



The Enlightenment

Origins of the Enlightenment

▶ What was the Enlightenment?

- ▶ An 18th century European philosophical movement that advocated **reason** as the primary source of authority and legitimacy
 - ▶ Heavily influenced by Scientific Revolution

▶ What were the basic principals of the Enlightenment?

- ▶ Reason – Truth through logical reasoning
- ▶ Nature – Nature is good; natural laws of politics & economics
- ▶ Progress – Believed society and humankind could be perfected
- ▶ Liberty – Believed society should be set free
- ▶ Equality – Everybody has natural rights.



Social Contract

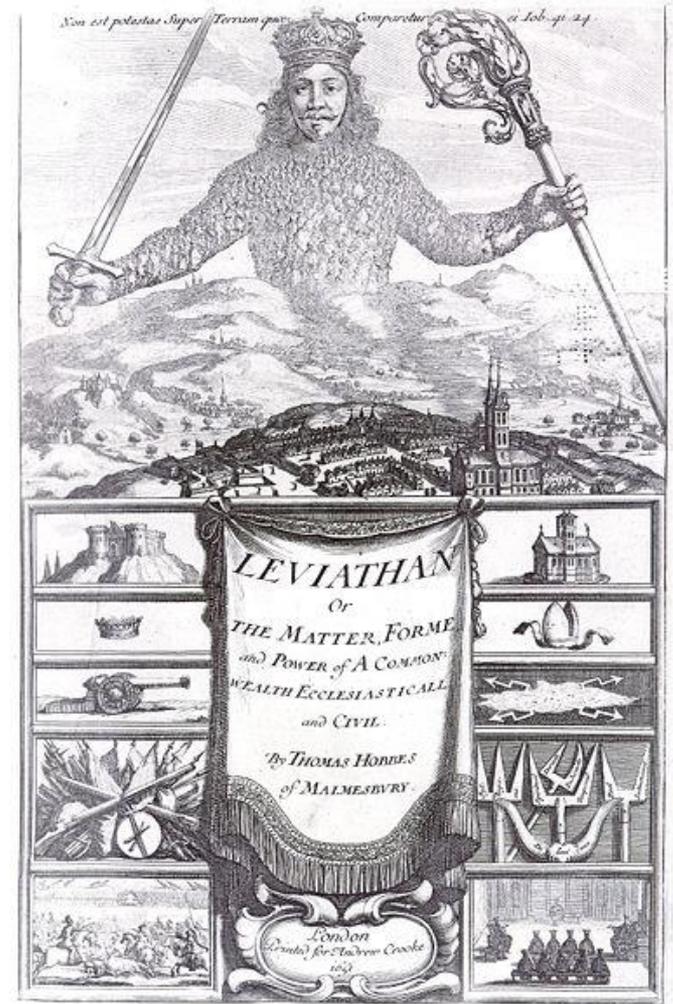
- ▶ Complete and total freedom (everybody doing everything they wanted without restraint) would actually lead to nobody having any freedom.
- ▶ So we agree to give up some of our freedoms in exchange for a more orderly society.
 - ▶ Eg. I want to drive 120 mph in a school zone. But I give up this desire because I must follow laws as a member of a civil society.
 - ▶ Enhances the rights and respect to others (little kids)
- ▶ Thus we create the most respectful society possible.
 - ▶ Where everybody can be free.



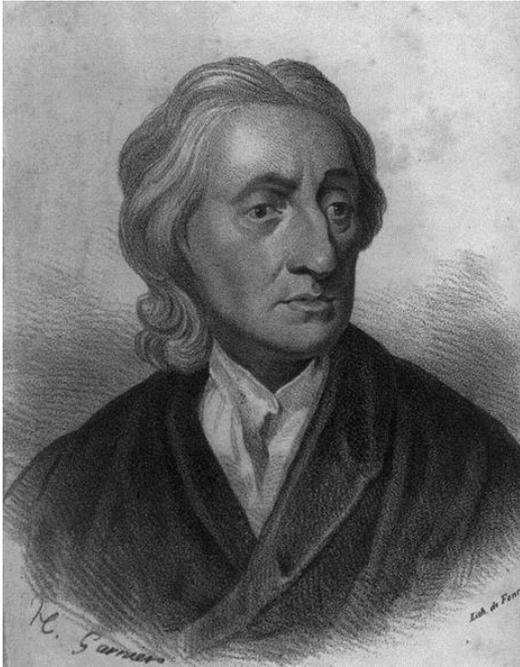
Important Enlightenment Thinkers

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

- ▶ Lived during the English Civil War
- ▶ Famous work was *Leviathan*
- ▶ Main Ideas
 - ▶ His version of the social contract
 - ▶ Man is inherently selfish and aggressive
 - ▶ Mankind, if left on its own, would be ruled by chaos and conflict
 - ▶ Citizens need the law and a strong monarch to prevent chaos



John Locke (1632-1704)



▶ Lived during the English Civil War

▶ Social Contract

- ▶ Everybody's rights are enhanced if we respect the rights of others (even though we may give up some of our desires).

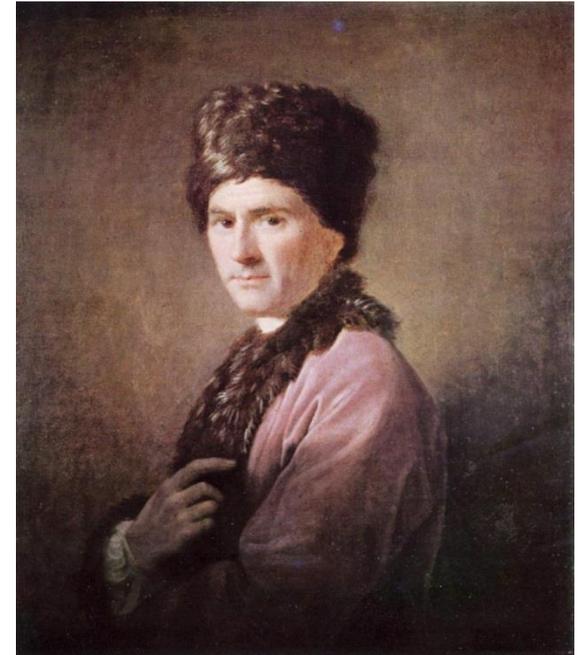
▶ Father of Liberalism

- ▶ Supported individual's **natural right** to life, liberty, and property
- ▶ Government at the consent of the governed



Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1788)

- ▶ French philosopher
- ▶ Main Ideas
- ▶ Social Contract
 - ▶ Society must be governed based upon the general will of all of its members.
 - ▶ Freedom = following what the most people desire (even if it goes against your personal desires).
 - ▶ Humans are basically good by nature but corrupted by society
 - ▶ Civilization destroyed freedom and equality
 - Specifically the desire for private property.
- ▶ Advocated direct democracy.



“Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains”

Voltaire (1694-1778)

- ▶ Frequently targeted the clergy, aristocracy, and government
- ▶ Main Ideas
 - ▶ Freedom of religion, freedom of speech, tolerance
 - ▶ Attacked intolerance, prejudice, and superstition
 - ▶ Religion = Deism
 - ▶ God started it all, then allowed it to run without interference.



“Crush the evil thing”



Montesquieu (1689-1755)



“Power should be a check to power”

- ▶ A French aristocrat and a lawyer
- ▶ Believed Britain was the best-governed country
- ▶ Main Ideas
 - ▶ Challenged absolute monarchy
 - ▶ Separation of Powers
 - ▶ Executive, legislative, judicial
 - ▶ Checks and Balances
- ▶ Influenced the United States Constitution



Impact of the Enlightenment

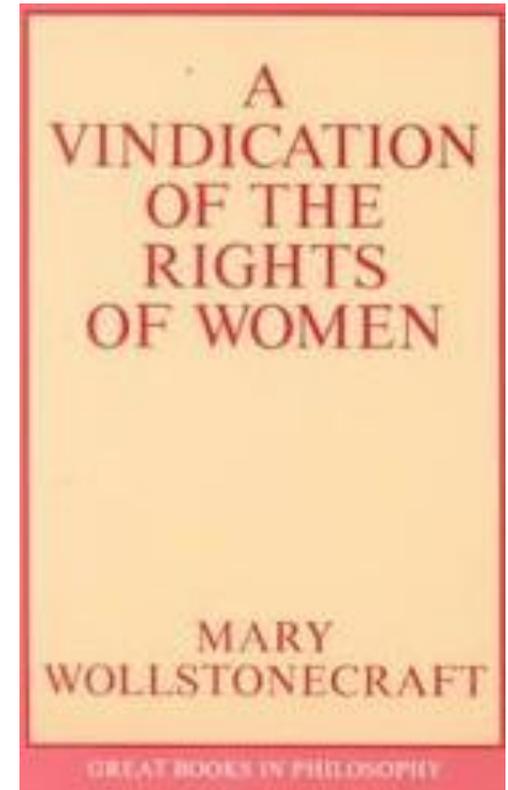
Discuss:

- ▶ Religion
- ▶ Women's roles
- ▶ Trans-Atlantic slave trade
 - ▶ Chattel slavery of Africans
- ▶ The idea of elite classes (aristocracy)
- ▶ The ideal government and role of the people (which people, women? commoners?) within that government.
- ▶ Mercantilism
 - ▶ Oppression of dependent peoples to enhance the core nation's coffers.



Women and the Enlightenment

- ▶ Enlightenment thinkers maintained traditional ideas toward women
- ▶ Educated women challenged these ideas using Enlightenment arguments
 - ▶ Mary Wollstonecraft
 - ▶ Women need education to be virtuous & useful
 - ▶ Women have the right to participate in politics
- ▶ Women helped spread Enlightenment ideas by holding salons



Impact of the Enlightenment

▶ Revolutions

- ▶ American, French, Haitian, Latin American (especially Bolivar)

▶ Belief in social and human progress

- ▶ Abolition of slavery, promote education, social equality, etc.

▶ Secular outlook in Europe

- ▶ Promotion of religious tolerance, openly question religious beliefs, science challenges religious teachings

▶ Importance of the individual

- ▶ People can judge right and wrong for themselves, rise of capitalism, support for democracy, etc.

