

Philosophy of fear

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Philosophy of Fear In the pure state of nature, all humans are of equal mind and body, meaning that no one has a distinct advantage or disadvantage against another. The state of nature is also referred to as the state of war in which every man will fight and try to protect what they deem as theirs. Thomas Hobbes, a seventeenth century philosopher, described this as *bellum omnium contra omnes*, meaning the war of all against all. Due to everyone attempting to fight everyone else to stay alive in a pure state of nature, societies and civilizations cannot form.

So is there a way to keep the peace and let mankind develop into its full potential? Hobbes uses an idea of giving up individual powers to one person or an assembly of men as in the form of sovereignty. The sovereignty will be able to enforce the peace with unlimited power. The sovereignty acquires these powers as individuals give up particular freedoms. The extent of forfeited rights is to a level such as permitted by everyone in the society and the individuals must be tolerable of the sovereignty still possessing these rights.

If individuals wanted to keep all of their given rights, then they would maintain rights to kill, steal, and lie. These are three severe issues when trying to form a peaceful world. If these rights are given up by individuals to sovereignty then a society can begin to form. Once the society begins to form the sovereignty will make decisions based on the best interest of the people that have joined together. For cultures to exist you need to not doubt every person's actions and have faith that they will honor whatever contract they have agreed to.

The sovereignty has a contract with the people to protect them and the people must keep the contract of giving up their rights to the sovereignty.

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The people also have a contract with each other to surrender the same rights to the sovereignty. Without this reliance on your fellow men, there can be no justice and therefore no morality in the society. The most important responsibility of the sovereignty is to make known the rules of the society so as the individuals understand what they may and may not do. If these laws are not in place then the society will fall back into a state of war because of the unavoidable fight over scarce resources.

Hobbes's main reason for giving up your rights to an authority is to escape the state of war. Because of the equality of man, where everyone is capable of killing another, there is no sense of security and you could be confronted at any point in time. These actions of people are not just for sin but for personal gain so without a government guiding the way, individuals will motivate themselves to do as they please no matter who it affects. This means that the sovereignty is there to lead the way and force people to act for the good of society and not just the good of themselves.

An example of this would be if a person wanted to steal food from a grocery market the government would need to have a deterring force to stop the individual because losing that food means the whole society no longer has access to it but rather just the individual. The force used by the sovereignty is what keeps the contract, made by the individuals giving up their rights, from breaking. In a state of nature the fear of the other party not keeping up their end of the agreement is what keeps people from making said agreements but when you have a punishment from a higher authority it allows there to be a safety net.

The sovereignty is there to maintain peace and penalize those looking to disturb this balance of power. Hobbes's idea of a person with unlimited power is almost as if he is saying there should be living god among society. If this living god can do no wrong in individual's eyes and maintains the peace among them, then society will not revert to a state of war. Hobbes uses this idea of fear to break through the state of nature and compel people to be peaceful within the society created. Only through fear comes peace and morality.