

all against all in the state of nature and then made them decide, in a supremely self-interested act, to seek self-preservation by submitting their wills to an all-powerful sovereign. No less than most earlier natural-law theorists, however, Hobbes saw the social contract through which men subjected themselves to the sovereign as not merely a transfer, but much more importantly, an abrogation of the sovereign authority that had resided in free individuals in the state of nature. With Hobbes, Locke used the construct of a state of nature and the ideas of consent and contract to explain the origins of civil society. As well, he emphasized the free, rational, and individualistic character of man in the state of nature. As long as they remained within the bounds of the laws of nature, according to Locke, each man in his natural state was equally beyond the jurisdiction of every other man.

Locke broke dramatically with Hobbes and with most earlier natural-law writers in his rejection of an absolutist theory of the social contract. For Locke, men entered into society not out of the terror generated by their brutish behavior in the state of nature, but out of a recognition that individual natural rights to life, liberty, and property could best be secured against the vicious behavior of degenerate men through mutual submission to civil authority. The sole function of government, in Locke's view, was thus to guarantee individual rights to life, liberty, and property to those who voluntarily put themselves under the jurisdiction of the political society. In sharp contrast to Hobbes, Locke stressed the limited character of the grant of authority to the state. Indeed, he went on to emphasize the continuing rights of individual members both to withdraw from political society through the act of emigration and to resist—even to the point of revolution—any government whose exertions of authority went beyond or acted in violation of the limited ends for which it had been instituted.

For more than a half-century following its initial publication, the *Two Treatises* seems to have had relatively little *direct* influence upon the development of either British or American political thought. Within a decade after it appeared, William Molyneux (1656–98), the Anglo-Irish scientist, philosopher, and friend of Locke, used it to provide much of the theoretical underpinnings for *The Case of Ireland Being Bound by English Statutes, Stated** (Dublin, 1698). This bold denial of the authority of the English Parliament over Ireland was reprinted eleven times during the eighteenth century and was popular in both Ireland and the American colonies among those

who wished to resist the intrusion of Parliament into local affairs. Moreover, the doctrines espoused in the *Two Treatises* were popularized after the Glorious Revolution by more accessible writers, such as James Tyrrell (1642–1718) in *Bibliotheca Politico; Or an Enquiry into the Ancient Constitution of the English Government* (London, 1691–92), Bishop Benjamin Hoadley (1676–1761) in *The Origin and Institute of Civil Government* (London, 1709), and the numerous defenders of the Whig order of Sir Robert Walpole during the 1720s and 1730s. Though apparently itself rarely read, the *Two Treatises* had come by Walpole's time to be widely celebrated for having provided the theoretical justification for the Glorious Revolution.

Similarly, the *Two Treatises* figured prominently in all the impor-

