Obscurantism Strikes Back?

Anti-Science and Anti-Democracy as Two Sides of the Same Coin

5 July 2025, Christian Meyers

CHAPTER 1 :
"Zeitenwende" – "End of History" – "Dark Enlightenment"

"Zeitenwende" (2022)

Date: 27 February 2022

Venue: Bundestag (German federal parliament) during a special session in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022

Bundeskanzler Olaf Scholz declared, *"Wir erleben eine Zeitenwende. Und das bedeutet: Die Welt danach ist nicht mehr dieselbe wie die Welt davor."* ("We are experiencing a turning point. The world after will not be the same as the world before.")

"End of History" (1989)

- Francis Fukuyama's concept of the **"End of History"** was first articulated in a 1989 essay and later expanded in his 1992 book *The End of History and the Last Man*.

- Fukuyama argues that **liberal democracy** (combined with free-market capitalism) is the **final form of human government**, and that **history, as a progression of competing ideologies, has effectively ended**.

  With the **collapse of fascism** (after WWII) and **communism** (after the Cold War), **liberal democracy** no longer faces serious ideological competitors. It marks the **end of viable ideological alternatives** to liberalism. **Liberal Democracy as the Final Form**

"Dark Enlightenment" (after 9/11, 2001)

- The **Dark Enlightenment** (coined by Nick Land) is a radical critique of liberalism and democratic egalitarianism.

- It argues that the Enlightenment led to **decay**, **weakness**, and **cultural decline**, and calls for a return to **hierarchy**, **order**, and **techno-authoritarianism**.

- **Link to Zeitenwende:** The **Dark Enlightenment** interprets **global disorder** (e.g., Ukraine war, civilizational collapse, AI) **not as a temporary crisis**, but as a **chance to reboot civilization**. *Zeitenwende* might be read (cynically or hopefully) as a **crack in the liberal order** that allows other visions—reactionary or authoritarian—to emerge.

CHAPTER 2 :
In "Dark Enlightenment", there is "Enlightenment"...

2.1. "Zeitenwende" from Renaissance to Enlightenment

1. From the rise of printing (mid-15th century) to **global dissemination of knowledge** through **republics of letters**, **scientific academies**, and **encyclopedia**

=> **Turning Point**: The publication of **Diderot and d'Alembert's** *Encyclopédie* (1751–1772) aimed to systematize and democratize all human knowledge.

2. From Humanism (harmonized Christianity with classical wisdom - "dignity of man") to Rationalism ("systematic doubt, universal reason, impersonal laws")

=> **Turning Point**: works of **Descartes, Spinoza** and **Voltaire**, who questioned miracles, dogma, and clerical authority.

3. From (ancient) Authority to Empiricism (rejection of dogma, emphasize on **empirical observation** and **scientific method)**

=> **Turning Point**: **Francis Bacon's** *Novum Organum* (1620) outlined a **new method of inquiry based on induction and experimentation**.

4. From a more "symbolic science" to Mathematical Science (mathematics as the language of nature)

=> Turning Point: Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica* (1687) unified celestial and terrestrial mechanics, anchoring the universe in calculable laws.

5. From a hierarchical and often geocentric cosmos to an heliocentric, mechanistic, and potentially infinite universe.

=> Turning Point: **Galileo's** telescope (1610) and **Newton's** physics radically changed humans' place in the cosmos.

6. From "dogmatic" universities (as preservation and transmission of tradition) to "free" academies and universities

=> Turning Point: Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge (1660)

7. From Civic Virtue (classical **virtue** and **princely rule) to Social Contract (natural rights**, **individual freedom**, and **social contracts)**

=> Turning Point: The **Glorious Revolution** (1688) and **Locke's** *Two Treatises of Government* (1689) introduced a rational basis for constitutional monarchy and liberal rights.

8. From Divine Command (justice as part of a sacred cosmos, ruler's legitimacy from God) **to human laws (**human invention, human deliberation, grounded in utility, reciprocity, rational regulation of passions. human)

=> Turning Point : **Hugo Grotius**, *De iure belli ac pacis* (1625) ; **Spinoza**, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670) - **John Locke**, *Two Treatises of Government* (1689) ; **Montesquieu**, *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748) ; **Rousseau**, *The Social Contract* (1762)

2.2. The shifts from Renaissance to Enlightenment are not conflict-free

- **Between 1500 and 1800**, **the boundaries between science, philosophy, and theology remained fragile and perilous.**

- Dozens of **natural philosophers, physicians, reformers, and early secularists** were **persecuted by** both **Catholic and Protestant authorities**, as well as **by monarchs who ruled in close alliance with religious institutions**. **Charges ranged from heresy and impiety to witchcraft, sedition, and atheism**. For many, the pursuit of reason, inquiry, or unorthodox belief led not to recognition, but to **exile, imprisonment, torture, or death**.

- **Atheism** in particular was not only controversial but frequently criminalized across early modern Europe. Inquisition courts in Spain, Portugal, and Italy treated disbelief in God as a capital offense, while in France, **suspected atheists or pantheists could be censored, under surveillance, or imprisoned. Even expressing doubts about church dogma could destroy reputations and careers**. In England and France, thinkers faced legal and social sanctions under **blasphemy and heresy laws**. Across the German principalities, **freethinkers operated under constant risk**, especially in territories dominated by Lutheran orthodoxy, where theological dissent was rarely tolerated.

- The legal and cultural context of each region played a crucial role in defining the risks faced by **dissenters**. While some **Protestant universities permitted limited academic freedom**, the broader climate was one of suspicion and repression. This period produced a long and sobering list of individuals who paid a high price for their intellectual independence—**martyrs of science and free thought** whose work often challenged not only religious dogma but the entire foundation of theological authority. **Their stories illuminate the costs of inquiry in an age when faith and power were tightly intertwined**.

Thinkers, scientists, philosophers, theologians, persecuted, exiled, silenced, executed:

Etienne Dolet (1509 - 1546); Giordano Bruno (1548–1600); Galileo Galilei (1564–1642); Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) [mother Katharina Kepler]; Lucilio Vanini (1585–1619); Uriel Da Costa (1585 – 1640); Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679); René Descartes (1596–1650) ; John Locke (1632–1704) ; Benedictus de Spinoza (1632–1677); Pierre Bayle (1647–1706); Jean Meslier (1664–1729); John Toland (1670 - 1722); Anthony Collins (1676 - 1729); Christian Wolff (1679–1754); Montesquieu (1689–1755); Voltaire (1694–1778); Joseph Süß Oppenheimer (1698–1738); Julien Offray de La Mettrie (1709–1751); David Hume (1711–1776); Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778); Denis Diderot (1713–1784); Helvétius (Claude Adrien) (1715–1771); Baron d'Holbach (1723–1789); Chevalier de La Barre (1745–1766); Johann Friedrich Struensee (1737 - 1772)...

The **Index Librorum Prohibitorum** (Index of Prohibited Books, 1669 - 1966);

 was a powerful tool of censorship created by the Catholic Church, listing **publications considered heretical, anti-clerical, or morally corrupting** :
Religious Criticism and Heresy : Luther, Calvin, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Jansen; **Scientific Works :** Copernicus, Galilei, Bacon, Bruno, Descartes… **;**
Philosophical and Theological Works : Spinoza, Uriel Da Costa, Hobbes, Hume, Locke, Rousseau, Voltaire, Helvétius, La Mettrie, d'Holbach, Condorcet, Sade… ; **Political and Revolutionary Works :** Machiavelli, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Diderot & d'Alembert…

Inquisition and the Enforcement of Religious and State Unity:

 From the late 15th century onward, several Catholic states used inquisitorial institutions to consolidate **religious orthodoxy** and **political centralization**. These tribunals particularly targeted **converted Jews (conversos)**, **Muslims (Moriscos)**, **Protestants**, and **intellectuals** accused of heresy, including philosophers, theologians, and scientists. **Major Inquisitions by State-Church Collaboration :** Spanish Inquisition (1478–1834); Portuguese Inquisition (1536–1821); Roman Inquisition (1542 – c. 1908).

French Monarchy and Religious Control:

France did not establish a centralized Inquisition. However, the monarchy was deeply involved in religious enforcement through **state institutions** : Prosecution of Heresy during the Wars of Religion (1562–1598) ; the Edict of Nantes (1598); the Edict of Fontainebleau (1685) ["Révocation de l'Edit de Nantes].

Religious Persecution and Diaspora Movements:

State-church persecution, whether inquisitorial or state-led, triggered significant waves of migration: 15th–16th Century: Sephardic Jewish Diaspora; 17th–18th Century: Huguenot Diaspora.

2.3. Innovative enlightenment initiatives, BUT...

- **Tycho Brahe (1548 - 1601)** was a Danish astronomer, known for his comprehensive and unprecedented accurate **astronomical observations**, which - with the help of his assistant Johannes Kepler, a convinced Copernican - turned astronomy into the **first modern science** and also helped launch the **Scientific Revolution**. **BUT**, at the imperial court in Prague (cf. Habsbourg) he was also an **astrologer** and **alchemist**. For quite some time, **charlatans disguised as alchemists, continued to create great damage at European courts.**

- **Abbé de Saint-Pierre (1658-1743)** wrote the "Projet de traité pour rendre la paix perpétuelle entre les souverains chrétiens" ou "*Projet pour rendre la paix perpétuelle en Europe*" (1712, 1713, 1717) [Project for Perpetual Peace between Christian sovereigns / in Europe] and it was published during the Utrecht Peace Congress (1712-1713) Saint-Pierre believed in overcoming the violent state of nature. By abandoning quarrels and installing a new "balance of power", the '**European Union**' could ensure the 'tranquil possession' of sovereigns. **BUT,** the Abbé de Saint-Pierre was widely **perceived by his contemporaries as a dreamer** and utopian.

- **Bernard Picart (1673–1733) and Jean-Frédéric Bernard (c. 1680–1744)** are best known for their monumental early 18th-century work titled: "**Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde**" ["Religious Ceremonies and Customs of All the Peoples of the World"], published between 1723 and 1743 in Amsterdam. It advanced Enlightenment arguments for religious tolerance, freedom of conscience, and the separation of church and state, brought ethnographic knowledge and religious anthropology to a wider audience, including readers outside the university or church hierarchy and undermined Religious Dogma and absolute truth by supporting emerging secular and humanist ideas. **BUT**, **it took a long time for the principle of religious tolerance** to be enshrined in modern constitutions, for example.

- **Gerard van Swieten (1700–1772),** physician to Empress Maria Theresa of Austria, was sent to investigate vampire cases in Moravia and the Banat and debunked vampire superstition in his 1755 report, described it as a mix of peasant folklore and irrational fear. This led to **imperial decrees banning vampire-related exhumations and stakings**. In 1758, he also examined and treated Magda Logomer a woman condemned to death in Zagreb for witchcraft at the request of Maria Theresa, leading to the verdict being cancelled by the queen, **ending a phase of witch trials** in Croatia. **BUT**, however, other, far **more serious and powerful superstitions were not abandoned** in the Habsburg territories.

- **Johann Friedrich Struensee (1737–1772**), a radical Enlightenment figure, launched an astonishing wave of reforms in Denmark-Norway, after power shifted, from the mentally ill king Christian VII to his court physician. Denmark–Norway abolished serfdom before France and slave trade before Britain. **BUT,** In 1772, a palace coup orchestrated by reactionary nobles and Queen Dowager Juliane Marie led to Struensee's arrest and execution and finally to a **reversal of many reforms. Censorship and noble privileges returned**.

2.4. Enlightenment does not equal Enlightement...

- **The Enlightenment was about conflict between knowledge and authority, reason and myth, participation and domination**.

- In the 18th century, thinkers envisioned a **world liberated by science and governed by the self-determining citizen**. Their project was radical: to **dethrone tradition, demystify power, and democratize knowledge**. But from the very beginning, there were **counter-currents**.

- **Jonathan Israel's model** helps us understand Enlightenment **not as a single movement**, but as a **struggle between** conflicting visions of modernity. The **Radical Enlightenment**, with its uncompromising rationalism and egalitarianism, clashed with the more **pragmatic Moderate Enlightenment**, while both were attacked by the **Counter-Enlightenment**, which sought to defend religion, tradition, and authority.

2.4.1. Counter-Enlightenment

- The **Counter-Enlightenment** emerged as a reaction against both radical and moderate Enlightenment ideals, **defending tradition, monarchy, religion, and social hierarchy**. It challenged the belief that reason alone could sustain moral or political order, warning that rationalism detached from faith and historical continuity was dangerous. **Strongly religious and often opposed to religious tolerance, its thinkers supported absolutism or theocracy and criticized revolutionary movements**.

- This movement laid the foundations for **modern conservatism, Romanticism, and nationalism**, promoting **faith over reason, hierarchy over equality, and identity over cosmopolitanism**.

- Its legacy persists in 20th- and 21st-century movements like the **New Reaction** and the **Dark Enlightenment**, which **echo its rejection of liberal democracy, egalitarianism, and secular modernity, often repackaging traditionalist and authoritarian ideals in digital, postmodern forms**.

2.4.2. Moderate Enlightenment

The **Moderate Enlightenment** was a **reformist movement rooted in the ideas of Locke, Newton, and Montesquieu**, seeking progress through reason while working within existing political and religious structures. It promoted **constitutional monarchy, religious tolerance** (primarily among Christians), and **gradual legal and political reform, avoiding the radicalism of revolutionary change**.

Thinkers such as Voltaire, Montesquieu, David Hume, and Adam Smith emphasized **freedom of speech, separation of powers, and the compatibility of reason with religious belief, especially deism**.

This strand of the Enlightenment supported **rational governance, commercial society, and moral improvement without rejecting tradition outright**.

2.4.3. Radical Enlightenment

The Radical Enlightenment, rooted in the **philosophy of Spinoza**, **championed reason, materialism, secularism, equality, democracy, and freedom of thought**, positioning itself in stark contrast to the Moderate Enlightenment.

Advocating for **universal human rights, direct democracy over constitutional monarchy, freedom of the press, and religious tolerance (including for atheists), this movement rejected all ecclesiastical authority and was often explicitly anti-clerical, atheistic, or pantheistic**.

Thinkers such as **Spinoza, Diderot, d'Holbach, Helvétius, Condorcet, Rousseau, and several English deists and Dutch republicans** advanced a **radical critique of monarchy, aristocracy, and religion on rational and moral grounds**.

Far surpassing Voltaire's calls for limited toleration, they promoted **republicanism, egalitarianism, and a secular moral order that laid the intellectual foundation for revolutionary republicanism, especially in the French Revolution**.

As historian Jonathan Israel emphasizes, the Radical Enlightenment was not merely a reformist current but a **transformative force that shaped modern democracy, secular liberalism, and the discourse of human rights**.

2.5. But apart the "beautiful ideas", welcome to reality...

2.5.1. Enlightenment as an intellectual and academic elite project

The Enlightenment: Elite Origins and Structural Exclusions

- Although often hailed as the cradle of modern reason, secularism, and universal rights, the Enlightenment was in origin a **project crafted by and for a narrow elite**.

- Its core thinkers [philosophers, scientists, aristocrats, and bourgeois intellectuals] operated within rarefied institutions such as **salons, academies, and universities, largely inaccessible to the broader population**.

- The discourse itself was couched in **elite languages (Latin, polished French, German, and English) and demanded familiarity with classical and humanist traditions that excluded most of society**.

- **Circulation of Enlightenment ideas was similarly restricted**: expensive books, private correspondence, and highbrow publications catered to literate urban elites, while linguistic, educational, and economic barriers limited the reach of its ideals.

- Thus, despite its universalist rhetoric, the **Enlightenment functioned as an elite-driven reconfiguration of knowledge and power**, only gradually diffusing beyond its original confines through later political and social upheavals.

The Other Side of the Enlightenment: Working-Class Realities

- For the working classes, the **Enlightenment's ideals bore little resemblance to daily life**.

- Across rural and urban Europe, **most people remained bound by feudal structures**, exploited labour systems, and persistent inequality.

- Peasants faced **oppressive taxation, erratic harvests, and famine**, while urban labourers endured overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and chronic insecurity. Women and children were doubly burdened, performing the hardest work for the least pay, all without social protections or political voice.

- **Access to education and literacy was minimal**, especially for women and rural populations, making participation in Enlightenment discourse virtually impossible.

- Far from empowering, **secular rationalism often felt like a threat to traditional moral and communal frameworks**.

- **Meanwhile, "enlightened" states retained systems of censorship, surveillance, and corporal punishment.**

- In **this light, the Enlightenment appears less as a liberatory rupture than as an elite phenomenon that marginalized the very masses it claimed to speak for requiring revolution, reform, and mass mobilization to even begin bridging that divide.**

2.5.2. An "Enlightenment ideas mindset" does not mean no wars (dynastic succession wars, territory expansion wars, ressources colonialisation wars)

While the Enlightenment is often associated with reason, human rights, and a progressive vision for society, the period from the late 17th to the end of the 18th century was anything but peaceful.

In Scandinavia and the Baltic, wars such as the *Great Northern War* **(1700–1721)** and the *Gustavian War* **(1788–1790)** showed that Enlightenment rationality had not pacified the peripheries of Europe.

Rather than a time of universal rationality, it was a century marked by persistent wars, rooted in dynastic succession, territorial ambition and colonial competition. The *War of the Spanish Succession* **(1701–1714)** and the *War of the Austrian Succession* **(1740–1748)** both erupted due to contested thrones following the deaths of monarchs, revealing how Enlightenment ideals of governance and law had not yet displaced the traditional, absolutist logic of dynastic claims.

Meanwhile, the *Jacobite Rebellions* **in Britain (1715 and 1745),** as well as the *War of the Polish Succession* **(1733–1738)**, demonstrate how internal struggles for legitimacy and regional autonomy continued to destabilize even states at the heart of the Enlightenment.

The **Seven Years' War (1756–1763) marked a turning point in both scale and consequence. Often considered the first true global war**, it saw major European powers (including Britain, France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia) engage not only in Europe but across North America, India, the Caribbean, and West Africa.

Nonetheless, **colonial wars** continued unabated, from the *Anglo-Mysore* and *Anglo-Maratha* Wars in **India to the *French and Indian War* in North America**. Meanwhile, in Qing **China, Emperor Qianlong** led the "*Ten Great Campaigns*" (1755–1792).

The persistence and proliferation of warfare into the late 18th century, including the *American Revolutionary War* **(1775–1783)** and the *French Revolutionary Wars* **(1792–1802)**, makes clear that Enlightenment values of liberty and reason did not necessarily prevent violent conflict.

These wars were not marginal anomalies but central expressions of state power during the Enlightenment era, reminding us that abstract ideals often coexisted uneasily with military and imperial realities.

2.5.3 Did the (Radical) Enlightenment ever become fully real?

- The (**Radical) Enlightenment,** advocating secular reason, democratic equality, and universal rights, **never became fully real in any historical state**.

- Its **ideals proved too radical for entrenched elites, monarchies, and religious institutions**.

- Though revolutions in **America** and **France** drew heavily from Enlightenment principles, they were soon overtaken by violence, reaction, or pragmatic compromise.

- Yet the influence of the Radical Enlightenment is undeniable: It **reshaped political thought, movements for feminism, secularism, and socialism**.

- **Though its full realization remains elusive, the Radical Enlightenment continues to serve as a critical horizon, a reminder that modern freedoms are incomplete and that the project of reason, equality, and universal justice is still unfinished.**

CHAPTER 3 :
The contemporary legacy of Enlightenment

3.1. Enlightenment critizised

- Contemporary thinkers highlight its internal contradictions: the same **rationality that promised liberation** also **enabled systems of control**.
- Enlightenment reason, far from being neutral, often served to **normalize power through institutions that discipline and regulate**. Its legacy of instrumental thinking, **valuing efficiency over ethics**, has supported both **capitalist exploitation** and **authoritarian governance**.
- **Universal claims to truth**, critics argue, were historically **entangled** with **colonial domination** and the **marginalization of non-Western knowledge systems**.
- In this light, the Enlightenment emerges **not as a pure project of progress**, but as a **complex formation complicit in structures of domination**.
- Moreover, the Enlightenment **ideal of autonomy** is seen as giving **rise to fragmented, self-regulating individuals who internalize neoliberal imperatives**.
- **Emancipation turns into self-exploitation**, and **freedom becomes a tool of market discipline**.

3.2. Enlightenment Legacy : "Dark Enlightenment" or "New Enlightenment" ?

- The Enlightenment's legacy is **no longer a single story**. It remains a **contested terrain** where **rival projects of modernity** unfold: **liberal-democratic moderation, radical critique and emancipation, and reactionary reinvention**.

- **Francis Fukuyama** argued that the moderate Enlightenment "won," becoming the default ideological foundation of Western modernity. Yet today, **both the radical and reactionary alternatives challenge this hegemony from opposite ends of the political spectrum**.

- **Whether our era gives rise to a "New Enlightenment" or descends into a "Dark Enlightenment" will depend on how we navigate these ideological lines, and whether we can transform critique into a renewed commitment to human dignity, plurality, and justice.**

3.2.1 The Rise of "Dark Enlightenment" or "Welcome back to Counter Enlightenment…"

- The **Dark Enlightenment**, a term coined by British philosopher **Nick Land**, represents a radical **intellectual rupture with liberal democratic traditions**. It constitutes a **broad critique and rejection of the Enlightenment's foundational values such as egalitarianism, democracy, and the primacy of popular consensus**.

- Drawing heavily on the early works of **Curtis Yarvin (aka Mencius Moldbug)**, the movement **questions the legitimacy and efficacy of democratic governance**, proposing instead **hierarchical, technocratic alternatives rooted in autocratic control and corporate-like governance models**.

- **Emerging since the late 2000s** as part of a wider **neo-reactionary milieu**, the Dark Enlightenment **synthesizes libertarian, traditionalist, and reactionary thought** and is closely **associated with figures in Silicon Valley, right-wing political strategists, and online intellectual subcultures**.

- **Central to the Dark Enlightenment is its fundamental skepticism towards mass political participation and progressive ideals**, which it views as causes of social and civilizational decline. Instead, it **envisions** a **post-liberal order characterized by elite rule, corporate sovereignty, and the restoration of hierarchical social orders**, often drawing historical analogies from **monarchism**.

a. Accelerationism: Technological and Social Acceleration to Bypass or Destroy Liberal Stagnation

Nick Land's accelerationism, a foundational ideology of the Dark Enlightenment, calls for the radical intensification of technological and social forces to bypass what he sees as the stagnation and decay of liberal democracy, advocating not reform but its outright obsolescence. Emphasizing the supremacy of impersonal techno-capitalist dynamics, Land envisions a post-human future governed by algorithmic control, data-driven governance, and elite techno-cultures where human agency is marginalized.

He valorizes authoritarian yet economically efficient regimes like China under Deng Xiaoping and Singapore under Lee Kuan Yew, which prioritize stability and productivity over democratic freedoms, reflecting a techno-monarchist ideal in which CEOs wield power through AI and data analytics, managing society as a startup rather than a participatory polity. This accelerationist stance entails deliberately destabilizing existing liberal political structures through capitalist and technological disruption to precipitate their collapse, enabling the rise of a hierarchical, post-liberal order dominated by elite control and technocratic governance.

b. Patchwork: A Vision of a Fragmented World of Small, Self-Governing Corporate City-States

Curtis Yarvin's Patchwork envisions a radical dismantling of the modern nation-state in favour of a fragmented system of small, self-governing corporate city-states led by CEO-monarchs accountable to technocratic shareholders rather than voters. This model replaces democratic institutions and bureaucratic governance with hyper-efficient, market-driven regimes prioritizing hierarchy, order, and customer service, drawing on classical hierarchical principles and a formalized military status quo to ensure durable peace while rejecting liberal pacifism.

Cities like Dubai, Hong Kong, and Singapore exemplify his ideal of non-democratic governance delivering prosperity without democratic burdens. Yarvin calls for a cultural shift to overcome "dictator phobia" by dismantling entrenched academic and media power structures, paving the way for neo-monarchist rule. Ultimately, the Patchwork proposes a neo-feudal techno-capitalist order where corporate efficiency and authoritarian hierarchy combine to sustain social stability.

c. Cathedral: Neo-Reactionary Term for the Combination of Academia, Media, and Government as a Liberal-Ideological Power Structure

The Cathedral, a central concept in the Dark Enlightenment coined by Curtis Yarvin, denotes the intertwined elite network of academia, mainstream media, and government that enforces progressive liberal ideology as a closed epistemic regime. This secular priesthood indoctrinates society by promoting a leftist morality rooted in guilt, resentment, and enforced egalitarianism, which pathologizes hierarchy, intelligence, and difference while censoring dissent as "hate speech" or "misinformation."

Key institutions like Ivy League universities, The New York Times, and Hollywood serve as pillars sustaining this cultural and intellectual conformity, masking it behind the guise of pluralistic discourse. In opposition, Dark Enlightenment thinkers exalt an anti-academic elite (sovereign intellectuals and "warrior-technocrats")who operate beyond the Cathedral's influence, advocating for the restoration of political sovereignty to a select few capable of engineering a hierarchical, post-liberal social order.

3.2.2 "New Enlightenment" or "Enlighten the Enlightenment" and empower...

- The un[]k is not to restore Enlightenment ideals as fixed doctrines of the past, but to **rethink and rev[] the[] for a pluralistic and technologically mediated world**.

- The "New E[]tenment" calls for a dual strategy: **resisting anti-intellectualism** and **renewing democrati[] owledge systems by fostering collective inquiry, empirical rigor, and creative knowled[] xpansion beyond technocratic gatekeeping**.

- Central to this renewal is a commitment to []ic justice, where **Enlightenment values are reinterp[]ed through cosmopolitan and[] []utio[]y humanism that embraces universalism (**without []ing diversity), and **pluralism** (w[]ut laps[] []to relativism).

- **Educational and scientific institutions** must re[] their **roles as arenas of contestation and deliberate, slow reasoning;** not as instruments o[] []e domination.

- This involves embracing the **ethics of uncertainty** and responsible innovation that res[] s com[]ty and **societal impact**.

- **Science must be reframed from a top-down a[]ority to a co-produced commons wher[] []zens actively participate in knowledge creation, governance, and ethical reflection**.

- **Such a participatory, democratized science and education system is vital to sustaining democratic agency and empowering societies to navigate the ethical and political challenges p[] by AI, neurotechnology, and other emerging fields**.

CONCLUSION CHAPTER :
Democracy and Science Rise or Fall Together

Obscurantism Strikes Back?

Anti-Science and Anti-Democracy as Two Sides of the Same Coin

- **Democracy and Science are not parallel forces, they are co-dependent pillars of a free society.** Born of the Enlightenment, both institutions emerged to challenge dogma, demand accountability, and place reason above authority. Today, this historic alliance is under attack. **Obscurantism**, whether in the form of viral disinformation or ideological anti-science, erodes not only truth but freedom itself. The delegitimization of experts, the silencing of dissent, and the corrosion of public reasoning are not accidents, they are strategies of control.

- **We must see through the illusion: when science is censored, democracy is compromised; when democracy is hollowed out, science is politicized or suppressed. Each needs the other to thrive**. Enlightenment thinkers understood this: that human progress depends on the liberty to question, to learn, to debate. That truth must be protected by law, and power constrained by reason.

- **To preserve our future, we must reclaim our Enlightenment**. This is not a nostalgic gesture, it is a political imperative. A society that cannot reason together cannot govern itself, cannot innovate, and ultimately, cannot remain free.

=> LET'S FIGHT FOR THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW UNIVERSAL DEMOCRATIC ENLIGHTENMENT !

Thank you for your attention