

Embracing the Renaissance: My Journey Through the Course (Revamped)

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In the vast expanse of history, the idea of a renaissance holds a special allure—a promise of renewal and rediscovery that resonates deeply with the human spirit. It's like emerging from a long, dark tunnel into the warm embrace of sunlight—a profound shift from stagnation to vibrant growth. Just as civilizations go through their ebbs and flows, so do we as individuals. For me, this course has been nothing short of a personal renaissance—an exhilarating journey of discovery and growth.

As I searched to understand the intricate tapestry of business history, philosophy, and literature, I found myself swept up in a whirlwind of new ideas and perspectives. It was like peeling back layers of an onion, each revelation revealing a deeper truth about the world and my place within it. The discussions and the texts explored challenged me to question my assumptions, to see things from different angles, and to embrace the richness of diversity in thought.

As I delved into the readings on the tumultuous times of the 19th century, particularly in Adam Smith's "The Wealth of Nations" (I loved so many concepts from this book, I can't stop reflecting on it) and Marx's "Capital," I couldn't help but draw parallels to personal growth and adaptation. The slow adjustment to change, as highlighted by Smith's emphasis on the invisible hand of the market and Marx's critique of capitalist exploitation, resonated deeply with me. Just as society grappled with revolution and reform, I found myself reflecting on my own journey of transformation. Slow, yet steady. As Adam Smith put it, "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest." The words of the authors echoed the sentiment that change, though gradual, is inevitable—and it is our ability to adapt and evolve that defines our progress.

The reading on industrialism was particularly eye-opening. The profound changes brought about by industrialization—both in society and in the workplace—were staggering. From the exploitation of child labor to the rise of new social classes, the implications of industrialism reverberated through every aspect of life. Personally, I found myself grappling with a mix of shock and disbelief at the stark realities uncovered by the reading. It forced me to confront uncomfortable truths about the darker side of progress and the need for ethical considerations in business practices. For instance, the accounts and research I did of children as young as five or six working long hours in dangerous conditions in factories and mines deeply troubled me. These children were subjected to grueling workdays, with little to no breaks, and were exposed to hazardous machinery and toxic substances without adequate protection. Many suffered from injuries, illnesses, and even death as a result of their labor. Reflecting on these grim realities underscored the importance of advocating for ethical labor practices in modern business operations, and reminded me of the human cost often overlooked in the pursuit of progress.

One of the most captivating aspects of this course delved into the intriguing clash between science and theology. The readings, particularly on the theory of evolution, made me think deep about the essence of existence, (something I'm often always thinking about) and ignited some interesting discussions surrounding the perception of reality with people around me. Personally, I found myself treading the fine line between tradition and progress, pondering how to harmonize the way I was raised (Adam and Eve) with the fresh insights presented. This reading served as a catalyst for introspection, reinforcing the significance of critical thinking when navigating conflicting worldviews. Thinking even deeper about this, I always find it fascinating to think about the evolution of human understanding—how we've transitioned from

relying solely on religious narratives to illuminate our origins, to embracing scientific theories substantiated by empirical evidence. It's truly fascinating to reflect on how this gradual shift has unfolded over centuries, underscoring the perpetual evolution of human knowledge and our remarkable capacity to embrace new ideas, even when they challenge our deeply held beliefs. And just think... If this newfound knowledge has slowly evolved to our understanding of where we are now, what other stones do we have to turn over and learn about?

On the theological note, exploring the Oxford Movement in the Renaissance reading was a profound journey into the realm of religious revival within the Church of England, serving as a poignant reminder of the enduring power of faith and introspection. As someone who has been navigating my own religious journey over the past few years, delving into this topic resonated deeply with me. It's fascinating to consider how, amidst the vast tapestry of human spirituality, there are countless religions and belief systems, each with its own unique narrative and revival stories. The concept of romanticism in religion, as discussed in the reading, prompted me to reflect on my own experiences of personal growth and spiritual exploration. It reminded me that, despite the diversity of religious traditions, there is a common thread of seeking meaning and enlightenment woven throughout human history. In many ways, the reading served as a reminder to me that humanity has had a timeless quest for understanding and connection to their higher power in an ever-changing world.

Overall, the journey through this course has been nothing short of transformative. From grappling with the complexities of industrialization to exploring the clash between science and theology, each reading offered a new perspective and a fresh insight into the world of business and society. As I reflect on my renaissance experience, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude for the opportunity to embark on this journey of discovery and thought provoking

learning. The course has not only broadened my understanding of business and society but has also deepened my appreciation for the complexities of the human experience.