

Between the middle of the fifteenth century and the late seventeenth, Europeans learned to think of the world as a whole and of all seas as one.... The age saw not only the most rapid expansion of geographical knowledge in the whole of European history; it saw also the first major victories of empirical enquiry over authority, the beginnings of that close association of pure science, technology, and everyday work which is an essential characteristic of the modern western world.

*J.H. Parry, **The Age Of Reconnaissance.
Discovery, Exploration and Settlement
1450-1650.***

The world of 1789 was, for most of its inhabitants, incalculably vast. Most of them, unless snatched away by some awful hazard, such as military recruitment, lived and died in the county, and even the parish, of their birth.... The rest of the globe was a matter of government agents and rumour. [By 1848,] the known, mapped, and intercommunicating area of the world was larger than ever before, its communications unbelievably speedier... Science had never been more triumphant; knowledge had never been more widespread.

*E.J. Hobsbawm, **The Age of Revolution
1789-1848.***

There is a marked contrast in the relation of technological discoveries to actual changes between...the Industrial Revolution ...and the twentieth century. The revolutions in cotton textiles and in pig iron and bar iron production, and the introduction of steam in the second half of the eighteenth century were in response to long-felt needs and followed a long searchNecessity was the mother of invention, and the period of gestation was long. In contrast, many economically important inventions in the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries were the results of attempts to apply new scientific discoveries.... Here, the addition to the stock of knowledge came first, and one might say that invention fostered need.

*Simon Kuznets, "Reflections on the
Economic Growth of Modern Nations"
(1957).*

*What actually happened was probably far more complex than this summary.
Jorge Luis Borges, **The Book of Sand.***