

# Chapter 17: The Age of Enlightenment

## 18<sup>th</sup> Century Thought



# The Ideas of **Isaac Newton**

- His law of universal gravitation showed the power of the human mind
- Encouraged natural philosophers to approach nature directly
- Insisted upon empirical rationalization to check rational explanation

# The Ideas of **John Locke**

- Argued all humans entered the world on a blank page
- Argued experience shapes character
- Rejected the Christian notion that sin permanently flawed humans
- Humans can take charge of their own destiny

# The Example of British Toleration and Political Stability

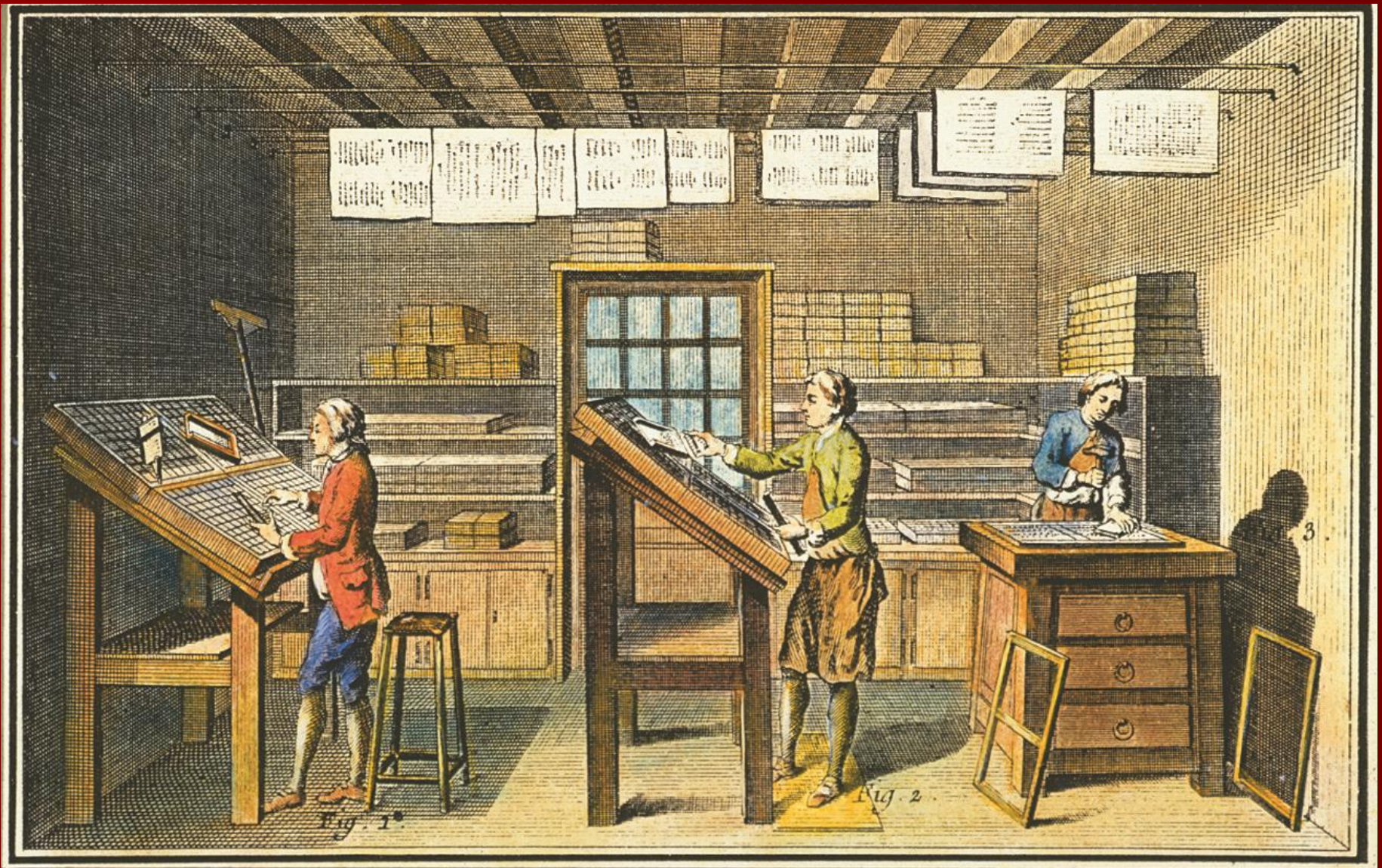
- Religious toleration except for Unitarians and Roman Catholics
- Freedom of speech and press
- Limited monarchy
- Courts protect citizens from arbitrary government action



# Print Culture

- The volume of printed materials increased; books, journals, magazines, daily newspapers
- Religious versus secular – increased number of books that were not religious led to criticism
- People of Print
  - **Joseph Addison** and **Richard Steele** - published books on politeness and the value of books
  - **Alexander Pope** and **Voltaire** – become wealthy and famous from their writings
- **Public opinion** – the collective effect on political and social life of views discussed in the home, workplace and places of leisure
  - Government had to answer to the people
  - Central European governments in fear censored books, confiscated offending titles and imprisoned authors





Printing shops were the productive centers for the book trade and newspaper publishing that spread the ideas of the Enlightenment.



# The **Philosophers**

- People who favored change, championed reform, and advocated toleration
- Could be found at universities and coffee houses
- Were usually for; expansion of trade, improvement of agriculture and transportation, invention of new manufacturing industries

# Voltaire

- Why did Voltaire admire the English so much?
- What was his view on Frederick the Great?
- What were his ideas on religious toleration?
- What were his views on government?



**Voltaire at 24, by  
Catherine Lusurier**



# Voltaire – the first philosopher



- Imprisoned at the Bastille for offending the French
- Went into exile in England
- Published works
  - 1733 – **Letters on the English**
    - praised the British for their freedoms especially of religion and criticized the French
  - 1738 – **Elements of the Philosophy of Newton** – popularized the theories of Newton after his death
  - 1759 – **Candide** – satire attacking war, religious persecution and unwarranted optimism about the human condition

# The Enlightenment and Religion

- The Enlightenment challenged the church and its concepts of “original sin”.
- The church was not just challenged for its thoughts, but for its practices
  - Not paying taxes
  - Being rulers and religious leaders
  - Literary censorship

# Deism – religion and reason combined

- **What new views of God emerged during the Enlightenment?**
- **John Toland** - *Christianity Not Mysteriorous* (1696) – promoted religion as natural and rational, rather than supernatural and mystical
- Deism – tolerant, reasonable, capable of encouraging virtuous living

# Religious Toleration Literary Works

- **John Locke** – *Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689) – set forth toleration as prime requisite for a virtuous life
- **Voltaire** – *Treatise on Tolerance* (1763) – wanted answers to why the Roman Catholic Church executed Huguenot **Jean Calas**
- **Gothold Lessing** – *Nathan the Wise* (1779) – called for religious tolerance of all religions not just Christianity



# Radical Enlightenment Texts

- **David Hume** – *Inquiry Into Human Nature* (1748) – no empirical evidence that miracles exist
- **Voltaire** – *Philosophical Dictionary* (1764) – using humor, pointed out inconsistencies in the Bible and the immoral acts of Biblical heroes
- **Edward Gibbon** – *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776) – explains the rise of Christianity through natural causes
- **Immanuel Kant** – *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793) – religion as a humane force through which there can be virtuous living.

# The Enlightenment and Judaism



- Jewish Thinkers
  - **Baruch Spinoza** – *Ethics* – closely identified God with nature and the spiritual to the material world
- was deeply influenced by the new science of the mid-seventeenth century. In his writings, Spinoza argued for rationality over traditional spiritual beliefs
  - *Theologico-Political Treatise* (1670) – called on both Jews and Christians to use reason in religious matters
  - Excommunicated from his synagogue for his beliefs

# The Enlightenment and Judaism

- **Moses Mendelsohn** – argued differently from Spinoza that you could combine loyalty to Judaism with rational thought
  - *Jerusalem* (1783) – argued for religious toleration and the religious distinction of Jewish communities



# Islam in Enlightenment Thought

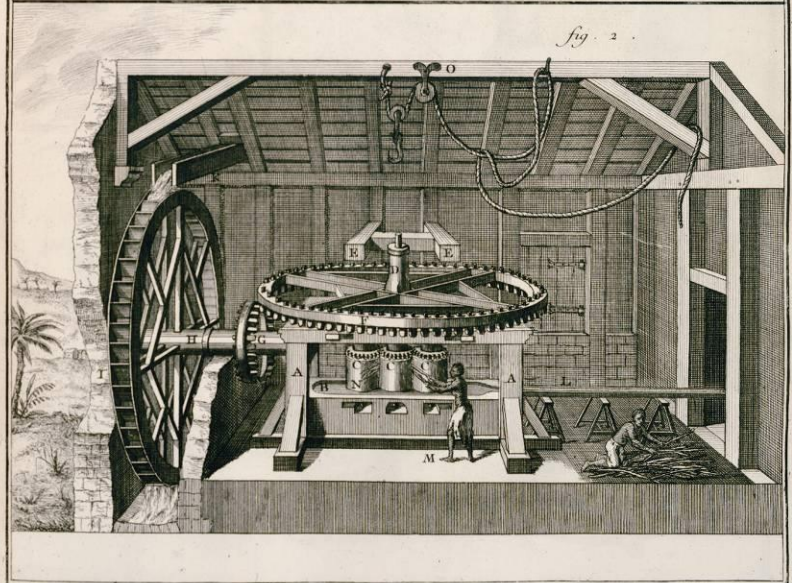
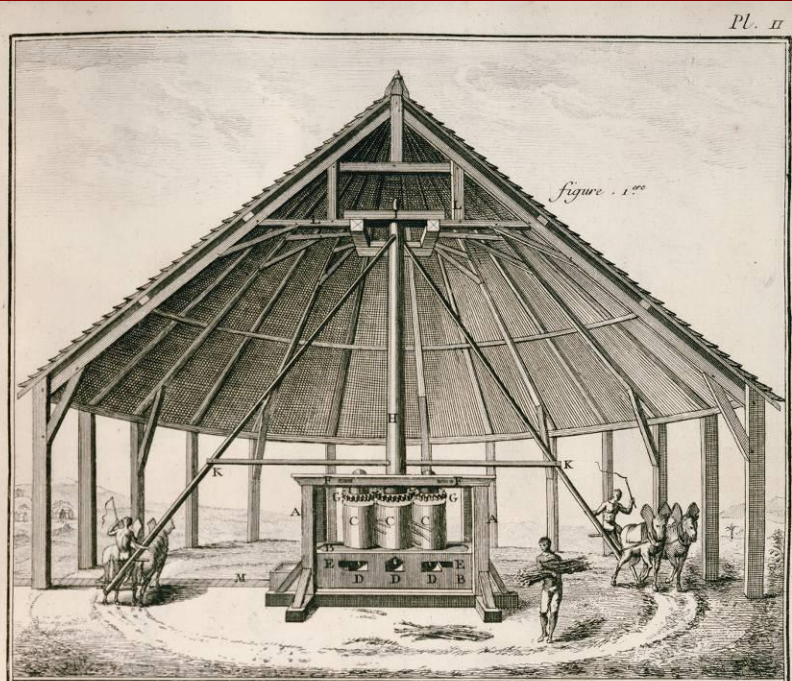
- Christians viewed Islam as a false religion and its founder **Muhammad** as an imposter
- Philosophers Negative on Islam
  - **Voltaire's** *Fanaticism* (1742) – cited Islam as one more example of religious fanaticism
  - **Charles de Montesquieu** – *Spirit of the Law* (1748) – stated Islam's passivity made it subject to political despotism
- Philosophers Positive on Islam
  - Deists **Toland** and **Gibbon** viewed Islam in a positive light
  - **Lady Mary Wortley Montagu** – *Turkish Embassy Letters* (1716-1718) – praised Ottoman society / felt women were freer



# The *Encyclopedia*



- Edited by **Denis Diderot** and **Jean Le Rond d'Alembert**
- Collective work of more than one hundred authors
- Had important information about 18<sup>th</sup> century social and economic life
- Between 14,000 and 16,000 copies sold before 1789
- Aimed to secularize learning



*OEconomie Rustique,  
Sucrière.*

Denis Diderot in the Encyclopedia included illustrations of machinery and working people from across the globe. Diderot was also deeply hostile to slavery. This engraving illustrated a sugar mill and sugar boiling house run with slave labor in the New World. The sugar produced in such mills was used in the European coffee houses where the ideas of the philosophes were often discussed.

University of Virginia Library

# Becarria and Reform of Criminal Law

- Marquis Cesare Becarria wrote *On Crimes and Punishment* (1764)
  - Spoke out against torture and capital punishment
  - Wanted speedy trials
  - Purpose of punishment should be to deter further crimes
- Purpose of laws is to guarantee happiness for as many human beings as possible



# The Physiocrats and Economic Freedom



- Who were the Physiocrats?
- Physiocrats were economic reformers in France-opposed mercantilism
- Leaders were **Francois Quesnay** and **Pierre Dupont de Nemours**
- group of economists who believed that the wealth of nations was derived solely from the value of land agriculture or land development
- Believed primary role of government was to protect property and to permit its owners to use it freely





# Adam Smith

- What economic ideas were introduced by Adam Smith?
- Wrote *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776)
  - Most famous work of the Enlightenment
  - Argued best way to economic growth is for people to pursue their own selfish self-interests
- Founder of **laissez-faire** economic thought – a limited role of the government in the economy
- **Four-stage theory** – human societies classified as the following
  - hunting and gathering
  - pastoral or herding
  - agricultural
  - commercial – society at its highest level

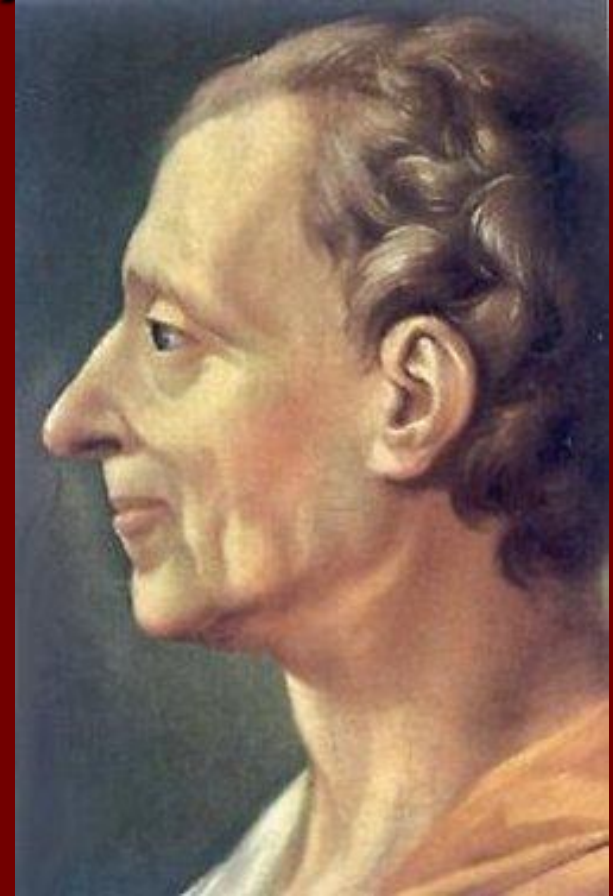


# Political Thought of the Philosophers

- Most thought came from France
- Proposed solutions included; aristocratic reform, democracy, absolute monarchy

# Montesquieu and *Spirit of Laws* (1748)

- Concluded that no single set of political laws could apply to all people, at all times, in all places
- Best government for a country depended on country's size, population, social and religious customs, economic structure, traditions and climate
- Believed in separation of powers so one part of the government would not be completely in control.



# Jean Jacques Rousseau: A Radical Critique of Modern Society

- Among the philosophes of the Enlightenment Jean Jacques Rousseau set forth the most democratic and egalitarian political ideas.
- His written works
  - *Discourse on the Moral Effects of the Arts and Sciences* (1750) – contended that the process of civilization and the Enlightenment had corrupted human nature
  - *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1755) – blamed much of the evil in the world on the uneven distribution of property
  - **The Social Contract** (1762) – society is more important than its individual members and each person can maintain individual freedom while being a loyal member of a larger community
- His philosophies later influence the French and American Revolution.

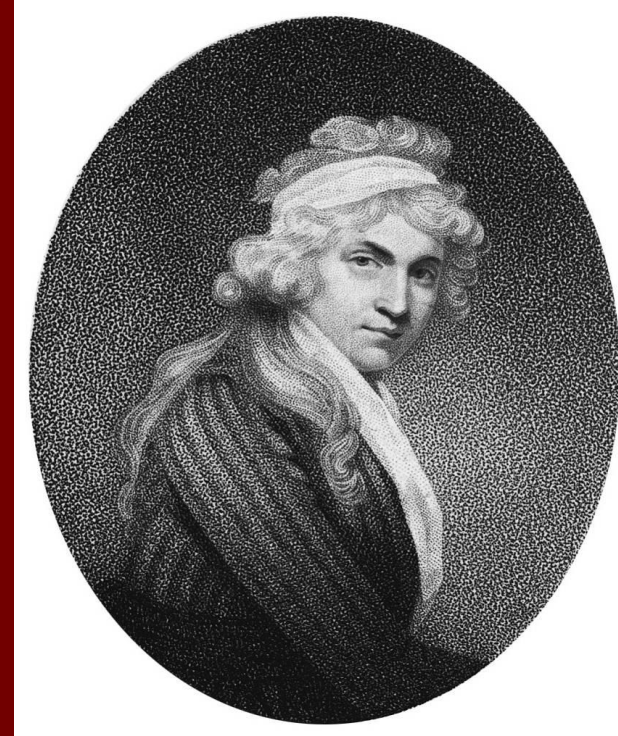




# Enlightened Critics or European Empires

- A few philosophers of the Enlightenment criticized the Europeans on moral grounds
  - Conquest of the Americas
  - Treatment of the Native Americans
  - Enslavement of Africans
- Three Ideas from the Critics
  - (1) “human beings deserve some modicum of moral and political respect simply because they are human beings”
  - (2) different cultures should have been respected and understood, not destroyed
  - (3) human beings may develop distinct cultures possessing intrinsic values that cannot be compared because each culture possesses deep inner social and linguistic complexities that make any simple comparison impossible

# Women in the Thought and Practice of the Enlightenment



- **Montesquieu** believed in equality of the sexes but had a traditional view of family and marriage
- The *Encyclopedia* suggested ways to improve women's lives, but did not suggest reform
- **Rousseau** – felt women should be subordinate to men
- **Mary Wollstonecraft** – *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) – defended equality of women with men based on human reason

# Rococo and Neoclassical Styles in Eighteenth-Century Art

- **Rococo** style of art embraced lavish decoration with pastel colors
  - became style of French aristocracy
  - famous artists included **Jean-Antoine Watteau**, **Francois Boucher**, and **Jean-Honore Fragonard**
- **Neo-classical** style art went back to the ancient world
  - concerned with public life more than the intimate families of rococo
  - famous artists included **Jacques-Louis David** and **Jean Antoine Houdon**

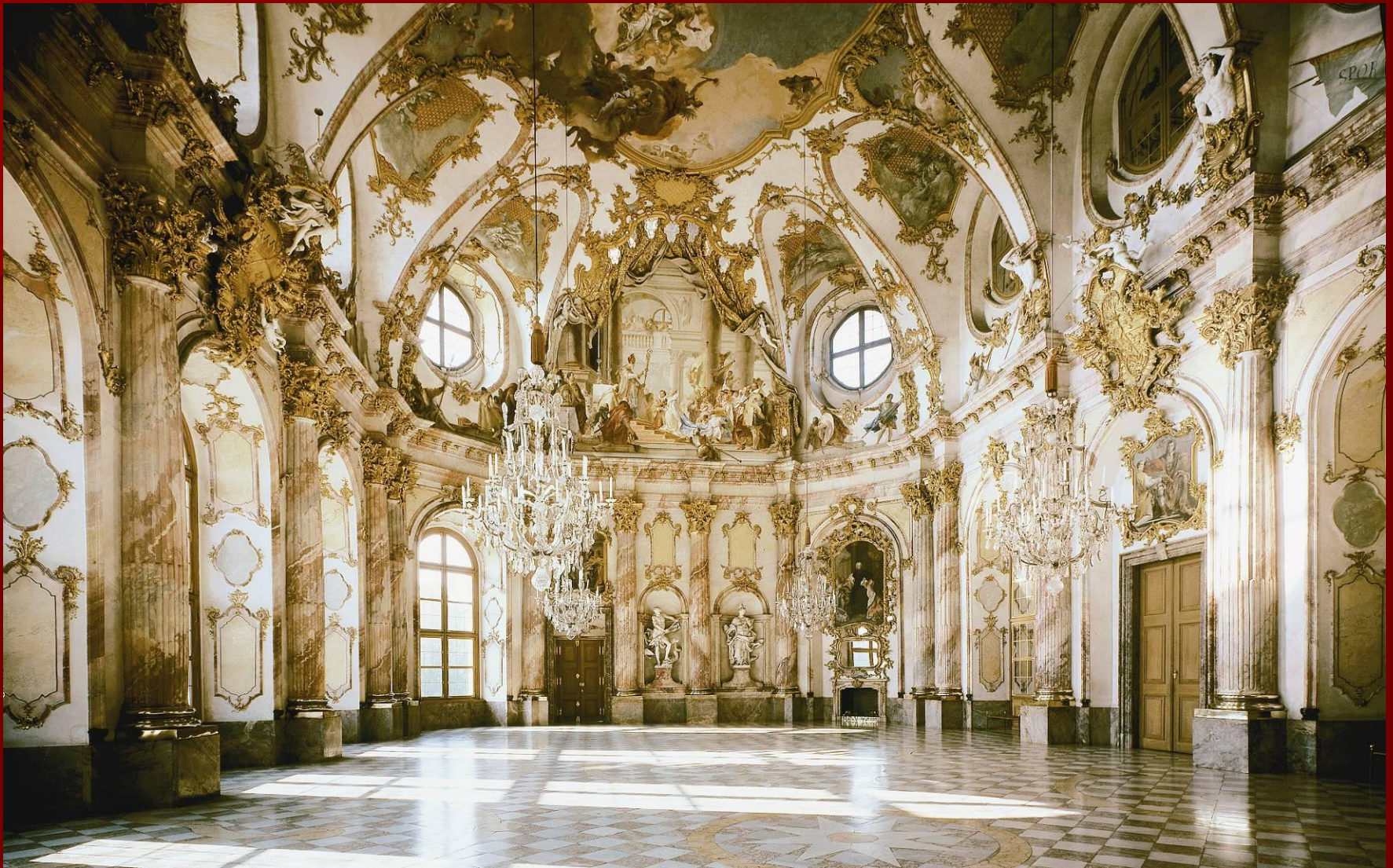




Antoine Watteau, "Embarkation for Cythera," (1717).

Oil on canvas. 129 x 194 cm. Louvre, Paris, France/Giraudon-Bridgeman Art Library





The color, the light, and the elaborate decorative details associated with rococo style is splendidly exemplified in the Imperial Hall (Kaisarsaal) built in Würzburg, Bavaria according to the design of Balthasar Neumann (1687–1753).





**An Eighteenth-Century Artist Appeals to the Ancient World** Jacques Louis David completed *The Oath of the Horatii* in 1784. Like many of his other works, it used themes from the supposedly morally austere ancient Roman Republic to criticize the political life of his own day. David intended the painting to contrast ancient civic virtue with the luxurious aristocratic culture of contemporary France.



The Pantheon in Paris (construction commencing 1758) embodied the neoclassical style used for a Jesuit Church. After the French Revolution it became a national monument where famous figures of the Enlightenment and Revolution were buried. The bodies of both Voltaire and Rousseau were transferred there during the 1790s.

Jacques Germain Soufflot (1713-1780), Facade of the Pantheon (formerly Church of Ste. Genevieve), 1757. Pantheon, Paris, France.  
© Bridgeman-Giraudon/Art Resource, NY

# Enlightened Absolutism

- defined as the form of monarchical government in which the central absolutist administration was strengthened at cost of the church, parliament, or diets
- Monarchs
  - Frederick II of Prussia
  - Joseph II of Austria
  - Catherine II of Russia



# **Compare & Contrast Joseph II & Catherine II**

## **Joseph II**

- **Son of Maria Theresa**
- **Narrow passionless rationality**
- **Sincerely wished to help his people**
- **Greatest ambition was to increase the Emperor's authority over diverse Habsburg realms**
- **Sought to overcome pluralism**
- **Imposed central authority over social and political life**
- **Reorganized local governments**
- **Toleration for Orthodox Christians, Jews, and Protestants**
- **Built roads, canals, and improved life of peasant farmers**
- **Liberalized landlord's authority over peasants.**
- **FAIL! WHY?**

## **Catherine II**

- **Not legitimate ruler**
- **Scandalous court life**
- **Partition of Poland...poor Poland**
- **Legislative reform**
- **New Law Code**
- **Russia from sea to shinning sea**
- **Peasant at first gained power but by end of reign were no better off.**
- **SUCCESS! WHY?**

# Frederick II 'the Great' of Prussia

- Frederick II of Prussia became known as Frederick the Great after his victories in the Seven Years Wars.
- Promotion through merit – work and
- Education rather than birth would decide ruled Prussia
- Religious Toleration – for every Christian, Muslim or Jew
- Administrative and Economic Reforms – legal reform included abolishing torture and limiting number of capital crimes





# Frederick II 'the Great' of Prussia



*Frederick the Great, King of Prussia 1740-1786.. From Discovery Education. Image. 2005. <http://www.discoveryeeducation.com/> (accessed 25 January 2012).*

As a young man, his affinity for literature and music led his father to torment and reject him, but when Frederick took the throne he proved that these tastes were compatible with strong leadership. Although his intellectual bent caused him to question his role, he never failed to forcefully exercise his power. In fact, Frederick became an apologist for absolutism and the authority of the state, and worked at further cementing the idea of complete loyalty to the state. From the beginning of his reign until 1779 he fought a series of wars with Austria that raised Prussia to a position of influence both in Europe and in Germany. His key conquest came early with the unprovoked seizure of Silesia from Austria in 1740. Frederick spent the rest of his years trying to consolidate and defend this acquisition.

# Voltaire & Frederick the Great





# Joseph II of Austria



- Son of Empress Maria Theresa & Francis I
- Centralization of Authority – aimed to extend the empire at the expense of Poland, Bavaria, and the Ottoman Empire
- Ecclesiastical Policies – religious toleration and bringing the Roman Catholic Church under royal control
- Well meaning but a failure
- Battle of Karansebes: army ran away from an IMAGINARY Ottoman army!
- nobility throughout the empire hated him: his taxes, his egalitarianism, his despotism and his puritanism.
- Ordinary people also hated him: *"All classes, and even those who have the greatest respect for the sovereign, are discontented and indignant."*
- Economic and Agrarian Reform
  - improved transportation and trade
  - abolished serfdom
  - land taxation

# Catherine the Great of Russia

- Catherine the Great ascended to the Russian throne after the murder of her husband.
- She tried initially to enact major reforms, but she never intended to abandon absolutism.
- She assured nobles of their rights and by the end of her reign had imposed press censorship.
- limited administrative reform – local control of the nobility
- economic growth – opened up trade and favored the expansion of the urban middle class
- territorial expansion – to warm weather ports along the Baltic and Black Seas







**Map 17-1 EXPANSION OF RUSSIA, 1689-1796** The overriding territorial aim of the two most powerful Russian monarchs of the 18th century, Peter the Great (in the first quarter of the century) and Catherine the Great (in the last half of the century) was to secure navigable outlets to the sea in both the north and the south for Russia's vast empire; hence Peter's push to the Baltic Sea and Catherine's to the Black Sea. Russia also expanded into Central Asia and Siberia during this time period.



# The Partition of Poland-1795



The callous eradication of Poland from the map displayed 18th-century power politics at its most extreme. Poland, without a strong central government, fell victim to the strong absolute monarchies of central and eastern Europe.

- land split by Russia, Austria, and Prussia
- proved that without a strong bureaucracy, monarchy and army, a nation could not survive

# The End of the Eighteenth Century in Central and Eastern Europe

- nations became more conservative and politically more repressive
- fading monarchs
  - **Frederick the Great of Prussia** – grew remote with age and left the aristocracy to fill government posts
  - **Joseph II of Austria** – in response to criticism turns to censorship and the secret police
  - **Catherine the Great of Russia** – peasant uprisings lead to fears of social and political upheaval



The salon of Madame Marie Thérèse Geoffrin (1699–1777) was one of the most important Parisian gathering spots for Enlightenment writers during the middle of the eighteenth century. Well-connected women such as Madame Geoffrin were instrumental in helping the philosophes they patronized to bring their ideas to the attention of influential people in French society and politics.

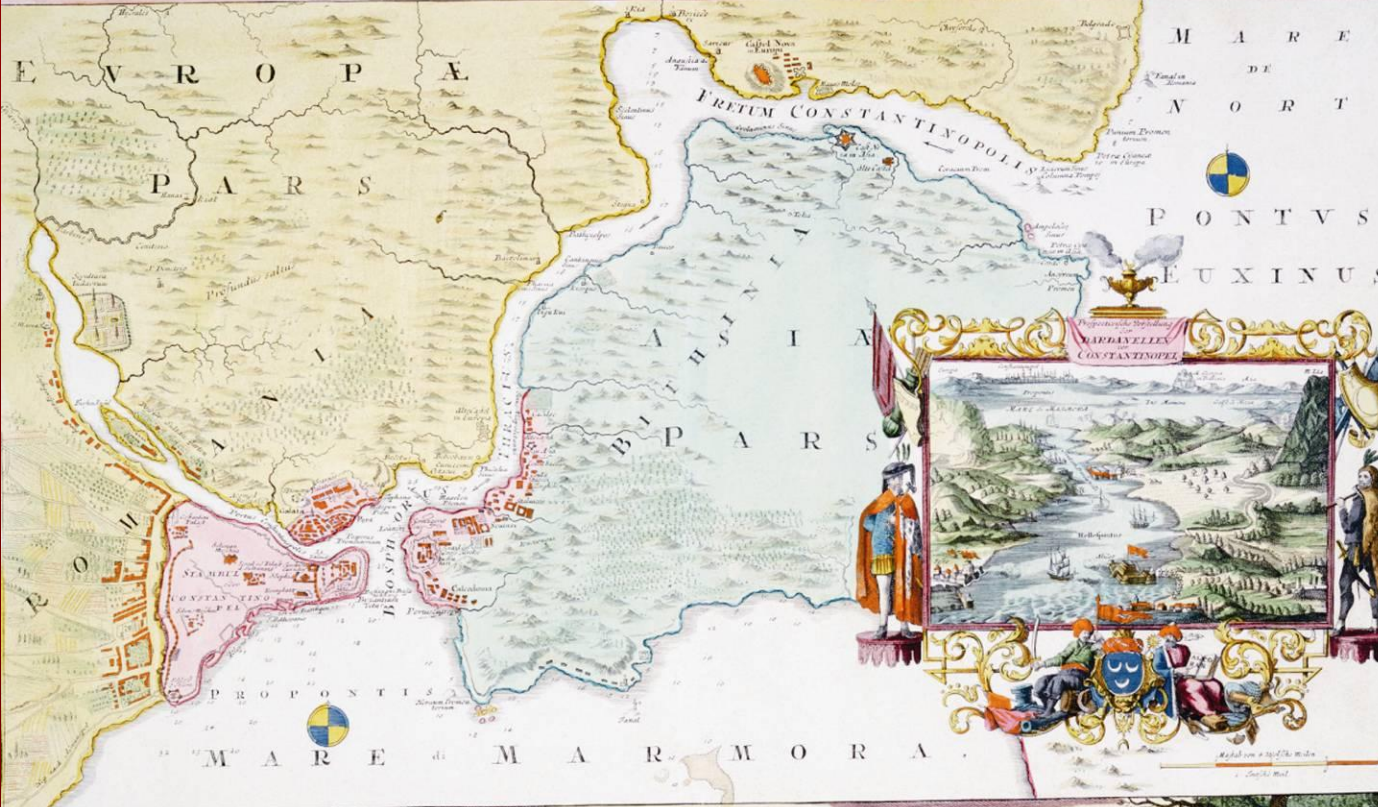




Business, science, religion, and politics were discussed in London coffeehouses such as this.



Accurate Vorstellung der Orientalisch Kayserlichen Haupt und Residenz-Stadt **CONSTANTINOPEL** samt ihrer Gegend und zweyen berühmten Meer-Engen Bosphoro Thracio und Hellesponto oder dem flets 2er Dardanellen herausgegeben von **JOHANN BAPTIST HOMANN** Des **ROCK KAYS KULLES** geographie in **NEURBERG**



Few Europeans visited the Ottoman Empire. What little they knew about it came from reports of travelers and from illustrations such as this view of Constantinople, the empire's capital.

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