

## Final Discussion

### **Erdal Yavuz:**

At last we are at the end of the workshop, after very interesting discussions and presentations. This will be an occasion for us to talk about and discuss once more certain issues that I think are very interesting for historians and social scientists. Now as far as I can discern, several themes emerged at the end of the meeting. One very important and current debate concerns the autonomy of the state, whether it has a real existence or has a certain mask of other constitutive factors such as the relations of production, etc. Within this theme the possible role of the state and ideology and other social practices, that is, the role of the political arena and the state as an institution in evaluating the problem of transition is of particular importance. A second interesting theme was the problem of uniqueness or specificity, that is the problem of transition and the problem of historical evolution, i.e. whether the Western evolution is unique, specific or part of a general trend. How can we then evaluate the place of the East and the West in that context? Another theme is the problem of image and reality which particularly emerged following Sayer's presentation on the limits of self-definition in the sense of reflecting the reality, historical attributes and the role of identities. Maybe we can add some other themes to those mentioned but I think it would be interesting to concentrate more or less on these points.

### **John Hall:**

Now that I have had the opportunity to hear about some of your feelings to do with the European experience, let me address a question to you [the audience] –concerned with the theme of European uniqueness and the question of imitation. The tendency of latecomers to copy the institutions of the leading state once led to copying parliaments and secularism, then to copying the Soviet Model, and most recently to copying the success of East

Asia. My question is whether you find anything in eighteenth century Britain that has relevance for Turkey, that might be copied here? Bluntly, it seems to me at first sight that this British experience is completely irrelevant for you. In particular, I note that Adam Smith's encapsulation of this experience as the triumph of commerce and liberty. Even though the fit between those two forces was not completely tight, it looks rather distinctively as if forced industrialisation –which is what most imitative industrialisation amounts to– rules out precisely this mix. But second thoughts suggest that there may be something about the British experience that does matter, and which does contain a general lesson. In the early eighteenth century, the British political elite learnt how to live with each other, how to contain their conflict within bounds, to regularise it in the form of party politics. The collective trauma of the civil wars produces moderation and compromise, and eventually bred the notion of a loyal opposition. Something like this seems to have happened in Chile, South Korea and Argentina. I would be interested to hear any of your reflections about this point.

**Fatma Mansur Coşar:**

When we adopted the Swiss civil code and repealed religious marriage which was done by the representatives of the two parties who signed a marriage contract, we added rights which had been lacking previously. This was established very early in the Republic, even so in the Turkish countryside marriages were done according to religious law. But we did not only take the marriage law, we also took the inheritance law. As a result the bride has the right to a more equal portion of the legacy than she had under religious law.

The new code was accepted in the countryside because under the new law the daughters would benefit materially much more in that way. This is a case where imitation or adoption of a law must be considered in an extra-legal context as well. So that the thing imitated acquires different dimensions than it had in its original context.

What is important is the way you interfere in the situation as it was before the imposition of the new law. Although what you do for one reason (i.e. equal rights of inheritance) gets accepted for another reason. But eventually there are deposits or residues in the society. The new civil marriage left a deposit of secularism regardless of its economic consequences.

**Derek Sayer:**

We need to distinguish between some set of general institutional, cultural

or other conditions for development and the particular causes of its happening in particular times and places. For example, Max Weber in his account of the rise of capitalism in the West lays particular emphasis on the Protestant ethic. He may be right or wrong about to what degree this was a cause in this particular case, but assume for the sake of argument that it was. He goes on to say this does *not* mean you have to have Protestantism before you can have capitalism, because what was critical about Protestantism was not its beliefs *per se*, but the kind of conduct on which it placed premiums –a methodical, rational, disciplined orientation to action, which he saw as fundamental to what he calls the rationalist economic ethic of modern capitalism. In other circumstances something other than Protestantism could give you this same outcome. So I think it is important to distinguish between the general conditions that might be present (I think John's argument is centrally directed toward identifying these) and the particular circumstances and ways in which these are secured in any specific case. I think the experience of England is inimitable, was not replicable, but I am not sure replicability as such is the issue.

**Fuat Keyman:**

I would like to link this point with Inan's opening remarks concerning the problem of thinking about history in terms of idealised typologies West versus non-West. I think the problem has to do with the fact that we, or at least those who are talking about uniqueness in a typological manner, tend to divide the world history in two parts; one is West and one is non-West. We tend to define them in terms of internal characteristics and the West becomes an area in which capitalism occur. Here the example is Britain. You are absolutely right that Britain is unique and not supposed to be or should not be exported. But history shows that it has been. There are two implications here. One is that the uniqueness thesis has a discursive element which draws a broad picture of the world, based on two typologies in which one typology becomes the centre of the world or becomes the way in which we think of the world and we tend to read the other world on the basis of the characteristics of this world. The West is unique; on the other hand, it is relational because the other part has been constructed on the basis of the characteristic of this uniqueness. Then how are we going to account for this, to what extent what we call unique is unique? Maybe we are not talking about uniqueness but we are talking about specificity. However, we do have to deal with the problem of relationality. This is also important for today's theories of globalisation, which pose the question on the basis of an idealised West and an idealised non-West, as if they are separated.

**Huri İslamoğlu-İnan:**

It appears that we are moving in the direction of some kind of consensus over the use of specificity and not uniqueness as a more appropriate term in addressing the concerns of the discussion here. Paul's paper this morning emphasised the truly specific character of England's development in the eighteenth century and therefore its inimitability. Yet this specific development was taking place in an international environment of military, political, economic competition among states. On the one hand, the specific development pattern that characterised England helped to recast this competitive environment which, I agree with Michael Mann, can be traced back to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and is not simply confined to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. On the other, the very existence of such a competitive environment was a factor in encouraging imitation. Of course, the interstate competition took place in the context of an expanding global market and the political-military aspirations of the states became inseparable from their abilities to build strong national economies which, in turn, was (and continues to be) a pre-condition for success in global markets. Of course, different states and national economies that came to be constituted –and I am talking of the success stories here, e.g. Germany, Italy, Japan in the nineteenth century; Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, perhaps China recently– each in the context of specific power relations, specific political cultures which came to be articulated in different ways with the exigencies of competition on the global scale. Now in this context what is it that gets imitated? Obviously it is not simply the technologies or the various institutions (e.g. organisation of armies or bureaucracies). Though such imitations are most visible, what is probably more significant is a conceptualisation, a thematisation of that what is to be attained or achieved.

Now when one looks at Germany during the nineteenth century when this area sought to catch up with England, what is striking is the intensity of the drive to do so. German social thinking of the nineteenth century is replete with expressions of anxiety over Germany's predicament, over its underdevelopment. No wonder that in *The German Ideology* Marx sounded very much like a Third World intellectual, possibly an Indian, of the 1960s and 1970s. But catching up involved a conceptual construction of that which is to be imitated, caught up with. Probably Max Weber's work is the best example of this kind of conceptualisation. In Weber's categories or ideal types one finds a set of very impressive mental constructs defining the boundaries of modernity in terms of its different institutional forms, in terms of the general conditions conducive to its development (e.g. Protestant ethics). Of course, in Weber's conception modernity and capitalist

development did not exist separately; nor were they linked by some kind of a crude causal logic; they described the one and the same historical condition. To this point we might return later. But what is important is that Weber's general categories were to serve as reference points for late-developers; they consisted of the image that late-developers had of what was involved in development. The issue of specificity of historical development paths did not concern M. Weber. I am sure he would not have rejected it if confronted with it. Nor was it his problem to map out a single developmental trajectory. He was simply interested in the logic, general conditions of the modern experience. On the other hand, I do not believe that Weber meant for his ideal types to get in the way of understanding historical complexities in different regions.

**Derek Sayer:**

I am curious about the ideal-types of capitalism developed by Karl Marx and Max Weber. Actually they fit the English case very badly. Take Weber's work and just go through it briefly. He emphasises rational law. Whether the English legal system is rational is debatable, and certainly it was never rationally codified. England in the earlier periods of capitalist development never had anything like a developed bureaucracy by comparison with continental European states. Weber stresses the Calvinistic form of Protestantism, England had a weakly Protestant Anglican state church. Weber stresses the importance of free urban communes during the Middle Ages as carriers of bourgeois values, England had few large cities at all outside of London, by comparison with France, Germany or Italy, and urban communes had less autonomy than in most of Europe because of the strength of the medieval English crown. Marxists have a similar problem in identifying anything in English history that might plausibly be called a 'bourgeois revolution'. They tried with the 1640's, in my view not very successfully. Marx stresses the progressive role of absolutism in breaking down feudal relations in France; England never had a developed absolutism. And so on. So we get this gap between our knowledge of what actually happened in the acknowledged 'classic ground' of capitalism and our ideal-types of what the general conditions of a functioning capitalism are supposed to be. This is exactly the point Huri İnan is making, the theorising is based on the experience of late developers and does not fit the initial case. I think the point is an important one, because it suggests that the value of the ideal-types is limited and may be based on inappropriate examples from which to generalise. Earlier I mentioned Japan, which reinforces the argument from another point of view. In the case of Japan you have a clearly prosperous,

decidedly capitalist, and obviously modern society which doesn't look like English modernity, German modernity or American modernity. Perhaps there are a variety of forms of modernity, which we can best illuminate only by studying each case, Japan, England, whatever, in its particularity. I think this would validate what Huri is saying. there are a variety of roads and, I would add, a variety of destinations.

**Huri İslamoğlu-İnan:**

How? A question to Derek. Do you agree that what England did in India it did in the German way rather than the English way? The striking example would be that of codification.

**Derek Sayer:**

The only place the English Common Law was codified –something radicals in England itself had been unsuccessfully struggling for at least a century– was in India. The modern Civil Service, with competitive exams, and so on, was pioneered in India also.

**Huri İslamoğlu-İnan:**

Then, in order to operate in the colonies England had to adopt the categories, or the *modus operandi* of the 'latecomers'?

**Paul Langford:**

Modernity is a very troublesome concept, and prone to circularity. Thinking in terms of the eighteenth century debate certain propositions seem important. The first is that things can get better for every one in the long-run. The second is that things get better in a way that can be ultimately related to non-material welfare, or what the eighteenth century called happiness. The late eighteenth century statements of declarations of rights of man depend on this assumption. Thirdly, there is the notion that states can consciously advance that process either by imitation or by forcing imitation on others. These ideas seem to me not to be characteristic of Western Christian culture before the Enlightenment.

**Fuat Keyman:**

I have a question to İnan and Sayer. If I understood you correctly, there is an attempt to establish certain linkage between capitalism and modernity.

If modernity is something that latecomers attempt to construct out of the peculiar experiences of British case, then we are establishing certain relationships between capitalism and industrial revolution, between emergence of capitalism and modernity. But, if I refer to Kant, we can say that modernity provides an attitude, modernity provided a formation on which or within which capitalism was made possible. So in this sense we should discuss also the role of modernity for the emergence of capitalism.

**Derek Sayer:**

What did Kant say on modernity?

**Fuat Keyman:**

Kant's "What is Enlightenment?" argues that modernity is a discursive, formative, cultural formation within which capitalism occurs. It is not simply that capitalism occurred in Britain and then in the latecomers.

**Banu Helvacıoğlu:**

Before I elaborate on this question, I would like to put some of the above-mentioned questions in a context. Yesterday morning the debate started with Hall's paper which took us roughly from eleventh century till eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and we travelled from China to Europe. Also yesterday, Derek Sayer posed a number of questions, one of which was: "when was modernity?" This whole theme about the specificity or the uniqueness of the European experience emerged out of this heated debate. Today, we are following the same path in terms of introducing, among other issues, the issue of labour and pinning down (the history of) England as the crux of the debate. To continue the discussion by means of Sayer's approach to modernity, he suggests to look at the West from the purview of the West, instead of making a distinction between East and West or Orientalism and Occidentalism. Sayer now raises the possibility of Occidentalism in approaching the question of the specificity of Europe. The example he used yesterday was the construction of the image of Prague and the material construction of the city in terms of architecture, culture and nationalism which he now raises within the context of the possibility of Occidentalism. It seems to me that we are still dancing around the idea of the uniqueness and Paul Langford raised the question of modernity again.

Now my question is this: why are we dealing with these questions, what is the purpose of raising these questions? I would like to go back to Huri

Inan's opening remarks yesterday about rewriting the history in relation to the notion of contingency as an alternative to historical determinism and essentialism. We have not discussed this issue, as far as I can see. Why is this questioning? It is not because we have three gentlemen from England who happen to be experts on England. There is something else that's going on. In the circles I belong to, the whole project of modernity is being questioned, mainly because the notion of history that we learn in high schools or the (conventional) understanding of modern history do not help to explain the current disorder in the world. This is one reason why a number of people are revisiting the past and are saying "By the way, what was going on in the past? Let's dig it deeper because there is some disjunction between the present disorder and what was told/written about the past". To be more specific, more concrete, there has been the unfulfilled promise of modernity, or better to say, unfulfilled promises of ever-growing expansionism in terms of prosperity, unfulfilled promises of the Enlightenment in terms of reason and rationality, and so on. As an illustration of where reason and rationality failed, just look around the world: the regional and local wars. There is also another reason why modernity is being questioned, something which we have not mentioned so far. That is, modernity has been experienced differently by people who were colonised. Now these people are saying "O.K., now let's go over the report card of modernisation from our point of view". Going back to Paul Langford's question about constructing the history in the present, there has been a construction process from the point of view of the cultural activities of colonised peoples in terms of their language, dance, music, theatre, etc. Now how can we pursue these questions in the context of what has been discussed here so far? I will go back to Keyman's comment that modernity predated capitalism. Once again, there have been two themes that are debated simultaneously. I am referring to Hall's paper and Keyman's comments. I spend considerable amount of time in trying to figure out the problematic relationship between modernism and postmodernism, modern and postmodern. I will skip postmodernism because the issues in that regard are complicated, but if you look at the debate here we are still unclear as to what constitutes modernity. I would like to mention only the main topics that have been raised in broader debates which also tackle the question of when modernism was.

**Derek Sayer:**

Modernism or modernity?



**Banu Helvacıoğlu:**

Modernity, when was modernity? We are looking for a date and a stable reference point: when did it start and where did it start? Until now we have focused on the development of capitalism in England which is one connotation of modernity. If you look at the same question from another point of view, one can identify the emergence of modernity with colonialism. So we go back to the fifteenth century. If we follow that up, it takes us to a totally different interpretation and questioning. Then, there is the question of liberal democracy as the origin of modernity, if we pursue that issue, our starting point is different. So England does not have to be the starting point. In the case of North America, for example, these questions have been debated in the most ethnocentric way in the context of the foundation of the United States of America. Thus, what we have is shifting points of origin, and that is fine. But, in my view the most problematic issue concerns the Enlightenment. If we take the Enlightenment as the starting point of modernity, how far do we go back in history? What is Enlightenment? Reason, rationality, individualism, etc. Where did these ideas come from? Did they drop from the sky? Where did the notions of rationality and reason come from? We start digging the past deeper. That is what I did this past summer. I had the luxury of doing that. I revisited the Greek civilisation and the foundations of math and logic. In certain theoretical circles, this is how modernity is being debated. If we take the Enlightenment as a reference point and the Greek civilisation as the starting point, we then ask the question of where logic in Greek thought comes from. It did not develop in thin air. In pursuit of this question, I revisited the Babylon civilisation. This is all to reiterate two related points: one, the issue of the origin of modernity takes us to different places, and two, modernity need not be identified with the development of capitalism in England. That only gives us only one version of modernity and in my view a narrow version of what modernity has been all about. The reason why we ask the questions of origins is not to provide another interpretation, but to rewrite the past in the present on the bases of different understandings. I would like to briefly mention the issue of alternative interpretations and History, with a capital H. Alternative interpretations of history, based on different experiences, have been marginalised by a single, uniform understanding of the past, i.e., by History with a capital H. Now we are in the process of constructing alternatives, that is why it is important to revisit different origins. Thank you.

**John Hall:**

I would like to make some general comments on the question of imitation. In Eastern Europe one constantly hears that they chose the wrong model of modernity to develop, and this does indeed seem to be true. But beyond this, things become very complicated. For one thing, there are very many variables that seem to be in operation, but it is very hard to work out which is the most important given that there are not enormous numbers of success stories. For another, what fits in one place does not work elsewhere. I remember Ron Dore, the sociologist of Japan, on one occasion noting that it would be possible and desirable for Britain to copy some institutional elements pioneered in Japan, but that it would be a mistake for the United States, with a very different political culture and economy, even to try to do so. As it happens, my own hunch is that there is something to be said for historical determinism. It is easier for a country with a state tradition to modernise than it is for one not so blessed: change is hard, and trying to change everything, to invent everything from scratch, is supremely difficult.

**Huri İslamoğlu-İnan:**

A small comment which may serve as a corrective to the increasingly abstract turn the discussion has taken. First, I sense a crystallisation of voices of two generations, perhaps. I hesitate to identify those voices as those of the older and the younger generations since the older generation may include myself and I am definitely not accustomed to be part of older anything. That aside, my sense is that some here, whom I will call the members of the young generation for the sake of convenience, seem to have a highly mystified idea of what modernity is coupled with a strong feeling of disappointment because modernity failed to live up to this mystified image. I suggest that we be a little more realistic, shall I say concrete, in talking about modernity. Modernity is not simply an abstraction, an idea; its history is inseparable from that of capitalism which, among other things, constitute one of the most effective ways of mobilising the resources of nature in the service of human needs. Here I am talking about the 'technical dimension' of the modernist project which involves not simply the introduction of new technologies or devices (forces of production in the Stalinist sense) but also certain ways of thinking that rendered the continual search for knowledge, instrumentalised in service of man, to be a centrepiece of societal ordering. An upshot of this process has been unprecedented expansions in food production whereby many more millions of people are fed in the late nineteenth century than it was possible to imagine as late as the eighteenth

century. Similarly, as a result of technological advances in the form of vaccinations etc., at no time in known history of man, infant mortality rates have been as low as they are right now. In this sense, one could think of modernity as something which delivers results. Thus, one might argue that the English case attracted attention because it worked, it delivered results in the form of increased productivities, in the form of cheap and expanded production of manufactured cloth the export of which made England a prosperous island. How to create wealth, how to expand productive capacity were issues which no one in the nineteenth century took for granted (there were not many postmodernists around then). Yet, it was not exactly clear how England did it, it was not done according to a set formula, the English had a 'rule of thumb' way of doing things, it was said. Whatever it was, though, the English way set some sort of a pattern, lay the groundwork for imitating the ways of creating wealth through economic enterprise and therefore of generating political might.

I am not suggesting that modernity can simply be reduced to technical or practical knowledge. But that dimension of it is certainly important in commending it, in legitimating it.

On the other hand, the quest for technical knowledge also gave us the atomic bomb which in a world locked in war resulted in the destruction of millions of persons. Finally, I should also mention that, given the kinds of property and production relations that characterise capitalism, not all partakes in the fruits of modernity in an equitable manner. Millions are deprived of the basic means of livelihood in the ghettos of world metropolises and in Africa. So are the contradictions of modernity project: it delivers, it holds the promise to deliver to all (given its ability to mobilise vast natural and human resources), but at the same time in order to reproduce itself as a system based on private ownership it has to exclude so many from its promise.

**Fatma Mansur Coşar:**

When we say modernism we go back to the Enlightenment period, go back to what is called "*la querelle des anciens et des modernes*" where rationalism was what we are talking about, when there was the idea that man can construct the world with his reason without an extra-human intervention, without any kind of meta-idea coming to help. What we call modernism is the early eighteenth century rationalism, which is still the main component of what today we call modernism. For them, modernism and rationalism were the one and the same thing. The French revolutionaries substituted supreme reason for supreme deity. Now later on it is true that this thing was modified

when people began to find out more about biology, psychology, evolution and so on. It was also realised that it is not reason only that makes things work. It was rationality that made possible the reconstruction of the physical and the intellectual worlds. For instance, when people discovered the circulation of the blood, then social theory immediately thought of the human being as a kind of mechanistic construct. You have that attempt all the time to equate the workings of reason with the working of society. This is a break; this is the eighteenth century, this is rationalisation, this is modernity. It is a convention that I think we must accept otherwise there will be confusion if we begin to find another name for this.

**Derek Sayer:**

The claim has been made, at least, that there was a link between the cult of reason and the guillotine that was operating in Paris at the same time. It is not just a matter of coincidence.

**Fatma Mansur Coşar:**

The guillotine was operating without reason. The guillotine has always operated. It is a product of technology –reason has nothing to do with it.

**Derek Sayer:**

No, the guillotine is a new, improved, *scientific* method of execution.

**Paul Langford:**

Going back to Hall's very forceful argument, I agree hundred percent, no society realistically is going to be able to stop its citizens from having television sets. That is a fundamental thing. But ought there not be some other intellectual or even aesthetic component of modernity? The consumer mentality is all that counts. We have to recognise that it is also there in pre-capitalism. In fact, consumer mentality existed among cave dwellers. But this is a long way from explaining the cultural tensions of modern capitalism. England and France in the twelfth century witnessed a great literary and philosophical battle between 'ancients' and 'moderns' which confronted the new scientific learning of the period. Intellectuals had to decide what they thought of as modern and to what extent they will endorse it. For such people the following century was a time of profound questioning and debate in which commercialism was only one issue. Is there a Turkish word for such people? What did you use in the past to mean anything different or to mean

what the West achieved at a certain point so you had to catch up with it?

**Fatma Mansur Coşar:**

We use the word contemporary. When you look at empires in history, somewhere an empire starts, begins to spread and is successful. It establishes itself and its establishment becomes legitimate. Then it links with a certain amount of innovations and is able to maintain itself. We see that at a certain moment of history a political entity became particularly successful and as a consequence becomes part of the consciousness of those who were not included in the original process. In other words, a successful civilisation, that is momentarily successful, spreads as a model and this model is definitely more or less successfully adopted according to whether or not it [the adopter] is nearer or further to the centre of the said civilisation.

**Banu Helvacioğlu:**

What I am talking about is not simply a matter of lexicon and different usage of the term. We are working as a team here to give a precise history of what we understand by modernity. I do not wish to take up a lot of time. If you are interested we can carry on the debate after this session. When I talk about questioning the Enlightenment project, what is at stake are reason and rationality, and when we pin it down, it is logic, when we go further it is truth. These are all within the realm of 'modern thought'. The main premise of modern thought is the search for truth and the assumption is that truth/reality can be transcended. There are different ways of approaching modern thought. It originated from the Greek thought, but as a result of the interaction with non-Western thinking at the time. I do not want to pursue that issue. The reason why I bring up the question of origin once again now is to raise some specific political, social and cultural implications of how science at the present works. In other words, we are not simply dealing with, and we are not in the habit of confusing people by coming up with different definitions. We are dealing with concrete problems, the problem we are questioning is science and from a theoretical standpoint we revisit logic. To respond to Huri İnan I am proud to say that I am not the youngest one here. I have brought my students. I hope they carry on the discussion and tell us what they think about modernity, and whether or not they share sceptical or optimistic scenarios. I would like to hear from them, but I would also like to make myself clear. To me, the question of modernity is not an issue of personal likes or dislikes. I do not discuss these things as if I am talking about a soccer game and say "they are doing really well". I would like to

remind you of some incidences which you may not have thought of in the context of questioning modernity. I would like to take you to 1992, which was an eventful year. In 1992, there was the OKA incident –the confrontation between a small group of aboriginal people and the police in the southern part of Quebec in Canada. Turkish TV covered the incident. You may have seen it on TV. The main reason for the confrontation, and it was a physical, violent confrontation, was that the area that was believed to be a religious, sacred territory for aboriginal people was going to be appropriated by a private company to build a golf course. Appropriation of the land was granted under the authority of Quebec government. This was a struggle over a specific location and I am bringing OKA as a symbol. There have been numerous confrontations with regard to specific territories that used to belong to certain people. In the case of aboriginals, the contested issue is not private property, but their sense of belonging. They claim that the area is theirs. Canada is not unique in this regard. Similar confrontations have been going on in Australia and New Zealand. Furthermore, these confrontations do not only concern the confrontation between aboriginal people and so-called white majority (or minority depending on the situation). It is also a question of organisation and we have a series of problems arising out of that. Second, there are a number of environmental movements from all over the world, not just simply Greenpeace, not just simply those based in North America. On environment, more and more people in North America are demanding an environment where their kids will not have asthma or allergic reactions. These issues are being posed in terms of questioning the report card of progress. What we call progress is this progress: "I want my kids to be healthy". Talking about health, there is AIDS, which need to be reconsidered in the context of progress. We want progress, yes, but, there is AIDS, which puts modernity/progress/science under scrutiny in another dimension. 1992 was also the year of Los Angeles riots. How do we forget? If we are talking about scepticism, it is in the context of both forgetting and of what we see on our TV monitors. I am not going to mention the Gulf War in order not to get into a debate on nationalism. So, please remember, I am just giving three examples –OKA, environment and Los Angeles riots– to at least make us think about the progress report of modernity. Again I am repeating; to me progress is not a question of personal like or dislike. To add to Huri İnan's list of performances and accomplishments of modernity; yes, as a result of vaccination fewer people are dying .

**One of the listeners:**

Huri İnan said modernity works, people are getting more vaccination,

they are having more TV sets and everything but how about democracy, how about participation? Democracy did not work so we have postmodernism. So they are creating all these new concepts and everything. It did not work. It did not work in the Middle East, it did not work in Africa, it did not work in South America. They might get more vaccination but they do not participate. They participate less and less. So, modernity, modernity theories did not work in the world. That is why young generations have to rethink it, they have to recreate modernity theories or postmodernity theories or whatever. So, I personally do care that more people get more vaccination but my real concern is how much people participate in the Middle East. How about democracy?

**Fuat Keyman:**

I would like to further Banu's point in a different direction. Two years ago I had participated in a panel on the changing nature of comparative politics. The panel was an attempt to search for a 'new comparative politics' in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and thus of the so-called Second World. This development rendered completely untenable the three-worlds ideology that had dominated the comparative politics textbooks and made it necessary for us to develop new methodologies. The fact that dividing the world into typologies of the first, the second, and the third worlds was no longer possible, brought about the need to do comparative politics by linking it with modernity, by unearthing the ethnocentric nature of the three-worlds ideology, and by asking questions about the impact of modernity on our understanding of other societies, states and peoples. As we pose the question of the nature of comparison in a changing world, we are faced with two positions, or two ontological choices. Either we take modernity for granted, as does Francis Fukuyama, and argue for the end of history which means that liberal democracy and market have become universalised; or we can develop a critical standpoint on modernity, question its hegemonic operation which reduces difference to sameness. The latter choice entails that we take seriously those positions that aim to demonstrate the essentialist operation of the grand narratives of modernity such as Marxism and Liberalism. The positions, including feminism, postmodernism, post-colonialism, attempt to problematise the taken-for-granted assumptions that think of modernity in terms of citizenship, that link democracy, capitalism, and modernity together, and that marginalise sexual, racial and ethnic differences.

In this sense, I don't think that taking the second position and raise the question of modernity as that which needs a critical examination can be characterised as a concern of a young generation by making a distinction between old and new. What the second position does is not to pose postmodernity as a new epoch or to privilege it over the so-called old modernist attitudes. It is rather a critical standpoint, a problematising attitude that aims at disturbing those claims to knowing which assume that we need a centre or a coherent identity to make sense of the world in which we live.

**Huri İslamoğlu-İnan:**

As much as we would like to see an aboriginal, a gay person and a black person around this table, I would also like to see a person from one of the shanty towns in Ankara here with us. It appears that there are certain problems which become fashionable at a given point in time and so now it has to be ecological, gay, aboriginal, that is, it has to be *different* to merit any discussion. Besides, these groups so long as they can retain the quality of being newsworthy without really touching upon fundamental issues such as profits, property rights, vital security interests, they are frequently paraded on CNN and thereby attract global attention. But those of us who take the time to watch the less glamorous local TV stations, are exposed to conflicts of another order which do not originate out of the ills brought upon us by modernity but are fought over shares in goods modernity (e.g. in the form of private ownership rights) promises to deliver. What I have in mind is a news story aired recently on Turkish television about an armed confrontation in Istanbul between the shanty town dwellers and officials from the municipality who were assigned the task of evicting from their shacks the residents who are for the most part migrants from rural areas. The screen was blistering with images of shanty town dwellers attacking with kitchen knives and sticks the police who accompanied the municipal officials. Now these lands on which the shacks are built belong to the Treasury and the shanty town dwellers who use their political leverage with the city government as well as through armed resistance, are trying to establish rights of absolute ownership over the land. But this is not simply a fight over having your own private little house, it is a fight over acquiring absolute private rights over land, which has become prime urban property, so as to be able to built large apartment complexes, most probably in collaboration with the local real estate mafia. So what we have here is a story of not challenging modernity, in terms of the environmental problems additional housing in the city entails, especially if this means sacrificing the green area on which the shanty town houses are presently built. Instead we have the shanty town population trying



to have a piece of the cake of modernity. Can we ignore these people, their aspirations because they happen to be not visibly *different*? Can we ignore them because their demands are not particularly chic? Can we ignore the modernity of their demands?

When I talked about the 'technical achievements' of the modernist project, I did so with the intention of bringing the discussion down to earth, to bring it down to the level of the actual hopes and aspirations of large numbers of people. On another level, I would be more than willing to talk about democracy and participation and would be willing to do so in the context of conflicts and contradictions that are inherent to the modernity project. In that relation, one could talk about the problematic relationship between capitalism (which I take to be inseparable from the experience of modernity) and democracy in light of historical examples, most dramatically that of Germany in the 1930s. One could also ask how real is democratic participation in the so-called havens of democracy, those havens of pluralist democracy such as the USA. For that matter anywhere else. Or ask if democracy is simply the appearance of representatives of the different ethnic or gender groupings, exhibiting in human forms the colours of the rainbow in nightly news programmes. The answers to these questions could then be posed in relation to how our political, as well as economic choices, are shaped by the highly commercialised environments that constitute our living spaces; they may also be posed in terms of how the media industry shapes the ways in which we think of pluralism and participation. Finally, such answers may point to the ways our plasticised worldviews may be the true obstacles to democracy and participation. In short, I am talking about adopting a stance that is really critical of modernity. Such a critique is too important to be left to a group of academics who deal in postmodernist jargon. To do justice to such a critique we could take as our starting point the critical theorists, especially those of the Frankfurt school, and, of course, Habermas.

**John Hall:**

Paul Langford asked us a question about modernity. Can modernity provide us with moral values? It is certainly the case that one moral order designed to go with modernity, namely Marxism, has failed. This seems to me no accident. Central to modernity is rational science, and it seems to me that the experts in this world manage their work without much moral certainty. One does not see them packing up their instruments in the midst of a moral crisis imputed to our condition by many modern social philosophers. As it happens, I would wish to go a little further to challenge

Paul Langford's general ingratitude for a rather dull world of affluence. "Consumers of the world unite!" does not sound romantic, but it has a certain ring to me all the same. Further, there may be some link between affluence and political decency in the long run. Certainly waves of democratisation have slowly –very slowly– increased the number of liberal states, and any account of that would have to include the pressures those states came under as the result of living in an open world. Beyond this, however, it seems to me crucial to note that there are contradictions within modernity. One drive can be towards homogenising national space, something which would make my own city, Montreal, less multinational and less varied. Another drive can be that to tolerance and diversity. Which of these drives gains the upper hand is one of the questions of the age.

**One of the listeners:**

Maybe they need another package. Maybe they are going to find another way to modernise or whatever.

**Derek Sayer:**

There are several things that need to be said. Some of this debate about modernity –as contrasted either with the 'pre-modern' or the 'post-modern'– recalls to me a problem I had with another dichotomy, that between 'core' and 'periphery'. I found it impossible to sustain that dichotomist language in which one part of the world was happily satisfied, heavily consuming, and the other part utterly deprived. If you go to New York, Los Angeles or any other major city in North America you will find the periphery in the very centre of the core. Conversely, I have rarely been treated so lavishly, in terms of being waited on, driven around by other people who wait until past midnight to take me home while I am happily chatting, drinking, smoking and generally enjoying myself. On my income I would never have that experience in North America, only somewhere like Turkey. I have difficulties with dichotomies.

So, there seems to be a general attempt here to construct what we might call a check-list of characteristics by which we might define modernity. To this Huri brought a certain emotional passion. I have no disagreements over the issue of vaccination, but we have probably never killed so many people as in this century either. Nor we have previously developed such supremely rationalised, technically sophisticated and morally neutral ways of doing that. Did you watch CNN during the Gulf War? It was beautiful. There was this thing called a 'smart bomb', and it was as if smart bomb equates with smart

people, and this in itself proves our moral superiority over the people on whom we are dropping these bombs. I raised the issue earlier of whether there was any connection between the French Revolution's cult of reason and the guillotine. I do *not* think it was mere coincidence. One of the things that science does –and Max Weber wrote about this too in 'Science as a Vocation'– is to systematically remove whole areas of life from the domain of moral or religious discourse; it demoralises, it technologises, it is precisely an instrumental reason. It offers no moral guidance for action, but it enormously enhances the reach and power of that action.

Alongside everybody being able to watch wars live on CNN, and the shanty towns, I would like to put another image of modernity, and for me it is an absolutely a central one. The image is the Holocaust, the rationalised extermination. There is a book called *Modernity and the Holocaust* by Zygmunt Baumann, hardly a member of the younger generation, which raises exactly the same questions as I am trying to. He argues that the Holocaust was not just an 'ordinary' genocide. It is not just the traditional European pogrom of Jews on a rather larger scale. The whole way in which it was organised, its rational-bureaucratic logic in Weber's terms, was one that distanced people from the consequences of their action or therefore any necessity to take any personal responsibility for it, and *such distancing and demoralisation* is fundamental to modernity as such. It is intrinsically connected with its means-ends calculative logic, its instrumental rationality. Rationality is not just an instrument, when rationality becomes embedded in forms of social organisation it has real social consequences. Frankly at the end of the day I do not care if I am the only Western intellectual in the world who has doubts about this logos of modernity. I do. Modernity is not an unmixed blessing. And I think that under these conditions to offer modernity as a simple recipe which everybody must emulate and assume the real problem is to decide how we are going to emulate it –another merely technical, empirical question– is intellectually irresponsible.

As to the issue of defining what we mean by modernity, I dislike the whole process of ostensive definition. That was part of what I was trying to get at yesterday when I argued the virtues of looking at one place in detail and looking out from there, rather than immediately positioning ourselves at some higher level of abstraction. But yes, I do see rationalism, which to me does involve the denial of difference, contempt for the particular, intolerance of ambiguity, as part of the problem. That does not lead me to a position of nihilism, as is often charged against 'postmodernism'. But it *does* lead me to a position of humility and guardedness with regard to the pretensions of the intellect, even though I am an intellectual. And this is particularly so in

regard to intellectuals's prescriptions for social action and politics. Totalising social theories all too often seem to require totalitarian methods to whip the world into line with their representations, just as the cult of reason needed the guillotine. Perhaps this is because they cannot address complexities, ambiguities, nuances, multiplicities, disorder, their very logicity puts them at odds with the world they seek to encompass. This was again something not mentioned so far. Somebody earlier gave an analysis of why postmodernist modes of thought are emerging now. I would add what I think is one very important reason, which is the collapse of what for over a century had been the major alternative discourse of 'liberation', Marxism in one or another of its variants. This discourse was based on claims to *know* history, to be *able* to know history. And on that basis to be able to rationally *control* where we are going. If I were to come up with a single definition of modernity it would be in terms of this belief in the possibility of bringing the future under the control of reason, whether that be in the natural or the social world.

I am simply trying to bring out complexities and pose them against what I see as the necessary simplifications in most social theorising. A simplification intrinsic to the movement to ever higher levels of generality and abstraction, which we see as explanation.

**Fuat Keyman:**

What I was talking about was not based on a complete disagreement with what Habermas says about modernity, or with the idea that modernity is linked with capitalism and democracy. Of course this diagnosis of modernity is true and a postmodern standpoint that does not see the importance of capitalism for an understanding of modernity would be untenable, or partial at its best. However, that does not mean that we should accept the way in which Habermas thinks of modernity and democracy. Instead, what we should do is to start with a critical standpoint on the very concepts of democracy and capitalism and proceed by problematising the way they are defined and put into service in modernity. In other words, I take seriously feminist, postmodern and post-colonial interventions concerning the way we talk about democracy. Listening to them is important insofar as they show us how liberal democracies work by eliminating differences and by locating citizen identity at the centre of the concept of democracy. More importantly, listening to them enables one to recognise the very complexities that these concepts involve, which is, I think, what Habermas's defense of modernity needs to do.

**David Marler:**

I was actually a little startled by the sudden jink, induced by Banu, in the course of what has been a lively conference. And it seems to me to illustrate beautifully the fact that history is always about the present. We are always rewriting it in terms of the present. We are always criticising, reshaping in terms of the perceived relevance of the past to the present. We began the conference with Huri İnan arguing vigorously against the presentation of idealised categories of West versus East; dynamic Occident against the static Orient. We proceeded to an analysis of the possible reasons for northwestern Europe and specifically Britain being the home of the first take-off of industrialisation. From there I think we went on to a kind of check-list of how one might repeat the act, and the interesting point that Derek made that possibly the check-lists were related not to the original model which did not fit the check-list but to the countries which had subsequently tried to repeat the experiment. Now we can come to a discussion about whether the experiment is worth repeating. It is a rather interesting parallel to, let us say, the invention of Masada by the Israelis in the 1960s, the creation of something which was on the face of it purely archaeological but in practice was all about building a modern nation-state today. Or indeed what is in present company is a slightly more controversial example: I know a Greek Cypriot scholar who is actually an honorary fellow of the Oxford College (which I attended) and who was terribly excited when he dug out a *kebab* skewer dating from remote antiquity with an inscription in the Arcadian dialect of Greek. This seemed to him to validate his political position today that Cyprus is, was, and always shall be Greek. In the same way we can come back to argue about everything from AIDS to Canadian Indian burial sites. The dry-as-dust history, in fact is infused by our present passions and I suppose that is what made last couple of days such a stimulating experience.

**Huri İslamoğlu-İnan:**

Now it is time to thank. John, Derek, Paul, thank you very much for being here. You have made the last two days most exciting for us all. We needed the intellectual stimulation, we were obviously getting a little rusty.