

JOHN LOCKE

He laid much of the groundwork for the Enlightenment and was concerned with the legitimacy of the state over the individual.

His beliefs are at the core of the American Declaration of Independence



JOHN LOCKE

Biography

Born 1632 in England.

Raised in a Puritan household

Sponsored to attend an elite school (paid by his dad's former military commander, who was in the House of Commons at the time)

Age 20, to college. He grew irritated learning about the old philosophers, preferring the modern ones

- ↳ Locke was convinced that one of the chief reasons for the failures of past philosophers was their lack of attention to the real sources of human knowledge
 - ↳ The mistakes stem from the "rubbish" that led so many of the dogmas philosophers believed in,

1665-1666, Great Plague in London. He is nearby.

100,000+ killed, almost a quarter of London's population

1666, Great Fire of London destroys 15% of London (about 13,500 residences) over 5 days

Locke studies medicine and helped Robert Boyle, the discoverer of some of the most important laws of physics, in his laboratory experiments

In so doing, he had first-hand knowledge of the scientific method

1683, Locke fled to the Netherlands, under strong suspicion of involvement in the Rye House Plot (unclear how involved he was, if at all)

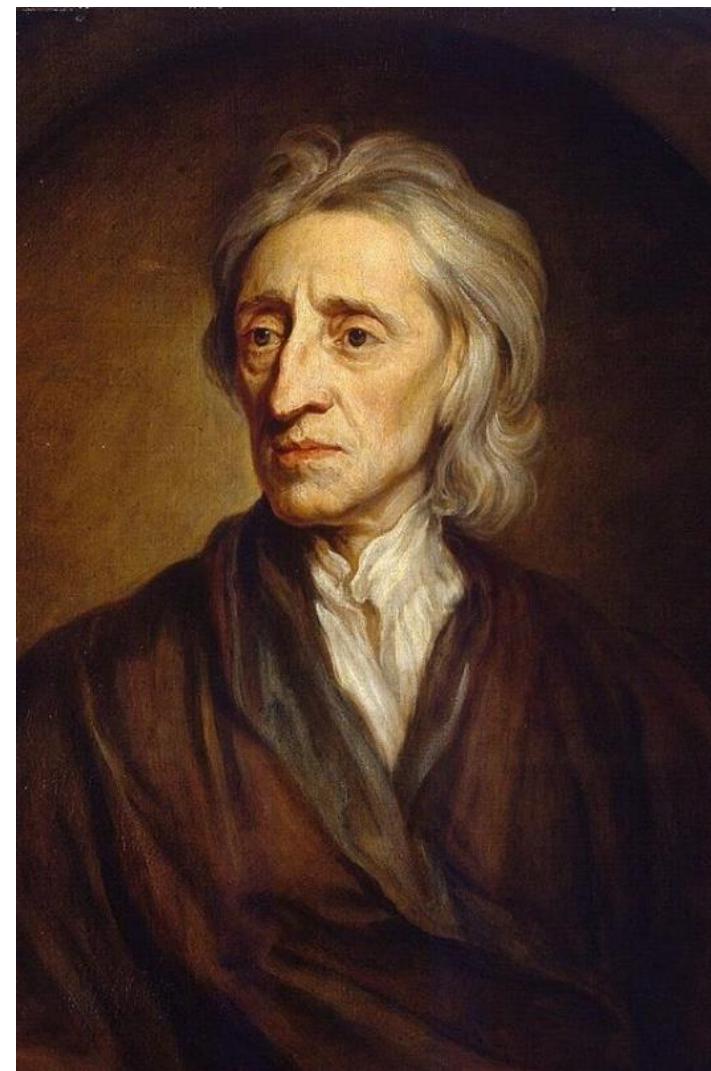
- ↳ RHP was a plot to assassinate King Charles II and his brother James. It did not happen.
 - ↳ In response, King Charles II had 10+ imprisoned and 15+ executed
 - ↳ By (hanging), (2) drawn and quartered, (3) burned at the stake, and (4) beheaded
 - ↳ Dozens of others fled to safety

1688, returned to England after the Glorious Revolution

- ↳ Charles II dead, and son, King James, is disposed by James's daughter Queen Mary.
- ↳ Locke accompanies Queen Mary on the return. Most his writing comes from after his return from exile

Regular asthma attacks

Dies 1704



Philosophy (major ideas)

Prior to the existence of human government, all things were subject to the rule of nature or Divine laws, which are revealed through the **exercise of reason**

He **believed in equality between the genders** (although he did little writing advocating this.)

Liberty is for the sake of pursuing happiness

Good is whatever produces pleasure and evil is whatever produce pain

Locke's views on slavery were multifaceted and complex. Although he **wrote against slavery** in general, Locke was an investor and beneficiary of the slave trading Royal Africa Company

Considered the first of the British empiricists

↳ Empiricist: **knowledge comes from what we experience**

The chief reason for the establishment of governments is the perseveration of private property

No one should have more property than they can use

- ↳ This is particularly so with regard to perishable things, like fruit
 - ↳ A person who gathers an enormous quantity of plums cannot decently justify claiming ownership over them because they cannot all be eaten before they rot, and *wasting is wrong*
 - ↳ However, the invention of money and some metals (virtually indestructible) enable some people to accumulate vastly unequal portions of the Earth's wealth.
 - ↳ Although this is theoretically undesirable, Locke concluded, **the sanctity of property is such that its unequal distribution has to be tolerated.**

Believed in religious tolerance and in the separation between church and state (influenced by Baruch Spinoza)

Comprised **Social Contract Theory**, which concerns the legitimacy of the authority of the state over the individual

- ↳ Heavily influenced the Declaration of Independence. Insisted that governments need the “consent of the governed”

There are no innate ideas

- ↳ Human knowledge is derived either from sense experiences or from introspection (thought/reflection)