

两百年之间

——从康德到福柯对启蒙的看法

Two Hundred Years Apart:

From Kant to Foucault on the Enlightenment

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[英文提要]

The paper observes how Kant, a philosopher from the Age of Enlightenment that ushered in the Modern Age, and the post-modern thinker of our time, Foucault—two thinkers, two hundred years apart—look at the Enlightenment. Then it critiques their views from the perspective of Christian faith.

For Kant, the Enlightenment is not only the awakening of Reason, but also the sacred right of man. Foucault observes that Kant made his critique from the point in time on which he stood, thereby establishing the “modern” attitude where man continually critiques the historical times of which he is a part. He stands on the boundaries of human existence and looks within those boundaries in an attempt to analyze and evaluate human existence. But Foucault points out the tragedy of this attempt at transcendence through

Reason is that even the enlightened ones who understand man's limitations often and inevitably themselves fall victim to these very same limitations.

The Enlightenment emphasizes the importance of man. This is not automatically contradictory to the Christian faith, for Christianity puts a high premium on the value of man too, especially when the emphasis is appropriately placed. But it may be observed that in the absence of the Enlightenment, man can still become what Barth terms "the absolute man". This is because the immature man is susceptible to the lure of absolutization. He absolutizes external forms of authority and becomes lost in the solitude of the crowd.

When the external world was the object of critique during the Enlightenment, the process resulted in "the absolute man". But when the movement itself was the object of critique, the process revealed the finiteness of man. Post-modernism has demonstrated to us the limitations of Reason and taught us to grapple with truth that is not without inconsistencies. This is not necessarily contradictory to the Christian faith because the Creator God Himself is beyond the full grasp of man or Reason. That which is consistent, all encompassing, and unchanging is beyond the faculties of man. As man faces that which is ultimately beyond him, this can be his *kairos* moment where he relearns the meaning of piety.

从西方经验来看，千年如一日的中世纪体制并非在瞬间结束，而是经历了五六百年一连串的觉醒而逐渐改变，以 17、18 世纪启蒙运动的理性觉醒为分际，向前有 15 世纪文艺复兴的人文意识觉醒与 16 世纪宗教改革的信仰良心觉醒，而后有 19 世纪