

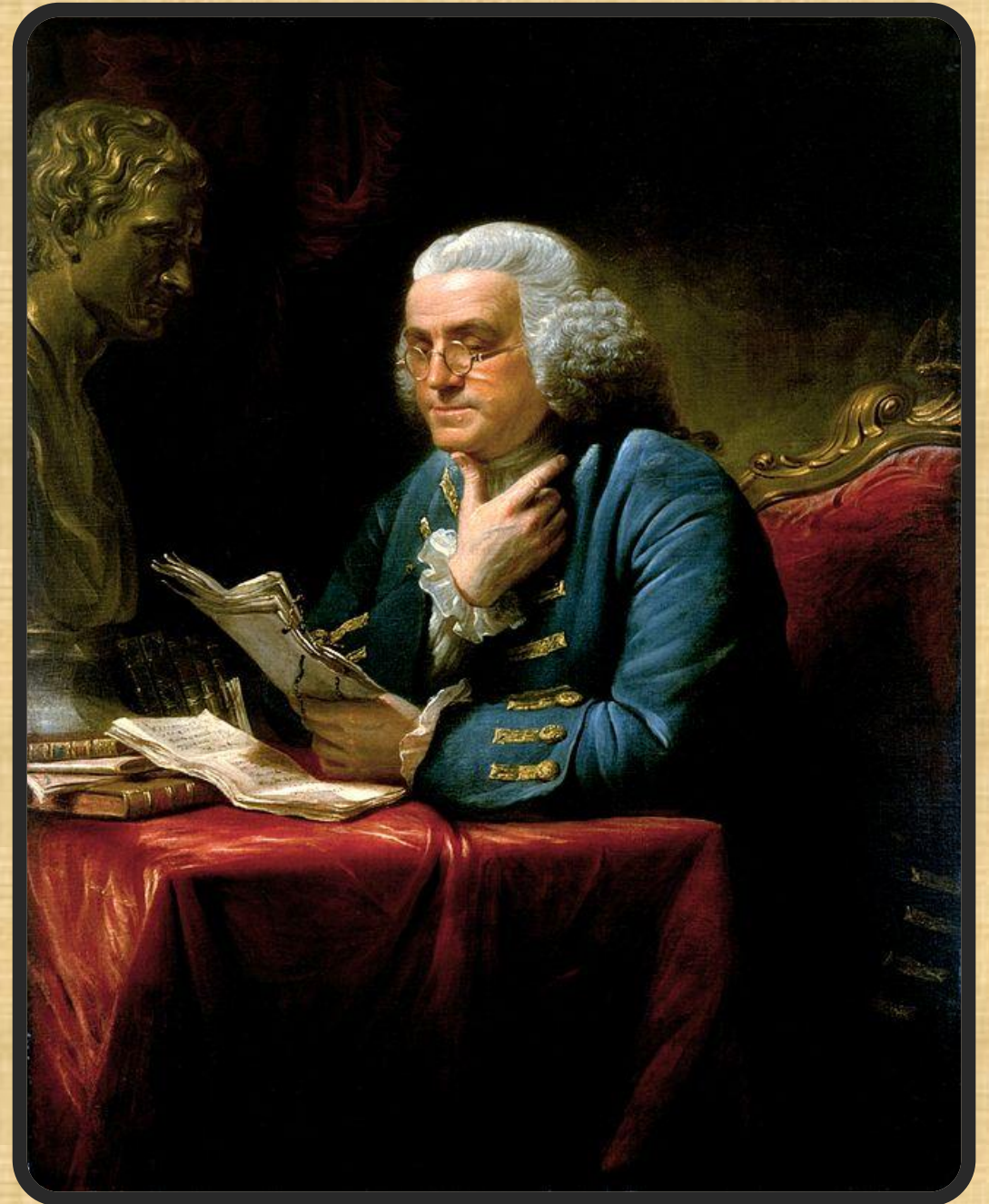
LECTURE 2

The American Enlightenment

The 18th-century American Enlightenment was a movement marked by an emphasis on rationality rather than tradition, scientific inquiry instead of unquestioning religious dogma, and representative government in place of monarchy.

Enlightenment thinkers and writers were devoted to the ideals of justice, liberty, and equality as the natural rights of man.

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)



B. Franklin whom the Scottish philosopher David Hume called America's "first great man of letters," embodied the Enlightenment ideal of humane rationality

**Practical yet idealistic,
hard-working and
enormously successful,
Franklin recorded his
early life in his famous
*Autobiography***



**→ Writer,
→ printer,
→ publisher,
→ scientist,
→ philanthropist,
→ and diplomat,
he was the most famous and
respected private figure of his time**

Philanthropy

means "love of humanity"
in the sense of caring, nourishing,
developing and enhancing "what it is
to be human" on both the
benefactors' (by identifying and
exercising their values in giving and
volunteering) and beneficiaries' (by
benefiting) parts.

He was the first great self-made man in America, a poor democrat born in an aristocratic age that his fine example helped to liberalize.

In many ways Franklin's life illustrates the impact of the Enlightenment on a gifted individual.

While a youth, Franklin taught himself languages, read widely, and practiced writing for the public.

When he moved from Boston to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Franklin already had the kind of education associated with the upper classes.

He also had the Puritan capacity for hard, careful work, constant self-scrutiny, and the desire to better himself.

Never selfish, Franklin tried to help other ordinary people become successful by sharing his insights and initiating a characteristically American genre - the self-help book.

1. Franklin's Poor Richard's Almanack, begun in 1732 and published for many years, made Franklin prosperous and well-known throughout the colonies. In this annual book of useful encouragement, advice, and factual information, amusing characters such as old Father Abraham and Poor Richard exhort the reader in pithy, memorable sayings.

2. Franklin's Autobiography is, in part, another self-help book. Written to advise his son, it covers only the early years. The most famous section describes his scientific scheme of self-improvement.

Franklin lists 13 virtues:

temperance,

→ silence, →

→ order, →

→ resolution, →

→ frugality, →

→ industry, →

→ sincerity,

→ justice,

→

He elaborates on each with a maxim;
for example, the temperance maxim is
*"Eat not to Dullness. Drink not to
Elevation."*

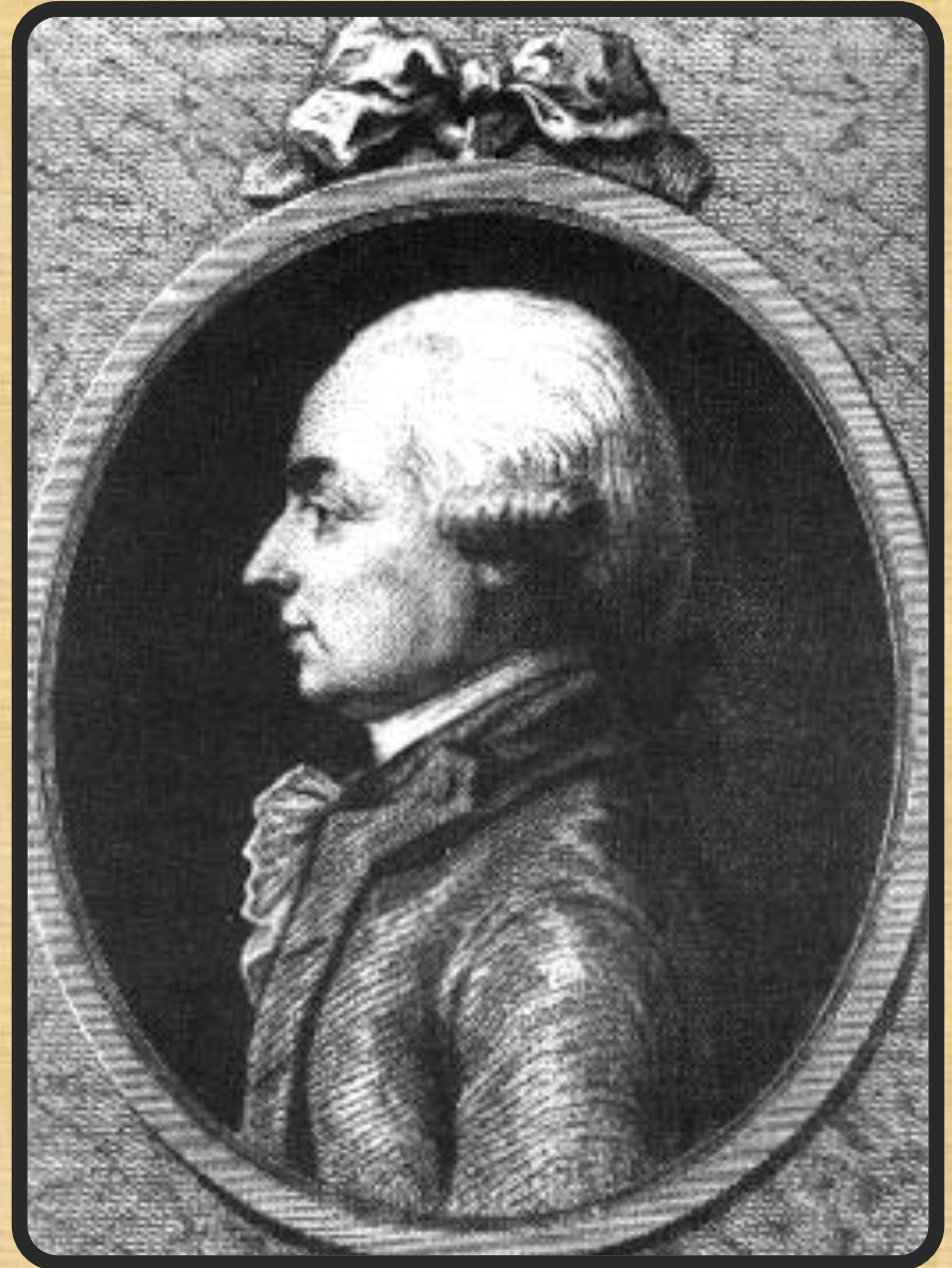
A pragmatic scientist, Franklin put the idea of perfectibility to the test, using himself as the experimental subject.

To establish good habits,
Franklin invented a
reusable calendrical record
book in which he worked on
one virtue each week,
recording each lapse with a
black spot.



His theory prefigures psychological behaviorism, while his systematic method of notation anticipates modern behavior modification.

Hector St. John de
Crèvecoeur
(1735 - 1813)



Naturalized in New York as John
Hector St. John, he was a
French-American writer

In 1755, he immigrated to New France in North America. There, he served in the French and Indian War as a surveyor in the French Colonial Militia, rising to the rank of lieutenant.

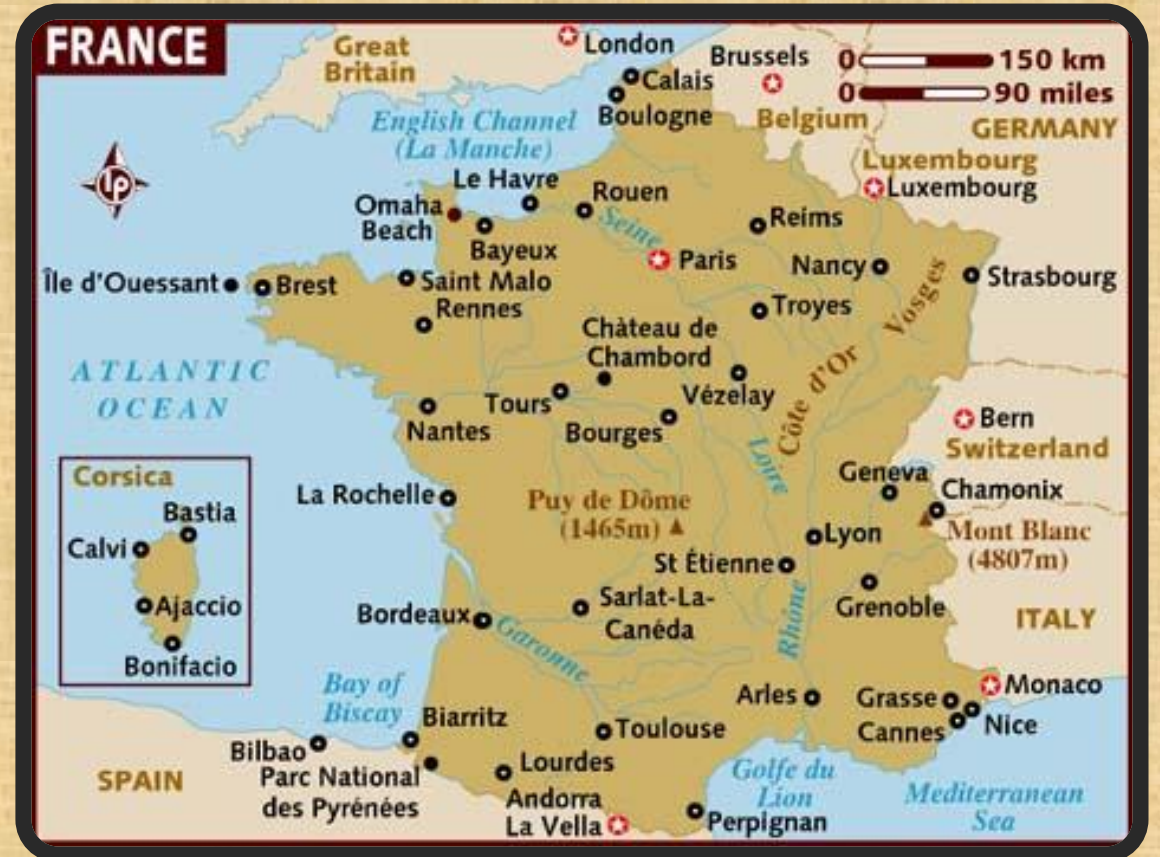
Following the British defeat of the French Army in 1759, he moved to New York State, then the Province of New York, where he took out citizenship, adopted the English-American name of John Hector St. John, and in 1770 married an American woman, Mehitable Tippet.

In 1755, he immigrated to New France in North America. There, he served in the French and Indian War. He bought a sizable farm in Orange County, New York, where he prospered as a farmer.



He started writing about life in the American colonies and the emergence of an American society.

In 1779, during the American Revolution, St. John tried to leave the country to return to France because of the faltering health of his father.



Accompanied by his son,
he crossed
British-American lines to
enter British-occupied New
York City, where he was
imprisoned as an American
spy for three months
without a hearing.
Eventually, he was able to
leave for Britain.



In 1782, in London,
he published a
volume of narrative
essays entitled the
*'Letters from an
American Farmer'*



The book gave Europeans a glowing idea of opportunities for peace, wealth, and pride in America.

Neither an American nor a farmer, but a French aristocrat who owned a plantation outside New York City before the Revolution, Crèvecoeur enthusiastically praised the colonies for their industry, tolerance, and growing prosperity in 12 letters that depict America as an agrarian paradise.

The book quickly became the first literary success by an American author in Europe and turned Crèvecoeur into a celebrated figure

Crèvecoeur was the earliest European to develop a considered view of America and the new American character

The first to use the ‘melting pot’
image of America (in a famous
passage) he asks:

*What then is the American, this new man?
He is either a European, or the descendant of a
European, hence that strange mixture of blood,
which you will find in no other country. I could
point out to you a family whose grandfather was
an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son
married a French woman, and whose present four
sons have now four wives of different
nations....Here individuals of all nations are
melted into a new race of men, whose labors and
posterity will one day cause changes in the world.*

The first to use the ‘melting pot’
image of America (in a famous
passage) he asks:

When the United States had been recognized by Britain following the Treaty of Paris in 1783, Crèvecoeur returned to New York City

Anxious to be reunited
with his family, he learned
that

- ➔ his wife had died
- ➔ his farm had been
destroyed
- ➔ his children had been
taken in by neighbors



Eventually, he was able to regain custody of his children.

For most of the 1780s, Crèvecoeur lived in New York City.



The success of his book in France had led to his being taken up by an influential circle, and he was appointed the French consul for New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

The Political Pamphlet



THOMAS PAINE.

*Secrétaire du Congrès au département des
affaires étrangères, pendant la guerre
d'Amérique, auteur du Sens commun,
et des réponses à BURKE.*



COMMON SENSE:
ADDRESSED TO THE
INHABITANTS
OF
AMERICA,
On the following interesting
SUBJECTS.

- I. Of the Origin and Design of Government in general, with concise Remarks on the English Constitution.
- II. Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession.
- III. Thoughts on the present State of American Affairs.
- IV. Of the present Ability of America, with some miscellaneous Reflections.

Written by an ENGLISHMAN.

Man knows no Master save creating HEAVEN,
Or those whom choice and common good ordain.
THOMSON,

PHILADELPHIA, Printed.
And Sold by R. BELL, in Third-Street, 1776.

Pamphlet, brief booklet; in the UNESCO definition, it is an unbound publication that is not a periodical and contains no fewer than 5 and no more than 48 pages, exclusive of any cover.

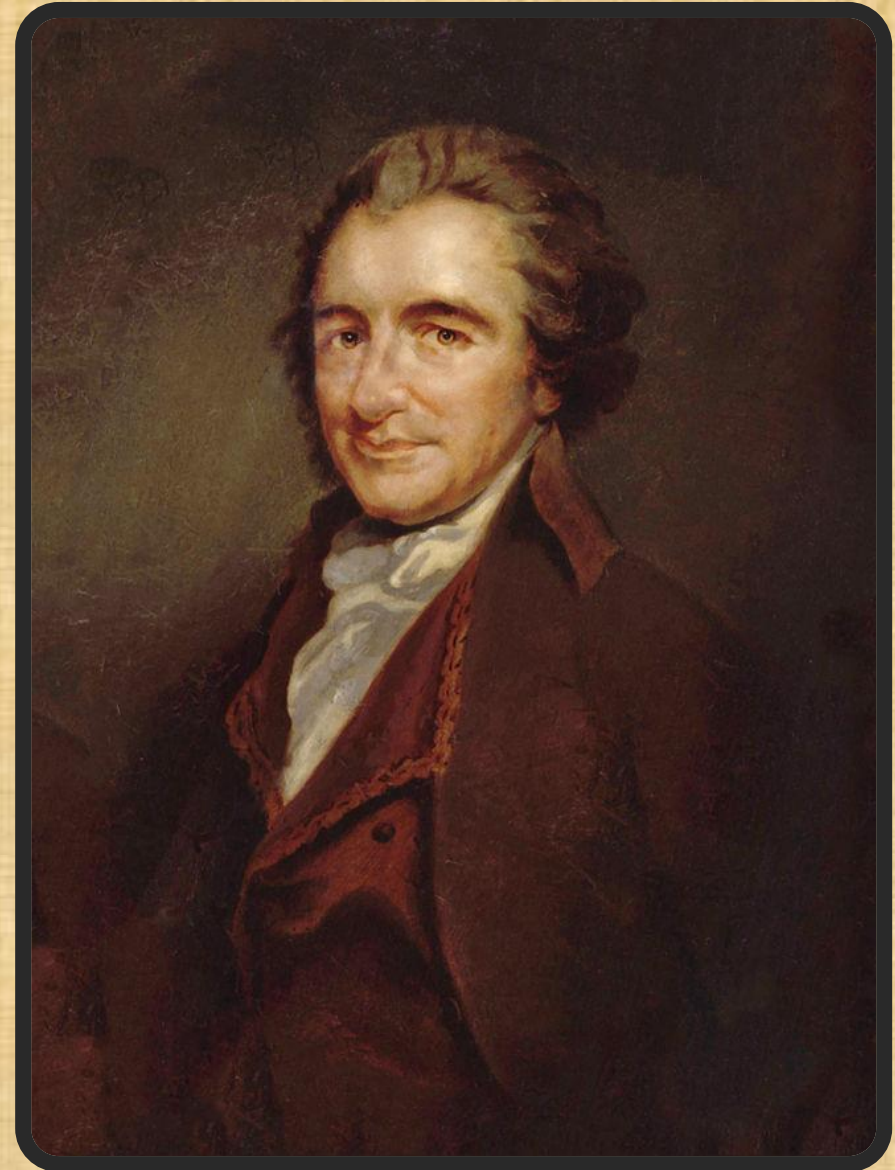
After the invention of printing,
short unbound or loosely bound
booklets were called pamphlets

Since polemical and propagandist works on topical subjects were circulated in this form, the word came to be used to describe them.

The passion of Revolutionary literature is found in pamphlets, the most popular form of political literature of the day.

The pamphlets thrilled patriots and threatened loyalists; they filled the role of drama, as they were often read aloud in public to excite audiences.

Thomas Paine's
pamphlet '**Common
Sense**' sold over
100,000 copies in the
first three months of
its publication



‘The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind,’
Paine wrote, voicing the idea of American exceptionalism, since America is a democratic experiment and a country theoretically open to all immigrants, the fate of America foreshadows the fate of humanity at large.