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- Course Teacher: Mritunjay Kumar Yadavendu, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology
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# DIALECTICS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

AUTHOR :MAX HORKHEIMER AND THEODOR ADORNO

“ON DIALECTICS OF ENLIGHTENMENT “

RELEVANCE: The germination of the ideas of critical thought owes its roots to the philosophy of Enlightenment. An era denoted by science and scientism stood challenged in the face of rejection of optimism and disbelief in the idea of modernity as the saviour of mankind.

# THE IDEA OF ENLIGHTENMENT

- The art of acquiring knowledge is through the technological expertise that one possesses.
- Knowledge is Power as one begets the other.
- Knowledge that does not satiate the quotient of “satisfaction” is like a courtesan meant to serve the principle of pleasure but not bear the fruit of legacy.
- Bacon, Father of ‘experimental philosophy’ realized that disenchantment would follow a patriarchal path ,mind will conquer the superstitious beliefs and will not owe loyalty to the uncertainties of nature.
- Therefore technology would eliminate the joy of understanding and replace it by numbers and images that serves an illusionary purpose of ‘work accomplished.’

# MYTH : AN ENLIGHTENED REALITY

- Myths through anthropogenic intervention lost their relevance. They became objects of enlightened reality.
- Myth becomes Enlightenment and nature mere objectivity.
- Man develops the need to master himself. This is acquired to the extent he can produce and manipulate things. Hence a thing's 'inself' becomes 'for him'.
- The relationship between enlightenment and things can be compared and contrasted in the same way as that of a dictator to his subjects.
- Nature loses its specific qualities to the spirit of classification and submergence.

# MAGIC AND SCIENCE

- Magic and Science share a unique relationship of commonality and difference.
- The world of science is reduced to representativeness but that of magic to differences.
- Magic and Science both are instrumental in their objectives. However magic carries this through mimesis and science through omnipotence of thought.
- Science tries to distance itself from objects but magic through mythical microcosm of reality entangles objects around it.
- The Principle of Immanence that repetition as necessary for every event is in reality myth.

# DISCURSIVE LOGIC

- Power in the domain of logic and concept is power derived from the real world.
- Freeborn citizens learned about truth from the notions of order and subjugation operating in real world.
- This led to classification in thought, truth symbolized classified ideas.
- The existence of opposed systems as holy and unholy, life and death and summer and winter are often linked to the same idea.
- Notional and categorical differences surface only when concepts cannot be thought of as a singular but a relative entity.
- Human fear of the unknown is singularly responsible for each explanation.

# INTUITION AND CONCEPT

- Science becomes a reclusive domain to apply isolated concepts ,a stand often taken by Mathematician.
- Art however bears the witness to the fact that repetition is knowledge production. Sign and it's image must bear a compliance of unity.
- Philosophy is characterized by accepting the bridge between intuition and concept.
- Art claims the dignity of the absolute.
- The work of art re enacts duplication, is a sign that intuition and concept both are ignited at the same level for understanding and interpretation.
- Philosophy tries to import ideas from the work of Art.

# LANGUAGE AND SYMBOLS

- Symbols usually take on the form of fetish.
- Language itself speaks of fetishes and Mana through the commands of the hierarchy.
- The use of language reiterates the fact that it reflects social conditions of reality.
- Enlightenment defeated the ideas of exclusive expressions.
- Language spoke of universality and dictated the strength of the powerful. It spoke of neutrality. Such neutrality is worse than Metaphysics.
- Language and symbols kept their jaws open only for the fear of the abstract from which it's episteme can be traced.



# MYTHIC TERROR

- Mythic terror springs from the fact that human utterance has no place in the functional context of self preservation.
- Hence Spinoza said “ the endeavour of preserving oneself is the first and only basis of virtue.”
- Self is realized only as a reference point for reason and legislating authority.
- Self will recede into oblivion if it loses a rational point for acting.
- The identity of the self is sustained through repeated behaviours and standardized procedures of ostracism for non -compliance.

# REGRESSION

- Self is forced to comply. Physical distance from sensuous experience as well as autocratic distance to subjugate and keep in hold the wandering mind.
- Mastery of the senses is achieved through acceptance of the production of unanimity.
- Mind is thus an agent of power disbursement.
- Isolation of the individual through the controlled power of the collectivity.
- This confinement has adverse consequences both for the body and the soul.

# CONCLUSION

- Sacrificing thought became detrimental to human progress.
- If theory does not allow for toppling status quo then it will not be free from fallacies.
- Enlightenment can be as destructive as it's Romantic enemies claim.
- Hence Bacon dreamed : 'which kings cannot buy with their treasure, nor with their force command..'
- Knowledge is 'the sovereignty of Man', but in it's present status it is deceiving the masses.

Thank You

