

Human nature gradual formation by life experiences

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The title of this work is Latin for a mind not yet affected by experiences or anything existing undisturbed in its original pure state. The minds of many great philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke have explored and argued the structure of human nature, but the main essence is the origin of this broad term. Does human nature originate the same in all people? Everything begins somewhere. The general characteristics and behavioral traits of ones mind at birth is a blank slate, a factory setting, tabula rasa. As argued by many scholarly authors, philosophers, and journalists, human nature is gradually molded by ones experiences in life. The experiences affect ones natural reaction to conflict, but at the beginning we are all the same.

Human nature is argued in a variety of perspectives in literature. In George Orwell's *Pacifism and War*, he argues that pacifism equals fascism when regarding World War II. Orwell states that the "so-called peace propaganda is just as dishonest and intellectually disgusting as war propaganda (Orwell 510)." Whether or not one supports war or peace depends on what he or she experienced growing up. In his eyes, both are equally as "dishonest and intellectually disgusting", so regardless of the content, the natural instinct to react in a way that supports a certain idea is similar in both circumstances. The ideas may be skewed by experience, but the raw natural reaction is the same as when it began at birth.

Orwell's inferred idea of the origin of human nature is similar to John Locke's in his work, *Of Ideas*. Locke's view on human nature was that it derives from ones experiences. He presents the reader with the image that "the mind is [...] white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas (Locke 101)." <https://assignbuster.com/human-nature-gradual-formation-by-life-experiences/>

Locke believes that the mind is tabula rasa in the beginning, then learns and thrives from experience. How someone will react to a situation will be rooted from his or her involvements in life. Therefore, ones human nature was once the same as all others, but was influenced by the knowledge, observation and proficiencies of life.

John Locke's ideas of human nature are opposite of Thomas Hobbes in that Locke believes human nature is a tool used for good in humans to learn and advance. In Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan, his arguments derive from his belief that human nature is selfish and destructive. His idea of diffidence defines that people cannot trust anyone or be close to anyone because they might be interested in the same thing and become enemies due to their natural instincts. Hobbes says, " if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies (Hobbes 95)." Despite Hobbes' negative outlook on the nature of human beings he also states in his work, " nature hath made men so equal in the faculties of body and mind (Hobbes 95)." Hobbes believes in the equal beginnings of human nature. When discussing human nature, all of these works mention or infer the idea of a blank slate.

Other researchers have dissected the idea of human nature just as Orwell, Locke and Hobbes have. David L. Hull, a philosopher of biology, wrote an article containing his views on human nature. His article was called On Human Nature. In this article Hull's purpose was to prove to generations of philosophers that biology does not suggest sameness in human nature, as they have tried to argue. He says, " it is simply not true that all organisms

that belong to Homo sapiens as biological species are essentially the same (Hull 3).” Hull goes on to explain that there is no biological way to prove that all humans have the same natural tendencies. There are so many different cultures and experiences humans will be exposed to, it is impossible to say that all humans will react the same in a conflict. Hull proves this with his expertise in biology by saying, “ the phenotype exhibited by an organism is the result of successive interactions between its genes, current phenotypic make-up and successive environments (Hull 8).” He is explaining that there is no biological way that human nature would be the exact same in all human beings. Therefore, every human being is a blank slate at birth and is affected by his or her own personal biological make-up and experiences. Life experiences will form how one will react in situations with conflict.

History has played a big role in further discovering human nature by observing the tendencies in human beings throughout it. In Donald E. Brown’s *Human Nature and History*, the origin of human nature is addressed to set up his discoveries about humans throughout history. Similar to Locke, Orwell and Hobbes, Brown must present his stance on the broad concept of human nature. He explains that many scientists have suggested that there is no way to determine human nature. However, Brown addresses that “ the mind is largely a tabula rasa and the concepts of human nature are social or cultural ‘ constructs’ (Brown 139).” He believes this is why there is such diversity throughout human history. The mind is born in a pure, unaffected state and is exposed to experiences that create variations of human tendencies. Brown believes these views have patterned throughout human history.

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The constructs and contents of each individual human mind are impossible to entirely dissect into one solid theory. Philosophers have theorized for centuries about the broad concept of human nature. There is no predetermined way every person will react to conflict. Reaction is consciously learned from everyday occurrences. A newborn child has no conscious concept of the world around them until they observationally learn through experience. As philosophers and authors have argued for years, human nature originates the same in all people. What defines human nature is the everyday discoveries and learning one does throughout his or her lifetime. The mind at birth is simply tabula rasa.