

Chapter Two The Age of Absolutism 1600-1715

Revolutions in Thought

The Trial of Galileo

- He was suspected of heresy
- Cardinals of the Roman Catholic were his judges
- Ordered to renounce that “the Sun is the center of the universe and immovable, and that the Earth is not the center of the same...”
- Earlier the Church declared that the idea of a heliocentric universe was absurd
 - Pope Paul the fifth ordered Galileo not to teach or defend his theories
- Galileo published *Dialogue on the Two Chief Systems of the World* which brought him to the Holy Inquisition
- He agreed to recant his views with the threat of being tortured or burned
- Sentenced to house arrest in Florence for the rest of his life
- 1992 – the Catholic Church acknowledged its error; accepted his findings
- Trial showed the growing rifts between authority of the Church and scientific thought

The Scientific Revolution

Astronomy and Physics

- From middle of sixteenth century to beginning of eighteenth century
- Challenged how Europeans saw themselves and the universe
- Central to the revolution was the use of experimentation to develop theories

Nicolaus Copernicus

- One of the first to challenge traditional views of the universe
- Published *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres*
- Put forward the idea of a heliocentric universe
 - Sun-centered universe; planets revolved around the Sun
- His theory suggested that the Earth rotated on its axis every 24 hours and the Moon revolved around Earth
- Based conclusions on philosophical deductions not astronomical observations

Galileo Galilei

- Gathered evidence to support the ideas of Copernicus
- Showed that motions could be described mathematically
- Formulated principal of inertia – bodies once set in motion tend to stay in motion
- Through his telescope he showed that: the Moon was not perfectly smooth and had a ruff surface with craters and mountains; Jupiter had moons; Sun had spots
- His book *Dialogue on the Two Chief Systems of the World* supported Copernican view and stated those who opposed it (Jesuits) were simple-minded
 - Brought him up with the conservative forces of Catholic Church

Tycho Brahe

- Rejected Copernicus view of heliocentric universe
- Recorded thousands of observations about planets and starts over 20-year period
- Discovered new star (1572) and new comet (1577) – proved Aristotle’s theory of a fixed universe to wrong

Johannes Kepler

- Contemporary of Galileo and once Brahe's assistant
- Believed Copernicus to be right
- Formulated three universal laws of planetary motion
 - Planets move in elliptical orbits, sun at one focus of the ellipses – disproved Galileo's theory of circular orbits
 - As a planet draws closer to the Sun it moves faster in its orbit – disproved notion that the heavenly motion is steady and unchanging
 - The square of the ratio of the time it takes any two planets to complete orbit equals the cube of the ratio of these planets' average distance from the Sun; the size of a planet's orbit is proportional to the time required for one revolution around the sun

Isaac Newton

- Formulated three laws of motion combining concepts of Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler
 - If no force acts on an object, it will stay still or maintain constant motion in a straight line
 - Every change of motion of acceleration is proportional to the force that caused the change and inversely proportional to the object's mass
 - For every action force, there is an equal reaction force in the opposite direction

A Revolution in Anatomy

William Harvey

- Not satisfied with divine power as explanation for the workings of the heart
- Published *On the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals*
- Described heart as a pump – not filtration plant
- Discovered in a single hour the heart pumps out more than a person's mass in blood; thus blood must circulate in the veins

Scientific Method and the Birth of Modern Philosophy

Scientific Method

- The scientific revolution was a new approach to discover the truth
- For centuries the truth was arrived at by relying on long trusted authorities (the Bible) or classical scholars
- Revelation in science arrived at through skepticism, experimentation, reasoning...

Francis Bacon

- Stressed importance of direct observation in finding the truth
- Published *Novum Organum* – attempt at replacing Aristotle's *Organum*
- Believed knowledge is the basis of power, and allows human control of nature

Rene Descartes

- Didn't believe we can rely solely on our senses for search of truth –senses can be tricked
- We can only be certain of one thing; that we exist – “I think, therefore I am”
- All other truths are based on mental perception
- The mind is essential, what we experience is secondary
- How we interpret our experiences is what determines our truths

Questioning Political Legitimacy; Hobbes versus Locke

- Reformation openly challenged authority of papacy and Roman Catholic Church
- Scientific Revolution challenged long-held theories about universe, ourselves, and the basis of all knowledge
- During 17th century political philosophy began to tackle question of who had the right to govern, and on what basis

Thomas Hobbes

- Political philosophy shaped by chaos after execution of King Charles the first
- Wrote *Leviathan* – explains beliefs for justification for any government
- Begun arguments on government with imagined “state of nature”
 - Refers to history prior to societies, organization, governments, or laws
- In the state of nature people were free, there were no restrictions, everyone must fend for themselves
- Believed that humans were selfish and aggressive by nature, and if left to own resources they would be in a constant state of conflict and chaos
- Life in the state of nature was “short, nasty, and brutish”
- Thus a state of peace is one in which there is law, people must agree to submit to the sovereign and their laws in return for peace
- Canada adopted similar theories

John Locke

- Used the idea of a “state of nature” for beginning of political philosophy
- Though over time, people willingly began to join together in societies to benefit from cooperation
- This cooperation led to the development of rules and laws to govern people's actions and governments to create the laws
- People would surrender some of their freedoms – known as “social contract”
- Rights not surrendered were: right to life, liberty, and property
- Power remains with the people and the government acts on their behalf; if not acting on their behalf the people can remove the government
- The United States adopted some theories

The Age of Absolutism

Absolutism Defined

- In absolutist states, monarchs claimed to rule by divine right
- Not limited in actions by parliaments or representative bodies – controlled all competing interest groups and regulated all religious sects
- Success of an absolute monarch was their ability to gain control of the nobility which was the greatest threat to the Crown
- Absolute monarchs created permanent, standing armies recruited, paid, and trained by the state; employed secret police to watch over possibly troublesome people
- Louis the 14th → “The interests of the state come first. When one gives these priority, one labours for one's own good. The advantage to the state redounds to one's glory.”
- Louis the 14th exemplified the absolutist belief that the monarchy personifies the state

Foundations of Absolutism in France

- Louis the 14th didn't create absolutism; he inherited it
- During his fathers reign, Richelieu rose to first minister of the French Crown
 - Influenced the king to promote the French monarchy as the embodiment of the French state
 - Laid the basis for French absolutism and French cultural dominance in Euro
 - Challenged and alienated the nobility
 - Divided country into 32 districts with intendants to ensure royal orders were enforced and the power of regional nobility was weakened
- When Richelieu and the King died – Louis the 14th replaced father, Mazarin replaced Richelieu
- Mazarin tried to deal with financial problems by raising taxes – civil war *Fronde* – continued on and off for about 12 years
 - Convinced Louis the only alternative to chaos/anarchy was absolute power

Louis XIV, The Sun King

- Reigned from 1643 to 1715
- Created most centralized nation-state in Euro; new sense of French nationhood
- “Sun King” because he provided light, warmth, and sustenance; seen as Apollo

Consolidation Power

- Created standing army maintained in peacetime; appointed Tellier secretary of war
- Tellier created first modern army
 - Permanent, professional, commissariat, ambulance corps, uniforms, weapons standard, rational recruitment, training, discipline, promotion
- Day-to-day governing carried out by: Court of State, Court of Finances, Court of Dispatches; Louis met with them at least once a week (very involved)
- Used bribery to guarantee provincial governors sympathetic to him were elected
 - Terms of three years, laws must have his approval
 - Bureaucracy staffed largely by upper middle class; deprived nobility
- Efforts to centralize power under him – challenged authority of Church; power struggle
- Louis produced four articles that stripped papacy of its power in France; annulled
- Louis won control over Catholic Church in France
- 1685 – revoke Edict of Nantes when religious freedom was granted to French Protestants; to unite church and state under one king

Colbert's Economic Reforms

- Colbert appointed controller-general by Louis
 - Government regulated economic activity based on premise that international power is a product of its wealth; believe success depended on self-sufficiency
- Encouraged new domestic industries, discouraged imports
- Created a powerful merchant marine; hundreds of water vessels for trade → resources
- Robert Cavelier de La Salle claimed territory along Mississippi
- Colbert reduced income tax of the rich and increased it for the poor
 - If the rich had more money they would spend more; benefit economy

Palace of Versailles

- Marble, gold, chandeliers, gardens, huge windows, mirrors; new French Provincial style
- One of the most important tools in gaining control of the French nobility

Life at Versailles

- Louis used Versailles to disarm potential threats to the throne
 - Planned events constantly so that the nobility were kept busy
 - Those not at Versailles channeled energy to earning invitation not to overthrow
- Louis surrendered almost all of his privacy to the state; except being seen without a wig – had sebaceous cysts

The Wars of Louis XIV

- Four major wars of aggression during last four decades of his reign; huge desire for land, wealth, glory
- The War of Devolution (1667-1688) – minor gains in attempt to gain Spanish Netherlands
- 1672 – Louis invaded Netherlands; standstill, some territory gained through Peace of Nijmegen
- 1689 – France went to war against the Grand Alliance; few gains
- War of the Spanish Succession; Louis attempted to land claim to Spanish throne; 11 years of war, Grand Alliance defeated French, forced to accept Peace of Utrecht
- Wars left France impoverished, little to show for sacrifices, people wanted to revolt

The Legacy of Louis XIV

- Created grandest court France had ever seen; 73 year reign
- Feudal lords and Catholic Church surrendered a lot of power to king
- France was Europe's leading cultural and military power
- People saw themselves as French, not just from a certain region
- Financing wars and costs of maintaining court at Versailles; high costs
 - Created crisis that the monarchy could not survive

Absolutism in Eastern Europe

Peter the Great

- Either think he was a superhero who transformed Russia into a modern state; some say human costs were too high
- Turned Russia away from feudal past and down the road to westernization
- Able to establish himself as the absolute sovereign of Russia
- Began to reform Russia despite opposition from family, court, and gov't officials
- Chose to fill important posts on merit, not lineage of rank

The Westernization of Russia

- Believed that the key to Russia's development was closer ties with Western Europe
- Sent 250 Russians to visit European countries; learn about manners, skills...
- Travelled abroad as Peter Mikhailov
- Learned a great deal and recruited over 750 to serve in Russia
- Realized value in maintaining ties with Eastern Europe and Asia; encouraged people to learn languages

- Created schools to train specialists; minimum education required to serve in government; education compulsory for the gentry
- Encouraged Western dress, manners, men shave their beards, changed title to emperor

Securing Power

- Faced challenge of raising money to meet his needs; increased taxes 550% in 1724 than in 1680; taxed almost everything
- There was a plan to depose Peter and put his sister on the throne – Peter found out and had over a thousand streltsy tortured and put on display
- Sister and wife forced to become nuns for sympathizing with rebels

The Legacy of Peter the Great

- Peter the Great was involved in every aspect of life; what people wore, read, ate...

England in the Seventeenth Century

The Triumph of the Constitution

- In sharp contrast to absolute monarchy of France, England was governed by a constitutional monarchy; Parliament ruled over the Crown
- 1529 – Henry the eighth forced to appeal to Parliament for divorce making Parliament stronger and setting precedents
- Elizabeth failed to deal with rise of Puritanism – no religious unity; had to ask Parliament for tax increases to finance Britain's war with Spain – reluctant to comply
- Absence of standing army – monarchy dependent on loyalty of militia controlled by the nobility

The Reign of James I

- Inherited financial problems as well as the throne in 1603
- Forced to appeal to Parliament for increase in taxes by millions of pounds; granted only 200 000 pounds; had to find another method
- People had to pay for their children to marry, sold titles, monopolies, forced people to lend money to Crown or face a fine
- Very bright but fascinated by witches, lazy, lavished money on court favourites
 - Title of “the wisest fool in Christendom”
- In constant conflict with Parliament with policies

Charles and the English Civil War

- Stubborn nature, refusal to compromise; earned Parliament's dislike
- Eleven years of tyranny – Parliament refused to increase taxes
- 1629 Charles suspended Parliament – brought England closest to absolutism
 - war in Ireland drained treasury, Charles had to recall Parliament for finance
- Once recalled, Parliamentarians tried to thwart the king's attempts to raise money
 - Two years of conflict – tried to storm Parliament, a lot got away
- The ones who got away gather quick support for civil war between Royalists (supporters of monarchy) and Roundheads (supporters of Parliament)
- Charles was captured by Parliamentarians and refused to compromise
 - Charged him with treason and cut off his head – Jan 30 1649
- Following this, England governed by Parliamentary republic 1649-58 under leadership of Oliver Cromwell
 - Absence of a monarch; England was divided over issues

- After Cromwell's death, there was no ruler → Charles II invited back to the throne
- Ruled effectively despite pro-French and Catholic feelings
- Historical period with the return of the monarch to the throne is known as the Restoration

The Glorious Revolution

- James II came to throne after death of Charles II
- Made known he wanted to restore Roman Catholic faith and revive power of English monarch
 - Some citizens opposed king, English people alienated
- Dutch monarch, William of Orange, asked by parliamentarians to seize throne
- William entered with 15 000 troops, James fled without resistance – Glorious Revolution
- William and Mary governed jointly
- So no attempts would be made to govern without Parliament, English passed Bill of Rights in 1689
 - “That the pretended power of suspending of laws, or the execution of laws, by regal authority, without consent of Parliament, is illegal”

Economic Change in Seventeenth-Century England

- Beginning comprised of series of local economies – independently striving for self-sufficiency
- Stall-holders would sell surpluses made with local materials in small towns
- Projects to improve river navigation; no place more than 120 km from sea or 35 km from river → facilitated trade
- Regions could now produce things that their climatic conditions were good for
- Revolution in retailing; shops like today
 - Stout goes and gets goods from various places and sells them paying for half in advance and half after with large return
- People would now favour market towns with variety, these towns grew and prospered
- Shift in urban economies – people go see shows, dentists, lawyers...
- Regional eco gave way to national eco
- Urban centers reinvented to become centers of retail, service, entertainment

Life in Seventeenth Century England

Social Classes and Cultural Units

- English and all Euro societies had many distinct social classes
 - The aristocracy, the landowning gentry, wealthy merchants/professionals, small property owners, wage-earning peasants, urban wage earners, and the destitute
- Acts acceptable in one class, bad in another; poor – rapid increase in unwed births
- Beliefs in magic and witchcraft deeply embedded in minds of most of the population in England and Euro

Family Life

- Sources of data for historians: diaries, letters, legal papers like wills, birth/death certificates, baptism records, and contracts
 - Newspapers, broadsides, almanacs, popular novels, poems, plays, architectural plans, folk customs and folk tales
- Small mother, father, children family not yet the norm; included all people under roof
- Little policing – family was agent of social control at village level; father kept tight control over young unruly people

Marriage Trends

- Had three purposes; continuity of the male line, preservation of the family property, acquisition of additional property or beneficial alliances
 - To continue male line – as many children as possible for a male to survive
- Henry the eighth dismantled nunneries – non-married women 10% to 25%
- New colonies in Caribbean and Americas opened up new lands for second-sons and daughters

Death: Life's Constant Companion

- Diseases: smallpox, intestinal worms, diarrhea, insufficient milk, lead poisoning for children
- Middle/Upper classes hired wet nurses to breast feed
- Person and public hygiene of little concern; contaminated water and food
- Filth, disease, contamination, food shortages, poor medical practices, and wars made death central to life in 17th century

Western Art in the Seventeenth Century

Patrons and Patronage

- Artistic expressions reflects values, aspirations, thoughts, desires, fears, triumphs...
- Constrained and inspired by demands of their patrons; ignore the wishes of patrons you will be poor because they have money
- Baroque style dominated 17th century; reflected religious fervour; asymmetrical, dynamic showing dramatics and emotion
 - Allegory, naturalism, violent scenes
- Paralleled political developments as focus in Euro politics went from Italian peninsula to France
- Patrons: clergy of Catholic Church, absolute monarchs, wealthy merchants
 - Influenced themes

Gianlorenzo Bernini

- One of the most admired and successful sculptors of baroque era
- Sculptures captured figures in intense action or emotion
 - *David*
 - *The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*
- Louis 14th had him create numerous works for Versailles
- Bernini had so many works on the go that he would design them, have his assistants make them, and he would do the finishing touches

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio

- Known for his art as well as his bad temper which got him in trouble with the law
- Had no preliminary drawings, he painted directly on the canvas
- Introduced type of naturalism or realism not yet seen in Italian painting
- *Medusa* is an example of his realistic style and fascination with violence

Artemisia Gentileschi

- Follower of Caravaggio
- *Judith Slaying Holophernes*; involves shadows, spot lighting, violent, twisting motion
- Shows her Judith's determination to rid the Jews of an oppressor King of Babylon
- One of the first women artists to make mark on history of Western art

Rembrandt van Rijn

- Educated in Calvinist school – stressed study of the bible → upbringing seen in art
 - Some of the most profound Christian images by a Protestant in 17th century
- Moved to Amsterdam so he could get portrait commissions and make living
 - Patronage in Netherlands came from institutions; guilds, wealthy middle class merchants
- *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*; captured expressions, became history painting
- *The Nightwatch*; rejected traditional arrangements for portraits, gave equal prominence to all members of group – turned into moment in history

Baroque Music

Jean-Baptiste Lully

- Inventor of French opera, greatest French composer (Italian by birth)
- Worked for Mlle. Montpensier – danced
- Performed for Louis 14th, was impressed, appointed composer of instrumental music
 - Wrote instrumental music for ballets, gained importance, wrote entire ballets
- Appointed composer of chamber music for king
- Collaborated with playwright Moliere to produce comedic ballets – early form of French opera
- First full opera *Cadmus et Hermione* 1673; composed 13 more operas
- 1681 Lully was able to purchase the office of “secretary to the king” granting him noble rank
- Hurt toe in performance, gangrene set in, became ill, died...

Literature in the Seventeenth Century

John Dryden

- Period of Restoration in England aka Augustan Age
 - Marks return to classicism, called neoclassicism; ordered, rational, simple
 - Seen in arts, architecture, literature...
- Developed lucid clear prose that became model for all writing of the period and beyond
 - Plain and practical, anyone could read it
- Created large body of poetry and prose which had classical themes

Moliere

- Most celebrated and controversial playwrights of 17th century
- Made fun of aristocrats in his plays – became target of threats on his life and person

- Received money from his deceased mothers estate → surrendered his claim to succeed in his fathers upholstery business
- Moliere and group of writers founded *L'illustre Theatre*, rented indoor tennis court for theatrical performances
- First performance for Louis 14th almost disaster, performed something for rural community instead, he liked it, asked to stay permanently in Paris
- 1650s entertained Parisian audiences
- Soon he didn't have to rely on patronage or princes, plays became more satirical
- Jealous actor claimed he married his own daughter, Louis responded by becoming godfather of the child, and later provided him with a pension when accused of impiety
- Louis helped keep Moliere alive