

In point of fact, the regret expressed in the attached note about my formulations in "The Enlightenment Is Not Over" is uncalled for.

This is so, at any rate, if to *have* authority is not necessarily to *be* an (or even the) authority. For all of the phrases cited as being insufficiently careful (allowing that there may be others that *could* be cited that would be different!) do not imply that reason *is* an (or even the) authority, because they are all genitive phrases talking about the unique authority *of* reason, i.e., the unique authority that reason *has*.

28 September 2002

I regret that my formulations in "The Enlightenment Is Not Over" are not more careful.

In responding to the question about the normative meaning of the Enlightenment, I say: "[T]he Enlightenment is to be understood normatively as the consistent affirmation of the unique authority of human reason over all other putative authorities" (322). And consistently with this, I go on to speak repeatedly of "the unique authority of human reason over all other supposed authorities," "reason's unique authority," "the unique authority of reason even in religion," and so on (324, 326, 327). The problem with this, of course, is that it implies that reason is simply *an* authority, even if a unique authority, among all other (putative, or supposed) authorities, instead of being the implicit primal authorizing *source* of authority—more exactly, the *noetic*, as distinct from the ontic, implicit authorizing source. It is in its being just this, indeed, that the uniqueness claimed for reason's authoritativeness consists. It is not *a* unique authority, even the highest such authority; it is uniquely authoritative.

Therefore, the sentence cited above should have been formulated to read: "The Enlightenment is to be understood normatively as the consistent affirmation that human reason is uniquely authoritative over all putative authorities"; and the other phrases should have been formulated accordingly—"the unique authoritativeness of human reason over all supposed authorities," "reason's unique authoritativeness," etc. This assumes, of course, that, although any authority is authoritative, the converse does not hold: something may—indeed, must—be the primal source of authority and, as such, authoritative (and authorizing) without itself being properly *an* authority.

29 March 1999