Radical Enlightenment Presentation Notes for Books and Ideas

April 1, 2014 Presentation

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The book being discussed today was written by Jonathan I. Israel titled *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750.* It is to some degree an effort to provide a better balance in the understanding of the growth of ideas leading to the creation democracy in Western civilization.

Jonathan Israel was at the time of its publication in 2001 a Professor in the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. Born in London in 1946, Oxford educated and well credentialed, he writes voluminous works. They include a trilogy as follows:

- The *Radical Enlightenment* is 720 pages of text (810 total), published in 2001;
- *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man, 1670–1752*; published in 2006, 872 pages of text (1025 total), and
- *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights 1750–1790*; published in 2011, 951 pages of text (1066 total).

This monumental trilogy is obviously on the Enlightenment, but his focus is on the Radical Enlightenment and its impact on democracy. And, he highlights to contributions of Baruch Spinoza for his contributions to the Radical Enlightenment, both of which are generally under recognized in the literature. Most of the credit going to the mainstream thinkers is in what is called the Moderate Enlightenment.   The difference in the two groups is significant because of differences in views as to the relationships between science and religion.

Israel's earlier work, before the first book of the trilogy, and his work in the decade during which he completed the second and third books of the trilogy, has a European thrust, especially the role of the Dutch Republic and some Judaic history in the Diaspora. His specialization has put him in a better position than the vast majority of scholars, or population for that matter, to understand Spinoza and his ideas. The rarified company would include Steven Nadler, and perhaps a few others; but I would not know enough to guess, and if I did, I wouldn't. Nadler is included because of his book *Spinoza: A Life* and his entry in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, on the web.

There is on the web a link to a review disputing the role of Spinoza. It can be reached through Wikipedia. I have some personal views on what underlies the dispute, some of which may become apparent in our discussion of the great controversies of the era related to source of authority and the nature of things. Of particular importance is power over the lives of people and the power of ideas.

The power of ideas will be the topic of my presentation at the Seminar, next week at 11 A. M. We can take some time for discussion during today's presentation, but you can do the math of 720 pages of text in 60 minutes; or five parts and 38 chapters.

This first book of the trilogy is of particular interest to me in my current work of exploring Judaism *as a Quest for Social Justice* for three interrelated reasons.

1. My first reason is based on his second objective in this book. His first objective being to convey his view "of the European Enlightenment as a single highly integrated intellectual and cultural movement…[page v]). The second objective is in two parts:
    - "… to demonstrate that the Radical Enlightenment, far from being a peripheral development, is an integral and vital part of the wider picture and was seemingly even more internationally cohesive than the mainstream Enlightenment [page vi]).
    - "…that Spinoza and Spinozism were in fact the intellectual backbone of the European radical enlightenment everywhere…[page vi]).
2. My second reason is that even before my reading of his assessment of the role of Spinoza, I had selected a handful of Jewish philosophers as being at the turning point of great ideas that impacted *social justice* over the ages since Abram made a *Covenant* on behalf of the Israelites with God accepting that there is only One God. The five philosophers are:
    - Maimonides for reconciliation of faith and reason near the end of the Middle Ages.
    - Spinoza for seeing God and nature as one at the beginning of the Enlightenment.
    - Moses Mendelssohn further reconciliation of Judaism and reason through the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah) and integrating Judaism into mainstream European society; and taking social justice as the rallying idea.
    - Mordecai Kaplan in the early part of the 20th century with the idea of Judaism as a civilization within a larger civilization as Modernity had evolved. And,
    - Isaiah Berlin for his interrelated concepts of two liberties, pluralism, and the futility of forcing a pursuit of the ideal.

As we will discuss, Spinoza's ideas not only got him excommunicated from the Portuguese-Jewish community in Amsterdam, but labeled an atheist by the Christians. And, the third reason for selecting the first book of the trilogy, and the Enlightenment as a whole is,

3. Spinoza pursued ideas that, although unpopular because they threatened the existing power structure, were part of a co-evolutionary process that included philosophy, science, and culture and were part of an emergent set of forces that improved the quality of life for mankind.
    This is relevant to the project that I and some of my Seminar Leadership Team are pursuing for a number of reasons. **America is in an early stage of a great transition that could be quite unfavorable, but if we learn from the Enlightenment of centuries ago it could be quite favorable to our ideals of liberty and justice for all**. [Emphasis added. See box that follows after the following three points.]
    - We are dealing with the power of ideas rather than brute force, an improvement in the **balance essential for a healthy society**.

- The society is most stable when the balance is in the middle ground, but progress comes at the edge of change which is disruptive, but worthwhile.
- Europe was at that situation at the end of the Middle Ages and at the cusp of the Scientific Resolution and the Enlightenment; and Spinoza, among others, made a difference. It may be that America is approaching such a transition being made possible by some nascent disciplines that are better equipped to facilitate a co-evolution to a next stage than the traditional disciplines alone, the subject of the treatise being briefly discussed in a couple of sessions of the Seminar on Strategic Decision Making this month.

> As these notes are being updated about six years after they were used for the ASPEC presentation, that danger, **an early stage of a great transition that could be quite unfavorable,** has increased substantially. Indeed, a pivotal point would be in the outcomes of the November 2020 elections. The trilogy, *American Democracy Endangered*, of which this appendix is now part, is addressing that issue.
> The earlier warnings are contained in the first two appendices to the trilogy's third book. They were presented a year or two earlier. The titles are: (1) *Liberty and Justice for ~~All~~ Some; And (2) Divisiveness in America*.

<u>Part I: The 'Radical Enlightenment'</u> [This refers to the first of five parts of the book.]

The introductory chapter has two sections:
- Radical Thought in the Early Enlightenment, and
- The "Crisis of the European Mind."

The other six chapters of the first part have, as a group, a view of the environment in which the Enlightenment emerged.   That included consideration of government, societal institutions, censorship, libraries, and learned journals.

Considering the time available, the thrust of the book can best be discussed by focusing on the opening chapter. But, there are a few chapters later in the book that deserve special attention.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Radical Thought in the Early Enlightenment

Radical thought in late 17th century emerged from "a vast turbulence in every sphere of knowledge and belief which shook European civilization to its foundation." [p.3] **This was at the edge of chaos, a time at which a dramatic change could take place, or the society could regress and decline**. [The bold type indicates notes for the seminar next week.]   [NO ¶] [read quote]

There is an extensive quote claiming that "..the impact of Descartes, Spinoza, and Bayle…[were leading elite and common people through new ideas,]… becoming entrapped in the Devil's snares. Parts of this

tide of new concepts moreover, **were of a distinctly radical character, that is totally incompatible with the fundamentals of traditional authority, thought, and belief.**" [emphasis added.] [p.3]

Battleground Shift. The battleground of ideas shifted in Europe from the first half of the 17th century to the second half, using 1650 as the pivot point. In the early part of the century, the philosophical debates centered on *confessional differences,* referring to Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed (Calvinist), and Anglican denominations of Christianity.   The transition came with new ideas, most of which were not welcomed. But, think of it as a new sheriff coming to town in the form of the New Philosophy.   Part of it was the embryo of the Scientific Revolution; and, part of it was in "political and moral theory," which we will permeate the four sessions, two in Books and Ideas on the trilogy, and two in the Seminar on view the transition with a new lens in order to help us in dealing with contemporary American issues.

Since the Israel book is so thin, I have a couple of quotes from a couple of other books picking **up on Israel's quotation of a theologian that mentioned Neo-Epicureanism as part of "systematically philosophical form of atheism**." [Emphasis added.] Here are the quotes:

- The revival of atomism and mechanism gave a grounding to experimental science and altered assumptions of political and moral theory in ways we now take for granted." (From *Epicureanism at the Origins of Modernity* by Catherine Wilson, page 3.) [We are now finishing up that book in the Interest group led by Naomi Block.]
- The core of this vision may be traced back to a single incandescent idea: that everything that ever existed and everything that will ever exist is put together out of indestructible building blocks, irreducible small in size, unimaginably vast in number. (From *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* by Stephen Greenblatt, page73.) [Some of you may recall that Woody Dulin presented that book earlier this year.]

Returning to the Israel book, the battleground shift was in Israel's view a European phenomenon, not simply a state by state Enlightenment development. The prevailing power structure was from 1520 - 1650 focused on the confessional antagonism, which branches of Christianity had the philosophical edge? Within the domain of the relevant State, the …

…Counter-Reformation of the sixteenth century, generated a major reorganization and revitalization of traditional structures of authority, thought, and belief. For the age of confessional antagonism, broadly the period of 1520-1650, had equipped Europe's governments, churches, courts, schools, and universities with newly devised or reinforced mechanisms of spiritual, and intellectual control which proved extremely effective in tightening the cohesion of society and culture, and strengthening the State and ecclesiastical authority, and therefore represented an accumulation of power and influence which was not going to be lightly abandoned anywhere. [p.7.]

The new battleground was a "…veritable 'Counter-Enlightenment.'' It was a traditionalist counter offensive that had to deal with societal structure in the source of authority as well as the transition in the analytical systems in which reason built upon the logic going back to Aristotle.

We have now gotten through page 7 of the book, which is less than 1% of 720 pages of narrative and about one-third of the first of 38 chapters. So, what I am going to quickly do is to identify some of the ideas of the battlefield, but will discuss their evolution next week in the first of two seminar sessions that I will lead. Then I will identify the environmental items in the next six chapters of Part I and relay some high points, mostly related to ideas and knowledge.

Ideas at Stake**.** There are four ideas key to the discussion.

- The first idea at stake is the reality of revealed religion and its role. It, along with ecclesiastical authority, was the chief target of the radical thinkers. [p.5] I will discuss that next week at the Seminar in the context of the quality of knowledge.
- The second idea relates to the opinion of prominent German court official that the radical new ideas amounted :...to make 'life in this world' the basis of politics." [.5 and footnote source] This second idea may be viewed in two parts;
  1. Are we dealing with reward and punishment in the hereafter, or in a human lifespan on earth?
  2. The only legitimacy in politics is self-interest.

The first part of the second idea, reward and punishment, is deferred until next week in the Seminar. We will deal with the second, self-interest, in two weeks at this Books and Ideas session in which the topic will be the third book of the trilogy, *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights 1750–1790.*
- The third idea relates to the quality of knowledge. But, rather than as to religion and its role, the focus will be on the analytics, especially contrasting the use of Aristotelianism by the Scholastics with its use in efforts of all thee Abrahamic faiths to reconcile reason and faith. That also be in the Seminar, as far as time will permit.
- The fourth picks up on a bunch of ideas, including Creation, and ownership in noble lands, and religious sanction for monarchy. [pp. 11-12] I'll read a lengthy passage that pretty well summarizes it. [READ starting with.. By contrast, ending with …religious sanction for monarchy.]

In short, philosophy was being moved from being the "serving-maid" in the form of the philosophy of Christian Europe to a precursor to secular science. About two thousand years earlier, in Athens, it had been at one with science, not a separate discipline.

The ancient work of Lucretius had surfaced after being suppressed for centuries and was, along with some other ideas from ancient times and the Middle Ages, now driving the Scientific Revolution.

The 'Crisis of the European Mind'

As noted in the opening of the presentation, " The other six chapters as a group provide a view of the environment in which the Enlightenment emerged.   That included consideration of government, societal institutions, censorship, libraries, and learned journals."

As we will discuss in the Seminar, the environment is the result of an emergent process coupled with a hierarchical authority; and it in turn influences the ensuing rounds of emergence. What the six chapters do is to comment on and describe the conditions under which the forces of the Radical Enlightenment were marshaled, and indeed the same forces encountered by mainstream Moderate Enlightenment that felt the need for inclusion of religion in the Enlightenment transition.

We will discuss that result for the American Enlightenment in two weeks when we are discussing the third book of the trilogy. Now, we turn to the remaining six chapters in Part I.

Chapter 2: Government and Philosophy

The first of the seven sections of the chapter is titled "The Advent of Cartesianism." The other six sections focus on geographical areas. Our discussion focuses on Cartesianism, that is the philosophy of Rene Descartes (1596-1650).

The salient ideas espoused by Descartes were as follows:
- "…Reason is a more dependable path to knowledge than experience or observation." [ps. 98 & 133 of Rohmann] The field is known as *Rationalism.*
- Although reason was not new, and the Scholastics used it, but within the constraints of the paradigm of received religion, Descartes rejected the Scholastic method that started with the basic assumptions of faith.
- He set the framework for the Scientific Method, focusing "…on *how* we know rather than what it is possible to know…" [p. 98 Rohmann] And,
- Dualism, the idea that mind and matter are two separate varieties of substance.

Obviously, these ideas were not viewed favorably by the prevailing power structure, especially the church.

Europe, in the 100 years preceding 1648, had been in battles over ideas. Most of this was "ideological and political rather than physical." [Page 23 - READ OPENING SENTENCE OF THE CHAPTER. By 1648..]

As discussed in the sub-section "Background Shift," a New Philosophy came on the scene. The salient ideas of Descartes were part of the New Philosophy.   The "new sheriff" was the power of ideas that challenged the prevailing authority. So, the confessional debates were being upstaged by the philosophers of the Enlightenment, especially the Radical Enlightenment.

The chapter is developed with a discussion of differences among regions, some focused more heavily on stamping out internal dissent. But, one of the more favorable, or really less unfavorable localities for intellectual freedom in which the New Philosophy could get some discussion was the Dutch Republic. Descartes, although born in France, spent most of his life in the Dutch Republic.

That was also the home of Spinoza, the most radical of the Radical Enlightenment. Bayle, arguable among the most radical, although born in France, also relocated to the Dutch Republic. Bayle is mostly

discussed in chapter 18 titled, "Bayle and the 'Virtuous' Atheist." That was where there in the continent there was least restraint on freedom, but it was not unconstrained.

Chapter 3: Society, Institutions, Revolution

Dynamic cities make a difference in the development of ideas. [READ THE OPENING PARAGRAPH, page 59.] The first of cities mentioned was Amsterdam. Also noted was diversity. We can discuss more about this next week in the seminar as we discuss evolution of ideas.

In addition to dynamic cities making a difference, there is also the involvement of nobles who were who, for one reason or other voiced opinion on the need for societal change. Among those discussed (pages 67-71) was Count Alberto Radicari di Passerano (1698-1737). His freethinking and radical thought in Italy presented problems for him. Then, after the Savoy Court and the Papacy reached a *rapprochement* (1726-27) "and the reestablishment of the Inquisition in the Kingdom [p.68] he decided to relocate.

> " Increasingly at odds with his own as well as his wife's family, and intensely fearful of the Inquisition, which he regarded as his mortal enemy, Radicari fled into exile in Northern Europe, from which he never returned….
> ¶ Steeped in Machiavelli, Sarpi, and Bayle, Radicari also at some point discovered Spinoza, who became the prime influence on the further elaboration and growing radicalism of his ideas on society and politics, as well as philosophy and religion. He was entirely at one with Spinoza in regarding 'democratical ' government 'the most ancient and agreeable to the natural and free condition of men.
> ¶ He argues, like Spinoza and Shaftesbury that 'good' can be determined only by benefits to society and the individual. [See pages 68-9 with footnotes on sources.]

Shaftesbury was another nobleman who saw liberty as political and social action. [See page 67.] In short, there were pressures for changes in societal structure from a variety of sources. The source of authority was being challenged.

There was a revolutionary impulse. Defenders' of liberty were reacting to "the near universal expansion of the monarchical State in the direction of absolutism..." [page 71.]

Chapter 4: Women, Philosophy and Sexuality

There was some sexism spouting the view that "women shouldn't bother their pretty little heads about the weighty matters." My words, not his. But some women were showing intellectual capacity and networks were being established.

Spinoza's view was if women could free themselves from the domination of men, and "…rival men in power and assertiveness, then there would no longer be any reason for refusing her equal access to the political process." [p.86.] What is impressive is that the test is competency, not gender.   Obviously, Spinoza was influenced by Plato as well as Aristotle.   For that matter, include Socrates who if he were willing to compromise with his principles, he would not have chosen death rather than escape to exile.

Chapter 5: Censorship and Culture

The title of this chapter, Censorship and Culture, may be viewed as the gateway to the trilogy which I, at least, see as a historiographic treatment of the evolution of a critical phase of Western civilization. It took a cultural change to give birth to the United States of America. That change was a shift in the source of power for the sovereignty of a state beyond mere force of arms.

The source of power was ideas emanating from individuals and networks of individuals. The chapter 5, as a gateway, starts with making some points about censorship. The opening sentence [on page 97] is "A crucial factor shaping the rise of radical thought in Europe -- as well in a different way, the moderate Enlightenment -- was the impact of censorship, secular and ecclesiastical."

The diversity of governments was not well organized as a group in suppressing thought and its expression in various forms, including publications, but there was not freedom of speech in any country, even Europe's two freest societies, the Dutch Republic and England. Religious belief was a matter of law. [READ PART OF SECOND PARAGRAPH on page 97 after noting some easing in Britain.]

There were book burnings in France, and regulations of imports of books on a forbidden list. Central Europe had been rife with suppression of beliefs deviating from the prevailing confessional stance; it shifted to"…becoming the suppression of Naturalism, fatalism, materialism, along with works shameful to 'good morals.'"   [p. 104]

One way of distinguishing between Radical and Moderate Enlightenment is in a one sentence quote on page 117, "It is thus invariably the case that arguing for full freedom of expression of ideas, access to ideas, and liberty of the press during the Enlightenment is a radical and not a moderate position." (A reference is footnoted, page 81 of Redwood's *Reason, Ridicule, and Religion*.)

Spinoza was the most radical of the Enlightenment philosophers in advocating full freedom of thought. He was accused by many of being an atheist, but arguably he was not -- he simply saw God and nature as one. Other philosophers fostering the Enlightenment, including moderates, such as Hobbes and Locke were in the camp of "…most scholars and academics of the age [that believed]… a providential God appeared indispensable as a binding and unifying force in society and consequently 'atheistic' ideas had to be forcefully suppressed." Thus, full freedom of expression was a radical and not a moderate position.

Further to Spinoza's position that "…the right of the sovereign, in both religious and secular spheres, should be restricted to men's actions, with everyone being allowed to think what he will and say what he thinks." That is from page 117, but quoted from Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*.

Later in the book, in Part IV: The Intellectual Counter-Offensive, in chapter 24, New Theological Strategies, in the last section, From 'Rationalization' to the 'Irrationalization' of Religion the discussion has moved to the 18th century. Israel notes there was a trend toward a "Christian deism."

This is important because of the question of what is censored; and relates to beliefs. And, the beliefs may evolve with culture. So, let's list some beliefs and deal with tolerance and censorship relevant to some combinations.

- Creation is a great place to start. All the Abrahamic based faiths subscribed to the belief that the world was created by God. The great divergence arose from the work of Epicurus, who left little written material, and Lucretius who wrote a great poem or what may be seen as a treatise. It is called *On the Nature of Things* and gives a remarkable explanation of nature built on the idea of atoms, but evolution and not Creation.

  That work was suppressed shortly after it received distribution and the Roman Empire turned to Christianity. It came to light maybe about a thousand years later when a copy was discovered in the library of a monastery. That book was discussed in the interest group led by Naomi Block on Lucretius. It was then followed in the interest group by the Catherine Wilson book, *Epicureanism at the Origins of Modernity*. Many of you were here in Books and Ideas when Woody Dulin presented on the book that told the story of its rediscovery, *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern.*

  Obviously, the ideas had a great impact on modernity. But, it took science to enhance the quality of some of the knowledge contained in the poem by Lucretius which relayed ideas of Epicurus, but had some additions. it also revealed that speculation on some aspects was of such quality as to be disregarded as corresponding to reality, but the work was still astounding.

- A second belief may be viewed as a combination of two beliefs; (1) the immortality of the soul and (2) the existence of a hereafter in the form of heaven and hell. For Christianity, this was a form of justice relating to behavior on earth. The premise is that humans are born with evil inclinations and salvation needs to be sought. The Epicurean philosophy holds that there is no hereafter.

- Related to this is the belief that morality is derived from God, and so the rules to live by are from a transcendental source. The alternative view is that morality is manmade. Justice as an example, according to Lucretius is an agreement among men not to harm each other. (Justice happens to be the key idea in the project that has me involved in all of this.)

- Next belief is in Divine Providence, the idea that God intervenes in the affairs of mankind. The alternative views fall into two categories. The first is that of Spinozism in which God and nature are One. It follows from that, according to Spinoza, that there is not only no intervention, but all is determined by nature it being created as a unity with God. The second category is atheism, no belief in God.

At that time, late 17th century, the conflict might be stated as between theology and reason. Today, the phraseology is more likely to be between science and religion. I will discuss that in the seminar. Now, we need to look at the evolution of the ideas.

However, it is worth noting that the idea of what beliefs are included in the classification of being a Christian deist softened over time as part of the counter-offensive to the ideas of Radical Enlightenment. That is discussed in chapter 24, which it doubtful that we will get to.

Now it is time to move the remaining two chapters in Part I, Chapter 6: Libraries and Enlightenment and Chapter 7: The Learned Journals.

Chapter 6: Libraries and Enlightenment

The libraries contributed significantly to the evolution of the culture of Europe. Three items in terminology are really helpful in understanding the change in culture through libraries in the seven decades ending in 1750. The first is

- *Confessionals.* The word refers to what was identified earlier (in the discussion of Background Shift) at the beginning of the first chapter. It was "*confessional differences,* referring to Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed (Calvinist), and Anglican denominations of Christianity. Thus the phrase refers to different denominations that were in competition, especially during the first half of the 17th century. The second is -
- *Universal Library*. The phrase refers to libraries that had books on a wide array of topics beyond the prevailing theology. That included competing theologies, even beyond that of the competing confessionals, and of course science. The inclusion of science was no small matter because it could be deemed to be in conflict with prevailing faith. Think heliocentric explanations rather than geocentric (Copernicus and Galileo compared to ancient thought). The third is -
- *Networks.* Networks means what you probably think it means, but there is a nascent discipline called *Network Science*. We will discuss it in the seminar next week in the context of the Radical Enlightenment.

    The 'Universal' Library

Chapter 6, Libraries and Enlightenment, opens with a section titled The 'Universal' Library. Here are some key points made in that first section:

- The universal library turned out to be the "workshop of the early Enlightenment both moderate and radical." [p.119] [Read opening sentence, or two, or three.] The previous chapter on culture and censorship noted limitations on publications. But the acquisition of books by a universal library opened the opportunity for access to books that would otherwise be difficult to access. Think Google.
- The cultural transition was the shift from libraries having literature that could deal with the New Philosophy and science in contrast to libraries focused on the prevailing denomination that had a very narrow range of books.
- The increase in the quantity of literature being published after 1670 was so great that by the middle of the next century, say 1750, "the available quantity was beyond the capacity of the multitude of libraries. So, after 1750 the output of books and periodical was so great, it was no

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longer feasible for any but rulers, large institutions, and the wealthiest nobles to seek true comprehensiveness in the ordering of their libraries." [p.120] The period of the universal library lasted about eight decades, from about 1670 ending about 1750.

- The leading advocate of the universal library, Gabriel Naude (1600-1653). He wrote a treatise published mid-century asserting *universality* "rather than theological specificity as the true guiding principle for s library of stature. Moreover, the 'universality' he invokes encompasses not just all religions and philosophies but also science and all knowledge." [p.120] It continues with;

   a. "Authority and tradition need to be balanced against innovation and new research."

   b. "True bibliophiles must acquire the output of all the best modern as well as ancient, authors, invariably selecting the best editions both in the original language and, where appropriate, French or Latin translation to facilitate the perusal of works in less familiar languages, such as Greek and Arabic." [p. 120]

   c. Especially include innovation "for to ignore innovation is to leave our minds weak and enslaved to outmoded notions. In astronomy, he recommends Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo because these are men who had transformed science." [p. 121]

- The result was much larger libraries and Naude urged shelving to be by discipline, "starting with the oldest authorities and commentaries… [thereby]… conveying a coherent sense of the development of each branch of learning.

- It takes a scholar to do the job of librarian and a cataloging to make it accessible.

The chapter continues noting that it took time to evolve from the old pattern. And the bibliographies, as such, became scholarly works. We are taking a little more time with this chapter because along with the next, The Learned Journals, we are talking about the first information revolution not called that, but that is was it was.

The Crisis of the Universities

This chapter [Chapter 6], Libraries and Enlightenment, has five sections. We just finished the first, which is titled "The 'Universal' Library." Turning to that second section, I would really like to discuss it using the lens of the nascent discipline of complexity science. Indeed, my preference would be to deal with the whole chapter, and even the book using that same lens. But, that won't work today because we can't get the depth without the familiarity with the nascent disciplines. But, we can deal with an overview in that context.

So, for this section of the chapter, the discussion of the crisis is in terms of **balance, leverage, innovation (change), discontinuity, and disruption** by relating the content of the section to the terminology. Then, next week, in the Seminar, I will talk about the process. In the following week, we will discuss the balance, leverage, innovation (change), discontinuity, and disruption that America is facing today. Indeed, last month Charlotte Neuhauser made a superb presentation on the disruption of education in America's higher learning arena caused by the internet and its associated innovations in education.

Here is my interpretation of some key points made in second section of chapter 6, The 'Universal' Library:

- The university system, given its narrow focus, was in a reasonable dynamic balance in the ten decades before the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. it was an era focused on confessionalization that dramatically expanded the university system in order to train in the "narrow range of disciplines overwhelmingly dominated by theology and law." [p.128]
- The process was facilitated by the 'bureaucratization of the monarchal State." [p.128] The spread of *the word* was leveraged by the university system in order to respond to the confessional battle. The process required much "larger numbers of young men trained in theology and law…"
- Innovation, or change, the advent of the pursuit of a broader range of knowledge, provided a discontinuity in the structure of prevailing university systems. it was a shift from a narrow curriculum to a broad range of study akin to that requiring the literature of the universal library.
- The disruption was manifested in a shift from rapid growth of universities to a decline. The crisis was a "lack of curricular flexibility and the funds with which to restructure and diversify teaching." It was obvious that the causes included "the paucity of professors and the inadequacy of teaching in older and especially newer fields of study." It was further manifested in a decline in the number of students.

The nature of the situation is reflected in the following quotes from pages 128-129,

> Hence the essence of the deep crisis in Europe's Universities was lack of curricular flexibility and the funds with which to restructure and diversify teaching….[The causes were obvious]…student numbers were falling and would continue to do so because of the paucity of professors and the inadequacy of teaching in older and especially new fields of study. **The problem was** not to grasp what was undermining Europe's universities but **to find the resources with which to transform them into larger, more diversified, and better funded institutions reflecting the changing requirements and expanding horizons of early Enlightenment society**. [Emphasis added.]

This was a transition that in our lens of complexity science may be called a discontinuity. It is akin to what we need to do in America today, and that is what I really want to share with you, so I am going to quickly wind up the Part I of the book, Radical Enlightenment and return to the topic of the transition.

The three remaining sections of chapter 6, shed more light, but the most important beam remaining in the chapter has to do with lexicons and dictionaries. These were necessary not only to explain the words used from diverse languages, but the ideas typically related by the jargon on the disciplines involved. The market bloomed.

The last chapter in Part I is titled Learned Journals. It discusses the changing culture and the vehicles of dissemination of newly created knowledge as well as formative ideas. As you might guess, the radicals were not especially welcomed in the journals, but some of their ideas crept in. And, the ideas spread. It wasn't anything like the reception to Tom Paine's *Common Sense* a century later, but there was

progress, as we will discuss that in two weeks when be resume to discuss the third book of the trilogy, Democratic Enlightenment.

<u>The Societal Transition through Knowledge and Education</u>

Now we are winding up the first part of the book with a really brief summary of the Radical Enlightenment ideas impacting societal change through the transformation of ideas into knowledge and the use of knowledge for education; the points are deceptively simple:

- Ideas are conceptions that perceive what might be, or what is. They can be grounded in fantasy or reality, but they can be powerful. When pursued they can lead to knowledge, but the knowledge may be low in quality, or high in quality.
- The quality of knowledge may be in different forms;
  1. It could correspond to reality which is what is usually thought of as the product of science.
  2. It could be beliefs based on faith, that may or may or correspond to reality, but which provides a guide to action, such as with religion or with manmade morality.
- The ideas of the radicals in the emergence of the Enlightenment challenged the beliefs of the church and the authority of the political structure of the leading countries of Western Europe.
- The power was being threatened, not by the force of arms, by the force of ideas, and the ideas were being transformed into knowledge.
- The networks of universities, literature, and education in a variety of forms were undergoing transition.

That may all be better understood using disciplines, some of which are only about half a century old, but we are not going farther with that today. It is only important to understand that our current Information Revolution and Globalization is providing the next transition. The first transition led to American democracy that has the source of authority with the people, not a hierarchical structure of royalty and church. At that time, during the American Revolution, Thomas Paine wrote that "The cause of America is, in great measure, the cause of all mankind." That may still be true today.

We don't know where the second is going, but maybe somewhere in the direction of a dystopia or a utopia. That is discussed in other parts of the four sessions; two in Books and Ideas, and two in the Seminar in Strategic Decisions - where in recent years has focused on applications of nascent disciplines, especially those dealing with complex adaptive systems.

Now, we will try to cover a few of the remaining 31 chapters.

> As noted elsewhere in this trilogy, the educational innovation is designed to use technology in order to enable motivated learners to grasp a line of reasoning as readily as possible; however, facilitating delving deeper in order to meet the standards of critical thinking. It is about the power of ideas but understanding that ideas are built upon knowledge, and the quality of knowledge varies widely.
> This appendix serves as an introduction to really delving deeper. Reading these notes is simply an introduction to an approach best pursued with an attempt to grasp reality that is best

explained by blending of disciplines, especially with mentors specialized in a diversity of disciplines.

The trilogy is designed to lead to a Declaration of Reform by thought leaders who can blend the disciplines and provide interdisciplinary explanations of ideas with a presentation of knowledge that would facilitate motivated learners delving deep enough to grasp reality. The idea is to leverage the knowledge through networks, but to deal with critical thinking rather than the simplistic perceptions of one or two characteristics without a grasp of the process best understood using a lens of complexity.