

The arts: renaissance and reformation, enlightenment and revolution

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



The Arts -Renaissance and Reformation, 1300-1650, Enlightenment and Revolution 1550-1800, The Industrial Revolution 1700-1900

Renaissance, in essence, means rebirth. The Renaissance and Reformation Period (1300-1650) is significant in the history of humankind in more ways than one. The Renaissance and Reformation period marked the beginning of a New Age in Europe which was characterized by interest among scholars to find out more about their world (Patrick 26). Though it began in Italy, Renaissance soon spread to many other parts of Europe. The Renaissance period influenced scholars to study the works of ancient philosophers. There were new developments in areas such as art, architecture and sculpture work. The reformation of the church occurred during the Renaissance period (Estep 63).

The cause of the Reformation was the excessive power that the church wielded on the people. The Renaissance allowed people to air their views and vent their frustrations on what they considered to be the wrongs of the church. They were concerned with the high level of extravagance that church bishops and priests lived on. The discontent caused a religious upheaval which saw the church split into two (87). The Reformation was also characterized by the middle class wanting more power and control.

Previously, the people, regardless of their place on the social ladder, had been under the unquestionable rule of kings and the church. However, according to Patrick, the Renaissance brought with it new beliefs about humanity and people were restless for change (105).

The Enlightenment and Revolution Period (1550-1800) was a period of knowledge and intellectual movement. This period was characterized by the

systematic categorization, organization, exploration and a need to understand everything (Jacob 34). For the first time since the church was established, science took centre stage in the way people thought about the world they lived in. The primary focus of the Enlightenment period was the use of reason to develop systems of ethics, religion and government. The Enlightenment was a way of helping people think and thereby obtain an objective truth about the universe. Those who championed the ideals of Enlightenment argued that it would free human beings from the bondage of religious authoritarianism and traditional superstition under which people had lived for a very long time. It was during this period that knowledge was readily available to everyone. The cause of the Enlightenment was to educate the human race about what was real about life (Morris 79).

The revolution was as a result of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. As people became more educated and enlightened, the more they wanted to be free from the tyranny of the church and different monarchs. There was a revolution in science, political and philosophical thought. The innovations of scientists and great thinkers such as Galileo Galilei, Isaac Newton made people question those things that they had always known to be true (Jacob 79). For instance, everyone thought that the earth was flat and that it was the center of the universe until Galileo proved the theory wrong using his telescope. Newton's scientific knowledge helped people understand gravitational pull. The Enlightenment and Revolution period marked a period when superstition and religious authoritarianism was replaced by informed scientific thinking (111).

The Industrial Revolution of 1700-1900 was a period that marked a new

beginning for modern civilizations. This is a period that marked significant changes in the economic lives of people. The main areas that were impacted by the industrial revolution were in agriculture, transportation, mining, manufacturing and technology (Beard 14). This revolution started in the United Kingdom and later spread to other nations in Europe, North Americana and to the entire world. This is one revolution that changed many different aspects of people's daily lives. The advances made in agriculture and manufacturing sectors saw the quality of life of people improve. New technologies were employed in every aspect of life, from agriculture and mining to textiles and manufacturing. New sources of energy were invented, and this only improved the production of goods. During this period, there was a lot of improvement on infrastructure, particularly in the area of transportation. The Industrial Revolution also saw certain shifts in the social structure, in which women began to be involved in economic activities (Goloboy 48). The revolution also saw the emergence of a strong middle class. It was also during this period that capitalism began to flourish (Ross 108).

The Renaissance and Reformation Period (1300-1650), the Enlightenment and Revolution Period (1550-1800) and the Industrial Period are three very important periods in the socio-economic history of mankind. These are the periods that ushered humanity from the dark ages to the modern era. Before the Renaissance and the Reformation, people had very little knowledge about their world, and they also had very little power over their lives. The Enlightenment and Revolution Period, on the other hand, introduced people to new and better ways of thinking. The Industrial period can be credited

with making the overall life of the common man easier and better.

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