

# NEW DIRECTIONS IN THOUGHT: ABSOLUTISM VERSUS CONSTITUTIONALISM

	<b>THOMAS HOBBS (1588-1679)</b>	<b>JOHN LOCKE (1632-1704)</b>
<b>PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most original political thinker of the 17<sup>th</sup> century,</li> <li>• Well-traveled (visited Descartes in Paris and Galileo in Italy).</li> <li>• Enthusiastically supported the new scientific movement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most influential political thinker of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.</li> <li>• Family had Puritan sympathies; father fought for parliamentary forces during the English Civil War</li> </ul>
<b>MOST SIGNIFICANT WORK</b>	<b>The Leviathan (1651):</b> portrays rulers as absolute lords over their lands, incorporating in their persons the individual wills of all their people	<b>Second Treatise of Government (1690):</b> presented an extended argument for a government that must necessarily be both responsible for and responsive to the concerns of the governed.
<b>VIEW OF HUMAN NATURE</b>	<p>Whereas earlier and later philosophers saw the original human state as a paradise from which humankind had fallen, Hobbes saw it as a state of natural and inevitable conflict in which safety, security, and a final authority were absent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human beings exist for no higher purpose than to meet their own needs.</li> <li>• In their natural state, they are inclined to a “perpetual and restless desire” for power.</li> <li>• Life is “nasty, brutish, and short.”</li> </ul>	<p>Locke regarded human beings in their natural state as creatures of reason and basic goodwill rather than of uncontrolled passion and selfishness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human beings have a strong capacity to dwell peacefully in society before they enter a political contract.</li> <li>• What they experience in the state of nature is not a state of war, but a condition of competition and modest conflict that requires a political authority to sort out problems rather than to impose sovereign authority.</li> </ul>
<b>VIEW OF NATURAL RIGHTS</b>	<p>Because human beings in their natural state have a natural right to everything, their equality breeds enmity, competition, and perpetual quarreling – “a war of every man against every man.” Therefore, they are constantly haunted by fear of destruction and death.</p>	<p>Locke portrayed the natural human state as one of perfect freedom and equality in which everyone enjoyed, in an unregulated fashion, the natural rights of life, liberty, and property.</p>
<b>TYPE OF GOVERNMENT</b>	<p>Human beings escape this terrible state of nature by entering into a political contract in which they agree to live in a commonwealth ruled by a recognized sovereign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This contract obliges every person to live according to a secularized version of the golden rule: “Do not that to another which you would not have done to yourself.”</li> <li>• Because words and promises are insufficient to guarantee this state, the contract also established the coercive use of force to compel compliance.</li> </ul> <p>Since the dangers of anarchy are greater than tyranny, rulers should be absolute and unlimited in their power.</p>	<p>Human beings enter into a contract to form a government to secure and preserve the rights that they already possess..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government exists to protect the best achievements and liberty of the state of nature, not to overcome them.</li> <li>• Therefore, by its very foundation, government is one of limited authority.</li> </ul> <p>Warfare emerges only when rulers fail to preserve people’s natural freedom and attempt to enslave them by absolute rule.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The relationship between rulers and the governed is one of trust.</li> <li>• If the ruler betrays that trust, the governed have the right to replace them.</li> </ul>

