

The Enlightenment

- What is it?
- Why did it begin?
- The Philosophers
- Influences



A. What is it?

- 17th -18th century movement where thinkers attempted to apply reason to explain how society and governments should be

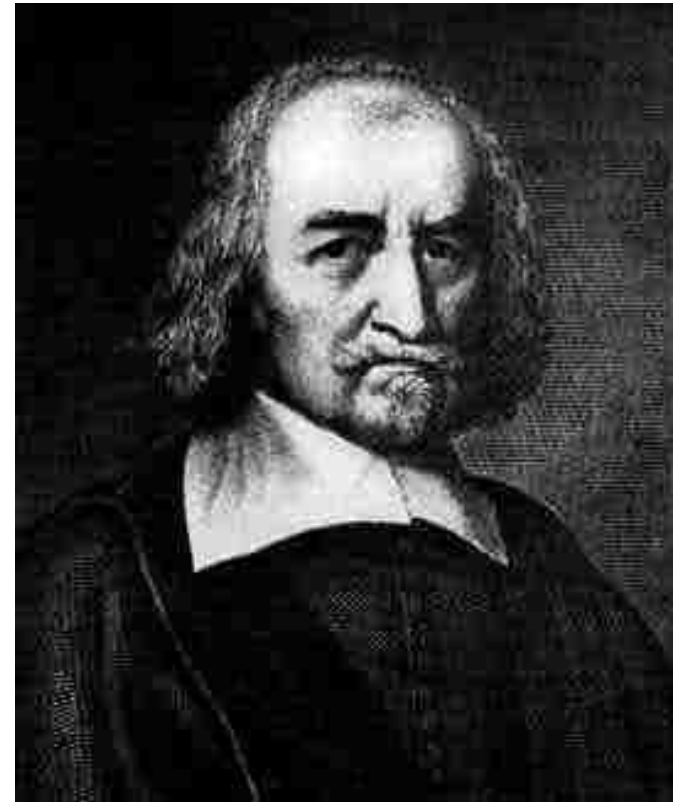


B. Why did it begin?

- Governments were being ruled by absolute monarchs since the fall of Rome.
- People were taught to believe that this was the only system of government and that their rulers had divine right.
- People began to question these governments when the Scientific Revolution proved that old beliefs about nature were incorrect.

C.The Philosophers

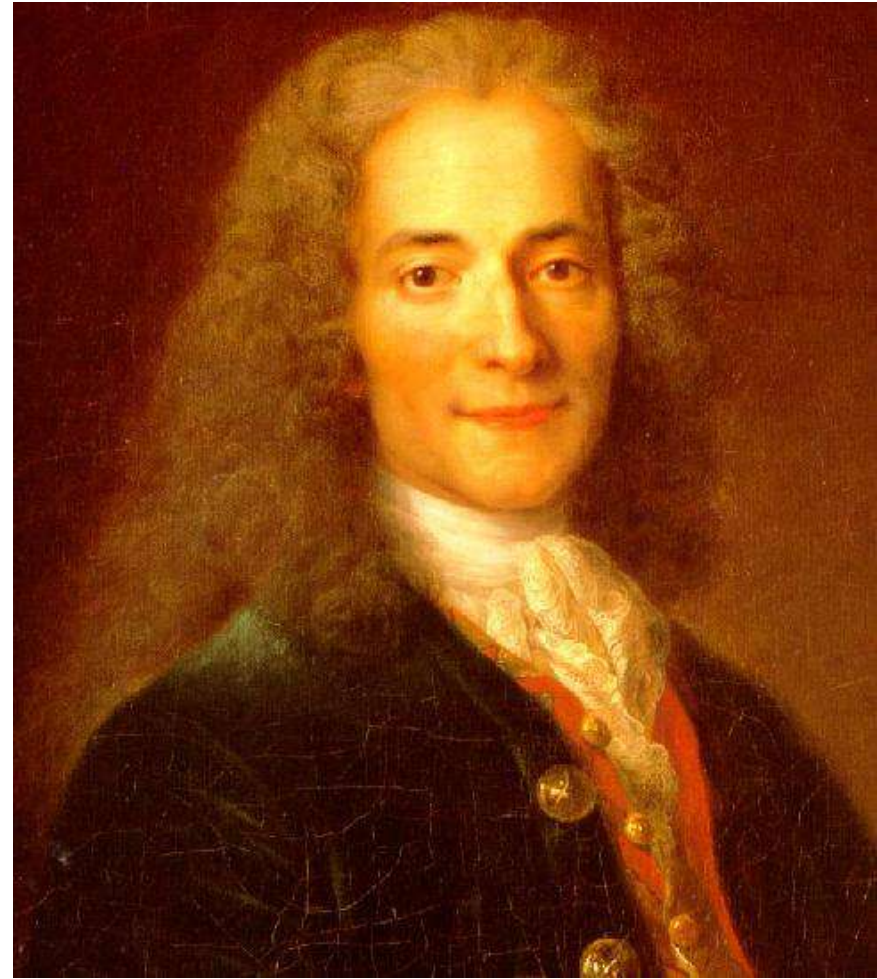
- Thomas Hobbes
- Believed all humans were naturally wicked and selfish.
- People created social contracts with rulers
- People agreed to give up their rights to gain law and order.



- John Locke
- Believed in self-government
- Also believed that people are born with three natural rights:
 - Life
 - Liberty
 - Property
- People would form governments to protect their rights.



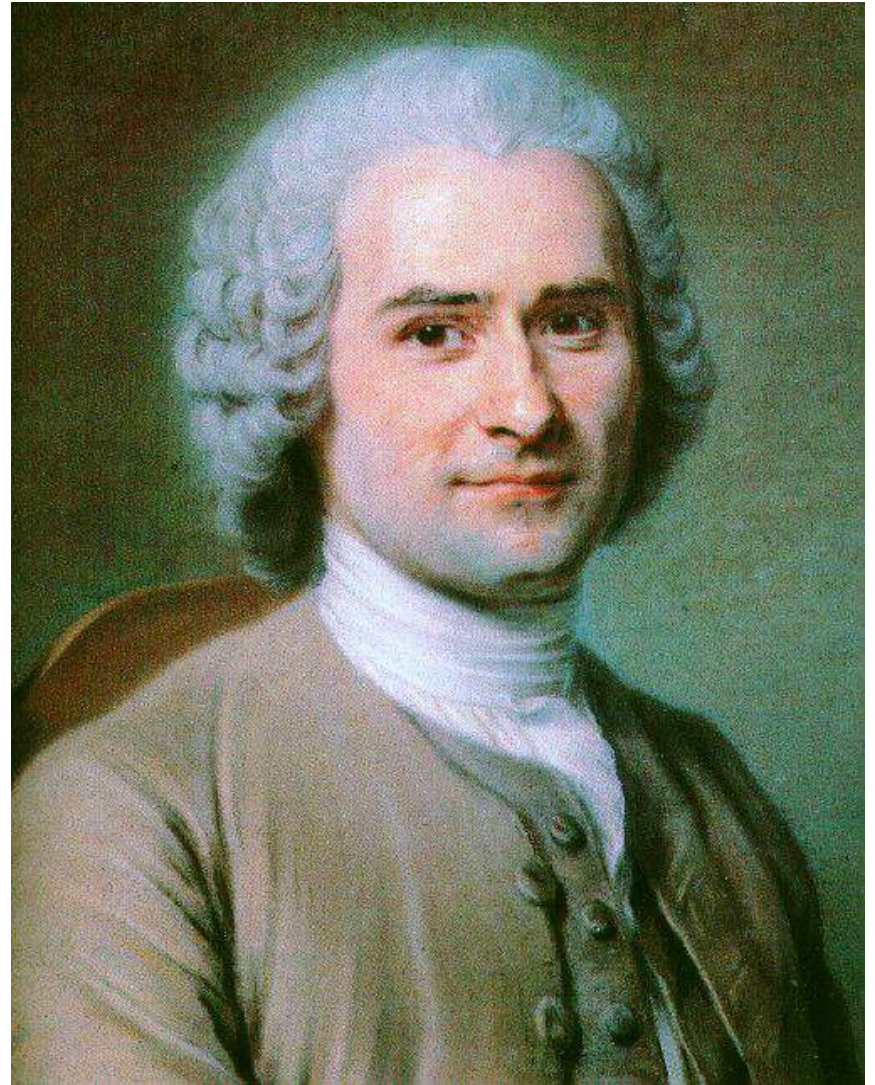
- Voltaire (a.k.a. Francois Marie Arouet)
- Believed that people were entitled to certain freedoms
 - freedom of speech
 - freedom of religion



- Baron de Montesquieu
- Believed the power of government needed to be checked by the separation of powers into three branches.



- Jean-Jacques Rousseau
- Believed that the only good government was a democracy
- The only legitimate government came from the consent (permission) of the governed (citizens).



D. Influences

- These ideas (while not original) are going to lead people to question the absolute monarchs.
- This questioning will lead people to overthrow their governments.
- The new governments will be based on the philosophers' beliefs of democracy.

