

## DIALECTIC OF ENLIGHTENMENT

1. an attempt to understand the appeal / attractiveness of fascism.
  - a. how is it that people become part of their own oppression?
  - b. Marx had said that the internal tension in capitalism would lead to revolution of the oppressed
  - c. Totalitarianism = more oppression and yet the masses were conforming - the drive for freedom seemed to vanish
  - d. Their thesis: the path provided by enlightenment to our liberation leads us to our own domination

"Enlightenment, understood in the widest sense as the advance of thought, has always aimed at **liberating human beings from fear and installing them as masters**. Yet the wholly enlightened earth is radiant with triumphant calamity. Enlightenment's program was the disenchantment of the world."

1. Enlightenment's project was freedom from fear, to further self-preservation.
2. BUT Enlightenment creates new conditions for fear, for disaster.
3. Absolute triumph of technology, of reason, of progress =
  - a. Totalitarian states
  - b. WMD's
  - c. climate

Enlightenment starts out as an attempt to escape from myth, from unreason but

Enlightenment itself is a myth

Enlightenment is so self-justifying it begins to undermine the freedom of human beings

Domination

Knowledge as power (Bacon) all other forms of understanding are pushed aside

Our methods of understanding come to oppress us

quantification becomes the only acceptable means of knowledge,

which results in the domination of the object of study

so in domination we assume the Lord position (Hegel)

however, the Lord is not free but dependent on the thing being dominated for power

The human subject becomes replacement of God

so man becomes commander

and the only way that a man can assume power over another is through domination by knowledge (quantification)

LOGIC OF ENLIGHTENMENT:

Modern technology triumphs in:

mass killing

efficient murder

control of people against their will

If enlightenment follows the logic of self-preservation through knowledge and if our path to self-preservation is in manipulation of and power over the objects of knowledge then we are in big trouble.

Rationality is linked to tyranny.

*“Human beings purchase the increase in power with estrangement from that over which it is exerted. Enlightenment stands in the same relationship to things as the dictator to human beings. He knows them to the extent that he can manipulate them.”*

Domination of nature leads to alienation from nature  
Domination of human beings leads to alienation from each other:

Equality and uniformity:

Persistent pursuit of equality leads to a conception of collective society that minimizes the individual — standardization - makes people easier to control.  
manipulating society into a predictable mold makes it easier to control.

through medication - training  
infringement of rights

even in liberal democracies.

ex. standardized testing

but there is no alternative to enlightenment that we can imagine today. These problems stem from values we do not want to give up = political/cultural deadlock

all forms of knowledge are pressured to conform to rationality, technological knowledge, scientific method

this makes enlightenment a myth for A and H — the myth being that there is nothing outside of enlightenment. Enlightenment absorbs all other forms of knowledge and ways of knowing, there is nothing outside the enlightenment.

*“Humans believe themselves free of fear when there is no longer anything unknown. This has determined the path of demythologization, of enlightenment, which equates the living with the nonliving as myth had equated the nonliving with the living. Enlightenment is mythical fear radicalized.”*

so rationality sees everything that doesn't fit within it with fear, mistrust (religion, art, etc.) Triumph of the quantitative (positivism) scientism

MAGIC FLUTE

rational knowledge will always reproduce the status quo. (Generalizability of nature, reproducibility, standardization.)

We think we're being rational when we are in fact participating in our own domination — in fact that's what it means to be rational.

scientism is only validated by mirroring the world as it is - rather than imaging the world as it might be - the world as it is is taken to be true reality.

possibilities that still exist for us:

Art and Memory

art treats the past as something living (rather than as dead material which can be manipulated for further rational/technological progress).

its not that Beethoven is false just because it is old like say an outdated scientific theory or piece of technology. When we talk of vintage technology that is technology entering into art. Beethoven, Bach, Shakespeare are true but not factual. This is why i don't think of learning about old philosophy or interesting, but defunct scientific theories as a waste of time. I am treating them as art. Perhaps this is a mode of understanding in embryonic form that could till save us.

HOWEVER, art is colonized by enlightenment:

art as a tool of domination — nazi rally choreography, propaganda, architecture | mass culture  
how have we come to this point?

psychology, focus grouping

reducing availability of alternatives to the status quo : expropriation of discourse - removing the availability to the standardized viewpoints made available in society.

*"the masses are unable to hear with their own ears that which has not already been heard. Myth becomes a tool of domination."*

(nazi spectacle / occult, homogenized commercial culture - e.g., Donald Trump)

Art as domination reinforces the status quo.

BUT there are forms of art that might open our eyes, ears. Art can act as a site of resistance if it does not reproduce the status quo.