

Enlightenment Thinkers:

Influencers of American Political Thought

Philosophy? = phil + soph



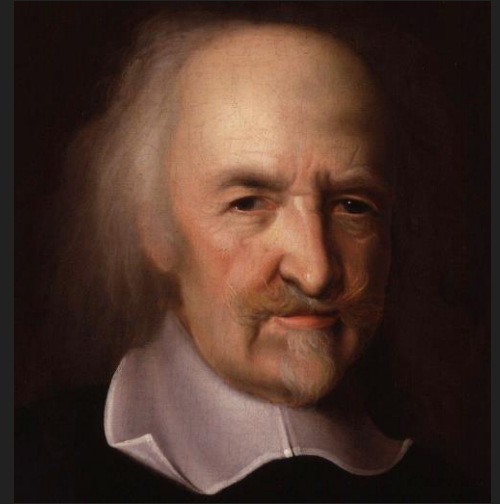
1. The Enlightenment movement that spread the idea that *reason and science* could improve society used reason and science to challenge preconceived notions about the world around them.

Thomas Hobbes

1. Book: *Leviathan* (1651)

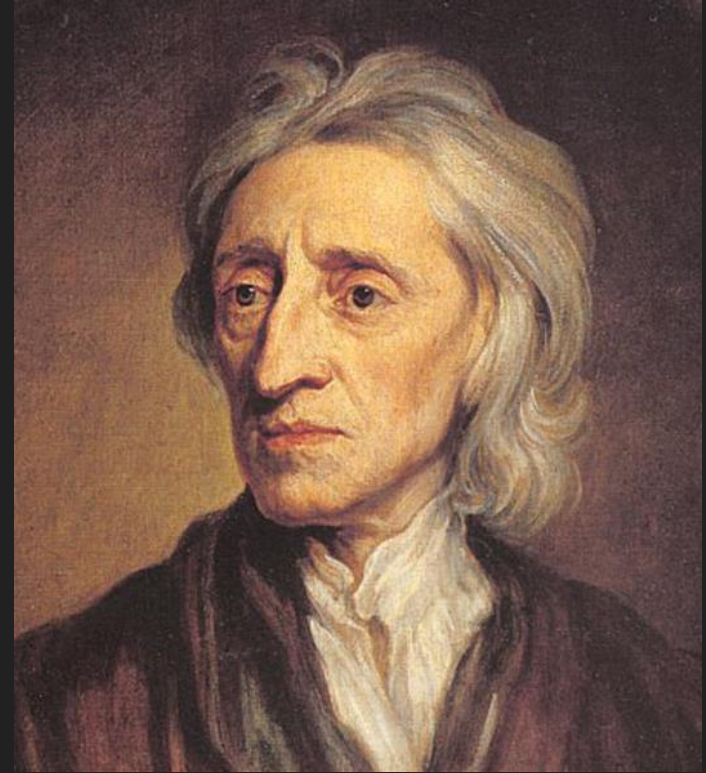
2. Important Ideas:

- Regarding life... “worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” ... summum malum
- A strong government can prevent this.
- Need for social contract.



*John Locke

1. Book: *Two Treatises on Government* (1689)
2. Important Ideas:
 - Natural Rights: rights that all people are born with – life, liberty, property
 - Right to Revolution: when government no longer protects the natural rights of its citizens, it is up to the people to form a new government that will



*Charles Montesquieu

1. Book: *The Spirit of Laws* (1748)

2. Important Ideas:

-Separation of Powers: the best way to protect natural rights is to divide the power of government (legislative, executive, judicial)

-Checks and Balances: by balancing the powers and giving each branch the power to watch over the other two ensures none will become corrupt



*Jean-Jacques Rousseau

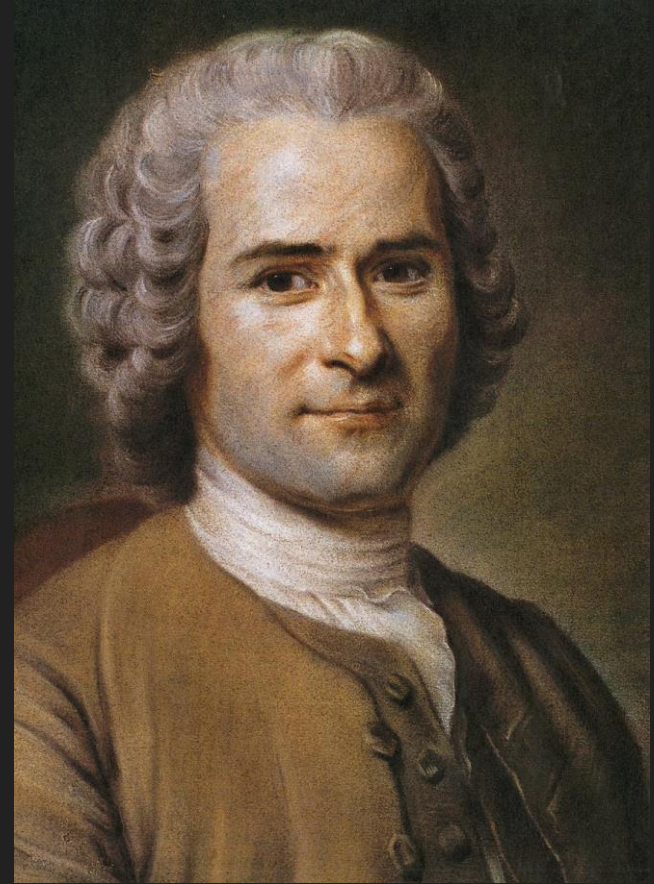
1. Book: *The Social Contract* (1762)

2. Important Ideas:

-Social Contract: an unwritten agreement
between a people and their government

The people agree to follow the laws

The government agrees to protect the people's
natural rights



Voltaire

Book: Candide (satire lambasting nobility, philosophy, the church, and cruelty)

Important Ideas: Free Speech “I disapprove of what you say, but will defend to the death your right to say it.” (attributed)

