The Conceptual Transformation of the State and Society During the Enlightenment Era: A Focus on Hobbes's Philosophy

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Abstract

Enlightenment philosophy, particularly Hobbes's ideas concerning government and society, serves as the foundation for numerous subsequent debates within the fields of social sciences. Hobbes' perspective on humanity and his portrayal of both the natural and civilized states represent fundamental pillars in modern political thought. He characterizes humanity as a "human wolf," and posits that the formation of a civilized state through the social contract arises out of necessity, primarily driven by concerns related to security and collective interests, which will be comprehensively examined in the present study. Society does not inherently emerge as an inevitable condition for group existence; it constitutes a conscious regulation of the inherently bellicose state among humans, prone to eruption at any moment. A majority of individuals relinquish their power to an individual or group, aiming to unify these disparate wills into a singular will. This article intends to delve into the transformative shift from classical ethics grounded in the concept of the "good" to modern social ethics rooted in the notion of public interests. It will include a brief overview of the Enlightenment period, encompassing figures. Finally, it redefines the relationship between individuals of the Enlightenment era and the state and society, elucidating the ethical policies within this framework and their integration into the philosophical system of the Enlightenment era.

Keywords: Enlightenment; natural state; social contract; civilized state; public interest.

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