The Culture Epoch Theory

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The culture epoch theory describes the manner in which culture is founded by a majority of people over a given period because of the conception of reality. In society, philosophers, scientists, and theologians provided a basis for understanding reality, which was later held by the period during different times of history. This theory explains that society undergoes a cyclic process of chaos, adjustment, and balance, which repeats itself over time.

All three stages have been proven to occur in any society throughout history. In the Middle Ages, otherwise known as the medieval period, the culture epoch theory can be analyzed to have taken shape due to the rapid chaos that occurred and the manner in which the society fought to achieve some balance. During this period, art and literature were used to preserve history and to communicate to future generations what took place during each era of the Middle Ages.

Chaos

Society undergoes a process of change in pursuit of reality, and it is the responsibility of innovative thinkers to give a sense of direction on what should be perceived as reality. The moment the innovative thinkers provided this sense of direction, it is incorporated as part of the culture where deviance leads to consequences. As the new culture adjusts to fit into the society, several changes occur to usher in the new culture. The society creates norms that are to be followed, and in the process, religious beliefs and educational philosophies are adjusted. Over time, the process of adjustment plunges the culture into a state of chaos (Lea 12). It is through the chaos that a new epoch is formed, and the society fights against each other in pursuit of a unifying culture. The societies that existed in the Middle Ages went through chaos by revolting against the changes that took place in society.

The fall of Rome is an example of chaos during the Middle Ages. The Roman Empire dominated Europe by ruling for a very long period, but its dominance ultimately ended. The Roman Empire had developed a culture that allowed it to rule, which was based on conquering and open leadership. After some time, the leadership of the Roman Empire was marred by conflicts, which eventually made it weak and easy to conquer. The various conflicts in the empire, which escalated political corruption and wastage of funds, led to the weakening of the army. The empire stalled in technological innovations, which made their opponents stronger by innovating better technologies. A combination of several factors that are all linked to leadership ultimately created a chaotic society that led to the fall of Rome.

The Zvolen Castle is a military structure that was adopted to defeat the Roman Empire. The statue of Augustus of Primaporta best describes the period between the fall of Rome and the Renaissance. The Black Death was the other endemic that wiped out a larger population during the medieval period. Geoffrey Chaucer's literature, "The Canterbury Tales," best describes the plague that killed several people in Europe (Lea 28). There are several explanations for the cause of the Black Death, but one of the consequences was the reduction in the labor of laborers working on the farms. Antisemitism became prevalent as the Jews were blamed for the deaths, while the Catholic Church lost some of its monopolies. The Black Death created chaos in society, which brought instability and conflicts in various sections of society.

Adjustment

Adjustment refers to a period just after chaos and confusion, when people are in search of stability. During the period of adjustment, innovative thinkers come up with new ideas aimed at creating a new culture and inspiring peace. The thinkers, such as painters and writers, explore conflicts and provide a new path that could be followed to cement a new culture. Other parties, such as intellectuals and politicians, helped in reshaping the ideas and designing new philosophies that could eventually restore order. It is through their efforts that a new reality comes in, and people develop new beliefs that shape their culture. In the Middle Ages, society adjusted to the idea of God, which saw the Catholic Church expanding and cities and universities also growing.

The Romanesque represents the period of adjustment in the Middle Ages, where architecture was used to express the adjustment. During this period, the church was expanding, and its significance could be greatly felt by the role the church was playing in restoring stability. There was a need to build churches, and Romanesque architecture was used to provide the best designs of churches in Europe. This kind of architecture involved the use of semicircular arches for windows and doors, while the introduction of masonry to replace the use of timber as well as protect the buildings from fire (Lea 48). The period of adjustment was filled with scientific innovation in the field of architecture, and this was reflected in the several churches built with Romanesque architecture. The expansion of churches in Europe, particularly in Italy and France, is a true representation of the period of adjustment, where religion played a key role.

Balance

Balance is a period that represents order and peace when society can grow. During this period, there is harmony in all the institutions in society. The philosophies and the new designs introduced to govern the society restore order, and individuals are in full belief of the new reality. Individuals can achieve life fulfillment, as there exists no issue that could threaten the emergence of new ideas, which could eventually lead to chaos. Even if new ideas are coming up challenging the already established ideas, it is done in a manner that does not lead to conflict but enhances the current

harmony and peace in the society (Lea 56). It is during the period of balance that stronger national states are established with a greater concern for humanity. In the Middle Ages, the Gothic period represents a time of balance where Greek philosophy was rediscovered, and scientific innovations took shape.

The Gothic represents the period after the Romanesque, when architecture was advanced and better buildings were designed. The Gothic period provided stability where knowledge was enhanced, and the work of art was improved. Great churches, civic buildings, and cathedrals are some of the structures that were built with Gothic architecture. It was through this kind of architecture that individuals could be able to express their talents and innovations. The fact that such architecture was directed to sacred and important places shows the importance of this innovation during the medieval period (Lea 62). The balance that existed where there was order meant that these kinds of architecture could not be destroyed due to the existence of peace. The Salisbury Cathedral represents the English Gothic, while the Dome in Siena represents the Italian Gothic.

Works Cited

Lea, Henry Charles. *A* History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages. Lulu.com, 2016.