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## The Dialectics of Enlightenment and Its Discontents

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**Abstract:** On a broad scale, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* re-conceptualizes the concept of enlightenment and its close association to mythical thinking. Through the meaning of Myth, Horkheimer and Adorno sought to challenge the mainstream meaning of enlightenment. However, why did The Enlightenment fall into the trap of mythical thinking again? Why does mythical thinking persist despite the ongoing progress of The Enlightenment? The myth semantically includes a twofold connotation: the genre, and the dark side of rationality. The Enlightenment has a mythological foundation that manifests itself in control, exploitation, and destruction tendencies. The power-knowledge relations are foregrounded as long as the overcoming of fear is resolved. Additionally, rationality is reduced to a control instrument and a monopoly of power. This paper thus focuses on the significance of the authors' criticism of the hidden agenda of the Enlightenment. It also addresses the paradox and dialectical aspect of myth and enlightenment within the historical and sociopsychological framework. The study demonstrates the discrepancy between the definition of myth referred to in the argument and F. W. J. Schilling's framework of thought, which is not explicitly mentioned in the text. The key findings are the contradiction between rationality and its outcome as a counterproductive force. The progress in human civilization results in the self-reversion toward the myths. The Enlightenment was not thus the antithesis of myth, but a sub-category of myth.

**Keywords:** Dialectics; Enlightenment; Discontent; Reverse; Myth.

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## 1. Introduction

Philosophically, the book *Dialectics of Enlightenment: Political Fragments (DE)* is a groundbreaking work in the development of thought of the twentieth century. Due to its fragmentary character, the text is more complex than any other work of the same genre in the same subject. Historically, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's (A&H) work represents one of the most original projects of the 'Frankfurt School' critical thinking. It demonstrates that enlightenment in the modern era was not an arbitrary and random program, but designates a symptom that evolved within the Western culture that emerged in a new kind of 'barbarism' in WWII. The irrational worldview that manifested in Nazism and fascism is an outcome. Comparing this and assessing it with the current political ambivalence worldwide, we are confronting with a new form of irrationalism that is called the 'Dark Enlightenment' movement. This movement presents itself as a new reactionary to the political ideas of democracy and freedom (Land). The New Right, populism, and fascism tend to be described as forms of that reactionary movement. Their "dark philosophy" strives to substitute democratic system into a techno-feudal system. Promoting a new form of authoritarianism, and the government responsibility managed like a corporation. The rebirth of ultra-ideologies that reject rational and realistic worldviews can be inferred from such a phenomenon.

From this background, the main idea behind this paper to reassess *DE* diagnoses and analysis from some essential questions: is criticizing enlightenment rooted in a kind of naivety and optimism toward human enhancement by reason and science? In other words, is critical thinking a necessary outcome or a development of the Enlightenment, and is there a need for self-reflection? Because we ought to think about this question, why Enlightenment cannot escape the Mythical Trap? These questions will guide the paper.

## 2. Contextualizing the Crisis of the Enlightenment

The historical context of *DE* is relevant because it witnesses the reveal of mythical narratives by totalitarian regimes. In 1932, E. Cassirer published *The Philosophy of Enlightenment* to defend enlightenment achievements liberty, rationality, and progress the rise of a new irrational political order. He tackled the enlightenment potential of criticism, and considered enlightenment as an answer to the dark, irrational Nazi emergence. In 1937, Horkheimer made a significant turning point in continental philosophy with an article "*Traditionelle und Kritische Theorie*"; here, he attacked both metaphysics and positivism. By emphasizing the dialectical thinking instead of the materialistic view that was previously common in the institute, he described it as a

“dialectical mode of thought” (Wiggershaus 211). The reversal from materialistic to dialectical thinking has to do with the fact that a new political era was dawning in Europe then; in particular, fascism, National Socialism, and Stalinism saw the light. With these developments, Horkheimer turned his back on the institute's original project, which dealt only with materialist theory and workers' interests, in favor of critical theory.

The importance of this shift, which took place in a period of history when great ideologies such as Marxism and Fascism dominated thought, was to counterbalance (Held 16-7). We can see this development as a paradigm shift within the Frankfurters from an old to a new insight that emerged as an independent and sharp philosophical reflection that dealt with criticism not only in the sense of an interdisciplinary scientific exercise but one that addresses the entire problem of the totality of thought denounced. Why the Enlightenment turned into the non-enlightenment movement contains the main question of the book. It emerges because of the world war's destructive impact on extermination and cleansing, alongside scientific progress, enlightenment, and the development of human intelligence. Nevertheless, how do figures like Stalin or Hitler and in fascism emerge in the world politics after the history of the Enlightenment? How does enlightenment (modernity) proceed its antitheses barbarism and counter-enlightenment?

The book's title indicates a contradiction: modernity as a thesis of newly developed intelligence has produced its counter-thesis, which is irrational, unenlightened force of domination. Science and rationality become a power to dominate the world. As *Odyssey* reflects a self-image that drives control because of fear and the desire to preserve, fear of the unknown is a tendency of knowledge, which converts it into a control of the non-identical other. Rational thinking replaced by self-oriented thinking of a subject that sees itself in the center of the interpreted world. As a result, regression and return to the pre-Enlightenment modern era are exposed. This paradox of enlightenment is an outcome of the instrumental rationality and positivist science outlook. Historically considered, enlightenment is an effort to escape from myth and irrational thinking. On the contrary, enlightenment produced irrationality and reproduced myth of controlling the world by the absolute power of knowledge. Another aspect of positivism worldview, a belief in a scientific mentality and practical principles, is the desire for a rational unity, construction and domination of the world as central to intellectual history in the *West*, from Plato to the present day (Adorno 6-7).

Generally, the book contains two main theses: the first one is that “myth is enlightenment, and enlightenment reverts to myths” (Adorno xviii) and the second one is that any attempt to break through the compulsion of nature only entangled more deeply in the compulsion of nature (Adorno 227). Thus, the main drive of the authors in both the theses and the two excursions would be “to explain why humanity, instead

of entering a truly human state, is sinking into a new kind of barbarism” (Adorno xiv). The historical context of such diagnoses indicates the original purpose of the book, which is written during WWII (1939-1944). As a reaction to the destructive character of modern rationality, the primary concern was not just to understand how “German Thought” trapped in Nazi rhetoric and discourse but also to navigate how the intellectual atmospheres accommodated and embraced it.

However, the root of what called the ‘trail of reason’ goes back to Kant’s major work, *Critique of Pure Reason* (Beiser). Kant criticized the theoretical reason-metaphysics charged it with its fault throughout the history of metaphysics. The trial of reason, in this sense, indicates the “crisis of the Enlightenment” that grew out of these concepts of reason: Reason, mechanism, mathematical conception of nature (Beiser). Kant critique of the theoretical reason-metaphysics, charges its fault. There is a line from Kant onwards to the A&H book, especially if we look closely at the crisis of enlightenment and rationalism; we can trace the anti-enlightenment approach, for example, in Jacobi’s critique of rationalism as devices for thinking through the crisis of the West and nihilism. Jacobi is considered by Leo Strauss as the device and original figure of the internal critique (Pelluchnon 31).

Viewing the last century, reactionary book titles like Oswald Spengler’s *The Decline of the West* or Rosenberg’s *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, or Heidegger’s *criticism*, and also Marx, Nietzsche, George Lukács, Herbert Marcuse, and Horkheimer. Consider the exhibition *Le Surréalisme 1947* in Paris, which was held in the same year *DE*, was published (FÖLDÉNYI 255). The catalogue of the exhibition contained an essay by Georges Bataille named “The Absence of Myth,” wherein he declares the idea that we have gone beyond myths is a delusion. On the contrary, even today we are the prisoners of a great myth, the myth that we no longer live within myth. “The decisive absence of faith is resolute faith ... ‘Night is also a sun,’ and the absence of myth is a myth: the coldest, the purest, and the only true myth” (Bataille 48).

In 1947, Horkheimer published a book titled ‘Eclipse of Reason.’ Here, he addressed another aspect of technological progress in modern times,

Even as technical knowledge expands, the horizon of man’s thought and activity, his autonomy as an individual, his ability to resist the growing apparatus of mass manipulation, his power of imagination, and his independent judgment appear to be reduced. (Horkheimer v)

That is because “advance in technical facilities for enlightenment is accompanied by a process of dehumanization” (Horkheimer v). The tendency to criticize reason, rationality, and enlightenment appears to follow a pattern began in romanticism and continued to postmodernism. The pursuit of knowledge results in the pursuit of power. In order to acquire freedom and knowledge, a ‘modern soul-reason’ engages in a Faustian

bargain with a 'demon', which drives rational knowledge. The outcome is “the destructiveness and uncertainty that are inherent in that acceptance” (Berman 86). According to Marx in the ‘Communist Manifesto,’ the modern world consists of contradictions; the destructive aspect of modernism is parallel to “stretch[ing] ourselves to grasp new human possibilities” (Berman 129). In the literature world, Baudelaire illustrates the destructive dimension of modernity, which paradoxically is an opportunity “to live openly with the split and unreconciled character of our lives and to draw energy from our inner struggles, wherever they may lead us in the end” (Berman 171).

However, A & H's criticism of rationality stems from the sociopolitical aspect of the destructive character of it. In addition, Kant diagnosed the destructive aspect of reason by drawing the boundaries of reason. Seemingly, A & H saw that “the self-destruction of Western reason is grounded in a historical and fateful dialectic of the domination of external nature, internal nature, and society” (Noerr 218). A & H's critique of enlightenment transforms Kant's approach to enlightenment and its definition that is escaping from one's own intellectual immaturity. A & H do not deny the fact that the Enlightenment emerged in the Age of Reason, but they argue that reason is a dialectic. When humankind appeals to his reason, it will transform it according to their own needs in reality as an ‘instrument’ of thinking for the sake of domination which leads to a paradoxical result rational thinking leads to irrational acts. That is a major symptom of rationality throughout its history that traced by a comparison between the classical and seventeenth-century figures like Bacon, who sees the sovereignty of man central in science.

Knowledge defined as dominion. In positivism, the world is represented by abstract mathematical formulas; that is, natural facts reduced to a calculus of rules of thought. Therefore, rationality serves as an instrument, and acquiring knowledge means gaining power over nature. Often, enlightenment considered the liberation of man from fear and the perfection of self-mastery (Adorno 1). However, this notion is not consistent with Kant's view of enlightenment, which means overcoming immaturity and being autonomous individuals. Because knowledge defined as dominion, and positivism featured the world as a set of theoretical formulations, the facts of nature expressed in a calculus of the laws of thought. An essential component of A&H's definition of enlightenment is fear. Ironically, enlightenment intended to free men but instead shackled them more effectively than ever. Self-preservation was the primary purpose of primordial man with a simple tool, and modern man exploits everything for the sake of dominance.

The founding principle of enlightenment is the disillusionment and disenchantment of the world, a slogan that contains the “happy match between the mind of man and the nature of things” (Adorno 1). Man declared himself a master of nature with the help of knowledge; the goal is to conquer fear. Knowledge grows into a power over everything and has no boundaries (Adorno 2); it exceeds the limit of nature. Modern thought about knowledge created a new illusion called scientific method inquiry, which contradicted the myth. However, this view presents itself as a new kind of myth. By reducing knowledge to a power, and rationalizing the world, the “evil” character of enlightenment exposed. In addition, the politic consequences of that is a new ideology that called rationality and manipulates individuals and mass consciousness.

One of the myths of enlightenment is the idea that men liberated from mythical thinking and nature. However, myth is not merely an irrational thought, since rationality presents myth in itself. Myth is an effort to understand and explain the origin of life; enlightenment is a similar approach to explain the world. Myth, and philosophy, scientific rational thinking are two sides of one coin; their origin is rooted in a fear. Odysseus's struggle against nature for self-preservation symbolizes how the primitive subject awakening from fear is gradually (Adorno 10). With this approach, A&H reveal the core problem, *aporia*, that they see turning negative rationality the critical sense of enlightenment thinking into irrationality.

In the positivist perspective, reason and rationality operate with mere facts, formal logic, and mathematical formulas. In addition, this way of reasoning brings the Enlightenment into unity with nature and the flattest mythological picture of reality. Therefore, they claim that the positivist mind also appeals to mythology and draws an analogy between myth and the Enlightenment. The myth of the Enlightenment is present and the Enlightenment becomes a myth (Adorno xviii). This analogy provides a link between the ancient myth and the modern era: the world as Odysseus, in which, on the one hand, attempts to control it through magical rituals, and on the other hand, the Enlightenment, attempts to have a grip on everything through reason. In the latest era, everything fits into the utility calculus and anything that does not meet this standard dismissed as an unreliable *factum* (Adorno 2). Moreover, that problem solved in the form of numbers in a system. Such an ideal counts as a system; everything must follow the system, and this makes enlightenment totalitarian (Adorno 5).

In this case, every essential thing pushed into the system and shaped in a certain way according to the nature of the totalitarian system. Everything is adapted to the system and stripped of its inherent properties or qualities that previously attributed to it. The system becomes one of continuous breakdown: everything must fit in and be

explained, and if it does not fit in, it is forced to fit in. In fact, ignorance does not fit in, because it is seen as the core of fear, which enlightenment tries to overcome. The Enlightenment radicalizes mythical fear and knowledge to overcome both fear and ignorance.

Therefore, the enlightenment began in the Homeric Epic by turning mythological imagination into thinking. And herein lies the coherence of both excursions, where additions to the theses are defended in the concept of enlightenment” (Wiggershaus 235). Therefore, the authors argue that their work is no more than “an explanation of why humanity is turning into a critical situation and sinking into a kind of barbarism” (Adorno xiv). The main characteristic dialectics that are announced in the introduction of the book tackle a conflict between two major components, reason and nature, that should be traced and be visible as well as understandable. The dialectic is thus an exciting attitude between man and nature.

### **3. Enlightenment: A Problematic Concept**

Enlightenment started out as a project to disenchant the world and liberate thoughts from mysterious narrations and invisible forces. It featured a growth of cognitive techniques, designed to understand and thus master nature as a result, which eventually led to things like computation and the pursuit of utility. In turn, these techniques extended and universalized to produce a universal science and outlook. As a result, power relations became a key factor of understanding, especially mastering nature and demythologizing the world. Myth pursues much the same themes, but in the form of deception, because it absorbs the facts and projects symbolic significance onto them.

In the Enlightenment, we are no longer deceived about the mechanisms but we are still under the power of factual reality: scientific laws rendered as natural or inevitable, but this time for scientific reasons. Fatalism was once blind and is now comprehensible—but it is still fatalism (Adorno 29). Thus, if civilization progresses by developing a technical domination of nature, it also regresses in cultural terms, and both thought and experience become impoverished. The 'pliable proletarians' have stopped up their ears (literally and culturally), but their master remains equally 'immobile' (Adorno 36).

Homer's *Odyssey*, in particular, seen as the earliest document that proves enlightenment and civilization in the history of the West. By comparing myth and enlightenment, A&H draw an analogy: by adapting material from the sanctified Odysseus to the barbaric barbarianism of the Cyclops, Odysseus conforms to the barbaric standards of the Cyclops' consciousness to protect himself. Profitable production is only possible based on planned labor, fixed property, and social hierarchy, which is also the case in capitalism.

Enlightenment based on the human-nature dialectical relationship; a man as the ruler of the world symbolized in the *Odyssey*. However, this is also the case in the later history that is known as the scientific revolution by calming disenchanting the world from its mystery and freeing the self from the nature constraints. Through the concept of the enlightenment, A&H try to tackle on the intrinsic relation between myth and enlightenment as an entertainment that one relapses into the other. Because both provide two ways of relating the modern subject to the world, myths as a collective approach to being by tracing meaning on uncritical grounds in opposition to an Enlightenment rational outlook. Hence, the modern subjects managing to establish that relation by instrumental rationality. Thus, “enlightenment behaves toward things as a dictator toward men. He knows them insofar as he can manipulate them” (Adorno 9).

At the beginning of their *DE*, the authors hold, “In the most general sense of progressive thought, the Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty. Yet the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant” (Adorno 3). They implement Bacon’s definition of enlightenment, which cited from Weber (Adorno 1). Moreover, the concept of knowledge is power, and the essence of knowledge is technology to control. Excessive violence is the only way to shatter the myth (Adorno 2). In other words, power and knowledge are synonyms for Bacon as well as for Luther (Adorno 2). The idea of disenchantment of the world is achieved by using power to control nature and disenchantment (Adorno 2). In addition, they address fear of what is behind the unknowable, because ‘enlightenment also recognizes itself in the old myths,’ the fear of demons, gods remain in form objects that not standard calculability and utility must be viewed with suspicion (Adorno 3). In this sense, the intertwinement of myth and rational labor found in *Odyssey*, which bears witness to the dialectic of enlightenment (Adorno 36).

#### **4. The Deformed Concept of Myth**

Myths are the product of human imagination that contains symbols to describe the world and the nature in the oral form. The term myth derived from the Greek *mythos* (saying, story, fiction) without any proven validation and unquestioned and untested character. Therefore, also considered as a contrast to *logos*, which is a validated truth by arguments and logical demonstration (Bolle). Throughout the history of humankind, people have myths (Willemsen 290). In addition, a human being is considered a “mythmaker,” a creature of fables whether enlightened or not (FRYE). Both Claude Levi-Strauss and Carl Gustave Jung connected myths and the collective unknown of contemporary society together (Willemsen 449). Modern ideologies appeal to myths due to the psychological impact. That is what Georges Sorel (1847-1922) asks does moving the masses to action through heroic myths. The Nazi ideologist Alfred Rosenberg (1893-1946) appealed to the irrational forces in Germany with his *Mythos* (Adorno 20).

Nevertheless, there is another aspect of myth that is articulated by Friedrich Schelling's *Philosophy of Mythology* the roots of the philosophical concepts inherent in the mythology. Due to the correlative character of myth to human nature and evolution, myth is an expression of nature and emerges out of it. That is why it affects human consciousness and understanding. Schelling's account of mythology stems out of his philosophy of nature (Krause). However, one plausible answer to the question of how Adorno been influenced by Schelling is theologian Paul Tillich, who supervised Adorno's Habilitation thesis on Kierkegaard at the University of Frankfurt. Tillich wrote a philosophical doctorate on the history of religion in Schelling's positive philosophy. In addition, his theological doctorate was on mysticism and guilt consciousness in Schelling's philosophy (Krause). According to Tillich, human consciousness dominated in its early stages by myth and mythical thought driven by an obscure compulsion and embodies the overawing, uncomprehending dominance of natural forces (Krause).

However, Adorno does not explicitly theorize a transition from myth to revelation. Rather, he believes, escape from repetition of myth by instrumentally rational action merely introduces a different kind of compulsion, in which the spontaneity of the self-crippled for the sake of power over nature. The breakout from the illusion of myth is genuine enlightenment, but nonetheless emancipated reason reverts to mythical compulsion (Krause). Hence, myth seen as an early stage of human consciousness, even if it is "un-pre-thinkable." Because it counts as the genesis of human thought and that is why we cannot go beyond myth. Moreover, it all started from myths, and human thought strived to evolve. Therefore, it is the first grammar of the psyche. In other words, mythology embodies deeply intuitive truths (Krause).

From that point of view, A & H focused on myth, in particular the *Odyssey*. They considered it a prototype of the Enlightenment subject (Adorno 60). Above that, the *Odyssey* approached as the basic text of European civilization (Adorno 46). Which means it is a document that bears all signs of enlightenment as well as the opposite. It articulates the progress of the European subject from the primitive stages to the modern era. In addition, *Odyssey* counts as the early stage of enlightenment as well as the modern one that manifested by Bacon's positivist view of the world. Such a view bears a tendency to control; gaining power by seizing knowledge is a totalitarian character of enlightenment (Adorno 6-7).

##### **5. Enlightenment: The Antitheses of Myth?**

Answering this 'banal' question is a hint that explains authors' way of thinking in the modern era. On one side, enlightenment is not the opposite of myth. It might have said, yes, it is. In the first thesis of the first essay, as announced in the preface, it has been acknowledged, "Myth is already enlightenment, and enlightenment reverts to mythology" (Adorno xviii). In that sense, myth is not contradictory to enlightenment.

Nevertheless, in order to make the correlation dialectical, it approaches myth and enlightenment as a contraction. The author adopts the Weberian/Baconian definition of enlightenment as introduced in the concept of enlightenment (Adorno 1). In addition, they aim to make the trial of enlightenment dialectical. Myth and philosophy/enlightenment have one origin: fear. Myth and rationalization engage control, explanation, understanding, and abstraction as an instrument to survive.

If the culture by definition suppresses the nature and the instincts of the human creature, can we agree with H&A that the Odyssey is just a myth, a legend and not a historical fact? The notion that the Odyssey is a narrative and not a historical reality because it is fiction in the literary canon is an exaggeration. Enlightenment thinkers believed that they had discovered the source of light and previously dispelled darkness by reason (Willemsen 449). The French variant of enlightenment tends to posit positive science absolutely; however, the German variant is broader, especially Kant's definition of enlightenment as outspokenness, daring to think, and being critical. Is enlightenment the opposite component of myth? Historically, myth considered an irrational, unscientific worldview that has not logical and evidence base.

Similarly, to this in the Hegelian concept enlightenment is a form of positivist reason, which freed itself from the rationalist metaphysics of the 17th century (Fluss). While enlightenment relies on reason and observation. Well, this is a simplistic description of the differences, especially if we reconsider the world ideology nowadays, even if it is true that myths' narration has an inherent supernatural element and symbolic character that cannot be verifiable due to lack of evidence. However, the problem is that the modern ideas also convert to such mythic characters. Obviously, the authors employ the concept of enlightenment to designate not just a specific historical epoch, but also the whole civilization process. In this sense, enlightenment does not mean the process whereby humans strive to some ideal standard of reason, truth, autonomy, and social progress. In other words, "Enlightenment" is not antithesis of myth but as the perpetuation of its innermost alienated logic (Grumley). Nevertheless, enlightenment, in turn, takes on the meaning it usually has for us: it is understood as the critical exposure and overcoming of all vestiges of myth. The program of enlightenment demands the destruction of the rational pretensions of all previous forms of social explanation magic, myth, and religion. However, such a program of critical destruction is ultimately nihilistic; eventually even the ideals so proudly held by the historical Enlightenment should be questioned by submitting them to new rigorous scientific standards.

Enlightenment is a mode of thinking that improves our lives and indicates a developed era in the history of humankind. However, the dilemma of enlightenment is that myth is already enlightenment, and enlightenment reverts to mythology and this mechanism leads to regression and oppression. In this sense, *DE* is about detecting a certain interval in the history: why and how enlightenment fostered fascism, totalitarianism, and a return to a new myth? The authors did not consider the instrumental rationality as a rival of the enlightenment. Moreover, the return to mythical reason and the practice of magic not excluded by rational thinking. The irrational elements that experienced in myth existed within the ideas of the Enlightenment itself. Although the concept of enlightenment generally refers to the idea of progress in the eighteenth century, through which the bourgeoisie liberated itself from the shackles of medieval feudalism, Adorno borrowed this idea from Max Weber in order to redefine the idea of enlightenment again.

The essence of the Enlightenment was a desire to control nature and fear, where instrumental rationality activated in order to dominate nature. Nevertheless, this impulse created a kind of "second nature," which is subjectivization of man and society. The Enlightenment contained an element that led to its self-destruction, which manifested in all totalitarianism and authoritarian personalities. In other words, it contained inherent barbaric elements. Even the most sophisticated question, be it *muthos* or *logos*, are a contradiction in the Greek origin. One answer is to find in book *The Origin of the Greek Thought*; that the meaning of word *muthos* is differs from what we used nowadays, its equality to telling or story, and that does not contradict with *logos*, but a discourse and storytelling that comes before signifying intelligent-reason (Vernant 24).

The contradiction comes later, starting from the fifth century, when it indicates *muthos* as unproven talk without any evidence (Vernant 24). The opposite view on those deals with those like that of Paul Veyne who sees that the process of purification of myth by reason goes back to the Plato's *Gorgias* (Veyne 15). The problem of the rational philosophy that began the Enlightenment project can still penetrate this truth about domination even if it has become 'forgotten' as philosophy itself becomes another mechanism of compulsion (Adorno 39). In both fascism and rationalization, 'the essence of the world coincides with the statistical law according to which the surface is classified' truth conforms to its positivist description (Adorno 221).

## 6. Resisting or Persisting a Myth?

One of the main characteristics of enlightenment is disenchantment of the world by resisting the mythical thinking. Therefore, the myth persists in the enlightenment self in several forms and periods of history. Even enlightenment meant to overcome both ignorance and mythical thinking in its primitive character by rational thinking. However, it seems what Carl Jung' (1875–1961) said it true: “What you resist persists” in that sense. The psychological impact of fear is rooted in the Enlightenment ideal as well as in the myth. The desire to overcome the unknowable, invisible, and unpredictable by knowledge and power is inherent in both enlightenment myths. The modern man strives to overcome fears and limitations (mental as well as physical) by resisting it. However, it leads to reinforcing the self-defense mechanism as a tool to remain in the safety and security zone.

It is a reminder that enlightenment transcends fear and ignorance, and by the power of knowledge, we strive to master fear and ignorance. However, this led to a control drive over everything. So, dialectics as a method of thinking used to explain the correlation between myth and enlightenment. Even the word ‘dialectic’ has different meanings over its long history, but generally it can be understood as a process of improving one’s reasoning abilities by contrasting different, opposite approaches or theses and trying to integrate them into a “higher” version of the truth. A dialectic process is inherently pluralistic and requires the opposites that it can then synthesize into a new insight. For Hegel, the concepts and principles are not mental items in an individual mind but rather abstract historical and "spiritual" things. On the other hand, Marx's concepts and principles are the historical and social dynamics of material production among human beings.

Both Hegel and Marx argue that a concept tends to pass over into its opposite. Then within that new opposite, the old, destroyed form is preserved and transformed. So, at each stage of enlightenment, older mythologies replaced by the new. However, those new mythologies contain just enough of the old to make them pernicious; "the deposed god returns as a more repressive idol," and the main theme is 'the self-destruction of the enlightenment' (Adorno xiii). In addition, there is a threat to social freedom that this entails. Paradoxically, certain themes in the Enlightenment have turned into their opposites and assisted wide-scale repression: On one hand, the growth of economic productivity furnishes the conditions for a world of greater justice; on the other hand, it allows the technical apparatus and the social groups that administrate a disproportionate superiority to the rest of the population. The individual wholly devalued in relation to the economic powers, which at the same time press the control of society over nature to hitherto unsuspected heights' (Adorno xiv).

The dialectical process of a thinking concerns only itself and unfolds only within itself. According to Schelling, 'the view, harbored from age to age, that philosophy can be finally transformed into actual science through the dialectic, betrays more than a little narrowness' (Fischbach). The aim of the authors through critique is breaking continuity of the history and political tradition. The task of philosophy/dialectics is "to teach the right life" (Jay 321). However, as Habermas asserts that, in developing a critical theory of society that denounces reason while simultaneously utilizing it, A&H, just like Nietzsche, left in an uncomfortable position, i.e., what is the basis of critique? If all reason form of exploitation, then how can use it to emancipate society? Thus, for Habermas, "the dialectic of enlightenment does not do justice to the rational content of cultural modernity that was captured in bourgeois ideals" (J. Habermas). As Habermas said, the Enlightenment has its dark side and self (J. Habermas). The crisis of enlightenment reviled in its blindness toward its own dark side that crystallized in the instrumental reason (J. Habermas).

## 7. Conclusion

The core question of the paper is why enlightenment turned to myth movement in history. Even if it was not an easy task for A&H to give a straight answer, it seems a naïve as well as legitimate to ask how world wars and mass destruction occurred. Or to be shocked why all that is the result of scientific progress, enlightenment, and the development of human intelligence. And how totalitarian figures (Stalin, Hitler, and fascism) emerge in modern history after all?

One of the remarkable aspects of *DE* is redefining enlightenment through the conception of myth. Enlightenment revisited through mythology to demonstrate its fragility and inconsistencies with its premises. Enlightenment marked by the persistence of myth in political discourse, knowledge, and modern culture. The Enlightenment ideal causes dissatisfaction and requires constant self-criticism. Meanwhile, the title of the book illustrates a contradiction in modern history: modernity produced its counter results. Irrationality, unenlightened and barbaric drives, are not absent from the progress. We cannot think of enlightenment, progress, and modernity without acknowledging the myth, which continually been reproduced. While, the book provides interesting subjects that enrich the reader view.

However, some issues that remain unresolved. The book is challenging to read due to the complicated and vague writing style, which makes it sometimes unreadable. The reader confronted with a variety of challenges from multiple perspectives and compelled to link philosophical fragments, which intended for synthesis, in this way of writing

books, regardless of the book's subtitle. Furthermore, Adorno's introduction of DE is in contrast to the content of it, particularly the interpretation of history. The way A&H interpreted history from a dialectal standpoint leaves a metaphysical legacy that neither Hegelian speculative dialectics nor the triumph of absolute spirit Marxist materialism can fill.

It is crucial to criticize the concept of progress, as it leads to improved progress. The most significant purpose of critical theory is to “attempt at self-criticism”. As mentioned before, criticizing the Enlightenment was before Frankfurt, starting from Kant to Nietzsche and Weber, etc. The idea that myth and enlightenment are intertwined and not contradictory, seems original and charming, but not a genuine idea from them. F.W. Schilling brought in his philosophy such an idea before and confirmed that myths are the roots of the philosophical ideas. The authors quoted Nietzsche and Weber and so on without mentioning Schilling's conception and definition of myth, which is questionable.

Their diagnosis of sociopolitical consequences of enlightenment stems from immanent criticism, not empirical and mostly circular reasoning. They identified the cause and the process of change in the history and shed a light on the dark side of enlightenment, exposing its mythical roots. What enlightenment opposed and resisted it radically persists. The continuity of myth in different forms symbolizes the perennial return of myth. While historically, enlightenment was considered an effort to escape from myths and irrational thinking. This dark side of enlightenment remains the other side of the coin. While historically, enlightenment was considered an effort to escape from myths and irrational thinking. This dark side of enlightenment remains the other side of the coin. Opposing myths is always creating a new kind of surviving myth. As Odysseus enlightens us with a self-image on how fear and a desire to preserve lead to controlling the world and nature. Science areas of fear of the unknown and the tendency of knowledge strive to control the non-identical self - the other. In addition, that diagnoses the self-destruction of the modern subject and shows how it returns to pre-enlightenment-modern, which is the paradox of enlightenment and a result of instrumental use of reason and the positivist science outlook.

Remarkably, they did not mention Kant's view in the 'antinomy of reason' where he elaborates on how reason generates some questions that contradict with its capacity to answer them. For example, like metaphysical questions on eternity, soul, and freedom. Moreover, the authors somehow neglect F.W. Schelling's concept of Myth as the source of enlightenment. The authors took from Weber the definition of enlightenment to create a contradiction with myth for the methodological purpose. Just to show that

enlightenment and myth are correlated and not opposite. Doing so led to a kind of circular reasoning, because self-criticism is an element of the modern mind and enlightenment itself. Critical rational thinking is a tool for liberating the mind from its shortcomings. Criticizing the instrumental rationality is activity of the reason itself.

However, this critical task is not external to rationality and dialectical thinking and analysis. Even their goal is to shed a light on the dark side of enlightenment, a mythical aspect that is not always bright. Moreover, they define enlightenment as a myth that interpreted through the Odyssey. They interpreted the myth/enlightenment controversy from their present horizon, which is interesting to a reader nowadays but is problematic as well. Enlightenment is a kind of ideology that uses myth as instrumental reason to control. It is a kind of exaggeration to demonize enlightenment consequences and see them in the form of totalitarian regimes. The task of *critical theory* in the book casts a transcendental metaphysical conception on man in the world where reason is the basis of dialectical ethical thinking. Accordingly, reason must be self-critical and not only focuses on a political system or nature but also participates in the critique of reason. The essential element of dialectics is that it focuses on myths and exposes the handling of reason as a new myth.

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