Enlightenment? Culture and Knowledge in Eighteenth-Century Europe

19 November 2009

Discipline and Education

“Evolution of the Military Arts: Infantry” from the Encyclopédie
What is Enlightenment?

Kant: man’s release from his self-incurred tutelage

Do we live in an enlightened age? No, we live in an age of enlightenment.

Question tradition
Make own decisions on basis of reason
Respect others (e.g. religious toleration)

modern science
democratic institutions
human rights
Educational Initiatives in Eighteenth-century States

advanced training institutions for mining, engineering
1745, Brunswick; 1755, Fribourg; 1778, Paris

specialist military academies
1752, France; 1765, Prussia;
1789, Bavaria; 1799, United Kingdom;
1802, United States (West Point);

Royal Military College, Sandhurst, England
School of Mines, Paris (1778)
Voltaire, *Candide* (1759)

Rousseau, *Emile, or on Education* (1762)

Moreau the young, illustration for Rousseau’s *Emile* (book published, 1762; this illustration, c. 1789)

Robert de Launay, frontispiece to vol. 4 (*Emile*) of *Collected Works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (1782)

Images from www.britishmuseum.org
Enlightenment and Education: Critiques

different education for different groups:
  Voltaire and many others argued that peasants shouldn’t be educated
  boys’ education versus girls’

Rousseau’s critique in the *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*

"Enlightenment, understood in the widest sense as the advance of thought, has always aimed at liberating human beings from fear and installing them as masters. Yet the wholly enlightened earth radiates under the sign of disaster triumphant"

  Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947)
Michel Foucault: Enlightenment and Discipline

punishment/discipline as two forms of power relations

punishment: episodic, exemplary, focuses on the body; meant to demonstrate the power of the ruler

discipline: constant, focuses on the “self” or the “soul”; meant to reform and improve the delinquent

The constant division between the normal and the abnormal, to which every individual is subjected, brings us back to our own time, by applying the binary branding and exile of the leper to quite different objects; the existence of a whole set of techniques and institutions for measuring, supervising, and correcting the abnormal brings into play the disciplinary mechanisms …
The Greatest Good for the Greatest Number?

Jeremy Bentham, 1748-1832

Bentham’s “auto-icon” on display at UCL

sketch of a prison or factory, from the Jeremy Bentham letters, UCL Library