

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Philosophical Foundations: Touchstone Dialogue #1
from *Leviathan* by Thomas Hobbes

Nature has made men roughly equal in body and mind. When everything is considered, the difference between one man and another is not very great. The case of bodily strength serves as a good example. The weakest man has enough strength to kill the strongest. He can do this either by some trick or by using a weapon or by joining with other men. The same is true of men's minds. Inequalities can be made up by various means or by joining with other men. The same is true of men's minds. Inequalities can be made up by various means.

This rough inequality in ability produces in every man the equal hope of getting what he wants. So when two men desire something which only one can have, this equality encourages both to strive for it. They therefore become enemies. **Each man tries to destroy or defeat the other in order to get what he needs to keep alive or to enjoy his life. If we consider what men are like when they do not live in societies, we find that they become enemies.** When one defeats the other, the victor must, in turn, expect a third person to try to take away what he has won.

So in the state of nature, every man is every other man's enemy. There is no safety or security except one's own strength and trickery. In this state of things there can be no factories or stores because products are always unsafe. There can be no farming, no trading, no large building, no arts, no sciences, no society. **Worst of all there would be continual fear and danger of violent death. The life of man would be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.**

This state of nature might not actually have existed and I certainly do not believe it existed throughout the world. Yet if we look at what we are now like in societies, we can convince ourselves how men would be in a purely natural condition. At night we all lock our houses and when we walk the streets we are constantly on guard. **This shows that we believe that only fear of an outside power keeps men in check.** Nations and kings who have nothing to fear act toward one another just as we describe individual men acting in a state of nature. When a peaceful society falls into civil war we see what men are like outside.

Individual Group:

1. A passage that stands out to me is Hobbes's statement that _____.

It makes me think/wonder/believe _____.

2. Three questions related to this passage are:
 - a.)
 - b.)
 - c.)

Group work:

3. Do you agree with Hobbes' assertion that human nature is violent and self interested? Why or why not? State examples from individual experiences.
4. Do you agree that only "fear of an outside power keeps men in check"? Why or why not?