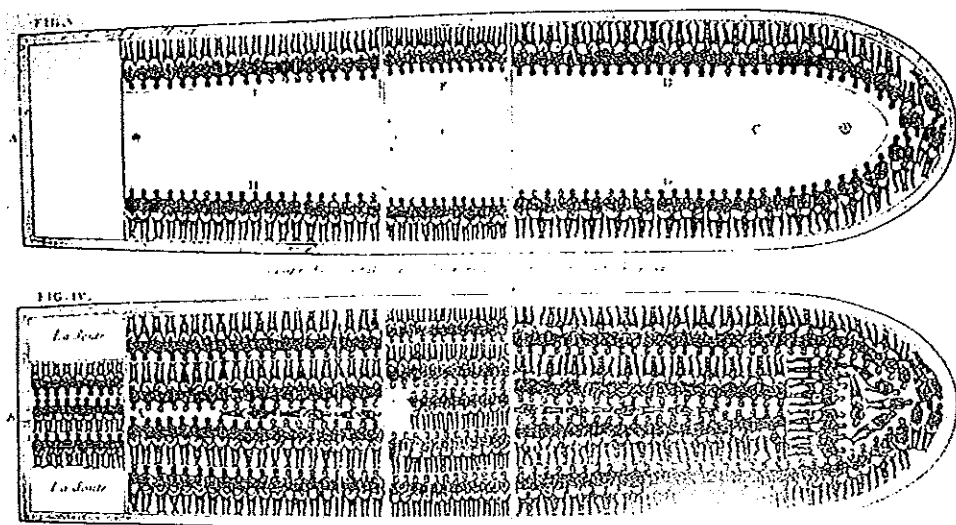


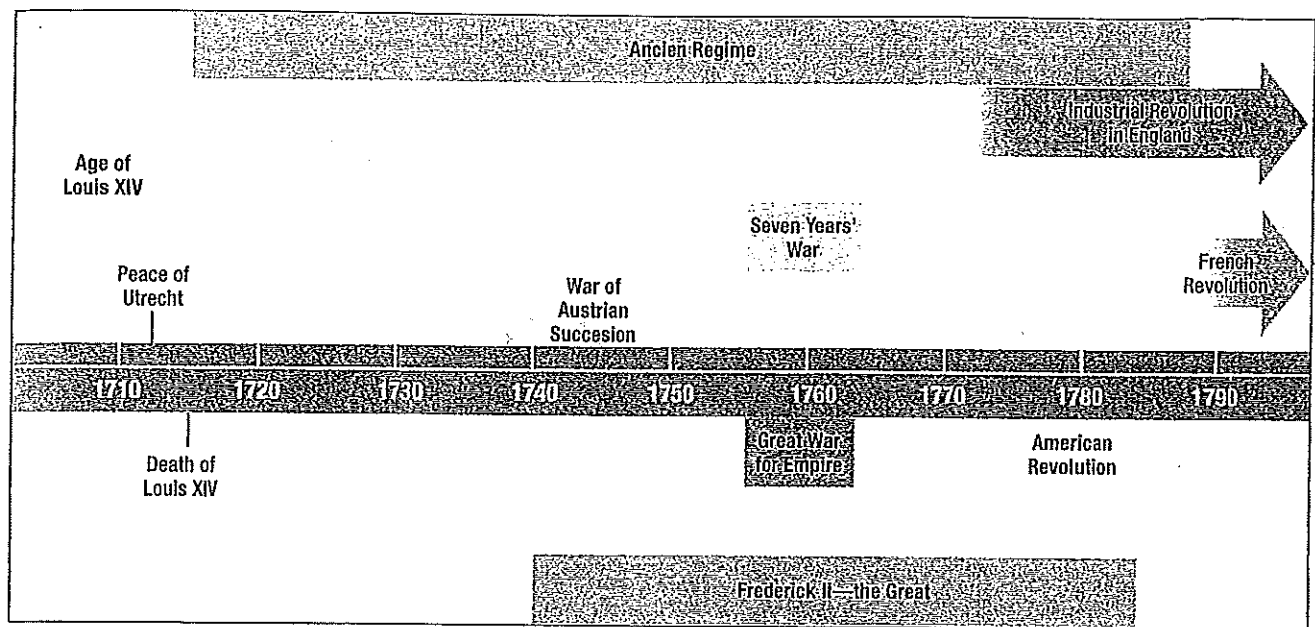
CHAPTER 8 READINGS

THE TRANSATLANTIC ECONOMY, TRADE WARS, AND COLONIAL REBELLION

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7 Politics and Society in the Ancien Régime

By the time of the death of Louis XIV in 1715, France no longer threatened to overwhelm the rest of Europe. Indeed, during most of the eighteenth century a rough balance of power developed amid the shifting diplomatic alliances and wars. There were two major sets of rivalries among states between 1715 and 1789. In Central Europe, the older Hapsburg Empire was pitted against the newer, assertive Prussia. Although Prussia acquired the status of a major power as a result of this competition, the Hapsburg Empire managed to hold on to most of its lands and to expand at the cost of weaker states like Poland and the Ottoman Empire. Outside of Europe, England and France struggled for supremacy over colonial territories in the Great War for Empire.

During this period preceding the French Revolution, referred to as the "Ancien Régime," most of the same political and social trends that had characterized the second half of the seventeenth century continued, namely, aristocratic dominance, strong monarchies, expanding central

governments, and traditional ways of life. Important changes that were initiated—such as agricultural, commercial, and industrial developments that strengthened the middle classes and led to urban growth—were limited in scope and area.

The sources in this chapter center on four aspects of the Ancien Régime between 1715 and 1789. First, the nature and position of the still-dominant aristocracy are examined. What were its responsibilities? What was the position of women within the aristocracy and outside of the aristocracy? Is it true that the aristocracy was frivolous? How did the aristocracy react to pressures from the monarchy on the one side and the middle classes on the other? What were the attitudes of the aristocracy toward the peasantry? Second, the development of the eighteenth-century state is analyzed. What role did Prussia's monarchs play in making her a major power? How did wars contribute to and reflect the growing importance of the state? Third, the importance of commerce and the middle class in

England is explored. What were the connections among commerce, the middle classes, and the English aristocracy? What was the relationship between the development of commerce and industry and England's colonial concerns and growing nationalism? What were some of the effects of the commerce in slaves engaged in by the English and others? Fourth, the assumptions most people held during the Ancien Régime are examined.

The sources in this chapter stress the relative political stability that characterized much of the period between

1715 and 1789. Stability was not the rule in intellectual matters, as will be seen in the next chapter.

For Classroom Discussion

Were politics and society in the Ancien Régime dominated by the aristocracy? Use the analyses by Krieger and Roberts, the source by Frederick the Great, and the paintings by Fragonard and Lawson.



Primary Sources

Political Testament

Frederick the Great

From a distance it may seem that eighteenth-century monarchs were much like those of the seventeenth century, similar in powers, position, and prestige. On closer examination, however, some differences are evident. Frederick II (the Great) of Prussia (1712–1786) was one of the most admired eighteenth-century monarchs. He ascended the throne in 1740 and ruled actively until his death in 1786. Frederick II continued the Prussian tradition of relying on a strong army to maintain and increase his holdings and prestige. At the same time he reorganized the army and the bureaucracy and introduced new ideas into both the theory and the practice of government. In the following excerpts from his Political Testament (1752), he sets out his conception of politics and the proper role of the sovereign.

CONSIDER: *How this conception of the monarch differs from that expressed by seventeenth-century monarchs; why Frederick emphasized the need to protect and support the nobility; who the crown's greatest political rivals for power were; the advantages and disadvantages to the monarch of religious toleration.*

Politics is the science of always using the most convenient means in accord with one's own interests. In order to act in conformity with one's interests one must know what these interests are, and in order to gain this knowledge one must study their history and application. . . . One must attempt, above all, to know the special genius of the people which one wants to govern in order to

know if one must treat them leniently or severely, if they are inclined to revolt . . . to intrigue. . . .

[The Prussian nobility] has sacrificed its life and goods for the service of the state, its loyalty and merit have earned it the protection of all its rulers, and it is one of the duties [of the ruler] to aid those [noble] families which have become impoverished in order to keep them in possession of their lands: for they are to be regarded as the pedestals and the pillars of the state. In such a state no factions or rebellions need be feared . . . it is one goal of the policy of this state to preserve the nobility.

A well conducted government must have an underlying concept so well integrated that it could be likened to a system of philosophy. All actions taken must be well reasoned, and all financial, political and military matters must flow towards one goal: which is the strengthening of the state and the furthering of its power. However, such a system can flow but from a single brain, and this must be that of the sovereign. Laziness, hedonism and imbecility, these are the causes which restrain princes in working at the noble task of bringing happiness to their subjects . . . a sovereign is not elevated to his high position, supreme power has not been confined to him in order that he may live in lazy luxury, enriching himself by the labor of the people, being happy while everyone else suffers. The sovereign is the first servant of the state. He is well paid in order that he may sustain the dignity of his office, but one demands that he work efficiently for the good of the state, and that he, at the very least, pay personal attention to the most important problems. . . .

You can see, without doubt, how important it is that the King of Prussia govern personally. Just as it would have been impossible for Newton to arrive at his system of attractions if he had worked in harness with Leibnitz and Descartes, so a system of politics cannot be arrived at and continued if it has not sprung from a single brain. . . . All parts of the government are inexorably linked with

Source: Frederick II, *Political Testament*, in *Europe in Review*, eds. George L. Mosse et al. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1957), pp. 110–112. Reprinted by permission of George L. Mosse.

each other. Finance, politics and military affairs are inseparable; it does not suffice that one will be well administered; they must all be . . . a Prince who governs personally, who has formed his [own] political system, will not be handicapped when occasions arise where he has to act swiftly: for he can guide all matters towards the end which he has set for himself. . . .

Catholics, Lutherans, Reformed, Jews and other Christian sects live in this state, and live together in peace: if the sovereign, actuated by a mistaken zeal, declares himself for one religion or another, parties will spring up, heated disputes ensue, little by little persecutions will commence and, in the end, the religion persecuted will leave the fatherland and millions of subjects will enrich our neighbors by their skill and industry.

It is of no concern in politics whether the ruler has a religion or whether he has none. All religions, if one examines them, are founded on superstitious systems, more or less absurd. It is impossible for a man of good sense, who dissects their contents, not to see their error; but these prejudices, these errors and mysteries were made for men, and one must know enough to respect the public and not to outrage its faith, whatever religion be involved.

The Complete English Tradesman

Daniel Defoe

During the eighteenth century England was growing in strength and prosperity, particularly in the areas of commerce and manufacturing. A primary beneficiary of these economic developments was the rising commercial middle class. This class was becoming more assertive as the English were becoming more nationalistic. Daniel Defoe (1659c.-1731) speaks about these trends in the following selection from *The Complete English Tradesman* (1726). Although best known for *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe wrote many works and followed a commercial career for some time.

CONSIDER: The support Defoe offers for his view that commerce rightly dominates the country economically; how the economic policies that Defoe would recommend compare with policies typical of mercantilism; the connections between commerce and social class in England; the apparent advantages of having colonies and the colonial policies that Defoe's views imply.

I . . . advance these three points in honour of our country
—1. That we are the greatest trading country in the world, because we have the greatest exportation of the

SOURCE: Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman*, vols. 17–18 of *The Novels and Miscellaneous Works of Daniel Defoe* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1840–1841), chap. 25.

growth and product of our land, and of the manufacture and labour of our people; and the greatest importation and consumption of the growth, product, and manufactures of other countries from abroad, of any nation in the world.

2. That our climate is the best and most agreeable to live in, because a man can be more out of doors in England than in other countries.*

3. That our men are the stoutest and best, because, strip them naked from the waist upwards, and give them no weapons at all but their hands and heels, and turn them into a room or stage, and lock them in with the like number of other men of any nation, man for man, and they shall beat the best men you shall find in the world.

And so many of our noble and wealthy families, as we have shown, are raised by and derived from trade, so it is true, and indeed it cannot well be otherwise, that many of the younger branches of our gentry, and even of the nobility itself, have descended again into the spring from whence they flowed, and have become tradesmen; and thence it is that, as I said above, our tradesmen in England are not, as it generally is in other countries, always of the meanest of our people. Nor is trade itself in England, as it generally is in other countries, the meanest thing that men can turn their hand to; but, on the contrary, trade is the readiest way for men to raise their fortunes and families; and therefore it is a field for men of figure and of good families to enter upon. . . .

As to the wealth of the nation, that undoubtedly lies chiefly among the trading part of the people; and though there are a great many families raised within few years, in the late war, by great employments and by great actions abroad, to the honour of the English gentry, yet how many more families among the tradesmen have been raised to immense estates, even during the same time, by the attending circumstances of the war, such as the clothing, the paying, the victualling and furnishing, &c., both army and navy. And by whom have the prodigious taxes been paid, the loans supplied, and money advanced upon all occasions? By whom are the banks and companies carried on, and on whom are the customs and excises levied? Have not the trade and tradesmen borne the burden of the war? And do they not still pay four million a year interest for the public debts? On whom are the funds levied, and by whom the public credit supported? Is not trade the inexhausted fund of all funds, and upon which all the rest depend?

Again, in how superior a port or figure (as we now call it) do our tradesmen live, to what the middling gentry either do or can support! An ordinary tradesman now, not in the city only, but in the country, shall spend more money by the year, than a gentleman of four or five hundred pounds a year can do, and shall increase and lay up every year too; whereas the gentleman shall at the

17-2 | Defining and Defending Mercantilism

THOMAS MUN, *England's Treasure by Foreign Trade* (1664)

The overseas trade and colonization policies adopted by early modern European countries were shaped, to a considerable degree, by the economic theory known as mercantilism. Mercantilists saw global wealth as finite and measured its movement from one nation to another exclusively in reference to the balance of trade. Since new wealth could not be created, one nation's gain was always another nation's loss. Thus, in the mercantilist view, the goal of government economic policy should be to maximize exports while minimizing imports. This goal had implications that went far beyond trade policy itself. Mercantilist governments attempted to stimulate economic activities at home that would produce goods with ready foreign markets. At the same time, they sought to acquire colonies abroad which would eliminate the need to purchase raw materials from foreign competitors. In the excerpt below, Thomas Mun (1571-1641), an influential English merchant and economic theorist, laid out the basic premise of mercantilism. As you read it, think about the kinds of policies that might follow from Mun's assumptions.

Although a Kingdom may be enriched by gifts received, or by purchase taken from some other Nations, yet these are things uncertain and of small consideration when they happen. The ordinary means therefore to encrease our wealth and treasure is by *Foreign Trade*, wherein we must ever observe this rule; to sell more to strangers yearly than we consume of theirs in value. For suppose that when this Kingdom is plentifully served with the Cloth, Lead, Tin, Iron, Fish and other native commodities, we do yearly export the overplus to foreign Countries to the value of twenty two hundred thousand pounds; by which means we are enabled beyond the Seas to buy and bring in foreign wares for our use and Consumptions, to the value of twenty hundred thousand pounds; By this order duly kept in our trading, we may rest assured that the Kingdom shall be enriched yearly two hundred thousand pounds, which must be brought to us in so much Treasure; because that part of our stock which is not returned to us in wares must necessarily be brought home in treasure.

For in this case it cometh to pass in the stock of a Kingdom, as in the estate of a private man; who is supposed to have one thousand pounds yearly revenue and two thousand pounds of ready money in his Chest. If such a man through excess shall spend one thousand five hundred pounds *per annum*, all his ready money will be gone in four years; and in the like time his said money will be doubled if he take a Frugal course to spend but five hundred pounds *per annum*; which rule never falleth likewise in the Commonwealth, but in some cases (of no great moment) which I will hereafter declare, when I shall shew by whom and in what manner this balance of the Kingdoms account ought to be drawn up yearly, or so often as it shall please the State to discover how much we gain or lose by trade with foreign Nations. But first I will say something concerning those ways and means which will encrease our exportations and diminish our importations of wares; which being done, I will then set down some other arguments both affirmative and negative to strengthen that which is here declared, and thereby to shew that all the other means which are commonly supposed to enrich the Kingdom with Treasure are altogether insufficient and mere fallacies.

READING QUESTIONS

1. According to Mun, what rule must England follow if it was to increase its wealth?
2. What analogy did Mun use to prove his point? Do you find it convincing? Why or why not?
3. What connections can you draw between mercantilism and the trade wars of the early modern period?

16-1 Seventeenth-Century Dutch Illustration of Buccaneers Attacking a Spanish Ship



The second half of the seventeenth century was the golden age of Atlantic piracy, especially in the Caribbean, where numerous small harbors provided refuge for pirate ships. Piracy's origins lay partly in unofficially sanctioned privateer attacks by English and Dutch ships on Spanish treasure fleets.

1. How do the tactics shown relate to the buccaneer goal of capturing ships and goods?
2. Briefly discuss how piracy affected the transatlantic trade.

16-2 West African Slave Market

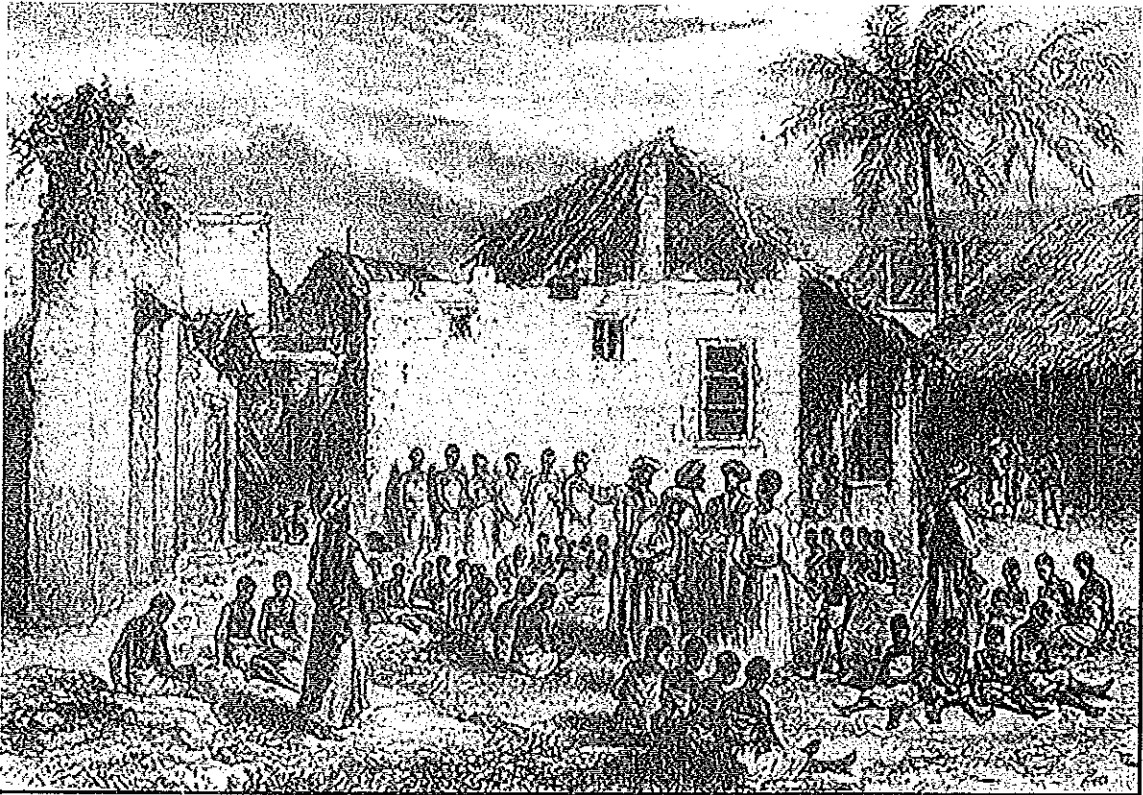


Photo credit: The Granger Collection, New York

Both Europeans and Africans were involved in the slave trade, which eventually transported around 12 million Africans across the Atlantic. African societies that sold captives into slavery often preferred to sell the men and keep the women and children as domestic slaves.

1. What can you infer about African society if African slavers preferred to keep women and children?
2. Slavery existed in Africa long before Europeans arrived. But how did the Atlantic slave trade affect African societies in ways that the internal African slave trade had not?

16-3 Slave Sale Notice



Negroes for Sale.

A Cargo of very fine stout Men and Women, in good order and fit for immediate service, just imported from the Windward Coast of Africa, in the Ship Two Brothers.—

Conditions are one half Cash or Produce, the other half payable the first of January next, giving Bond and Security if required.

The Sale to be opened at 10 o'Clock each Day, in Mr. Bourdeaux's Yard, at No. 48, on the Bay.

May 19, 1784. JOHN MITCHELL.

Thirty Seasoned Negroes

To be Sold for Credit, at Private Sale.

AMONGST which is a Carpenter, none of whom are known to be dishonest.

Also to be sold for Cash, a regular bred young Negroe Man-Cook, born in this Country, who served several Years under an exceeding good French-Cook abroad, and his Wife a middle aged Washer-Woman, (both very honest) and their two Children. Likewise, a young Man a Carpenter.

For Terms apply to the Printer.

This is a printed notice advertising the sale of slaves from May 19, 1784. The English is a bit different from today's, but the text is clearly readable.

1. What were the terms of purchase as advertised here?
2. What did the advertisers highlight in their sales pitch, to make these human beings attractive to purchasers?

best stand stock still just where he began, nay, perhaps, decline: and as for the lower gentry, from a hundred pounds a year to three hundred, or thereabouts, though they are often as proud and high in their appearance as the other; as to them, I say, a shoemaker in London shall keep a better house, spend more money, clothe his family better, and yet grow rich too. It is evident where the difference lies; an estate's a pond, but trade's a spring: the first, if it keeps full, and the water wholesome, by the ordinary supplies and drains from the neighbouring grounds, it is well, and it is all that is expected; but the other is an inexhausted current, which not only fills the pond, and keeps it full, but is continually running over, and fills all the lower ponds and places about it.

This being the case in England, and our trade being so vastly great, it is no wonder that the tradesmen in England fill the lists of our nobility and gentry; no wonder that the gentlemen of the best families marry tradesmen's daughters, and put their younger sons apprentices to tradesmen; and how often do these younger sons come to buy the elder sons' estates, and restore the family, when the elder and head of the house, proving rakish and extravagant, has wasted his patrimony, and is obliged to make out the blessing of Israel's family, where the younger son bought the birthright, and the elder was doomed to serve him!

Trade is so far here from being inconsistent with a gentleman, that, in short, trade in England makes gentlemen, and has peopled this nation with gentlemen; for, after a generation or two, the tradesman's children, or at least their grandchildren, come to be as good gentlemen, statesmen, parliamentarian, privy-counsellors, judges, bishops, and noblemen, as those of the highest birth and the most ancient families; as we have shown. . . .

All this confirms what I have said before, viz., that trade in England neither is or ought to be levelled with what it is in other countries; or the tradesmen depreciated as they are abroad, and as some of our gentry would pretend to do in England; but that as many of our best families rose from trade, so many branches of the best families in England, under the nobility, have stooped so low as to be put apprentices to tradesmen in London, and to set up and follow those trades when they have come out of their times, and have thought it no dishonour to their blood. . . .

The greatness of the British nation is not owing to war and conquests, to enlarging its dominions by the sword, or subjecting the people of other countries to our power; but it is all owing to trade, to the increase of our commerce at home, and the extending it abroad.

It is owing to trade, that new discoveries have been made in lands unknown, and new settlements and plantations made, new colonies planted, and new governments formed, in the uninhabited islands, and the

uncultivated continent of America; and those plantings and settlements have again enlarged and increased the trade, and thereby the wealth and power of the nation by whom they were discovered and planted; we have not increased our power, or the number of our subjects, by subduing the nations which possess those countries, and incorporating them into our own; but have entirely planted our colonies, and peopled the countries with our own subjects, natives of this island; and, excepting the negroes, which we transport from Africa to America, as slaves to work in the sugar and tobacco plantations, all our colonies, as well in the islands, as on the continent of America, are entirely peopled from Great Britain and Ireland, and chiefly the former; the natives having either removed further up into the country, or, by their own folly and treachery raising war against us, been destroyed and cut off. . . .

The Slave Trade

Anonymous

Part of the commercial prosperity enjoyed by several Western nations was built on the slave trade, which flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Slaves were generally shipped in British vessels, but the French and others engaged in this trade as well. Most slaves were taken across the Atlantic to Europe's colonial holdings, which in turn shipped goods such as sugar, metals, and wood products to the home country. Although there was little widespread opposition to slavery in Europe during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, by the middle of the eighteenth century antislavery sentiments were growing. The following is an account of what was involved in the slave trade, written in 1771 by an anonymous Frenchman who argued for its abolition.

CONSIDER: *The attitudes that permitted and supported the slave trade; the effects of this experience on the blacks; the legacy of this trade for the colonies.*

As soon as the ships have lowered their anchors off the coast of Guinea, the price at which the captains have decided to buy the captives is announced to the Negroes who buy prisoners from various princes and sell them to the Europeans. Presents are sent to the sovereign who rules over that particular part of the coast, and permission to trade is given. Immediately the slaves are brought by inhuman brokers like so many victims dragged to a sacrifice. White men who covet that portion of the human race receive them in a little house they have erected on the shore, where they have entrenched themselves

with two pieces of cannon and twenty guards. As soon as the bargain is concluded, the Negro is put in chains and led aboard the vessel, where he meets his fellow sufferers. Here sinister reflections come to his mind; everything shocks and frightens him and his uncertain destiny gives rise to the greatest anxiety. At first he is convinced that he is to serve as a repast to the white men, and the wine which the sailors drink confirms him in this cruel thought, for he imagines that this liquid is the blood of his fellows.

The vessel sets sail for the Antilles, and the Negroes are chained in a hold of the ship, a kind of lugubrious prison where the light of day does not penetrate, but into which air is introduced by means of a pump. Twice a day some disgusting food is distributed to them. Their consuming sorrow and the sad state to which they are reduced would make them commit suicide if they were not deprived of all the means for an attempt upon their lives. Without any kind of clothing it would be difficult to conceal from the watchful eyes of the sailors in charge of any instrument apt to alleviate their despair. The fear of a revolt, such as sometimes happens on the voyage from Guinea, is the basis of a common concern and produces as many guards as there are men in the crew. The slightest noise or a secret conversation among two Negroes is punished with utmost severity. All in all, the voyage is made in a continuous state of alarm on the part of the white men, who fear a revolt, and in a cruel state of uncertainty on the part of the Negroes, who do not know the fate awaiting them.

When the vessel arrives at a port in the Antilles, they are taken to a warehouse where they are displayed, like any merchandise, to the eyes of buyers. The plantation owner pays according to the age, strength and health of the Negro he is buying. He has him taken to his plantation, and there he is delivered to an overseer who then and there becomes his tormentor. In order to domesticate him, the Negro is granted a few days of rest in his new place, but soon he is given a hoe and a sickle and made to join a work gang. Then he ceases to wonder about his fate; he understands that only labor is demanded of him. But he does not know yet how excessive this labor will be. As a matter of fact, his work begins at dawn and does not end before nightfall; it is interrupted for only two hours at dinnertime. The food a full-grown Negro is given each week consists of two pounds of salt beef or cod and two pots of tapioca meal, amounting to about two pints of Paris. A Negro of twelve or thirteen years or under is given only one pot of meal and one pound of beef or cod. In place of food some planters give their Negroes the liberty of working for themselves every Saturday; others are even less generous and grant them this liberty only on Sundays and holidays. Therefore, since the nourishment of the Negroes is insufficient, their tendency to cheat

must be attributed to the necessity of finding the food they lack.

Letter to Lady R., 1716: Women and the Aristocracy

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

During the eighteenth century women continued to remain limited in the economic and political roles they could play, but it was possible for aristocratic women to take up influential social and cultural roles. In particular, many women used letter writing as an art, and from these letters much insight about the position and attitudes of women can be gained. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762) was a well-known British literary figure, writing essays and poetry in addition to her volumes of letters. The following is a selection from a letter written in 1716 to Lady R.

CONSIDER: *The assumptions about marriage among the aristocracy; connections among marriage, love, and economic interests; the position of aristocratic women reflected by this letter.*

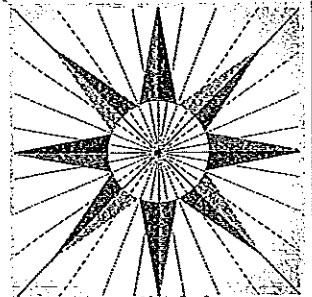
No woman dares appear coquette enough to encourage two lovers at a time. And I have not seen any such prudes as to pretend fidelity to their husbands, who are certainly the best natured set of people in the world, and look upon their wives' gallants as favourably as men do upon their deputies, that take the troublesome part of their business off their hands. They have not however the less to do on that account; for they are generally deputies in another place themselves; in one word, 'tis the established custom for every lady to have two husbands, one that bears the name, and another that performs the duties. And these engagements are so well known, that it would be a downright affront, and publicly resented, if you invited a woman of quality to dinner, without, at the same time, inviting her two attendants of lover and husband, between whom she sits in state with great gravity. The submarriages generally last twenty years together, and the lady often commands the poor lover's estate, even to the utter ruin of his family.

These connections, indeed, are as seldom begun by any real passion as other matches; for a man makes but an ill figure that is not in some commerce of this nature; and a woman looks out for a lover as soon as she's married, as part of her equipage, without which she could not be genteel; and the first article of the treaty is establishing the pension, which remains to the lady, in case the gallant should prove inconstant. This chargeable point of honour I look upon as the real foundation of so many

(1716) (3)

CHAPTER 15

Europe and the World in the Eighteenth Century



Willem Bosman, from *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea Divided into the Gold, the Slave, and the Ivory Coasts*

A Dutch sea-captain born in Utrecht in 1672, Willem Bosman drew on his 14 years of experience sailing along the coast of Western Africa to write this important narrative in 1705. Among other things, the book provides an eyewitness account of how the African slave trade worked around 1700, and it was quickly translated into many languages and furnished with illustrations and maps in many editions. This excerpt describes the mechanisms of the slave trade in "Whydah" (today called "Ouidah"), a kingdom that was absorbed into the Dahomey kingdom in 1727, and is today part of the nation of Benin.

Source: Willem Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea Divided into the Gold, the Slave, and the Ivory Coasts*. Translated from Dutch (London, 1705), pp. 363-365.

FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What was the ultimate "source" of slaves, according to Bosman, and how did other Africans contribute to this market?
2. Does Bosman recognize that slaves were human beings, due the respect that is proper to all people? Is he credible on this point?
3. How does this document reveal Europeans' fears about slave rebellion? Were there practical reasons for masters to treat their slaves with a modicum of decency?

...The first business of one of our Factors when he comes to Fida [Whydah] is to satisfy the Customs of the King and the great Men, which amount to about 100 Pounds in Guinea value, as the Goods must yield there. After which we have

free Licence to Trade, which is published throughout the whole Land by the Gover.

But yet before we can deal with any Person, we are obliged to buy the King's whole stock of Slaves at a set price; which is commonly one third or one fourth higher than ordinary: After which we obtain free leave to deal with all his Subjects of what Rank so-ever. But if there happen to be no stock of Slaves, the Factor must then resolve to run the Risque of trusting the inhabitants with Goods to the value of one or two hundred Slaves; which Commodities they send into the In-land Country, in order to buy with them Slaves at all Markets, and that sometimes two hundred Miles deep in the Country: For you ought to be informed that Markets of Men are kept in the same manner as those of beasts with us.

Not a few in our Country fondly imagine that Parents here sell their Children, Men their Wives, and one Brother the other: But those who think so deceive themselves; for this never happens on any other account but that of Necessity, or some great Crime: But most of the Slaves that are offered to us are Prisoners of War, which are sold by the victors as their Booty.

When these Slaves come to Fida, they are put in Prison all together, and when we treat concerning buying them, they are all brought out together in a large Plain; where, by our Chirurgeons, whose Province it is, they are thoroughly examined, even to the smallest Member, and that naked too both Men and Women, without the least Distinction or Modesty. Those which are approved as good are set on one side; and the lame or faulty are set by as Invalides, which are here called Mackrons. These are such as are above five and thirty Years old, or are maimed in the Arms, Legs, Hands or Feet, have lost a Tooth, are grey haired, or have Films over their Eyes; as well as all those which are affected with any Veneral Distemper, or with several other Diseases.

The Invalides and the Maimed being thrown out, as I have told you, the remainder are numbered, and it is entred who delivered them. In the mean while a burning Iron, with the Arms or Name of the Companies, lyes in the Fire; with which ours are marked on the Breast.

This is done that we may distinguish them from the Slaves of the English, French or others; (which are also marked with their Mark) and to prevent the Negros exchanging them for worse; at which they have a good Hand.

I doubt not but this Trade seems very barbarous to you, but since it is followed by meer necessity it must go on but we yet take all possible care that they are not burned too hard, especially the Women, who are more tender than the Men.

We are seldom long detained in the buying of these Slaves, because their price is established, the Women being one fourth or fifth part cheaper than the

Men. The Disputes which we generally have with the Owners of these Slaves are, that we will not give them such Goods as they ask for them, especially the Boesies (as I have told you, the Money of this Country) of which they are very fond, though we generally make a Division on this Head in order to make one sort of Goods help off another, because those Slaves which are paid for in Boesies cost the Company one half more than those bought with other Goods. The Price of a Slave is commonly—

When we have agreed with the Owners of the Slaves, they are returned to their Prison; where from that time forwards they are kept at our charge, cost us two pence a day a Slave; which serves to subsist them, like our Criminals, on Bread and Water: So that to save Charges we send them on Board our Ships with the very first Opportunity; before which their Master strip them of all they have on their Backs; so that they come Aboard stark-naked as well Women as Men: in which condition they are obliged to continue, if the Master of the Ship is not so Charitable (which he commonly is) as to bestow something on them to cover their Nakedness.

You would really wonder to see how these Slaves live on Board; for though their number sometimes amounts to six or seven Hundred, yet by the careful Management of our Masters of Ships, they are so regulated that it seems incredible: And in this particular our Nation exceeds all other Europeans; for as the French, Portuguese and English Slave-Ships, are always foul and stinking; on the contrary ours are for the most part clean and neat.

The Slaves are fed three times a Day with indifferent good Victuals, and much better than they eat in their own Country. Their Lodging-place is divided into two parts; one of which is appointed for the Men the other for the Women each Sex being kept a-part: Here they lye as close together as is possible for them to be crowded.

We are sometimes sufficiently plagued with a parcel of Slaves, which come from a far In-land Country, who very innocently perswade one another, that we buy them only to fatten and afterwards eat them as a Delicacy.

When we are so unhappy as to be pestered with many of this sort, they resolve and agree together (and bring over the rest to their Party) to run away from the Ship, kill the Europeans, and set the Vessel a-shore; by which means they design to free themselves from being our Food.

I have twice met with this Misfortune; and the first time proved very unlucky to me, I not in the least suspecting it; but the Up-roar was timely quashed by the Master of the Ship and my self, by causing the Abettor to be shot through the Head, after which all was quiet.

But the second time it fell heavier on another Ship, and that chiefly by the carelessness of the Master, who having fished up the Anchor of a departed

English Ship, had laid it in the Hold where the Male Slaves were lodged; who, unknown to any of the Ships Crew, possessed themselves of a Hammer, with which, in a short time, they broke all their Fetters in pieces upon the Anchor: after this they came above Deck and fell upon our Men; some of whom they grievously wounded, and would certainly have mastered the Ship, if a French and English Ship had not very fortunately happened to lye by us; who perceiving by our firing a Distressed Gun, that something was in disorder on Board, immediately came to our assistance with Chalops and Men, and drove the Slaves under Deck: Notwithstanding which before all was appeased about twenty of them were killed...

Phillis Wheatley, "To the Right Honourable William, Earl of Dartmouth..."

Phillis Wheatley was born in Senegal in 1753. At the age of seven, she was captured, enslaved, and shipped to America. Once there, she was purchased by the Wheatleys of Boston, Massachusetts, who gave her an education that helped her develop her considerable intellectual gifts. At age thirteen, she published her first book of poems. So many white people found it difficult to believe that a black woman could write sophisticated poetry, that Wheatley was forced to prove her abilities in court in 1772. After an exhaustive examination by some of Boston's most famous men, the court concluded that she was, indeed, the author of the poems published under her name. The Earl of Dartmouth, to whom Wheatley addressed the poem included below, helped with the publication of her work in England.

Source: Phillis Wheatley, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (London, 1773), pp. 73-75.

FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What does the poem tell us about the nature of Wheatley's education? What might have motivated the Wheatleys to purchase her and educate her the way they did?

2. What strategies did Wheatley employ in her effort to persuade the Earl of Dartmouth to take action? What actions did she hope he would take?

Hail, happy day, when, smiling like the morn,
Fair Freedom rose New-England to adorn:
The northern clime beneath her genial ray,
Dartmouth, congratulates thy blissful sway:

9.3 Slaves in the City

Slavery was also common in the cities and towns. Even relatively modest-income families had a slave or two to do menial labor, since such labor—"even carrying an umbrella or a package"—was considered beneath the dignity of a free person. The following are from newspaper want ads. *Source: O Diario do Rio de Janeiro, December 17, 1821; reprinted in Children of God's Fire, pp. 11-13.*

SALES

2. For sale a creole slave, a skilfull shoemaker, with a very good figure, about twenty years of age, with no vices or bad habits. His final price is 300,000 reis. Anyone interested in him should go to Travessa do Paço No. 11, upstairs, where he will find someone to speak to about the matter.

3. In Rua de Santa Teresa No. 36 a black man is now on sale, since his master is about to leave for Lisbon.

4. For sale, a black man of the Angola nation, about 20 to 25 years of age, a very good maker of combs, both tortoise shell and animal born. Anyone interested should go to Rua da Quitanda, corner of São Pedro, No. 50, where he will find someone to deal with....

6. Whoever would like to buy three native slave women from Angola, who have come recently from that place, one who irons and does laundry, another a baker and laundress, and the third also a laundress, all with very good figures and the ability to do every kind of work in the house, should contact Manoel do Nascimento da Mata, Rua Direita No. 54, first floor....

8. Whoever would like to buy a very good black cook and laundress, who also knows how to iron, is still young and without vices, should go to Rua dos Pescadores No. 80, where he will find someone to speak to....

PURCHASES

11. Whoever has a creole girl, well made, from six to eight years of age, and wishes to sell her, should contact Manoel do Nascimento da Mata, Rua Direita No. 54, first floor. He wishes to buy her to take her out of the country.

RENTALS

13. Whoever is interested in renting slaves well trained in the baker's trade, who could even do every type of work in a house, should go to Rua dos Latoeiros, house No. 14, or to the textile shop on the Rua do Cano, almost at the corner of Rua dos Latoeiros, facing house No. 51.

WET NURSES

16. Whoever would like to buy a black woman with milk, who can also cook and wash, should go to Rua do Senhor dos Passos, No. 35, opposite [the statue] of the same Senhor dos Passos....Private Notices....

19. Whoever is interested in sending us any slave woman for training in ironing, sewing, and other accomplishments appropriate to a woman should direct himself to Rua

São José, No. 69. In the same shop we mend silk stockings, do washing, every kind of sewing, and ironing is taken in at a reasonable price....

FOUND

34. Antonio José Telles, bush captain [capitão-do-mato], just arriving from Santa Cruz, has captured three black men from some thieves. Two acculturated Africans [ladinos] have been turned over to their owners, and a beardless boy newly arrived from Mozambique has been delivered to the jail for safekeeping, and I now make known to the public through this ad that his owner can see him at the jail.

35. On the 7th of the current month about ten o'clock in the morning two residents of Minas Gerais who stayed at the marshy encampment on the road to Minas and São Paulo found a black woman in an open hut and, suspecting her of being a runaway, took her with them and turned her over to Manoel Lopes Rodrigues Guimarães, a resident at the Carova ranch, in the new parish of Campo Grande. She says she is a Benguela and that her name is Maria. She is still not very adapted to the country, but says her master is a mulatto named Alexandre, and that he lives in the Valongo. Her owner can find her in the aforementioned ranch, or look for her in the bakery in the Beco das Cancellas between Rua do Ouvidor and Rua do Rosario, where she will be sent. When a precise description of her has been given, she will be surrendered to her owner, once the expenses have been paid.

ROBBERY

36. A black man of the Benguela nation named Joaquim has run away, taking with him a display case containing wares. He has been going about the city as a peddler, with a license made out in the name of Isabel Esmeria, and the wares he has stolen belong to her, his mistress. He is believed to be selling his materials in various places protected by the license which he also took with him. Whoever knows anything about the stolen goods, or the black man, should notify his mistress, who will pay a reward for the trouble. It is suggested to anyone who inspects street peddlers' licenses that if he should find this man in possession of that license he should have him arrested as a thief. It is also suggested that it will be easier to find him during daylight hours, and that the license will serve as evidence....

RUNAWAY SLAVES

40. It is now two months since a black creole woman named Candida from Mozambique ran away. She is tall, fullbodied, has long hair, and four spots or marks of her nation, one between the eyes, another on the chin, and one on each cheek. She has one slightly bent leg. Whoever brings her safely to Rua de Santo Antonio, No. 10, will receive the deserved reward.

41. A slave named Joaquim ran away in September of last year from Luis Manoel de Almeida Bastos. He is of the Benguela nation, practices the profession of cook, and was also a peddler. He is tall, ugly in the face, has a flat nose, with a scar in the corner of his left eye, and another on his lower lip close to the corner of his mouth, and he has, big flat feet. Anyone who has any information about him, and wishes to notify his above-mentioned, master, a resident at Caju Point in the house of Captain Manoel Joaquim Bacellar, will receive three doubloons as a reward.

UBA (12)

42. On October 30, last, a black man named Narciso fled from house No. 19 of the Rua do Lavradio. He is a trained mason, still a boy of about 18, short, well-built, has large eyes, and a very sprightly and happy face; blue trousers of cotton gingham from Minas Gerais, also carried cotton trousers. It is believed that he goes about in the city suburbs working at his trade. Project supervisors and master masons are requested to check at their construction sites....

1. List three things the author said that you think are important.

2. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.

3. List two things the document tells you about life at the time it was written.

4. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document.

9.2 Thomas Paine: from Common Sense

Thomas Paine (1737–1809) arrived in America in 1774, after having been forced out of his job as an excise officer for leading a campaign for higher wages. An acquaintance of Benjamin Franklin, who he first met in England, Paine wrote a series of pamphlets espousing the cause of American independence. The most famous, excerpted here, was entitled *Common Sense*. Source: *From Common Sense*, by Thomas Paine, *Penguin Classics*, ed. Isaac Kramnick (New York: Penguin Books, 1987), pp. 68–71.

Here then is the origin and rise of government; namely, a mode tendered necessary by the inability of moral virtue to govern the world; here too is the design and end of government, viz. freedom and security. And however our eyes may be dazzled with snow, or our ears deceived by sound; however prejudice may warp our wills, or interest darken our understanding, the simple voice of nature and of reason will say, it is right.

I draw my idea of the form of government from a principle in nature, which no art can overturn, viz. that the more simple any thing is, the less liable it is to be disordered, and the easier repaired when disordered; and with this maxim in view, I offer a few remarks on the so much boasted constitution of England. That it was noble for the dark and slavish times in which it was erected is granted. When the world was over-run with tyranny the least remove therefrom was a glorious rescue. But that it is imperfect, subject to convulsions, and incapable of producing what it seems to promise, is easily demonstrated.

Absolute governments (tho' the disgrace of human nature) have this advantage with them, that they are simple; if the people suffer, they know the head from which their suffering springs, know likewise the remedy, and are not bewildered by a variety of causes and cures. But the constitution of England is so exceedingly complex, that the nation may suffer for years together without being able to discover in which part the fault lies, some will say in one and some in another, and every political physician will advise a different medicine.

I know it is difficult to get over local or long standing prejudices, yet if we will suffer ourselves to examine the component parts of the English constitution, we shall find them to be the base remains of two ancient compounded with some new republican materials.

First.—The remains of monarchical tyranny in the person of the king.

Secondly.—The remains of aristocratical tyranny in the persons of the peers.

Thirdly.—The new republican materials, in the persons of the commons, on whose virtue depends the freedom of England.

The two first, by being hereditary, are independent of the people; wherefore in a constitutional sense they contribute nothing towards the freedom of the state.

To say that the constitution of England is a union of three powers reciprocally checking each other, is farcical, either the words have no meaning, or they are flat contradictions.

To say that the commons is a check upon the king, presupposes two things.

First.—That the king is not to be trusted without being looked after, or in other words, that a thirst for absolute power is the natural disease of monarchy.

Secondly.—That the commons, by being appointed for that purpose, are either wiser or more worthy of confidence than the crown.

But as the same constitution which gives the commons a power to check the king by withholding the supplies, gives afterwards the king a power to check the commons, by empowering him to reject their other bills; it again supposes that the king is wiser than those whom it has already supposed to be wiser than him. A mere absurdity!

There is something exceedingly ridiculous in the composition of monarchy; it first excludes a man from the means of information, yet empowers him to act in cases where the highest judgment is required. The state of a king shuts him from the world, yet the business of a king requires him to know it thoroughly; wherefore the different parts, unnaturally opposing and destroying each other, prove the whole character to be absurd and useless.

Some writers have explained the English constitution thus; the king, say they, is one, the people another; the peers are an house in behalf of the king; the commons in behalf of the people; but this hath all the distinctions of an house divided against itself; and though the expressions be pleasantly arranged, yet when examined they appear idle and ambiguous; and it will always happen, that the nicest construction that words are capable of, when applied to the description of some thing which either cannot exist, or is too incomprehensible to be within the compass of description, will be words of sound only, and though they may amuse the ear, they cannot inform the mind, for this, explanation includes a previous question, viz. *How came the king by a power which the people are afraid to trust, and always obliged to check?* Such a power could not be the gift of a wise people, neither can any power, which needs checking, be from God; yet the provision, which the constitution makes, supposes such a power to exist.

But the provision is unequal to the task; the means either cannot or will not accomplish the end, and the whole affair is a *felo de se*; for as the greater weight will always carry up the less, and as all the wheels of a machine are put in motion by one, it only remains to know which power in the constitution has the most weight, for that will govern; and though the others, or a part of them, may clog, or, as the phrase is, check the rapidity of its motion, yet so long as they cannot stop it, their endeavours will be ineffectual; the first moving power will at last have its way, and what it wants in speed is supplied by time.

That the crown is this overbearing part in the English constitution needs not be mentioned, and that it derives its whole consequence merely from being the giver of places and pensions is self-evident, wherefore, though we have been wise enough to shut and lock a door against absolute monarchy, we at the same time have been foolish enough to put the crown in possession of the key.

The prejudice of Englishmen, in favour of their own government by king, lords, and commons, arises as much or more from national pride than reason. Individuals are undoubtedly safer in England than in some other countries, but the will of the king is as much the law of the land in Britain as in France, with this difference, that instead of proceeding directly from his mouth, it is handed to the people under the most formidable shape of an act of parliament. For the fate of Charles the First, hath only made kings more subtle—not more just.

Wherefore, laying aside all national pride and prejudice in favour of modes and forms, the plain truth is, that it is wholly owing to the constitution of the people, and not to the constitution of the government that the crown is not as oppressive in England as in Turkey.

An inquiry into the constitutional errors in the English form of government is at this time highly necessary; for as we are never in a proper condition of doing justice to others, while we continue under the influence of some leading partiality, so neither are we capable of doing it to ourselves while we remain fettered by any obstinate prejudice. And as a man, who is attached to a prostitute, is unfitted to choose or judge of a wife, so any prepossession in favour of a rotten constitution of government will disable us from discerning a good one.