

**Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)**

English political philosopher, who wrote *Leviathan* in 1651.

Hobbes' concept of humankind and the state of nature

1. Human beings are equal. We have equality of ability and equality of hope.
2. Human beings are amoral and driven by desire for self-preservation and acquisition.
3. Each person desires everything and believes he/she has a right to anything (like a 2-year-old)
4. In the state of nature, each person has **absolute freedom / liberty** to do as he or she wishes.
5. Consequently, in the absence of government, there is a war of all against all.
6. There is no peace, security, or industry. Life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."
7. This is simply the human condition. People are not evil.

Escape from the state of nature

1. Humans make a rational calculation that we will be better off giving up our absolute liberty and absolute rights in order to secure our lives and liberty.
2. We consent to covenant together to form political society.
  - A. Hobbes' first law of nature is that humans keep their covenants.
  - B. However, humans break covenants whenever they think they can get away with it.
  - C. Therefore, covenants must be enforced by the sword.

3. To do so, Hobbes assigns all sovereignty to one absolute monarch; hence his book title, *Leviathan*.

**John Locke** (1632-1704)

English political philosopher, who wrote *Two Treatises of Government* in 1689.

He also wrote part of the first constitution for Carolina in 1669—Carolina being the land lying between Virginia and Florida.

Locke shared Hobbes' view of the state of nature and agreed we escape the state of nature by consenting unanimously to a civil compact.

Three features of Locke's thought make him different from Hobbes:

1. Locke emphasized right of **private property**, beginning with property of one's own body. (This is one basis for capitalism.)
  - A. Key rights for Locke are life, liberty, and property.
  - B. This is one basis for capitalism. 86 years later, Adam Smith published *The Wealth of Nations* (1776).
2. Locke championed **religious toleration**, treating religion as a private matter
  - A. Carolina Constitution, Article 97: Since the natives of that place, who will be concerned in our plantation, are utterly strangers to Christianity, whose idolatry, ignorance, or mistake gives us no right to expel or use them ill; and those who remove from other parts to plant there will unavoidably be of different opinions concerning matters of religion, the liberty whereof they will expect to have allowed them, and it will not be reasonable for us, on this account, to keep them out; that civil peace may be maintained amidst diversity of opinions, and our agreement and compact with all men may be duly and faithfully observed;
3. Locke located sovereignty in the majority, namely, **majority rule**.

## **Sovereignty**

Supreme authority and final decision-maker subject to no external control

Hobbes: Sovereignty of the British monarch agreed to by the people

Locke: Sovereignty of the people as represented in Parliament

United States: Sovereignty of the people as represented in their state legislatures and Congress

The sovereign can do no wrong—because there is no external standard against which to judge the sovereign. One can only appeal to God—the ultimate sovereign of the universe.