

Thomas Hobbes (1581-1679)

Hobbes' Conception of Human Nature

Hobbes' conception of sovereignty is based on his idea about human nature. It was also the fountain-head of all his philosophy. His conception of human nature is the pivot round which his whole philosophy revolves. He made a fundamental departure from his contemporaries by saying that man is essentially nasty, brutish and an uncivilized creature. As against society, he made individual, the spring board of his thought. Before him, Plato, Machiavelli, St. Augustine and St. Thomas had made society and not the individual as one unit.

Hobbes maintained that men by birth were equal in intelligence. It was the desire for having one and the same thing which made them quarrel with each other. Competition, glory and difference make people brute and quarrelsome. It was an uncontrolled society. Hobbes' conception of human nature was essentially based on two basic factors:

- (1) Men are equal
- (2) Men fight each other