientific revolution and enlightenment followed after the protestant reformation. It was an intellectual reformation that took place between 17th and the 18th century. It was in this period that ideas concern God, nature, humanity and science were synthesized. It was characterized by the emergence of science and the use of scientific inventions to solve various challenges in the society. Human beings developed the understanding of the universe and used that knowledge to improve their condition (Hayes, 2012). The objectives of rational humanity were considered to be happiness, freedom, and knowledge. For instance, Isaac Newton, a scientist who existed in this era was credited with the discovery of laws of motion and universal gravitation. The first secularized psychological ideas were developed during the period of enlightenment. For instance, john Lock argued that the human mind is tabula rasa at birth. He said that the character of individual is derived from the experience they have in the environment. On the other Hand, Thomas Hobbes considered humans to be driven by their own

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pleasure and pain. The ideas of Lock, Jeremy Bentham and other social psychologists challenged the existing authoritarian state and sketched the existence of a high form political organization that was based on human rights and democracy. Abstract reasoning resulted to romanticism, where people started to explore emotions and sensation. It involved a deep appreciation of the natural beauty of the environment and the use of emotions over reason. The high enlightenment vision was achieved during the French revolution in 1789. The people threw out the old leadership system along with the leaders in a revolution that was marred with execution.

Renaissance is also a period than experienced robust European civilization. It was a period of cultural link between the middle age and the modern history. Renaissance took place between 1300 BC and 1700. It was marked by renewed interest in ancient art and culture. Primarily, it was a period of culture and intellectual movement that swept European continent. The European society decided to rethink the classical philosophy and values. They believed that the middle age was marked by cultural decline and it was necessary to popularize the culture ones again. The renaissance art contributed to the European society through highlighting the concept of realism and perspective. The painter such as Leonardo da Vinci made significant attempt to reveal the human anatomy, this was important in revealing the human inner structures. The style of architecture used by the renaissance showed some of the ancient Greek and roman style of building. Renaissance literature, which focused on human behavior, was brought back to light to influence the behavior of members of the society. The engineering and scientific concepts that made breakthrough in the medieval period were improved by the renaissance age. Primarily, the renaissance period has significant influence on civilization. For instance, the development in science and geography disciplines enhanced understanding of the earth and human environment. The invention of the printing press revolutionized the research and education.

The first industrial revolution, which took place between 17th and 18th century, marked an age of increased production and more scientific inventions. It was an era of mechanization and was characterized by the use of different sources of energy. The use of steam engine was one of the remarkable inventions of the era. Thomas Newcomen made a stem engine that was used to pump water from mines. The invention came at a point when people were looking for an alternative way of pumping water from the mines since the use of horse had become so expensive. However, the use of the engine was limited since it could only manage twelve strokes per minute. The textile industry was booming especially in Britain. However, the producers could not meet the global demand since they manually made the clothes. James Hargreaves invented the spinning Jenny that revolutionized the textile industry. The invention enabled one worker to produce eight threads as opposed to one thread that they produced per work norm without the machine. The rise of the power looms and cotton Gins are among the inventions of the first industrialization civilization.

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Western civilization is characterized by interesting history that details the foundation of the current human civilization. It started in the medieval period to the renaissance period and has extended to the current society. It was a period that Europe experienced changes in religious set up that had never happened before such as the protestant reformation. Nonetheless, the scientific revolution and enlightenment led to ideas in psychology and politics that gave the society a different perspective. The first industrial revolution led to more inventions to increase production and satisfy the growing demand of commodities such as textile. Much of what was invented in the medieval period was enhanced in the renaissance period. More discoveries and improvements were done during the period. Western civilization is an interesting history that shows the development of western culture and inventions through various periods.

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