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Analytic Study of the Enlightenment :Historical Role, Characteristics and Programs

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ABSTRACT

The Age of Enlightenment is the name of an intellectual movement by which the Eighteenth century of the entire Europe is characterized. It was a turning point in a continuum of the intellectual and cultural efforts initiated in the seventeenth century in the Western society. The Age of Enlightenment or Age of Reason more than any other concept symbolized the emphasis on human reason-based ideals and capabilities. The Eighteenth century is also referred to as the century of philosophy. Thriving of philosophy in this century particularly concerned political philosophy with an emphasis on human rights as the source of all national and international rights, especially political rights in society. Individual political rights, his right to enjoy a happy life, freedom of expression, writing and press, and political parties for pursuing legitimate collective political objectives, the right of participation in national governance via healthy elections for legislation in society, freedom of religion, right of private ownership, and other elements of political rights were all raised and incorporated in the Enlightenment philosophy. The Enlightenment is also known as the age of awakening, since rational endeavors played a predominant role in this movement. Human ultimate mission which gives meaning to his life was the very effort for acquisition of the deep independent and critical knowledge to be technically applied to nature and through political and ethical actions to be practiced in society, in the sense that for acquisition of knowledge, one should not let one's ideas be influenced by any external power or any prejudice but only one's critical reasoning should be relied upon in giving shape to content of one's judgments. Nonetheless, the excessive emphasis on human reasoning and humanism eventually proved to be rather problematic than instrumental. Pure knowledge and reasoning had to increasingly give way to utilitarianism and instrumentalism which primarily served exploitation of poor masses and subjugation of other nations. Massacres of the French Revolution and Nazism and other catastrophes were one way or another the consequences of the Western modernity which indeed were the proofs of irrationality raising serious doubts about the notion of freedom and equality to the point that it was said: the best form of freedom in present society is slavery, and obedience is the best form of equality.

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INTRODUCTION

The Age of Enlightenment is attributed to the historical period corresponding to the Eighteenth century which is linked to the pioneering rational movement in the Seventeenth century. In the Seventeenth century, which in general balance of things was one of the most blessed and productive eras of modern thought, a splendid train of great thinkers such as Bacon, Descartes, Hobs, Spinoza, Lock, Bell, and Leibnitz was produced. All these great men of reason except Leibnitz significantly contributed to the rigorous Enlightenment movement which was committed to change religion and state in the French Revolution (Durant, 2001). The Renaissance was attached to ancient Greece and Rome and Catholic tradition and art, the Protestant Religious Reformation was committed to early Christianity and the medieval convictions, but the Seventeenth century and the Age of Reason gave birth to new ideas. This rich and eventful century, from Galileo to Newton, from Descartes to Bell, and from Bacon to Lock, moved toward a future which promised freedom.

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Perhaps the title 'Age of Reason' suited the Seventeenth century more than the Eighteenth century, since its philosophers who were by far outnumbered by the multitude of the liberated players of the French Enlightenment called for rational moderation and showed more foresight about intellectual freedom (idem: 773).

One of the intellectual products of the Eighteenth century in the field of political science was individualism. It was in this century that the school of Natural Rights reached its full fledged development. In this school, the concept of natural rights which halfway was known as human natural rights and presently is simply called human rights in the final synthesis became the origin of all national and international rights, especially human political rights.

In the field of philosophy of Science, systematic doubt as a guiding general principle was generally welcomed by the philosophers (Aalikhani, 2004) and due to the new interest in reasoning, critique and debate this century together with the seventeenth century is brought in close connection to philosophical thought. The French next to use of the German term for enlightenment *Aufklärung*, call it 'la Philosophie de Lumieres'. There is a tendency in the history which due to use of synonymous concepts attributes the Age of Reason both to the Eighteenth and Seventeenth centuries, while the Age of Enlightenment is specifically applied to the eighteenth century. This age begins from 1688 in coincidence with the Glorious Revolution of England and continues up until the French Revolution. Peter Gay considers "thriving of this age from 1720s until birth of the new republic in America in 1780s and the dawn of the French Revolution" (Porter, 1999). At any rate, this movement helped establishment of a condition in which ideological loyalty to the L'Ancien Régime was incessantly and for good destroyed (idem: 116).

2. Problem statement:

In regard to historical role of the Enlightenment, specification of its appearance and ending is somewhat difficult, but in general it could be established that this movement has been current over the last three decades of the Seventeenth century until beginning of the Nineteenth century. However, it is the Eighteenth century which was decisive in characterization of this movement. The Eighteenth century in all respects is of special significance in history of the modern Europe. The most flourishing and broadest manifestation ground of the Age of Enlightenment was the French of the Eighteenth century, the century which in view of Voltaire was the most enlightened century ever, and Marcuse referred to it as one of the most progressive stages of the human history in the West (Magee, 1997). Through the Eighteenth century, Paris together with London grew extraordinarily. Paris was the capital of Enlightenment and people all over Europe regarded it their utopia. In fact this city was the embodiment of the Eighteenth century and the new Age of Reason where they met each other.

The Eighteenth century is also known as the Age of Awakening, since it was characterized by predominant role of rational activities. In this period, knowledge was of cardinal importance and was discussed and analyzed from all angles. Some of the philosophers of this period laid the stress on the rational element of knowledge, while another group of thinkers meant the research and inquiry for a knowledge acquired through the senses.

The name Age of Enlightenment is assigned to the Eighteenth century for the resemblance it had in many respects to the Greek culture during 400-530BC (Cassirer, 1991). At that time in the history Greek culture, the reason tried to prevail in all domains and to fight the inherited superstitions from the past periods. Hence, the essence of the Eighteenth century Enlightenment movement can be interpreted as the worldly vision of life developed under influence of the ancient Greek culture during renaissance and expressed in the art, religion, politics, and natural sciences of the time. Although this "movement is not confined in itself but has an eye on the past and future beyond its boundaries, yet it constitutes a particular phase of the total intellectual development which gave the new philosophical thought the confidence to capitalize on its fundamental self-consciousness (idem: 42) for awakening of the general public. And this is the marked characteristic of the Age of Enlightenment. This movement was a liberal intellectual stream which was built on the current rational mind set and humanistic and scientific view in the Eighteenth century Europe. "... it relied on scientific, analytic and critical knowledge" (Copleston, 1988). In the Eighteenth century, the Enlightenment movement as a result of the adduced fundamental doubt by Descartes finds deeply rooted belief in reason and its interpretations about all stages of animal life with the same physical and chemical terms (Durant, 1989). The man of the Enlightenment period considered the middle Ages the pitch dark night followed by the dawn of the Renaissance and subsequent advent of the Enlightenment philosophers (Copleston, 1997).

The Enlightenment thinkers were in fact the practical people ... they not only wanted to comprehend of the world, but also to change it. For this reason, Denise Diderot, Jean Le Rond d'Alembert in the encyclopedia define philosopher as the one who breaks away from "the prevailing prejudices, tradition, customary perceptions, and authority and in short, all what chains (human) mind. Philosopher is the one who dares to think independently (idem: 20).

The Enlightenment philosophers tended to view the history as a progress towards rationalism of the Eighteenth century, that is a progress from darkness to light and expected a greater progress in the future for further realization of the ideals of the Age of Reason (Copleston, 1996).

In the Age of Enlightenment, "human mission which gives meaning to his life is the very effort for acquisition of independent and critical knowledge to the greatest possible extent to be technically applied to nature and through political and ethical actions to be practiced in the society. Besides, one should not let one's mind be influenced by any power or prejudice, instead, the content of one's judgments ought to be shaped only by one's own critical reason" (Goldman, 1987).

In view of the Enlightenment philosophers, from the dark Middle Ages onwards ecclesiastics have dominated the intellectual domain and filled the role of thought police. But with change of condition and growing level of literacy, expansion of education and easier access to book, the group of young secular intellectuals managed to strengthen its position and to compete with clerics on winning over people's favor and to challenge the church.

The enlightenment philosophers considered themselves as the vanguards of this group of authors and thinkers. So they demanded freedom of speech and intended as the spokesmen of the modernism to replace the clerics. This small group of the Enlightenment philosophers struggled for establishment of new religion called the religion of Humanism. Hence, the Eighteenth century should be also pointed out as the cradle of secularism, since at least the most fundamental elements of this school of thought were produced by the Enlightenment philosophers (Porter, 1999). The men who founded the Republic of Letters and Culture by having ahead such models as Montesquieu and Voltaire showed increasing self-confidence and perseverance (Spencer, 2012).

For these philosophers nothing was more important than religious reformation. They viewed the church as the main obstacle in the way of social solutions. Although the French Philosophers were skeptic to all religions, their assaults were concentrated on the Catholic Church in France since they knew it the best. Nonetheless, their offensives often were directed as well to activities of the Catholic Church in other parts of Europe (Dunn, 2003).

In doing so, "the age of Enlightenment took a decisive step in secularization of religion and materialization of the European mind. This didn't mean that all philosophers of the Enlightenment were Atheist and the age of people religiosity was expired. It was not the case at all. Indeed, the faith in Christianity and clerics was vigorously revived in reaction to the French Revolution and Napoleon's coming to power. However, in the wake of Enlightenment, Catholicism had lost its dominance in cultural and social domains. In sum, the Enlightenment is a borderline on one side of which Dante, Erasmus, Bernini, Pascal, and Milton as the great Christian authors and artists took position and on another side, Schopenhauer, George Eliot, and Darwin were lined.

The Enlightenment heritage, despite its contribution to liberation of the European mind from the narrow framework of rigid thinking, is evaluated as radical. Yet such conclusion might be somewhat doubtful, because ideas can never fly beyond the society they belong to. Therefore, many of the innovative and daring ideas of the Eighteenth century were soon transformed into ramparts of the establishment. The new Enlightenment human sciences which scrutinized social dynamism, population growth, wealth generation, and welfare increase turned into positivistic political economics whose duty was provision of suitable ideological feeding for the regimes that propagated capitalism as the immutable and inevitable social order in which the poverty of the poor was to be blamed on them. The challenging psychology of Condillac and Helvetius which believed in human rich ability for change and development was so modified and applied to force children at school and grown-ups at workplace to obedience and compliance with order. What once had been the enchanting view to human as a mechanical creature (free from the original sin) turned into a real nightmare of manufacturers in the Age of Machine. Manifestation of such orientation in natural sciences and technology through the instrumental rationality could be seen in two theoretical and practical dimensions, so as the technical dominance over nature naturally led to dominance over humans through totalitarian ideologies and fake generalizations. The idea which in the modern age emphasizes on enlightened self-destruction and self-founded reason is reduction of the early belief in reason to an instrumental reason for dominance over nature which has been accompanied with countless antihuman consequences leading to human slavery capital, negative will to power, and eventually to Fascism and living in a totalitarian society.

The enlightenment which helped human free oneself from the past bondages failed to stop new formation of new shackles. Modernity as the outcome of Enlightenment by creation of new myths drowned humanity in a new kind of slavery the bold manifestations of which could be seen in Fascism, Stalinism, Nazism, and yet again new birthplaces and forms of negative power orientation and totalitarianism in the field of science, culture and ideology.

As a consequence, the contemporary human is still struggling with problems of the urban, industrial and modern society the Enlightenment was the midwife of. Yet, in this struggle, he largely profits from the principles of social analysis, human values and scientific experiments inherited from the enlightenment philosophers, because he still considers himself as the intellectual descendent of the Enlightenment (idem: 139-140). In sum, it should be said that foundation of the Eighteenth century Enlightenment is the worldly vision of life shaped during Renaissance and manifested in the art, religion, politics and natural sciences. Birth of the Enlightenment philosophy should be sought in England. Then this movement from England reached France and first from France and later on directly from England was brought over to Germany (Windelband, 1975).

The intellectuals who emerged in the Eighteenth century seemed to feel a strong guiding and instructive duty towards society from which they should not deviate at any price and under any circumstances.

3. Dimensions and indicators of the Enlightenment Era:

The Age of Enlightenment is classified into various political, religious, philosophical, cultural, economic, social, and legal dimensions as well as into different schools of thought such as cosmopolitanism, humanism, Scientism. The corresponding indicators to each dimension are specified as follows:

1. Political Enlightenment: enlightenment in the area of politics involves political freedom, political autonomy, democratic autonomy, individual autonomy, liberal democracy, democratic state, civil society, socialism, liberalism, negation of king political hegemony, political parties, and elections.
2. Religious Enlightenment: Enlightenment in respect to religion concerns pluralism (in place of uniformity), secularism, refutation of metaphysics, superstition elimination, tolerance, moral relativism, refutation of religious authority (of Pope), freedom of creed.
3. Philosophical Enlightenment: enlightenment in philosophical dimension includes rationalism, criticism, pragmatism, critical rationality, and modernity.
4. Cultural Enlightenment: enlightenment in the cultural domain is manifested in freedom of speech, cultural relativism, tolerance and indulgence, populism, modernism, reformism, romanticism, revolutionary fantasies, freedom to write and press freedom.
5. Economic Enlightenment: this dimension includes economic freedom, free market economy, free trade, capitalism, Bourgeoisie, socialism, progress, economic justice, and the right to private property.
6. Social Enlightenment: this dimension is characterized by rational society, constitutionalism, middle class, and democratic response.
7. Cosmopolitan Enlightenment: this dimension has to do with internationalism, cosmopolitan movements, international civil rights movements and public sphere.
8. Humanist Enlightenment: this dimension addresses human centrality, individualism, individual freedom, free will, and human rights.
9. Scientism Enlightenment: in this dimension, Enlightenment is identified by naturalism, empiricism, empirical science, natural rights (human rights).
10. Legal Enlightenment: it primarily concerns social rights including social justice (Egalitarianism), citizenship rights, civil virtue, and (people) general will.

4. Main consequences and associate of the Enlightenment:

The chief attributes of modernity signify the Enlightenment in the modern sense. This associate of the Enlightenment can be traced as far back as the Renaissance which persisted up to this day. Although conceptually the records of it can be extended down to the Fourteenth century, the modernity in the modern sense by opposing to the old political system laid down new foundations for civilization and culture of the Western society in which human stood in the center of all issues. In the Age of Modernity, the essence and foundation of religious and cultural traditions were questioned and were considered as a philosophical issue needing a solution. For this reason, human relations with the world, nature, history, present, past and future, government system, and hereafter world as well as many other issues were radically changed and this tendency to change, glamour, and novelty was in fact inherent to this movement.

Modernity and its process today are among the critical factors which in social life at highest level contribute to evolution of distinct species of intellectual, political, economic movements both in subjectivity and objectivity. This movement is built up under influence of three major social contexts in the West, i.e. Renaissance, religious reformation, and Age of Enlightenment, though its course of development requires accurate inquiry into the methods, evaluations, social analyses, and social belief systems and structures. The views and principles of modernity especially with ending of the World War II helped contextualization process for expansion of capitalism in other countries and legitimization of its respective values. These preparatory arrangements, on the one hand, were effectuated through interaction of different forces and on the other hand, depended on their critical role in formation of national government and its impact on the countries. Evidently, for conceptualization of social impact in the course of modernity in the West, i.e. Renaissance, religious reformation, and Age of Enlightenment, identical paths have not been proposed. Western philosophers in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries and onward were at variance in interpretation of the phenomenon. Those who had studied Kant and were acquainted with the representationalist view were undoubtedly also acquainted with Marx's philosophy regarding human emancipation, social structures, and his political view against bourgeoisie individualism.

Modernity process in bourgeoisie sense necessitates implementation of a political economy according to Adam Smith model of capitalism which is based on free economy and trade and John Lock model of liberalism in which people's accord is the only source of government authority whose task is protection of life, freedom, and ownership.

Modernity process in terms of Marxism, leads to a synthesis of Communism or Socialism suggesting implementation of an economy based on Karl Marx model of socialism and Marx-Engels model of Communism which shape the leftist interpretations of modernity along with the desirable values and structures of leftist group.

Presence of the bipolar conflict between application of bourgeoisie models and Marxist models for thorough transformation of the traditional society gave rise to different views and interpretations of the modernity process which according to social condition of countries promoted different structures and values.

Both systems which are regarded as two fundamental social – political structures are linked to modernity and hence to the Enlightenment which convey a universal idea of rationality that is the search for a more or less positive knowledge and exercise of influence in nature and society as characteristics of the modernity holistic nature. The universal rationality refers to knowledge possibility in a way it is usually thought of.

One consequence of such view is the tendency of the Enlightenment to establishment of hierarchies (e.g. between rational and irrational, knowledge and non-knowledge, as well as between good literature and bad literature, and good art and bad art). This line of argument usually goes further and reaches to the point that an association between establishment of knowledge hierarchies and social hierarchies is assumed: Enlightenment rationality is in fact the rationality of the male white and another kind of oppression against women and ethnic groups (Craib, 1999).

In view of Anthony Giddens, the uniqueness of the modern world is in the fact that increasing domains of social life are no longer interpreted by tradition but on rational grounds. In addition, he views modernity in terms of time and space: standardization of time and space and “detachment” of people relations from time and space specifications, and their great efforts for “re-emplacement” of these specifications (idem: 241).

In his famous work, *Consequences of Modernity*, Giddens argues that emergence of new ideas does not mean emergence of a new era called postmodernism. On the contrary, in his mind, a change in cultural awareness compared to modernity institutions is of less importance. In his view, emergence of the current situation itself is the effect of modernity radicalization and intensification. By referring to dissolution of the theory of evolution, disappearance of the historical teleology and contemplation prevalence, and decline of the western culture high position, he introduces us into the sphere of a shocking experience. He believes the current period has developed under influence of the worldwide modernization process the consequence of which will be correlation of all cultures throughout the world in light of the destined Western culture, in the sense that the fate of the remotest peripheral cultures is tied to destiny of the West (Bayers et al, 2006). Such inference is because despite the difference between the thinkers regarding birth date of the modernity they all maintain the same view on birth place of this movement and consider the modernity as the product of a specific geographical domain. This phenomenon which appeared following the developments induced by Renaissance, religious reformation, and the Enlightenment provided special instructions for the modern life.

The term modernity which has proposed as a reference for reflection of new ideas in the Age of Enlightenment incorporates a philosophical, political and social view to human and environment, yet its key issue in regard to it is to be found in its epistemological concepts. Within framework of the modern epistemology, human is both the object and subject of knowledge. In this framework, the pivotal concept of human is defined free from metaphysical models and human rationality is the ground of new knowledge about oneself and the surrounding environment, so as dominance of human over all aspects of life has been considered characteristic to this framework. Modernism in the new intellectual – philosophical form includes certain characteristics and principles which are identifiable as the ‘fundamentals’. These fundamentals are: humanism, rationalism, and utilitarianism.

1. Humanism:

In the modern philosophy, human enjoys a high position as the ultimate purpose of all affairs. By focusing on human, the modern philosophers targeted the situations which were needed for his sociopolitical life. From this perspective, everything that not serves human satisfaction and happiness is excluded from this philosophy and hence is renounceable. In the modern philosophy, theoreticians define human as independent, free and liberated from restricting models and consider society and social order as reflection of human rationality. The result of this vision was replacement of natural laws by written laws.

2. Rationalism:

The main characteristic feature of the Enlightenment was rationality and rationalism and philosophers of the time emphasized on realization of rationalism in human culture. In the process of knowledge, reason helps human organize the necessary relationship with his environment and thereby choose suitable means for realization of his objectives. Hence, human mental power is a reality by means of which he is enabled to satisfy his needs in the best possible way. The first task of reason is instruction. And its second task within the functional area which can be expected from it is its use as a means of progress.

3. *Utilitarianism:*

This principle is founded on individualism in which "satisfaction" is the central issue. According to this principle, everything that serves satisfaction of human needs can be of effect on evolution of humans and reduction of their problems. In fact, the subjective, spiritual and moral satisfaction which in the past was the criterion of happiness was excluded from the human intellectual domain. The truth is that modernity is a particular orientation adopted by part of the humanity in the last several centuries to fundamental issues which have always mattered to human. In modernity, a new orientation was adopted in response to the question regarding existence and place of human in the world. The new place indicates that the relation of human to existence implying pivotal position of human in the world as the identifier has undergone changes. In other words, the modernity on the environ of its axis becomes a challenge which occurred in the Eighteenth century in the name of reason and science and in the name of human and humanity. The modernity of trust and reliance on reasoning power of human in position of the identifier, even though possibility of absolute knowledge does not exist, as Kant puts it, the object in its essence is not comprehensible and it is what we see in the visible world and nothing else. And the solution of all possible problems either in the area of knowledge, or in ethical action and behavioral domain is to be found in human reason. Such approach paved the way for progress of new sciences. The science unlike the past gave up essence of things and targeted knowledge of nature and human state. Finally, the hope was created that human by rational knowledge can liberate oneself from the bonds of nature and history. Based on this vision and ideal, by knowledge of nature and essence of history human is expected to finally reach the Utopia of his excellence.

In the Middle Ages, human totality and perfection without unity with God was not achievable. However, human metaphysical position in Christian vision, i.e. return from the earthly world to the spiritual world and absolute abstraction, in the modern world and modern metaphysics was transformed into the ultimate earthly destination for human. Therefore, some philosophers have referred to after Renaissance and Enlightenment period as the beginning of modernism and believe later development of modernism should be related to discovery of America, progress of the rational worldview and philosophical rationalism, and introduction of the Newtonian mechanical model of the world which gave human the possibility of absolute scientific knowledge, and technological revolution. Crystallization of such idea even in the present time can be viewed. It was not for no reason that "Baudrillard", one of the "postmodern" philosophers, interpreted modernity as the characteristic of civilization, a characteristic that opposes the tradition. Modernity constantly contends the things once considered new and modern. This characteristic feature with lower value enjoys a secure place in modernism, since each time new things replace formerly considered new things. In other words, given the central position of individual, the main emphasis of modernism is on emergence of new mechanisms of individual identity shaped under influence of the modernity institutions which in turn shape these institutes. Another characteristic of the modern social life, in addition to flexibility of its institutions, are the profound processes for organization of time and space which are integral part of development and liberating works. In this process, it becomes more and more evident that different possibilities in choice of life style in the age of mutual relations (the Global Village) raises some issues which cannot be easily skipped (Giddens, 1994). Among these issues, it can be referred to the issue of Christian fatalism which gradually moved out of intellectual, cultural, economic and political domains of society and in this process with liberation from grip of the church, individual, in addition to deciding his fate, personally accepted the responsibility for all his actions (Ghaseminejad, 1996).

Thus far, political philosophy of modernism was addressed at three levels:

1. Political views of Thomas Hobs: in his view, politics is synonym to government. He believes people's interest and welfare are interpreted in one body called government. In this concept, to escape the natural state, individual in a contract puts one's destiny in the hand of government. Thus, government is the outcome of a contract between people, which has nothing but people's consent and will of the contracting parties.
2. In the Second period, politics finds a new implication. Although this period too starts with the social contract, but the contract meant by Roseau differs from that of Hobs. In the Social Contract of Roseau, due to dominance of law and public will, state does not take any constraint, i.e. no barrier or limitation is imposed on it. Here, two principles of freedom and equality enter the field: the first one is a criterion for democratic states and second one a criterion for socialist governments (idem).
3. The third period of modernism is the period of excellent modernity. This notion was founded on Hegel philosophy, in which politics is a perfect synonym to tolerance and freedom. Hence, politics is the objective embodiment of reason and freedom. In the historical process, state reaches the highest degree of self-consciousness and rationality in history is defined equal to freedom and acquires a place in the form of government. Objective crystallization of this idea is in totalitarian governments (Nejad Baram, 1998).
4. Enlightenment program: unfinished, finished project and in-between theory against hasty knowledge

Enlightenment principles about order and progress, its reliance on possibility of control of nature and history by human, confidence in human common sense and nature, and especially its emphasis on the Western culture reasoning order caused new solutions gradually in dealing with life phenomena to move out of the quantitative and mathematical state and to take on a more qualitative posture. This process is called postmodern,

since it is a direct consequence of modernity, as Lyotard considers the postmodern era the witness to collapse of great conventions which guard general laws. At any rate, there are three viewpoints in the Enlightenment program. The first view maintains that the achievements of the enlightenment and modernity, slight though they might be, should be preserved and refers to modernity, despite its shortcomings, as an unfinished project. It believes that the ideals of the Age of Enlightenment are still worth pursuance and can be corrected for their shortcomings. Hence, the Enlightenment actively seeks for realization of the infinite material progress and sociopolitical freedoms. Thus, this vision represents the longer colonial historical process through which a specific (European) posture was imposed as the measure of social progress at global scales. Within framework of such definition of modernity, the term 'modernization' after the World War II was applied by Americans to a form of social and economic development in the third world countries, which specifically followed the Western model of capitalism. Such limited definitions of modernity can be also found in the economic issues regarding future of the East Europe following collapse of Communism and in classical topics on religious fundamentalism. In sum it can be concluded that the concept of modernity is unbreakably tied to the contradictory cultural heritage of European colonialism, since if modernity is basically a temporal concept, then in its most complete form is only feasible based on spatial prerequisites, i.e. unification of the world under colonial leadership and governance which in general materializes the historical idea, so as the basic differentiation between European and non-European cultures leads to historical differentiation inside of the present time (Pin, 2003). It is this differentiation that makes Jean François Lyotard consider the modernity project in view of Jurgen Habermas still suppressive and self-alienating: prisoner of progress passion, still attached to the sole precept of liberating search and life coherent richness which subjects society to the leveling rational exigency, attached to the purpose of rational consensus which in fact suppresses irreducible diversity of lingual games and forms of living (Kossait and Abbe, 2006).

The second view belongs to postmodern philosophers who aim to pursue the things modernity has neglected as the achievements of the Age of Enlightenment and propose newer premises. Some of them do not consider post-modernity as the end of modernity and suppose an incipient state for it. In general, post-modernity can be regarded as a transition from the fundamental concepts, ideals and outlooks which since the Eighteenth century has guided the Western civilization through which has become universal. Lyotard considers postmodernism as perception of modernity plus the crises induced by it. A modernity which is not within the framework of rationality and totalitarian notion of historical process, but fundamental principles of the Enlightenment especially in Newton perception of nature, rationalism of Descartes and Kant, particularly in regard to individualism and the idea of progress and advancement as the prevailing doctrines influenced all philosophical, political and social issues and arguments in the West. In his book, *Libidinal Economy*, Lyotard criticizes the essence of modern rationality, modern theorization and in sum, modern doctrine and re-inspected the modern general tenets. Modernity, in view of Michel Foucault, in his late works, was a critical and ethical approach and declared the objectives which could not be achieved, but in the effort to achieve those objectives, a new opportunity was created for human. In his view, the Enlightenment put forward the idea of collective maturity and accountability, but didn't bring it to an end. Foucault's stand was similar to that of Habermas with this difference that Habermas in essence believes in progress and possibility of achieving the goal. In despair of Foucault, like that of Horkheimer and Adorno in dialectic of the Enlightenment, was not for yielding to the ruling power but for necessity of the present day struggle.

The third notion maintains an in-between standpoint and warns against the hasty interpretation of the enlightenment and its consequences and is of view that we can have more encouraging relation with the Enlightenment, yet with a positive description of postmodernism, it tries to reconcile itself with social developments and the life continuously interpreted issues as the indicators of human and world confusion. This view, in fact, by valuing the positive achievements of modernity and the Age of Enlightenment shows respect for the historical experiences of human which gradually in the course of time its defects and shortcomings will be improved lest mankind efforts goes lost in slaughter house of Enlightenment expiration imprudence. Here, the organizing human reason comes to the aid of the Enlightenment and its associated modernity.

In review of the above three viewpoints, the obvious point is that human ideas and views never ends and in the course of time it emerges in other periods. Hence, the Enlightenment and its achievements are always alive and present, as is the case with the cultural achievements of the ancient Greece which after lapse of twenty two centuries since 530-400BC leaves its imprint on Renaissance and during the religious reformation with emphasis on the same principles and again its reappearance in the Eighteenth century, in the Age of Enlightenment, and this time in a much wider scope of time and space extending all over Europe which in response to requirements of the time needed to be blown a new spirit. So, the enlightenment reengineered itself and proposed new solutions in the same cast which through interaction and collision of ideas succeeded in producing innovation and creativity and managed to realize new ideas. It is for this reason that the history ought to be understood and from its faults and dogmas lessons should be derived in order that future events not bring us back to the former place. Thus we should serious avoid hasty adherence to the Enlightenment and its results. Instead, by adopting an intermediate critical – corrective view, people should be relieved from perplexities and

one-sided emphasis on its incompleteness or expiration. Human historical experiences should be valued and profited from without going to extremes, and making full use of knowledge tools their inadequacies and defections ought to be improved and resolved, in order that human efforts won't go lost in the slaughterhouse of imprudence, because the mere negation or refutation is not an alternative. Instead, improvement of the human past experience can be profited from for efficiency of the present and future. In this way, without any bias and one-sidedness, mankind equipped with two wings of materiality and spirituality will be able to reach the final destination, and in this journey, avoiding ethnocentric attitudes will be the additional cause.

Conclusion:

In Enlightenment development, several factors were of influence. With growing expansion of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, many curiosities were aroused round science, industry, inventions, and other subjects raised by the French Encyclopediasts. Some philosophers consider the Enlightenment as the driver of the riotous forces which destroyed traditional sources of authority, stability and order. Due to their aloofness from the ordinary people, they could not comprehend that if their views came to their logical conclusion, confusion or even something worse could arise among masses of people.

Some others argue that Enlightenment gave rise to feeling of despair, aimlessness, and loneliness which are characteristics of the modern age. They maintain that the Enlightenment in place of emphasis on personal responsibility and social obligations unduly laid the stress on individual rights. Besides, the enlightenment philosophers were accused for undermining the faith in God and religion authority without a substitute to meet spiritual needs of most people.

The Enlightenment heritage was even the cause of indignation in some of the environmental activists who state its emphasis on progress and reason in the contemporary materialistic approach to nature has led to massive destruction of environment. They argue that the Enlightenment by contending all powers except reason has unleashed villainy and malfeasance.

Through merely rational justification of ethical principles, man separated ethics from science. He who once wanted to be wise, now only looks for knowledge. He worships not God but technology and sacrifices his fellow species before it. The industrial dehumanization, forced labor camps, atomic bombs all are the products of the Enlightenment value-free science. Subscribers to the Enlightenment argue that the Enlightenment ought to be viewed in the context of reality. What philosophers reacted to were the major social, political and economic defects of their time. Although reason and scientific method did not resolve all the social problems of the eighteenth century, yet they provided effective ways in dealing with these problems which still in present time have applications. They hoped for a better world which is founded on reason, senses, and respect for people rights. They maintain that Enlightenment managed to lead mind of the Western society to the doorway of new freedom. To the exclusion of all forms of religious and traditional authority and all the imaginable fears, it provided the ground for establishment the free inquisitive ethical system. It delineated a world in which mankind played the role of an eternal adventurer.

For two centuries, it seemed God to be speaking with mankind in a new language. This language, however, still speaks, though its outcomes proved the wish for an ideal human society an impossible dream, especially after experiencing the disastrous impacts of Fascism, Nazism and Stalinism which were concrete manifestation of its assumptions on authoritarianism and totalitarianism in the areas of culture, ideology and personality. So it made the new world look a world of value-free knowledge. As a result, when its principles came to be questioned by experts, the derived hopes and horrors from the French Revolution swept across Europe as the most profound spiritual and intellectual crisis. Division and conflicts became the meaning of a common resolution as the intellectual characteristic of the Enlightenment. Discontinuity (rupture?) and recommencement (restart?) found new expression in Romanticism and Hegel philosophy, so as by maneuvering of the art and art schools in package of the Enlightenment developments, this school of thought, as is put by some, became the ancestor of many Fascist, irrational and even backward (reactionary) and authoritarian regimes.

At any rate, the nineteenth century due to such paradigms as Socialism, Positivism, and Evolutionism which were conceived as truly modern did its best to remain loyal to the big principle, but practically was ensnared in the modern mentality and its performance and due to rejection of traditional values and incapability in filling the resulted value gap, also the reason saw itself unable in fulfillment of the final logical results of its criticism on the modern society beyond the Enlightenment self-destructive nature. People of the Enlightenment called themselves modern and were the first ones who thoroughly investigated its meaning. However, their modernity had a childish immaturity and innocence. From the revolution of 1789 to the white revolutions of 1989 and through the centuries of exploitation, colonialism, war and colonial domination, modernity was deplorably busy with massacres and terrors. And now in recent decades, philosophers have tried by calling themselves as postmodern to create a new concept of innocence and geniality and by stating that post-modernism is the modernism plus its consequent crises to distance themselves from the past misery, an approach which was again superficial and as much as modernity proved to be futile and fruitless. Those who warned against hasty judgment on the Enlightenment distrusted this movement, so as they conceived the manslaughters as the

predispositions of the modern Western society. In their view, the committed massacres by Nazis was not only the result of the industrial society technology, but also the Western bureaucratic system was the product of a bureaucratic culture which was based on the spirit of instrumental rationality and indifference to ethical and religious values.

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