

# In the eyes of john locke and thomas hobbes assignment

[History](#)



In the Eyes of John Locke and Thomas Hobbes After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 there was certainly a need for increased government/police power to provide and keep peace and security throughout the nation. Yet with this increase a suppression of individual civil liberties is inherently necessary. Naturally the more surveillance of private citizens, the less privacy they are afforded. According to John Locke this is seen as an infringement upon the natural rights of individuals. In his opinion, life, liberty, health and possessions are seen as sacred to each person.

All people are considered equal according to their divine right to not be imposed upon in regards to these above rights. And it is the responsibility of civil government, created in mutual agreement of the mass, to make sure that these rights are not infringed upon. Thus in the case of increased governmental surveillance, John Locke would find it hard to justify the right of the government to infringe upon the personal rights of its people considering that the purpose of this government is to protect those rights.

Because the social contract created by the people when creating government was consciously set forth by the people "to better preserve himself, his liberty and property" it would be stepping beyond the responsibilities and boundaries of its very purpose if it was to suppress the liberties of its citizens beyond the point of common good (which he claims can only be known by the people themselves). So if the constituents of government believe that their rights and in turn their common good as a community are being infringed upon, the government is in fact acting unjustly.

On the other hand, Thomas Hobbes (though also of the mind that all men are equal and have natural rights that government is set up to protect) sees government as a necessary remedy to the constant state of war societies undergo. Unlike Locke, Hobbes sees all men as being equal to the point that everyone has equal rights, or in the least opportunity, to everything about them including each other's bodies. Thus without a government to provide protection and back up claims of ownership, everyone is at equal and constant risk of harm and attack.

In the crisis of September 11, Hobbes would have seen the authority and power of the commonwealth or United States government as increasingly more important than ever in order to keep peace. Because we naturally tend to be in constant competition with everyone else around us, society is naturally "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" when peace can not be ensured by a social contract that provides governmental protection and law. Hobbes sees the commonwealth as sovereign once it is established, and to disobey it leads only to severe inconveniences on the part of the rebellious.

Thus if the government sees fit to implement increased surveillance for the good of the people, the people (being the ones that agreed upon said government in the first place) are bound to obey its decrees. This is in fact the sacrifice made when the social contract was forged and was hence obviously seen as necessary by the people for their protection. So Hobbes would certainly support increased governmental surveillance for the greater good of peace.