

Locke and hobbes and their philosophical views

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When one thinks of the great philosophers of the 16th and 17th centuries, the names John Locke and Thomas Hobbes automatically come to mind. Both men were instrumental in the philosophical world. Both were educated at Oxford and both chose a self-imposed exile to Holland because of their political views.

On the state of nature, John Locke believed that God created the world and man. Therefore, all men are equal. No one has the right to take a life and that also applied to suicide. He felt that all men were entitled to life, liberty, health and property. However, he felt that government was something that took away these rights instead of insuring them. To him, it seemed that only God was to have control of man.

While Locke felt that man was better off without laws and government, Thomas Hobbes thought that it would be a complete state of confusion if this were to take place. Without laws, people would be able to avenge any wrong that they felt was done to them. He felt that it would leave man in a constant state of fear because there would be no safety. Disputes would become a time of violence according to Hobbes.

John Locke thought that a world without government would return man to his simpler, more rightful place. This idea derives from the idea that no one man has the right to be in charge of another. With the act of government and enforcement of laws, there are people who would have to do the enforcing of the laws. Unfortunately, this would pit man against man and that would go against the natural order that should exist.

Hobbes ideas of government seem contradictory. In one sense he believed in a government with absolute authority, but then he states that man should not obey a law if it takes away his dignity and honor. Hobbes felt that no one should even question whether one should obey authority of his/her government and that for anyone to be able to choose which laws that would be obeyed was insanity and would lead to complete confusion.

Locke's thoughts on the rights of each individual is that of self-ownership. In other words, an individual was completely responsible for himself/herself and answered only to God. He did believe in self-discipline and strict moral character. He thought that even the monarch had to answer to God. So he thought that all people should have equal rights and all rights should be afforded to all people.

Since Hobbes was a Calvinist, he believed that man was inherently evil while Locke believed that it was society that was evil. Hobbes believed that men needed something to dictate his behavior. That is why he believed in a strong government which allowed certain civil rights, but not others. He also believed that it was possible for some to enjoy more rights than others because of their behavior.

Both men also had strong feelings on the right to revolt or rebel. Locke felt that one of the true reasons that it would be right to rebel against a government was if that government was not a legitimate government. The way that people could tell that a government was not a legitimate government was to look at how it believed in the rights of the individual. If the government believed that it was right for a man to be enslaved or took

away other rights that others shared, then that government should encounter a rebellion of its people.

Hobbes on the other hand believed that revolt and rebellion would lead to mayhem. He sighted that the French revolution ended in many useless executions of working class people because of a rebellion against the government. He agreed that to change the government, one should change it by changing the laws and not by rebellion.

Rene` Descartes was a philosopher who was known as the father of modern philosophy. He was called that because he used much from science and math. He believed that the body represented the physical world and the mind represented the metaphysical. Descartes felt that if one was out of sort then the other would be as well. He felt that everything in the natural world had to work together and so should the body and the mind. The body was the physical organs while the mind was composed of the brain and the neurological system. It was quite possible for a dysfunction of the brain to allow something in the body to not work properly.

Locke, Hobbes, and Descartes gave great contributions to the world of philosophy. They were in many ways different. However they did cause the world to stop and think and not just take things at face value.

Works Cited

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. 7, July 2007, <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

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