

# James burkes narrative of scientific revolution and carolyn merchants ecological ...

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## A comparison between James Burke's narrative of scientific revolution and Carolyn Merchant's Ecological Revolution

James Burke's *The Day the Universe Changed* is a ten episode documentary television series, which narrates how specific technological and scientific advances have transformed the western way of life. The primary focus of the film is to highlight the effects of science and technology on the western philosophy. For example, episode 04 talks about how printing has transformed knowledge. The ancient world that relied largely on spoken word and memorized knowledge was significantly changed by Gutenberg's discovery of printing (Burke @-7: 38). The availability of printing machines and papers significantly changed how people stored, memorized and reviewed information. In episode 05, Burke talks about how science has revised the heavens. The main idea presented here is that the heavens do not revolve around the earth. He cites discoveries made by Isaac Newton and Galileo to support his ideas, and further explains how the new created a conflict within the Catholic Church (Burke @-9: 00).

Carolyn Merchant in her narrative, *Ecological Evolution*, explores the process of ecological transformations, which took place in New England as European Settlers assumed control of the land (Merchant 27). She explains how human societies relate to the environment, and how they have changed the environment. This narrative is focused to explain how human gender relations, social structure, and economic regime are influenced by ecological realm of animal and plant life.

Both Merchant and Burke are determined to explain how scientific and technological advancement has changed human's way of life. Burke

describes the effect of science and technological advancements on human philosophy in a positive perspective, while Merchant believes that science and technological advancements have adversely affected environment and its contents in a negative way. For example, Burke narrates that the availability of written materials facilitated the amount of information that people store and remember. It also reduced the level of corruption in the church, since financial statements among other records, were available for audit and verification (Burke @-6: 53). The attempts to end corruption in the Catholic Church also led to the emergence of Lutheran movements.

Merchant, on the other hand, explains that Europeans' exhaustive methods of logging, hunting, and tapping at the onset of increasing urbanization and industrialization, shattered Indian's integration with their natural world (Merchant 52). In summary, Burke believes that scientific and technological advancements have positively contributed to human developments such as urbanization and industrialization, while Merchant believes that such developments have extremely shattered humans' integration with their natural environment.

#### Works Cited

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