

Austrian High Enlightenment

Josephinism, Literature, and State Building

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Abstract

This article examines state building under Joseph II in the Habsburg Empire between the period of 1780-1790 and considers the intellectual successes of Josephinism. It analyzes the context of his targeted intellectual audience and focuses in particular on the work of Austrian author Johann Pezzl who was a contemporary of Joseph II and a member of Masonic and other Enlightenment era groups.

Article

The reign of Joseph II was at the peak of Enlightenment sensibilities, and in many ways, he personified the ideal of an enlightened monarch. To be an enlightened monarch was to embody the state in your every action and be dictated not by the church or emotional sentimentality but by logic and reason; Joseph certainly worked towards this ideal. After the death of his mother Maria Theresa in 1780, Joseph oversaw a number of reforms in the Habsburg realm. From his Edict of Tolerance in 1781 to his lifting of censorship on the press to his attempts to modernize agriculture in the Empire, Joseph was a figure of modernity. This is not to say Austria was the backward land that it is often portrayed as in popular history; its many different legal systems, languages, and lack of centralized structures were not dissimilar to France, England, and even Prussia.¹ Yet Austria and Joseph II were subtly different in this era and marked by continual contradictions. Joseph II liberalized censorship laws, yet at the same time, he went against theatre and ballet, pushed for greater “Germanization” throughout his empire, and took part in the dismantling of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Joseph II clearly embodied the contradictions and transitions that Austria and much of Europe underwent at the end of the eighteenth century.

Historical scholarship on his rule gives much attention to his role in the creation of the bureaucratic state and to how he focused his energies on reforming the Habsburg Monarchy with his policies of state building, such as state schools, agricultural reform, and abolishment of serfdom.² The culture of High Enlightenment Vienna is also given attention.

¹ Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 49.

² Derek Beales, *Joseph II, vol. 2, Against the World 1780-1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 307-315, 363.

Much of the scholarship on the reign of Joseph II is about the culture of music in Vienna during the late classical and early Romantic era. A major gap that is missing from this period is material on literature during Joseph's reign. While one of Joseph's primary biographers, Derek Beales, wrote extensively on the Joseph's reign, he does not give much attention to the literary culture of the era, devoting only a chapter or article to it.³ This article examines the function of the Enlightenment in Austria through a little known novel from the era. The text, *Faustin oder das philosophische Jahrhundert* (Faustin or the philosophical century) by Joseph Pezzl, was composed during Joseph's reign. While work such as *Faustin oder das philosophische Jahrhundert* does not carry the same weight in the so-called canon of western literature as its French counterpart, *Candide*, Pezzl clearly saw Austria as part of the Enlightenment—and even the center of it.⁴ Therefore, historians should also recognize that Austria was an essential part of the Enlightenment.⁵ Unfortunately, much of the historical literature gives very little attention to the interaction of literature with the public sphere, instead preferring to look at either newspapers, periodicals, or even works of theater. This article therefore focuses on this interaction between the public and relevant literature.

The study of the Enlightenment in Austria is complicated by its chronology and nature. While it can be solidly argued that Joseph was a figure of enlightened absolutism, it becomes more problematic when one looks at the achievements of the Enlightenment and Josephinism in the Austrian context. While the era following Joseph was marked by greater levels of conservatism and sometimes reactionary responses to the French Revolution, figures such Joseph Rohrer and Charles Sealsfield actively engaged the Enlightenment in their writings and actions.⁶ While not an exhaustive study of the era, this article intends to shine some light on the historical origins of the Enlightenment in Austria and how it relates to the culture of tolerance, censorship, arts, and contradictions that were part of the era of Josephinism. It focuses specifically on the period of 1780 to 1790 when Joseph reigned as sole Emperor. It looks at the effects that Joseph had on the book and printing industry and his enlightened ideas towards the state and the church. This serves as a springboard to examine the effects on literature that his reign had, along with other activities related to the culture of the Habsburg Monarchy. The article further examines how literature of this period interacted with and affected the developing Austrian public sphere.

³ For example, see Ibid. See also Derek Beales, "Was Joseph II an Enlightened Despot?," in *The Austrian Enlightenment and its Aftermath*, eds. Ritchie Robertson and Edward Timms (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991).

⁴ Johann Pezzl, *Faustin oder das philosophische Jahrhundert* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1982), 380-381. Originally published in Zürich in 1783.

⁵ Beales, "Was Joseph II an Enlightened Despot?," 13-15.

⁶ Ritchie Robertson, "Joseph Rohrer and the Bureaucratic Enlightenment," in *The Austrian Enlightenment and its Aftermath*, eds. Ritchie Robertson and Edward Timms (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 1-42. Hartmut Steinecke, "Charles Sealsfield and the Novel as a Means of Enlightenment," trans. Ritchie Robertson, in *The Austrian Enlightenment and its Aftermath*, eds. Ritchie Robertson and Edward Timms (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 132-144.

When discussing the concept of “Austria” before 1804, one has to be careful with the meaning of the word. Austria as a state did not exist until the Napoleonic Wars, with the destruction of the Holy Roman Empire. Before 1806, it was simply a duchy that the Habsburgs controlled. Figures like Joseph II or Pezzl would not have seen themselves as Austrians. Pezzl was a Bavarian by birth and Viennese by his adopted city of Vienna.⁷ While Joseph attempted to create an Austrian state, his efforts were largely limited by the size and scope of the Habsburg Monarchy and the inability of one man to alter the course of several million people. Despite these challenges, it should still be noted that there was a growing sense of identity within the Empire, even if it was limited to the upper echelons of society.⁸ For the sake of simplicity, this article defines Austrian literature as that which was written in German and published in the German-speaking sections of Central Europe that the Habsburg Monarchy ruled directly.

While Central Europe is often overlooked by historians in favor of France or England, it is especially egregious to do this with the Enlightenment. Vienna was a major cultural and intellectual center for Europe, especially during the reign of Joseph II. He was clearly engaged in a dialogue about the state and the role of the ruler with the rest of Europe, modeling himself after the enlightened despotism that characterized Frederick the Great, Peter the Great, or Louis XIV. Joseph grew up in a court dominated by Jesuits, who censored most information and practiced large amounts of religious pomp.⁹ This in part led to Joseph’s wishes to undermine the powers of the Jesuits and, at the same time, maintaining his Catholic orthodoxy. The Enlightenment itself can be defined as a movement in opposition to the restrictions placed on intellectual freedom by the Catholic Church.¹⁰ Joseph’s policies when he came to power can easily be perceived as part of an enlightened viewpoint on state and church relations. Once on the throne, Joseph enacted major policies of toleration, and lifted much of the censorship built up by the baroque institutions of his predecessors. Joseph saw himself as a servant of the state, which he claimed in his last will and testament.¹¹ Therefore, for Joseph, it made perfect sense to change the course of the monarchy in the direction of other European states through abolishing much of the censorship that his mother had created and allowing progressive voices to rise within the Empire. Under Joseph, the list of banned books decreased from five thousand to under nine hundred, and over a thousand brochures were published within the first eighteen months of his rule.¹² He went so far in abolishing censorship that he even allowed works that criticized his leadership, though he did not allow works that criticized foreign leaders or anti-Christian pieces. However, Joseph did this largely out of a fear that they would be taken negatively by the uneducated public. He wrote:

⁷ Similarly, figures like Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart would be considered a Salzburger at the time and not Austrian.

⁸ Lucjan Puchalski, *Imaginärer Name Österreich: Der Literarische Österreich-Begriff an der Wende vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2009), 140.

⁹ Derek Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. 1, *In the Shadow of Maria Theresa, 1741-1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 32.

¹⁰ Beales, *Joseph II*, 2:69.

¹¹ T.C.W. Blanning, *Joseph II* (New York: Longman Group, 1994), 56.

¹² Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 64.

Come down strongly against works that contain unbridled obscenities, from which no learning or enlightenment can ever arise, and to be all the more indulgent in the case of those in which learning knowledge, and coherence are to be found, since the former are read ... by the multitude and by the weak souls, while the latter come into the hands only of those with well-prepared minds and well-established principles.¹³

Yet this did not stop Joseph's wishes to create a society in which almost anything could be published, as Joseph was trying to reform Austrian society into a model of the Enlightenment. He was not without his critics; even Joseph's friend, Princess Eleonore Liechtenstein, wrote: "Everything is to be feared from the Emperor's spirit in this field, from his love of novelty, his perversity, his mania for rousing subordinates against their chiefs, and still more from the hardening of his heart and, finally, abandonment of God."¹⁴

While Joseph lifted much of the censorship within the Empire, he ruled the state as an autocrat at the same time. The Habsburg Monarchy under Joseph II was characterized as an "enlightened police state: everything for the people, nothing by the people."¹⁵ Thus in some ways he sought to liberalize the empire in ways that he thought would make it run more efficiently, such as the lifting of censorship, while still maintaining control over the matters of state. This paradox of despotism in the age of the Enlightenment continued not only within the Monarchy but throughout Europe. During this time, a figure like Joseph wished for the betterment of his state and sought to accomplish such goals through policies such as mass education, tolerance, and freedom of the press. Yet, at the same time, he ruled the affairs of the state with an iron fist, treating the state as more of a military institution rather than something run by civilians.

In line with this paradox, Joseph had complete and utter disdain for hereditary institutions, yet he was the inheritor of a dynastic power that had maintained control over Central Europe for three-hundred years.¹⁶ Unlike his peers, Joseph lacked the patience for slow and steady reforms. This desire for the state to change immediately to his liking is illustrated by the way Joseph presented his court. His court was described as "the meanest, most masculine, and least attractive in Europe."¹⁷ In contrast to his mother, he shunned the luxury of the Schönbrunn Palace and instead preferred the simplicity of his villa, where his bed quarters were spartan and he wore his military uniform at nearly every opportunity.

For many, Joseph's schemes seemed almost quixotic in their scope, from his plowing the fields in Moravia to his "incessant traveling" to his Edict of Tolerance.¹⁸ The criticism of his

¹³ Beales, *Joseph II*, 2:91.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁵ Robert A. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire: 1526-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 184.

¹⁶ Paul B. Bernard, *Joseph II* (New York: Twaine Publishers, Inc, 1968), 91.

¹⁷ Beales, *Joseph II*, 2:56.

¹⁸ Blanning, *Joseph II*, 72-75.

policies by figures such as Princess Eleonore Liechtenstein did not do much to slow Joseph down, as he was single-minded in his goals for the Empire. Joseph thus continued his mother's practice of mass education. Joseph regarded the goal of achieving mass literacy to be of the utmost importance in developing society. He wrote that mass literacy was "as one of the most important objects of my concern for the general good."¹⁹ Here again Joseph is engaging in concepts from the Enlightenment, with not only the correct terminology but also the same intent that was originally used by Rousseau when he wrote about the general or common good.

Joseph would thus make sure his state followed the models set out by the Enlightenment. The state was to be logical and standardized, which itself explains his affinity for the military and his disdain towards the Catholic Church as a political actor. For Joseph, the two things he disliked most in the world were privilege and insubordination.²⁰ Both of these attributes were embodied by the Catholic Church, who rationalized their function to society not through utility (at least in the mind of Joseph) but through existing as a continuous institution for so long. Inevitably, Joseph would try to curb their power, as he also saw them as a force for fanaticism. Joseph sought to combat the excesses of the church and specifically their unfiltered power and privileges in several different ways. Most notably, he asserted sovereign control of the clergy, whom he viewed as subjects subservient to him. For Joseph, the church was to have the same role in society "in just the same way there is an army to defend the state, courts to administer justice and a bureaucracy to deal with political and economic matters."²¹ To this end, Joseph sought to utilize the church as an institution of the state through re-educating the clergy along the lines of secularism and making them beholden to him and the world around them.

All of this is not to say that Joseph was anti-clerical along the lines of a figure like Voltaire or even Frederick the Great of Prussia. Joseph believed in the Catholic Church, but he ultimately saw himself as a servant of the Austrian state first and as a Catholic second.²² Joseph was also highly influenced by his advisor, State Chancellor and Foreign Minister Wenzel-Anton, Prince of Kaunitz-Rietberg, better known as Kaunitz.²³ Kaunitz and Joseph had a similar worldview about what the Habsburg Monarchy should look like. Both ultimately disdained the confessional state that had been created in Austria since the Counter-Reformation. It was Kaunitz in his function as Chancellor who worked radically against the Catholic Church as an institutional structure and instituted policies, such as requiring those who wish to join a convent to live outside of it for two years or his opposition to holy days and pilgrimages.²⁴ Most radical of all his policies was the abolition of approximately seven hundred monasteries and convents throughout the Habsburg Monarchy.²⁵

¹⁹ Ibid., 68.

²⁰ Ibid., 92-93.

²¹ Ibid., 95. Quote from Joseph II from a letter to Baron Kressel in June 1783.

²² Ibid., 98.

²³ Bernard, *Joseph II*, 106.

²⁴ Franz A.J. Szabo, *Kaunitz and Enlightened Absolutism: 1753-1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 236-240.

²⁵ Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire*, 191.

Kaunitz was not the only figure in Joseph's government that worked towards establishing his vision of an enlightened Austrian state. Gottfried van Swieten was the son of the Dutch physician Gerard van Swieten, who himself was not only Maria Theresa's personal physician but also her most trusted advisor and confidant. Swieten first served as a diplomat to Berlin in the 1770s and, due to the close connections of his father to the government, became a trusted and favorite advisor of Joseph. In 1781, Joseph made Swieten a councilor of state and director of the State Education Commission. The following year, he appointed him as the director of the new Censorship Commission. Due to his close ties with the Habsburg Monarchy, Swieten was by far the most influential and important figure of the Austrian Enlightenment with notable political clout.²⁶

However, the Austrian Enlightenment was not a movement strictly limited political reform and state crafting, with many different members of Austrian society having their own take. Partially because of Joseph's reforms towards censorship and the press and partially due to his educational reforms, there was a growing revolution in reading. When Joseph lifted much of the censorship that had dominated creative and intellectual activity within the Empire, people began to feel that they could have a say over the course of the Empire. It is not likely that Joseph would have listened to them, but they were nevertheless allowed to voice their opinions.²⁷

Under the reforms that Joseph instituted, the middle class in Austria began to take on a greater role in society, most notably as part of the burgeoning Austrian bureaucracy. This growing middle class started to see themselves less as subjects of the Monarchy and more so as citizens. The role of the bureaucracy in the Habsburg Monarchy was meant to promote the best and brightest minds in the Empire. To accomplish this, it did away with the hereditary institutions that had previously dominated the Monarchy. The bureaucracy contained not only members of the middle class but also members of the aristocracy, thus forcing these two groups to interact with on a professional basis.²⁸ Johann Pezzl remarked in 1787 that "an army of ca. four and half thousand men marching; it is an army of bureaucrats. After these follow three hundred wagons ... All of these headed for the Department of State, the imperial Chancellery, the Department of War, the Austrian-Bohemian Chancellery, etc."²⁹ In theory, these bureaucrats were promoted based on merit. In as early as 1763, Joseph had written that personal merit was what mattered and the hereditary system hid talent from the monarchy.

²⁶ Nicholas Till, *Mozart and the Enlightenment: Truth, Virtue and Beauty in Mozart's Operas* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1992), 100-101.

²⁷ Franz M. Eybl, "Enlightenment in Austria: Cultural Identity and a National Literature," in *German Literature of the Eighteenth Century: The Enlightenment and Sensibility*, ed. Barbara Becker-Cantarino (Rochester: Camden House, 2005), 252-253.

²⁸ Waltraud Heindl, *Gehorsame Rebellen: Bürokratie und Beamte in Österreich 1780 bis 1848* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1991), 165.

²⁹ Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 60.

It was not only middle-level bureaucrats who enjoyed a booming effect from Joseph's reforms; the freemasons also became more widespread throughout the Empire, with Vienna seeing the greatest development. In 1742, only one lodge existed there. By 1780, there were six different lodges in the city, with some 200 people as members. Freemasons made up a great number of the cultural elite in Enlightenment Vienna, with its members including figures like Mozart, Aloys Blumauer, Michael Denis, Joseph Hadyn, Pezzl, Emmanuel Schickaneder, and Swieten.³⁰ Nineteenth-century novelist Karoline Pichler remarked on the prevalence of freemasons in her formative years, stating, "The order of freemasons carried on its affairs with a publicity and ostentation that was almost ridiculous. Freemasons' songs were printed, composed, and universally sung. Masonic insignia were worn as pendants on watches ... ladies received white gloves from apprentices and craftsmen."³¹ While freemason lodges had begun to grow in the 1740s under the guidance of Joseph's father, Francis Stephen (who was also a freemason), it was with Joseph's reforms that lodges boomed in numbers and freemasons were able to organize and participate without fear of repercussions. By 1784, there were sixty-six lodges in the Habsburg Monarchy, and the lodges had voted to secede from the leadership of the Berlin-centered lodge, *Grosse Landesloge* (Grand Landlodge), to have their own national lodge in Vienna.³² Interestingly, despite their deistic tendencies, freemason lodges throughout the Habsburg Monarchy saw a large number of ex-Jesuits join their ranks under the reign of Joseph. This waning of the Counter Reformation was yet another signal of the rise of civil society under Joseph. The Freemasons operated as the middle ground between secular and religious society.³³

Outside of his literature, another notable way that author Johann Pezzl interacted with the public sphere was through his membership of the freemasons. The society interacted in the public sphere in numerous ways, most notably with their periodical *Journal für Freymäurer* (Journal for freemasons). This journal was published quarterly by Christian Friedrich Wappler between 1784 and 1787, and allowed for freemasons to publish not only academic and journalistic endeavors but also their creative works. This journal was associated with the lodge *Zur wahren Eintracht* (True Harmony), which was led by Idnaz von Born.³⁴

Throughout Vienna, there were numerous printing presses releasing different works of varying levels of seriousness. Some discussed day-to-day occurrences of chambermaids, while others tackled more significant issues such as the papacy or the state. What these publications all had in common was that they showed that the public had a growing eagerness to read what was being published, no matter the content. The growth of the publications under Joseph II came to be known as the *Broschürenflut* (pamphlet flood). This

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ewan West, "Masonic Song and the Development of the *Kuntslied* in Enlightenment Vienna," in *The Austrian Enlightenment and its Aftermath*, eds. Ritchie Robertson and Edward Timms (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 72-73

³² James van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 257.

³³ Ibid., 264.

³⁴ Eybl, "Enlightenment in Austria," 253.

environment allowed Johann Pezzl to thrive as an author. Pezzl was born in Bavaria in 1756 and grew up in the Benedictine monastery in Mallersdorf where his father was the chief baker. Between 1768 and 1775, he was a novice at the monastery but left to study law in the Archduchy of Salzburg in 1776. After publishing *Briefe aus dem Noviziat* (Letters from the noviate), an inflammatory work of antimonasticism (something that nearly all Enlightenment figures would support in one way or another), he was forced to leave the Archduchy in 1780 and moved to Zürich. Here he continued to write and published multiple scathing critiques of monasticism and the Catholic Church. In 1783, he published the semi-autobiographical novel and panegyric for the reign of Joseph II, *Faustin oder das philosophische Jahrhundert*. In 1784, Pezzl moved to Vienna, where he lived for the rest of his life. During his early years there, he worked as a freelance writer and became involved in the freemason lodge, *Zur Wohltätigkeit* (For Charity). Through the lodge, he came into contact with figures such as Mozart, van Swieten, and Kaunitz. By the next year, Pezzl had become the personal librarian of Kaunitz. Through Kaunitz, he was able to come into close contact with other Josephinist statesmen and philosophers. Following the growing discontent with Joseph's reforms and his tendency towards absolutism, Pezzl began to work on a more critical and cynical piece of writing, *Skizze von Wien* (Sketch of Vienna). In 1791, after the death of Joseph, Pezzl worked as a public employee for the *Geheime Ziffernkabinett* (Secret Cabinet of Numbers), which was chiefly concerned with spying and the monitoring of letters.

While Pezzl remains relatively unknown in the Anglophone world, during his lifetime *Faustin* was one of the most successful works to come out the Holy Roman Empire. Pezzl's book received the distinct honor of being translated into French and was thus able to reach a wider reading audience throughout Europe. Furthermore, the work was reprinted numerous times, both legally and illegally, testifying to the popularity of the book. It was the only book that Mozart had in library upon his death.³⁵

The novel can be described as the Austrian answer to *Candide* and, in many ways, feels like a direct copy of *Candide*. Yet this is hardly surprising, given Voltaire's status as one of the greatest figures of the Enlightenment; Pezzl's copying him can consequently be viewed as a form of flattery. Overall, one gets the sense from Pezzl's work that he is partially driven by a desire not necessarily to prove Austria's greatness in literature but, at the very least, add his contribution to the Enlightenment project through an Austrian viewpoint. Fundamentally, both are works of social critique, but while Voltaire criticized the prevalence of barbarism and the lack of Enlightenment, Pezzl critiques the perceived sense of Enlightenment that the West thought it had. Overall, Pezzl's work does deserve note for his prose which, while mildly sentimental at times, is well conceived. The plot itself is the standard eighteenth-century picaresque, but Pezzl delivers the plot with both force and feeling.

The hero of the novel, Faustin, grows up in a Bavarian monastery and is taught that he lives in an age where reason reigns supreme. His teacher, Father Boniface, clearly a nod to St.

³⁵ Georg Knepler, *Wolfgang Amadé Mozart*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 116-117.

Boniface, the patron saint of Germans, instructs Faustin at the start of the novel on what virtues an enlightened monarch should embody: "Each monarch tries with others to promote tolerance, enlightenment and freedom of thought in his own state, and to banish superstitions, barbarism, fanaticism, stupidity, chicanery and misery from his people."³⁶ Yet as one would expect, this statement does not hold true when put to the test of reality. Shortly after, Faustin and Father Boniface leave the monastery to travel the world in search of countries that represent the Enlightenment as Father Boniface describes it. Throughout their journey, they constantly come to people who are the antithesis of the Enlightenment, finding only pain and misery. They travel throughout both the Americas and Europe. During their travels, they are beaten by workers who are angry that feast days have been abolished; their anger stems not from any sense of piety but because they no longer have a holiday. In France, they are imprisoned for possessing the works of Voltaire, Claude Adrien Helvétius, Pierre Bayle, Montesquieu, and even Frederick the Great. In another chapter, they come across a crowd being entertained by a Catholic priest and exorcist, Johann Joseph Gaßner, who is based on a real Austrian priest from the eighteenth century. The crowd attacks them. They later insult monasticism and are forced to flee from the Holy Roman Empire to Venice. In Venice, they are attacked and robbed by bandits, and once there, they meet the magistrate in Venice to tell of their ordeal. However, they end up criticizing the constitution and are banished from the city. In Spain, they find some respite in the court of Charles III and his settlement project of Sierra Morena. They eventually make toward way to Portsmouth in England and then to London. Once there, they find themselves in the middle of the Gordon Riots. Father Boniface is killed by the rioters, and Faustin is appalled not only by their barbarous attitude but also by the intolerance and fanaticism in a country that is supposed to be the embodiment of the Enlightenment. Disgusted by the English, Faustin volunteers to go to America as a soldier but is tricked into becoming a slave. Once in Port Royale, he is sold as a slave and forced to work on a plantation. Pezzl here launches into a tirade against the evils of New World slavery. Eventually, Faustin escapes slavery and returns to Europe.

Near the end of the novel, Faustin makes his way to Prussia and the court of Frederick the Great, where he thinks that he has at last found the place that truly embodies the Enlightenment. Upon his arrival, he prays at an altar and praises that the works of Voltaire are respected in Berlin and that tolerance is the chief virtue of the land. Unfortunately for Faustin, his beliefs are shattered when a conflict between churches arises over the use of hymns by Paul Gerhardt, a composer of the seventeenth century. Frederick the Great declares, "The Priests must not forget tolerance, because no persecutions will be tolerated."³⁷

Dejected, Faustin again leaves in search of the land that Father Boniface had described to him at the beginning of the novel. At last, he reaches Vienna, where Joseph II reigns

³⁶ Pezzl, *Faustin oder das philosophische Jahrhundert*, 15. "Eifert ein monarch den andern vor, Toleranz, Erleuchtung und Denkensfreiheit in seinen Staaten zu befördern: Agberglauben, Barbarei, Fanatismus, Dummheit, Schikane und Elend ferner von seinen Völkern zu verbannen."

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 321. "Die Priester müssen die Toleranz nicht vergessen, denn ihnen wird keine Verfolgung gestattet werden."

supreme. At first, Faustin is unsure what to make of the place, but the more time he spends there, the more he realizes that Joseph's Vienna is the embodiment of the Enlightenment. He declares:

The creation of free thought, cleansed of religion; the right of the Throne against Roman influence; the right of reason against pedants, against stiff schoolbooks and apostles of superstition the right of mankind from the harassment and oppression of tyrants.³⁸

Clearly Pezzl would like the readers to connect Vienna with how Father Boniface described the perfect enlightened place. No longer are people slaves to the Catholic Church; instead, in Vienna, they are their own masters motivated by reason and rational thought. Pezzl goes on to compare Joseph to Sesostris—the first Chinese Emperor—as well as Orpheus, Titus, and Marcus Aurelius. The last sentence declares that under Joseph II, there will truly be a “philosophical century.”³⁹ Ultimately *Faustin* is a tale of optimism triumphant, unlike *Candide*. The story not only serves as a panegyric ode to the greatness that is Joseph II but also illustrates the uniqueness of Vienna in the eighteenth century. While other states might have writers and philosophers writing texts on the nature of mankind and what the most just state is meant to look like, it is only in Vienna that such a thing is possible.

Fundamentally, Pezzl portrays an optimistic worldview that came with the accession of Joseph as the sole ruler of the Habsburg Monarchy. While Pezzl was not the only author to declare glory from Joseph's reign, he is by far one of the most vocal and successful authors writing in his favor. Furthermore, Pezzl wrote this work as a counterpoint to the attitude towards the Enlightenment in the Protestant parts of the Holy Roman Empire. While Pezzl was a deist, with very little love of Catholicism, he was still culturally Catholic and thus sought to prove that Catholicism was not incompatible with the Enlightenment. For Pezzl, Protestants were just as capable of intolerance as Catholics. The death of Father Boniface at the hands of an angry Protestant mob can be seen as a direct parallel to the death of Doctor Pangloss at the hands of the inquisition in *Candide*. Pezzl also expresses his numerous discontents with the Catholic Church and the Jesuits in particular, which were shared by Pezzl's fellow freemasons and superiors. Throughout the book, there are several of references to the Jesuits practicing pederasty on their students.

Following the death of Joseph in 1790, Pezzl wrote a biography of him in which he characterized the emperor as being both the root of the liberalism that had taken hold in Vienna and within the Monarchy but also as the cause of the repression and authoritarianism that tried to stamp it out.⁴⁰ It is likely that Pezzl suffered much of this resentment towards Joseph due to not only his failings but also his misplaced trust in

³⁸ Ibid., 378-379. “Dem Hersteller der Denkenfreiheit, der gereinigtern Religion; der Rechte des Thrones gegen die Römischen Eingriffe; der Rechte der Vernunft gegen Pedanten, steife Schulsüchse und Apostel des Aberglaubens; der Rechte der Menschheit gegen die Schikane und Unterdrückung der schwelgenden Untertyrane.”

³⁹ Ibid., 283.

⁴⁰ Till, *Mozart and the Enlightenment*, 223-224.

Joseph. By creating an almost saint-like figure in Joseph, Pezzl sets himself up for disappointment. Nevertheless, Pezzl expressed in his work *Skizze von Wien* that, following the reign of Joseph, nobles in Vienna no longer stood along the walls, waiting for the attention of the monarch. Instead, they worked to gain the respect of the sovereign and the public through service to the state.⁴¹

What Pezzl's novel succeeds in doing is taking the Enlightenment and demythologizing much of the traditional aspects of Central European culture. The problem here is that Pezzl tries to rationalize the paradox of being an Enlightenment thinker who believes in ideals like the equality of mankind and religious tolerance, yet at the same time, he is forced to confront the fact that he supports a hereditary monarchy that is an anathema to the concept of equality. Fundamentally, Pezzl's critique of the European system does not push the reader hard enough, which leads the reader to either conclude that Pezzl was willfully ignorant of his own paradoxical thinking or that he simply did not conceive his thinking as contradictory. Despite Pezzl's rosy portrait of Austria as compared to the rest of Europe, much of what he describes as happening to Faustin throughout the novel could also easily happen to his protagonist within the Habsburg Monarchy. One can easily imagine Pezzl's Hungarian counterpart pointing out the flaws of his thinking by looking at conditions that Magyar speakers were experiencing. One could also see Pezzl retorting that the Hungarians oppress the Slavic speakers just as readily. The further you go, the more myopic it becomes.

While some liberal thinkers thought Joseph's reforms did not go far enough, others who agreed with him became alienated due to his dictatorial tendencies. For instance, although he was an ally of Joseph, Kaunitz expressed frustration at Joseph's inability to negotiate or slow down his reforms. Kaunitz was largely able to pursue policies in the way that he wanted because of his venerable position as state chancellor.⁴² However, he expressed bitterness due to Joseph's inability to handle criticism and that his state building had alienated the Habsburg Monarchy from much of the Holy Roman Empire. Thus, when Kaunitz learned of Joseph's death, his response was "[t]hat was very good of him."⁴³ Yet, within a few weeks, Kaunitz had tempered his criticism of Joseph, and expressed that he had been a "great man."⁴⁴ It was only the ardent defenders of the Old Regime that truly were happy with his death.

Figures ranging from Ludwig van Beethoven to pamphleteers honored the reign of Joseph and his role as an enlightened monarch.⁴⁵ They praised him for such things as his willingness to innovate agriculture, his reformation of censorship, and his concern for the poor and social outcasts. He was praised for not only being a devoted Catholic but also advocating and enacting toleration. Even Protestants sang the praises of Joseph. For instance, the evangelical Lutheran theologian, Johann Georg Fock, eulogized the monarch in a sermon:

⁴¹ Blanning, *Joseph II*, 103.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ For example, Beethoven's Cantata on the Death of Joseph II was written when the composer at the age of nineteen but would not be published until the late nineteenth century.

Through Joseph, God raised the glory and prestige of the house of Austria, together with the fortunes and prosperity of its extensive provinces: through Joseph He gave an improved organization to the internal structure of the state and administration of justice and a greater strength to the military... he purged from religion the many abuses and accretions which prevented its beneficent power from reaching the hearts of men.⁴⁶

While his successors would be far less radical than Joseph—and in some cases were outright reactionary, like Francis II—Joseph’s reign nevertheless altered the course of the Habsburg Monarchy. His creation of the merit-based bureaucracy would see itself continued into the nineteenth century and beyond. The culture of liberalism that arose around his court and followers would endure and the print industry would continue to grow, despite the Monarchy attempting to roll back the clock in the face of the French Revolution. The reforms instituted by Joseph proved to be incredibly vital to the development of the public sphere in Austria, reaching its apex at the turn of the nineteenth century. The coffeehouse—which became so inseparable from later historiographical memory of Vienna and the Habsburgs—as a public institution originated under Joseph and allowed for the intersection between reform, the state and literature.

Fundamentally, it becomes a rather flawed point of view to try to ascribe the Enlightenment of a country to one man. Yes, Joseph certainly was a highly influential person who sought to reorganize his country along the lines of the Enlightenment, but at the same time, this narrative leads to undervaluing the contributions of figures such as Pezzl. Pezzl does himself a disservice by creating an almost mythical figure in Joseph, leading him to largely ignoring the fact that the Enlightenment is happening because of people like him and his colleagues. It is through this lens that the Enlightenment ceases to be an intellectual movement. Once historical figures become mythologized, it makes it seem almost impossible for anyone else to contribute to the Enlightenment idea. So, fundamentally, the reader has to take what Pezzl is saying with a grain of salt and realize that he himself is too self effacing of his own successes.

⁴⁶ Blanning, *Joseph II*, 199-200.