



The Enlightenment

Pre-Enlightenment Society to
Enlightenment

What was the Enlightenment?

Period during 18th century (1700s) when thinkers (philosophes) began to use reason to try and understand how the world worked and how to make it better. Many social and social advances were made.

Also known as the *Age of Reason*



But, it was **NOT** always that way...

Historically...

(16th & 17th Centuries)

- People turned to church teachings (**RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE**) as only truth
- Religious teachings & traditional beliefs explained the universe & how the world worked
- And absolute rulers had all power



Absolutism (Absolute Monarchy)

Dominate in the 16th & 17th Centuries:

- People willingly accepted authority in exchange for peace & safety
- Nobility was incorporated into power to avoid opposition



Absolutism is When...

- Power rests in hands of king/queen
- Monarchs of Western Europe had complete control over national government & society
- Selected through *DIVINE RIGHT RULE* (more later...)

Divine Right Rule Theory

Basics:

- King ruled by will of God
 - Rule absolutely
 - Opposition to king = rebellion against God
- Theory gained support due to power of religion
 - Monarchs nationalized church (gain power)



Why would this assure the king gained power and support?

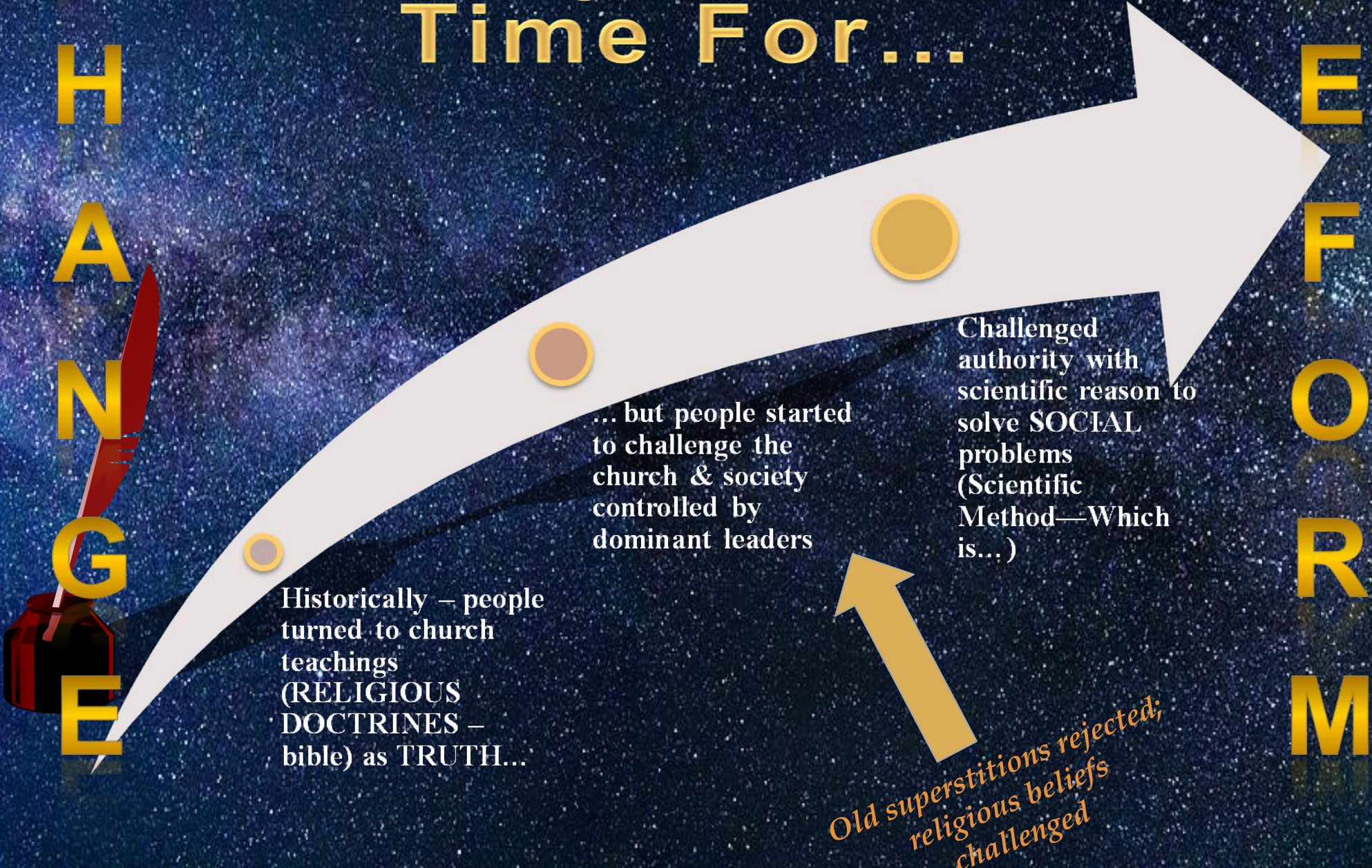
The Back Story:

- Belief people should be excluded from power
 - God's purpose is to institute absolute monarchy
 - Monarch's rule is to protect and guide society
 - Rule with best interest of society
 - King Louis XIV of France...

Background Information on Enlightenment Time For...

C
H
A
N
G
E

R
E
F
O
R
M



Historically – people turned to church teachings (RELIGIOUS DOCTRINES – bible) as TRUTH...

... but people started to challenge the church & society controlled by dominant leaders

Challenged authority with scientific reason to solve SOCIAL problems (Scientific Method—Which is...)

*Old superstitions rejected;
religious beliefs challenged*

A Change in Thinking...THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION

Man can now reason to explain the world around him

Systematic observation & careful experimentation leads to correct principles

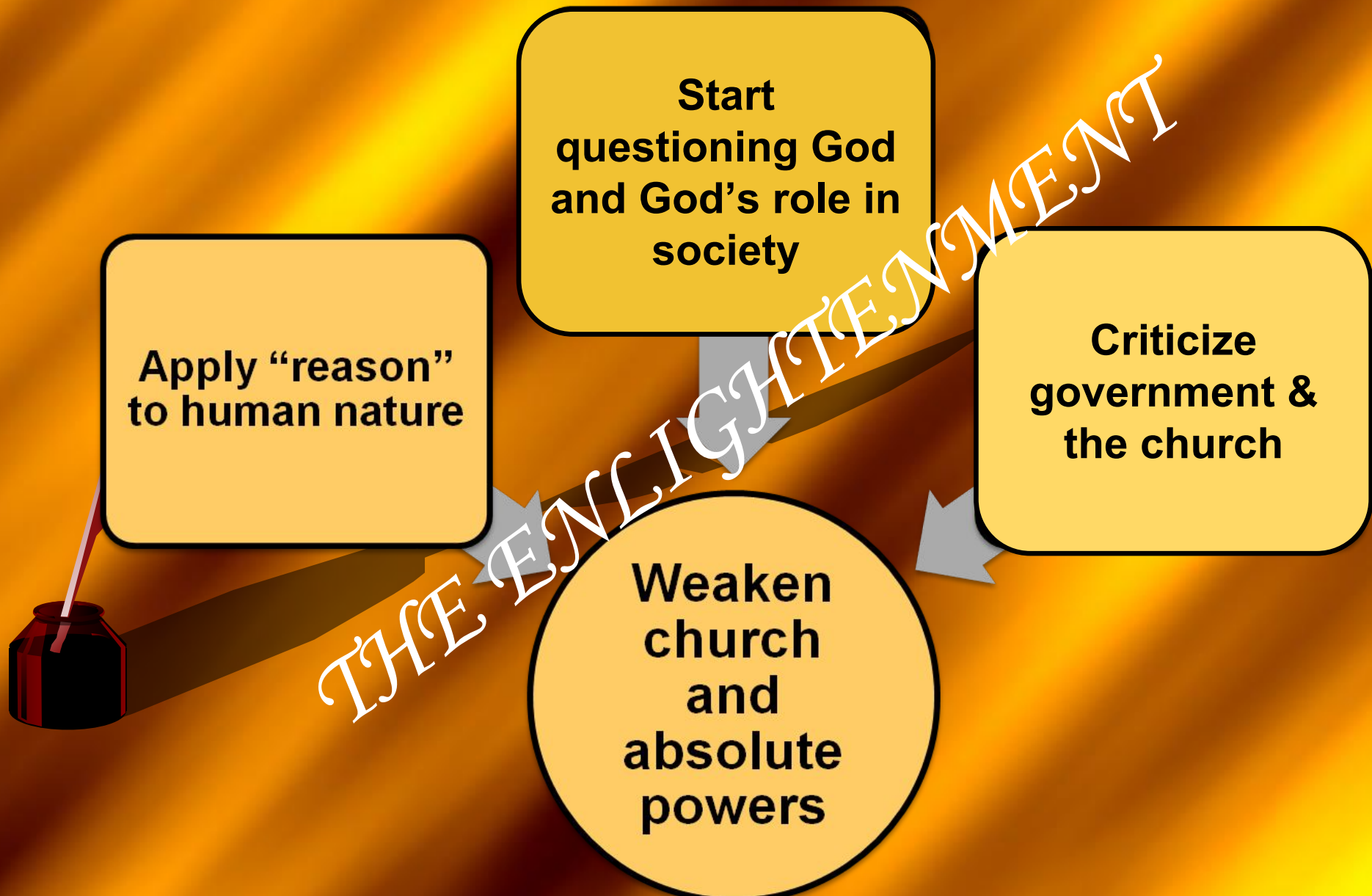
No need for God in science = natural law

Francis Bacon
Rene Descartes
Isaac Newton

SCIENTIFIC THINKING

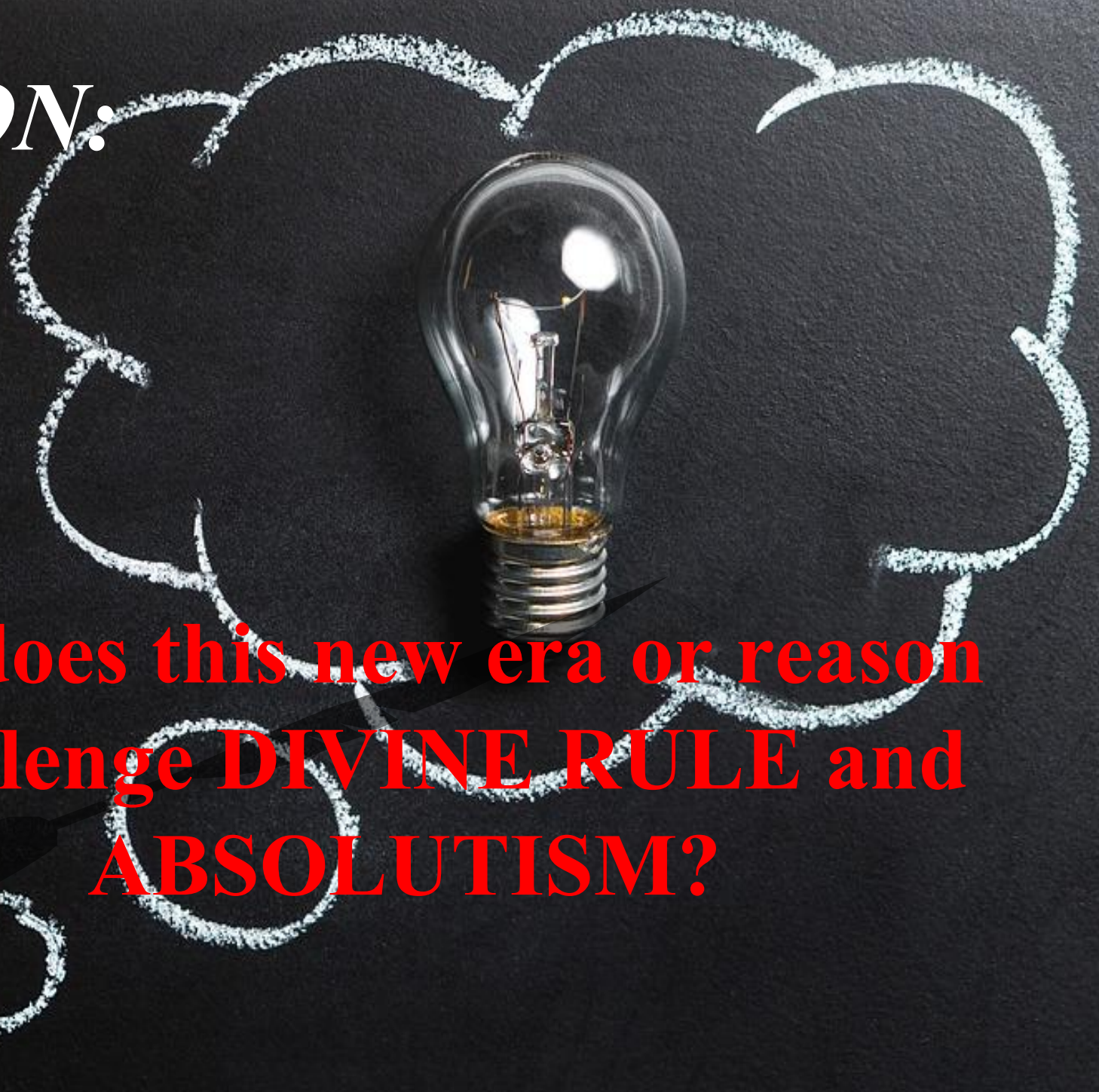


Social Scientists Apply the Thinking from the Scientific Revolution to Society to solve social problems: 1700-1800s



QUESTION:

**How does this new era or reason
challenge DIVINE RULE and
ABSOLUTISM?**



THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Philosophes (thinkers) apply the Scientific Revolution to SOCIETY to solve social problems, ignorance, and build a better world. Main issues discussed revolved around the role of government.



Denis Diderot



Salons

Teach to think
critically &
question

Put together a
collection of
the writings of
the major
philosophes

ENCYCLOPEDIA

Question:

Why would an Encyclopedia be revolutionary during the Enlightenment?



Philosophe, Thomas Hobbes

Humans are naturally selfish & fearless

Life in nature is poor, nasty, brutish, & short

Need a POWERFUL leader to impose order & manage corrupt behavior

Which Government?

Social contract = exchange of freedom for protection & security from the government



Philosophe, John Locke



People are born with “unalienable rights”



LIFE

LIBERTY

PROPERTY

Views Of:

Rulers are not
ABSOLUTE

Rights of
People

**John
Locke**

R
E
P
U
B
L
I
C

Bound by laws
of **Reason &
Nature**

Create order

Protect people's
natural rights

Gain consent of
the people

Right to
OVERTHROW
the ruler if...

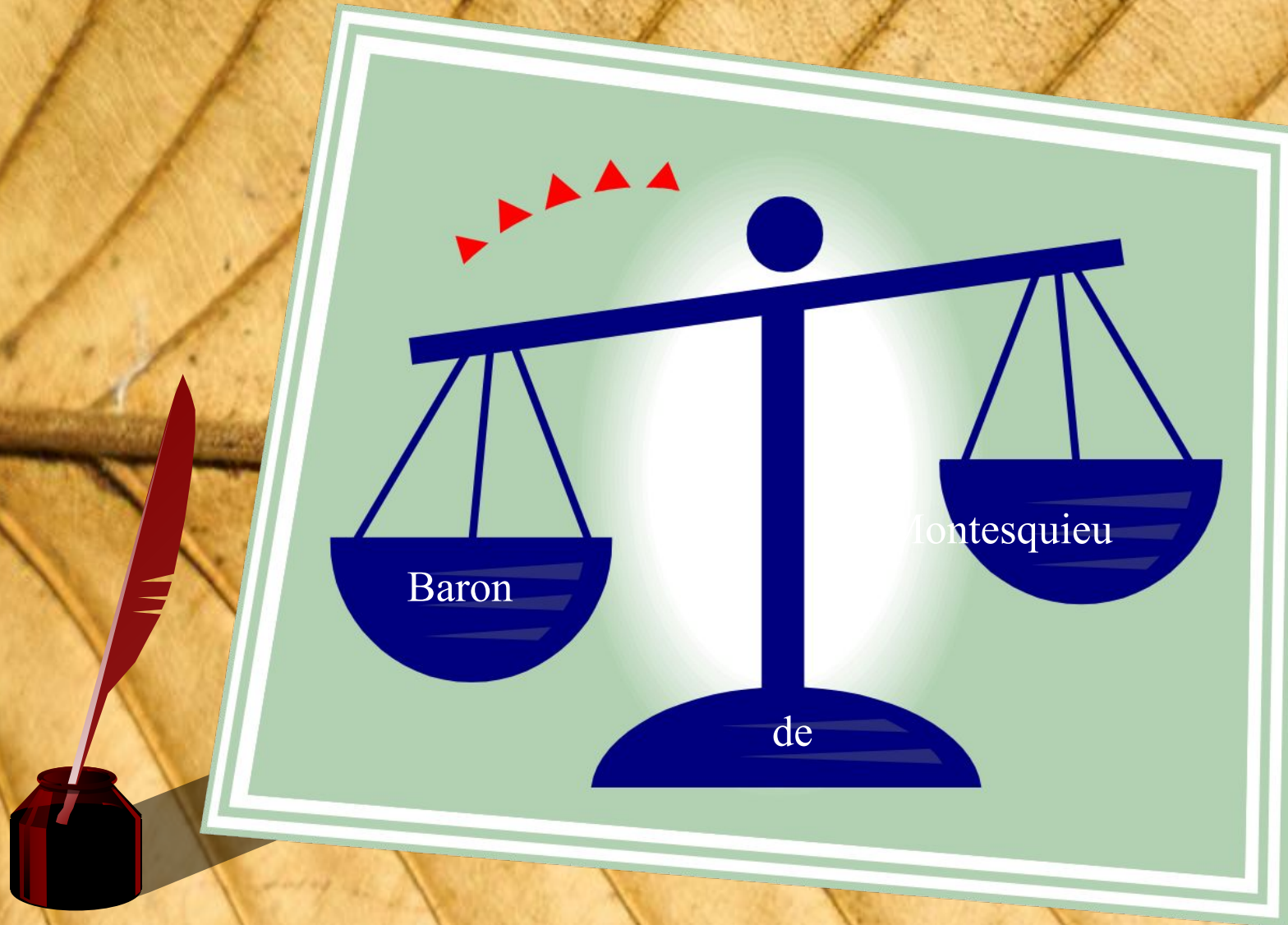
(1) Does not
represent the
people

(2) Fails to
protect natural
rights

REVOLT



Philosophe, Baron de Montesquieu



It's NATURAL for rulers with **ABSOLUTE POWER** to use power in corrupt manner... therefore... we must...

Philosophe, Baron de Montesquieu

...spread power evenly over three branches of government – prevent the abuse of power by dividing political power

CHECKS & BALANCES:

- a. **Legislative – Made laws (Congress)**
- b. **Executive – Enforce the laws (Pres.)**
- c. **Judicial – Interpret and apply laws (Supreme & Federal Courts.)**



Philosophe, Jean Jacques Rousseau believed that people are...

*born
good*

*corrupted by
the
environment*

**Corruption
by**

Society

*corrupted
by bad laws*

*corrupted by
bad government*



Philosophe, Jean Jacques Rousseau

A Social Contract is necessary

- Government should be contract between people
 - Best government used POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY (vote by all of the people – MAJORITY RULES)
- “General Will” OR Common Good
 - People should give up freedom for the majority’s decision



DEMOCRACY



Philosophe, Voltaire

- Used public opinion to fight injustice



“I do not agree with a word you say, but I will fight to the death for your right to say it.”

Believed the perfect government needed
FREEDOM OF THOUGHTS
freedom of speech and of religion.

