

The Transformation of Europe, 1500-1750

So, what should you know?

- ❖ How the religious reformation and dynastic rivalries further divided the people of Europe at a time when greater unity seemed desirable
- ❖ How royal centralization increased the unity and power of Spain, France, and England
- ❖ How state policies with regard to military reorganization, warfare, and diplomacy, and economic growth enabled northern European countries to move ahead of Spain
- ❖ How to analyze the relationships between climate change, human-induced environmental change, and social change in Europe
- ❖ How witch-hunts, the Scientific Revolution, and the Enlightenment reflected different European views of the natural world and of human society

RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL INNOVATIONS

Religious reformation, 1517-1563

- ❖ In 1500 the Catholic Church, benefiting from European prosperity, was building new churches including a new Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. Pope Leon X began a new capital campaign for Saint Peter's by authorizing the sale of indulgences.
- ❖ Simply put, indulgences is paying to have a soul "prayed" out of purgatory into heaven—a form of bribery of sorts.

- ❖ The German monk Martin Luther challenged the Pope on the issue of indulgences and other practices that he considered corrupt or not Christian. Luther began the Protestant Reformation on the argument that salvation could be achieved on faith alone and that Christian belief

- could be based only on the Bible and on Christian tradition.
- ❖ **The Protestant leader John Calvin came up with *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Calvin believed that salvation was God’s gift to those who were predestined and that Christian congregations should be self-governing and should stress simplicity in life and in worship.**
 - ❖ **The Protestant Reformation appealed not only to those who agreed along religious lines but also to the Germans who disliked the Italian-dominated Catholic Church and to peasants and urban workers who wanted to reject the religion of their masters.**
 - ❖ **The Catholic Church agreed on a number of internal reforms and a reaffirmation of fundamental Catholic beliefs at the Council of Trent. These responses to the Protestant Reformation, along with the activities of the newly formed Society of Jesus (Jesuits) comprise the “Catholic Reformation.”**
 - ❖ **The Protestant Reformation led to a number of “wars on religion,” the last of them ending in 1648.**

The Failure of Empire, 1519-1556

- ❖ **Between 1516 and 1519, Charles of Burgundy, one of the Austrian Habsburgs, inherited the thrones of Castile and Aragon along with their colonial empires, the Austrian Habsburg possessions, and the position of Holy Roman Emperor. Charles was able to form a coalition to defeat the Ottomans at the gates of Vienna in 1529, but he was unable to unify most of his territories.**
- ❖ **Lutheran German princes rebelled against the French-speaking Catholic Charles, church lands and giving rise to the German Wars of Religions. When Charles abdicated the throne, Spain went to his son Philip while**

the weak Holy Roman Empire went to his brother Ferdinand.

- ❖ **The Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire had lost their ability to impose political and religious unity on Europe. The monarchs of Europe won out in this situation because they took the chance to increase their own power.**

Royal Centralization, 1500-1750

- **The rise of the European kingdoms was guided by long-lived and capable monarchs in Spain, France, and England and by talented chief advisers like Cardinal Jimenez in Spain, Jean-Baptiste Colbert in France, and Robert Walpole in England.**
- **Monarchs and their advisers limited the power and subordinated the church (Protestant or Catholic) to the state. At the same time, because church and state were so closely identified, monarchs imposed religious uniformity: Philip II of Spain had the Inquisition to take care of those pesky Protestants, and Louis XIII and Louis XIV of France took care of the Protestants in their own special French ways.**
- **In England, Henry VIII brought the church under royal control when he split from the Catholic Church and made himself head of the Church of Henry, or should I say the Church of England. He also seized the Catholic church property in England and made the royal treasury very rich.**



Two of Henry's wives needed two heads.

- **European monarchs also established stronger national institutions including uniform laws and tearing down the defensive fortifications of local nobles and independent cities.**

- **The development of common national languages through vernacular translations of the Bible and vernacular literature and entertainment (novels and plays) also contributed to national unity.**

Absolutism and constitutionalism

- **Absolutism is the absence of any constitutional check on a ruler's power. Constitutionalism is a system of government that subjects the ruler's power to limits specified by law and custom.**
- **In France, the Bourbon kings were able to get around the Estates General (the representative body of sorts) and develop an absolute government. Louis XIV's finance minister Colbert was able to increase revenue through more efficient tax collection and by promoting economic growth while Louis entertained and controlled the French nobility by requiring them to attend his court at Versailles.**
- **In England, a conflict between Parliament and king led to a civil war and the establishment of a Puritan republic under Oliver Cromwell. After the Stuart line was restored, Parliament enforced its will on the monarchy when it drove King James II from his throne in the Glorious Revolution in 1688 and forced his successors, William and Mary, to sign a document, the Bill of Rights, that limited the power of the crown.**

BUILDING STATE POWER

War and diplomacy

- ❖ **Constant warfare in early modern Europe led to a military revolution in which cannon, muskets, and commoner foot soldiers became the mainstays of European armies. Armies grew in size, and most European states maintained standing armies. England had a standing navy, too (oh, my mind is going wild with that concept . . .)**

- ❖ **Europeans devised new command structures, signal techniques, and marching drills to manage these armies and make them more effective.**

- ❖ **Lots of new toys were developed during this period. Warships with multiple tiers of cannon and four-wheel cannon carriages that made reloading easier were invented by the Big Boys. When the English Navy defeated the once-invincible Spanish Armada in 1588, the new naval technology of England was proven.**
- ❖ **Let me tell you all about the Spanish Armada. It isn't mentioned too much in your book, but it is fun.**
- ❖ **With the defeat of Spain by England, France became the strongest power on continental Europe. Yes, really. England had the best navy. During the War of Spanish Succession, England, allied with Austria and Prussia, was able to prevent the French House of Bourbon from taking over the Spanish throne. Louis XIV compromised by putting his grandson on the throne when the genetically-challenged Habsburgs were dried up.**

House of Bourbon.

- ❖ **With the War of Spanish Succession and with Russia's emergence as a power after the Great Northern War and Peter the Great (more stories coming), the four powers of Europe—France, Britain, Austria, and Russia—were able to maintain a balance of power that prevented any one power from becoming too strong for about two centuries.**

Politics and the Economy

- **The rulers of European states needed to raise new revenue to pay the heavy costs of their wars. The most successful made profitable alliances with commercial elites. The Spanish, however, undermined their economy by driving out Jews, Protestants, and the descendants of Muslims so that the bullion they gained from their American empire was spent on payments to creditors and for manufactured goods and food.**
- **The northern provinces of the Netherlands won their independence from Spain (**Council of Blood**) and became a commercial power. The United Provinces of the Free Netherlands and particularly the province of Holland favored commercial interests, craftsmen, and manufacturing enterprises. Amsterdam became a major center of finance and shipping.**
- **After 1650, England used its naval power to break Dutch dominance in overseas trade. The English government also improved its financial**

situation by collecting taxes directly and by creating a central bank.

- **Did I tell you that the Dutch economy heavily relied on the sale of tulip bulbs? I am NOT making that up.**
- **The French government streamlined tax collection, used protective tariffs to promote domestic industries, and improved its transportation network. The French were not able to introduce direct tax collection, tax the land of nobles, or secure low-cost loans.**

URBAN SOCIETY AND COMMERCIAL TECHNOLOGY

Urban Social Classes

- **There was a great disparity between the wealthy few and the many poor in the cities of early modern Europe. Now, there's a news flash.**
- **The wealthy urban bourgeoisie (middle class) thrived on manufacturing, finance, and on trade, especially that of grain. The bourgeoisie formed mutually beneficial relationships with the monarchs and built extensive family and ethnic networks to facilitate trade between different parts of the world.**
- **The urban poor consisted of the “deserving poor” (permanent residents) and large numbers of “unworthy poor”—migrants, peddlers, beggars, and criminals.**
- **Common people in early modern Europe married relatively late because young men served long periods of apprenticeship when learning a trade and young women needed to work to earn their dowries. The young people of the bourgeois class also married late, partly because men delayed marriage until after finishing their**

education. Late marriage enabled young couples to be independent of their parents; it also helped to keep the birth rate low.

Commercial techniques and technology

- **Europeans developed a number of new commercial techniques in the early modern period. These included large banks, joint-stock companies, and stock exchanges.**
- **Previously invented technologies were refined and applied more widely. Water wheels and windmills were improved, canal systems were constructed, new large-capacity cargo ships were built, and mapmaking improved.**

RURAL SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The struggle for food

- **The standard for living of the average European declined sharply in the century after 1530.**
- **Why? Well. Wars, transformation of cropland to grazing, and the shorter growing seasons brought on the Little Ice Age. This is not to be confused with the movie “Ice Age.”**
- **By 1700, new crops from the Americans (potatoes and maize) were helping to alleviate the food shortage.**

Deforestation

- **High consumption of wood for heating, cooking, constructions, shipbuilding and industrial uses led to severe deforestation in Europe in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Shortages drove the cost of wood up.**

- **As the price of wood rose, Europeans turned to burning their children for fuel. I put that in to see if you actually read these.**
- **As the price of wood rose, Europeans began to use coal instead of wood. There were some efforts to conserve forests and to plant trees, particularly to save wood for naval vessels. The people could just freeze.**
- **Deforestation had really bad effects on the rural poor who had relied to free access to the forests for wood, building materials, nuts and berries, the Three Bears, and wild game, particularly possum. ARE YOU PAYING ATTENTION?**

Peasantry and gentry

- **Peasants were free, not serfs. Still, they suffered from debt that forced many of them to sell their land to the rising members of the bourgeois class, who gained gentry status by purchasing land. “Gentry” simply means “fufu” or “stuck-up” or “poser.”**
- **The bourgeois gentry gradually increased their ownership of land. Many became even more fufu by marrying into noble families or by purchasing titles of nobility. WOOOOO.**
- **Severe poverty, heavy tax burden (why are the poor always taxed the most?), and the perception of inequality led to numerous peasant rebellions. These were quickly suppressed by Big Brother.**
- **Most Europeans in 1750, rural or urban, lived in wretched poverty.**

THE REALM OF IDEAS

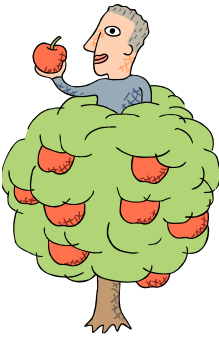
Traditional thinking and witch-hunts

- **European concepts of the natural world were derived from both local folk traditions and from Judeo-Christian beliefs. Most people believed that natural events could have supernatural causes.**
- **Belief in the supernatural is vividly demonstrated in the witch-hunts of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In the witch hunts over 100,000 people (three-quarters of them women because they wore those pointed witchy hats and were easily identified) were tried, and about half of them executed on charges of witchcraft.**
- **Modern historians have tried to figure out if the witch-hunts are a result of fear of unattached women (have to watch us!) or of social stress. Some scholars believe that the poor had marginal people may have believed that they were capable of witchcraft and welcomed the notoriety and attention gained from public confession.**

The Scientific Revolution

- **European intellectuals derived their understanding of the natural world from the writings of the Greeks and the Romans. These writings suggested that everything on earth was reducible to four elements—the sun, moon, planets, and stars were so light and pure that they floated in crystalline spheres and rotated around the earth in perfectly circular orbits.**
- **The observations of Copernicus and other scientists including Galileo undermined this earth-centered model of the universe and led to the introduction of the Copernican sun-centered model.**

- **The Copernican model was initially criticized and suppressed by Protestant leaders and by the Catholic Church. Despite opposition, printed books spread these and other new scientific ideas among European intellectuals.**
- **Isaac Newton's discovery of the law of gravity showed why the planets go around the sun in elliptical orbits. Newton's discoveries led to the development of Newtonian physics. However, Newton and other scientists did not believe that their discoveries were in conflict with religious belief. And, no, Isaac Newton did NOT invent Fig Newtons or Apple Newtons.**



No, Isaac . . .you are supposed to sit UNDER it!

The Early Enlightenment

- **The advances in scientific thought inspired European governments and groups of individuals to question the reasonableness of accepted practices in fields ranging from agriculture to laws, religions, and social hierarchies. This intellectual movement, which assumed that social behavior and institutions were governed by scientific laws, is called the Enlightenment.**
- **The Enlightenment thinkers were also influenced by the Reformation, by accounts of other cultures (including Jesuit accounts of China), and by the English Revolution and the political philosophy of John Locke.**

- **John Locke argued that rulers derive their power from the consent of those whom they govern and that if monarchs overstepped the law, citizens had the duty to rebel.**
- **The new scientific methods provided the enlightened thinkers with a model for changing European society. These thinkers were not a homogeneous group; they got their ideas from a variety of sources and had lots of different ideas and goals. Many were optimistic that the application of reason would lead to human progress.**
- **The ideas of the Enlightenment drew opposition from many absolutist rulers and from clergymen, but the printing press made possible the survival and dissemination of new ideas.**

And now to the CONCLUSION!!

- ❖ **Europe underwent a number of revolutionary changes in years between 1500 and 1750. The changes were an extension of developments that had begun in the Late Middle Ages and would lead to the political and industrial revolutions of the latter part of the eighteenth century. The process of change may have brought progress, but it was a violent process that involved war, persecution, suffering, and an uneven distribution of wealth.**
- ❖ **Seen from a global perspective, these changes appear to be part of the process by which the balance of political, economic, and military power shifted slowly but inexorably toward the Europeans.**

