

Article review on kant's "what is enlightenment"

[Philosophy](#), [Freedom](#)



- Do we still apply the concept of nonage today? ANSWER: Yes. Can you think of a situation today in which nonage is mandatory and thinking for oneself is prohibited? ANSWER: A situation today in which nonage, according to Kant's definition, is mandatory whenever an individual imposes upon him-/herself reliance on authorities without the use of his own reason – "for it is comfortable to be a minor" (p. 1). There are instances when an individual is prohibited to think for him-/herself, such as in religion, simply because he/she was indoctrinated at a very young age to believe whatever was offered to him/her without critical reflection because of fear, punishment, intimidation and discouragement from authorities (p. 1).

- How does Kant reconcile freedom of thought and obedience? ANSWER: Kant was able to reconcile freedom of thought and obedience whenever there is a "public use of one's reason in all matters" (p. 2) and obedience to authorities as encapsulated in "[a]rgue as much as you please, but obey!" (p. 2). For the former, Kant has meant that people, esp. the enlightened ones, have to exercise their reasons in public arenas such as in public debates, newspaper editorials and other avenues/media. Whereas, for the latter, Kant meant that people obey the laws of society in order to achieve a 'collective' enlightenment or "unity of the community" (p. 6).

- What historical context informs Kant's phrase Sapere aude! ANSWER: The historical context that informs Kant's "Sapere aude!" was the monarchical period of his time where there was little individual representation or freedom. Why is this important for Kant's own historical context? ANSWER: "Sapere aude!" is important for Kant's own historical context because it was used during his time as an exploration of his theories of reason in the public

sphere. Kant claimed that a person ought to think for himself, independent from the dictates of the “ guardians who make their domestic cattle stupid” (p. 1) to maintain people’s dependencies on them and remain in nonage throughout their lifetime.

- What is the most important difference between revolutionary and reformist ideas? ANSWER: The most important differences between revolutionary and reformist ideas are: (a) revolutionary ideas may end a despotism, but never the true enlightenment of the person or society unlike the ones using reformist ideas; and, (b) reformist ideas could advance proposals to protect individuals or even “ old institutions” (p. 5) whereas revolutionary ideas would only wish for toppling establishments.

- Is Kant a determinist? ANSWER: No. Why? ANSWER: Kant believes in freedom of thought, autonomy or independence. If Kant is a determinist, he would have just relinquish his theory of enlightenment such that people ought to learn to think for themselves (Sapere aude!).

- Is it possible for the public to become enlightened in Kant's sense?

ANSWER: Yes! What does your response imply or necessitate for politics?

ANSWER: When people learned how to use their freedom to reason out and voice out their ideas, thoughts or opinions, the state will learn to treat man agreeably “ in accord with his dignity” (p. 7).

- When was the last time you were lazy in Kant's sense of the word?

ANSWER: The last time I was lazy in Kant’s sense of the word was, when I was so dependent on my teacher’s lecture without need for further thinking.

Is it possible to avoid Kant's notion of laziness in our modern world?

ANSWER: Yes, through the use of critical or higher-order thinking whenever

we make a decision for our actions. Are you lazy in your studies? ANSWER: Definitely not!

- Kant uses this short phrase to convey a much wider array of meanings and political implications. What does " Sapere aude!" mean to you? ANSWER: For me, it means, learning to depend on one's thought after careful deliberation of the situation. Do you live up to this exhortation? ANSWER: Yes! I learned to think for myself and on my own terms accordingly.

Work Cited

Kant, Immanuel. What is Enlightenment? Trans. Mary C. Smith. Vancouver: Fairleigh Dickinson University, 2013.