

The enlightenment

Business



The Enlightenment is seen as being a French phenomenon followed by the fact that the movement had the greatest effect on France with its major proponents being known as philosophers. Nevertheless, the need to back up the ideology by the Enlightenment philosophers can elucidate the reason why salonnières supported this truth-seeking principle. It is considered as one of the greatest factors that turned France into an intellectual center of Europe. The Enlightenment originally had no significant effect on the Western world at first.

However in later years, this Age of Reason gave rise to one of the most controversial receptions of modern times. There were economic, religious and philosophical discrepancies with the new idealism propagated by the Enlightenment coming into conflict with earlier movements such as the Neoclassicism. However, we can't dispute the fact that the Enlightenment was in opposition of Materialism that had been introduced earlier while at the same time making emphasis on emotion over reason. The philosophers of the Enlightenment promoted the spread of their ideas in Western nations, hence creating the great effect by the movement. Immanuel Kant who was a professor of philosophy in Germany was among representatives of the Age of Reason. In a new era of philosophic idealism, Kant ushered an advancement from the earlier theories such as the Newtonian theory.

He observed that even though religious truths such as the existence of God could not be proved through scientific methods, human beings have no other choice except for the interpretation of facts based on physical realities.

Rationalistic kind of effects achieved by the Enlightenment elicited sharp debate and provoked considerable religious reaction. In England, there was

strong opposition regarding the religious ideology introduced by the Enlightenment with Joseph Butler (1692-1752) and William Paley (1743-1805) coming into the defense of Christianity. These two as well as other proponents of the older system emphasized on religion of the heart rather than of the mind. This led to the emergence of new movements such as Pietism which began in England. " The pietists discarded traditional formalism and stilted sermons in favor of a glowing religious fervor, producing a vast upsurge of emotional faith among the English lower classes" (The European Enlightenment).

Early Enlightenment had a significant effect on the Western world as it brought a situation of renewed humanitarianism. According to Burns, this happened as a result of the growing concern for human worth. In a religious context, humanitarianism led to the shunning of radical politics but at the same time ignored the issues regarding female rights and gender equality despite the movement being in strong support of women. Nonetheless, the Enlightenment caused a change in human perspective where children, the poor, slaves and prisoners were left to suffer due to ignorance. The practical fruits of this humanitarian wave can be identified through the formation of the movement against slavery in England.

This eventually led to the abolishment of the slave trade. By 1750, the West had experienced significant changes, the most crucial among which were commercialization, cultural reorientation and the rise of the nation-state. This changed the political patterns completely going by the fact that this period made politics seem to be of less significance. The ideological perspective during the Age of Reason prompted the people to call for equal

<https://assignbuster.com/the-enlightenment/>

representation and no political differences. France was the most affected nation being absolute monarchy during this period (P492-494).

We cannot therefore ignore the tremendous changes brought by the Enlightenment and most significantly felt in the Western world. The Age of Reason instigated to a new wave of vision for years to come. It also signaled the end of absolute monarchy prospering in the majority of Western countries during the early 18th century. According to Enlightenment philosophers, this movement was a great discovery in the sense that it was supposed to be a secret formula for perpetual happiness. The main idea behind this was to try and deliver the people from restraints for the sake of the free will attainment. Consequently, current Western democracies owe their political, ideological and economic success to the Enlightenment.