Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, And Montesquieu. Essay, Research Paper

Many men and women had significant impacts on the historical period known as the Enlightenment. Three men that had such an impact on the Enlightenment were Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Montesquieu. Each of these men had different theories and ideas about what type of government there should be. This resulted in many people having different opinions on how the government should rule their country. Due to this, the Enlightenment was a very chaotic and opinionated period. During the seventeenth century, England was on the verge of a civil war. It was split between an absolute monarchy and a self governed society. One man who believed in absolute monarchy was Thomas Hobbes. He believed in totalitarianism, which is when the government controls every aspect of your life. He believed this because he said that people could not have a self governed society because people are naturally corrupt and that a self governed society would cause chaos. Hobbes also supported absolutism because there was a non-educated population, and if that population governed itself, there would be craziness. He advocated that an absolute monarchy would protect the people and bring peace throughout the society. To share his ideas with the rest of the world, he published a book called Leuathon. This book shared his beliefs about absolutism. Hobbes felt very strong about his beliefs and he had many supporters. But there were other enlightened thinkers who disagreed with him. John Locke was also an enlightened thinker but disagreed with Hobbes. Locke believed in a limited government. He believed in this because a limited government was established to protect the people and their rights. Locke stated that the people had a right to overthrow the government if it violated their natural rights. The natural rights were liberty, life, and property. Property was one of the rights because land equals wealth. Locke based his theories on natural law and social contracts. A social contract is when people create a government to protect their natural rights, and if the government fails to protect these rights, or violates them, then the people have the right to rebel. Locke also published a book called Two Treatises of Government. He called it this because there were two sides of government that people were fighting for. Montesquieu was an enlightened thinker who believed in Locke’s theories more than Hobbes. He believed in separation of powers within a government. This is where there is a legislative, executive and judicial branch within the government. The legislative branch would make the laws, the executive branch would enforce the laws, and the judicial branch would interpret the laws. His social views were very similar to Locks. He believed in pro individual rights. This is where the people have freedom of speech, economic equality, social equality, and freedom of publication. He too published his own book called The Spirit of Laws in1748. The Enlightenment was a very different period because of all these different ideas about how the government should be run.This sparked people to start thinking about the government on their own and having their own opinions. The Enlightenment was a type of revolution because it changed the way people thought and how people viewed their own government. Even though these three men were very influential, there were many other great speakers and leaders who affected the people and the government.