

Enlightenment makes promises it can't keep:

*"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."*

Knowledge as power (Bacon)

Self-preservation

reason liberates precisely through **domination** (of nature, of other people, of the self)

this is the **dialectic**: an intensification of the same motion toward freedom becomes the motion toward domination

Instrumental vs. Intrinsic Value

Enlightenment becomes myth | myth has always contained the impulse toward 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."

Odyssey as Enlightenment

Instrumental reason:

Sirens —> sailors can't hear the music / Odysseus can hear the music but can't do anything

Modernity : not simple oppression / laborers should focus on work — this pushes things forward. Master can enjoy the music (art, critique) but this can only be done in a situation where you have no influence

Things are planned in such a way that the consequences of the music will be neutralized

Calculated renunciation is central to enlightenment (presages modern condition)

magic/myth is other to enlightenment

when art becomes autonomous it becomes useless — Hegel's end of art | Art is flourishing, but it is now outside society

this delimits its consequences / makes it closer to spiritual concerns

Scientism — a term generally used to describe:

1) the cosmetic application of **science** in unwarranted situations not covered by the **scientific method**.

2) a belief in the universal applicability of the scientific method and approach, and the view that **empirical science** constitutes the most authoritative **worldview** or the most valuable part of human learning—to the exclusion of other viewpoints.

scientism is only validated by mirroring the world as it is - rather than imaging the world as it might be (i.e., speculative theory) - the world as it is taken to be true reality (naturalizing the market, the relations of power, etc.).

The problem with knowledge:

To know is to control, to dominate, to master. So we need to explore other possible relationships to the world (see Levinas)

Knowledge
Enjoyment
Nourishment

Art and Memory

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

old technology as obsolete

old technology as vintage (i.e., aesthetic)

HOWEVER, art is colonized by enlightenment

Propaganda / Ideology, (e.g., nazi spectacle / occult)

Homogenized mass culture

focus grouping / selling out

Marquis de Sade as early Culture industry guy:

Wanted to rationally examine the maximization of pain and pleasure (maximal use). How to achieve the optimal effects to make culture into a drug – rather than into a form of true enlightenment

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

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.

Contradictions in Enlightenment Values*

Freedom and equality don't add up:

this distinction/contradiction between actuality and pretension Marx calls
IDEOLOGY

Every value taken to an extreme flips over to its opposite

Dialectic Structure:

Enlightenment is not just chronological, but part of the dialectic of thought

Language (Semantic/Rational – Aesthetic/Talismanic)

Language is permeated by enlightenment

[e.g., Positivist Philosophy has as its object the cleansing of language — pure
language over natural language

**the attempt to cleanse language of emotional / historical / non-logical
baggage is often seen as a promise of freedom**

seen as getting rid of the glue, the baggage, bias, injustice]

But Language is also magical, talismanic, expressive, contains a mythical
residue/substrate. And in fact this substrate is chronologically prior to semantic
meaning.

To rid Language of its relationship to its non-semantic other is to distort it, not to
clarify it

To rid music of its aesthetic dimension is to distort it

positivist systems are a form of distortion

For civil society to function (i.e., a society of rational public discourse, art being used
to allow a non-utilitarian experience of freedom, etc.) you need to have inequality (if
only to allow for the leisure time to engage in these activities. Promise of industrial
automation was that it would allow greater numbers of people to have more free
time, but the result is always more complicated, instead of leading to greater wealth
for the many it leads to greater wealth for the few, people are put out of work,
functionally sterilized (can't afford to raise a family), become more fearful for their
existence – have to work worse jobs for longer hours – have no time for intellectual
pursuits. Attention spans get shorter and shorter. So the sort of freedom on which
the notion of civil society is based leads instead to a situation in which people are
less free and more susceptible to coercion.

