

Thomas Hobbes (Part II)

To escape this state of nature and to avoid war man is endowed with reason and rational self-preservation. These are known as laws of nature which play an important role to transform state of nature into a civil society. In order to escape the state of nature, individuals renounce their natural rights and institute a third person or body of persons conferring all rights on that person or body, authorising all its action as their own. This common superior or sovereign has to be created through a covenant with the sovereign outside this covenant.

Sovereignty is indivisible, inalienable and perpetual. The Sovereign acts according to natural law but he alone is the interpreter of this law and his action cannot be challenged. After the constitution of civil society, natural law is assimilated into civil law.

Hobbes starts with natural rights of individuals but restricts them to found a viable civil society. He restricts the natural liberty of men but does not expose the individual's right to restrict authority of the state.