

# The Enlightenment and Social Contract Theory

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## Thomas Hobbes (1588 - 1679)

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- “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)

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- 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)

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- 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

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