

As you read the following excerpt from Thomas Hobbes *Leviathan* annotate the main idea of each paragraph in the margins.

NATURE has made men so equal in the faculties of body and mind as that, though there be found one man sometimes stronger in body or of quicker mind than another, when all is reckoned together the difference between men is not so much as that one man can claim to himself any benefit to which another may not claim as well.

And therefore if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies and endeavor to destroy or subdue one another.

So that in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel. First, competition; secondly, diffidence; thirdly, glory. The first makes men invade for gain; the second, for safety; and the third, for reputation. The first use violence, to make themselves masters of other men's persons, wives, children, and cattle; the second, to defend them; the third, for trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other sign of undervalue, either direct in their persons or by reflection in their kindred, their friends, their nation, their profession, or their name.

Hereby it is manifest that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war as is of every man against every man. For war consists not in battle only, or the act of fighting, but in a tract of time wherein the threat of battle exists.

What is consequent to a time of war, where every man is enemy to every man, the same is consequent to the time wherein men live without other security than what their own strength shall furnish them. In such condition there is no place for industry, no culture of the earth; no navigation, no commodious building; no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

It may seem strange to someone that has not considered these things that Nature should thus render men apt to invade and destroy one another. Lets therefore consider that when taking a journey, man arms himself and seeks to go well accompanied; when going to sleep, he locks his doors; when even in his house he locks his chests; and this when he knows there be laws and public officers, armed, to revenge all injuries shall be done him; what opinion he has of his fellow subjects, when he rides armed; of his fellow citizens, when he locks his doors; and of his children, and servants, when he locks his chests. Does he not there as much accuse mankind by his actions as I do by my words? But neither of us accuse man's nature in it. The desires, and other passions of man, are in themselves no sin. No more are the actions that proceed from those passions till they know a law that forbids them; which till laws be made they cannot know, nor can any law be made till they have agreed upon the person that shall make it.

To this war of every man against every man, this also is consequent; that nothing can be unjust. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, have there no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law; where no law, no injustice. Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues. Justice and injustice are none of the faculties neither of the body nor mind.

Questions to consider:

1. In general, what is Hobbes' impression about human nature?
2. According to Hobbes, what is the state of Nature? How does this compare to Locke's philosophy?
3. Do you agree that men's lives are nasty, brutish and short? Explain.
4. Hobbes claims that the natural state of man is basically violent anarchy. Which type of government do you think he would most advocate for? Explain.
5. Do you agree with Hobbes on the general perception of man? Do you lock YOUR doors at night? Your locker at school? Your car?