

Modernity's role in shaping nineteenth century western civilization essay examples...

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The Nineteenth Century was a period of advance in industrialization, urbanization, migration and education. This was a time of unparalleled change in the western world; culture became more refined and more akin to what we know today. Scientific discoveries changed how people dealt with illnesses and diseases, and manufacture increased with the inventions of new machines. Art and philosophical thought both depict and reflect this modernity, and using these mediums, this essay will evaluate the extent to which it shaped western civilization and the results - both positive and negative - that it produced.

Artists portrayed new industrial scenes in their paintings, portraying everyday life as experienced by workers and laborers. Paintings such as *The Iron Rolling Mill* (1875), by Adolph Menzel and *Coalbrookdale by Night* (1801), by Philip James de Loutherbourg show how, because of modernity, society shifted from agrarian to industrial. This industrialization aided urban growth and developments, and increased manufacture and production (Dubrulle, 2009, web.).

Unfortunately, Nineteenth Century art often shows the dark side of modernity. Bleak paintings set against a backdrop of urbanity show the struggles in the lives of the poor; a negative effect of the increased industrialization and migration to urban areas that modernity caused. Paintings by Augustus Edwin Mulready, for example *Uncared For* (1871) and *Fatigued Minstrels* (1883) explore this issue of poverty in cities as the downside of industrialization. In the paintings, homeless street children bring home the suffering caused by a lack of support for the poor in this society of

modernity and the need for reform (Tetens, 2010, web.) Modernity went a long way towards shaping the structure of society at this time, so in this aspect it played a huge role in shaping Western civilization.

New advances in technology and science influenced philosophical thought in the Nineteenth Century, especially regarding religion and society. The desire for reform in society influenced thinkers such as Jeremy Bentham, who campaigned for better living and working conditions, free education, and greater support for children and the elderly. Throughout his life he became extremely critical of the effects modernity had on the lower classes, again emphasizing the role modernity played in civilization at this time (“ Jeremy Bentham”, n. d. web.).

References

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