



Social History and Enlightenment

Intellectual history

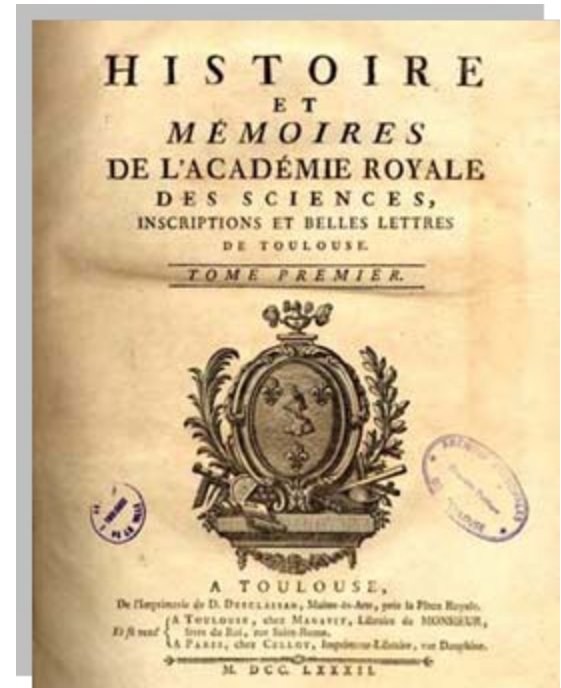
Enlightenment as content: emphasis on reason
questioning attitude
“scientific method”
may be deist or atheist

Social history

Enlightenment as practices
a model: the bourgeois public sphere (Habermas)
some examples: print media
cafés
learned academies
the Salon
freemasonic lodges
significance: changed meaning of “public”

Who could participate in this new public sphere?

Conclusion: a new concept (new vocabulary) without a precise or certain referent



Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962 in German)

from an absolutist to a “bourgeois” public

bourg

bourgeois (adjective)

bourgeoisie (noun)

Edinburgh Greensboro Danbury Hamburg



Jürgen Habermas, 1929-

Great Chain of Being

cafés

print media

learned academies

freemasonry

the Salon

how are these
different from

God

King

clergy

aristocracy

other people

animals

plants

minerals

The Republic of Letters

Literacy in France (average)

	men	women
1686-1690	29%	14%
1786-1790	47%	27%

Intensive and shared or extensive and personal?



“Printing with moveable type”
from the *Encyclopédie*

Coffee politicians does create?

1652 first coffeehouse in London

Jean de Thévenot, *Voyages en Europe, Asie, et Afrique* (Paris, 1664)—several pages on “cahvé.”

1669 arrival in France of Ottoman ambassador



“Basis of the new *philosophie* :
our birthplace was a café”

Bourgeois public sphere: cafés

State-sponsored Academies

Académie Française (1635)

Académie Royale des Sciences (1666)

Dijon Academy of Arts, Sciences, and Literature—Essay Contests

1743: Can natural law perfect mankind without the assistance of political laws?

1744: What is the cause of fever?

1750: Did the restoration of the sciences and the arts lead to the purification of *moeurs* [habits and manners]?

1755: What are the origins of inequality?

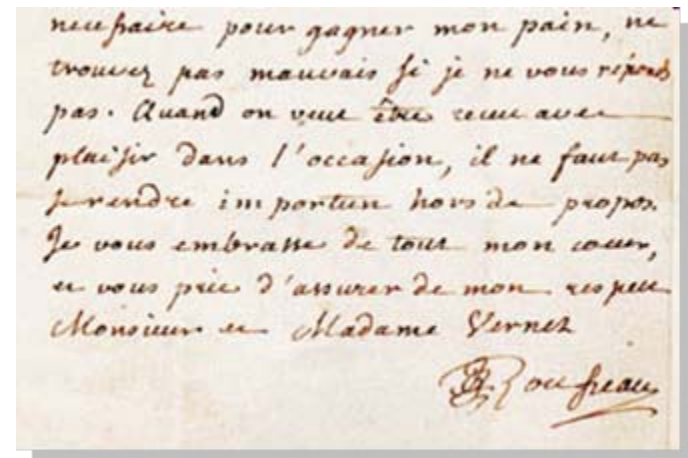
1990: What role should computers play in daily life?

2008: Do we have a duty to remember?

Metz Academy

1784: On the shame associated with capital punishment

1787: Are there ways of making Jews more useful?





Vue perspective du Salon de l'Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture au Louvre, à Paris.

A Paris chez Benoist, Libraire de l'Académie.

Bourgeois public sphere: the Salon

Diderot, the Critic

“An enormous painting and an enormous piece of foolishness. Imagine a table in the center of a large room... around it, the Provost of the Trade Guilds, or maybe it's a huge pregnant woman in disguise, stands with all the city's officials.... all eyes turn upward, to where... a small shrunken Peace scatters flowers over genies of the arts and sciences.



This work is truly cumbersome... the aldermen are just woolen sacks or ridiculous colossi made of whipped cream. ... It really looks like Monsieur the Provost has invited Minerva and Peace to come have some hot chocolate... The genies are a yellowish green, just like the flowers. All is heavy handed and lacking in finesse. The monotony is so general, so unbearable, that one cannot stand here for long without starting to yawn. ...

This bad painting does demonstrate a mastery of perspective, however, and the figures in the background recede convincingly...”

Diderot, *The Salon of 1767*

Bourgeois public sphere: the Salon

“In our modern institutions, where the form of government is such that most subjects must stay in the place assigned to them by nature, how is it possible to contribute to the common good?”

from a speech given by a freemason in Grenoble , 1779

Number of freemasonic lodges in France

1749	62
1759	130
1769	312

Number of freemasons in 1789 > 50,000



Bourgeois public sphere: freemasonry



china statuette of a freemason, 1760s



1. Le Grand Maître
 2. Le V. Secrétaire
 3. Le V. Trésorier
 4. Le Grand Acolite

*Assemblée de Franc-Maçons pour la réception des Apprentis.
 Entrée des Répondans dans la Loge.
 D'après un tableau de l'Académie de Saint-Jacques par M. de La Motte, Architecte de la Loge de Saint-Jacques.
 Dessiné par M. de La Motte, gravé par M. de La Motte.*

5. Le Grand Acolite
 6. Le Grand Acolite
 7. Le Grand Acolite
 8. Le Grand Acolite

“A meeting of Freemasons for the initiation of new apprentices”

Bourgeois public sphere: freemasonry

Features of the new public sphere as defined by Habermas:

1. It disregarded status: “the power and prestige of public office were held in suspense; economic dependencies also in principle had no influence.”
2. Cultural products became available for purchase, which meant they could lose their aura of sacredness; “private” people determined a play or a painting’s meaning on their own, through rational communication, and were then in a position to define the source of a product’s value and authority
3. “The same process that converted culture into a commodity ... established the public as, *in principle*, inclusive. However exclusive the public might be in any given instance, it could never close itself off entirely. There was also a more inclusive public, one made up of all the private persons who—insofar as they were educated and propertied—could avail themselves via the market of the objects that were subject to discussion.”



Joseph Wright (of Derby), *Experiment on a Bird in an Air Pump* (1768)

Provincial Academies (31 in 1789)

	Clergy(%)	Nobles (%)	Commoners (%)
honorary members	17.6	71.2	11.1
full members	22.2	39.9	37.7
associate members	19	25.7	55



“View of the City of Rouen, capital of the province of Normandy” (1770)

bourgeois public sphere: who could participate?

Jean Pierre Brissot, the would-be *philosophe*



1754 born in Chartres, thirteenth child of an innkeeper

1774 goes to Paris

entered and won essay contests on legal rights of the wrongly accused and against capital punishment; published works disputing the authority of Saint Paul and calling for the abolition of slavery;

failed the bar exam; attended chemistry and physics lectures

1779 goes to London to establish the *Lycée*, a planned philosophes' club

1784 returns to France; arrested on suspicion of authoring satirical pamphlets

1. Hôtel de l'Escoville, Caen (Calvados), France—for much of the eighteenth century, this was the meeting place of the local learned society, the Académie des Sciences, Arts, et Belles Lettres de Caen; photo from fr.wikipedia.org
2. gallica.bnf.fr
3. commons.wikimedia.org
5. illustration from the *Encyclopédie*; <http://encyclopedie.uchicago.edu/>
6. Plate, Delft (Netherlands), c. 1710; photo <http://www.photo.rmn.fr>; "Birthplace of the New Philosophie"—unidentified engraving, probably from the collections of the Musée Carnavelet (Paris) or the BHVP [note the "ville de Paris" stamp]; photo <http://chez-edmea.blogspot.com/2010/10/le-cafe-le-procope.html> "Coffee Politicians does Create" is the title of a journal article; see Steven Pincus, "Coffee Politicians does Create," *Journal of Modern History* 67:4 (1995), 807-834.
7. Dijon Academy essay subjects from www.acascia-dijon.fr; Metz Academy from Daniel Roche, *Le Siècle des Lumières en province* (1978); photo of the final paragraph of a letter signed "J.J. Rousseau," from <https://www.ville-ge.ch>
8. anon, "Perspective View of the Salon at the Louvre," (176?), gallica.bnf.fr
9. Noel Hallé, *Minerva Leading Peace to the City Hall* (1767); Versailles; photo www.photo.rmn.fr ; Diderot text from *Diderot on Art: The Salon of 1767*, trans. John Goodman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).
10. Figures and quotation from Margaret Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); statuette (Meissen), www.photo.rmn.fr; dish with masonic emblems, fr.wikipedia.org
11. Anonymous, "A Meeting of Freemasons," engraving, gallica.bnf.fr
13. Joseph Wright of Derby, *Experiment with a Bird in an Airpump* (1768), oil on canvas; wikimedia.org
14. "View of the City of Rouen," engraving, gallica.bnf.fr
15. "J. P. Brissot, deputy to the Legislative Assembly from Paris" (detail); engraving by Maviez; photo gallica.bnf.fr