

## Aufklärung – totgelaufen?!

# Commitment to the Values of the Enlightenment

We often read that the Enlightenment failed and contributed to colonization. Or that rationality dehumanized people. Basically, these are linguistic inaccuracies that we nevertheless use and tolerate. Because they are actually anthropomorphisms. It sounds as if we were sitting in an armchair watching what the Enlightenment is doing, for example, whether the one mentioned in the title of the magazine is dying out. But Enlightenment does not act. It is merely a theoretical construct that contains various sub-theories, such as those on humans as free beings, on the relationship between humans and nature, or on humans and animals.

We refer to the totality of these theories as “the Enlightenment.” Unlike purely explanatory theories with their descriptive statements, Enlightenment theories also contain prescriptive statements. And it is concrete “empirical” human beings who strive to implement these prescriptions. Or they act contrary to them, out of financial, political, or other interests.

So whether the Enlightenment fails or not depends on whether people are committed to it. This commitment also includes the effort to expose and possibly punish violations of human dignity. Or the effort to fulfill the right to accurate information and expose false information. Or to demand free speech and equality regardless of race and expose violations of this principle. And it is not the fault of the Enlightenment when its line of argument is turned on its head, for example, in order to justify cultural colonialism.

In addition to the basic construct of the Enlightenment, developed at its core by Kant, there were also corresponding “programs” in the 18th century, such as the creation of an encyclopedia. In these programs, scholars and intellectuals of their time explained how critical knowledge could be used specifically to combat superstition. They emphasized the benefits of knowledge for welfare and progress. And again: Using knowledge in this positive sense or using it to oppress others is not in the hands of the Enlightenment, but is subject to the goals that people pursue and for which they use available knowledge or patterns of rationality as it means.

So before we proclaim New Enlightenments or declare AI to be a second Enlightenment, we should strive to fulfill the postulates of the first Enlightenment. There is plenty to do. Some of what is possible is addressed in this issue.

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## Liebe Leserin, lieber Leser,

mit dieser Ausgabe knüpfen wir an den Relaunch der **Weiterbildung** an – inhaltlich vertieft, redaktionell geschärft und mit einem klaren Blick auf das, was Weiterbildung heute leisten muss.

Ihre Rückmeldungen zum Neustart der **Weiterbildung** haben uns erreicht und geholfen. Bitte schreiben Sie uns weiter: Was fehlt? Was hat Ihnen in der Umsetzung konkret geholfen? Welche Erfahrungen möchten Sie mit der Community teilen? Welche Ergänzungen sollte eine neue Website zur Zeitschrift leisten?

Vielen Dank für Ihre Arbeit an guter Bildung – Tag für Tag, oft im Kleinen, mit großer Wirkung. Wir wünschen eine anregende Lektüre und viel Kraft für die Umsetzung.

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