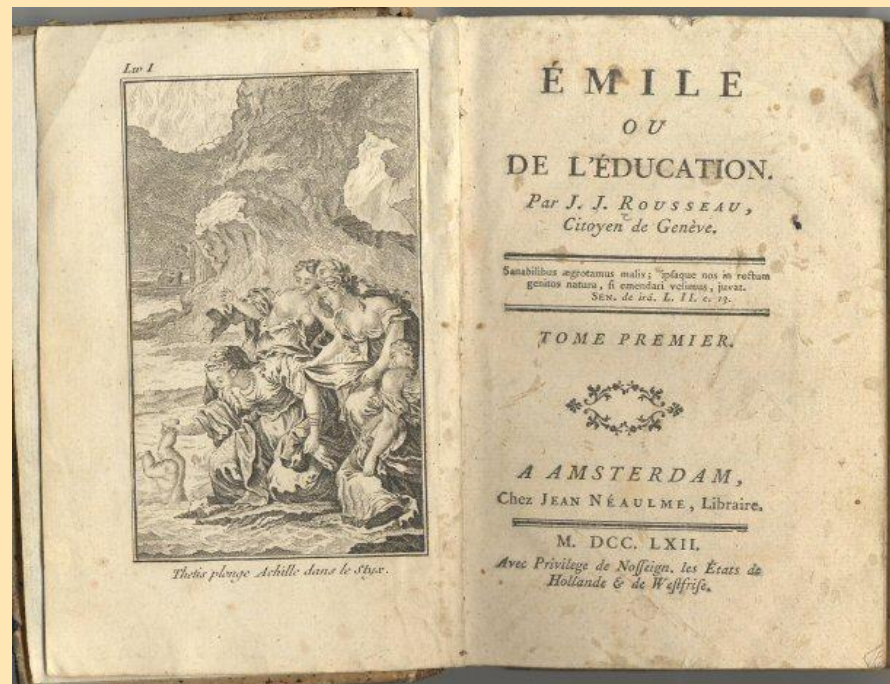


# The philosophy of the Modern Ages

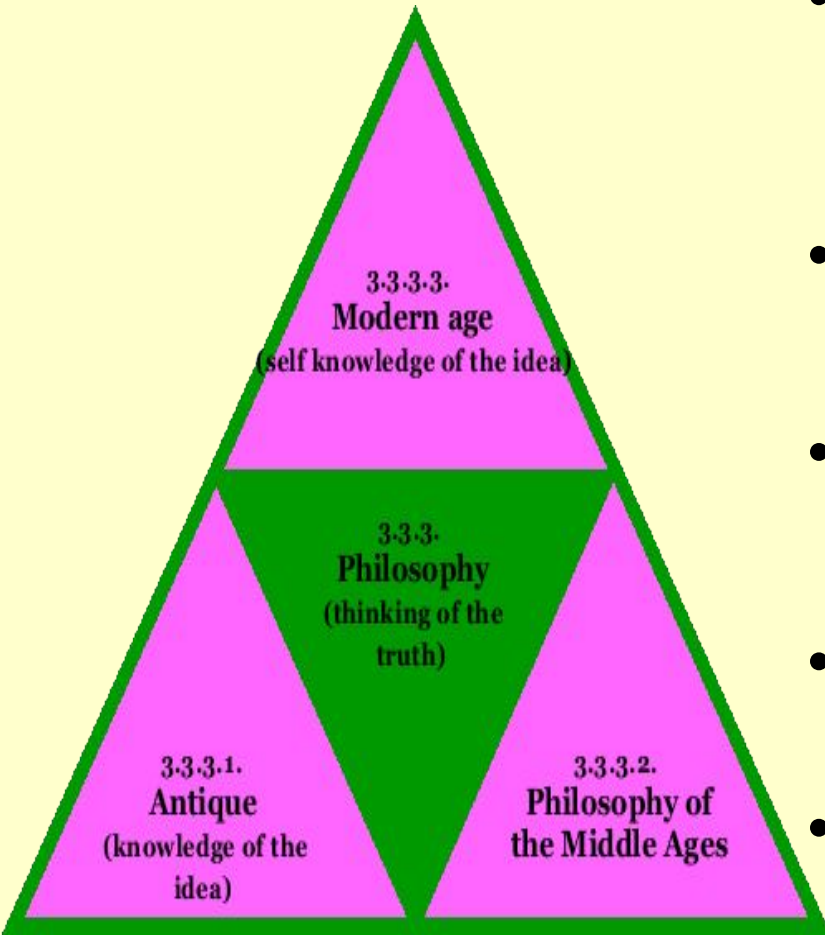


# PLAN:

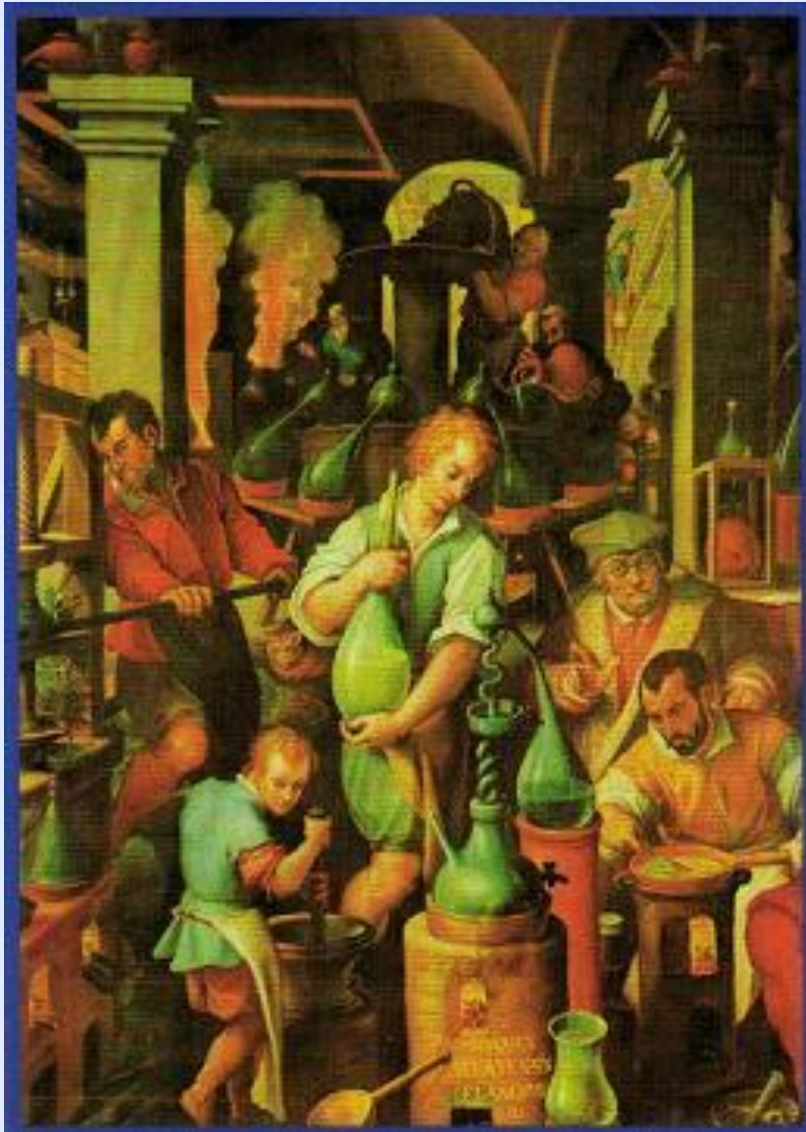
1. General characteristics of the Modern Ages
2. The Empiricism. English philosophy of the XVII century (*Fr. Bacon, Th. Hobbes, J. Locke*)
3. The Rationalism. European philosophy of the XVII century (*R. Descartes, B. Spinoza, W. Leibniz*)
4. French philosophy of the XVIII century: Enlightenment, Encyclopedias, Mechanical materialism (*Fr.-M. Voltaire, J.-J. Rousseau, D. Diderot, P.-H. Holbach*)



# *Main peculiarities of the Modern Ages philosophy:*



- Philosophy was guided by science. It was inseparably linked with knowledge taken from experience, practice.
- The problems of epistemology in the new philosophy became as important as ontology problems, even more.
- The conflict between Empiricism and Rationalism - two main streams of the XVII century
- The growing interest to the social organization. The social contract.
- The dominant place of materialism (mechanistic and metaphysical)



European philosophy  
manifested  
**Rationalism.**

English philosophy –  
**Empiricism.**

These two positions  
tended to the  
development of  
science, formed its  
character, defined  
main tendencies of  
Modern Ages  
thinking.

# Empiricism

**It is the philosophical position, which stresses on sensual cognition, and regards that all knowledge derives from sensation on one hand and reflection on the other.**

**There are two variants of Empiricism: materialistic (*Bacon, Hobbes, Locke*) and idealistic (*Berkley, Hume*).**



# Francis Bacon



(1561-1624)

*Francis Bacon's Self Portrait*

He was the greatest theorist of science of **Empiricism**.

He realized that a new age of scientific knowledge was dawning, with various discoveries and techniques, especially the work of Copernicus and Galileo, the use of the telescope, printing and so forth.

Bacon ambitiously wished to create a complete classification of existing sciences, a whole new **inductive logic**, and a new philosophy of nature.

He was highly critical of much of the procedures of the teamed world: humans should work together with system in order to create knowledge.

He saw humanity as too much dominated by various idols, which could distort and undermine their knowledge.

**New science, which was aimed at learning the forces of nature, required new methods, primarily empirical. Experiment and proper induction, noted F. Bacon - are the two wings of scientific knowledge: experiment serves to reveal facts, and induction - for their correct generalization.**

The English philosopher *Thomas Hobbes* **professed materialism, seeking to explain everything on the basis of mechanistic principles.**

His philosophy was devoted to ascertaining the laws of motion out of which there necessarily arise, on the human level, such things as **social contracts**, which are the basis for the state.

Hobbes was a nominalist, and saw no merit in the idea of a universal concept or idea.

He was also an empiricist, of a sort - science he considered to be based on sense-experience

Hobbes took a dispassionate view of politics.

Competition, mutual mistrust and the desire for glory between people lead to conflict, either actual or feared - **the war of all against all**. Enlightened egoism suggests the forming of a government which will regulate civil society. The commonwealth is formed out of fear, a basic feeling in politics. Once formed it becomes, so to speak, a mortal god Leviathan.



(1588-1679)

**John Locke** British empirical philosopher, he developed a whole political philosophy based on Empiricism.



(1632-1704)

He claimed that our knowledge is obtained purely from sense experience and is refined by reflection upon the things that affect the senses. Man's knowledge is limited, and he must function exclusively within the limits of his senses.

Locke formulated his long-lived political and economic views. He rejected the notion of the divine right of kings, as well as the authority of the Bible and the Church in temporal affairs.

Locke advocated within certain bounds, toleration in matters of religion.

**He was the first to divide power into executive, legislative and foreign policy.**

In contrast to Hobbes sovereignty ultimately resides in the people, and issues in general are to be decided by majority vote.

Locke's general political theory became a major basis for the **Justification of democratic government.**



# Idealist Empiricism: George Berkeley



(1685-1753)

A convinced adherent of religion, Berkeley undertook a critique of the notion of matter. He considered the concept of matter to be general and therefore false.

He thought we perceive not matter as such but only the individual properties of things — taste, smell, color, etc., of which the perceptions Berkeley called *ideas*. The things surrounding us exist as ideas in the mind of God, who is the cause and the source of earthly life.

Berkeley's subjective idealism is a logical confusion of religious idealist views and the one-sided elements of nominalism and sensualism.

Berkeley introduced the concept of collective consciousness, which is determined by God.

# Idealist Empiricism: David Hume



(1711-1776)

Hume developed a system somewhat different from Berkeley's but also essentially subjective idealist, directed primarily towards agnosticism.

He believed that man could not go beyond his own sensations and understand something outside himself. True knowledge could only be logical, while the objects of study concerning facts could not be proved logically, being derived from experience. Inasmuch as experience cannot be logically substantiated, experiential knowledge is unreliable.

Hume stated that objective character of causality was unknowable. At the same time he recognized subjective causality in the form of generation of ideas (memory images) by sense impressions.

Hume lost all criteria of the truth of knowledge and was forced to declare belief rather than theoretical knowledge to be the source of practical certainty.

# ***The disadvantages of Empiricism:***

1. The exaggeration of the importance and role of sensation in epistemology.
2. The underestimation of the value of abstraction in the theory of knowledge.
3. The denial of the activeness and independence of thinking.

**Empiricism failed to expose the origin of the universal ideas and in its extreme variants came to the complete denial of the world existence.**

# **Rationalism**

**(from Latin “ratio” meaning reason) is the philosophical position that considers reason (thought) as the source of knowledge and the criterion of its truth**

The theory of rationalism assumed the existence of innate ideas in human mind largely determining the results of cognition.



# The founder of Rationalism was French scientist Rene Descartes, the philosopher who placed reason first, reducing the role of experience

He was the first philosopher to bring mathematical methods to bear on speculative thought.

He began by asserting that everything that could not immediately pass his criterion of truth (i.e. *the clearness and distinctness of ideas*) was worthy of doubt.

The first self-evident truth is that of *the thinking self*. The other truth that he recognized immediately according to his criterion was *God*. From these two clear and distinct ideas, he developed a highly elaborated system of thought that spread throughout all divisions of philosophy.

Descartes revolutionized philosophy in various ways:

- he was not highly dependent on tradition;
- he was committed to discovering a method in philosophy, and so was the major progenitor of a systematic epistemology;
- he set European philosophy along the path to introspection.



(1596- 1655)

*“I think therefore I am”*

# Spinoza Baruch



(1632-1677)

One of the relatively few titans of philosophy. Using the mathematical method or argument developed by Descartes, he developed his entire philosophy around a conception of nature in which one, eternal, infinite *Substance* is the ultimate and immediate cause of all things (identical with the religious notion of God).

This Substance is the self-caused, self-existing cause pervades nature through and through. Substance is one and capable of no division, it is also infinite and therefore is capable of having an infinite number of attributes.

Spinoza stated that people are delivered both from the passions and from competitive struggles with others. True freedom resides then in knowledge, and the free person leaves behind her the confusions of ordinary moral discourse, with its illusions of freedom and its use of praise and blame.

# Gottfried Leibniz



(1646-1716)

The German philosopher he was a person of dazzling achievements.

His systematic philosophy can be discovered in a wide variety of works, including his “Discourse on Metaphysics”, the “New system of Nature” “Interaction of Substances” and the “**Monadology**” as well as in his one large book, the “Theodicy” .

- Leibniz expressed certain profound ideas of dialectical nature. His radical pluralism is highly different from the monism of Spinoza.
- He added to the concept of substance that of active force, or the Aristotelian principle of the self-motion of matter.
- Leibniz through theology arrived at the principle of the inseparable (and universal, absolute) connection of matter and motion.
- One of the major achievements of Leibniz’s philosophy was his theory of an individual monad as a concentrated world, as a mirror of the one infinite universe.
- He was one of the founders of modern

## *The disadvantages of rationalism:*

- The denial of the importance and role of experience in getting universal, and truthful knowledge.
- The refusal of dialectics in the process of gaining knowledge, that is, from incomplete to entire and then to absolute one.



# French philosophy of the XVIII century

- **Enlightenment**
- **Encyclopedias**
- **Mechanical materialism**



The second half of the 18th century was an epoch of acute aggravation of the conflict between the feudal and bourgeois worldviews, particularly in France. This conflict came to a head in the bourgeois revolution. Ideologically, it was prepared in the works of the XVIII century French philosophers: **Voltaire** (1694-1778), **Rousseau** (1712-1778), **Diderot** (1713-1784), **La Mettrie** (1709-1751), **Helvétius** (1715-1771) and **Holbach** (1723-1789). *They resolutely fought against church and the socio-political order in contemporary France of that time.*

## **Common features characterizing theories of this epoch representatives :**

- Strong criticism of the feudal order and the ideology of the Catholic Church, the desire for democratization of all spheres of public life, and, accordingly, the declaration of the necessity to involve the masses of people into economic and political activity;
- The intensive formation of the National Education (which gave the name of the epoch);
- Swift progressive development of science and technology, which accelerated other processes of social life and led the optimistic faith in limitless progress of reason and knowledge.
- Materialism in understanding Nature.

# *Main streams of the XVIII century French philosophy*

- ❖ Deism
- ❖ Atheism
- ❖ Materialism
- ❖ Utopian-socialism.



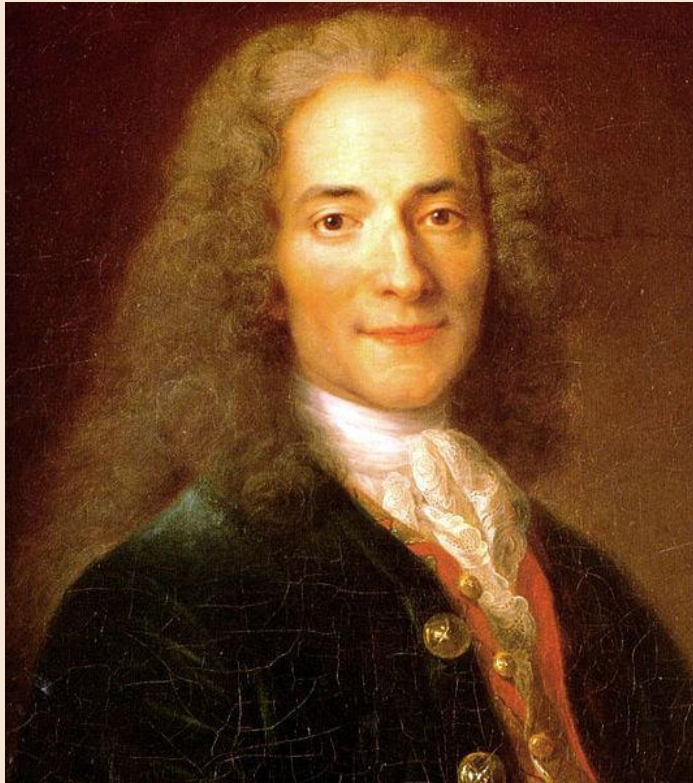


# Deism

- is a philosophical doctrine that reduced the role of God to a mere act of creation and held that, after the original act, God virtually withdrew and refrained from interfering in the process of nature and the ways of man.



# Francois-Marie Arquet Voltaire



(1694-1778)

**"If there was no God,  
then He would have to  
be invented"**

Voltaire was a passionate and gifted critic of intolerance and of the outmoded institutions of the ancient regime. But his plans for tolerance were not anti-religious.

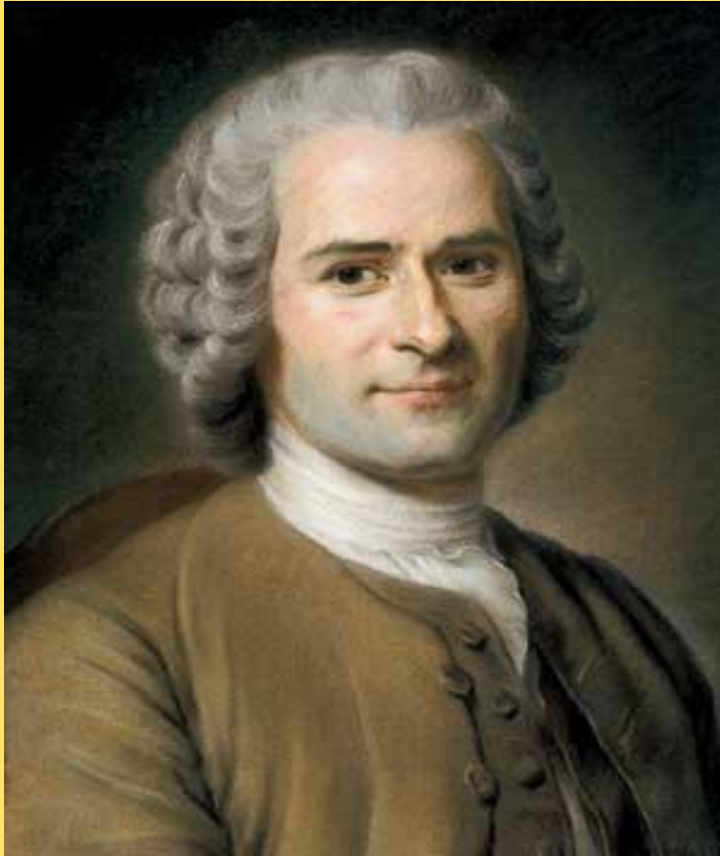
He was against the dominance of the Catholic Church in all spheres of human individual and public life and demanded the secularization of the church.

Voltaire was an advocate of rational forms of religion. **"Without religion, society becomes an uncontrolled crowd."**

Voltaire found a practical application of the most important slogan of the Enlightenment "Reason, nature, humanity". He opposed reason to ignorance, nature – to belief in supernatural forces, humanity – to the religious-ethical norms of feudalism. **If morality, religion and law are based on reason, one can say that they have true character.**

He was a powerful campaigner for the reform of the law, the abolition of torture and so forth: many of these ideas were incorporated in the "Declaration of the Rights of Man" in 1789.

# *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*



**(1712-1778)**

Rousseau gave eloquent expression to the idea of an idealized nature, partly as a means of criticizing existing society.

Rousseau's views on education, expressed in "Emile", stressed the natural progress of the human heart, towards a moral life in society in union with fellow-humans.

Rousseau in his *Control social* introduced the idea that in civil society humans achieve freedom through the total alienation of each associate with all his rights to the community.

# Denis Diderot



(1713-1784)

Diderot was an editor of the French Encyclopedia. Beginning as a **deist** he concluded his life as a **pantheist**.

- He advocated skepticism in opposition to dogmatism and held that nothing could be taken as absolutely true for all time. Since change is the fundamental principle of life – or so our sense experience tells us – truth must, like everything else, be subject to change.
- Diderot was a most interesting **materialist**. He saw the universe as matter in motion that was inherent in it. It was atomic in structure, and sensitive.
- He also considered that thought is a property of the brain.
- Diderot was stick to the conception of the development of organisms. According to that theory, nature, or matter, is the cause of everything; it exists by itself, and it will continue to exist and to act eternally; it is its own cause.
- All material bodies consist of atoms. In relation to man, matter is everything that acts



# Paul-Henri Baron d'Holbach



(1723-1789)

Holbach was German nobleman who settled in Paris and became a French citizen. **A severe and outspoken atheist, he was highly critical of religion and the Church.**

He developed the doctrine of eternal change (nothing in nature is fixed; nature is capable of and is forever giving rise to new organisms; man is not exempt from this law of change; man cannot exist without nature, though nature can exist without man). By this doctrine, man has no special role in the universe; all things traditionally postulated about his uniqueness and worth are meaningless.

His atheistic materialism was stated in his "*The System of Nature*" (1770). He was nevertheless a staunch believer in freedom of thought and of the press, the separation of Church and State, and constitutionalism.

He described his own political outlook as ethnocratic, since the social contract is based on the mutual usefulness of individuals and the State, and the State is a means, not an end.

## Common features of Materialistic philosophy of the XVIII century :

- It manifested materialism in a crude atheistic form;
- It was based on natural science and stick upon its deduces;
- It was not contradictory to metaphysics;
- It had got mechanistic character;
- It was contemplative in the theory of knowledge and idealistic as for the conception of the society.

# Conclusions:

In general the Philosophy of the Modern Ages in the personalities of its most outstanding representatives proved convincingly that “There’s nothing more practical than a good theory” as Marx once said.

# Questions for express-control

1. What philosophical position admits reason as a basis of cognition?
2. Whom does the statement “I think, therefore I am” belong?
3. Who was the founder of Empiricism, the author of the dictum “Knowledge is power”?
4. What philosopher created the theory of “Monadology”?
5. Reducing God’s role to the first cause corresponds to the position of...