

EUROPE IS WHAT UNITES US: THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Europe is able to create high cultural, intellectual, literary and artistic trends and movements, that brought us so much welfare and prosperity. E.g. the Age of Enlightenment, an elite cultural and very complex movement of intellectuals in 18th century, that sought to mobilize the power of reason in order to reform society and advance knowledge. It promoted intellectual interchange, common goals of progress, tolerance and opposed intolerance and abuses in Church and state.

Originating about 1650–1700, it was sparked by philosophers **Baruch Spinoza** (1632–1677), **John Locke** (1632–1704), and **Pierre Bayle** (1647–1706) and by mathematician **Isaac Newton** (1643–1727). Ruling princes often endorsed and fostered Enlightenment figures and even attempted to apply their ideas of government.



Die Tafelrunde by Adolph von Menzel. The oval domed "Marble Hall" in Sanssouci, the summer palace of Frederic the Great, is the principal reception room of the palace. On the left side, in the purple coat, sits Voltaire; the other guests are Casanova, Marquis d'Argens, La Mettrie, the Keiths, Von Rothenburg, Von Stille and Francesco Algarotti

The Enlightenment flourished until about 1790–1800 and it was focussed on functionality and conceived art and beauty as side issues, a personal hobby. The radical Enlightenment is under the impression that reason can only be the slave of the passions. After 1800 the emphasis on reason gave way to Romanticism's emphasis on emotion and a Counter-Enlightenment gained force.

The center of the Enlightenment was France, where it was based in the salons and culminated in the great *Encyclopédie* (1751–72) edited by Denis Diderot (1713–1784) with contributions by hundreds of leading philosophers (intellectuals) such as Voltaire (1694–1778), who stayed between 1750 and 1753 in Sanssouci, the summer palace of Frederic the Great in Potsdam and who claimed that the continent constituted a kind of great republic divided into several states, Rousseau (1712–1778) and Montesquieu (1689–1755). The movement is to be consider as a mindset, for personal issues and virtues, and for social environment.

February 12, 1950, Albert Einstein wrote: "A human being is a part of the whole, called by us 'Universe', a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest – a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. The striving to free himself from this delusion is the one issue of true religion. Not to nourish this delusion but to try to overcome it is the way to reach the attainable measure of peace of mind."

It seems that all natural laws during the birth of the universe are very precisely aligned to give life a chance. That's very coincidental and why there is conjecture that our universe is but one in a huge amount of universes that are born continuously. You can see it as a cosmic lottery. Every now and then there is a universe in which life has a chance. We must be mindful with such a top prize.

Early human settlements were dependent on proximity to water and, depending on the lifestyle, other natural resources. Humans have also a marked appreciation for beauty and aesthetics which, combined with the desire for self-expression, has led to cultural innovations such as art, literature and music. Also they are noted for their desire to understand and influence the world around them, seeking to explain and manipulate natural phenomena through religion, science, philosophy and mythology. This natural curiosity has led to the development of advanced tools and skills; humans are the only known species to build fires, cook their food, clothe themselves, and use numerous other technologies.



As such, we build together our civilization, our human condition and development of new customer values. Plato said: "Man, as we say, is a tame and civilized animal. Nevertheless, he requires proper instruction and a fortunate nature. And then of all animals he becomes the most devine and most civilized. But if he be insufficiently or ill educated, he is the most savage of earthly creatures".

Subsequently, it will be in our own power to descend to the lower, brutish forms of life or we will be able, through our own decision, to rise again to the superior orders whose life is divine. It's to us 'to draw out', to facilitate realisation of our self-potential and latent talents.