**Unit 1: The Age of Revolution**

***The Enlightenment***

\***The Enlightenment**, also known as the **Age of Reason**, is one of the most important movements in human history

It is usually defined in the following terms:

*The Enlightenment* – was an intellectual movement of the 18th century that focused on making society better (progress) through the use of reason and the application of natural laws.

* it took place throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries
* happened throughout Western and Central Europe; spread to North American colonies
* was centered in **Paris**

Historians tend to think of the Enlightenment as key in **two important historical processes:**

1. It was the **culmination** of a historical process that had begun with the Renaissance in which individualism and creative/intellectual genius began to be celebrated and touted.

2. It marks the beginning/birth of the modern era of historical thought in which **classical liberalism in economics, politics, and society** begin to be championed throughout many parts of the Western world.

1. Culmination of Historical Process – Renaissance to Enlightenment

***The Middle Ages***

* began with the fall of the Roman Empire in the West
* was marked, especially during its Dark Age, by low culture and advancement
* for many, was a brutal period in history
* peasants lived and worked in miserable conditions
* society was controlled by feudal lords and the Roman Catholic Church

\*The Roman Catholic Church held power in many ways, two, however, stand out

1. The *Vulgate* – Latin only Bible; peasants couldn’t read it

- Bible was not allowed to be translated

- allowed for a few to control the views of many

2. Salvation and the Sacraments

- peasants **feared the concept of Hell**

- to reach **Heaven** they had to have faith, good works, and take part

in the *Seven Sacraments* (Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation,

Confirmation, Marriage, Holy Orders, Anointing of the Sick)

* the Roman Catholic Church would punish those who did not agree with it by excommunicating them (did not allow them to receive mass and/or the seven sacraments)
* These individuals would not be allowed proper burial if they died, and thus, lose salvation (entrance into Heaven)
* Society tended to stay in line. Individualism was truly not celebrated as it would be with the birth of the Renaissance (exps: painters didn’t sign art, individuals didn’t dress in bright clothing, etc..)

***Late 13th-14th Century***

Extension of Trade between Europe and the East (Silk Road and the Middle East)

1. Spread of Ideas between East and West (cultural diffusion)

2. Wealth, especially in Italy among the trading/banking families

- new found wealth meant looking for new investments

- art and architecture became new forms of investments

***The Renaissance and Reformation***

* 14th-16th centuries
* the beginning of the Renaissance, or rebirth, is directly linked to the rise of trade and wealth during the late 13th and early 14th centuries
* as a movement, the Renaissance was focused on the rebirth of Classical (Greek/Roman) ideas of and the principles of early Christianity
* As investment in art took hold, it promoted greater **competition** among the creative minds and stimulate intellectual growth

***Virtu*** – Renaissance concept that means “to strive for excellence”

* ***Individualism***, driven by the concept of *virtu*, now became the driving force behind the historical narrative

-over a period of 300 years, the level of intellectual/creative work increased in quantity and well as quality

* at the same time, the **Reformation** helped weaken the power and prestige of the Roman Catholic Church
* the Renaissance also stimulated a growing interest in the natural world and mathematics. Over time this interest would grow and develop into the Scientific Revolution.

***The Scientific Revolution***

-16th-17th centuries

-movement which grew out of the curiosity and individualism of the Renaissance

- focused on the natural world and mathematics

- everything had to be tested and quantified (proved mathematically)

- it also provided the **Scientific Method** for validity and reliability

* Scientists and mathematicians were able to expand their perimeters and explore in greater depth (exp: dissection) because of the weakening power of the Catholic Church.

-It was also a period that influenced how the future would look at learning

-**Two Theories of Cognition (thinking)** came to the forefront:

1. **Rene Descartes’** - ***“cogito ergo sum” (I think, therefore I am)***

-used geometric proof to try and prove the existence of God

- came to the conclusion that are minds have **Innate Ideas**

2. **John Locke - *Tabula rasa (Blank Slate)***

- came from his famous *Essay on Human Understanding*

- proposed that our mind was empty therefore it was shaped not by

innate ideas but shaped by our **Environment**

-Enlightenment philosophes’ would key in on Locke’s idea and use it in support of their idea that they could use reason to help make society better (progress)

***The Enlightenment***

**Why Paris?**

3 Major Reasons: 1. Large City with a vast amount of resources

2. Large Upper Class and Upper Middle Class (wealth, education)

3. Louis XV was weakened by war and economic debt

**Spread of Enlightenment Ideas:**

1. Salons – private meetings of scientists, upper class, some clergy, and philosophes

- usually hosted by progressive families or rich widows

- most famous salons were hosted by Madame Geoffrin (*Grandmother of the*

*Enlightenment*) and Madame d’Holbach

- each salon had it own rules depending on the host (Geofrrin – be polite, no talk

of atheism)

-socializing would first take place, then men would read/present papers or essays

on a wealth of topics; debate would then take place over the topic

- In England these meetings took place in Coffee Shops and Tea Houses

2. *The Encyclopedie’*

– **the greatest work of the Enlightenment**

* 32 Volumes ranging over 70,000 different topics
* about 70% of material was directly related to science and math, 30% to

philosophical matters

* was illegal to own; black market for it developed
* was in demand inside and outside of France

Denis Diderot – chief Editor of the *Encyclopedie’*

\*Kant - *What is Enlightenment?*

***“Enlightenment is when Man breaks away from his self-imposed laziness…for this to occur, however, society must be free (by law) to engage in this discussion and spread of ideas”***

**Enlightened Absolutism**

- by the second half of the 18th century some monarchs recognized that the Enlightenment could be applied in their lands to make them stronger

-limited freedom of speech, religious tolerance, abolition of torture/death penalty, codification of laws, introduction of schools, and in limited cases the abolishment of serfdom (Austria-Joseph II) were examples of steps taken by Enlightened Despots

**\*The one thing Enlightened Despots never did, however, was to limit their own power. None ever granted the construction of a Constitutional Monarchy**

3 Major Enlightened Despots of the 18th Century:

1. Catherine II “the Great” of Russia

2. Frederick II “the Great” of Prussia

3. Joseph II of Austria

**Enlightenment Philosophes’ and their Ideas**

-Enlightened Philosophes wrote on a large spectrum of topics

-Politics, Religion, Society, the Nature of Justice, were just a few of the major topics that were debated throughout the salons of Paris

-many of the philosophes came from the upper reaches of society; however, there were exceptions (exp: Rousseau)

**Major Ideas or Concepts:**

**Diesm** – comes from the Latin term “Deus” (God)

* belief that God was not a religious God, but instead was a natural force or creator
* deist believe that God acted as a “clockmaker” who created the universe (wound it up) and then let it go to be ruled by its natural laws
* deist rejected all miracles and supernatural aspects of religion
* stressed the morality based on ethical considerations
* this concept comes directly from the Enlightenment belief in the powers and certainty of science and math
* possibly influenced by the corruptness of the Roman Catholic Church over the decades

**Equality**

* though many of the philosophes were progressive, most did not believe in equality as we define it today
* women were not seen to be equal and many philosophes did not trumpet their cause
* the status quo remind in terms of social structure and non-Europeans
* there were some however that were ahead of their time

Mary Wollstonecraft – wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792)*

* her response to the French philosophes’ view on equality
* she argued that women should have the right to education
* if given the right to education then they could participate in the public sphere as an instrumental and equal part
* they could also use this education to help bring up the children of the country in a more progressive and enlightened state
* she is seen as one of the first feminist of the modern era

**Political Philosophy**

\*Most philosophes believed in the concept of Natural Rights (those rights inherent at birth). They also had a distrust of the populous and the concept of democracy.

Social Contract Theory

Thomas Hobbes - wrote *Leviathan*

* believed that life was “nasty, brutish, and short” and that we do what’s best for our own good
* due to this fact, we need to be ruled by a absolute monarch
* the absolute monarch does not derive his power from God (divine right) however
* instead, the absolute monarch derives his power from the people (creation of social contract)

*Social Contract* – we (people of a given society) give up some of our natural rights in order to live under a government that provides order and structure

John Locke - wrote the *Two (Second) Treatise on Government*

* subscribed to the social contract
* believed in constitutional monarchy or a limited form of republicanism
* difference from Hobbes was that he believed the job of government was preservation of natural rights (*life, liberty, and property*) not just order and structure
* Locke also believed that the members of society had the right to overthrow/remove a leader if he was not protecting the natural rights (*life, liberty, and property)* of its people

\**The American Declaration of Independence* is one of the best examples of a people stating their grievances against a government that has not preserved the natural rights of the people it ruled, thus declaring their intent to remove that leader.

*“When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.*

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness….”*

Jean-Jacques Rousseau – wrote *The Social Contract*

* one of the most liberal philosophes of the Enlightenment; from Switzerland, poor
* moved to Paris, became a fixture at the Salons
* believed as Locke did that government should protect the natural rights of individuals, he broke with the rest of the Enlightenment establishment, however, over the trust he placed on the people and the form of government which was best

General Will – concept that states the populous can best make political choices for itself

- though it doesn’t mean democracy will be chosen, it lends itself to this form of gov’t.

Political Structure

Baron de Montesquieu – wrote *The Spirit of the Laws*

-from France, but had visited Great Britain

-believed that there should exist in government a **Separation of Powers** and **Checks and Balances** so that no one person or branch would become too powerful

3 Branches : Legislative, Executive, and Judicial

\*The United States Constitution is based off of this principal