

Humanities analysis essay



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Toward a World Economy Europe's entry into the Atlantic and Pacific created an international exchange of goods, created a new world-wide economy including the Americas, and paved the way for the establishment of colonies. The ability of the West to dominate the seas allowed Western merchants to displace others from the world trade system. The Eastern particularly the so called Indian trade until the end of 15th Century was under the control of Islamic merchants. It is possible that the first words spoken by Christopher Columbus on stepping ashore in the New World were the Arabic greeting "As-salam alaykum" ? Arabic had been the scientific language of most of humankind from the eighth to the 12th century. It is probably for this reason that Columbus, in his own words, considered Arabic to be "the mother of all languages," and why, on his first voyage to the New World, he took with him Luis de Torres, an Arabicspeaking Spaniard, as his interpreter. Columbus fully expected to land in India, where he knew that the Arabs had preceded him.

He also knew that, for the past five centuries, Arabs had explored, and written of, the far reaches of the known world. They had been around the perimeter of Africa and sailed as far as India. They had ventured overland beyond Constantinople, past Asia Minor, across Egypt and Syria - then the western marches of the unknown Orient - and into the heart of the Asian continent. They had mapped the terrain, traced the course of rivers, timed the monsoons, scaled mountains, charted shoals and reached China, and, as a result, had spread Islam and the Arabic language in all these regions.

Aileen Vincent-Barwood in *Slaves on board of a ship. Destination America*

Until 1630, the slave trade remained in the hands of the Portuguese. The Dutch and British began to export slaves to plantation colonies in the Americas after 1637. Both Europeans and indigenous peoples were active participants in the commerce, because it was possible to realize major profits.

With the development of plantation agriculture in the Americas, slaves became the primary component of the coercive labor system. Later at the end of the 16th Century the earliest of the colonizers, Spain and Portugal, declined in the face of later competition from England, France, and Holland. The creation of a world economy largely dominated by the West was a major shift in history. Latin America, Africa, the southern colonies of the American coast, and some other regions were drawn into a system that condemned them to an inferior, dependent status.

After 1700's, the West underwent a series of dramatic transformations in politics, intellectual development, and industrialization. The latter in the form of a so called "revolution" altered basic social patterns, enhanced Europe's position in the world, and marked the path to be taken by other civilizations. "Water to the mill" The answer to the question "where comes the water to the mill" ("degirmenin suyu nereden geliyor?" is a Turkish saying) that is the origin of the wealth of the West, lies mostly in the Atlantic slave trade.

The volume of slaves shipped increased from the sixteenth century to a zenith in the eighteenth century. By 1800, about three million slaves resided in the Americas. At its end in the nineteenth century, the slave trade still

shipped more than one million slaves High slave mortality in the plantation environment required constant replenishment of workers. Slavery was part of the triangular trade, in which European manufactured goods were shipped to Africa for slaves sent to the plantation colonies from which sugar and cotton were exported to Europe.

In Africa, participation in the slave trade often reduced local economies to dependence on European manufactures. In this peculiar fashion, Africa was linked to the global trade system. The Disruptions caused by “ Industrialized” Life Industrialization promoted movement from the country to the city. Family life was disrupted in the process. Workers found themselves packed into slums and subjected to harsh labor conditions. Workers responded to new conditions, in some cases with outright resistance, but failed to slow the pace of technological change.

For the middle class, women retreated from the labor force to take up duties in the domestic household. Attitudes toward children involved greater concern for education and a sense of childhood. A source of social instability was the dramatic population increase that set in after 1730, a result of improved nutrition and a lower rate of infant mortality. However unlike previous epochs, the population increase of the eighteenth century produced more positive responses.

Upper- class families attempted to secure their positions, and the social hierarchy became more rigid. Business families attempted to increase their margins of profit, sometimes by the addition of more technology. At the lowest level, the poor were driven to seek new means of employment and

the higher demand for work decreased the wages to a mere subsistence level. Population growth stimulated a surge in production of textiles and other goods of daily usage.

This process in history is called proto-industrialization accompanying changes in social patterns in response to new economic conditions Towards the “ Revolution” During the improving stage of the market relations in European economies, the dominant mode was simple trade rather than production. However, a manufacturing industry was also growing up around the logic of mercantilism. The arguments of the political economists of the period were similar to contemporary arguments.

In order to have a favorable balance of trade it is more profitable to produce and sell goods with higher capital input and technology while importing cheap raw materials and agricultural goods. The logic behind the new policy proposals was the growing conscience of domestic interests of a rising manufacturing bourgeoisie. In a manufacturing economy, productive forces like capital and labor have to be employed in a way to constantly increase the productivity in order to increase the profits. This aximizing trend needs protection against external competition and needs a labor freely obtainable in the market. Accordingly, this transition to an industrial economy needed more people freed from traditional bonds and obligations in the feudal domains in order to decrease the cost of labor.. We observe the preliminary signs of this trend in the 18th Century England. The English Parliament, unlike the monarchies of Europe, became more under the control of the merchant and capitalist classes.

Here we may remember the famous economist Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*' proposition that, "the only legitimate goal of national government and human activity is the steady increase in the overall wealth of the nation". The key to wealth is surplus, and surplus is increased by producing more with less cost, then we arrive to the increasing drive for technological improvements and innovations. This nature of capitalism also explains the opposition of the bourgeoisie to feudal relations. "Sheep are eating men": Enclosures During the 17th and 18th Centuries, developments and inventions in science and technology applied increasingly to agriculture and manufactures. Advances in farming and animal breeding methods increased productivity in the supply of raw materials, like wool, for the needs of the industry. The term "Enclosure" is used to explain the process of appropriation of former common lands (lands which provided free access and use to the peasants) by the landlords to breed sheep for their wool.

Enclosures increased the number of larger and more productive and efficient capitalist farms but, reduced the peasants either to the status of farm laborers or more often displaced them from their lands. (Read the box: "Sheep are eating men") "Sheep are eating men" "When, therefore, we look at the world with the eyes of More (Thomas More) we are looking from the widest windows of that time; looking over an English landscape seen for the first time very equally, in the level light of the sun at morning.

For what he saw was England of the Renaissance; England passing from the mediaeval to the modern. Thus he looked forth, and saw many things and said many things, they were all worthy and many witty; but he noted one thing which is at once a horrible fancy and a homely and practical fact. He

who looked over that landscape said: “ Sheep are eating men. ” This singular summary of the great epoch of our emancipation and enlightenment is not the fact usually put first in such very curt historical accounts of it” From G. K. Chesterton, A Short History of England, 1917.

Children working in a textile factory Industry shouldered by children! The term “ Industrial Revolution” signifies accelerated developments of the technology and their applications to the Industry of England. Supporting an unprecedented increase in industrial production, this revolution reached its peaks, at the end of the 18th century and mid 19th century. Although by some authors the term “ revolution” is considered to be exaggerated, it is true that between 1750’s and 1850’s the quality of goods produced increased enormously and machine power began to replace the human power for the first time in the history.

Workshops turned into factories, artisans to entrepreneurs and laborers to an alienated working class: the industrial proletariat. Output and distribution, passed the limits of local markets and the yields of a mass production began to be directed towards export markets. Briefly, industrial “ revolution” was not a sudden incident but a transformation through time resulting with technical, economic, social, political and ideological alterations. If looked from another aspect, Industrial Revolution also would mean misery of the working people, including women and small children, laboring from early morning until night.

In 1833 the English Government passed a Factory Act to improve conditions for children working in factories. Young children were working very long

hours in workplaces where conditions were often terrible. The basic act was as follows: Industrial revolution also goes together with the resistance of worker in the form of machine breaking, which will be known as “ Luddite Movements”, rise of working class organizations, trade unions and finally “ Socialism” as an ideology and movement. New industrial techniques mostly originating in England during the early 19th Century spread rapidly in Northwestern Europe, France and the U.

S. A. and during the second half of the 19th century to Germany, Italy and Austria. Interestingly, these newly industrialized countries, particularly the U. S. A. as compared to England gained a better momentum towards the end of the century. This was due to the application of the most recent and efficient technologies without the transformation cost of outdated units. That is, countries industrializing later reached higher rates of development, while previously advanced countries due to the cost of replacing the old plants became relatively slower in the race of modernization. 4

The key development of the Industrial Revolution was the application of machine power to replace men and animals. Favorable supplies of natural resources and the spur of population growth helped to produce the first Industrial Revolution in Britain. Industrialization built on the commercial advantages Europe enjoyed in the world trade network and the developments of the scientific revolution. The initial inventions, such as James Watt’s steam engine, that prompted the Industrial Revolution occurred in Britain. Each invention spawned new technological developments in related fields.

Hence, throughout its history, political and institutional framework to facilitate the abovementioned aspects had also developed in England. On the other hand, England had, in its territories, the necessary raw materials like coal and iron ore. England's overseas superiority also helped to a better access and control of raw materials and a cheap labor besides the slaves in the overseas territories. High population growth and "enclosure" movements transforming peasantry to "wage competing laborers" also reinforced this advantage.

Moreover, England's manufactured exports since the beginnings of the industrial revolution had been wool, cotton and hardware. If compared, for example to France's silk and other luxury goods, England's goods had a steady demand and a larger access to other markets. The brief outline below explains the necessary conditions of a leap forward such as the "Industrial Revolution":

1. Sufficient and accelerated capital accumulation.
2. Availability and sufficient size of domestic and foreign market.
3. Access and control of raw materials.
4. Free and cheap labor.
5. A political and institutional framework facilitating innovation.

England, as compared to the other countries was in a more advantageous state for the above mentioned preconditions. During the 17th and 18th Centuries England had began to monopolize overseas trade in such a way

that all its wars resulted with the acquisition of a new overseas territory. Besides leading the North American, the South American and, most importantly, the Indian trades, England was also continuing to gain ground in the Mediterranean region.

Lower prices besides better quality made possible by industrialized production increased the demand for English goods in foreign markets. English goods price and quality advantage had also caused the decline of local industries of common goods in the Ottoman Empire as in other countries. Remember the Turkish saying “ As? İacaksan İngiliz sicimiyle as? İ” (“ Better to have English cord if you are to be hanged”) is a dramatic confession of quality that uninterrupted finishing causes less suffering.

England’s first entrance to the Ottoman market The Ottoman Empire managed to maintain its vigor until the late seventeenth century. At that time the empire, which was overextended, began to retreat from its most distant borders in Europe and the Middle East. Once the Ottoman Empire began to contract, its administrative structure, which had always depended on military expansion, began to deteriorate and corrupt. (Readers 4 and 5) Technological and cultural conservatism continued to cause the Ottoman Empire to disregard important changes in Europe.