



What is the Enlightenment?

(also called
the **Neo-classical Period**)

It begins with a
rejection. . . .

- Of dogma
- Of superstition
- Of traditional religion
- Of factionalism
- Of (in some cases) monarchy
- Of disorder



The 1600s had a different ideology—one steeped in supernatural politics.

Alchemy, Angelology, Demonology
The Great Chain of Being
Divine Right of Kings



...but that led to dire political schisms when a monarch died without a clear heir.



Many countries become **Protestant**, shattering the fifteen-hundred-year-old spiritual monopoly of Catholicism.

Protestant Reformation!

But that dreaded
factionalism led to
religious wars--
some continuing
off-and-on for a
century.

England, Germany, and Holland became Protestants allies. They fought repeatedly against Catholic France, Spain, and Italy. Later, Protestant groups turned on each other--with Anglican persecutions against Jansenists, Anabaptists, Quakers, etc.



And to
heresy
trials

Hæc fuit effigies quondam venerabilis Husi,
Dum sua pro Christo membra cremanda dedit.



Na Obráz Dístra Jana Husy/
Mučedníka Božího.

And to the
auto-da-fé

(the execution
of individuals who
dissented from
standard
scriptural
Interpretations—
usually by public
burning)



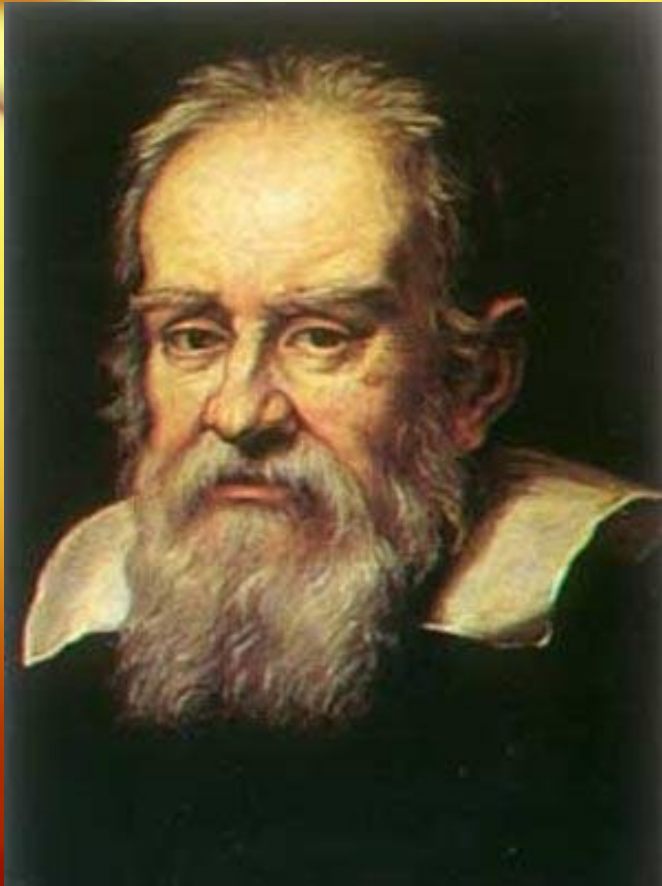
And to ever
increasing
numbers of
witch
burnings

Witch trials were actually
higher in number during
the Renaissance reign of
King James I than in any
decade of the
medieval
period.



And the Inquisition's growth.

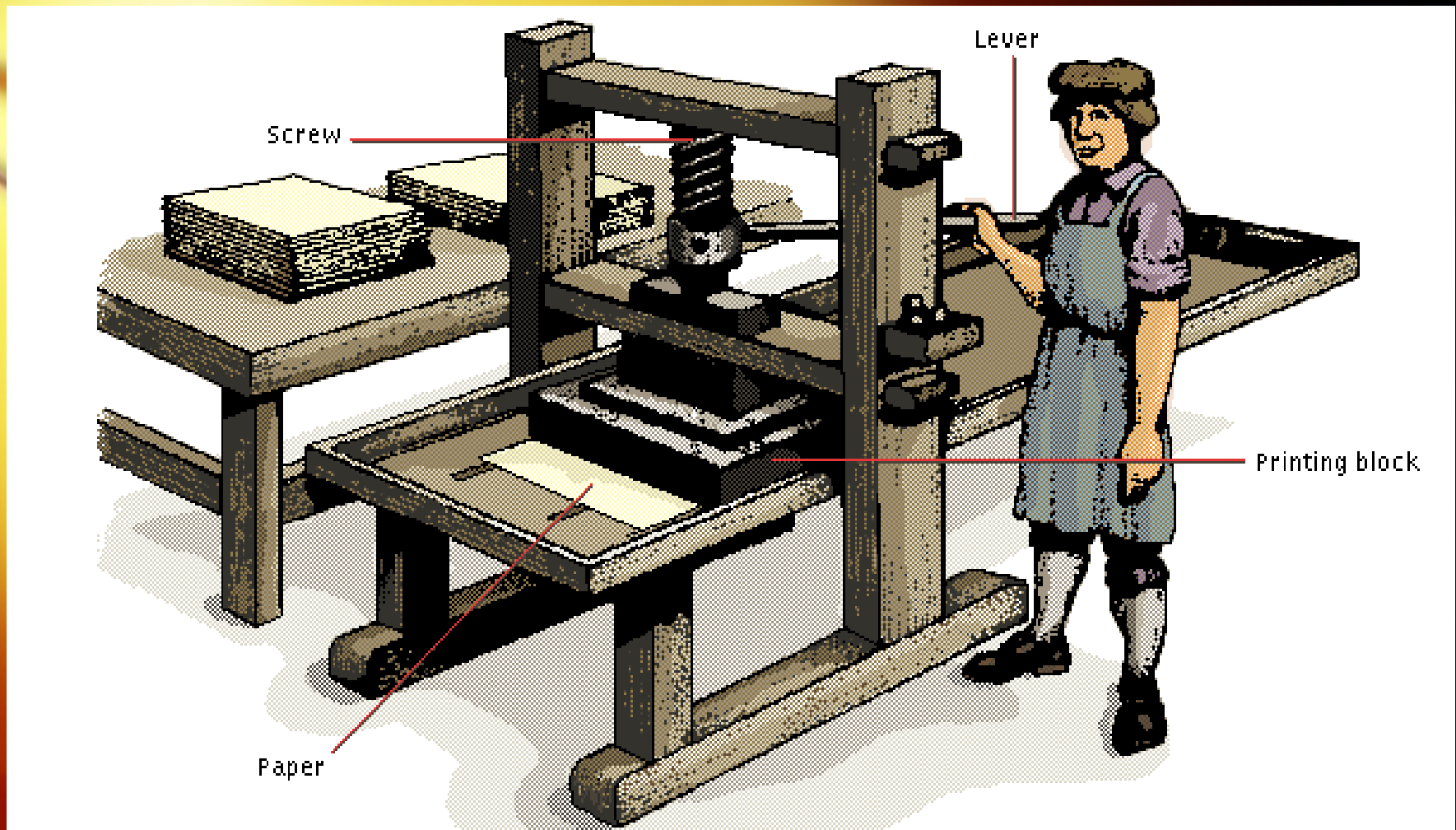
The Inquisition received official Church sanction in 1215, but the height of its activity in Spain and France actually peaked in the 1500s and 1600s—i.e., Renaissance times.



Not even Galileo was safe.

**The church arrested Galileo
For heretical ideas such as
heliocentrism. Threatened with
torture, he publicly recanted his
science and lived his last days
under house arrest.**

Western Christian biblical references Psalm 93:1, Psalm 96:10, and Chronicles 16:30 include text stating that "the world is firmly established, it cannot be moved." In the same tradition, Psalm 104:5 says, "[the LORD] set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved." Further, Ecclesiastes 1:5 states that "the sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises." This meant that the idea the earth spun on its axis or revolved around the sun was incompatible with literalist readings of scripture.



The printing press dazzled the early Renaissance . . .



But the overflow of new ideas was also frightening—leading to national censorship, book burnings, the *index librorum prohibitorum*, pamphlet wars.



**Worn out by 200
years of this
bickering,
warfare,
dissension, and
fanaticism,
Europe was ready
for a change by
the 1700s.**

That change was the Enlightenment!

What is the Enlightenment attitude?

- (1) A desire for rationality, logic, consistency.
- (2) A rejection of emotionalism
- (3) A preference for evidence, not faith
- (4) Increased interest in science, mathematics, geometry
- (5) An admiration for Greece and Rome and an abhorrence for everything medieval.
- (6) A preference for the artificial over the natural, technology over wilderness.

What is the Enlightenment socially?

- (1) A disdain of “messiness” and “chaos” as being unharmonious.
- (2) A preference for democracy
- (3) A preference for civilized, polite discussion of ideas. Conclusions reached by intelligent debate—not force.
- (4) A desire to create social standards based on reason—not tradition.

What is the Enlightenment aesthetically?

- (1) A desire for geometric shapes, orderly repetition in mathematical patterns.
- (2) A disdain of "messiness" and "chaos" as being unharmonious.
- (3) Greco-Roman architecture
- (4) Endless **Heroic Couplets**
- (5) **Satire** as a means of social critique

From the perspective of an 18th-century Enlightenment thinker, which of the following nineteenth-century ideas do you believe would be most unsettling?

- ☞ a. Freud's idea that at their core human beings are not driven by a rational mind but rather by primal impulses.
- ☞ b. The view of Marx that change in human history was achieved through struggle not reason.
- ☞ c. Darwin's idea that evolution through the competition of natural selection led to success of one species over another.
- ☞ d. The view of both Marx and Darwin that conflict and struggle rather than reason and education were the motors of progress.