

Free argumentative essay about how do the ideas of enlightenment help shaped mode...

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The enlightenment refers to the sprawling of intellectual, social, philosophical, and cultural movement that spread through France, England, German, and other parts of Europe during the 1700s. Enlightenment thinkers advocated for self-autonomy in thinking, free of the limitations of traditional authority. The process of “modernity” traces its origin to this movement, as an heir, with seeds implanted in this period. Evidently, the process began with a vision of an autonomous free individual, but later contributed to the instrumental means-end thinking that has shaped modernity. The writers of the enlightenment mastered everything they regarded as worth learning, ranging from science to art. They used “common sense” to attack intolerance, superstition, and religious extremism, which they considered main barriers to freethinking. Consequently, the period of enlightenment influenced all facets of society. Considering all these changes taking place in the way people perceived the world, enlightenment influenced western modernity socially, religiously, politically, and economically.

The ideas of enlightenment on reform had a significant impact on the way monarchs exercised power than did on industrialization. Historians labeled majority of the monarchs as “enlightened despots,” because they attempted to combine enlightenment reforms with absolutist powers. In his Spirit of laws (1748), Montesquieu developed two main ideas. One was that the best form of government was that which served the interest of the citizens. For example, democracy only applied to small city-states, and that absolutism suited large empires in hot climates. As such, democracy is not consistent with the notion of empire. The other idea touched on separation and balance of powers. In France, he believed the king and a number of “intermediate

bodies," including provincial estates, parliaments, organized nobility, church, and chartered towns should share power. Montesquieu believed that the government should consist of democracy, monarchy, and aristocracy, an idea representing the interest of the middle class. Those involved in drafting the U. S. constitution were aware of the ideas of Montesquieu because the U. S. had no history of social institution besides slavery during that period. Consequently, they distorted the meaning of separation of powers and democracy as Montesquieu defined to develop a political structure peculiarly suited only to the conditions of the U. S.

The enlightenment also had a significant contribution to American Revolution, resulting to acknowledgement of natural rights. In political theory, individuals enter into the society with certain basic rights that the government can neither take away nor deny. Natural rights should apply to every human being without any description. Great thinkers during the enlightenment age such as Thomas Jefferson and John Locke heavily advocated for natural rights and challenged the absolute power of kings. Jefferson associates these unalienable rights with " life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," something that people continue to fight for. The ideals of enlightenment thinkers helped stop slavery as well end racial discrimination in the United States and other parts of the world. Before the declaration of independence, slavery was a common practice, especially in the Western Hemisphere, and some religious figures had defended the practice. The enlightenment era brought liberty that allowed people to shun oppressive regimes.

During the enlightenment time, scientists and philosophers attempted to

justify power and order of society based on new principles besides religion. The enlightenment saw the application of scientific methods to study human behavior and society during the eighteenth century. The Scientific Revolution influenced the development of individualism. The successful application of scientific methods to derive own conclusions rather than deferring to religion or installed authority confirmed the capabilities and value of the individual. The ability of people to discern truth through reasoning led the development of rationalism. In the past when Greek culture prescribed ethical explanation for the solar eclipse, Philosopher Thales introduced, for the first time, the logical thinking, in contrast to the mythical thinking explaining that the solar eclipse occurs when the moon passes over the sun in a direct line. During that time, the disagreement was not on the divine cause of solar eclipse, but the scientific principles such as the superposition of on the solar eclipse and the composition of the moon. This scientific explanation for natural phenomena marked the beginning of analytical thinking, using methods such as deductive and observation proofs.

The enlightenment age was a period marked with significant developments. The enlightenment age helped shape the modern society in many ways. In many ways, enlightenment seems to have died. The ideas of human rights it conceptualized are powerfully attractive to oppressed people everywhere, who apply the same notion of natural law that Lock and Jefferson inspired. The idea of Montesquieu on democracy is too universal that tyrants can rig polls in order remain in power claiming to be acting on their behalf. Some may disregard the fruits of enlightenment because of the society we live in, but the transformations that accompanied enlightenment meant much for

the people who lived in the age. One of the most significant points worth of note is the reality that the enlightenment era ushered in classicism - a period associated with the industrial revolution in Europe. It goes without saying that the industrial revolution is the foundation of modern day technology, which defines all aspects of contemporary society.