

# Overview of the Enlightenment:

## The Importance of the Enlightenment



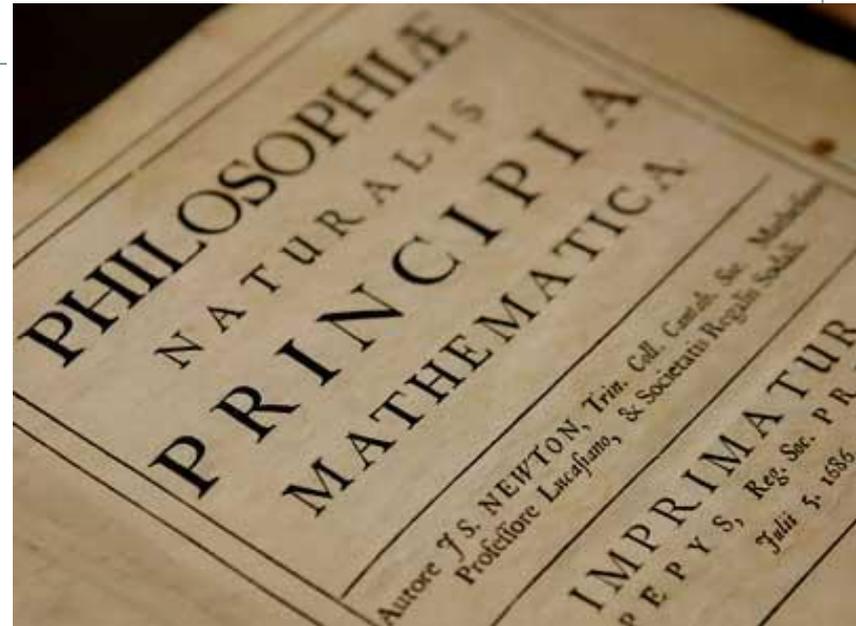
- The Scientific Revolution convinced many European thinkers about the power of reason
- In the 1600s, a new generation of philosophers began to view reason as the best way to understand truth
- This new reason led to the Enlightenment or the Age of Reason

**Age  
of  
Reason**



# Overview of the Enlightenment Cont.:

- People began to gather in coffeehouses to debate their new ideas
- Many writers published their ideas in books, magazines, and inexpensive pamphlets to help spread ideas among educated readers
- By the time the Enlightenment reached its peak, Paris was the center of intellectual activity



# French *Salon* and the Philosophes:



- Upper class nobles like Madame de Pompadour, invited writers, artists, philosophers, and government officials to their homes to debate and discuss ideas
- ***Salons***: Gatherings for aristocrats to discuss new theories and ideas
- **Philosophes**: French Enlightenment thinkers who attended the salons; tried to apply reason and scientific ideas to government and society



# Madame de Geoffrin's *Salon* by Anicet Lemonnier



# Denis Diderot:



- Chief editor of the *Encyclopedie* (28 volumes )
- Set of books that Enlightenment thinkers contributed to their essays
- Major achievement of the philosophes
- Angered French and Catholic Officials
- Begun in 1745; completed in 1765
- Spread Enlightenment ideas around the world

*ENCYCLOPÉDIE,*  
OU  
DICTIONNAIRE RAISONNÉ  
DES SCIENCES,  
DES ARTS ET DES MÉTIERS,  
PAR UNE SOCIÉTÉ DE GENS DE LETTRES.

Mis en ordre & publié par M. DIDEROT, de l'Académie Royale des Sciences & des Belles-Lettres de Prusse; & quant à la PARTIE MATHÉMATIQUE, par M. D'ALEMBERT, de l'Académie Royale des Sciences de Paris, de celle de Prusse, & de la Société Royale de Londres.

*Tantum series juncturae pollet,  
Tantum de medio sumptis accedit honoris!* HORAT.

TOME PREMIER.



A GENEVE,  
CHEZ CRAMER L'AÎNÉ & Compagnie.

M. D. C. C. LXXII.

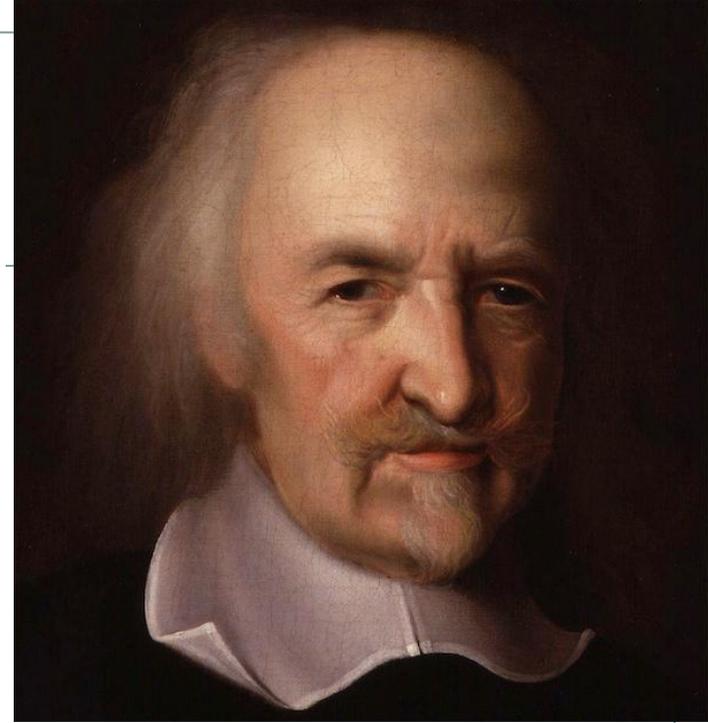


# Jean-Jacques Rousseau:



- Philosophized on the nature of society and government and wrote *The Social Contract*
- *The Social Contract:*
  - Individuals forming a society entered into a “social compact” with one another
- Believed that people are naturally good but civilization corrupts them
- Everyone should agree to be governed by the will of the people (Popular Sovereignty or Direct Democracy)

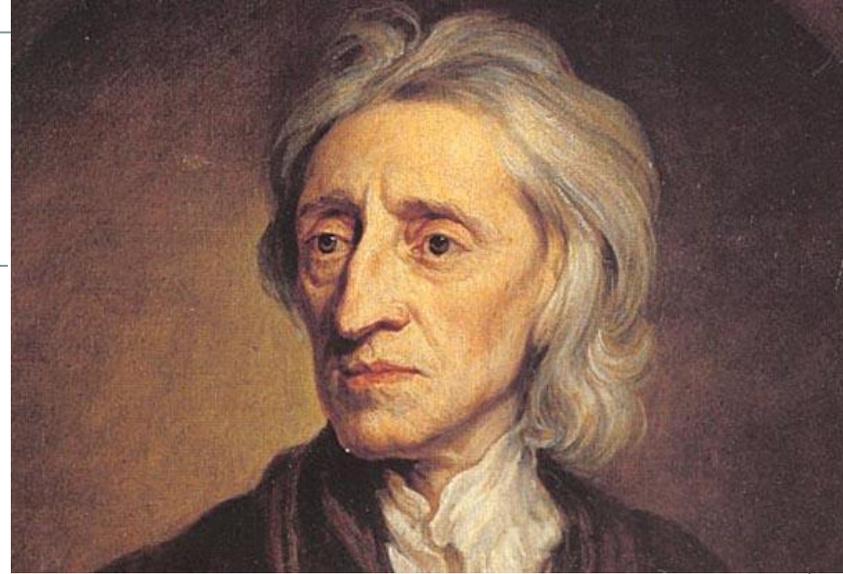
# John Hobbes:



- Applied rational analysis to the study of government
- Attacked the concept of divine right, yet supported an absolute monarchy
- **Beliefs:**
  - Humans were basically driven by passions and needed to be kept in check by a powerful ruler
  - Humans are born greedy and selfish
  - Thought that without laws, we would fight rob and oppress one another

# John Locke:

Heros of the Enlightenment: John Locke

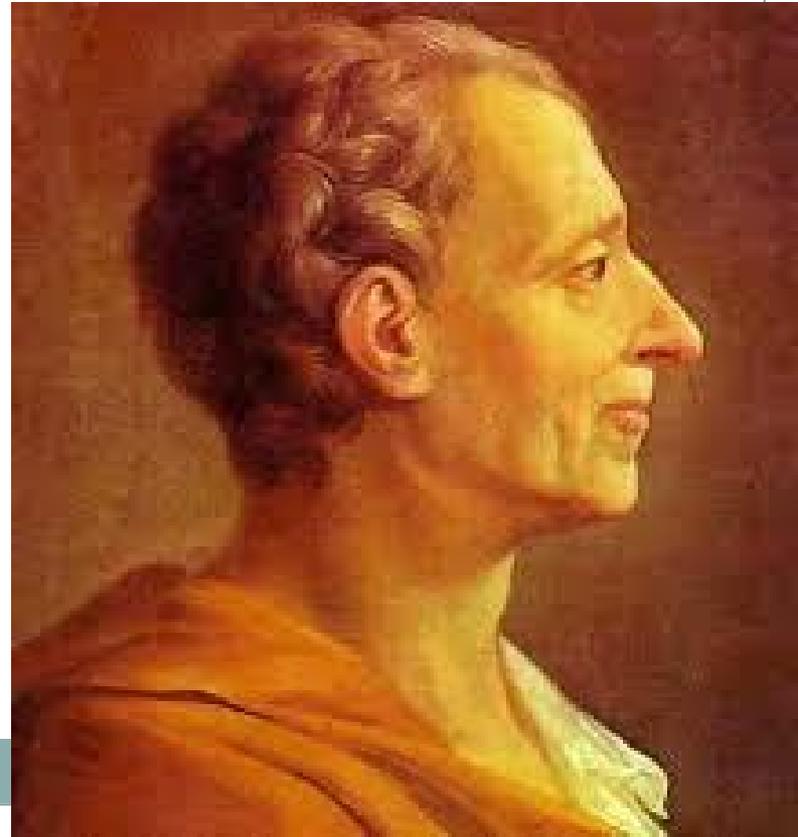


- Believed that all men were equal
- Believed that individuals had natural rights, which he defined as “life, liberty, and estate”
- Locke attacked the divine right of kings and authoritarian government
- Wrote *Two Treatise of Government*
- He promoted a constitutional monarchy that derived its power from the law and from the consent of the people
- He also believed that a government’s responsibility was to protect individual property

# Baron de Montesquieu:



- French noble and political philosopher
- He is famous for his theory of separation of powers, which is implemented in many constitutions throughout the world
- Separation of powers- Identified three sorts of governmental power:
  - Legislative
  - Executive
  - Judicial
- Wrote *The Spirit of the Laws*
- Montesquieu's analysis of the system of checks and balances through separation of power was his most lasting influence to political thought



# Voltaire:

## [Voltaire and the Enlightenment](#)



- Most famous philosophe
- Wrote plays, essays, poetry, philosophy, and books
- Attacked intolerance in society, politics, and religion
- Championed social, political and religious tolerance
- A famous quote usually attributed to Voltaire states, “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.”



# Cesare Beccaria:



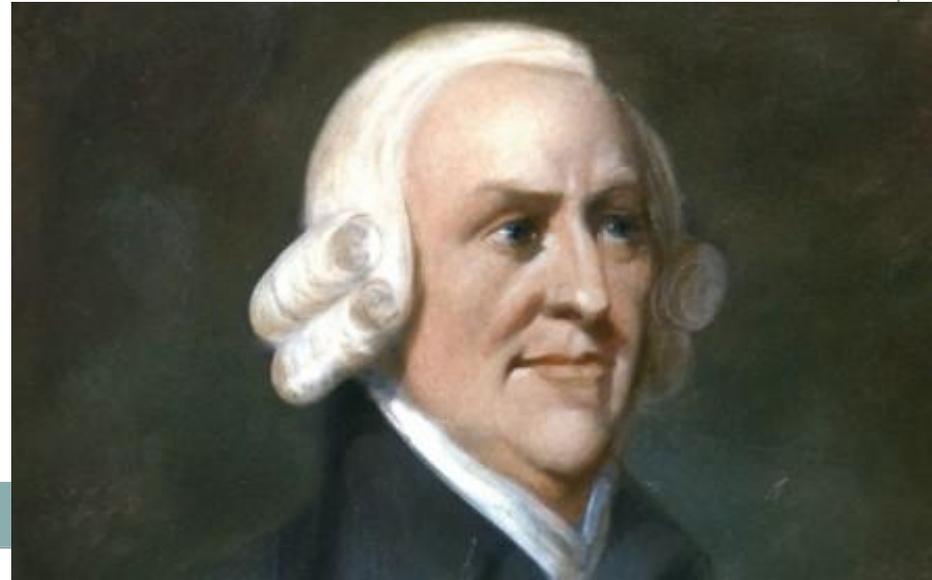
- Italian lawyer – opposed to torture and other cruel punishments, believed punishments should not be cruel or unjust
- Advocated for fair trials and equality of punishments
- Opposed the death penalty



# Adam Smith:



- **Father of Modern Capitalism/Laissez-Faire**
  - Business activities that take place without the interference of the government
  - Argued that in the long run it would be to the nation's advantage not to restrict imports by tariffs
- **Government interference justified only for the purpose of defense or to extend to protect the rights and liberties of its citizens**
- **Wanted funding of public education**



# Our Government and Laws:



- Our system of laws is a direct result of the ideas of the Enlightenment:
  - Preamble to the Declaration of Independence: Natural Rights
  - Constitution: Separation of Powers
  - First Amendment: Free Speech and Freedom of Religion
  - Fourth to Eighth Amendment's: Protections for the accused
    - No unreasonable search and seizure
    - Due Process and Trial by Jury
    - No Cruel and Unusual Punishments

# Exit-slip:



- **Define *Salons* and Philosophes.**
- **What are some of John Locke's key beliefs?**
- **Who wrote *The Social Contract*?**
- **Who believed in the “separation of powers?”**