

Politics

Part 3 of 3

Turn a Light On

- The Enlightenment (18th Century)
- The opposition to authority directed against (mostly):
 - the power of the clergy, the king, and the nobility.
- Why do you think these institutions were targets?

A Rational Response

- “rationalism”- unshakable faith in “human reason.”
- French Enlightenment is often called “the Age of Reason.”
- The new natural sciences had revealed that nature was subject to reason.
- Now the Enlightenment philosophers saw it as their duty to lay a foundation for:

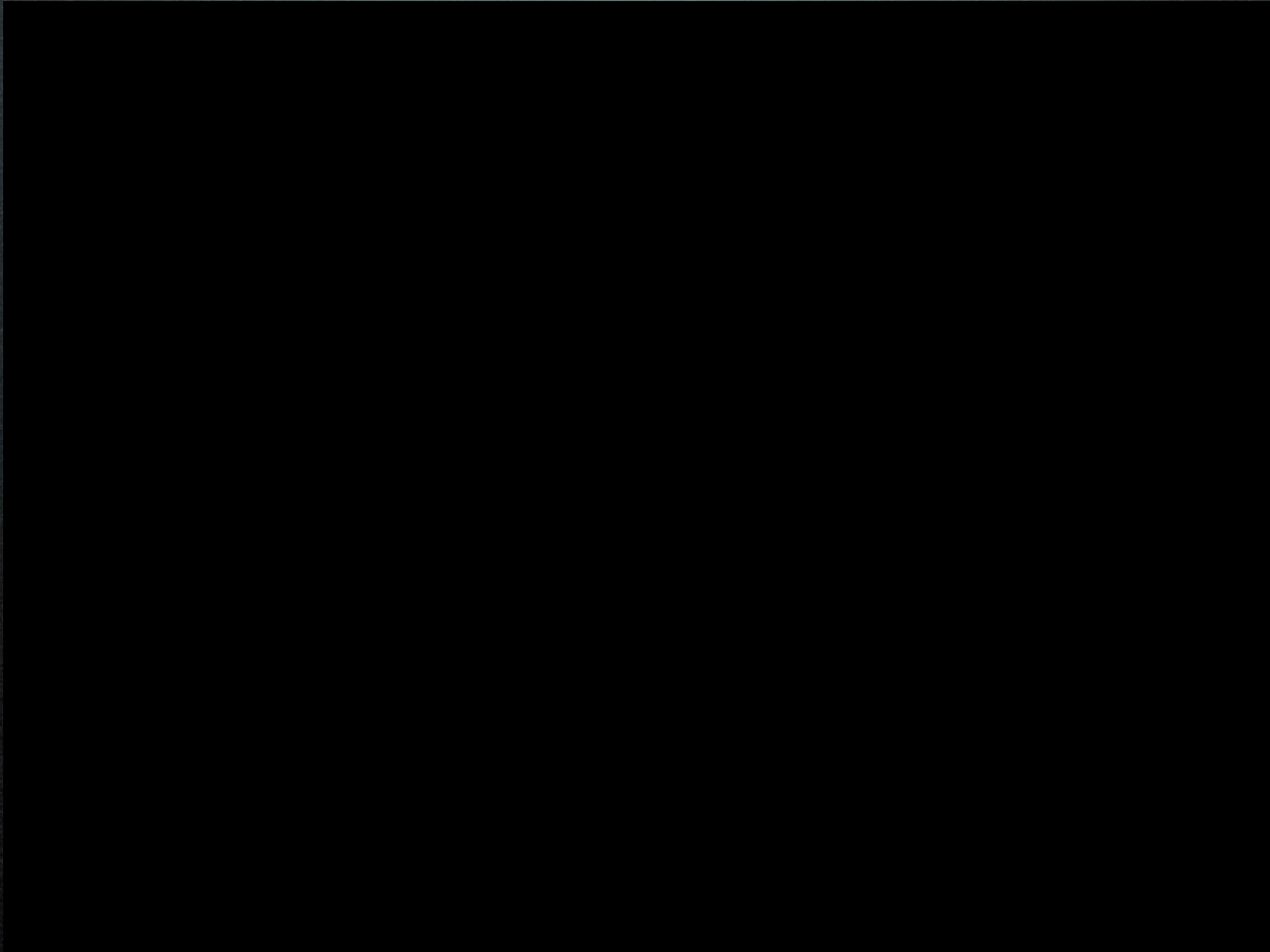
morals, religion, and ethics

- ...in accordance with man’s “immutable reason.”

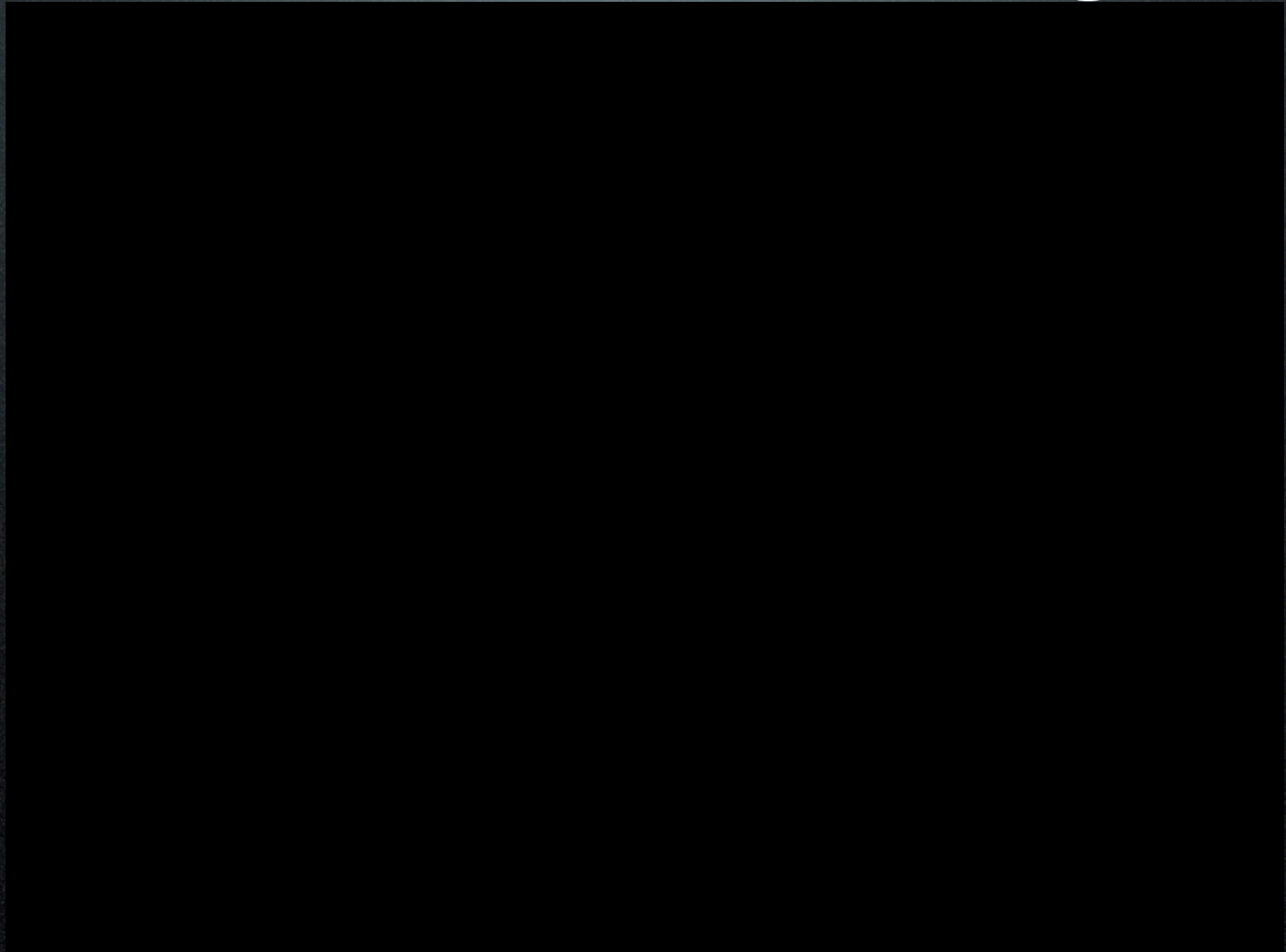


← What does this mean?

Dawkins on Morality



The Comfort of Religion



Building a Better You

- This led to the “Enlightenment Movement.” - “enlightening” the masses was to be the basis for a better society.
- Great attention was therefore focused on the education of children and the people.
- Cultural optimism:

The Enlightenment philosophers felt that once reason and knowledge became widespread, humanity would make great progress.

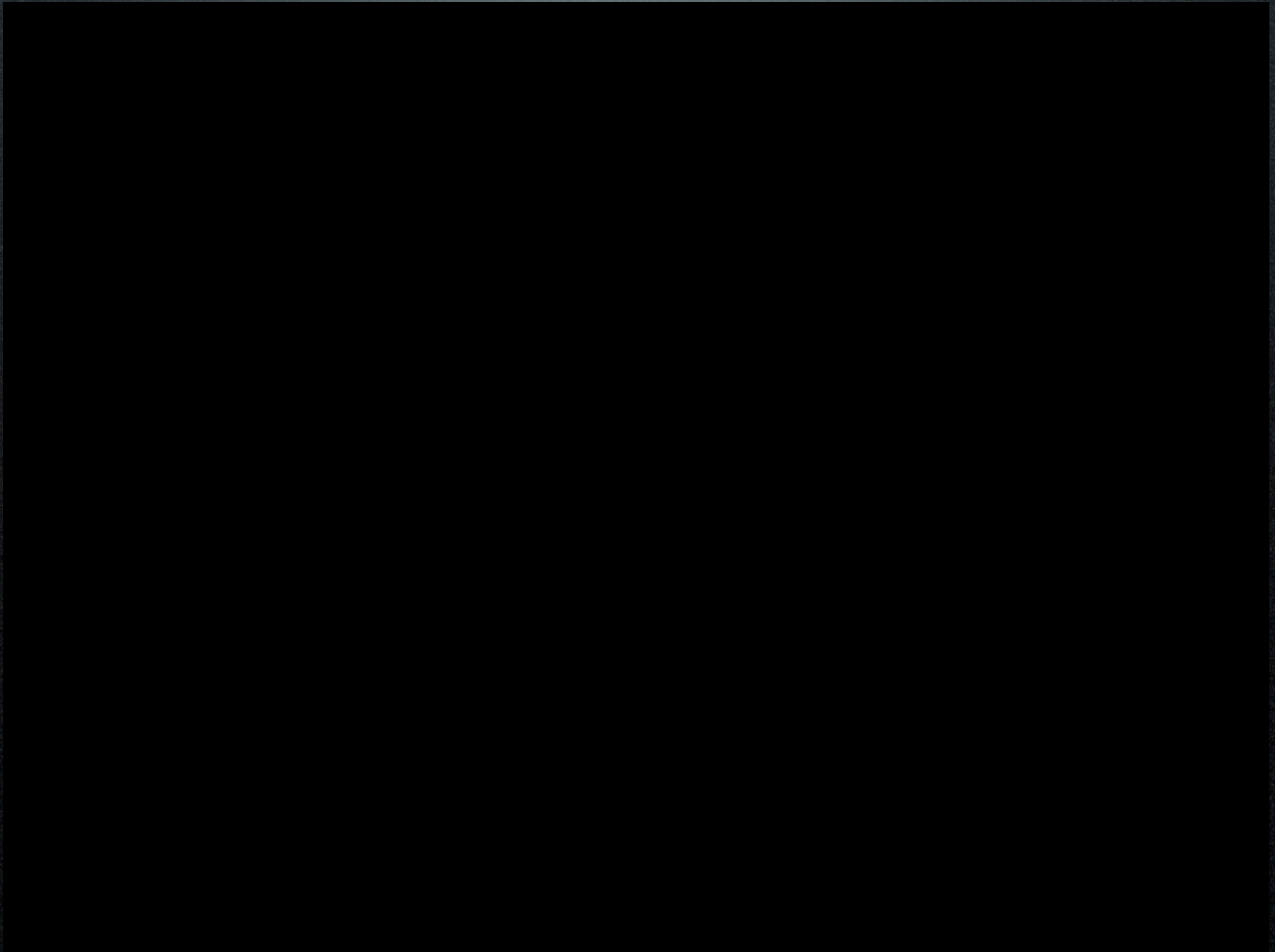


KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Would the enlightenment philosophers be pleased with what they see around us today?

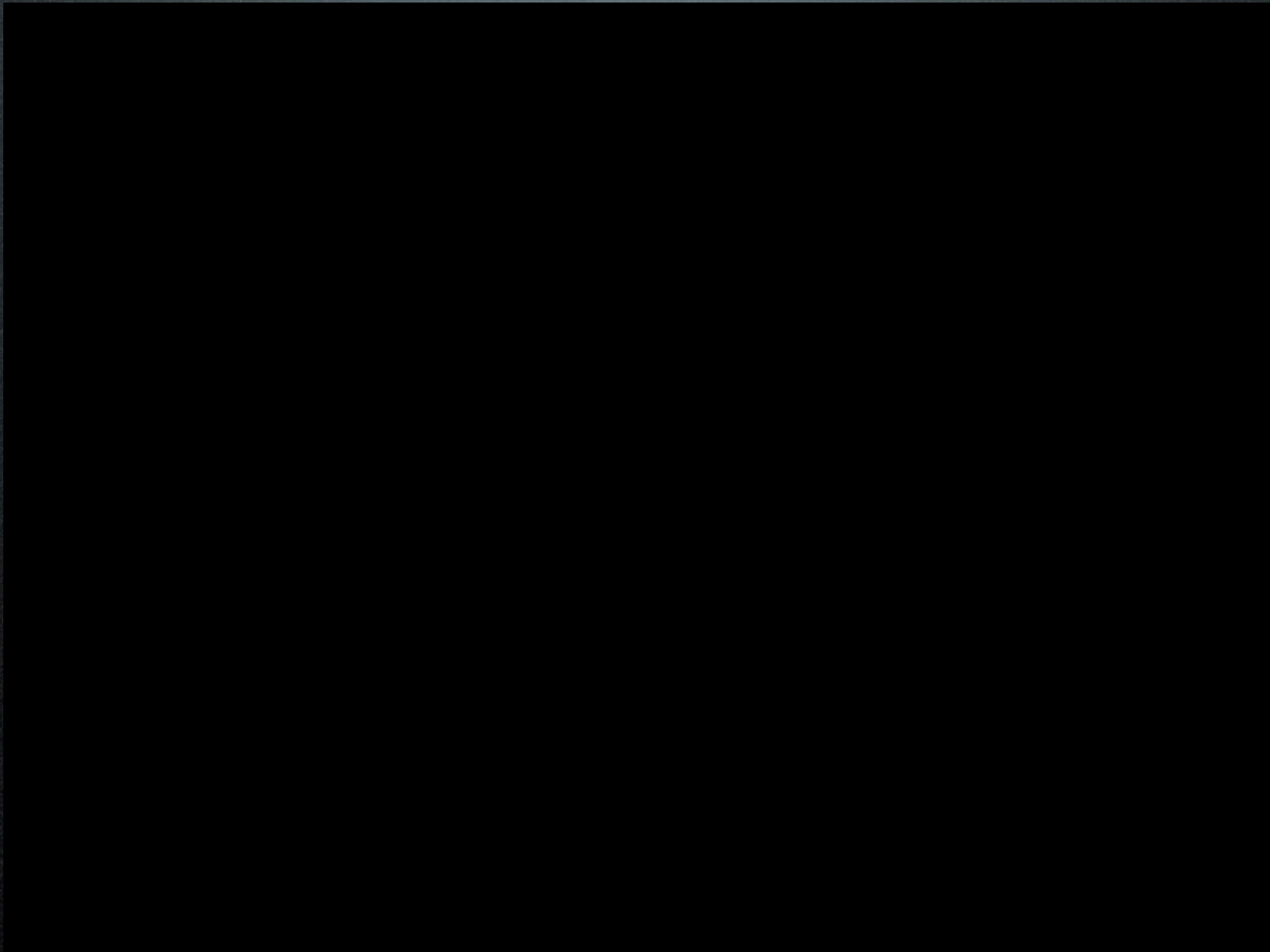
Stupid in America

Dismantle Public Ed.



Keep it Natural

- The French Enlightenment philosophers did not content themselves with theoretical views on man's place in society.
- They fought actively for what they called the “natural rights” of the citizen.
- At first, this took the form of a campaign against censorship for the freedom of the press, and politics, and for the individual's right to freedom of thought and utterance had to be secured.
- Enlightenment philosophers also fought for the abolition of slavery and for a more humane treatment of criminals.
- Enlightenment philosophers wanted to establish certain rights that everybody was entitled to simply by being born. That was what they mean by “natural rights.”



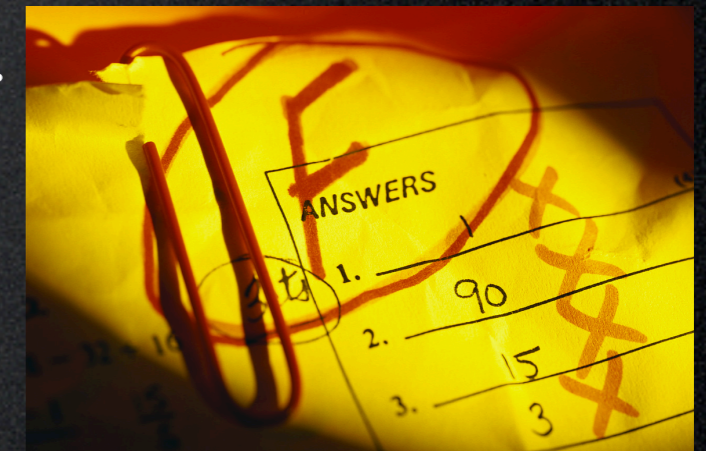
Origin of Rights

• Is education of the masses necessary?



What should be included in this “education?”

Is the experience of education more important than getting good grades?





Self-Destructive Man

Wednesday, January 28, 15



Free Will vs. Determinism

What the Hegel?

- Georg Wilhelm Hegel (1770 - 1831)
- Dialectic for him was:
 - a thesis is produced,
 - it develops an opposition (its antithesis),
 - a conflict between them ensues, and the conflict is resolved into a synthesis that includes both thesis and antithesis.



Hey Girl



The history of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness of freedom.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

- We are just pawns of historical necessity
- Hegel inferred that the state was a separate, distinct entity that (so to speak) had “an existence of its own.”
- Hegel also inferred that the state was more important than the individual citizen, since it not only united all its citizens into a particular culture but also because its persistence guaranteed the continuance of the culture even though its individual members perished.

Group Supremacy



Do you agree that the state is more important than the individual?

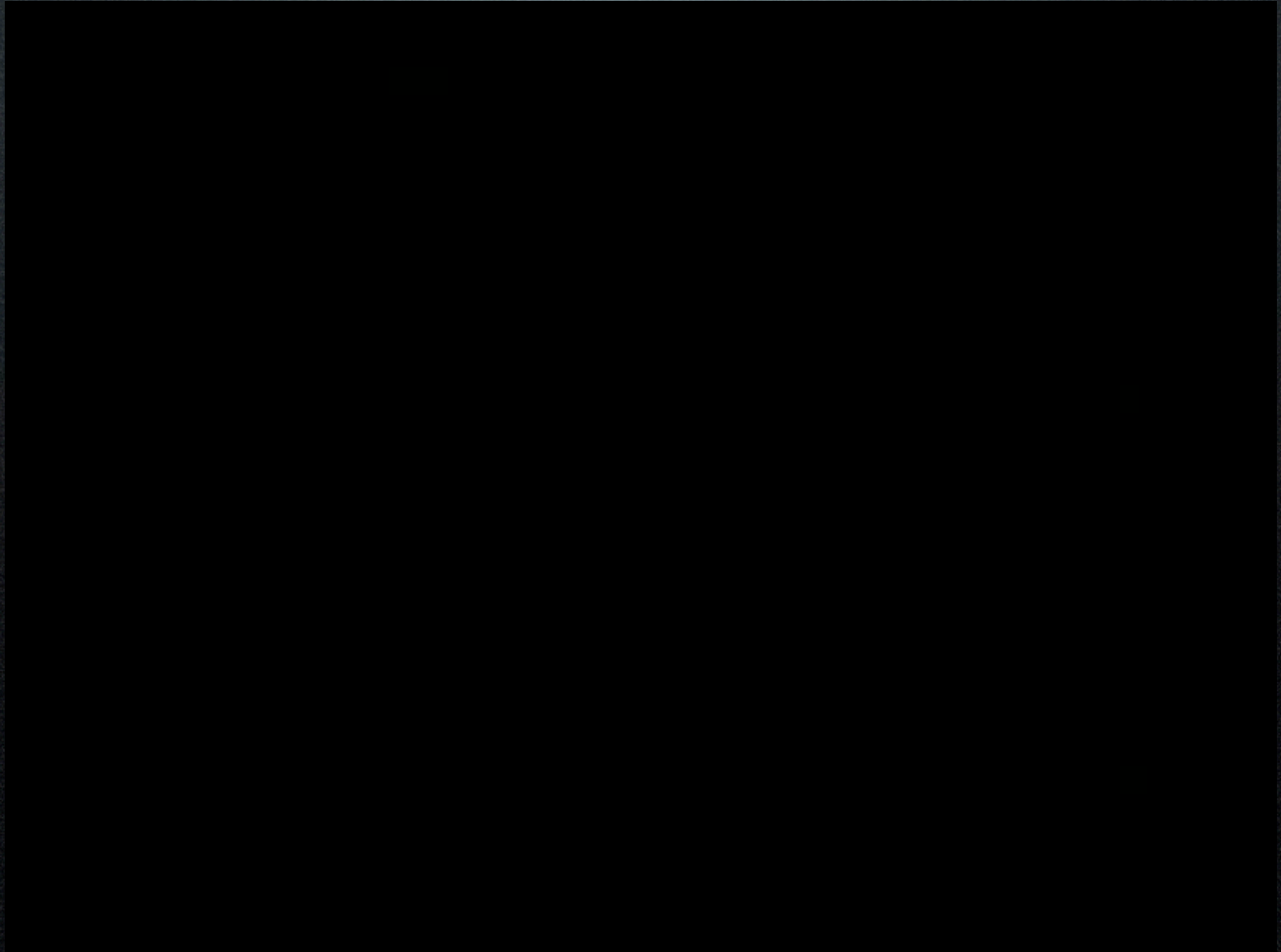
"EITHER WE BELIEVE THAT THE STATE EXISTS TO SERVE THE INDIVIDUAL OR THAT THE INDIVIDUAL EXISTS TO SERVE THE STATE."

- AYN RAND



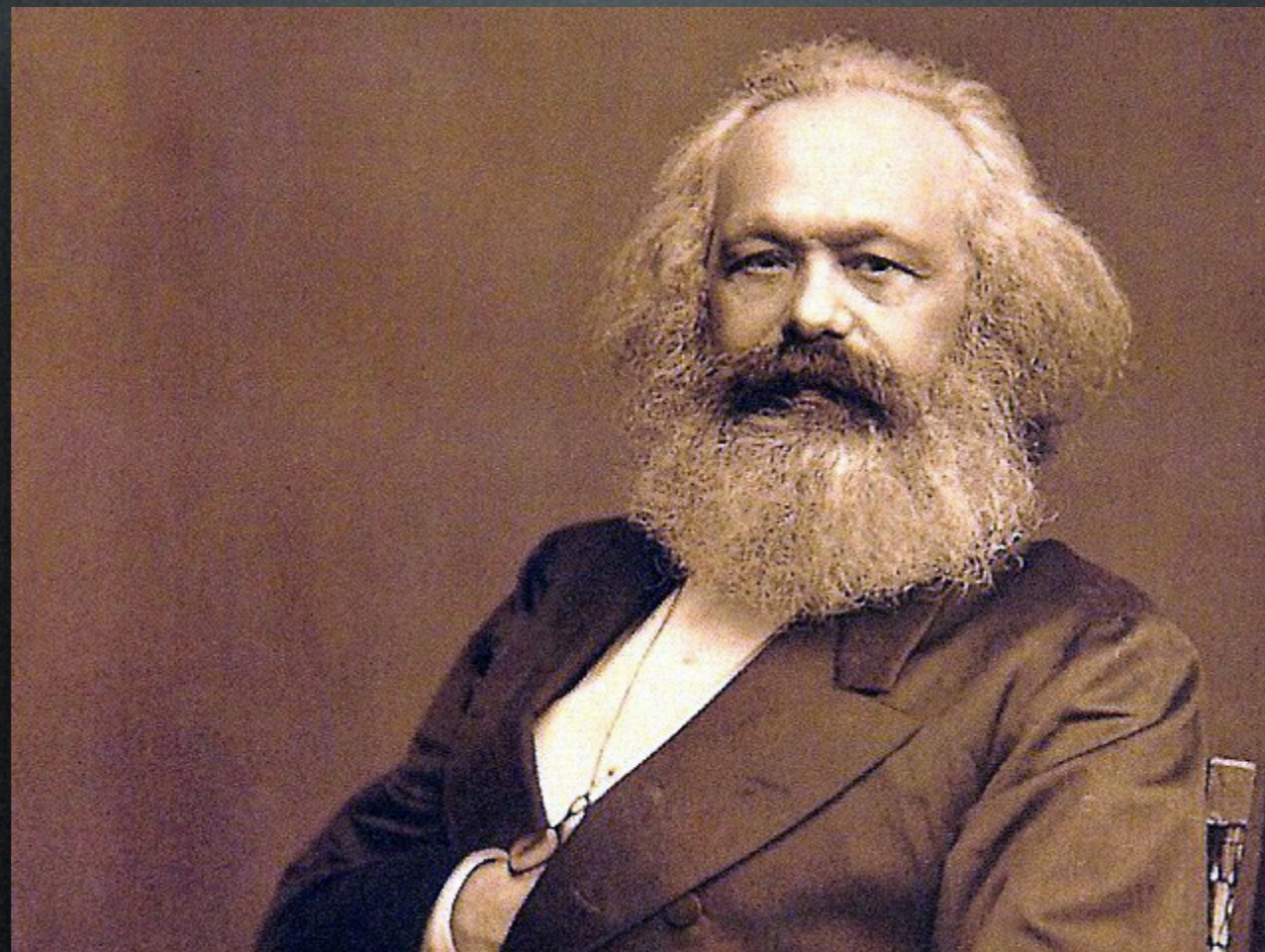
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Communist Manifesto



This One is for Marx

- Karl Marx (1815 - 1883)
- Thought that it was the **material factors** in society which determined the way we think.



- We usually say that the era of the great philosophical systems ended with Hegel.
- After him, philosophy took a new direction.

- Instead of “great speculative systems,” we had what we call an “existentialist philosophy” or a “**philosophy of action.**”

On Your Marx

- Marx developed Hegel's idea that historical development is driven by the tension between opposites - which is then resolved by sudden change.
- Material changes are the ones that affect history.
- Marx particularly emphasized that it was the economic forces in society that created change and thus drove history forward.
- Called these material, economic, and social relations the "basis" of society.
- The way a society thinks, what kind of political institutions there are, which laws it has and, not least, what there is of religion, morals, art, philosophy, and science, Marx called society's "superstructure."
- Marx believed that material relations support, so to speak, everything in the way of thoughts and ideas in society.
- Society's "superstructure" is in fact a reflection of the "bases" of that society. It is the interactive effect of society's "basis" on its "superstructure."

Marx on Society

- Marx believed in the three levels in the “bases” of a society:
- The most basic level is what we may call society’s “**conditions of production.**” In other words, the natural conditions or resources that are available to society. These are the foundation of any society, and this foundation clearly determines the type of production in the society, and by the same token, the nature of that society and its culture in general.
- The next level is the society’s “**means of production.**” By this Marx meant the various kinds of equipment, tools, and machinery, as well as the raw materials to be found there.
- The next level in the bases of society is those who own the means of production. The division of labour, or the distribution of work and ownership was what Marx called society’s “**product relations.**”
- The “**mode of production**” in a society determines which “political” and “**ideological**” conditions are to be found there.

Marx for Being Right

- No natural right
- Ruling class decides what is right
- History is merely a matter of who owns the means of production.



For all of history conflict is between those who own the means and those who do not. And since classes will never voluntarily relinquish power, change can only come from revolution.

Another Brick in the Wall

Alienation: Capitalist system workers work for others. No connection to work and thus himself.

Slaves for another social class.

Exploitation of workers: where does profit come from? How do you create more?

- Labour: man works and transforms nature -> nature interacts with man and transforms consciousness
- **The way you think is closely connected to the job you do.**

Hit the Marx

- How do you feel about entering the work force?
- Given Marx's position, how do you think you want to conduct yourself in the work force?
- Does the government perpetuate the problem of poverty by providing money for the poor?
- What's the government's responsibility to poor people?
- How much of poverty is due to laziness?

Just Rawls to the Finish

- John Rawls (1921 - 2002)
- The Rawls test:
 - You're a law maker, once you've made your rules you drop dead.
 - Back to life in the society, but have no choice in which "position" you end up in.



Rawls Before you Walk

- Society can be politically “just” but economically unfair.
- Rawls does not object to a society that exhibits differentials in wealth.
- What Rawls objects to is a society where inequalities in wealth allow some persons to sink beneath a minimal level with respect to the material conditions of existence.
- Rawls’ emphasis is on minimizing the differences in wealth among members of a politically free society.
- In this respect, Rawls’ idea of a “good” society is one that counteracts the natural inequalities deriving from:
 - birth, drive, talent, and circumstances, ...all features that tend to distribute wealth unfairly.
- “The common good” for Rawls is measured in terms of certain basic benefits to individuals who otherwise would be economically disadvantaged.

Done Politics.

- Now we move on to the fun stuff.