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Light and Shadows

On the Dialectic of Enlightenment in Art

For Werner Hofmann



Published in 1784, Immanuel Kant's (1724–1804) answer to the question "What is Enlightenment?" – "Enlightenment is the human being's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity" – was illustrated by the artists of his time, as shown in the present survey, with a good deal of light to counter the prevailing shadows cast by social conditions. Yet for all this optimistic illumination, the shadows did not abate as the Enlightenment progressed. In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, written in 1944 in exile in Los Angeles and published in 1947 in Amsterdam, Max Horkheimer (1895–1973) and Theodor W. Adorno (1903–1969) made this drastically clear with their terrifying antithesis of an Enlightenment thwarted by the dream of reason and its pursuit of absolute rationality. In their view, the Enlightenment was both inhumane and totalitarian for its rigid subjugation of all life and every society to the rational law of numbers. Remarkably, however, the shadow thus cast upon the Enlightenment was, as demonstrated in the following discussion of Albrecht Dürer's (1471–1528) master engraving, a shadow that had already made its presence felt during the Renaissance. An enlightenment before the Enlightenment, as it were, the Renaissance saw a nascent recognition of the delicate psyche of those people to whom the enlightenment of the public was eminently due. Ever attributed to the realm of darkness, melancholy has been described at length since antiquity. Around 1800 it was put to clever use by exponents of the Enlightenment – as the example of Francisco de Goya (1746–1828) shows – in circumventing various forms of censorship since ingenious madness, the exclusive domain of the melancholic, offered considerable licence. And even in the reputedly dry bourgeois world of calendar copperplates and didactic treatises, there existed an ongoing awareness of the special disposition characterising members of the Enlightenment; then, as now, it was on account of this particular disposition that they were viewed as being equally outstanding and endangered and, as such, especially suspect. In the pictorial history of European enlightenments, the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* – one of the definitive pieces of philosophically grounded social criticism to have emerged in the twentieth century – foregrounds one of the main themes of visual reflection regarding the complex nature of human beings and their attempts to improve the world.

Voltaire

Only in the face of so much shadow does the light of the Enlightenment appear so bright. With the lamp he is holding in his hand, Voltaire (1694–1778), a mere silhouette in Jean Huber's paper-cut portrait of the philosopher, shines light on what lies ahead of him. Like the classical philosopher Diogenes (c. 412–c. 323 BC), the French philosopher Voltaire, renowned as the "light of the century", holds up his lamp in quest of the truth. "J'éclaire" – "I enlighten" – "Enlightenment" is the name Voltaire, pictured as a slightly stooping, forward-moving figure, bestows upon his enterprise of illuminating the darkness, a task which seems so manifestly bound up with curiosity and caution. Yet as the dark figure of Voltaire reveals, it is a darkness in which he, too, is enveloped – which nevertheless allows him to prepare his line of attack discreetly and covertly and to thus heighten the effect and surprise of his endeavours as an agent of the Enlightenment.

Chodowiecki

The light of the Enlightenment assumes a rather different guise in the work of Daniel Chodowiecki (1726–1801). As can be seen in the present example, it does not appear in the form of a courageous deed on the part of one individual, faithfully adhering to the Kantian maxim of "dare to know" (*Sapere aude*) in his or her pursuit of a clarity of knowledge. Rather, Chodowiecki depicts the Enlightenment as a natural phenomenon, the radiance of the sun. Driven out of France on account of his Protestant beliefs, though welcomed at the court of the Prussian king, Frederick the Great (1712–1786), Chodowiecki chose to portray the Enlightenment as a rising sun which, as both the etching and inscription proclaim, shines far and wide across a typical rural landscape in the middle of Germany with a pointed steeple. Idyllic though it may be, the Enlightenment philosopher, writer and natural scientist Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1724–1799) problematised the landscape with its horse and cart in a commentary penned for the *Göttinger Taschen Calender für das Jahr 1792* (Göttingen Pocket Calendar of 1792). "This supreme work of reason [the Enlightenment]," he writes, "has, to date, acquired no more universally intelligible allegorical symbol (perhaps because the thing itself is still new) than the rising sun. And no doubt it will long remain the seemliest, bearing in mind the fog which will inevitably rise from the mires, censers and burnt offerings on idolatrous altars and which can so easily conceal it. Whereas if the sun does but rise, no harm is done by the fog."

Whipped up by opponents of the Enlightenment for the purpose of obscuring vision, the fog mentioned by Lichtenberg can be easily identified in Chodowiecki's engraving in the white vapour lingering above and behind the village. If the meteorological details of a landscape depiction even as humble as the present one were able to deliver such an excoriating critique of prevailing social conditions, how much more truly might this be said of the misty landscapes of German Romanticism and their shadows? However, in looking at Chodowiecki's calendar engraving, or "political landscape" as the artist termed it, one suddenly has a sense that the actual achievement of the all-illuminating Enlightenment lay in the free movement of goods and intellectual assets, the orientation, mobility and exchange embodied by the cart and its passenger, and that this is what is symbolised by the radiant sun. Doubtless, this symbol of nature was also intended to signify that no authority, whether clerical or political, could stand in the way of the Enlightenment. Nothing can prevent the sun from rising! At the same time, however, the

light of the Enlightenment is egalitarian, falling as naturally on the Church as upon the "huts" and "palaces". No one can evade the light of the Enlightenment, neither the traveller, nor the coachman, nor the inhabitants of the village off in the distance – everybody has a stake!

Schick

A stake in the Enlightenment, whose rapid spread was viewed – in Germany too – in relation to the French Revolution, was held not only by men, but by women as well. This is programmatically evident in Christian Gottlieb Schick's (1776–1812) portrait of Heinrike Dannecker (1773–1823) from 1802. The first wife of the neoclassical sculptor Johann Heinrich Dannecker (1758–1841), the portrait's subject came from an affluent family of merchants from Stuttgart with a strong appreciation of the fine arts. With her legs crossed and one hand raised to her chin, the young Heinrike is portrayed outdoors; she is seated on a cube-shaped block of stone, the profile of which lends it the appearance of an ancient architectural fragment. The colours of her clothing – red, white and blue – are as much an allusion to the French *tricolore* as her headdress is reminiscent of the Phrygian caps of the French Revolution or in allegories of freedom.

Schick, who had only just returned to Stuttgart after training in Paris under the revolutionary artist Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825), portrayed his childhood sweetheart Heinrike as a free spirit out in the open landscape. Her ingenuous, friendly gaze towards the viewer speaks no less for her confident manner than does her sophisticated posture amid the charmingly cultivated, sun-bathed landscape stretching out in front of her. The bright light of the sun falls directly on Heinrike, such that, in line with Lichtenberg's socio-critical weather forecast on Chodowiecki's calendar engraving, she appears as a pensive observer in the sunlight, turned towards and – moreover – playing a part in the principles of truth and Enlightenment. Yet Schick's portrayal of Heinrike Dannecker in the colours of the French Revolution is arguably less a personification of political freedom in what was then the Duchy of Württemberg. Rather, in the midst of civilised nature, almost rendered monumental by the light of the sun, Heinrike appears to be an exemplary representative of a self-understanding in women enlightened by the ideals of the French Revolution – liberty, equality, fraternity –, while the flowers she is holding in her left hand simultaneously convey her delicate sensibility.

Dürer

Around 1800 there was a widespread feeling of optimism with relation to the Enlightenment. Like an inexorable natural phenomenon, it was thought there would be an unfaltering progression from the darkness of ignorance to the light of truth. Yet the story of the Enlightenment has a far more critical prologue. It begins around 1500 when, with the advent of the so-called Modern Era and the end of the purportedly dark Middle Ages – an era characterised by the hegemony of the Christian Church –, the classically inspired idea of the Renaissance – or, as Albrecht Dürer called it, the "Wiedererwachsung" (regrowth) of humanity – was born, and with it the first European enlightenment. The first image of enlightenment to carry some awareness of the dangerous contradictions inherent in humanity's pursuit of knowledge, thus making it an icon of the modern age, is Dürer's engraving of 1514, *MELENCOLIA . I*. Again a light can

be seen in the sky, its radiance extending far and wide. The light does not come from the sun, however, but from a comet, the mysterious glow of its sweeping rays condensing the vast expanse of the heavens. A rainbow arches above. Despite the abundance of light in the sky – a further source of light lies in front of the image to the right –, the scene seems decidedly nocturnal.

Like a melancholic sister to Schick's pensively gazing Heinrike Dannecker, though she predates the latter by centuries, is Dürer's no less monumental, wreathed figure of Melancholy. Deep in thought amid the profound solitude of night, she is sitting out on a stone terrace overlooking a vast coastline. Only the comet and rainbow cast an enigmatic light on her deeply shadowed face. In her nocturnal solitude, her sole companions a studiously scribbling putto, a slumbering dog and a bat fluttering eerily in the sky, Dürer's angel-winged figure of Melancholy sits with her head resting against her hand. Positioned at the foot of a tower-like building, she is surrounded by all manner of tools and instruments, each of them useful in the business of "surveying" and "ruling" the world. She is idly holding a pair of compasses in her hand; a book lies closed in her lap.

Whereas Aby Warburg (1866–1929) saw in Dürer's figure of Melancholy the "thinking self-activity of the illuminated creature", and thus a prefiguration of the Enlightenment, the sense of paralysis she exudes is commonly interpreted as a personification of sorrow and resignation over the futility of humanity's pursuit of knowledge in the face of creation and its divine secrets. By way of a warning to all future enlightenments, Dürer is believed to have portrayed the Faustian pursuit of knowledge characterising the beginnings of the Modern Era – humanity's insatiable urge to know everything – as a woeful failure. The character of "I" in the title has been deciphered as the imperative form of the Latin verb "ire", by which Dürer would have meant "melancholy go away, flee!"

While such an interpretation of Dürer's engraving seems quite plausible at first, it entirely contradicts the cult of melancholia nurtured by the Humanists during the Renaissance. Initially concentrated in the circle around Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) and the Platonic Academy in Florence, the group drew heavily on antiquity. This cult of melancholia shaped the elitist self-perception of European intellectuals through to the Enlightenment and beyond. Even as early as Aristotle (384–322 BC), as transmitted in the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *Problemata* (problem XXX, 1), the melancholic was the only one of the four human temperaments (sanguine, choleric, melancholic, phlegmatic) capable of achieving the extraordinary; boasting outstanding intellectual ability, melancholics were people who excelled in the arts and sciences, as well as politics and philosophy. All great people gifted with genius, he argues, were melancholics or, vice versa: only melancholics are capable of being ingenious and gaining an understanding of divine ideas. Dürer, too, is known to have perceived himself as a melancholic and to have portrayed himself as such, his head propped upon his hand. Even at the end of the eighteenth century, Johann Casper Lavater (1741–1801) and William Blake (1757–1827) still considered melancholy the undisputed "mother of all arts". In the ever-unstable melancholic, an excess of melancholy, which is caused by a preponderance of black bile over the other humours and its overheating or chilling – attributed in the doctrine of astrology to the dangerous influence of the dark planet Saturn – leads directly from divine genius to desperate insanity or frenzy, from deep depression to enduring sorrow or even complete paralysis, depending on the composition of the melancholic temperament in question. Only at a well-tempered mean, neither too hot or too cold, as Aristotle would have it, can atrabilious melancholy give rise to greatness in art, science, philosophy and politics.

Set down in 1944 under the bright Californian sun, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the darkening metamorphosis of reason as a result of its reckless hubris into a delusion of reason hostile to nature and humankind, to which everything and everyone must submit, such a "dialectic of enlightenment", arising in Horkheimer and Adorno's writings from the socio-critical analysis of the totalitarian degeneration of society as a result of the purposive rationality of capitalism, fascism and positivism, according to which all life and every society is rigidly subjugated to the rational law of numbers – everything has to pay off, be useful and profitable –, this radical reckoning with a "human mind" that supposedly "conquers superstition" and, in an almost totalitarian manner, is supposed to "rule over disenchanting nature", this analysis of the "self-destruction of the Enlightenment" therefore finds a scarcely less dangerous counterpart for the individual in the glorification of the cult of melancholia and its doctrine of genius as the foundation of all outstanding achievements in human thought. Just as enlightening reason, according to Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805) – in reference to the terrors of the French Revolution – can only have a beneficial effect if reason is balanced with emotion, so melancholy can only be of benefit in a well-balanced, moderate lifestyle. Every excess has consequences for the melancholic of a most disastrous kind. Just as the Enlightenment, taken to excess, metamorphoses into its opposite, so does an excess of melancholy annihilate the very gifts believed to engender its unique intellectual distinctions.

Yet the reverse is also true: the decisive impulses of the light-bearing Enlightenment were, from the Early Modern Era onwards, commonly held to turn on the extraordinary gifts of the melancholic, as tortured as he was inspired by black bile and dark Saturn. The Enlightener as an intellectual, thinker, scientist and artist was for the most part a melancholic who, when melancholy increased too much and gained the upper hand, transmuted the actions of his enlightenment into dark corruption. The blessings and perils of the Enlightenment, for having made reason absolute, therefore closely correlate with the distinctions and hazards of the melancholic temperament. Light and shadows, melancholia and Enlightenment thus appear to be intimately interwoven with one another.

Hence, the melancholic genius is required to keep his or her melancholic temperament at a well-balanced mean. The overheating of black bile in the melancholic, writes Aristotle, leads to fantastic dreams and insanity, whereas chilling leads to sorrow, dull-wittedness and inertia to the point of complete paralysis. In Dürer's engraving of 1514, for the first time in European art, humanity's pursuit of knowledge, its quest for enlightenment, visibly acquired a delicate psyche in combination with the melancholic temperament. Moreover, by linking this quest with mathematics, Dürer invested it with the highest claim to truth and the greatest dignity in analogy to the biblical maxim that God ordered all things in his creation by measure, number and weight. It is to this sentence we might refer the "I" in the title. For according to Euclid's (c. 360–c. 280 BC) canonical definition, "one" is not a number, though it is the source and origin of all numbers: "Unus est fons et origo numerorum". One, then, is the foundation of all mathematics.

Consequently, "melancholy and mathematics", this correlation so comprehensively depicted in the engraving, is also what is meant by Dürer's two-part title "MELENCOLIA . I" in his primary system of reference given by pure visuality. Yet there is also a second system of reference at work which manifests itself in Dürer's permanent call for virtue, for the right measure in all pursuits of knowledge. Human beings cannot know

everything! For the pious Christian, Dürer, there was no doubt that certain knowledge must be withheld by God: "What beauty is, I know not". God alone knows such things, although those "to whom he reveals them, may know them too". In gazing up at the heavens, her attention fixed on the comet – still an unpredictable phenomenon for the astronomers in Dürer's times – Dürer's figure of Melancholy recognises the limits of her knowledge, her lack of knowledge! Similarly, the view of the sky, the gaze towards the light of the heavens, embodies for Dürer the highest form of enlightenment per se, and later in the same vein for Chodowiecki. In Dürer's case it is an enlightenment of human beings as to their ignorance.

Recognising the ultimate ineffability of divine creation, the Humanists viewed such "Docta ignorantia", such learned ignorance, as the perfection of knowledge through devote piety in the face of God's greatness. At the same time, the "Docta Ignorantia" provided the incentive for further advances in the quest for knowledge, and hence for the idea of progress, common to all enlightened modern sciences. This also proved to be the case for Dürer who came to the apodictic conclusion that even if the ultimate truth would forever remain beyond his grasp, he would never abandon his research: "This beastly thought," writes Dürer, "I do not accept." Yet neither did Dürer accept the thought that there was anything inherently good about humanity's quest for knowledge. People, he claims, attain both good things and bad things from the arts and sciences. "It behooves a rational human being" to use the arts and sciences to their best advantage, to "concentrate on the better".

In line with the Humanists, Dürer evidently believed that human beings were possessed of a free will, that they were "free-willed beings". This notion was set forth for the Humanists by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) in his famous *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, scripted in Florence in 1486, and later illustrated by the French Humanist and mathematician Carolus Bovillus (Charles de Bovelles, 1479–1567) in his *Liber de Sapiente* (Book of the Sage). Published in Paris in 1510, four years prior to Dürer's Melancholy engraving, the book found its way into a number of libraries in Nuremberg. Human beings, Pico argued, have no definite place in God's creation. Rather, their special dignity lies in their being a microcosm that corresponds on all levels to the macrocosm. Bovillus illustrates this idea by means of the various levels marked on the left-hand side of his diagram. A human being can only become a "truly human being" if he or she – as Bovillus shows on the right – activates all the gifts granted to him or her. Only when a human being makes full use of all his or her faculties, including the intellect, will he or she have become a true human being.

According to Bovillus, only the "wise man" who activates all the possibilities at his disposal, is, as the creator of himself, "Artifex et sui calothecnicus", a human being and at one with himself: "Cum se ipsum unus", "Sapiens unus est"! Being at one with himself, the wise man becomes not only a true human being but also an image of divine unity. With his own powers, used virtuously, he recreates himself in God's image, becoming a second god on earth: "secundus Deus in terris". Thus it is no coincidence that the representative of "Wisdom" on the title page of Bovillus' *Liber de Sapiente* is seated – like Dürer's Melancholia soon afterwards – on the right upon her stable seat of virtue, regarding divine creation in the mirror in order to arrive at a knowledge of herself. Seated opposite Wisdom upon an unstable, round seat is the blind "Fortuna", holding the Wheel of Fortune in her hand. On the wheel people are struggling to attain happiness and wealth, oblivious to the open grave waiting below.

Echoing this arrangement, Dürer's engraving assembles all the symbols of inconstancy – the sphere, the sea, the ships, the fire and the ladder – on the left where the view opens out to the world beyond. By contrast, the youthful putto, a symbol of carefree if fleeting youth, sits purposefully on his millstone, midway between the areas of Virtus (Virtue) and Fortuna (Fortune). Studiously scribbling under Melancholia's charge, he is already on the path to knowledge and thus to wisdom and virtue. In Dürer's view, these needed to strike a moderate balance between the extremes, whereas all that pertained to vice had "neither aim nor measure"! Similarly, it is only in this state of equilibrium that the melancholic, as argued since the days of Aristotle, might be spurred on to excellence! Upon her stable seat of virtue, with her energetically clenched fist and the aid of her extraordinary gifts in the mathematical arts, Dürer's angel-winged figure of Melancholy has raised herself to the level of wisdom. A representative of wisdom possessed of free will, she has become at one with herself and thus an angelic image of divine unity. Therein lies her merit for Dürer and the key to the work's two-part title.

We are now in a position to decipher the title: "MELENCOLIA . UNUS". According to Euclid, "UNUS" constituted the very foundation of mathematics. And according to the Humanists, "UNUS" was the highest distinction of the wise man, for he had thus become one with himself again and with God. This distinction turns on the conviction that human dignity is born of the capacity of the individual to serve as the creator of his or her own self and, in the task of becoming one with him- or herself, to deploy, virtuously, all the gifts with which he or she has been endowed! As Dürer's engraving shows us – being both a comfort and a warning sign for all enlightenments – the melancholic temperament, the most distinguished and most imperilled of all the human temperaments, is in a position to achieve this goal in spite of all the visible dangers – albeit not without a steadfast orientation towards the right measure. Human beings are allowed to know. Knowledge, the capacity to achieve knowledge by one's own efforts, is what accounts for their divine status. Secure knowledge is founded upon mathematical measurement and verification. All knowledge is capable of improvement. The artist, owning a melancholic temperament, is marked out for the privilege of access to higher ideas. Yet only if these are used virtuously and in the right measure can they be kept from causing harm. With the acquisition of knowledge, Dürer suggests, the human being's admiration for God grows, as does his or her piety. Dürer's Melancholia sits at the end of her knowledge among her tools and instruments, resting her head on her hand, as does Christ as the Man of Sorrows on the title page of Dürer's Passion woodcuts of 1511. In Dürer's Melancholy engraving, knowledge and faith are still envisaged to be as unified as the triad of artistic inspiration, mathematical measurement and exact observation. The "twilight of the Renaissance" that has been ascribed to Dürer's engraving, a contestation of the central ideals of the Renaissance and thus of all subsequent enlightenments – free will and self-determinism through reason – never occurred in Dürer's work. Or, to return to Aby Warburg, in Dürer's oeuvre all shadows are balanced by the "thinking self-activity of the illuminated creature".

Goya

Francisco de Goya's famous etching *Capricho 43* features yet another melancholy artist as Enlightener. Bearing the inscription "El sueño de la razón produce monstruos", the etching was executed in Madrid around 1797/98, only a few years after the French Revolution. In the nocturnal solitude of the idle artist, shared with bats and other

creatures, one cannot fail to notice Goya's reference to Dürer's canonical depiction of artistic melancholy. In contrast to Dürer's image, however, the key figure is not portrayed as a meditative, pensive observer, with a view of the world before him. Indeed, seated at his desk, the cubic form of which evokes a seat of virtue, and resting with his head lowered and his arms crossed over his drawing implements, he much more closely resembles a person sleeping. In looking at this depiction, in which following the mediaeval tradition the melancholic temperament is equated with *acedia*, the deadly sin of sloth, one cannot help but wonder whether the artist we see, who has drifted off to sleep while working, is an Enlightener at all.

The ambiguity of the bright inscription emblazoned across the front of the cube-shaped desk raises new questions, bearing in mind that the Spanish word "sueño" means both "sleep" and "dream". "The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters" reads almost like an Enlightenment creed. Indeed, this reading seems to be affirmed by the image of the sleeping artist with huge night birds looming directly overhead. Neglecting his duty of reasonable action, and thus of enlightenment, he becomes the tortured victim of his chimeras. Yet what if it were the "Dream of Reason" producing the monsters? All of a sudden Goya's etching would read as a critique of pure reason; it would be a harbinger of Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, an astonishing premonition of a reason which, in the guise of the dreaming artist, dreams up all manner of new projects and possibilities, the monstrous and menacing proportions of which are signified by the night creatures. Thus the artist as a victim of his slumbering reason suddenly metamorphoses into a dreaming perpetrator in no less danger of falling victim to his own dreaming reason.

In line with this second reading, the first preparatory sketch for *Capricho 43* depicts the artist's infinite creative energy. Even in this earlier version, the artist is already shown resting his head on his desk with his eyes closed, bearing a striking resemblance to Goya himself, the artist is clearly dreaming. His head of curly hair, surrounded by rays of emanating light, looks as if it were the source of the faces, grotesque figures and animal forms such as dogs, horse's heads and bats, which fill the air above him while he is immersed in visionary introspection. It is the melancholy artist we see who, gifted with a boundless imagination and unlimited creativity, can conjure up creatures from his mind, from his own inner thoughts, at will.

Both a self-portrait and pictorial manifesto of Goya's creativity, this preparatory drawing makes plain that *Capricho 43* was originally intended to serve as the title page for the *Caprichos* series. Comprising eighty etchings, a large number of which are represented in the present volume, the series delivers a terrifying portrait of society in Goya's times. The contemptuous, misanthropic arrogance of the nobility, the hypocrisy of the clergy, the bigotry of the middle classes and the folly of the common people were depicted by Goya as unsparingly as the human madhouse of hatred, lies, avarice, violence, lust and deception that, according to Goya, dominated social life in eighteenth-century Spain without appeal to any form of reason. Goya shows a society at the end of reason! Far from being an explicit indictment of anyone in particular, Goya's *Caprichos* are camouflaged, as the name suggests, as mere dreams, as figments of the artist's imagination. Such track-covering is also served by a commentary on the *Caprichos* held at the Prado in Madrid. While not penned by the artist's own hand, though clearly shaped by his sophisticated ambiguity, this commentary helped Goya conceal behind familiar academic formulae the radical artistic transgression enacted by his *Caprichos*. There, in

complete accord with the rules of the academy, the artistic principles informing the *Caprichos* are described as follows: "Imagination, deserted by reason, begets impossible monsters. United with her, she is the mother of all arts, and the source of their wonders." Indeed, it was precisely this notion of reason as a necessary counterbalance to the imagination that became the new doctrine of art in the Enlightenment, one of its key proponents being Anton Raphael Mengs (1728–1779), director of the art academy in Madrid and Goya's teacher. A personification of imagination is portrayed in this subservient capacity on the well-known frontispiece produced in 1792 for the *Encyclopédie*, a landmark work of the European Enlightenment. Imagination can be seen in the upper left section of the image hastening to adorn Truth at her temple of light, while Reason and Metaphysics are shown on the right, doing their best to liberate her of her veil. By combining forces, Reason and Imagination illuminated by Truth engender all the arts and sciences assembled under them. Whereas Reason guarantees fixed rules and valid truths, Imagination is relegated to a subordinate position, being limited to the field of imitation. In his colour circle symbolising human intellectual and spiritual life, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) also deemed the overlapping of Imagination and Reason – situated at the diagram's zenith – to be "beautiful", the highest ideal. Pure imagination, on the other hand, was viewed by the classicist Goethe as simply "unnecessary" and thus to be avoided.

In order to bring the title page of his *Caprichos* into accord with the prevailing doctrine of art, Goya was obliged to alter it. The artistic explosions of fancy, those excesses of a random imagination billowing forth from the head of the artist in the first preparatory drawing, had vanished by the second version, shifting the emphasis to reason and its importance for artistic production. Now the "dreaming author" – as reads the inscription on "Sueño 1" (First Dream) – is engulfed in bright light, like the geometric 'cube of virtue' that is his desk. Both the artist and his study are thus cast in what appears to be the light of reason and the Enlightenment. The light, as the principle of intellectual enlightenment, has also banished the chaotic jumble of dream figures characterising the initial version. The monstrous night birds on the right are clearly being warded off by the immaculately geometric and brightly gleaming beam of light on the left. None of the animals dares enter the blinding light of reason. In line with current academic doctrine, here imagination and reason are patently brought into equilibrium with one another, manifesting the common prerequisites of the creative act. No longer is the artist overwhelmed by his imagination as in the first preparatory drawing. With his head buried deeper in his arms, the shining light of the artist submerged in dreaming sleep has been calmed – and anonymised too.

Evidently Goya's second preparatory drawing with its depiction of the sleeping, dreaming artist was yet intended to serve as the title page of the socio-critical *Caprichos* series. For the light of reason, in accordance with classicist doctrine, so visibly reinforced the Enlightenment, while the artist, as though camouflaged, was made unrecognisable. That this considerably more elegantly poised artist is still a role-playing self-portrait is unequivocally conveyed by the inscription on the brightly illuminated 'cube of virtue' where he sits. It declares the works of the *Caprichos* produced there to be "Ydioma universal" – "universal language" – "drawn and etched by Francisco Goya in the year 1797". And above the dreaming author, bathed in an equally bright light, stands the almost apologetic statement: "His sole intention is to banish pernicious vulgarities and to perpetuate the firm attestation of truth with this set of caprices."

In terms of their inscriptions, then, the *Caprichos* can be considered capricious, whimsical fancies which capture the pernicious vulgarities, the dark sides of society, and banish them through the light of truth. In the conspicuously dichotomous play of light characterising this drawing, this enlightening exorcism – or exorcism of the Enlightenment – is envisioned as a polarity of light and shadows, of rational reason and rampant fantasy, as articulated in the Prado commentary and called for by artistic convention. This finely calculated tension of light, this repression of darkness and its monsters by the geometric beam of light signifying reason, has been interpreted by Werner Hofmann as an anticipation of a view expressed by Adorno and Horkheimer in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Enlightenment, they argue, is nothing other than radical repression and as such the exponentiated return of fundamental fear: “Enlightenment is mythical fear radicalized.”

In light of this observation, Goya’s decision to make a further significant change in producing the final version of *Capricho 43* seems only logical. For it was always Goya’s strategy to banish society’s vices not by repression, not by masking them, but by depicting them in all their terrifying reality. No genre of art is capable of doing so with such unsparing hyperbole and, at the same time, such perfidious truth as the purportedly imaginary world of the *Caprichos*. Yet this called for the complete immersion of the artist in society’s darker sides, that dark nightmare panorama, as accomplished by Goya – in contrast to the two preparatory drawings – in the darkly shaded aquatint *Capricho 43*. While the artist’s right arm and right hand – the artistic hand! – are vividly illuminated, his posture and black shoulder-length loose hair having been carried over from the second preparatory drawing, the etching sets him for the first time in a greyish black darkroom of melancholy. As a consequence, the etching could no longer serve as the title page. Moved almost to the middle of the series, it became the forty-third plate with the ambiguous, and meanwhile famous title “The Dream/Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters”. Like a self-denunciation, this dark icon of modern artistic melancholy was thus consigned to the very world of vice to which the bourgeois order, suspicious of its incommensurability, has always ascribed it. To this removal of artistic melancholy to the realm of vice, this camouflaging distancing of his manifesto image, Goya added another measure: the new title page of the *Caprichos* now bore a very consciously bourgeois self-portrait with top-hat.

Furthermore, Goya pitched his *Caprichos* series in the daily press – no doubt also for tactical reasons – not as an indictment of social reality, but as a far more generalised concentration of images, as a series resembling a work of literature, a work of a universal language. In reading his comments, one acquires a clear sense of the way in which Goya, at once a celebrated social figure and disillusioned court painter, deploys a rhetoric of self-serving assertions and bourgeois platitudes of Enlightenment to protect his equally abysmal and shocking views on the dark sides of society from interference by suspicious censors. Goya’s argumentation presents his critical project of enlightenment as to the gross abuses and injustices plaguing the country as a set of capricious exercises in artistic acrobatics, as an advanced school of the imagination and thus artistic innovation. For, as Goya’s cryptic advertising prospectus, published in *Diario de Madrid* in February 1799, continues, “she [the genius’ imagination] assembles in a single fantastic personage circumstances and features which nature distributes among many individuals. From this combination, ingeniously composed, results that happy imitation by virtue of which the artist earns the title of inventor and not of servile copyist.”

Thus Goya camouflages his objective of enlightenment behind the credentials of his uniquely inventive artistic genius. In a remarkable parallel with the re-evaluation of rationality and reason in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, he develops a “dialectic of the enlightener”, on the one hand to obscure his socio-critical intentions in the crepuscular light of his artistic ingenuity, and on the other hand, by way of a testimony to his supreme artistic originality, to strikingly and drastically bring them to the fore. At the same time he covers his tracks as an author by depicting himself in *Capricho 43*, his anonymised role-playing and manifesto image, as a suffering victim of his monstrous fantasies. As a whimsical artistic fantasy constantly shifting between the rational and irrational, the “Capricho” is the ideal genre for camouflaging critical enlightenment. Indeed, with the “Capricho” it is difficult to call anyone to account, least of all the melancholic genius who, being liable to shift at any moment between ingenious fantasy and pathological delusion, was relegated to the world of vice by Goya himself in *Capricho 43*.

In a detail that has received little mention to date Goya did in fact make reference to the decisive impulse of enlightenment behind his fancies, camouflaged as mere caprices and dreams (“sueños”). Indeed, in *Capricho 43*, and only in the darkness pervading the final etching, an owl on the left-hand side can be seen holding out a pencil in its claws to the dreaming, sleeping artist, as though the artist were supposed to be thus awakened from his dreamy inspiration to artistic action. Here, Goya paraphrases a secondary motif in the portrait he painted of his friend Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos (1744–1811). Completed in 1798, hence almost at the same time as the etching, the portrait ennobles the polymath Jovellanos, a key figure of the Spanish Enlightenment, with the characteristic gesture of the pensive melancholic, his head propped up by his hand. 1798 was the year in which Jovellanos was at the height of his career, being appointed Spain’s minister of justice. And yet it was also the year in which he suffered his most bitter defeat, being dismissed from office and forced into a protracted period of political exile in Mallorca. Goya’s portrait places all the famous Enlightener’s works under the protection of Minerva, goddess of wisdom, whose statue watches over Jovellanos’ desk. Since time immemorial the heraldic animal of Minerva has been the owl. Given that it is the owl whom Goya has passing him a pencil in his role-playing portrait of the dreaming artistic genius, and that a second owl – surely no coincidence – appears to be shielding the artist with its brightly illuminated wings from the menacing swarm of bats flying out of the darkness towards him, it would seem that Goya had placed the *Caprichos*, his ingeniously ambiguous enlightenment project, under the protection of Minerva, tutelary goddess of the sciences, arts and the scholarly Enlightenment. The good spirits among the night birds, the owls of Minerva, are the ones who call Goya to artistic action, endeavouring to release him from the dangerous nightmares of his artistic melancholy whose menacing messengers, as was also the case for Dürer, are the bats. As it happened, Goya’s owls offered him better protection than Minerva did Jovellanos. Whereas the latter was forced into exile, Goya, in pursuing his tactics of ambiguity, was spared such pains – perhaps at the price of the *Caprichos*’ abysmal failure on the art market. Of the 300 copies produced, Goya was able to sell a mere twenty-seven. The society Goya had so profoundly unmasked paid his *Caprichos* no heed. Being a melancholic artist and critical Enlightener outside society also made Goya a prophet and martyr of an ambivalent modernity.

In his role-playing self-portrait, *Capricho 43*, as in the two preparatory drawings, Goya staged himself as an irrational genius who, camouflaged by the classicist doctrine of art and shielded by the cult of melancholia cultivated since the Renaissance, had the

audacity to unrelentingly provoke a society at the end of its reason. This he did in the Enlightenment-oriented hope that the *Caprichos*, with their monstrous imagery of a kind never seen before, would elicit a response from the viewer leading from fascinated horror to reflection and ultimate improvement. In the case of the unsaleable *Caprichos*, however, Goya's intention proved unviable. From that point on, the Enlightener Goya fell ever deeper into the role of the melancholy outsider.

Chodowiecki Again

Chodowiecki took quite a different tack with his 'enlightenment in small steps' in a bourgeois world, which tended to dissipate in Germany among the countless small states and only really came together in the prolific array of treatises, journals and calendars in circulation at the time. With his monthly copperplates appearing in the popular *Göttinger Taschen Kalender* from 1778 to 1783, Chodowiecki followed in the footsteps of William Hogarth (1697–1764) with his depiction of the *Fortgang der Tugend und des Lasters* (The Progress of Virtue and Vice). Conceived in readily comprehensible antithetical pairs of images, of good and evil, of virtues and vices, the series was to serve as a moral orientation for middle-class audiences in Germany. In commentaries written to accompany these pairs of images, Lichtenberg, the above-mentioned, highly esteemed Enlightenment professor of natural sciences, writer and philosopher at the University of Göttingen, often seemed to find the vices more interesting than their virtuous counterparts with their invariably prim and proper body language. Of the couple watching the sunset with the appropriate restraint, for example, Lichtenberg writes, "They calmly enjoy the sight of the setting sun", this being quite in contrast to the emphasis of "so many of our young poets" who respond to the grand spectacle of the sunset – when the sun, a symbol of the Enlightenment, sinks into night as the day draws to a close – by "blurting out these mysteries". His commentary on Chodowiecki's contrasting couple, who can be seen gazing at the setting sun in a most affected manner, holding their arms around one another's backs with suspicious vigour, is suitably scornful: "Whoever does not see fashionable sensibility and vitulating rapture welling up in hexameters, does not see at all." Lichtenberg also recognises the erotic intentions of the young man: "Judging by the movements of one of his legs and his right arm [...], I would conclude that he wanted to fly towards the sky, were the rogue not gripping the earth so tightly with his left [arm]." The supposedly educated, the enlightened and over-enlightened are, once again, the ones who exhibit the most licentious affectation in viewing art, the ones who in their avid discussion of the statue of a Flora or a Pomona completely lack any quiet devotion or natural humility before the artwork, though the same can be said of the virtuous.

In these calendar illustrations, as in Chodowiecki's copperplates for Johann Bernhard Basedow's (1724–1790) *Elementarwerk* (Elementary Work) of 1769, Enlightenment quite obviously equates to the control of the affects. Thus on Plate 26 of this pictorial encyclopaedia – designed to introduce children to the various situations awaiting them in life, albeit under the guidance of adults who were to explain the content of the plates – the bourgeois parlour is a place illuminated by the pleasantly bright light of the sun symbolising the Enlightenment; it is a place where one reads together, looks at the things, writes or ponders. Considerate and well-mannered behaviour strengthens family ties across the generations. In stark contrast to the image of the parlour, however, is the insane asylum depicted below. Here one can observe people ruled by their affects, people

who, having escaped from the asylum, are mocking and taunting each other and who finish by suicidally throwing themselves into the water in their delusional state. Indeed, only when instincts are restrained, as illustrated by the horse and cart in the upper left, can industry flourish. And as demonstrated by the image of the beam balance below, only where there is peace, harmony and trade based on trust among people from China across the Orient and all the way over to Europe, will good prevail in the world.

One of the most important picture books for children in Enlightenment Germany, Basedow's *Elementarwerk* still envisaged education as for the large part determined by religion. This is particularly apparent in Plate 48 which depicts a school lesson in its upper left. The teacher draws his pupils' attention to an inscription stating the lesson's objectives: "The Book of Nature and Morals and the Book of Religion". Nature has evidently found its way into the classroom in the form of the detailed charts on minerals, plants, animals and human beings mounted on the walls. In the image directly to the left, the children, now grown older, can be seen making their way along a dangerous path in an orderly fashion; passing through a rocky coastal landscape, they are headed for the round temple of virtue. And below, one can see an austere church interior with a clergyman standing in front of an open Bible. Above him is an inscription on the front wall in lieu of an altarpiece, exhorting the assembled congregation to "walk before God" and "do good unto their enemies": "Wandelt Vor Gott, Thut Wohl Auch Feinden". Music is the only form of art that seems to be tolerated in this austere, pictureless Enlightenment church interior, as signified by the violin hanging on the back wall to the left of the clergyman.

This same depiction of 1769 was used by Chodowiecki more than twenty years later for the title page of Franz Heinrich Ziegenhagen's (1753–1806) *Verhältnislehre* (Doctrine of the Proper Relationship [...]). In this expansive manifesto and advertisement for what was arguably one of the most extreme projects of utopian enlightenment in Germany, the merchant Ziegenhagen set down his concept for an agricultural "colony" which was to be situated in the vicinity of Hamburg near Billwerder. In this planned model farm, illustrated by Chodowiecki, the children of affluent families were to live and learn side by side with children from orphanages and poorhouses under the instruction of judicious pedagogues. And this with equal numbers of boys and girls so as to secure – by creating the possibility of potential future marriages – the colony's future as a social-revolutionary utopia of classless society. In this colony, whose model character Chodowiecki illustrates in the spirit of Enlightenment by means of the rigid geometric structure of the grounds, the children's daily routine is run strictly by the clock, from rising together at four o'clock in the morning in summer, or at six o'clock in winter, to common meals, common lessons with a focus on the natural sciences and practical training in agriculture and trades such as carpentry or blacksmithing, common sunbathing followed in the evening by swimming and sports practice from six to seven o'clock and common bedtime at nine.

In Chodowiecki's overview of this children's colony one can discern all the different stages of this timetable, this educational work of reason dictated by the clock. Indeed, the clock tower looms large in the central axis of the complex. The residential areas outside the colony, with a view of the distant city in the upper left edge of the picture, are conspicuously squalid; animals are being tortured and further off in the background, criminals are being broken on the wheel and hanged. In the model complex, by contrast, one can see the members of the "colony" peacefully going about their useful gardening and farming tasks, although with the paddock occupying the middle of the foreground,

the main focus is on cattle breeding. In close proximity to the animals, the lightly clad boys and girls are engaged in sporting exercises to promote their physical wellbeing. They are free spirits out in the open landscape and fresh air as opposed to the harmful life they would have in the city – something to which Ziegenhagen attached particular importance. At the very centre of the foreground Ziegenhagen is shown riding on horseback as the regent of this realm of reason reaching all the way to the progress of the hot-air balloon floating on the horizon.

In this pedagogical province of model enlightenment for the classless education of the youth, all the signs of regimentation and repression described by Horkheimer and Adorno in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* are already lurking beneath the surface, from the rigid way of life run by the clock and the utilitarian optimisation of the world through to the exclusion of those seemingly unfit for life. It was Chodowiecki who exposed this last point of Ziegenhagen's utopia in the title page he designed for the book. What in the copperplate for Basedow's *Elementarwerk* was still a church interior for common worship becomes a mere assembly hall on the title page of Ziegenhagen's *Verhältnislehre*. Serving the veneration of reason, it is also adorned with wall charts on the nature of creation, ranging from minerals and plants to animals and people. And once again music, reinforced by a mighty organ, is the only one of the arts admitted to this assembly hall of the Enlightenment. This comes as little surprise considering that Ziegenhagen's book ends with a reproduction of a piece of music – a poem written by the Freemason Ziegenhagen and set to music by Mozart (1756–1791) – in which he strikes up a hymn to the "Divine Almighty" whom religions only call by different names and whose supreme divine commandments are listed in Ziegenhagen's poem: "Love me in my works! / Love order, proportion and harmony! / Love one another, yourselves and your brothers! / May physical strength and beauty be your adornment, / a bright mind your nobility! / Hold a helping hand to your mutual love / which only madness, never truth, withheld from you so long! [...]"

Ziegenhagen himself is depicted standing in front of an open book in the middle of the front wall. With outstretched arms, he is pictured as an orator addressing his congregation. Men and women are no longer separated, as was typical of church life in those days, and as illustrated in Basedow's work. Rather, men and women, rich and poor sit side by side in the rows, conspicuously mixed. Some are standing – such as a bare-footed man and a needy woman in among the wig-wearers – and seem to be listening attentively, moved by what they are hearing. The key sentence in Ziegenhagen's gospels of reason once again stands written on the front wall: "Place yourselves in the proper relationship to one another and with the rest of creation". The political implications of this dogma are demonstrated in the right foreground by the assembled dignitaries and regents of all nations and creeds who are shaking hands with one another, thus building the foundations of world peace as called for by Ziegenhagen and renouncing all religion. For in the age of reasoned proportionality, religion is redundant, nothing more than an unnecessary cause for discord among people. As can be read on the pages of the open book high up on the front wall like eternal tablets of law: "Doctrine of the proper relationship to God's creation / Path to true happiness".

In Ziegenhagen's view, however, this general commandment of true happiness was entirely contradicted on the title page of his *Verhältnislehre* by the hunchbacked gentleman in the genteel black coat with a neatly groomed wig, sword and cane. Accorded a prominent position in the foreground, he was cast by Chodowiecki as a

listener of Ziegenhagen's oration and a witness to the world peace covenant. Ziegenhagen thought him a very unwelcome guest, complaining in the corrigenda concluding his 600-page-strong tract that Chodowiecki, owing to the geographic distance between them, had introduced this hunchbacked figure without consulting him, though the very goal of his work was to develop the human being in the proper relationship to creation. And it was precisely this kind of proportionality that he found lacking in the hunchback: "Yet due to the malproportioned figure in the foreground who upon the artist's own design was portrayed in the contemporary attitude outside the rows of seating, the title copperplate has completely lost its intended nobility and stirringness of impression and gained a peculiar appearance instead."

To put it in plain terms, Ziegenhagen's goal was to train beautiful people, and on the whole, Chodowiecki did as directed, portraying consistently beautiful, well-proportioned people of all ages in the other copperplates of life in the colony. It can be no coincidence, then, that in the isolated case of the title page, Chodowiecki so prominently and reservedly incorporated a well-dressed elderly gentleman of manifest respectability as if by way of a counterpart to the vibrant preacher of utopian enlightenment, Ziegenhagen. In fact, the gentleman with the deformed back, Ziegenhagen's pronounced antithesis, could well have been an Enlightener too! As the most prolific illustrator of the German Enlightenment, Chodowiecki enjoyed close relations with Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786) and Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, both of whom suffered from curvature of the spine and, together with Kant, were renowned in Germany as intellectual giants of the Enlightenment with physical deformities. Lichtenberg, the brilliant commentator of Chodowiecki's copperplates, seems to have been the one whom Chodowiecki self-confidently and impersonally chose to incorporate as an unwanted counterpart to Ziegenhagen. Lichtenberg was an ironic sceptic when it came to any grand or closed thought and world system, even the Enlightenment. He was an Enlightenment thinker influenced by Anglo-Saxon common sense who demanded of any enlightened philosophy that it should not teach people what to think, but how to think. If there was such a thing as a forerunner and leading figure of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* around 1800 in Germany, then it was Lichtenberg! In his black coat, he is clearly recognisable in Chodowiecki's engraving as a member of the order of scholarly melancholy, as someone who, suffering from numerous ailments and a hunched back, knew only too well how it felt to play the role of outsider. When Ziegenhagen's utopian project was rejected as infeasible, he plunged deeper and deeper into financial crisis. In 1806 he committed suicide.

Shonibare MBE

Born in London in 1962 to Nigerian parents, Yinka Shonibare grew up in Lagos, Nigeria and London and went on to study fine arts in 1984, attending Goldsmiths College among other institutions. Following a serious illness, which left him handicapped for life, he produced a series of sculptures in 2008, *The Age of Enlightenment*, in which he pointed out that the great luminaries of the European Enlightenment, such as Jean le Rond d'Alembert (1717–1783), Antoine Lavoisier (1743–1794), Louis-Auguste le Tonnelier (1730–1807), Immanuel Kant or Adam Smith (1723–1790), were all deformed, crippled or handicapped in one way or another. Here, as we have already seen in relation to Chodowiecki, the happiness and perfection promised by radical Enlightenment is once again taken to the point of absurdity. Enlightenment is not there for the purportedly

perfect human being but so that people will respect one another as they are, with their own specific gifts. According to Shonibare MBE, it was often the Enlightenment thinkers, marginalised on account of their handicap, whose thought defined the otherness of the other, which in turn resulted in the marginalisation of that other.

Comprising a set of staged photographs after Goya's *Capricho 43*, Shonibare MBE's most recent photographic series, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* from 2009, shows him once again to be an enlightener on the Enlightenment, a subversive inventor of images for the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, to which he is no stranger. An internationally acclaimed artist of African origins, Shonibare MBE incorporated into his name the official abbreviation of the honour bestowed upon him in 2005, "Member of the Order of the British Empire". Dubbed a citizen of honour of the British Empire, the artist of African and European backgrounds overtly references Goya's manifesto image – both in terms of the formal composition of the staged photographs and the inscriptions in French which accompany them – in his exploration of the many monsters unleashed upon Africa and the other continents by the international dreams of the Enlightenment. Whereas in Goya's work we find the melancholy artist dreaming, revealing society's monsters with the imaginative powers of his genius, here we have a project manager, a hybrid of colonisation and globalisation clothed in pseudo-African textiles. While he sleeps, his sense of reason dreams up all the good and reasonable things supposed to be a blessing for Africa, Asia, America, Australia or Europe. As was also the case for Goya, however, reason assumes the form of the night birds, creatures that cross over into life in a highly surreal manner, and ends by nightmarishly afflicting and ultimately destroying the very things it sought to nurture – and the project manager along with them.

According to Shonibare MBE, in the face of such a self-forgetting Enlightenment with all its monstrous nightmares, there is no escape. Every continent has been graced with enlighteners from another continent and destroyed by the dreams of its reason. Africa has been bedreamed by Europe, Europe by Asia, Asia by Africa and so on. As Shonibare MBE points out, the formulation of the inscriptions on the front of the desk in French serves as a current reminder of France's pre-eminent role in the Enlightenment, in the liberation of thought and the ongoing monstrosities it produces.

Seldom has a contemporary artist reflected on the blind, self-seducing Enlightenment and its consequences for the whole of the modern world to the extent that Shonibare MBE has with imagery and words so utterly devoid of illusion! Whereas his photographic series delivers a striking paraphrase of Goya, his explanatory comments on the work read like an updated continuation of Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. As Shonibare MBE commented with brilliant perspicuity in a 2008 interview on his photographic series after Goya on the monsters of reason: "The Enlightenment period is a time of being liberated from the Dark Ages, from the shackles of tradition into the empirical methods of science and rationality. Our traditional notions of democracy were refined in this period and emerged in the Age of Enlightenment alongside the ideals of liberalism. However, it is precisely the arrogance of liberal democracy that has been used as a justification for a number of wars and, most recently, the war in Iraq. The appeal to a transcendentalist notion of democracy has effectively presaged an unjust war. The arguments are familiar from a colonial period: they, the other, are an 'uncivilised' people and we, enlightened Europeans that we apparently are, will endeavour to enlighten them. However, like Caliban in *The Tempest*, they refuse to be enlightened so we will force democracy upon them by the gun. This act is irrational in itself: the arrogance of liberal

democracy has led to the most irrational acts of genocide. In *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*, I have taken the text from Goya's original aquatint prints and their formal composition. I have turned the original statement, reproduced on the desk where a figure sleeps, and put a question mark after it so that it reads in French, 'The sleep of reason produces monsters in America?' The original statement becomes rhetorical and I used French in particular here as it was the French who gave America its Statue of Liberty. There are five images in all, representing five continents. In Africa, it is an image of an old white man, rather than an African, asleep at the desk. In Asia, the figure is a black man. In the most basic terms I am suggesting that irrational aggression, born out of a form of Enlightenment rational reasoning, towards a race that you do not understand produces a sleep of 'reason' out of which comes monsters – and the term 'monsters' could be substituted here with any amount of atrocity. Your enlightened intentions, in sum, do not necessarily produce enlightened results."

About the author

Born in 1943 in Calw, Germany, Peter-Klaus Schuster studied art history, German literature and philosophy in Tübingen, Zurich, Frankfurt and Goettingen. Following the completion of his doctorate in 1975 with a thesis on Albrecht Dürer, "Melencolia I: Dürers Denkbild", he was a fellow at the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte in Munich and curatorial assistant at the Hamburger Kunsthalle. He subsequently served as curator of nineteenth-century art at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg from 1978 to 1981, during which time he lectured at the University of Regensburg. From 1981 to 1983 he worked as a curator at the Hamburger Kunsthalle before taking up an appointment as chief curator at the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen in Munich in 1983. In the five years prior to his move to Berlin in 1988, Schuster also held a lectureship at the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich. Since 1988 he has held a lectureship at the Free University in Berlin, the year in which he was appointed to the position of chief curator and deputy director of the Nationalgalerie Berlin. From 1994 to 1997 he served as director of the Alte Nationalgalerie Berlin, from 1998 to 1999 as director general of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen in Munich, and from 1999 to 2008 as director general of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin and director of the Nationalgalerie Berlin. In 2008 Schuster was awarded the Order of Merit of the State of Berlin and the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. From 2008 to 2010 he was a guest scholar at The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. He has published widely and conceived numerous exhibitions specialising in art during the Age of Dürer as well the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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