

The ideas of thomas hobbes and john locke

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Thomas Hobbes and John Locke were both seventeenth century English thinkers and writers. Each had their own views the government's role and human nature which were vastly different from one another. They expressed their ideas in their works, Hobbes's Leviathan and Locke's Two Treatises of Government. Thomas Hobbes published Leviathan in 1651, two years after the end of the English Civil War. In it, he supported an absolute monarchy and claimed that people had no qualms about compromising basic morals. Since people had a wicked disposition, if they were left to their own devices, life would become as quoted " a solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. " If people wished for a safe and reasonable life they would have to relinquish some of their freedom. In his opinion, a weak government could not ensure such a thing, therefore only a strong government could force submission and quell the chaos innate to man. Locke believed that people had the basic principles needed for a civilized society, so they were entitled to natural rights such as life, liberty, and property. In 1690, he published Two Treatises of Government which said that a government existed to protect peoples' rights. He opposed absolute monarchy and thought that the best type of government was the one with limited power. It also had to be approved by the people. He also put forward an idea that the people could remove the government from power if it didn't fulfill its duties or did not respect people's rights. These ideas had inspired those who lead revolutions in America and France. Both Hobbes and Locke had seen the English Civil War with their own eyes, and yet had unlike opinions of the nature of humans and the function of the government. Their ideas were significant through the Enlightenment.