

The Enlightenment and Social Contract Theory

Thomas Hobbes (1588 - 1679)

- * "The life of man was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."
- * Wrote *Leviathan* in 1658
- * Believed that **human nature was rooted in corruption**
- * Believed **humans to be driven by self-interest, greed, and desire for power**
- * Supported absolute monarchy
- * Wanted government to hold absolute and undemocratic power
- * Believed social contract served to **prevent a return to uncivilized nature**

John Locke (1632 – 1704)

- * Influenced by the *Glorious Revolution*
- * Wrote *Second Treatise of Government* in 1690,
- * Beliefs heavily diverged from Hobbes
- * Believed that **nature was good by default**
- * Believed humans were born with **natural rights**
- * Believed humans entered social contract to **provide order** and to **protect rights**

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 - 1788)

- * French Enlightenment Thinker
- * Focused on social contract theory
- * "Man is born free, everywhere he is in chains."
- * Wrote *The Social Contract* in 1762
- * Believed **humans were good by nature**, and corrupted by organized government
- * Believed **private property promoted inequality**
- * Believed **wealth created vanity and corruption**
- * Pre-Marx socialism-esk