

The eye-opening views of immanuel kant on people lives

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Immanuel Kant

Immanuel Kant's most enduring work, *What is Enlightenment?* is one of the most famous and impactful of all Kant's essays. According to Kant the definition of "Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed nonage." Enlightenment is the ability for humans to think for themselves and the reason why there is a lack of Enlightenment is not from a lack of intellect, but from the lack of courage to think for oneself. Kant addressed the issues of what causes a lack of enlightenment among people, and all the preconditions that are needed for it to be possible for humans to enlighten themselves. He also talked about religion in the essay about how it impairs enlightenment and that humans must be allowed freedom to use their own ability and intellect rather than blind faith in religion. He also pointed out that the rulers of his time had more of a concern about what to think about religious issues than what to tell its citizens to think about scientific and artistic issues. Overall, the essay takes a critical view of how most people choose to live their lives by not thinking for themselves and rather let other people think for them instead.

Nonage which is "the inability to use one's own understanding without another's guidance" is imposed by oneself from a lack of courage and indecision to simply use one's own intelligence and mind without have someone else's input or thinking. Kant stated *Sapere aude* which means *Dare to know!* Which is to "Have the courage to use your own understanding," as the motto of enlightenment. He pointed out that the reason why most of humankind choses to remain intellectually dependent or

“ minors” is due to most people’s “ laziness” and “ cowardice” because it is simply too hard for most people to think for themselves or be intellectually autonomous in life, even though they have become free from “ external guidance.” For other people, it is easier in life to think for one’s self which establishes them in life as the “ guardians” to the minor’s comfortable and easy lives, which are composed of the clear majority of people in humanity.

Kant pointed out a clear picture of why people chose an easier life when he stated “ If I have a book that thinks for me, a pastor who acts as my conscience, a physician who prescribes my diet, and so on—then I have no need to exert myself. I have no need to think, if only I can pay; others will take care of that disagreeable business for me. Those guardians who have kindly taken supervision upon themselves see to it that the overwhelming majority of mankind—among them the entire fair sex—should consider the step to maturity, not only as hard, but as extremely dangerous. First, these guardians make their domestic cattle stupid and carefully prevent the docile creatures from taking a single step without the leading-strings to which they have fastened them. Then they show them the danger that would threaten them if they should try to walk by themselves. Now this danger is really not very great; after stumbling a few times they would, at least, learn to walk. However, examples of such failures intimidate and generally discourage all further attempts.” It would be extremely difficult for someone to become an enlightened individual when by nature nonage is the only thing that they have allowed. The individual is most likely incapable of even understanding the first thoughts that are his own, because he never simply has tried before

to think for himself, rather enjoying his easy life of nonage. Due to the near impossibility of emerging from nonage by cultivating one's own thoughts there are only a few individuals who have succeed and live an enlightened life that once was not.

Society can however enlighten itself if it is given the freedom to do so. Even though there are some independent thinkers that could show how valuable it is to society to think for oneself; society can only successfully achieve enlightenment if it is achieved at a slow pace or else a revolution could occur that could never bring a true reformation of thought. There is only one necessary requirement for enlightenment to be achieved and that is complete freedom of reason. Society is consequently filled with restrictions on freedom, as some are necessary for society to function well as a whole, but according to Kant " Which restriction is harmful to enlightenment? Which restriction is innocent, and which advances enlightenment? I reply: the public use of one's reason must be free at all times, and this alone can bring enlightenment to mankind."