

THOMAS HOBBES



Best known for State of Nature theory

His main concern is the problem of social and political order: how human beings can live together in peace and avoid the danger and fear of civil conflict.

His beliefs strongly influenced America's Founders as they formulated the recognition of inalienable rights, the Social Contract and limited government.

THOMAS HOBBS

Biography

Born 1588 England

Born prematurely, when mother heard of the coming invasion of the Spanish Armada.

- ↳ He would later say “My mother gave birth to twins: myself and fear.”
- ↳ Dad was uneducated. Little know of mom. 2 siblings
- ↳ Dad got into a fight with local clergy. Forced to leave London. Leaved Thomas with his uncle, a wealthy glove maker with no family of his own.

1608, recommended to tutor the son in the Cavendish family (a political family, and developed a lifelong connection with the family

1610 and 1615, toured Europe with the Cavendish family. Exposed to scientific and critical methods

Associated with Ben Johnson and Francis Bacon

- ↳ Johnson is 2nd best next to Shakespeare; Bacon was high figure to Queens, including to Elizabeth I
- ↳ At the same time, he is introduced to the Earth-shaking discoveries of Copernicus, Galileo, Descartes and Bacon

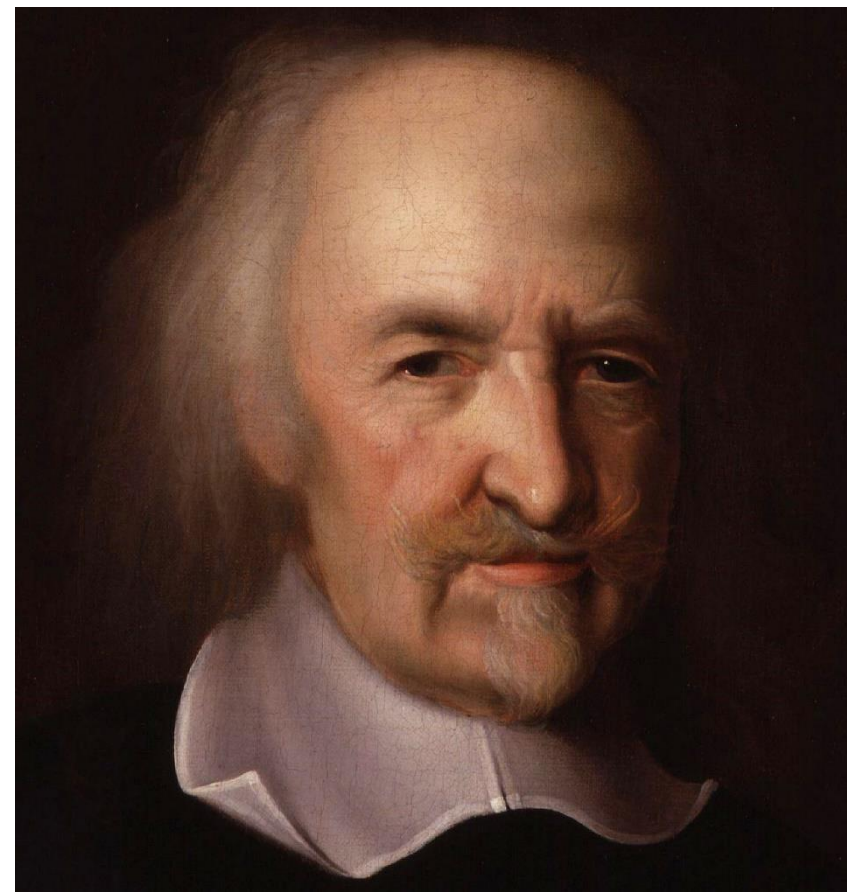
Hobbes spends years in Paris as a tutor. Gets involved with philosophy circles.

1637, returns to England, a country full of discontent (years prior to the English Civil War). Back in Paris by 1642.

1647, suffered a near-fatal illness that disabled him for 6 months

1666 House of Commons introduces a bull against atheism and profaneness. He is protected from arrest by the King

1679, suffers stroke. Dies



Philosophy (major ideas)

“State of Nature”

- ↪ As long as there is no common power to maintain order, all people are in a figurative state of war with one another. It is like a person-to-person Cold War, where no one can trust another. There is no law.
- ↪ Consequentially, none of the benefits of civilization are possible in this state – no education, no agriculture, no exports/imports, no society

Religion arises out of fear, ignorance, and efforts by rulers to maintain their advantage over their subjects

Monarchy is the best form of government

Knowledge is derived from sense experience and from reason

A state of peace requires a foundation of law

Only matter exists; there is no such thing as a purely spiritual being...this includes God

Good and evil are simply what people desire or dislike; right and wrong are what are permitted or forbidden by law

Human actions arise out of a desire for self-preservation, and the laws of nature permit any action reasonably intended for that purpose