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greatest paradox was that while it borrowed and assimilated Eastern (mainly Chinese) ideas these were then crafted into a body of knowledge that imagined the East as uncivilized and, in turn, led on to the imperial civilizing mission and the repression of the East ..

The discourse created (largely unwittingly) a kind of intellectual apartheid regime in which the West was fundamentally segregated from the East by an imaginary borderline that stretched back in time to Ancient Greece.

Although Hobson sees the growth of a kind of intellectual apartheid' as largely unwitting it is hard to deny the importance of a deeply rooted prejudice against and disrespect for other cultural and intellectual traditions in the West' s civilizing mission' and promotion of universal' values In 2004, in Heresies: Against Progress and Other Illusions(2), John Gray, Professor of European Thought at the London School of Economics and identified as the most important living philosopher' by one prominent British author and journalist, threw a sharp light on the quality of Western conviction that underpins intellectual apartheid' :

Both communism and neo-liberalism were messianic movements, using the language of reason and science, but actually driven by faith. Seemingly deadly rivals, the two faiths differed chiefly on a point of doctrinal detail whether the final perfection of mankind was to be achieved in universal socialism, or global democratic capitalism. Just as Marx' s revolutionary socialism had done, the global free market promised an end to history. As could have been foreseen, history continued with an added dash of blood.

Like most Enlightenment ideologies, communism and neo-liberalism were obsessively secular. At the same time they were deeply shaped by religion. Looking to a future in which all of mankind would be united in a single way of life, each was rooted in a view of human history that is found only in western monotheism. Marxism and the cult of the free market are only the latest in a succession of Enlightenment faiths, in which the Christian promise of universal salvation reappears as a political project of universal emancipation.

In fact, John Gray is not an enthusiast for other forms of faith encouraged by the Enlightenment, particularly the contemporary fashionable belief in the benevolence of scientific and technological innovation:

We are not masters of the tools we have invented. They affect our lives in ways we cannot control and often cannot understand. The world today is a vast unsupervised laboratory, in which a multitude of experiments are simultaneously under way.

Many of these experiments are not recognized as such. But the industrialization of agriculture, and the intensive use of pesticides, fertilizers and antibiotics to render plant and animal life unnaturally productive; the use and over-use of antibiotics in medicine; the widespread use of chemicals, illegal or prescribed, to alter mood or behaviour; mass air travel on the scale of the last 20 years or so these and many other practices, which we have come to take for granted, are really experiments, carried out on a scale that defies our understanding.

We can't know the risks of these experiments because we don't understand their interactions with one another. We can't control our new technologies because we don't really grasp the totality of their effects. And there's a deeper reason why we are not masters of our technologies: they embody dreams of which we are not conscious and hopes that we cannot bear to give up. Late modern cultures are haunted by the dream that new technologies will conjure away the immemorial evils of human life. These passages capture the way in which the monotheism of Western culture, in its various forms, has bred a dependence on faith and a blind acceptance of the promises and dogma of prophets, whatever their credentials and whether they preach on behalf of God, ideology or science. There always seem to be many who are prepared to follow

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