

The Enlightenment

Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau

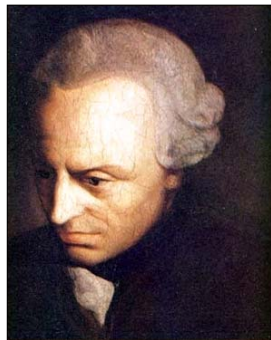
The Enlightenment

- The Enlightenment was a philosophical movement of the 18th century that emphasized the use of reason to scrutinize previously accepted doctrines and traditions and that brought about many humanitarian reforms.
- Note: This is a different meaning of "enlightenment" than used in Buddhism to describe a blessed state in which the individual transcends desire and suffering and attains Nirvana.

What is Enlightenment?

"Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity."

Immanuel Kant, 1784



Legacy of the Enlightenment

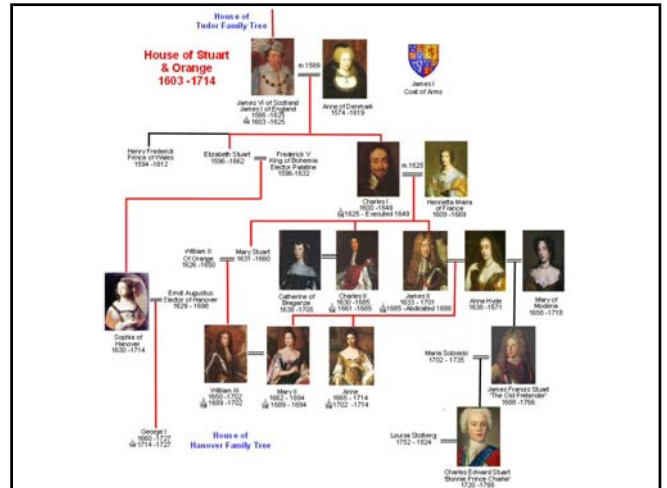
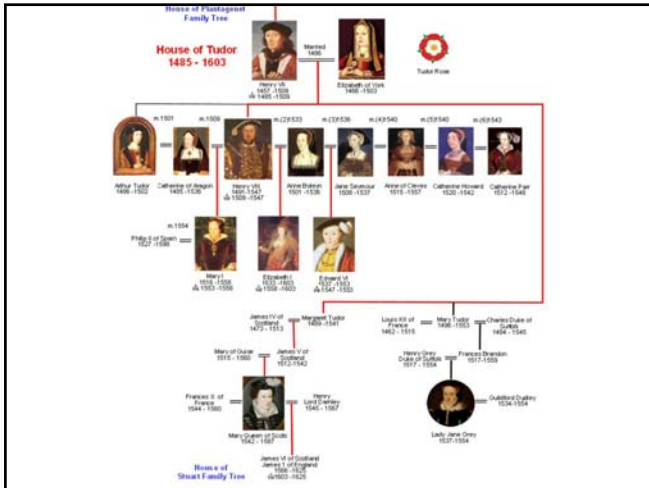
Many of the ideas and principles of the Enlightenment are now articles of faith in the Western heritage. From it come the beliefs that **governments should rest on the consent of the people**, that *the least amount of state interference in the lives of citizens is best*, and that **all people are created equal**. More fundamentally, from the Enlightenment come the views that **human nature is good** and that **happiness is the proper goal of human life**.

Origins of the Enlightenment

- The Enlightenment emerged from two sources:
- First, as a logical consequence of the Scientific Revolution, Enlightenment philosophers argued that the same kind of systematic thinking could benefit all forms of human activity.
- Second, as a solution to the violent political problems that plagued England through the 16th and 17th centuries.

English Enlightenment Timeline

1534 – Henry VIII separates from Rome
1649 – King Charles I tried and executed
1651 – *Leviathan*
1658 – Oliver Cromwell (Lord Protector) dies
1660 – English Restoration
1688 – The Glorious Revolution
1689 – *Two Treatises of Government*
1689 – The Bill of Rights
(1789 – The French Revolution)



The Commonwealth (1649-1653)

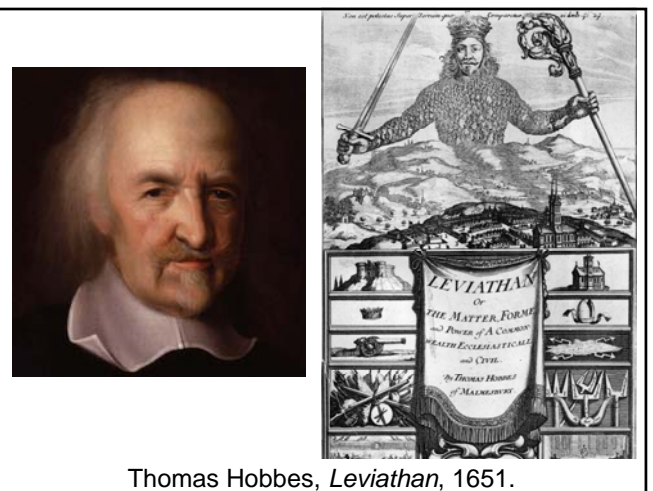
- After the execution of Charles I, Parliament declared England a republic.
- The members of Parliament, landowners, and merchants who engineered the revolution wanted change to stop, with them in charge.
- But ordinary people no longer wanted to be ruled by someone else.
- One group, called the Levellers, wanted religious toleration, law reform, and universal suffrage (for men).

A variety of religious beliefs emerged...

- Baptists or "Dippers," believed that choosing one's faith should wait until adulthood.
- Seekers went from congregation to congregation until they found the right one.
- Diggers believed that Christ wanted property to be shared in common.
- Ranters believed that nothing was a sin unless one conceived it to be a sin.
- Quakers believed that all people had God's inner light, and thus all people were equal.
- Muggletonians believed that a local tailor, Lodowick Muggleton, was the last prophet named in Revelation.



- Regional Divisions
 - England
 - Scotland
 - Ireland
- Political Divisions
 - Royalists
 - Parliament
 - Common people
- Religious Divisions
 - Anglicans
 - Puritans
 - Presbyterians
 - Catholics



Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1651.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

- **State of Nature** is the hypothetical condition of humanity before the foundation of the state.
- Hobbes believed that human beings in the state of nature would behave badly towards one another. In this state any person has a natural right to do anything to preserve their own liberty or safety.
- Famously, he believed that such a condition would lead to a “war of every man against every man” and make life...
“solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”

Hobbes' Solution

- To escape this state of war, men in the state of nature accede to a **social contract** to establish a civil society.
- According to Hobbes, society should cede some of their natural rights to a sovereign authority (a leviathan, a monarch) in exchange for stability and protection.
- Abuses of power by this authority are to be accepted as the price of peace. However, he also states that in severe cases of abuse, rebellion is expected.

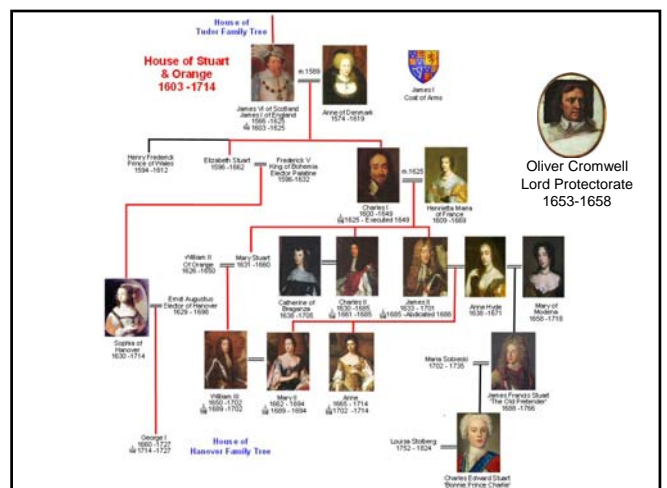
Social Contract Theory

- The notion of the social contract implies that the people give up some rights to a government or other authority in order to receive or maintain social order.
- Social contract theory formed a central pillar in the historically important notion that legitimate state authority must be derived from the consent of the governed.
- Thomas Hobbes (1651), John Locke (1689) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762) are some of the most famous philosophers of social contract theory, which formed the theoretical foundation of democracy.



Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658)

- Oliver Cromwell was one of the commanders of the New Model Army which defeated the royalists in the English Civil War.
- After the execution of King Charles I in 1649, Cromwell dominated the short-lived Commonwealth of England, conquered Ireland and Scotland, and ruled as Lord Protector from 1653 until his death in 1658.



John Locke (1632 –1704)

- John Locke was an English philosopher.
- Author of *Two Treatises of Government* (1689)
- He is primarily known for his development of social contract theory.

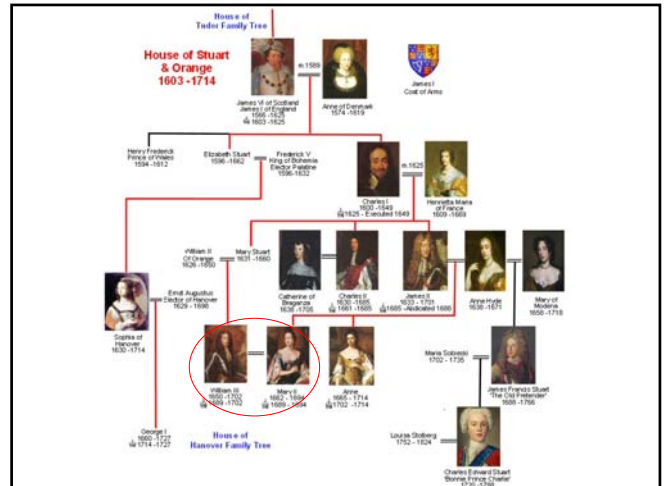


Key Beliefs of Locke

- *Tabula Rasa*: The theory that individuals are born neither good nor bad and that their knowledge comes from experience and sensory perception.
 - (Nurture over nature)
- Unlike Thomas Hobbes, Locke believed that humans are naturally rational and that reason, if left alone, would lead to decent moral behavior.

Key Beliefs of Locke

- Locke argues that humans escape from the state of nature by making two contracts:
 - The first to form a civil society.
 - The second to form government.
- Locke also advocated governmental checks and balances, and he believed that revolution is not only a right but an obligation in some circumstances.



The Glorious Revolution



England, 1689. Constitutional Monarchy:
King William III and Queen Mary II

The Enlightenment: France



Louis XIV of France (1638-1715)

- Louis XIV, the Sun King, ruled as King of France from 1643 to 1715.
- Louis XIV was the epitome of an absolute monarch. The phrase, *L'état, c'est moi.* is frequently attributed to him.



Absolutism

- Absolutism is a term used to describe a form of government where the ruler is unrestrained by any other institutions, such as legislatures, churches, or social elites.
- An absolute monarch is a monarch that has total control.



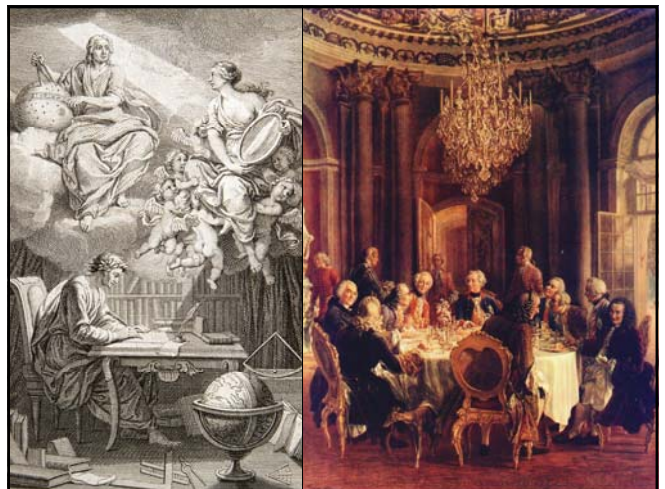
Palace of Versailles, 1669-

French *Philosophes*

- Philosophes were writers that popularized the ideals of the Enlightenment during the 18th century.
- Their work was widely read and admired by kings and nobles, as well as the middling orders.

Famous *Philosophes*

- Voltaire (1694-1778)
 - Explained to Frenchmen (and other Europeans) Britain's constitutional monarchy, religious toleration, free press, the scientific ideas of Newton, and the political ideas of Locke.
- Denis Diderot (1713-1784)
 - Saw science as the way to banish bigotry and superstition. Edited the *Encyclopédie*
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)



Enlightenment Ideals

1. Human autonomy
2. The importance of reason
3. Enlightenment is universal
4. Progress
5. Secularism
6. The centrality of economics to politics
7. The ideal of popular government

1) Human Autonomy

- Enlightenment means that humans develop (become “mature”) through the use of their reason. Individuals can seek knowledge and use their own reason rather than be told how to think by the church or the state. *Sapere Aude!*

The Motto of Enlightenment

Sapere Aude!

(Dare to think for yourself!)

From Immanuel Kant's *An Answer to the Question: "What is Enlightenment?"*

1) Human Autonomy

- The notion of human autonomy changes the relationship between individual freedom and the state. If individuals should be free to use their own reason and to think what they want, how much power should the state have over individuals' lives? This becomes a key problem for Enlightenment ideologies.

2) The Importance of Reason

- Freedom means being able to think rationally for yourself. Kant argues that humanity must abandon a life of unreason, of relying on superstition, faith, and blind obedience. Instead, we must order our lives according to reason.
- Reason will lead us to the truth. We find truth through science rather than opinion or faith. Through scientific inquiry we can solve all the mysteries of the universe and reveal the solutions to all the problems people face.

3) Enlightenment is Universal

- All human beings possess the ability to be enlightened. In other words, humans are **equal by nature**. All humans are part of a “universal community” who share a single universal human nature. Differences among people are less important than their fundamental sameness.

4) Progress

- Humanity is progressing from immaturity, superstition, and slavery to maturity, reason, and freedom. Human history is therefore the story of progress in the human condition.

5) Secularism

- Religion and politics should be separated.
- There should be no official religion.
- One's method of worship should be a private matter.
- Note: Many enlightenment thinkers were deists. **Deism** is a religious and philosophical belief that a supreme being created the universe, and that this (and religious truth in general) can be determined using reason and observation of the natural world alone, without the need for either faith or organized religion.

6) The Centrality of Economics to Politics

- A society's well-being depends on how its economy is structured.
- The social organization of production and distribution becomes a central problem for enlightenment ideologies.

7) The Ideal of Popular Government

Sovereignty of the people:

"In free governments, the rulers are the servants and the people their superiors and sovereigns."

-- Benjamin Franklin

"Supreme executive power derives from a mandate from the masses, not from some farcical aquatic ceremony."

-- from Monty Python and the Holy Grail

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)

- He wrote that reason is good, but he found the heart a better guide to right conduct.
- Unlike Hobbes and Locke, he asserted that man was happiest in the state of nature, that civilized society tends to corrupt man.
- In the *Social Contract*, Rousseau contends that big states are naturally corrupt and corrupting of human spirit. He argued for small states in which citizens know and trust each other.



The first man who, having fenced in a piece of land, said "This is mine," and found people naive enough to believe him, that man was the true founder of civil society.

From how many crimes, wars, and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not any one have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows: Beware of listening to this impostor; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody.

Discourse on Inequality, 1754
Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Goals of the Enlightenment

- Before Rousseau, *philosophes* seem to have expected current monarchs and nobles to put an end to privilege and bigotry and spread intellectual and personal freedom and scientific progress.
- Only Rousseau suggests that the whole system of the *ancien régime* should be abolished and power given to the people.
- Both of these solutions would be tried:
 1. Enlightened absolutism
 2. Revolution



Enlightened absolutism is a term used to describe the actions of absolute rulers who were influenced by the Enlightenment.

Enlightened monarchs were rulers who embraced the principles of the Enlightenment and applied them to their territories.

They *tended* to allow religious toleration, freedom of speech and the press, and the right to hold private property. Most also fostered the arts, sciences, and education.

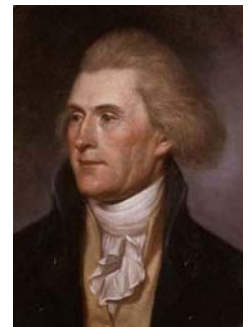
Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II of Austria (1780-1790), an “enlightened” monarch.

U.S. Declaration of Independence

- Thomas Jefferson, echoing Locke, appealed to man’s natural rights in the Declaration of Independence from Great Britain, July 4, 1776:
 - *“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”*

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)

Thomas Jefferson was a “founding father” of the United States, the principal author of the Declaration of Independence (1776), and the third President of the United States (1801–1809).



We the People

Article 1

Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year of the People of the several States, who shall have the Qualifications requisite for Senators of the same State in which they shall be chosen. No Person shall be a Representative who shall not, when chosen, have seven Years Residence in that State, and when chosen, be seven Years of Age. No Person shall be a Representative who shall not, when chosen, have been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when chosen, be, when chosen, seven Years a Citizen of the State in which he shall be chosen.

Section 3. The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature of the State in which they shall be chosen. They shall have the Qualifications requisite for Representatives of the same State in which they shall be chosen. No Person shall be a Senator who shall not, when chosen, have nine Years Residence in that State, and when chosen, be nine Years of Age. No Person shall be a Senator who shall not, when chosen, have been nine Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when chosen, be, when chosen, nine Years a Citizen of the State in which he shall be chosen.

Section 4. The Senate and House of Representatives shall be assembled in one Place, which shall be called the City of the United States, and they shall hold their first Session on the first Monday in October, next following the first Meeting of the Legislature of the State in which the said City shall be situate. They may adjourn from Time to Time, and may change the Place of their Meetings, on Condition of Reporting the same to both Houses. They shall be held in open Session, and the Doors of their Chambers shall be always open, except on the Day of their adjournment. They shall be held in open Session, and the Doors of their Chambers shall be always open, except on the Day of their adjournment.

