

Assess the view that life in a 'state of nature'

Life



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The state of nature is the term used to describe a lawless state of human behavior, wherein all people are free of legal and moral restraint. It would create a state where all people would be able to act on their wants and desires without fear of punishment from a governing body, as there wouldn't be one, and that man would only have to fear the retaliation from other people against their actions. In this essay, I will be outlining the views of both Hobbes and Locke on the state of nature and drawing a conclusion from their opinions.

Hobbes' view on the state of nature is that such a thing would lead only to a state of war. He believed that without moral or legal constraints, mankind will simply pillage, murder, and plunder in order to get what they desire, regardless of the views of others. In a state of war, man will use power as he sees fit in order to survive and with no clear definition of rights or duty, each individual will be free to judge the rights and duties of others and of themselves.

There will be no duty to keep other people safe and out of harm and no-one will have the explicit right to live or to keep their property. If another claims that you hold something he needs to survive, you would have no right to deny him as there is no law or right outlining that it was yours and yours alone. As our desires are never satisfied and we have a continuous want of things, man will continue to overturn others if it means he gets what he wants in life, whether or not he truly needs it.

He believes in the state of nature translating to a state of anarchy, as no human will ever be satisfied with what they have and will always strive for

more. Hobbes claims that In a lawless state, we may not wish direct arm onto others, but we will be constantly aware that other people may wish to harm us. In order to prevent being the volt, we would attack first In order to stay alive, thus becoming the aggressor. Self-preservation In a lawless state, In Hobbes' opinion, would only ever lead to conflict as man turns on man In order to keep themselves alive.

Due to this, we would never trust another person and the lack of alliance or allegiance would lead to us all being equally vulnerable. So despite the lack of rights or duty, each of us are equal in a state of nature, as we are all equally able to be pushed over by the person beside us, whether they are friend or otherwise. Hobbes is very much in agreement that living in a state of nature would be truly awful. Locke, however, doesn't completely agree.

He doesn't believe - as Hobbes does - that scarcity In society and living in a state lawlessness would lead to man killing man In order to stay alive. He believes that people will provide themselves with natural moral principles that we are all inclined towards. Locke drew this belief from his belief in God and the creation of Man and all things on the Earth. By this logic, we have a duty to protect others from harm. We are therefore obligated, as God's creations, to punish those that cause harm to others, and those principals would be our natural obligations.

He also believes that we cannot claim property unless our labor helped create what is on the land, but we still have no lawful right to it and the supposed right to it is not dependable. He proposed that removal from a state of law would create a form of democracy among men where they

would govern themselves and keep themselves in equal measure in order to create a fair semblance of society. Locke thinks that society can exist in a state of nature and exist informally, so he disagrees with the statement that living in a state of nature would be awful in any sense.

He believes that people can and will work together to protect themselves and each other as we have an obligation to care for other people as a natural instinct. By Locke's reasoning, man would eventually enter into an unspoken social contract and form a crude government to better protect their rights and promote organization in their society. I believe that although a state of nature would initially lead to man taking whatever he pleased from others and doing what he had been previously unable to do, eventually a form of society would emerge.

People cannot continue without governing themselves and eventually they would create some form of law in order to govern themselves and protect their rights and duties. Initially living in a state of nature would be awful because there would be the breakaway from lawful restraint and that new freedom would lead to complete uproar as the population of the world indulged in all they had been unable to do. I still, however, believe that Locke's state of things would prevail and that man would find a way to organize themselves in order to survive and beat the inevitable scarcity.