Injury vs. harm

“And when a man hath in either manner abandoned, or granted away his right; then is he said to be Obliged, or Bound, not to hinder those, to whom such right is granted, or abandoned, from the benefit of it: and that he ought, and it is his Duty, not to make void that voluntary act of his own: and that such hindrance is Injustice, and Injury, as being sine jure; the right being before renounced, or transferred.”

It is true, that certain living creatures, as bees, and ants, live sociably one with another, (which are therefore by Aristotle numbered amongst political creatures;) and yet have no other direction, than their particular judgments and appetites; nor speech, whereby one of them can signify to another, what he thinks expedient for the common benefit: and therefore some man may perhaps desire to know, why mankind cannot do the same. To which I answer, ...

Fifthly, irrational creatures cannot distinguish between injury, and damage; and therefore as long as they be at ease, they are not offended with their fellows: whereas man is then most troublesome, when he is most at ease: for then it is that he loves to shew his wisdom, and control the actions of them that govern the commonwealth.

“nothing the sovereign representative can do to a subject, on what pretence soever, can properly be called injustice, or injury; because every subject is author of every act the sovereign doth; ... a subject may be put to death, by the command of the sovereign power; and yet neither do the other wrong ... he that

---

1Leviathan ch. 14, par. 7.
2Leviathan ch. 17, par. 11.
so dieth, had liberty to do the action, for which he is nevertheless, without injury put to death. And the same holdeth also in a sovereign prince, that putteth to death an innocent subject. For though the action be against the law of nature, as being contrary to equity, (as was the killing of Uriah, by David;) yet it was not an injury to Uriah; but to God. Not to Uriah, because the right to do what he pleased, was given him by Uriah himself: and yet to God, because David was God’s subject; and prohibited all iniquity by the law of nature. Which distinction, David himself, when he repented the fact, evidently confirmed, saying, *To thee only have I sinned.*

---

[3]Leviathan ch. 21, par. 7.