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The Enlightenment and Its Effects on Modern Society

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Contents

1 Liberty, Life, and Happiness for All: The Ideals and Legacies of the Enlightenment in Modern Societies Revisited	1
Introduction	1
Modern Democratic Society and the Enlightenment	1
Modern Democratic Values and Institutions and the Enlightenment	3
The Process and Outcome of the Enlightenment	7
Destruction of Old, Creation of New, Social Values, and Institutions	7
Appendix: <i>The General Concept of Enlightenment</i>	14
2 Modern Democratic Society and the Enlightenment	19
The Children of the Enlightenment	19
The Modern Concept of Liberty and the Enlightenment	24
The Ideal and Legacy of the Enlightenment	24
Enlightenment Liberalism – The Principle of Liberty	28
Universal Liberalism – “Liberty for All”	30
Individualism and the Enlightenment	34
Enlightenment vs. Other Individualism	35
Liberal Individualism	39
Social Equality and Justice and the Enlightenment	43
Enlightenment vs. Non-Enlightenment Egalitarianism and Inclusion	44
Social Universalism and the Enlightenment	48
Cosmopolitanism	50
Social Progress, Optimism, and Pacifism and the Enlightenment	52
Social Progress	52
Optimism and Hope	55
Pacifism	59
Human Happiness in Society and the Enlightenment	61
3 The Enlightenment and Western Civilization	67
The Enlightenment and Contemporary Civilization	67
The Enlightenment and Stages in Western Civilization	67

The Highest Point in the Quest for Human Liberty, Equality, Justice, Life, and Happiness?	72
Cultural Revolution in Modern Society	77
The Creative Destruction of Traditionalism	79
The Creation of Liberal-Democratic Modernity.....	84
The Creative Destruction of Feudalism and the Medieval World.....	86
The Enlightenment as the Dual Destroyer-Creator.....	89
Generalized “Copernican Revolution” in Society.....	93
How the Modern West Was Won?	99
4 The Enlightenment and Modern Culture	107
The Enlightenment as Cultural Revolution.....	107
“Creative Destruction” in Culture.....	107
The “Rationalistic Renaissance”.....	115
Light, Reason, and Liberation vs. Darkness, Superstition, and Subjugation	119
The Enlightenment Legacy of Human Reason and Social Progress.....	128
Rationalist and Progressive Legacies.....	133
Liberal-Democratic Legacies.....	141
The Enlightenment as Revolution in Science, Knowledge, and Education	150
Liberation and Well-Being Through Science, Knowledge, and Education	152
The Program of Intellectual Freedom.....	160
The Foundation of Modern Social Science.....	165
5 The Enlightenment and Politics	169
The Enlightenment as Proxy Political Revolution	169
The Enlightenment vs. the Ancien Regime	169
The Enlightenment and the New Politics	176
Modern Democracy vs. Traditional Theocracy	182
The Enlightenment and Liberal-Secular Democracy.....	184
The Enlightenment and Modern Democratic Revolutions	190
The Political Legacies of the Enlightenment	196
The Legacy of Political Liberties and Human Rights.....	196
The Legacy of Religious Freedom, Tolerance, and Pluralism.....	203
The Enlightenment vs. Intolerance and “Holy” War	207
Universal vs. Partial Political-Religious Liberties.....	217
6 The Enlightenment, Civil Society, and Economy	225
The Enlightenment as a Civic Revolution	225
Civil Society vs. Civitas Dei.....	225
The Enlightenment vs. the Protestant Reformation.....	231
The Agent Provocateur of the Conservative Anti-Enlightenment	235
The Enlightenment and the Creation of Modern Civil Society	237
Civic Innovation.....	237

The Human Life-World and the “Holy”	241
The Enlightenment and Sacred-Secular Differentiation.....	245
The Enlightenment and Modern Secular Humanism.....	252
Enlightenment Humanism and the Penal System for Sinners-Criminals.....	255
The Enlightenment as a Proxy Economic Revolution	264
Civil Society and Economy	264
The Enlightenment as Economic Innovation.....	265
The Enlightenment vs. the Feudal Master-Servant Economy	268
The Enlightenment and Economic Modernity and Freedom.....	273
7 Counter-Enlightenment, Post-Enlightenment, and Neo-Enlightenment.....	279
The Enlightenment vs. the Dark Middle Ages Déjà Vu	279
The Medieval “Empire Strikes Back”.....	279
The Birth and Maturation of the Anti-Enlightenment – Enemies of the Enlightenment.....	281
The Main Current of the Counter-Enlightenment – Conservatism.....	281
Neo-Conservatism Cum the New Counter-Enlightenment.....	293
Counter-Enlightenment Conservative “Romance” – Romanticism.....	295
The Ultimate Conservative Anti-Enlightenment – Fascism	299
The Post-Enlightenment.....	301
Post-Enlightenment as the Anti-Enlightenment	301
Post-Enlightenment as the Neo-Enlightenment.....	303
The Post-Enlightenment as Post-Modernity	306
The Neo-Enlightenment.....	308
The Neo-Enlightenment and the New Liberalism	309
Trends Toward the Neo-Enlightenment.....	310
“American” Values and the Enlightenment Revisited.....	317
Enlightenment vs. Pre- and Anti-Enlightenment American Values	318
The Enlightenment and American Liberal-Democratic Values.....	323
Appendix: Critics and Skeptics of the Enlightenment.....	326
8 Conclusion	333
A World without Enlightenment Ideals, Achievements, and Legacies.....	333
The Dark Middle Ages Universalized in Society and Perpetuated into Infinity.....	333
“Back to the Future” of Witches, Witch Trials, and other Wondrous Creatures and Practices.....	337
A World with Enlightenment Values and Legacies.....	343
Welcome to Liberal-Democratic Modernity.....	343
References.....	347
Index.....	361

Chapter 1

Liberty, Life, and Happiness for All: The Ideals and Legacies of the Enlightenment in Modern Societies Revisited

Introduction

Modern Democratic Society and the Enlightenment

Most people in modern Western and other democratic societies take the latter's constitutive values and institutions as parametric, namely given or granted. This applies to such values and institutions as liberty, equality, justice, democracy, inclusion, human rights, dignity, well-being and happiness, humane life, civil liberties, scientific rationalism, technological and social progress and optimism, economic prosperity, free markets, secularism, pluralism and diversity, individualism, universalism, humanism, and the like. For instance, in modern democratic societies most people, with certain exceptions, consider social, including political, ideological, and increasingly cultural, pluralism or diversity as "a given" (Dombrowski 2001) and the necessary condition of individual and other freedom (Habermas 2001; Hirschman 1982; Van Dyke 1995). This also holds true for the concept and pursuit of individual happiness, well-being, and humane life in society (Artz 1998; Lane 2000) considered almost universally a given value or incontestable, inalienable human right of individuals solely for being humans (Cole 2005) within modern democratic societies. Overall, most people regard these and related foundational values and institutions of modern democratic society as if they were somehow preexisting, present, and unproblematic, simply always being "out there."

Like other Western societies, most Americans take as parameters or givens such things as liberty, equality, justice, democracy, human rights, civil liberties, inclusion, universalism, individualism, science and technology, the pursuit of happiness and well-being, humane life, social progress, economic prosperity and freedom, including free markets, and related constitutive values and institutions of their society. Yet, by contrast to other democratic societies, most Americans, as well as many US sociologists and economists, tend to redefine and appropriate these values and institutions as uniquely or native "American" rather than as common Western ideals. Alternatively, these supposedly unique American values and institutions are

typically distinguished from, and occasionally opposed to, their “non-American” or “foreign,” including Western and other European, variants. For most Americans and many US social scientists, these values and institutions, notably universal liberty, equality and justice, democracy, science and technology, progress, individualism, optimism, happiness, human life, economic prosperity, market freedom, and the like are as “American” as the “apple pie,” while their opposites being dismissed and disdained as “non-American” and “foreign,” including “European” a la the “old” and “decadent” Europe.

The current work argues and demonstrates that virtually all of these essential values and institutions of modern Western and other democratic societies, including America, can be considered primarily the ideals and legacies of the Enlightenment as their main foundation and point of origin. They are, first and foremost, the creation and heritage of the Enlightenment as a specific intellectual movement and victorious cultural revolution in Western Europe, with subsequent partial ramifications and resonances in America and beyond, especially during the eighteenth century. This book revolves around, develops, and substantiates the proposition that the Enlightenment is the primary foundation and point of origin of modern democratic societies and their fundamental values and institutions. In particular, it makes and confirms the “political incorrectness” or “indecent proposal” that the main American democratic values, ideals, and institutions substantially originate in and precisely derive from the European Enlightenment rather than being uniquely or exceptionally “American” to be invidiously distinguished from and opposed to those “non-American” or “foreign,” including Western “European.”

The aforesaid of the Enlightenment casts doubt on both taking modern democratic societies’, including America’s, constitutive values and institutions as granted, preexisting, or “pre-Enlightenment” (Cascardi 1999) *and* redefining them as uniquely “American” vs. “non-American,” including “European.” It thus reveals these views and beliefs as myths and collective deceptions or misrepresentations. The first is the general myth of “given” – for example, “Christian,” “pre-Enlightenment” – Western democratic values and institutions preceding the Enlightenment. The second is the special “American myth¹ of origins” (Dessí 2008) or religious-like creed of America’s exceptional, mostly pre-Enlightenment Puritan-rooted values and institutions independent of, different from, and even opposed to the “foreign,” European Enlightenment defining ethnocentric (Beck 2000) Americanism espoused by US hyperpatriotic conservative sociologists (Lipset 1996) and “libertarian” economists (Friedman 1982). At least this is what the current study intends to contend and demonstrate.

¹ Dessí (2008:539) comments that “American myths of origins, for example, were built around the arrival of the [Puritan] Pilgrim Fathers,” as well as the American Revolution, the exploration of the West, and the Civil War.

Modern Democratic Values and Institutions and the Enlightenment

In a sociological sense, modern Western and other democratic societies are primarily the children of the Enlightenment as their true, though often unrecognized, parent, and only secondarily and in part, jointly of other “parents” such as the pre- and anti-Enlightenment. This holds true not solely, as usually assumed, of Western Europe, but also, though often overlooked, of America, specifically its Jeffersonian liberal, secular, egalitarian, inclusive, and democratic, as differentiated from its Puritan-rooted conservative, theocratic, nonegalitarian, exclusionary, and undemocratic, design and reality. The above contradicts US conservative economists’ and sociologists’ (Friedman 1982; Lipset 1996) claims to American exceptionalism *cum* superiority or triumphalism (Baudrillard 1999; Bell 2002) in relation to modern democratic Western European societies, thus to the Enlightenment as their historical point of origin and intellectual foundation.

In general, modern Western and other, including American, civilization, is, above all, the offspring and realization of the eighteenth century European Enlightenment and its liberal, democratic, secular, rationalistic, egalitarian, equitable, inclusive, pluralistic, universalistic, optimistic, progressive, and humanistic ideas and values, while just minimally or residually of pre-, anti- and non-Enlightenment forces. It is essentially an Enlightenment-based civilization (Berman 2000; Habermas 2001; Mokyr 2009; Smart 2000) as the social system and historic period of a market economy, democratic polity, free civil society, and rationalistic-humanistic culture, and only in the nonessential sense a pre-, anti- and non-Enlightenment “civilization.”

This is the main argument to be developed and substantiated in this work. Admittedly, it may sound self-evident and tautological or redundant in modern liberalism and its projection and system of liberal-secular democracy and society continuing and appreciating the Enlightenment’s ideals and legacies. Still, in contemporary societies, especially “exceptional” *cum* superior America, not “every schoolboy knows” (Bateson 1979) that modern Western democratic civilization is fundamentally an Enlightenment-based one in that its foundational values and institutions of universal liberty, equality, justice, happiness, human life, progress, and the like primarily derive from and are inspired by this cultural revolution in eighteenth century Europe.

Furthermore, most “schoolboys” and scholars, including sociologists and economists a la Talcott Parsons and Milton Friedman, in America “know” or are taught and teach the opposite absolute “truth” in accordance with American triumphant and narcissistic exceptionalism (Bell 2002; Holton 1987; King 1999; Turner 2002) relative to other Western and all societies; that America’s constitutive values and institutions are uniquely, exceptionally, and exclusively “American,” with other Western and all societies needing a sort of permission to apply them from the US “inventor” holding their sole “property right” and, as bellicose conservatism contends since Puritanism (Gould 1996; Munch 2001; Tiryakian 2002), divinely

ordained with “manifest destiny” to save *cum* destroy the “evil” world not sharing these “all-American” ideals and institutional arrangements. Alternatively, these values and institutions are considered implicitly or explicitly independent, different, and even opposed vis-à-vis the liberal-secular Enlightenment as “European” and “foreign” (Bloom 1988; Bremer 1995; Dunn and Woodard 1996; Friedman 1982; Lipset and Marks 2000), thus “un-American,” in spite or perhaps because of Jefferson et al. being exposed first-hand to and inspired by its ideals (Archer 2001; Byrne 1997; Patell 2001; Phelps 2007).

The above self-evident argument is therefore justified or necessitated by this seemingly “blissful ignorance” (Wacquant 2002) and in that sense “darkness,” compounded with denial or forgetting, regarding the relationship of American and generally Western constitutive values and institutions to the Enlightenment, in America and to a lesser extent other modern societies. After all, the original definition and activity of the Enlightenment was, as Descartes, Voltaire, Diderot, Kant, Hume, Condorcet, and others emphasized, overcoming ignorance and intellectual immaturity, including religious and other superstition and prejudice, and thus spiritual darkness, through the light of reason, methodical doubt, and knowledge (Kant’s “dare to think” and know). Generally, as Keynes (1972) suggests, a “study of the history of opinion is a necessary preliminary to the emancipation of the mind” and in extension of human life and society.

In sum, the “double jeopardy” of ignorance-darkness and denial-forgetting in this respect provides the rationale and even necessity for the argument and portrayal of modern Western as primarily Enlightenment civilization. The latter also includes America in its Jeffersonian liberal-democratic ideal and proxy-reality. No doubt, this is an axiom or paradigm in one context, such as modern liberalism in the Enlightenment tradition or Western liberal democracies. Yet, it is an exact opposite in other settings, a contested “rediscovery,” as in America extolled as an “exceptional [superior] nation” by Parsons et al., and a rejected proposition or proxy heresy in conservatism, fascism, religious fundamentalism, theocracy, and other forms of the anti- and pre-Enlightenment.

The Enlightenment and its sociological child, liberal, secular, democratic, rationalistic, optimistic, and progressive, including capitalist, modernity (Bauman 2001; Beck 2000; Habermas 2001), forms a revolutionary break and thus essential discontinuity from, rather than an evolutionary outcome of and so, continuity with previous Western and other civilizations and history (Giddens 1984; also, Angel 1994; Mokyr 2009). The Enlightenment’s revolutionary discontinuity relative to previous societies and times holds true as a general pattern, with a few secondary variations. Among these, the main variation is what Simmel and Parsons call the artistic and humanistic Renaissance as a prelude to or precursor of the liberal, secular, democratic, and rationalistic Enlightenment, through its revival of classical “pagan” vs. medieval “Christian” civilization, notably art and culture.

Yet, the proto- or proxy-Enlightenment Renaissance was, as Pareto registers, halted “too soon” in Northern Europe, as well as probably prevented from ever “coming to America.” The Renaissance was countered, in his account, precisely by the explicitly antiartistic and implicitly antihumanistic Protestant Reformation,

particularly Calvinism's theocratic "disciplinary" revolutions (Gorski 2003; Loveman 2005) and, in Weber's words, its "extreme inhumanity" or harshness (Fourcade and Healy 2007), including its Anglo-Saxon derivative, Puritanism in the case of America (Parsons² 1967a). In this respect, the Reformation, especially the Calvinist Revolution, functioned as a type of pre-Enlightenment initially and of counter- and non-Enlightenment subsequently, just as did religious conservatism or orthodoxy overall (Habermas 2001; Nisbet 1966). Thus, within Protestantism, the tendency toward countering the liberal-secular Enlightenment was particularly evidenced by Calvinism (Bremer 1995; Sorkin 2005) and its Puritan (Munch 1981) or evangelical sects, including, as Mill and Weber suggest, Methodism (Byrne 1997) and especially American Baptism (Hinson 1997), both, alongside Presbyterianism, dominating and converting the old US South into the anti-Enlightenment "Bible Belt" following the Calvinist Great Awakenings (Boles 1999; German 1995).

Specifically, the Enlightenment exhibits a revolution and thus a profound discontinuity in relation to the medieval social system such as the feudal *ancien regime* and "Christian" civilization in Western Europe and beyond. It is no wonder that its exponents designed and designated this period as the Age of Enlightenment or Reason in deliberate opposition to and projected supersession of the Dark Middle Ages of unreason, ignorance, and what Kant called perpetual spiritual "immaturity," including religious superstition, fanaticism, prejudice and wars, and theocratic control and oppression. They defined the Dark Middle Ages to incorporate both the feudal *ancien regime* as societal despotism and "Christian" civilization as religiously grounded and dominated (pre-) civil society and culture reduced into the "servant" of, thus subordinating and sacrificing humans to, theology, religion, and church, simply as theocracy *cum* "godly society."

Consequently, liberty, equality, justice, universal inclusion, democracy, rational science and technology, societal progress and optimism, economic prosperity and freedom, individual dignity, well being, happiness, humane life, and related foundational elements of modern democratic societies, including America, express the Enlightenment's revolutionary discontinuity or radical break with the pre-Enlightenment, notably medievalism with its feudalism and "Christian" civilization. These Enlightenment values and institutions are hence revolutionary, novel, discontinuous, and even deviant or aberrant within Western "Christian" and other religiously based society and civilization during its *long durée* (Braudel 1979) in terms of centuries and millennia, from the fourth through eighteenth century AD.

Specifically, such values and institutions are new and anomalous, if abstracting from some short-term, mostly secondary deviations from and previous opposites to a medieval "Christian" social order and *Civitas Dei* (godly society) in general within this timeframe. Of course, the most salient contemporaneous deviation in this respect was the fifteenth century artistic and humanistic Renaissance. In this context, the latter was a sort of embryo-Enlightenment reviving classical "pagan"

²Parsons (1967a:57) implies this in stating that "their negative valuation of ritual is one of the few points on which the Puritans and the men of the humanistic Renaissance could agree."

culture and civilization, rather than its medieval “Christian” phase “deconstructed” as a regression into antiartistic primitivism and antihumanism, instead attempted to revitalize or “purify” by the Protestant Reformation (Eisenstadt 1965), notably Calvinist disciplinary counter-revolutions (Gorski 2003) in Europe and their Puritan theocratic revolts in England (and Scotland) and America (Juergensmeyer 1994; Stivers 1994). Yet, the Renaissance was reversed, if Pareto is correct, and to that extent represented a short-lived and relatively secondary deviation from the medieval *Civitas Dei* in most of Protestant Europe, especially England and America, where it essentially never “came,” as Weber implies detecting a sort of artistic emptiness, devastation, and regression owing to Calvinist Puritanism, as the paradigmatic instance of, as Hume classically documented, antiartistic and anti-humanistic antagonism as well as antiseccular radicalism (Juergensmeyer 1994) in these two countries. Prior antipodes and thus defined enemies of the medieval “godly” social order hence involved classical Greek democracy, art, science, and culture, as well as the Roman republic and law, etc., as extant Enlightenment and liberal analogs or proxies and precursors (Garrard 2003; Manent 1998), yet condemned and almost destroyed as “pagan” by their “Christian” successor.

Alternatively, most Enlightenment values and institutions were *not* and are *not* normal, natural, and continuous in the genesis, historical evolution, and present reality of Western and other modern democratic societies, while keeping in mind such pre-Enlightenment deviations as the Renaissance and classical civilization. Hence, they could not and cannot be taken as granted and givens as though preexisting and always “out there,” as pre-Enlightenment medieval, as distinct from antique, values and institutions, notably within “Christian” civilization officially commenced with establishing what Pareto calls the Roman theocracy and the legalization of Christianity in the fourth century AD (Sorokin 1970). Given their revolutionary and recent origin within the *long durée* of thirteenth to eighteenth centuries, these values and institutions are not, as taking them as givens implies, invariably irreversible or “to stay forever” and unchallenged in Western and other democratic societies, including America, let alone in undemocratic and non-Western settings, especially Islamic and other theocratic countries.

The possibility of a reversal of and challenge to Enlightenment values and institutions is indicated by antiliberal, antiseccular, antiegalitarian, antidemocratic, anti-rationalistic, and related adverse reactions or counter-revolutions in Western and other modern societies, including America. These antagonisms span from medieval-rooted conservatism to its “monster-child” or subtype fascism to communism and to neoconservatism and its own offspring or ally neofascism and its religious subtype revived fundamentalism such as Islamic radicalism throughout the world and “Christian” evangelicalism in America and to a lesser extent Europe. All antiliberal and antidemocratic counter-revolutions, with the partial and debatable exception of communism mostly on the account of its secularism, especially conservative medieval-inspired revolts, fundamentalist theocratic revivals, and fascist totalitarian subversions, have basically functioned and still function as a sort of counter-Enlightenment. They do either in their specific opposition to and attack on the Enlightenment as the identifiable target *or* by opposing and attacking modern liberal-democratic, secular,

egalitarian, rationalistic, and pluralist society (Munch 2001) as its enduring ideal, creation, and legacy within Western civilization and even beyond, as indicated by the global trends to liberalization and democratization, secularization, rationalization, and diversity during the early 2000s (Inglehart 2004).

In summary, the constitutive values and institutions of modern democratic societies, including America in its Jeffersonian project and reality, in virtue of being primarily rooted in the eighteenth century Enlightenment, are genuinely – even if not totally – innovative and thus “new under the sun” of Western, specifically “Christian” and related religiously based civilization during its long-term evolution since the fourth century and the institutionalizing of Christianity and the establishing of the Roman theocracy. This essential innovation contradicts various counter-Enlightenment, including medievalist, conservative, fascist, neoconservative, neo-fascist, fundamentalist, neo-Marxist, postmodernist, feminist, and other adversaries and critics and their “nothing under the sun” hostile or skeptical allegations and implications about Enlightenment ideals, achievements, and legacies.

The Process and Outcome of the Enlightenment

Destruction of Old, Creation of New, Social Values, and Institutions

In sociological terms, the Enlightenment is what Durkheim would call a total social fact of revolutionary change. It is through intellectual or cultural tools – for example, ideas and books such as the *Encyclopedia* in France – as distinct from political means against the old domestic or colonial order subsequently used by, in Pareto’s³ word, the Enlightenment’s “daughters,” the French and in part American Revolution. In a way, the Enlightenment operates as the composite process of intellectual destruction and delegitimization (“deconstruction”) of the values and institutions of the *ancien regime* as a total social system and of creation or projection of those of a new society. The inner logic, essential process, and ultimate outcome of the Enlightenment are the destruction of old oppressive, theocratic, irrational, and inhumane social values and institutions, and the creation of new democratic, secular, rational, and humane ones through human reason or, as Kant put it, “dare to think.” In this sense, the Enlightenment constitutes what Schumpeter may call complete “creative destruction” or generalized “Copernican revolution” in society. It does so in at least four domains and respects such as culture, civil society, polity, and economy, as specified below.

³Pareto remarks that “it has been said that the Revolution was the daughter of Voltaire and of the Encyclopedists. This is true only to a small extent insofar as humanitarian skepticism had weakened the upper classes.”

First, the Enlightenment originates and operates as the intellectual, cultural challenge to and eventually the act of destruction of medievalist theocratic culture in which all cultural forms and subjects were literally reduced to the servants of theology, religion, and church, thus subordinated and eventually sacrificed (heretics, libertines, etc.) to theocracy. Alternatively, it arises and functions as the creation or reinvention of a new secular or nonreligious, rationalistic, and what Weber calls sensuous, emotional type of human culture and civilization, including art. In artistic terms, the Enlightenment continues and expands the Renaissance that was, if Pareto is correct, “halted too soon” by the Protestant Reformation, notably antiartistic strict Calvinism in Europe and its evermore extreme offspring in antagonism toward art and humanism, Puritanism in England and America.

In cultural terms, the Enlightenment is the process of creative destruction with respect to medieval “godly” theocratic culture, including art, philosophy, “Christian science” exemplified by geocentric astronomy and biological creationism, and education, and alternatively, in relation to its modern secular, though not necessarily antireligious, alternatives. In short, it transcends and substitutes the first, and projects and creates the second type of culture, including art and science. Symbolically, the Enlightenment conjoins the destruction of the Inquisition as the exemplar and symbol of medieval pre-Enlightenment culture and society with the creation of noninquisitorial, nonviolent resolution of scientific and other intellectual, political conflict and dissent, including religious heresy, blasphemy, or heterodoxy.

Counterfactually, if the Enlightenment, including its precursors like the Renaissance, had not happened, or had failed, the Inquisition would have likely still operated either in its original Catholic original or its derivative, as Weber and Tawney suggest, Protestant, especially Calvinist-Puritan, substitutes. Consequently, without the Enlightenment, geocentric “the sun revolves around the [flat] earth” astronomy and biological creationism would likely have been still coercively imposed, dissent from them punished with death as heresy, and believed by most people, as is in part the first and notably the second and its “intelligent design” variations, plus the belief in supernatural miracles and “Satan” (Glaeser 2004), including “witches,” in contemporary America. At least in this respect, the Enlightenment forms the true revolutionary and innovating, thus novel, process of enlightening and liberation from the Dark Middle Ages, the genuine light and liberty cast on and superseding the literal darkness, misery, and death of antiscience irrationalism, including superstition, ignorance, or prejudice, and of theocratic oppression in medieval culture.

Second, the Enlightenment develops as the process of creative destruction with respect to what its representatives (Kant, Hume, Voltaire, Diderot, Montesquieu, Condorcet) as well as critics (Hegel, etc.) and predecessors (Hobbes) designated or implied as civil society in the sense of the sphere of individual freedom and agency, including privacy, thus the free private life-world (Habermas 2001). Specifically, the Enlightenment arises and acts as a sort of intellectual destroyer or challenger of medieval “uncivil” (McCann 2000) or precivil society in the sense of a nonexistent civil society in medievalism and the pre- and counter-Enlightenment generally such as traditionalism and conservatism, respectively. Alternatively, it does as the intellectual creator or projector of modern

civil society through its advocacy and promotion of individual dignity and liberty, privacy, and human and civic rights. These were categories virtually nonexistent, unknown, or, after their embryos in ancient Greek democracy and the Roman republic, “burned and buried” in medieval society and pre-Enlightenment traditionalism, and are attacked and eliminated or subverted by the counter-Enlightenment such as conservatism, fascism, neoconservatism, and neofascism.

In this sense, the Enlightenment operates as the Schumpeterian destruction of medieval non- or precivil “godly” society of theocratic oppression, humiliation, and death for “higher” divine powers, and the creation of modern secular, but not invariably or openly antireligious, civil society of individual liberty, privacy, human well-being, happiness, dignity, rights, and life. Symbolically, the Enlightenment performs the act of destruction of the medieval, especially, as Weber implies, the Protestant, vision and reformation of society as a super-monastery of sadistic-masochistic saints (Adorno 2001; Fromm 1941; McLaughlin 1996) vs. sinners (also, Gorski 1993), in which humans are forced, as by Calvinism, especially Puritanism, to become life-long monks or ascetics and priests (Munch 1981), thus a sort of overarching and permanent open prison populated with humans as prisoners for life. In turn, it engages in the process of (re)creation of a nonmonastic or nonascetic, nontheocratic, and generally noncoercive private sphere, thus the modern autonomous, secular, or normal life-world defining true civil society. Furthermore, the Enlightenment movement formed a (micro) civil society on its own right created and functioning through free exchange of ideas in Paris’ salons frequented by most of its representatives as admittedly “freethinkers”⁴ (Byrne 1997), including Voltaire, Hume visiting from Scotland, and Jefferson and Franklin residing in the city, but avoided or despised by its enemies or skeptics like Calvinist Rousseau (Garrard 2003).

Counterfactually, in the absence or failure of the Enlightenment, non- or precivil theocratic society after the model or image of an ascetic and coercive monastery and permanent open prison would have probably persisted in Western and other societies. It would especially, in Calvinist Europe like Geneva, Holland, Scotland, and in part Prussia (Gorski 2003), and Puritan-dominated England transiently (and Scotland continuously) and America enduringly (Munch 2001). In Mises’ (1950) words, this theocratic order would have petrified in the form or image of the “peace of the cemetery” without the Enlightenment. In turn, modern civil society would have hardly ever been established or retrieved from Hobbes’ secular or Aristotle’s previous similar vision in the absence or failure of the Enlightenment. At least in this respect, the Enlightenment is the true revolutionary process or project of innovation,

⁴Byrne (1997:31) adds that “what the militant freethinkers of the Enlightenment provided was the intellectual weaponry which opened up the possibility of widespread disbelief,” though one wonders what is “militant” about such and other free thinking distinguished, as Jefferson suggested, from action, unless one assumes the stance of the religious pre- and counter-Enlightenment for which any different thought or dissent is a “militant” heresy or blasphemy subjected to punishment with death, as by the Catholic Inquisition and New England’s Puritan theocracy, thus a standpoint from the Dark Middle Ages.

liberation, humanizing, openness, and escape from the oppressive, dehumanizing, including cruel and sadistic-masochistic, closed, and exclusionary Dark Middle Ages, in their early Catholic and late Protestant “Christian” renditions alike.

The Enlightenment is the probably first – after ancient democracy and civilization (Manent 1998) and its attempted rebirth by the Renaissance – genuine liberal-democratic endeavor and optimistic hope for escaping and transcending the darkness, superstition, misery, despair, oppression, and death of pre- and anti-Enlightenment societies and times, such as the feudal *ancien regime* and conservative-fascist social systems, respectively. In particular, within Great Britain and especially America the Enlightenment promises an escape from and overcoming what Tawney (1962) calls, referring to late-medieval Puritanism, the theocratic “hell in this world” construed, through Weber’s and (before Hume’s) detected Puritan “pure hypocrisy” (also, Bremer 1995), as “paradise lost and found” and “God’s Kingdom on Earth” (Munch 2001) a la Winthrop’s (and Reagan’s) “shining city upon a hill.” The Enlightenment is the prime force that exposes and transcends Puritan and any theocratic “paradise” as a tyrannical dystopia extolled and coercively enacted, as via the death penalty and mass imprisonment for sins-crimes, by US religious conservatives as the high, only road to “heaven” (Lemert 1999), specifically the Calvinist salvation of a few “elect” saints through the “delirium of total annihilation” (Adorno 2001) of most humans and the corrupt world as “evil,” “ungodly” forces a la Armageddon (Juergensmeyer 2003).

A third related dimension of the Enlightenment’s process of intellectual destruction of the *ancien regime* as a total social system and of creation of a new society involves its political subsystem. The Enlightenment acts as the prime agent of intellectual and, through its “daughters” or “heirs” the French and American Revolutions, political overcoming of medieval and generally pre- and counter-Enlightenment, namely traditional and conservative illiberal and repressive “godly” (Zaret 1989) politics. Alternatively, it does as the force of intellectual and, through these revolutions, political creation, involving the projection, construction, and promotion, of modern liberal-secular democracy and society. In sum, the Enlightenment intellectually and eventually politically exposes and transcends medieval and any theocracy as “holy” tyranny, and creates or projects modern liberal-secular democracy as the system of political liberties and rights.

Hence, the Enlightenment originates and functions as the Schumpeterian movement of intellectual destruction of the old theocratic sociopolitical order and of creation of a new secular, but not necessarily or explicitly antireligious, democratic social-political system. Symbolically, it is the act of safe demolition of the medieval and other pre-Enlightenment tyrannical and self-collapsing, as through religious conflicts and wars (Angel 1994; Dombrowski 2001), political construction as the church-state enforcing “godly” politics and ruled by “divinely ordained” agents, including, as Puritan masters claimed, “God’s [anti] vice regent [s]” (Zaret 1989), with “divine rights” to rule, punish, and kill other humans for their vices, sins, and pleasures as grave crimes. The Enlightenment and its product liberalism intellectually demolishes or delegitimizes and transcends the Vatican Church (Burns 1990) or Catholic theocracies and what Weber calls Calvinist “state churches” in Europe and America, including the Puritan “theocracy of New England” spanning from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century (Munch 2001).

Alternatively, the Enlightenment is the process of symbolic construction of a new type of political building in which sacred and secular powers are no longer merged, a merger reportedly never doing much “good” to virtually any society in history and existence (Dahrendorf 1979), from Pareto’s “Roman Theocracy” to Weber’s “Calvinistic state churches” in Europe and their Puritan version in the “theocracy of New England” (and briefly England) to its presumed evangelical heir the Southern “Bible Belt” and to Iran’s “Islamic Republic” and Taliban-ruled regions. Instead, the Enlightenment formally separates sacred and secular powers and realms through what Jefferson called the “wall of eternal separation of church and state” (Dayton 1999), and substantively differentiates religion and politics in general. The latter process is an aspect of social differentiation and rationalization, notably continuing and even reinforcing secularization in modern democratic societies (Gorski and Altinordu 2008; Inglehart 2004), including in part “godly” America (Crabtree and Pelham 2009; Hout and Fischer 2002), contrary to conservative or rational choice antiseularization detractors.

Counterfactually, if the Enlightenment did not develop or succeed in its operation and legacy, medieval theocracy *cum* “godly” politics and society would have likely, with expedient Vatican- and Puritan-style adjustments, remained a prevalent type of political system in modern Western and other societies, including America under colonial and postrevolutionary Puritanism and its recurrent revival via “reborn” fundamentalism through the twenty-first century. Conversely, in this scenario a free, open, inclusive, or liberal-democratic secular sociopolitical system would have hardly ever been established and even conceived in these societies in the absence or failure of the Enlightenment as the foremost project of political liberty and democracy. Simply, there was *no* such thing as democracy, especially its liberal-secular, inclusive, and pluralist version, in the medieval order and the pre-Enlightenment overall, excepting in part ancient Greece and Rome. In turn, this democratic form is eliminated or perverted in the counter-Enlightenment like medieval-rooted authoritarian conservatism and its own metastasis totalitarian fascism, including Nazism, just as its religious subtype, theocratic fundamentalism such as revived Islamic radicalism and American “Christian” (mostly Protestant) “born again” evangelicalism.

Hence, it is a set of irrational expectations, entertained by the obverse of “rational fools” (Sen 1977), to expect that pre-Enlightenment traditionalism would miraculously establish, and counter- and post-Enlightenment conservatism does and will sustain and promote, liberal-secular and pluralist democracy, thus a truly democratic polity as the admittedly political creation and project of the Enlightenment (Buchanan and Tullock 1962). In this respect, the latter functions as the true revolutionary and novel⁵ (Artz 1998) process and project of democratization via political

⁵Artz (1998:35) comments that the Enlightenment’s ideals “at first glance” look like an “uncoordinated collection of high-minded Liberal sentiments, almost platitudes today. Yet the common ideas of one age were once the novel discoveries of an earlier generation.” In his view, the Enlightenment’s ideas were far from being “platitudinous in their time [but] have come to seem so, paradoxically because of their key power to make converts” (Artz 1998:35).

liberalization, thus genuine liberation from what Popper (1973) calls medieval despotic authoritarianism, notably from theocracy as “godly” tyranny. In sum, the Enlightenment is the process of creative destruction by intellectually destroying or superseding the old despotic and closed order, including medieval theocracy, and creating or designing a new political structure as liberal-secular and inclusive democracy.

Fourth, the Enlightenment functions as the process of creative destruction with respect to the economy itself, including capitalism – to which Schumpeter originally applied the concept vs. precapitalism like feudalism. It does as the prime agent of intellectual and, through the French and American Revolutions, political destruction or overcoming of what Weber calls economic traditionalism, and of creation or vision of a modern economy, including the theory and system of free markets and competition (Buchanan and Tullock 1962; Mokyr 2009; Phelps 2007; Hirschman 1977).

Specifically, the Enlightenment intellectually destroys or discredits feudalism as the economic structure of the *ancien regime* as a total social system. In turn, it creates or envisions modern capitalism as a coherent theoretical concept. It does directly by its philosophers such as Hume and Ferguson, and its protosociologists like Condorcet, Montesquieu, and Saint Simon, or indirectly through classical political economy as the product or part, including Adam Smith who was the actual member of the Enlightenment⁶ (Berry 1997; Tribe 1999), as had been his predecessors, French *Physiocratic* economists (Quesnay, Turgot). For instance, Keynes (1972) explicitly traces the first theoretical formulation of the *laissez-faire* doctrine of early modern capitalism to the “political philosophers of the day” of the Enlightenment, specifically those in France, rather than to British classical political economists proper like Smith, though the latter himself was a self-described member of Hume’s led Scottish Enlightenment. Also, some contemporary economists attribute the associated invisible-hand doctrine to the Enlightenment, especially Montesquieu’s and other noneconomic, political “arguments for capitalism before its triumph” (Hirschman 1977, 1982).

⁶This does not necessarily contradict, or is just neutral to, Weber’s thesis of an “elective affinity” or “intimate connection” between Calvinism and the “spirit and structure” of modern capitalism. The Enlightenment was the first or most developed articulation, via classical political economy, of the theory of a free-market, capitalist economy in contrast to ascetic Protestantism as, assuming that Weber is right, its putative religious source and sanctification in practice. Simply, the Enlightenment philosophically and sociologically conceptualized or envisioned, while, if Weber is correct, Calvinism practiced via its “inner-worldly asceticism” or sanctified by its “harsh” dogma of predestination, but did not theorize about, in the scientific sense of economics and sociology, a free market economy or capitalism. Thus, a remarkably sociologically-minded leading economist, Akerlof (2007:15) comments that “Weber describes Calvinists as aspiring to be ‘worldly ascetics’” through saving favored to consumption, simply protocapitalist entrepreneurs, but not capitalist “theorists.” Similarly, Fourcade and Healy (2007:296) comment that Weber “was careful to show that the rational search for profit he observed among the protocapitalist Calvinists did not follow logically from their religious worldview” and thus their ideological or theoretical conception but “rather, their actions made psychological sense as a way to relieve the salvational anxiety their harsh religious doctrines tended to produce.”

Generally, the Enlightenment directly as through Hume, Condorcet, Montesquieu, and Saint Simon, or indirectly via Smith's classical political economy is admittedly the primary intellectual source and theoretical formulation of the conception of economic freedom, including free markets, thus modern capitalism replacing feudal servitude, just as of political liberty and democracy (Buchanan and Tullock 1962; Mokyr 2009) superseding despotism and theocracy. Therefore, it operates as Schumpeter's process of true creative destruction by destroying or discrediting the old oppressive and closed feudal and other traditional economic structures, while creating or conceptualizing new free and open values and institutions in Western and other economies, including, via Jefferson's Paris transmission, America.

At the minimum, it is the Enlightenment that philosophically and sociologically discredits and delegitimizes and in that sense "softly" destroys feudalism or serfdom and other forms of economic traditionalism and oppression, including slavery. Alternatively, as Keynes suggests, it posits, legitimizes, and thus conceptually – not necessarily practically, if Weber is correct in his Calvinist-capitalist connection thesis (Akerlof 2007; Fourcade and Healy 2007) – creates modern capitalism or the free-market economy (Hirschman 1982). This holds true both of Enlightenment philosophers and sociologists such as Hume, Condorcet, Montesquieu, Saint Simon, and others *and* classical economists⁷ like Smith – thus his liberal disciples Ricardo and Say, minus antiliberal Malthus – as well as Quesnay, Turgot, and other French *physiocrats*.

Symbolically, the Enlightenment safely demolishes the old, self-collapsing house of master-servant or slave relations, and constructs or projects the building of a new nonfeudal type of relations between economic agents based on what Spencer calls "voluntary cooperation" and the "system of contract" as opposed to the feudal regime of compulsion and status or hierarchy. Also, labor liberties and rights, including collective organization and action, thus industrial democracy as a system of countervailing capital-labor freedom and power, are the logical and eventual outcome of the Enlightenment's new liberal economic design and system, exemplified by the New Deal in America expressive of American liberalism, yet delayed and countered by the counter-Enlightenment such as conservative-authoritarian capitalism or capitalist dictatorship (Pryor 2002) as a sort of neofeudalism (Binmore 2001), of new master-servant economy and polity.

Counterfactually, the above implies that if the Enlightenment did not develop or fully succeed through the French and American antifeudal and procapitalist Revolutions in economic terms, feudalism would have likely persisted as an economic system, and thus perpetuated the *ancien regime*. Alternatively, capitalism would have hardly ever established itself as a systematic theoretical concept and

⁷Most classical economists, either belonged to – like Smith, not to mention Hume, Quesnay, and Turgot – the Enlightenment or were theoretically associated with, as shown by Ricardo, Say, Senior (in part), and Bastiat, Mill, Cairnes, and Marx (partly). An unsurprising exception was Malthus, a Protestant minister-turned-economist espousing clerical anti-Enlightenment and antiliberal ideas (Somers and Block 2005).

problematic of economics and sociology, and even as an institutional order, despite Weber's Calvinist-capitalist "intimate connection," in Western and other societies, including America, without the advent, triumph, and heritage, of the Enlightenment. At most, in this scenario feudalism would have likely coexisted, as it did, if Weber is correct in his thesis, during the pre-Enlightenment, with Calvinist *theocratic* capitalism or capitalist theocracy, thus with an also illiberal, oppressive economic system, in the absence or failure of the Enlightenment, including its later political realization via the French and American Revolutions. In summary, the Enlightenment acts as the Schumpeterian genuine process of creative destruction in economic values, principles, and structures. First, it does so by being directly or indirectly, via Smith's classical political economy, the intellectual destroyer of feudalism and traditionalism as the old economic blueprint and system. Second, it does so as the theoretical creator or the chief designer and promoter of modern liberal-democratic, as distinguished from Calvinist and other (e.g., Islamic) theocratic, capitalism, as in Smith's words, the market "system of natural liberty," including the original, albeit subsequently relaxed or qualified, doctrines of government *laissez-faire* and the "invisible hand" of markets (Hirschman 1977; Mokyr 2009).

In these four accounts, the Enlightenment arises and functions as the process of creative destruction with respect to prior Western and other society and time. Specifically, it does so as the destroyer of through a revolutionary break and thus substantive discontinuity with the old medieval closed, despotic, and theocratic society, including feudalism, during early and late medieval times, from the fourth to eighteenth century AD. Alternatively, it does as the creator or projector of a new open, liberal-democratic, and secular, though not necessarily antireligious, social system in Western and other societies, including America even if to a lesser extent than modern Europe. In summary, the Enlightenment intellectually deposes the medieval feudal, despotic, and theocratic order to what Mannheim calls the "dead past," and conceptually inaugurates or ushers in modern liberal-democratic society as a novel ideal, a total social system, and historical period. This book is organized accordingly, revolving around these four themes and arguments. This is a comparative-historical, as well as theoretical empirical analysis, rather than a history of the Enlightenment's substantive relevance for and legacy in modern Western societies, including America.

Appendix: *The General Concept of Enlightenment*

The Enlightenment with a capital E as the specific cultural movement and historical event in seventeenth to eighteenth century Europe and in part America is to be distinguished from the general and perhaps older (and subsequent) idea of enlightenment with a noncapital "e". This is useful to emphasize in view of various confluences between "the Enlightenment" in particular and "enlightenment" in general in the sociological and other literature, including critical (Horkheimer-Adorno's) theory and its Hegelian "dialectic of enlightenment," not "the Enlightenment" (Cascardi 1999). This work deals specifically with *the* Enlightenment and its ideals,

achievements, and legacies in modern Western societies so that just a few remarks about “enlightenment” will suffice for the sake of distinction and comparison.

For instance, early *laissez-faire* French economist Frederic Bastiat categorically stating “no wealth, no enlightenment” uses the latter concept in a general, abstract sense, and suggests, following Adam Smith, the economic and thus societal, conditions of “enlightenment” as understood. This is also manifest in his statements that “there are but two things that can save society: justice and enlightenment [i.e.] the equality of well-being, of enlightenment, of moral dignity” and that the “social order [is] so constituted as to diffuse more and more enlightenment, morality, and happiness among more and more people.”

In retrospect, like Smith and most orthodox and neoclassical economists, Bastiat did not register or envision exceptions to his axiomatic rule “no [material] wealth, no [spiritual] enlightenment” and alternatively to the wealth-enlightenment equivalence. A paradigmatic exception to this rule or equivalence is modern America. This is the wealthiest and yet reportedly the least “enlightened” or progressive society in the sense of rationalistic, secular, and liberal (Inglehart 2004), including artistic (Scitovsky 1972; Throsby 1994) and intellectual (Munch 2001), conversely, the most and even the “only remaining primitive” (Baudrillard 1999) case in cultural terms among contemporary Western societies. For illustration, the wealthiest country in the world has by far the lowest public expenditure on the arts or esthetic culture among modern Western societies (Throsby 1994), just as the highest percentage of people (71) maintaining the primitive medieval belief in “Satan” (Glaeser 2004) and implicitly “witches” within the West. Furthermore, some US conservatives both admit and celebrate that most, especially young, Americans, while self-described as the “richest” in the world, are “natural savages [*sic*]” (Bloom 1988). In particular, they celebrate the fact that the Bible has been the “only common culture” in American history and society, implicitly acting as the chief contributor to this extolled “savagery” *cum* innocence à la Rousseau’s “noble savage” only corrupted by “ungodly” and “un-American” liberal-secular, notably university, public education to be substituted with *no* education, not to mention private and home religious schooling on a scale unknown in modern Western societies, as “better” according to religious conservatives such as “born again” Protestant fundamentalists (Darnell and Sherkat 1997).

At this juncture, this and related observed, including political-democratic and welfare-state, “backwardness” (Amenta et al. 2001) is what, first and foremost, defines, identifies, and typifies the new or rather perennial “American Exceptionalism” (Inglehart 2004; Quadagno 1999) and in that sense a kind of aberration in relation to other Western societies. Hence, “American Exceptionalism,” as perpetuated and glorified by conservatism, does *not* consist in, as US conservative sociologists (Lipset 1996) and economists (Friedman 1982) triumphantly claim, superior “liberty,” “individualism,” “pluralism,” “democracy,” “rationality,” “prosperity,” “progress,” and the like compared with all other, including Western European societies as “inferior” in these terms. For instance, the “wealthy” conservative “Christian” America is an exceptional society among these societies by persistently and systematically depreciating, through the lowest public spending on, art and

other secular culture as the actual or potential means of Bastiat's enlightenment. Conversely, it is by promoting, on a scale unknown or unrivaled among modern Western societies, private and home religious schooling, as typically a tool of secular nonenlightenment in the sense of religious superstition, prejudice, unreason, ignorance, and fanaticism, including the widespread belief in "Satan" and "witches" (and in part the "flat earth" medieval dogma), thus irrationalism and darkness favored to science (e.g., evolutionary biology, climate science, etc.). Of course, this holds true unless one claims a sort of "godly enlightenment" through such beliefs or what Hobbes⁸ called "strong fancies," including "fairies, ghosts, and goblins," and the "power of witches," as implicitly does American religious conservatism, and explicitly as did early Calvinism with its claim to "enlightened" faith opposing the Enlightenment as "false" and rationalizing its post-Calvin tyrannical theocracy in Europe (Sorkin 2005). Both tendencies in America perpetuate Puritanism's strident antagonism, as Hume, Mill, and Weber register, to art and all secular culture, and its rejection or devaluation of nonreligious education and science unless harnessed in the "higher" cause of the Puritan total mastery of the world: theocratic domination and repression within society and permanent "holy" war against and subjugation of other "evil" societies (Becker 1984; Juergensmeyer 1994; Merton 1968; Munch 2001).

At any rate, at least America under religious conservatism, specifically predominant Protestant sectarianism and evangelicalism (Jenness 2004; Lindsay 2008; Lipset 1996), deviates from and "falsifies" Bastiat's equation between wealth and enlightenment as dubious economic determinism or reductionism. Alternatively, it suggests that wealth as the economic factor, while perhaps the necessary, is not the sufficient condition of "enlightenment" in the general sense and to that extent of human happiness and emancipation or liberty, as demonstrated by opulent pre- or early capitalist despotic societies, such as Italian city-states, identified by Simmel and also by modern wealthy "capitalist dictatorships" such as Singapore's and in part American "unfettered" capitalism with its persistently "inhuman face" during neoconservatism (Pryor 2002). Evidently, "enlightenment," like happiness as the invention of the Enlightenment (Artz 1998), presupposes not only wealth as what Marshall calls the material prerequisite of human welfare and capitalism as an economic system, but also other, noneconomic conditions, specifically political democracy, civil society, and secular, as different from theocratic, culture, just as all of these are conditioned, sustained, and promoted by the process of "enlightening," including knowledge, science, and education, as Voltaire, Condorcet, Kant, Diderot, Hume, Jefferson, and others suggest.

Also, critical social theory (the Frankfurt School) uses "enlightenment" in the "widest sense as the advance of thought," which "has always aimed at liberating human beings from fear and installing them as masters" (Horkheimer and Adorno 1993:1). Arguably, the "essence" of enlightenment thus understood is the "choice between alternatives" (Horkheimer and Adorno 1993:25). Hence, when these

⁸Hobbes' full statement is that "from this ignorance of how to distinguish dreams, and other strong fancies, from vision and sense, did arise the greatest part of the religion of the Gentiles in time past, that worshipped satyrs, fauns, nymphs, and the like; and nowadays the opinion that rude people have of fairies, ghosts, and goblins, and of the power of witches."

critical theorists adopt from Hegel and elaborate on the “dialectic of enlightenment,” they operate with the general concept, and yet usually address the “dark side” or destructive effects of *the* Enlightenment as the specific historical phenomenon in eighteenth century Europe, creating a conflation or lack of differentiation between the two concepts and processes. As some sympathetic commentators admit, “the potentially vague and troubling term ‘Enlightenment’ [is in Horkheimer and Adorno] both the designation of a historical epoch [the modern European Enlightenment] and as the description of a conceptual paradigm. [Their] critique of the instrumentalization of reason says nothing about whether what lies at stake in the question of Enlightenment is itself historical or theoretical (Cascardi 1999:21). Admittedly, in their work, “Enlightenment” betrays a struggle both to describe a fundamental structure of reason and to characterize the historical practices that, in modernity, have led to rationalization and reification (Cascardi 1999:22). In this view, their analysis “shuttles back and forth between the historical and the theoretical meanings of the term “Enlightenment” [i.e.] the nature of enlightened reason [and] the specificity of the modern Enlightenment as an historical phenomenon [namely] an embodiment of the self-canceling ideals of bourgeois, democratic culture” (Cascardi 1999:23–24). Some contemporary analysts follow or evoke this dual treatment of “enlightenment” as both a “philosophical concept” and an “historical process” (Trey 1998:11). Also, following early critical theory, this entails a preference for the first concept on the ground that a new “politics of emancipation is by necessity a politics of enlightenment,” yet a “form of enlightenment that moves beyond the parameters of modernity” as the product or project of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, and thus beyond the latter itself (Trey 1998:7–8).

Of course, this reopens the question and dilemma whether, how, and to what extent “enlightenment” in general is possible in present and future democratic societies by overcoming or neglecting and depreciating the values, achievements, and legacies of *the* eighteenth century Enlightenment laying at the heart of modern democracy and civilization (Berman 2000; Habermas 2001). From the stance of the latter, the answer is categorically and unambiguously negative; to paraphrase Bastiat, “no Enlightenment from the eighteenth century, no enlightenment in the twenty-first century and beyond.” While certainly not all enlightenment has been *the* Enlightenment during human history, the eighteenth century Enlightenment and its legacy today is the very essence and condition of “enlightenment” in modern Western and other liberal-democratic and secular society. In short, in this society human “enlightenment” as a general concept and process assumes and maintains the specific form of *the*—not just any—European Enlightenment and its legacy from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century (Angel 1994; Hinchman 1984). If “enlightenment” is simply “something people do”⁹ (Bittner 1996:346), then the

⁹Bittner (1996:346) rejects Rousseau’s underlying Calvinist and in part Kant’s secular view that “original maturity, lost through our own fault and regained by the endeavors of enlightenment,” as a “mere repetition of paradise,” supposedly “lost by our sin and regained through redemption.” No wonder, most of its key figures, notably Voltaire, Diderot, and Hume, rejected Rousseau’s Calvinist and generally theocratic or “Spartan” views as incompatible with, and even hostile to, the Enlightenment and its project of modern liberal-secular and democratic society (Garrard 2003).

specific Western modern Enlightenment involves their actions in Europe and beyond during the eighteenth to the twenty-first century.

The above yields two corresponding distinctions. One is the distinction between the old and new, premodern and modern Enlightenments, as Hegel and other analysts suggest. Thus, “while Hegel usually writes of *the* (the eighteenth century) Enlightenment, he sometimes mentions an ancient Enlightenment as well [suggesting that] the modern Enlightenment epitomizes and completes a process of enlightenment which began several millennia ago” (Hinchman 1984:2), notably with ancient Greek philosophy as well as art and science. In short, this distinguishes premodern and modern “enlightenment,” including persuasion and education, as the noncoercive “means of moral regulation” in contrast to coercive “forms of social control” (Ruonavaara 1997).

Another distinction is between what Weber would call the Occidental and the Oriental Enlightenment, though he associates the “Enlightenment” and even “enlightenment” as such, through associating rationalism, including capitalism, and liberalism, with the West rather than the Orient. In short, this is a distinction between what some analysts describe as “Enlightenment West” and “Enlightenment East,” the first defined primarily by rationalism and liberalism, and the second by irrationalism or mysticism and conservatism or traditionalism, respectively (Angel 1994). Furthermore, one could object that even the Western Enlightenment is “too diffuse and amorphous a concept to admit of neat definition and delineation [so] argue with reasonable plausibility that “enlightened” thinking began with Renaissance humanism, with the Reformation, or even with the Greeks” (Byrne 1997:3). Some analysts argue that such historical redefinitions or speculations “would be spurious” (Byrne 1997:3) and instead suggest limiting the Western Enlightenment to a specific social space and historical time, Europe, notably France, and in part beyond like America, during the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries. The current work centers on the Western Enlightenment and situates the latter in this specific social space and time, primarily eighteenth century Europe.

Chapter 2

Modern Democratic Society and the Enlightenment

The Children of the Enlightenment

Modern Western and other democratic societies', including Europe's and America's, fundamental values and institutions are, first and foremost, the creations and legacies of the Enlightenment. Their ideals and social structures of liberty, equality, justice, democracy, inclusion, individualism, social progress, secularism, pluralism, scientific and technological rationalism, economic prosperity and freedom, free markets, the pursuit of happiness and well being, dignified humane life, optimism and hope, universalism, and humanism are primarily rooted in, advocated, and advanced by the Enlightenment. The latter is understood as a sort of cultural revolution, starting as an intellectual or philosophical and sociological movement in Western Europe, especially, though not solely, in France, with subsequent partial ramifications and derivations in America and other non-European or non-Western settings during the seventeenth and especially the eighteenth century.

In this sense, modern liberal-democratic, egalitarian, rationalistic, secular, pluralist, advanced, humanistic, and progressive society, or simply modernity, is the child of the Enlightenment (Habermas 2001). Conversely, the latter is the prime intellectual creator of modernity (Beck 2000; Habermas 2001), specifically its liberal-Western version in light of actual or possible "multiple modernities," including illiberal and non-Western ones (Eisenstadt 2003; Jepperson 2002; Eisenstadt and Sachsenmaier 2002), just as the existence of Eastern forms of "enlightenment" (Angel 1994). In short, the "modern project" of society admittedly originates in and derives from, above all, the Western Enlightenment (Smart 2000).

Alternatively, the Enlightenment, in virtue of its inner ideal or dream of, to paraphrase Jefferson, "liberty, equality, justice, life, and happiness for all," is the genuine originator, more specifically the spiritual parent, of the project and reality of modern liberal-democratic society (Artz 1998; Delanty 2000; Munch 2001). Essentially, it is the true foundation and vision of modern free, open society (Popper 1973) through various explicit and "links" between the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century and modern social, including political, philosophical and scientific, conditions during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Hinchman 1984; also, Habermas 2001). On this account, to paraphrase a postwar statement about generalized Keynesianism

(Akerlof 2007), “we are all the Enlightenment’s children” (Artz 1998; also, Byrne 1997). This holds true as a general pattern or prevalent tendency, with some deviations and oppositions in the form of the pre- and counter-Enlightenment such as medievalism and conservatism, including fascism, revived fundamentalism, neo-conservatism, and neofascism, respectively. In this respect, the Enlightenment constitutes what Durkheim would call a total sociological, as distinguished from limited intellectual or philosophical, phenomenon, including social revolution or, as Sidgwick puts it, innovation, involving multiple and complex societal ramifications and consequences as well as socio-historical conditions and settings (Linton 2001; Simon 1995).

In sociological terms, the expression “the child and children of the Enlightenment” substantively signifies that modern liberal-democratic Western and other societies and the people living in them, including America and Americans, are primarily the societal outcomes, legacies, and descendants of the Enlightenment (McLaren and Coward 1999), as distinguished from the pre-Enlightenment and opposed by the counter-Enlightenment. As observed, it is Enlightenment rather than pre- and counter-Enlightenment values and institutions that are at the “heart of Western civilization” (Berman 2000) hence being, first of all, the expression and heir of the Enlightenment. These values and institutions include “Enlightenment traditions” of liberal-secular democracy and an esthetic and rationalistic culture centered around the arts and sciences, in particular involving the “disinterested pursuit of the truth, cultivation of art, and commitment to critical thinking” through “an expanding intellectual inquiry” (Berman 2000). The “influence of Enlightenment” is also observed and salient in modern society in that “so many” of its problems appear and are framed and solved within the “parameters of Enlightenment norms” (Fitzpatrick 1999). A cited paradigmatic instance is the “enshrinement of Enlightenment ideas in public law” as displaying the “tension” between its “universal norms” and their “appropriate application” to individuals, groups, and societies (Fitzpatrick 1999).

Conversely, Western, and even more non-Western, illiberal-undemocratic societies have almost invariably been the children of – that is, reproduced and justified by – the pre- and counter-Enlightenment predating and countering the Enlightenment and its ideals, respectively. Paradigmatic negative instances include the transient conservative and counter-revolutionary restoration of the *ancien regime* in early nineteenth century France (Delanty 2000), Bismarck’s German authoritarian and militarist-imperial state (Habermas 1989a), and Nazism and other totalitarian and warlike fascism (Blinkhorn 2003) in interwar, as well as neoconservatism and neofascism in postwar, Europe (Giddens 2000; Hodgson 1999). Such instances or functional equivalents are also found in America at some historical points, as during Puritanism until its “disestablishment” in the early nineteenth century, Federalism, paleoconservatism, including McCarthyism, then neoconservatism and within it revived religious fundamentalism and neo-fascism, and geographic regions like Puritan-ruled New England and the fundamentalist Southern and other “Bible Belt,” including the (also) Calvinist “Wild West” (Clemens 2007; Dunn and Woodard 1996; Lipset 1996; Munch 2001) and the “nightmarish world” (McCann 2000) of Mormon-ruled Utah.

All these cases exemplify outcomes of the counter-Enlightenment countering, as well as of the pre-Enlightenment predating, the French and American Revolutions. For example, religious-political conservatism in Europe and America during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century arose from medievalism and functioned as the anti-Enlightenment (Eisenstadt 1999; Nisbet 1966) and antiliberalism resulting in illiberal, and thus undemocratic, societies and historical periods. And it has continued to do so since, through paleoconservatism and interwar fascism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and via neoconservatism, including “born again” religious fundamentalism and neofascism, up to the late twentieth and early twenty-first century (Dombrowski 2001; Habermas 2001; Munch 2001). By analogy, medievalist traditionalism and religion such as orthodox Catholicism and Protestantism in Europe persisted and petrified as the pre-Enlightenment (Habermas 2001) and consequently, as Mannheim (1967) suggests, pre-liberalism and predemocracy.

These opposite lineages of modern liberal-democratic open vs. illiberal-undemocratic closed societies reveal the stark contrast and profound contradiction between Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment ideals, values, and institutions, and their respective societal outcomes of liberty and democracy *and* of illiberty and authoritarianism, respectively. Evidently, the sociological child of the Enlightenment and its ideals and values is the polar opposite to that of the pre- and anti-Enlightenment: liberal-democratic and open vs. illiberal-undemocratic and closed society.

In a sense, one cannot emphasize enough that modern Western democratic and other societies, including in both Europe and America, prove primarily to be the creations and legatees, thus most people living in them the spiritual children¹ (Artz 1998) or heirs, of the eighteenth century Enlightenment and its ideals of liberty, equality, justice, democracy, universalism, reason and rationalism, optimism and social progress, well being, happiness, human life, and the like. This emphasis is needed because in these societies, particularly “exceptional” America, not “every schoolboy knows” and acknowledges – and this includes many, especially conservative, sociologists and economists – the primary historical genesis or cultural foundation of their constitutive values and institutions in the Enlightenment, itself unknown or “forgotten” by ordinary people, especially most Americans. Instead, most “schoolboys” view these values as preexisting, including pre-Enlightenment, notably as “Christian,” in particular “Protestant” (Berger 1991; Lipset 1996; Mayway 1984; Parsons 1967a), and parametric or given, simply always “out there.”

Thus, recall that most people in today’s Western and other societies (Inglehart 2004) regard political and increasingly cultural pluralism or diversity as a parameter or given (Dahrendorf 1959; Dombrowski 2001; Hirschman 1982) in an open, democratic society. Yet, not everyone seems to know or recognize that this social value and condition is primarily the ideal, product, and legacy of the Enlightenment and its holistic or “comprehensive” liberalism (Dombrowski 2001; Reiman 1997).

¹ Artz (1998:35) observes that “so successful were [the Enlightenment’s ideals] they that at bottom we are still the spiritual children of the eighteenth century.”