



The Political Philosophy of Hobbes

Its Basis and Its Genesis

By
Leo Strauss

Translated from the German Manuscript

By Elsa M. Sinclair



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

THE MORAL BASIS

POLITICAL philosophy, as that branch of knowledge which consists of moral philosophy on the one hand, and politics in the narrower sense on the other,¹ was treated systematically and exhaustively by Hobbes three times: in the *Elements of Law* (1640), in the second and third parts of the *Elementa philosophiae* (Section II, *De homine*, 1658; Section III, *De cive*, 1642), and in the *Leviathan* (1651). In all three presentations this political philosophy is based in method and material on natural science. The method is Galileo's 'resolutive-compositive' method. The material is borrowed from the mechanistic explanation of the passions and previously of sense-perception. It is therefore understandable that almost every one who has written about Hobbes has interpreted his political philosophy as dependent on natural science, for either material or method or for both. This interpretation, which at a first glance seems to be merely the recognition of an obvious fact, proves on closer examination to be extremely questionable.

The attempt to work out political philosophy as a part or annexe of natural science by means of scientific method is constantly questioned in Hobbes's work, because he was aware of the fundamental differences between the two disciplines in material and method. On this awareness is based his conviction that political philosophy is essentially independent of natural science. He was therefore able to write and publish *De cive*, the third part of his system, many years before the two systematically earlier parts. In justification of the premature publication of this book, he expressly says in the preface '... factum est ut quae ordine ultima (pars) esset, tempore tamen prior prodierit; praesertim cum eam principiis propriis experientia cognitis innixam, praecedentibus indigere non viderem'.²

¹ *De corpore*, cap. 1, art. 9; *De homine*, Ep. ded.

² It follows from the dedication to *De homine* that what is said in the preface to *De cive* of politics in the narrower sense holds also for the other part of political philosophy, moral philosophy.

Political philosophy is independent of natural science because its principles are not borrowed from natural science, are not, indeed, borrowed from any science, but are provided by experience, by the experience which every one has of himself, or, to put it more accurately, are discovered by the efforts of self-knowledge and the self-examination of every one.¹ As a result, evidence in political philosophy is of quite a different kind from evidence in natural science. On the one hand, it is much easier to understand: its subject and its concepts are not so remote from the average man as are the subject and concepts of mathematics which form the basis of natural science.² On the other hand, 'the politiques are the harder study of the two'; by reason of their passions, men obscure the, in itself, clear and simple knowledge of the norms which political philosophy builds up. Moreover, man with his passions and his self-seeking is the particular subject of political philosophy, and man opposes by every kind of hypocrisy the self-knowledge on which the proof of these norms rests.³

According to Hobbes, political philosophy is not only independent of natural science, but it is a main component of human knowledge, of which the other main component is natural science. The whole body of knowledge is divided into natural science on the one hand, and political philosophy on the other.⁴ Every classification of knowledge is based on a classification of the existent.⁵ Hobbes's classification of the sciences is based on a classification of existing things into natural and artificial.⁶ But this classification does not fully correspond to his intention, for most things which are produced by art, in particular all machines, are the subject of natural science.⁷ It is not so much the artificially produced things that are basically

¹ *De corpore*, cap. 6, art. 7; *Leviathan*, Introduction.

² *De homine*, Ep. ded.; *Leviathan*, ch. 31 (p. 197) and Conclusion (p. 385).

³ *Leviathan*, ch. 30 (pp. 180 and 187) and Introduction; *Elements of Law*, Ep. ded.; *English Works*, vol. vii, p. 399.

⁴ The immediate source for this classification may well be Marius Nizolius, *De veris principiis et vera ratione philosophandi* (Parma, 1553), lib. 3, capp. 3-4.

⁵ *De cive*, Ep. ded.

⁶ *De corpore*, cap. 1, art. 9; *De homine*, Ep. ded.; *Leviathan*, Introduction.

⁷ *De corpore*, cap. 1, art. 7; *De cive*, Ep. ded.; *Leviathan*, Introduction and ch. 9.

different from all natural things as the production, the human activity itself, i.e. man as an essentially productive being, especially as the being who by his art produces from his own nature the citizen or the State, who, by working on himself, makes himself into a citizen. In so far as man works on himself, influencing and changing his nature, so that he becomes a citizen, a part of that artificial being called the State, he is not a natural being: 'Homo . . . non modo corpus naturale est, sed etiam civitatis, id est (ut ita loquar) corporis politici pars.'¹ 'Manners of men' are something different from 'natural causes'.² The basic classification of existing things which in truth underlies Hobbes's classification of the sciences is classification under nature on the one side, and under man as productive and active being on the other.³

The question whether Hobbes understood political philosophy as a part or annexe of natural science or as a fully independent branch of knowledge, in other words, whether his political philosophy is intended to be naturalistic or anthropological, thus bears not only on the method but above all on the matter. The significance of the antithesis between naturalistic and anthropological political philosophy for the matter becomes fully apparent if one grasps that this antithesis is only the abstract form of a concrete antithesis in the interpretation of and judgement on human nature which extends throughout the whole of Hobbes's work. Hobbes eliminated the latter contradiction as little as the former.

Hobbes summed up his theory of human nature as it underlies his political philosophy in 'two most certain postulates of human nature'. The first postulate is that of 'natural appetite', 'qua quisque rerum communium usum postulat sibi proprium'.⁴ As a result of the scientific explanation, this appetite is taken as having its roots in man's sensuousness, in his animal nature. Man is an animal like all other animals, as a percipient being constantly exposed to manifold impressions which automatically call forth desires and aversions, so that his life, like that of

¹ *De homine*, Ep. ded.

² *English Works*, vol. iv, p. 445; cf. *Leviathan*, ch. 37 (p. 238).

³ *Elements of Law*, Ep. ded.; *Leviathan*, ch. 9; *De corpore*, cap. 1, art. 9; *De cive*, Ep. ded.

⁴ *De cive*, Ep. ded.

all other animals, is constant movement. There is, however, one important difference: the specific difference between man and all other animals is reason. Thus man is much less at the mercy of momentary sense-impressions, he can envisage the future much better than can animals; for this very reason he is not like animals hungry only with the hunger of the moment, but also with future hunger, and thus he is the most predatory, the most cunning, the strongest, and most dangerous animal.¹ Human appetite is thus not in itself different from animal appetite, but only by the fact that in the case of man appetite has reason at its service. This view of human appetite, which at first sight seems to be the specifically Hobbian view, is, however, contradicted in Hobbes's writings by his repeated and emphatic statement that human appetite is infinite in itself and not as a result of the infinite number of external impressions.² But if this is the case, then human appetite is essentially distinguished from animal appetite in that the latter is nothing but reaction to external impressions, and, therefore, the animal desires only finite objects as such, while man spontaneously desires infinitely. There can be no doubt that only this latter view of human appetite corresponds to the intention of Hobbes's political philosophy.

The two conceptions of human appetite differ not only in substance as mechanistic and vitalistic conceptions. They differ also in method. The mechanistic conception is based on the mechanistic explanation of perception and therewith on the general theory of motion; on the other hand, the apparently vitalistic conception is based not on any general scientific theory, but on insight into human nature, deepened and substantiated by self-knowledge and self-examination. In spite of their opposed matter and methods, the two conceptions of human appetite have, however—below the surface—something

¹ *De homine*, cap. 10, art. 3.

² *Elements of Law*, Pt. I, ch. 7, § 7; *Leviathan*, ch. 11 (p. 49); *De homine*, cap. 11, art. 15. In all three passages Hobbes bases the proposition that life is limitless appetite mechanistically on the assumption that appetite is only an automatic consequence of perception, but also on the incompatible assumption that appetite is essentially spontaneous. On closer investigation it is seen that the mechanistic argument is not sufficient proof of the proposition, and that therefore the proposition itself cannot possibly owe the self-evidence, which it has for Hobbes, to the mechanistic argument.

in common, which allows us to characterize both of them as naturalistic.

The clearest and most perfect expression for the naturalistic conception of human appetite is the proposition that man desires power and ever greater power, spontaneously and continuously, in one jet of appetite, and not by reason of a summation of innumerable isolated desires caused by innumerable isolated perceptions: ' . . . in the first place, I put for a generall inclination of all mankind, a perpetuall and restlesse desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in Death.'¹ But this apparently perfectly clear proposition is fundamentally equivocal, for the boundless striving after power is itself equivocal. Hobbes continues: 'And the cause of this, is not alwayes that a man hopes for a more intensive delight, than he has already attained to; or that he cannot be content with a moderate power: but because he cannot assure the power and the means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more.' The striving after power may thus be rational as well as irrational. Only the irrational striving after power, which is found more frequently than the rational striving, is to be taken as natural human appetite. For the rational striving after power rests on already rational reflection and is for that very reason not natural, i.e. not innate, not in existence prior to all external motivations, to all experience and education.² The only natural striving after power, and thus man's natural appetite, is described by Hobbes as follows: 'men from their very birth, and naturally, scramble for everything they covet, and would have all the world, if they could, to fear and obey them.'³ It depends on impressions from without and thus on perception that the child 'desires' that particular thing which he sees and not another thing, of whose existence he knows nothing; but that he 'would have all the world . . . to fear and obey (him)'—that, on the occasion of a particular desire which was awakened and caused by sense-perception, he 'desires' absolute rule over the whole world—cannot originate in the impression of things per-

¹ *Leviathan*, ch. 11 (p. 49).

² For Hobbes's concept of 'natural', see especially *De cive*, cap. 1, art. 2, annot. 1.

³ *English Works*, vol. vii, p. 73.

ceived, for animals who also perceive and desire do not aspire to absolute dominion. In the case of man, animal desire is taken up and transformed by a spontaneous infinite and absolute desire which arises out of the depths of man himself.

We find a more detailed definition of the irrational striving after power, the natural appetite of man as man, in the following differentiation between irrational and therefore unpermissible striving after power, and rational and therefore permissible striving:

'because there be some, that taking pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, which they pursue farther than their security requires; if others, that otherwise would be glad to be at ease within modest bounds, should not by invasion increase their power, they would not be able, long time, by standing only on their defence, to subsist. And by consequence, such augmentation of dominion over men, being necessary to a man's conservation, it ought to be allowed him.'¹

We here clearly see that rational permissible striving after power is in itself finite. The man guided by it would remain 'within modest bounds', would 'be content with a moderate power'. Only the unpermissible, irrational, lustful striving after power is infinite. Now irrational striving after power, man's natural appetite, has its basis in the pleasure which man takes in the consideration of his own power, i.e. in vanity. The origin of man's natural appetite is, therefore, not perception but vanity.

In four different arguments, Hobbes does not tire of designating the characteristic difference between man and animal as the striving after honour and positions of honour, after precedence over others and recognition of this precedence by others, ambition, pride, and the passion for fame.² Because man's natural appetite is nothing other than a striving after precedence over others and recognition of this precedence by others, the particularities of natural appetite, the passions, are nothing other than particular ways of striving after precedence and recognition: 'all joy and grief of mind (consists) in a

¹ *Leviathan*, ch. 13 (p. 64).

² *Elements of Law*, Pt. I, ch. 19, § 5; *De cive*, cap. 5, art. 5; *Leviathan*, ch. 17 (pp. 88-9).

contention for precedence to them with whom they compare themselves.¹ And as 'to have stronger, and more violent Passions for anything, than is ordinarily seen in others, is that which men call Madnesse', madness must show with particular clearness the nature of the passions. Speaking of the cause of madness, Hobbes says: 'The Passion, whose violence, or continuance maketh Madnesse, is either great vaine-glory; which is commonly called Pride, and selfe-concept; or great Dejection of mind.'² All passions and all forms of madness are modifications of conceit or of a sense of inferiority, or in principle, of the striving after precedence and recognition of that precedence. According to Hobbes's view, the motive of this striving is man's wish to take pleasure in himself by considering his own superiority, his own recognized superiority, i.e. vanity.³

The same conclusion is reached if one analyses and compares the arguments by which Hobbes in the three presentations of his political philosophy proves his assertion that the war of every one against every one arises of necessity from man's very nature. Every man is for that very reason the enemy of every other man, because each desires to surpass every other and thereby offends every other. The astonishing discrepancies between the three presentations, the still more astonishing obscurities, even the logical defects of the individual presentations show that Hobbes himself never completed the proofs of his fundamental assertion, and, as is seen on closer study, did not complete them simply because he could not make up his mind explicitly to take as his point of departure the reduction of man's natural appetite to vanity. We cannot here produce the proofs for this assertion.⁴ Instead we would remind the reader of one fact, which, although it is so obvious, has, so far as we know, always been overlooked—the reason which caused Hobbes to call his most detailed exposition of political philosophy the

¹ *Elements of Law*, Pt. II, ch. 8, § 3; cf. *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 8, § 8, and ch. 9; also *De cive*, cap. 1, art. 2.

² *Leviathan*, ch. 8 (p. 36); cf. *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 10, §§ 9–11.

³ 'Gloria . . . sive bene opinari de se ipso . . .' *De cive*, cap. 1, art. 2; cf. *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 9, § 1; *De cive*, cap. 4, art. 9; *De homine*, cap. 12, art. 6. Cf. pp. 133 and 135, note 1, below.

⁴ The author hopes to present these proofs in the near future within the framework of an exposition of Hobbes's political philosophy.

Leviathan. At the end of the most important part of this work, he says:

'Hitherto I have set forth the nature of Man, (whose *Pride* and other passions have compelled him to submit himselfe to Government;) together with the great Power of his Governour, whom I compared to Leviathan, taking that comparision out of the last two verses of the one and fortieth of Job; where God having set forth the great power of Leviathan, called him King of the *Proud*.'¹

It is not mighty power as such which is the *tertium comparationis* between Leviathan and the State, but the mighty power which subdues the proud. The State is compared to Leviathan, because it and it especially is the 'King of all the children of pride'. Only the State is capable of keeping pride down in the long run, indeed it has no other *raison d'être* except that man's natural appetite is pride, ambition, and vanity. It is with this thought in mind that Hobbes says of his book *Leviathan* that it is 'Justitiae mensura, atque ambitionis elenchus'.²

Why could Hobbes not make up his mind to treat the view which is in reality conclusive for him, that man's natural appetite is vanity, unequivocally as the basis of his political philosophy? If this conception of natural appetite is right, if man by nature finds his pleasure in triumphing over all others, then man is by nature evil. But he did not dare to uphold this consequence or assumption of his theory. For this reason, in the enumeration of the causes which lead to the war of every man against every man, in the final presentation (in the *Leviathan*) he puts vanity at the end.³ That it was the above-mentioned reason⁴ which determined Hobbes may be seen from a passage in the preface to *De cive*. The objection had been raised that, according to Hobbes's theory, man is by nature evil. He replies:

'Quamquam . . . a natura, hoc est, ab ipsa nativitate, ex eo quod nascantur, *animalia* hoc habeant, ut statim omnia quae sibi placent, cupiant faciantque quantum possunt, ut quae impendent mala, aut metu fugiant, aut ira repellant, non tamen ob eam causam mala

¹ *Leviathan*, ch. 28, *in fine*.

² *Opera latina*, vol. i, p. xciv.

³ Compare the different order of the argument in *Leviathan*, ch. 13 (pp. 63-4) on the one hand, in *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 14, §§ 3-5 and *De cive*, cap. 1, art. 4-6 on the other. Cf. p. 169, note 2, below.

⁴ Cf. p. 33, l. 23.

in his description of the striving after power itself, that the innocence, neutrality, and moral indifference of that striving is only apparent. The striving after power, as human striving after power, is always either good and permissible or evil and unpermissible. The apparent moral indifference arises simply and solely through abstraction of the necessary moral difference, which Hobbes himself immediately stresses. Hobbes's political philosophy rests not on the illusion of an amoral morality, but on a new morality, or, to speak according to Hobbes's intention, on a new grounding of the one eternal morality.

The second of the 'two most certain postulates of human nature' which Hobbes takes as basis of his political philosophy, along with the 'postulate of natural appetite', is 'the postulate of natural reason', 'qua quisque mortem violentam tanquam summum naturae malum studet evitare'. In accordance with naturalistic reasoning this postulate is reduced to the principle of self-preservation: since the preservation of life is the condition *sine qua non* for the satisfaction of any appetite, it is 'the primary good'.¹ As a logical conclusion of this thought, Hobbes attempts to deduce natural right, natural law, and all the virtues—the four Platonic cardinal virtues—from the principle of self-preservation.²

It is striking that Hobbes prefers the negative expression 'avoiding death' to the positive expression 'preserving life'. It is not difficult to discover the reason. That preservation of life is the primary good is affirmed by reason and by reason only. On the other hand, that death is the primary evil is affirmed by passion, the passion of fear of death. And as reason itself is powerless, man would not be minded to think of the preservation of life as the primary and most urgent good, if the passion of fear of death did not compel him to do so.³ A further reason, which is closely connected with the one already mentioned, recommends the negative expression. According to Hobbes, the preservation of life is the *primary* good, an arises from vanity is said by Hobbes in *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 16, § 10, and ch. 9, § 6.

¹ *De homine*, cap. 11, art. 6.

² See particularly *De cive*, cap. 3, art. 32.

³ Cf. *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 14, § 6 with the Ep. ded. to this work.

unhindered progress to ever further goals, a 'continuall prospering'—in a word, happiness is the *greatest* good, but there is no *supreme* good, in the sense of a good in the enjoyment of which the spirit might find repose.¹ On the other hand, death is the *primary* as well as the *greatest* and *supreme* evil.² For death is not only the negation of the primary good, but is therewith the negation of all goods, including the greatest good; and at the same time, death—being the *summum malum*, while there is no *summum bonum*—is the only absolute standard by reference to which man may coherently order his life. While in the order of goods there is no real limit, and while, in addition, the primary and the greatest good are completely different, the primary and greatest and supreme evil are one and the same, and it is thus only in consideration of evil that a limit to desiring, a coherent orientation of human life, is possible. Only through death has man an aim, because only through death has he one compelling aim—the aim which is forced upon him by the sight of death—the aim of avoiding death. For this reason Hobbes prefers the negative expression 'avoiding death' to the positive expression 'preserving life': because we feel death and not life; because we fear death immediately and directly, while we desire life only because rational reflection tells us that it is the condition of our happiness; because we fear death infinitely more than we desire life.

But Hobbes cannot after all acquiesce in the assertion that death is the primary and greatest and supreme evil. For he knows that a miserable tortured life can be a greater evil than death. Thus it is not death in itself which is the greatest and supreme evil, but an agonizing death or, what seems at first to mean the same thing, a violent death.³ But if Hobbes had really considered an agonizing death as the supreme and greatest evil, he would have attributed an even greater importance to medicine than did Descartes⁴ or Spinoza.⁵ This is so little the

¹ *De homine*, cap. 11, art. 15; *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 7, § 7; *Leviathan*, ch. 6 (p. 30) and 11 *in princ.*

² *De homine*, cap. 11, art. 6; *De cive*, Ep. ded. and cap. 1, art. 7.

³ *De homine*, cap. 11, art. 6; cf. *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 14, § 6; *De cive*, Ep. ded.; *ibid.*, cap. 3, art. 12 and cap. 6, art. 13.

⁴ *Discours de la méthode, in fine.*

⁵ *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione*, ed. Bruder, § 15.

case that he actually forgets medicine: 'Calamitates autem omnes, quae humana industria evitari possunt a bello oriuntur, praecipue vero a bello civili; hinc enim caedes, solitudo, inopiaque rerum omnium derivatur.'¹ Not an agonizing death in itself, but a violent death which threatens a man at the hand of other men, is the only one which Hobbes considers worthy of mention. When he says of an agonizing death that it is the greatest evil, he thinks exclusively of violent death at the hand of other men. The 'postulate of natural reason' expresses this thought in the formula '(unusquisque) mortem violentam tanquam summum naturae malum studet evitare'.

Not the rational and therefore always uncertain² knowledge that death is the greatest and supreme evil, but the fear of death, i.e. the emotional and inevitable, and therefore necessary and certain, aversion from death is the origin of law and the State.³ This fear is a mutual fear, i.e. it is the fear each man has of every other man as his potential murderer.⁴ This fear of a violent death, pre-rational in its origin, but rational in its effect, and not the rational principle of self-preservation, is, according

¹ *De corpore*, cap. 1, art. 7. It must further be pointed out that in almost all the passages in which Hobbes treats of the utility of natural science, he does not mention medicine at all. Compare the following passages: *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 13, § 3; *De cive*, Ep. ded. and cap. 17, art. 12; *Leviathan*, ch. 13 (pp. 64-5) and ch. 46 *in princ.*; *De corpore*, cap. 1, art. 7.

² Speaking of the laws of nature, Hobbes says: '(the dictates of reason) are but theorems, tending to peace, and those uncertain, as being but conclusions of particular men, and therefore not properly laws.' *English Works*, vol. iv, p. 285. Cf. *De cive*, cap. 2, art. 1, annot., and *Leviathan*, ch. 26 (p. 143).

³ 'Fertur enim unusquisque ad appetitum ejus quod sibi bonum, et ad fugam ejus quod sibi malum est, maxime autem maximi malorum naturalium, quae est mors; idque necessitate quadam naturae non minore, quam qua fertur lapis deorsum. Non igitur absurdum neque reprehendum, neque contra rectam rationem est, si quis omnem operam det, ut a morte et doloribus proprium corpus et membra defendat conservetque. . . . Itaque Juris naturalis fundamentum primum est, ut quisque vitam et membra sua quantum potest tueatur.' *De cive*, cap. 1, art. 7. That *necessitas* is not here to be understood in the naturalistic-determinist sense is shown by parallel passages, such as the following: 'You that make it so heinous a crime for a man to save himself from violent death, by a forced submission to a usurper, should have considered what crime it was to submit voluntarily to the usurping Parliament . . . he (Hobbes) justified their submission by their former obedience, and present necessity . . .' *English Works*, vol. iv, pp. 423 ff.

⁴ *De cive*, cap. 1, art. 2-3.

to Hobbes, the root of all right and therewith of all morality. He drew all his logical conclusions from this: he finally denied the moral value of all virtues which do not contribute to the making of the State, to consolidating peace, to protecting man against the danger of violent death, or, more exactly expressed, of all virtues which do not proceed from fear of violent death: 'Sunt enim tum fortitudo, tum prudentia, vis animi potius quam bonitas morum; et temperantia privatio potius vitiorum quae oriuntur ab ingeniis cupidis . . . quam virtus moralis.'¹

The antithesis from which Hobbes's political philosophy starts is thus the antithesis between vanity as the root of natural appetite on the one hand, and on the other, fear of violent death as the passion which brings man to reason. More accurately expressed: because Hobbes reduces man's natural appetite to vanity, he cannot but recognize the fear of a violent death—not the fear of a painful death, and certainly not the striving after self-preservation—as the principle of morality. For if man's natural appetite is vanity, this means that man by nature strives to surpass all his fellows and to have his superiority recognized by all others, in order that he may take pleasure in himself; that he naturally wishes the whole world to fear and obey him. The ever-greater triumph over others—this, and not the ever-increasing, but rationally increasing, power—is the aim and happiness of natural man: 'Continually to out-go the next before, is felicity.' Man's life may be compared to a race: 'but this race we must suppose to have no other goal, nor other garland, but being foremost.'² Absorbed in the race after the happiness of triumph, man cannot be

¹ *De homine*, cap. 13, art. 9. In *De cive*, cap. 3, art. 32, Hobbes had still recognized the Platonic cardinal virtues; in the *Leviathan*, ch. 15 (p. 81), he mentions only temperance besides justice. It must further be pointed out that in the *Leviathan*, ch. 6 (p. 26), courage is characterized as a passion, and that as early as the *Elements* (Pt. I, ch. 17, § 14) a clear distinction is drawn between justice, equity, gratitude, temperance, prudence, which are always virtues, on the one hand, and on the other, courage, liberality, &c., which can be virtues, but also vices. See also pp. 50 and 113-15 below. Cf. Voltaire, *Dictionnaire philosophique*, art. 'Vertu' and 'Fausseté des vertus humaines,' and Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*, first section (the paragraphs at the beginning).

² *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 9, § 21.

becomes the master. The vanquished, who 'submitteth . . . for fear of death', who admits his weakness and with that has forfeited his honour, becomes the servant.¹ The dominion of the master over the servant—despotic rule—is one form of the natural State;² and as the other form of the natural State, patriarchy, is construed by Hobbes entirely according to the pattern of despotic rule, we may even say: despotic rule is the natural State.

The artificial State, which is as such more perfect, arises when the two opponents are both seized with fear for their lives,³ overcome their vanity and shame of confessing their fear, and recognize as their real enemy not the rival, but 'that terrible enemy of nature, death',⁴ who, as their common enemy, forces them to mutual understanding, trust, and union, and thus procures them the possibility of completing the founding of the State for the purpose of providing safeguards for the longest possible term, against the common enemy. And while in the unforeseen life-and-death struggle, in which vanity comes to grief, the futility of vanity is shown, it is revealed in the concord of living, and of living in common, to which their pre-rational fear of death leads them, that the fear of death is appropriate to human conditions, and that it is 'rational'. It is even shown that it is only on the basis of fear of death that life comes to concord and that the fear of death is the only 'postulate of natural reason'.

A close connexion thus exists between the two 'postulates of human nature', on which Hobbes bases his political philosophy. Vanity left to itself of necessity leads to mortal combat, and since 'every man looketh that his companion should value him, at the same rate he sets upon himself',⁵ the vanity of each of necessity leads to the 'warre of every one against every one'. And as man by nature lives first in the world of his imagination

¹ *Elements*, Pt. II, ch. 3, § 2; *De cive*, cap. 8, art. 1; *Leviathan*, ch. 20 (p. 106).

² *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 19, § 11; *De cive*, cap. 5, art. 12; *Leviathan*, ch. 17, *in fine*.

³ ' . . . men who choose their Sovereign, do it for fear of one another, and not of him whom they institute.' *Leviathan*, ch. 20, *in princ.*

⁴ *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 14, § 6.

⁵ *Leviathan*, ch. 13 (p. 64).

and then in the opinion of others, he can originally experience the real world only by feeling it, all unforeseen, in a conflict with others; he comes to know death, the primary and greatest and supreme evil, the only and absolute standard of human life, the beginning of all knowledge of the real world, originally only as *violent* death.

If, by his reduction of natural human appetite to vanity, Hobbes attributes guilt to man, then the affirmation of the fear of death (which is opposed to vanity) must also have moral significance. That is, Hobbes must have systematically differentiated between the fear of death, as the origin of all law and all morality, and all amoral or immoral motives. His contention that the State originates only in mutual fear and can only so originate has thus moral, not merely technical, significance.

Hobbes distinguishes no less precisely than any other moralist between legality and morality. Not the legality of the action, but the morality of the purpose, makes the just man. That man is just who fulfils the law because it is law and not for fear of punishment or for the sake of reputation.¹ Although Hobbes states that those are 'too severe, both to themselves, and others, that maintain, that the First motions of the mind, (though checked with the fear of God) be Sinnes', he yet 'confesses' that 'it is safer to erre on that hand, than on the other'.² In believing that the moral attitude, conscience, intention, is of more importance than the action, Hobbes is at one with Kant as with the Christian tradition.³ He differs from this tradition at first sight only by his denial of the possibility that just and unjust actions may be distinguished independently of human legislation. In the state of nature the distinction between just and unjust actions depends wholly on the judgement of the individual conscience. In the state of nature every action is in principle permitted which the conscience of the individual recognizes as necessary for self-preservation, and every action is in principle forbidden which according to the judgement of the individual conscience does not serve the purpose of self-

¹ *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 16, § 4; *De cive*, cap. 3, art. 5, and cap. 14, art. 18; *Leviathan*, ch. 15 (pp. 77 and 82).

² *Leviathan*, ch. 27, in *princ.*

³ See particularly *De cive*, cap. 4, art. 21, and *Leviathan*, ch. 44 (p. 348).

or Pride in appearing not to need to breake it.¹ That this cannot be Hobbes's final word is already proved by the use of the word 'pride'. As we have seen, the very title of the book *Leviathan*, in which the two passages just quoted occur, expresses the opinion that pride, far from being the origin of the just attitude, is rather the only origin of the unjust attitude.² The reduction of the just intention to pride is a deviation from Hobbes's key-thought. Not pride, and still less obedience, but fear of violent death, is according to him the origin of the just intention. What man does from fear of death, in the consciousness of his weakness at the hands of other men, when he *honestly* confesses to himself and to others his weakness and his fear of death, unconcerned about his *honour*, this alone is fundamentally just: 'Breviter, in statu naturae, Justum et Injustum non ex actionibus, sed ex consilio et *conscientia* agentium aestimandum est. Quod *necessario*, quod studio pacis, quod sui conservandi causâ fit, recte fit.'³ Self-preservation and the striving after peace for the sake of self-preservation are 'necessary', because man fears death with inescapable necessity.⁴ Hobbes's last word is the identification of conscience with the fear of death.

However one may judge this identification, at all events it permits a systematic differentiation between justice and injustice, between moral and immoral motives. This identification alone allows Hobbes to say: 'Ad *naturalem* hominum proclivitatem ad se mutuo lacessendum, quam ab affectibus, praesertim vero ab inani sui aestimatione derivant, si *addas* jam *jus* omnium in omnia, quo alter jure invadit, alter jure resistit . . .';⁵ that is to say, to distinguish between man's natural appetite and his natural right. In particular it makes possible the distinction between the attitude of the unjust man who obeys the laws of the State for fear of punishment, i.e. without inner conviction, and the attitude of the just man, who for fear of death, and therefore from inner conviction, as it were once

¹ *Leviathan*, ch. 15 (p. 77) and ch. 14 (p. 73).

² That 'pride' is always used in the derogatory sense is indicated by Hobbes in *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 9, § 1.

³ *De cive*, cap. 3, art. 27, annot.

⁴ *Ibid.*, cap. 1, art. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, cap. 1, art. 12. Cf. *Elements*, Part I, ch. 14, § 11.

why 'no man can conceive there is any greater degree of (Understanding), than that which he already attained unto. And from hence it comes to passe, that men have no other means to acknowledge their own Darknesse, but onely by reasoning from the unforeseen mischances, that befall them in their ways'.¹ The extreme case of unforeseen mischance is unforeseen mortal danger. Thus it is pre-eminently through unforeseen mortal danger and the irresistibly compelling fear of death which arises from it that we are enabled to free ourselves from the power of our fantasies and our prejudices. Science bears traces of this origin: its principles 'non modo speciosa non (sunt), sed etiam humilia, arida, et pene deformia (videntur)'.² Science proceeds 'from most low and humble principles, evident even to the meanest capacity; going on slowly, and with most scrupulous ratiocination'.³ Science stands in complete contrast to all dogmatic, rhetorical, and allegedly inspired pseudo-knowledge, which catches the eye and may, indeed, be 'suddenly'⁴ gained.

Since man is by nature fast in his imaginary world, it is only by unforeseen mischance that he can attain to a knowledge of his own darkness and at the same time a modest and circumspect knowledge of the real world. That is to say: the world is originally revealed to man not by detachedly and spontaneously seeing its form, but by involuntary experience of its resistance. The least discriminating and detached sense is the sense of touch. This explains the place of honour which is tacitly granted to the sense of touch in Hobbes's physiology and psychology of perception; all sense-perception, particularly that of the most discriminating and detached sense, the sense of sight, is interpreted by experience of the sense of touch.

Thus not the naturalistic antithesis of morally indifferent animal appetite (or of morally indifferent human striving after power) on the one hand, and morally indifferent striving after self-preservation on the other, but the moral and humanist antithesis of fundamentally unjust vanity and fundamentally just fear of violent death is the basis of Hobbes's political

¹ *Leviathan*, ch. 44 (p. 331).

² *De corpore*, cap. 1, art. 1.

³ *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 13, § 3.

⁴ *De cive*, Ep. ded.; *Leviathan*, ch. 43 (p. 324).

the specifically human problem of right. Hobbes's political philosophy is really, as its originator claims, based on a knowledge of men which is deepened and corroborated by the self-knowledge and self-examination of the individual, and not on a general scientific or metaphysical theory. And because it is based on experience of human life, it can never, in spite of all the temptations of natural science, fall completely into the danger of abstraction from moral life and neglect of moral difference. Hobbes's political philosophy has thus for that very reason a moral basis, because it is not derived from natural science but is founded on first-hand experience of human life.

The contention that Hobbes's humanist moral motivation of his political philosophy is more original than the naturalistic motivation, from which one must first disentangle it, would receive indirect corroboration, if it could be shown that either all or the most important points of that moral motivation were already established before he had turned his attention to natural science. That this is the case is probable from the outset. Hobbes was over forty when he 'discovered' Euclid's *Elements*, and not until after that did he begin to take a serious interest in natural science. The 'discovery' of Euclid was beyond doubt an epoch in his life; everything he thought and wrote after that is modified by this happening. But if one has once seen that his most original thoughts are hidden rather than shown forth by a form of proof borrowed from mathematics and a psychology borrowed from natural science, and if one is not disposed to take for granted that he was asleep up to the age of forty, so that he needed the 'discovery' of Euclid to awaken him, one is inclined to suppose that what he wrote in his youth (before he was forty) and thus before he was influenced by mathematics and natural science, expresses his most original thoughts better than the work of his maturity. Whether this is the case, and to what extent, can be decided only after the sparse remnants of his youthful philosophy have been investigated. Only at the close of this investigation will it be possible definitely to answer the question whether and to what extent the 'discovery' of Euclid and the subsequent pursuit of natural science prejudiced his political philosophy or furthered it.

22
1 <

most weighty reasons for the inadequacy and uselessness of scholasticism.¹ Just as did Bodin, Bacon considers not so much the writing of history, as the philosophical utilization of history, as the need. Certainly as a result of the systematic turning to the problems of application, and therefore to history, the tasks set to history are widened; Bacon makes a plea for history of literature, which part of history had as yet been neglected. This branch of history should also serve the purpose of making men wise.² Bacon particularly desires a collection of the theories of the various philosophers, but not in the style of the classical doxography 'by titles packed and fagotted up together, as hath been done by Plutarch', but 'the philosophies of everyone throughout by themselves': 'For it is the harmony of a philosophy in itself which giveth it light and credence; whereas if it be singled and broken, it will seem more foreign and dissonant.'³ The reason for this enhanced interest in all branches of history—most clearly seen in Bacon's case—is the enhanced interest in the problems of application. This interest is the motive of the study of history, as it is of the direct study of characters, passions, temperaments, humours, &c.,⁴ in a word, the study of man as he really is, which study, according to Bacon's contention, was neglected by traditional philosophy in favour of the study—which he admits to be primary—of man as he ought to be.

The fact that a philosopher such as Bacon should make himself the advocate of philosophy's turning to history lightens

¹ Ibid., p. 285.

² 'History is natural, civil, ecclesiastical, and literary; whereof the first three I allow as extant, the fourth I note as deficient. For no man hath propounded to himself the general state of learning to be described and represented from age to age . . . without which the history of the world seemeth to me to be as the statua of Polyphemus with his eye out; that part being wanting which doth most shew the spirit and life of the person. . . . The use and end of which work I do not so much design for curiosity and satisfaction of those that are the lovers of learning, but chiefly for a more serious and grave purpose; which is this in few words, that it will make learned men wise in the *use and administration* of learning. For it is not St. Augustine's nor St. Ambrose's works that will make so wise a divine, as ecclesiastical history, thoroughly read and observed; and the same reason is of learning.' Loc. cit., p. 329 f.

³ Loc. cit., p. 365 f.

⁴ Compare the mention of these themes in Hobbes's introduction to his translation of Thucydides. *English Works*, vol. viii, p. xxix f.

takes on an historical significance—not, indeed, as a condition of absolute lack of order, but as a condition of extremely defective order. And the progress which may be traced in real history from the *prisca barbaries* to *hodiernum tempus* with reference to the conquest of nature, bears witness to the possibility of the progress still to be achieved in regard to the ordering of the world of man.¹ Thus real history has as its function to vouch for the possibility of further progress by perception of progress already made. After that—historically perhaps even earlier—its function is to free man from the might of the past, from the authority of antiquity, from ‘prejudices’. Authority loses its prestige when its historical origin and evolution are traced; as a result of historical criticism man’s limitations show themselves as limits set by himself, and therefore to be overpassed. Since there is no superhuman order which binds man from the beginning, since man has no set place in the universe, but has to make one for himself, he can extend the limits of his power at will. That he can, indeed, extend those limits is shown by history as the history of progress;² that present limits can be overstepped is proved by history as historical criticism. It is by the doubt of the transcendent eternal order by which man’s reason was assumed to be guided and hence by the conviction of the impotence of reason, that first of all the turning of philosophy to history is caused, and then the process of ‘historicising’ philosophy itself.

¹ *De cive*, Ep. ded.

² Condorcet says in the introduction to his *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (ed. Prior, pp. 2-3): ‘Ces observations, sur ce que l'homme a été, sur ce qu'il est aujourd'hui, conduiront ensuite aux moyens d'assurer et d'accélérer les nouveaux progrès que sa nature lui permet d'espérer encore. Tel est le but de l'ouvrage que j'ai entrepris, et dont le résultat sera de montrer, par le raisonnement et par les faits, que la nature n'a marqué aucun terme au perfectionnement des facultés humaines; que la perfectibilité de l'homme est réellement indéfinie; que les progrès de cette perfectibilité, désormais indépendants de toute puissance qui voudrait les arrêter, n'ont d'autre terme que la durée du globe où la nature nous a jetés.’ The last words betray Condorcet's (and his predecessors') ultimate presupposition: if nature had not *cast* us on this globe, infinite progress would be impossible. Compare below, p. 134 f.

kind of knowledge. His history contains no 'wise discourses . . . of manners and policy', no 'open conveyances of precepts', but is pure narrative. Not only does Thucydides keep strictly to the sequence of events, but particularly 'the grounds and motives of every action he setteth down before the action itself. . . . After the action, when there is just occasion, he giveth his judgment of them; shewing by what means the success came either to be furthered or hindered.' By thus revealing 'the ways and events of good and evil counsels' by his account, and allowing the judgement on the connexion between motive, plan, and result to arise from concrete experience, he teaches the reader much more thoroughly than any philosopher could.¹ Thucydides is concerned primarily with motives. The most powerful motives are the passions.² Thucydides stands out above other historians particularly because he reveals those usually unavowed passions which primarily determine social life. The depth of his insight finds adequate expression in the obscurity of his sentences: 'the obscurity . . . proceedeth from the profoundness of the sentences; containing contemplations of those human passions, which either dissembled or not commonly discoursed of, do yet carry the greatest sway with men in their public conversation.'³ Knowledge of the passions, more generally expressed, knowledge of the motives, is of peculiar difficulty. The second reason why Hobbes characterizes Thucydides as 'the most politic historiographer that ever writ' is, therefore, that Thucydides is fully aware of the limits set to the knowledge of motives. '. . . (he never enters) into men's hearts further than the acts themselves evidently guide him.' For 'the inward motive . . . is but conjectural'.⁴ Thus it is from Thucydides that one can best learn the nature both of

¹ *English Works*, vol. viii, pp. viii and xxi f. Cf. p. 80, note 1, above.

² Compare with this and the preceding passage these sentences from Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (quoted from the translation by J. Sibree, London, 1905): 'The question of the *means* by which Freedom develops itself to a World, conducts us to the phenomenon of History itself.' 'The first glance at History convinces us that the actions of men proceed from their needs, their passions, their characters and talents. . . . Passions, private aims, and the satisfaction of selfish desires, are . . . the most effective springs of action' (p. 21).

³ *English Works*, vol. viii, p. xxix.

⁴ *Loc. cit.*, pp. viii and xxvii f.

valued, bear it with less patience than in a democracy'.¹ The passions which determine human society are a striving after rank and precedence or modifications of that striving, and because that is the case, monarchy is the best form of State. For—one must complete the argument thus—in a monarchy that striving cannot have so disastrous an effect as in the other forms of State.

The first presupposition for the preference for monarchy is thus the conviction that the striving after rank and precedence, or, as we should say according to our earlier exposition,² that vanity is the most dangerous passion. That Hobbes held that view at the time of writing the introduction to the translation of Thucydides is proved also by the fact that in the dedication to that work, when praising the virtues of the second Earl of Devonshire, he emphasizes no less than three times that his patron was completely free of this passion.³ From the outset vanity was for Hobbes the root of all evil. For in vanity he recognized the power which dazzles and blinds men. Because man desires to think well of himself, he refuses to recognize such facts as reveal the limits of his power and intelligence. Vanity hinders man from perceiving his true situation. Vanity is nourished by success. Thus man profits more from ill fortune than from good fortune. Ill fortune prevents him from over-estimating his power and intelligence, awakens fear in him, and fear is a good counsellor. As vanity is the power which dazzles, the diametrically opposed passion, fear, is the power which enlightens man. Now vanity is co-ordinated with publicity as fear is with solitude. Man can assure himself of the justice of the good opinion which he has, or would like to have, of himself, only by the recognition which comes to him from others; he must, therefore, hide from others his weakness, his consciousness of weakness, that is to say, his fear. On the other hand, he can admit his fear to himself. Therefore, he prefers the strictest reprimand, the advice most injurious to

¹ *English Works*, vol. viii, p. xvi f.

² See above, p. 111 f.

³ ' . . . there was not any, who more really, and less for glory's sake favoured those that studied the liberal arts liberally, than my Lord your father did.' *English Works*, vol. viii, p. iii f. ' . . . his study . . . directed not to the ostentation of his reading.' ' . . . (he) took no fire either from faction or ambition.' *Loc. cit.*, p. iv.

his self-love, if they are but privately administered, to any public disapproval.¹ Consequently, because vanity, which makes men blind, dominates public life, and thus fear, which advises man well, dares to show itself only in solitude or among intimates, because, therefore, generally speaking, any individual is more reasonable than any assembly, monarchy is the best form of State.

The chain of reasoning which has just been put forward forms the basis of Hobbes's political philosophy at all stages of its evolution from the introduction to his translation of Thucydides onwards. We discussed the fundamental significance of the antithesis of vanity and fear in Chapter II. Here it need only be recalled that in all the presentations of his political philosophy Hobbes kept to the connexion of this antithesis with the antithesis of monarchy and democracy (or aristocracy).² Because vanity by nature determines man, not only is the State necessary, but particularly monarchy is the best form of State, since in it publicity—vanity's element—is least powerful.

We draw the conclusion that there was no change in the essential content of the argument and aim of Hobbes's political philosophy from the introduction to his translation of Thucydides up to the latest works. What changed was especially the method. Originally Hobbes supports his argument particularly by (induction from) history, later by direct study of the passions. Only the method of the reasoning and therewith also of the presentation can have been decisively influenced by the 'discovery' of Euclid's *Elements*.

¹ ' . . . there is something, I know not what, in the censure of a multitude, more terrible than any single judgment, how severe or exact soever . . . ' Loc. cit., p. vii. ' . . . much prosperity . . . maketh men in love with themselves; and it is hard for any man to love that counsel which maketh him love himself the less. And it holdeth much more in a multitude than in one man. For a man that reasoneth with himself, will not be ashamed to admit of timorous suggestions in his business, that he may the stronglier provide; but in public deliberations before a multitude, fear (which for the most part adviseth well, though it execute not so) seldom or never sheweth itself or is admitted.' Loc. cit., p. xvi. ' . . . men profit more by looking on adverse events, than on prosperity . . . men's miseries do better instruct, than their good success . . . ' Loc. cit., p. xxiv.

² *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 13, § 3; Pt. II, ch. 5, §§ 4, 7, 8, and also ch. 8, § 3; *De cive*, cap. 10, art. 7, 9, 11, 12, and 15; *Leviathan*, ch. 19 (p. 98) and ch. 25 (p. 138 f.). Cf. above, p. 64 f.

at their own prices, so that poor people, for the most part, might get a better living by working in Bridewell, than by spinning, weaving, and other such labour as they can do . . .¹

Hobbes thus seems to be a determined opponent of the middle class. If one looks more closely, one notices, however, that his attack is really directed against the policy of the English middle class, and by no means against the middle class itself, its being and its ideal. His final word is not that the middle class is the natural vehicle of any and every revolution, but that, in so far as it is so, it is acting against its own real interest, and that, if it rightly understood its own desire for private gain, it would unconditionally obey the secular power:

'I consider the most part of rich subjects, that have made themselves so by craft and trade, as men that never look upon anything but their present profit; and who, to everything not lying in that way, are in a manner blind, being amazed at the very thought of plundering. If they had understood what virtue there is to preserve their wealth in obedience to their lawful sovereign, they would never have sided with the Parliament. . . .'²

Not only does Hobbes not attack the middle class which is sensibly aware of its own interests, he even provides it with a philosophical justification, as the ideals set up in his political philosophy are precisely the ideals of the bourgeoisie. It is true that he condemns the desire 'to grow excessively rich', but 'justly and moderately to enrich themselves' is 'prudence . . . in private men'.³ It is true that he condemns the exploiting of the poor, but he takes it for granted that 'a man's Labour also is a commodity exchangeable for benefit, as well as any other thing'.⁴ For 'the value of all things contracted for, is measured by the Appetite of the Contractors: and therefore the just value, is that which they be contented to give'.⁵ Private property and private profit are so little objectionable in themselves that they are rather the inevitable condition for all peaceful life:

'For maintaining of peace at home, there be so many things necessarily to be considered, and taken order in, as there be several causes

¹ *Behemoth*, p. 126.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ch. 15 (p. 78); cf. also *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 16, § 5, and *De cive*, cap. 3, art. 6.

² *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁴ *Leviathan*, ch. 24 (p. 130).

concurring to sedition. And first, it is necessary to set out to every subject his propriety, and distinct lands and goods, upon which he may exercise and have the benefit of his own industry, and without which men would fall out amongst themselves, as did the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot, every man encroaching and usurping as much of the common benefit as he can, which tendeth to quarrel and sedition.¹

Along with peace at home and abroad, freedom for individual enrichment is the most important aim of corporate life. The sovereign power has, apart from assuring peace, no further duty than seeing to it that the citizens 'quantum cum securitate publica consistere potest, locupletentur (et) ut libertate innoxia perfruantur'.² For there is no real good outside sensual goods and the means to acquire them.³ Even science—however great the pleasure it may afford the individual—has no other publicly defensible aim than the increase of human power and human well-being.⁴ Well-being is achieved mainly by labour and thrift. The gifts of nature are less important for its acquisition than trade and industry:

'Ad locupletandos cives necessaria duo sunt, labor et parsimonia; conducit etiam tertium, nempe terrae aquaeque proventus naturalis . . . priora duo sola necessaria sunt. Potest enim civitas in insula maris constituta, non majore, quam ut habitationi locum praestet, sine semente, sine piscatura, solâ Mercaturâ et opificiis ditescere.'⁵

Thus neither income or fortune, but only consumption, should be taxed; taxation of consumption puts a premium on thrift and a penalty on extravagance.⁶ It is the duty of the government to compel the able-bodied poor, who cannot support themselves, to work, and also to provide work for them, and

¹ *Elements*, Pt. II, ch. 9, § 5; cf. *De cive*, Ep. ded., and *Leviathan*, ch. 24 (p. 131 f.).

² *De cive*, cap. 13, art. 6. Compare also the explanation of 'liberty of subjects' in *Leviathan*, ch. 21 (p. 112).

³ *De cive*, cap. 1, art. 2.

⁴ *De corpore*, cap. 1, art. 6.

⁵ *De cive*, cap. 13, art. 14. ' . . . Plenty dependeth (next to God's favour) meerly on the labour and industry of men. . . . there have been Commonwealths that having no more Territory, than hath served them for habitation, have neverthesse, not only maintained, but also encreased their Power, partly by the labour of trading from one place to another, and partly by selling the Manufactures, whereof the Materials were brought in from other places.' *Leviathan*, ch. 24 (p. 130). Cf. also *De cive*, cap. 12, art. 9.

⁶ *Elements*, Pt. II, ch. 9, § 5; *De cive*, cap. 13, art. 11; *Leviathan*, ch. 30 (p. 184).

on the other hand to forbid excessive display, for the purpose of encouraging thrift.¹ Along with 'justice and charity', Hobbes obviously recognizes only industry and thrift as virtues. In contrast to industry and thrift, war is no certain means of securing well-being; only 'when all the world is overcharged with Inhabitants, then the last remedy of all is Warre';² but as long as this extreme case has not come about, war should be waged only for defence,³ and to this end it is best to maintain a mercenary army. Thus the relationship between 'Leviathan' and subject is changed to its opposite; the sovereign power is the hireling of the individuals, who apply themselves to just and modest self-enrichment, who buy and sell labour like any other commodity, and who also can pay for the work of their defence: 'the Impositions, that are layd on the People by the Sovereign Power, are nothing else but the Wages, due to them that hold the Publique Sword, to defend private men in the exercise of severall Trades, and Callings.'⁴ The king and his professional army, whose duty it is to protect the private people, must, therefore, *nolens volens* be courageous: 'Fortitude is a royal virtue; and though it be necessary in such private men as shall be soldiers, yet, for other men, the less they dare, the better it is both for the Commonwealth and for themselves.' Far from allowing the citizen to be led astray from his own virtue by royal virtue, Hobbes holds up the middle-class virtues to the king as model: 'Frugality (though perhaps you will think it strange) is also a royal virtue; for it increases the public stock, which cannot be too great for the public use. . . .'⁵ The king exercises his sovereign right in the spirit and in the interest of the bourgeoisie; he provides for equality before the law and for legal security; he chooses his counsellors in consideration not of hereditary privileges but of personal capacity; he opposes the pride and presumption of the aristocracy.⁶ However much Hobbes personally esteemed the aristocracy, and esteemed the

¹ *De cive*, cap. 13, art. 14; *Leviathan*, ch. 30 (p. 184 f.).

² Cf. *Leviathan*, ch. 30 (p. 185) and also *De cive*, Ep. ded., with *Elements*, Pt. II, ch. 9, § 9, and *De cive*, cap. 13, art. 14.

³ The motive of the war of conquest is vanity; cf. *English Works*, vol. vi, p. 12, and *Leviathan*, ch. 13 (p. 64); see above, p. 11.

⁴ *Leviathan*, ch. 30 (p. 184).

⁵ *Behemoth*, p. 45.

⁶ *Leviathan*, ch. 30 (p. 187 f.).

specific qualities of the aristocracy,¹ his political philosophy is directed against the aristocratic rules of life² in the name of bourgeois rules of life. His morality is the morality of the bourgeois world. Even his sharp criticism of the bourgeoisie has, at bottom, no other aim than to remind the bourgeoisie of the elementary condition for its existence. This condition is not industry and thrift, not the specific exertions of the bourgeoisie, but the security of body and soul, which the bourgeoisie cannot of itself guarantee. For this reason the sovereign power must be permitted unrestricted power of disposal even over property, because it is only on that condition that the sovereign power can really protect the lives of the subjects. For neither poverty nor oppression nor insult is the greatest and supreme evil, but violent death or the danger of violent

¹ See above, p. 45. All the same it is said incidentally in *Behemoth* (p. 69): 'I believe that the Lords, most of them, following the principles of warlike and savage natures, envied his (Strafford's) greatness, but yet were not of themselves willing to condemn him of treason.' The words 'following the principles of warlike and savage natures, envied his greatness, but yet' do not occur in the older editions and were first published by Tönnies from the manuscript.

² That this is the case was clearly seen by Clarendon; he says in *A brief view and survey of the dangerous and pernicious errors to Church and State, in Mr. Hobbes's book, entitled Leviathan* (1676): Hobbes 'must not take it ill, that I observe his extreme malignity to the Nobility, by whose bread he hath bin alwaies sustain'd, who must not expect any part, at least any precedence in his Institution; that in this his deep meditation upon the ten Commandments, and in a conjuncture when the Levellers were at highest, and the reduction of all degrees to one and the same was resolv'd upon, and begun, and exercis'd towards the whole Nobility with all the instances of contempt and scorn, he chose to publish his judgments; as if the safety of the People requir'd an equality of Persons and that "the honor of great Persons is to be valued for their beneficence, and the aids they give to men of inferior rank, or not at all; and that the consequence of partiality towards the great, raised hatred, and an endeavor in the people to pull down all oppressing and contumelious greatness"; language lent to, or borrowed from the Agitators of that time' (p. 181). The phrases quoted by Clarendon occur in *Leviathan*, ch. 30 (p. 184). "Good counsel", he saies, "comes not by lot or inheritance, and therefore there is no more reason to expect good advice from the rich, or the noble, in the matter of State, then in delineating the dimensions of a Fortress"; and is very solicitous, like a faithful Leveller, that no man may have priviledges of that kind by his birth or descent, or have farther honor then adhereth naturally to his abilities . . .' (p. 182). The phrases quoted occur in *Leviathan*, ch. 30 (p. 187). In the Latin version of the *Leviathan*, which was published after the Restoration, Hobbes left out the phrases which were hostile to the aristocracy. Compare in this connexion the previous note.

death. It is true Hobbes prefers country people to the inhabitants of the great cities;¹ but in the last analysis this has no other meaning than the related fact that he prefers the horrors of the state of nature to the spurious joys of society.² Hobbes 'prefers' these terrors of the state of nature because only on awareness of these terrors can a true and permanent society rest. The bourgeois existence which no longer experiences these terrors will endure only as long as it remembers them. By this finding Hobbes differs from those of his opponents who in principle share his bourgeois ideal, but reject his conception of the state of nature.³

That Hobbes penetrated more deeply into the matter than the later writers was recognized by no one more clearly than by Hegel. Hegel's analysis of the bourgeois corroborates the identity of Hobbes's morality and bourgeois morality which we have attempted to show. For Hegel is not content to characterize the bourgeois by just and modest self-enrichment and similar features. Obviously following Hobbes, he emphasizes that protection against the danger of violent death, the denial of fortitude as a virtue and thus the fear of violent death, are the primary conditions of bourgeois existence.⁴ And as Hegel recognizes the fear of violent death as the basis of the bourgeois existence, he prefers Hobbes's conception of the state of nature to later conceptions: 'Hobbes looks at this condition in its true light, and we find in him no idle talk about a state of natural goodness; the natural condition is really far more like that of the animals—a condition in which there is an unsubdued individual will.' Even though Hegel rejects Hobbes's 'views' as 'shallow and empirical', he nevertheless admits that 'the reasons he gives for them, and the propositions he makes concerning

¹ '... there is . . . an insincereness, inconstancy, and troublesome humour in those that dwell in populous cities, like the mobility, blustering, and impurity of the air; and a plainness, and, though dull, yet a nutritive faculty in rural people, that endures a comparison with the earth they labour.' *English Works*, vol. iv, p. 444.

² Compare the description of these joys in *De cive*, cap. 1, art. 2.

³ I have treated this rather more fully in my 'Anmerkungen zu Carl Schmitt, Der Begriff des Politischen', *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, vol. lxvii, p. 738 f.

⁴ Cf. Hegel's *Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie*, ed. G. Lasson, Leipzig, 1913, pp. 379 ff., 472 f., and 477 ff.

prepared to owe their good fortune exclusively to their own achievement and their own serious labour.

It would seem to us that Hobbes's political philosophy is the most important testimony to the struggle which has been fought against the aristocracy in the name of bourgeois virtue. It bears witness to the struggle particularly in that this struggle is fought out within that political philosophy itself; the genesis of Hobbes's political philosophy is nothing other than the progressive supplanting of aristocratic virtue by bourgeois virtue. For Hobbes came only gradually to a clear realization that the moral attitude he adopted as a standard demanded the unconditional rejection of aristocratic virtue. The antithesis could, for a time, remain hidden from him, because in spite of their antithesis,¹ aristocratic virtue and bourgeois virtue have something fundamental in common.

Aristocratic virtue as Castiglione sees it and bourgeois virtue as Hobbes sees it, are in accord in that they are, and are understood as, the virtues of civilized men. In the name of 'letters' Castiglione fought against the older view, which was defended particularly by the French aristocracy of his time, and which admits only 'noblenes of armes'. The courtier is certainly to pass soldiering off as his main profession, 'and all the other good qualities for an ornament thereof'. But he is to know that apart from moral virtue, to which valour essentially belongs, 'the true and principall ornament of the minde in every man . . . are letters'.² He is to know that the object of war is peace, defence and not conquest, the civilization of subject peoples and not barbaric tyranny over them.³ He is to have left the coarseness of country life behind him, like all martial, 'Scythian' coarseness.⁴ It is an urban ideal that Castiglione has before him, as had Hobbes.⁵ So it is not surprising that Castiglione also considered it a prince's duty 'to shew favour to marchant men, and to helpe them also with stockes' and 'set a stint to

¹ Compare especially the passages on laughter in Castiglione's *Courtier* (pp. 137 ff.) and in Hobbes's writings (e.g. in *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 9, § 13).

² Castiglione, loc. cit., pp. 68, 35 f., and 72.

³ Loc. cit., pp. 280, 288 ff., and 300.

⁴ Loc. cit., p. 129.

⁵ Compare Hobbes's observation as to the connexion between philosophy and urban life in the *Leviathan*, ch. 46 (p. 364): 'Where first were great and flourishing Cities, there was first the study of Philosophy.'

passions - reason instead of
passions - action

words, what had to be added to his fundamental moral attitude, in order that his political philosophy should take on its final form.

Before the 'discovery' of Euclid, Hobbes still believed in the authority of traditional (Aristotelian) moral and political philosophy. But although, or rather because, he took the validity and applicability of the traditional norms as a matter of course, his interest centres not so much on those norms as on the method of their application. He investigates not so much the essence of virtue and vice as 'the method of obtaining virtue and of avoiding vice'. The problem of application, in itself secondary, actually becomes the central problem, as the presupposition is made that reason is, in principle, impotent. Thus Hobbes's turning to history has philosophic significance. Taught by tradition what man should be, he seeks to discover, by the study of the historians and by induction from history, what man is, what forces really determine him, in order to gain from this knowledge rules for the application of the traditional norms. He discovers especially the passions as forces of this type. Among the passions he pays particular attention to vanity and fear. The view which guides this selection is the relationship of the passions to reason, or more accurately, the fitness or unfitness of the various passions, to function as substitutes for impotent reason. For vanity is the force which makes men blind, fear is the force which makes men see. With this the reciprocal and unequivocal co-ordination of the two passions with the basic forms of human corporate life (publicity and solitude) is given, and with it the answer to the question of the best form of State (the unconditional preference for monarchy). It is true, the traditional norms limited the horizon within which Hobbes at first took his bearings; what really interested him was, however, not those norms, but phenomena, which cannot be understood within the traditional horizon—at all events if they are to be conceived in such a way as Hobbes from the outset conceived them. By emphasizing the antithesis of vanity and fear of violent death, Hobbes was already going beyond the traditional horizon.

As early as his humanist period Hobbes had not only the historians (and poets) at his disposal for the study of the passions.

He doubtless, at this time, already knew the scientific analysis of the passions in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, to which, as we have seen,¹ his political philosophy owes so much. Hobbes's earliest scientific ambition was perhaps to write an analysis of the passions, in the style, i.e. according to the method of the *Rhetoric*, in order thus to further the theory of application of the moral precepts. Had such a plan been carried out, a very free, a very independent adaptation of the *Rhetoric* would have come into being. For Hobbes's approach to the passions and kindred phenomena was from the outset an interest peculiar to himself and diverging from Aristotle's. Whereas Aristotle discusses honourable and estimable passions with the same emphasis as base and blameworthy ones, the emphasis for Hobbes is from the beginning laid on the 'dissembled passions', which are *eo ipso* to be condemned. It is true that Aristotle, no less than Hobbes is concerned with those passions which 'carry the greatest sway with men in their public conversation';² but for him the positive connexion of a passion with public life does not mean a criticism of that passion, since among the passions which appear in public life there are estimable as well as despicable ones. Hobbes, on the other hand, finds from the beginning that the passion which counsels men well is hardly or not at all displayed in public.³ With this is connected the fact that for Hobbes the delusion brought about by good fortune is in the foreground, whereas Aristotle discusses the good and evil consequences of good fortune in the same equitable tone.⁴ Such characteristic deviations from the *Rhetoric* are found in the few sentences of the introduction to the translation of Thucydides which touch upon themes of the *Rhetoric*. We may therefore take it as certain that if at this time Hobbes had made a coherent exposition of the passions and the like, he would even then have presented them in a way fundamentally different from Aristotle's. What this exposition would have been like may be seen if one compares the central chapters of Hobbes's anthropology, which arose out of the study of the *Rhetoric*, with their model. For since some of the changes which Hobbes makes in Aristotle's assertions cannot possibly

¹ See above, p. 35 ff.

² *English Works*, vol. viii, p. xxix.

³ See above, p. 112, note 1.

⁴ See above, p. 124.

living.¹ Finally, in his discussion of anger Hobbes names only fear as an antidote against anger, whereas Aristotle among many other things mentions respect as well as fear.² The change in the estimate of vanity is shown by the fact that Hobbes in his discussion of emulation and envy makes no mention of the difference in value of these two passions, according to which emulation is nobler than envy.³ Besides, he traces the pleasure of victory to vanity, whereas Aristotle characterizes the reason for this pleasure as a conception of superiority.⁴ Moreover, in Hobbes's enumeration of the causes of crime, he names vanity in the first place, diverging from Aristotle.⁵ Finally, Hobbes's analysis of shame shows no trace of what is the background of the Aristotelian analysis of this passion; according to Aristotle shame is no virtue, but a passion, but, nevertheless, it is that passion which holds noble youths in check, whereas the base can be held in check only by fear—according to Hobbes, shame, as confusion arising from disgrace endured, is only the opposite of satisfied vanity.⁶ The original difference between Hobbes and Aristotle becomes completely clear when one compares the two philosophers' enumeration

¹ *De homine*, cap. 11, art. 14. Cf. above, p. 125, note 1.

² See above, p. 37. Cf. *English Works*, vol. vi, p. 453 f. and *De homine*, cap. 12, art. 4. Cf. also above, p. 20 f.

³ See above, p. 39.

⁴ . . . τὸ νικᾶν ἡδύ . . . φαντασία γὰρ ὑπεροχῆς γίγνεται. *Rhetoric*, i, 11, § 14. ' . . . victoria, jucunda: facit enim bene de se sentire . . . ' *De homine*, cap. 11, art. 12. Connected with this is the fact that in the passage quoted Hobbes says, deviating from Aristotle (*Rhetoric*, i, 11, § 15), 'Placent autem maxime certamina ingeniorum . . . ' For interpretation of this passage see above, p. 19.

⁵ *Leviathan*, ch. 27 (p. 157). The sections which follow were obviously influenced by *Rhetoric*, i, 12, §§ 1-4. Compare also the treatment of degrees of crime in *Leviathan*, ch. 27 (p. 161 f.) with *Rhetoric*, i, 14.

⁶ See particularly the juxtaposition of *gloriatio* and *pudor* in *De homine*, cap. 12, art. 6. Cf. also *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 9, § 3. In Aristotle cf. (apart from *Rhetoric*, ii, 6) *Eth. Nicom.* 1108^a32, 1116^a28 ff., 1128^b1 ff., and 1179^b12 ff. Cf. also Plato, *Legg.*, 646 E ff. The difference in the estimate of shame, which is still more clearly seen if one considers the treatment of shame in Mandeville's 'Fable of the Bees', which was influenced by Hobbes, is of particular interest, because in it the vanity-fear antithesis, which characterizes Hobbes's view of human nature, finds its most vivid expression. The disparagement of shame, the replacement of shame by fear is the necessary consequence of preferring the shameless 'honest' admission of fear, which renounces all claim to honour, to 'vain' hiding of fear, which is solicitous of honour. Cf. above, p. 21 f.

of pleasant things.¹ In Aristotle's view the typical or normal example of what is pleasant is the ease which constitutes or accompanies the achievement of or return to a natural and, therefore, also a customary state, and he therefore begins his enumeration with this; thus everything which one can do without compulsion and exertion, with ease and convenience, counts as pleasant, among other things, freedom from care, idleness, sleep, play, jesting, laughter. Such things are not even mentioned in Hobbes's list. They are disregarded as are the sensual enjoyments which Aristotle discusses immediately after. In his enumeration of pleasant things, Hobbes names in the first place *progress*; ease of any kind, 'the repose of a mind satisfied', is in his opinion a state neither desirable nor attainable: 'continual delight consisteth not in having prospered, but in prospering,' not in possession and enjoyment, but in successful striving and desiring.² Leisure cannot be a good to aspire to in such a life of tension which, far from moving between many and varied states of repose, is complete restlessness. Thus, diverging from Aristotle, Hobbes names in his enumeration of pleasant things, work or occupation.³ As Hobbes teaches that the most pleasant thing of all is the progress to ever-farther goals, that even enjoyment has in it an essential dissatisfaction, that there is nothing pleasant without the keen pang of dissatisfaction, he stands in sharp contrast to Aristippus, according to whose theory pleasure is identical with gentle movement, and also to Aristotle and Plato and Epicurus, who say that the greatest pleasure is pleasure free from any alloy of pain, the purest pleasure. Thus, diverging from Aristotle, Hobbes characterizes that which is 'more vehement' as better.⁴ According to Hobbes the pleasant is not so much what is naturally

¹ See above, p. 40.

² *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 7, § 7; *Leviathan*, ch. 11 (p. 49); *De homine*, cap. 11, art. 12 and 15.

³ *De homine*, cap. 11, art. 11. Cf. also above, p. 34, note 1.

⁴ *De homine*, cap. 11, art. 14. Cf. V. Brochard, 'La théorie du plaisir d'après Épicure' (*Études de philosophie ancienne et de philosophie moderne*, Paris, Vrin, 1926, pp. 262 f., 273 f., and 288), on the fundamental difference between English utilitarianism on the one hand, and Epicurus and classical philosophy altogether on the other. For the development after Hobbes, I would refer the reader particularly to Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding* (Book II, ch. 20, § 6) and Nietzsche's *Wille zur Macht* (Aphorisms 693 ff.).

pleasant, as the 'pleasant' movement from one pleasant thing to another pleasant thing, to a pleasanter thing, the consciousness which accompanies this movement, more accurately, self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is, however, constituted only by a comparison of the individual with other individuals: man does not merely strive after ever-farther goals, but after goals more remote than any other man has as yet attained to.¹ If the pleasant which is worth mentioning exists only in comparison with others, in trying conclusions with others, in matching oneself *against* others, it is not surprising that in his enumeration of pleasant things, Hobbes, differing from Aristotle, mentions neither friends nor the doing or receiving of good, but immediately after progress itself, as it were interpreting progress, *malum videre alienum.*² The difference between Hobbes's and Aristotle's enumeration of pleasant things—this difference, which is perhaps the best key to an understanding of all the latent presuppositions of Hobbes's morals—is to a considerable extent identical with the difference between Bacon and the philosophic tradition.³ With this we gain further corroboration for our contention that the difference between Hobbes and tradition is in decisive points independent of the turn to mathematics and modern science. Indeed, if one takes

¹ ' . . . as men attain to more riches, honours, or other power; so their appetite groweth more and more; and when they are come to the utmost degree of one kind of power, they pursue some other, as long as in any kind they think themselves behind any other.' *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 7, § 7.

² That Hobbes here thinks particularly of the misfortunes of friends is shown by the parallel to *De homine*, cap. 11, art. 11 ('Malum videre alienum, jucundum: placet enim non ut malum, sed ut alienum. Inde est, quod soleant homines ad mortis et periculi aliorum spectaculum concurrere'), in *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 9, § 19, which concludes with the words 'men usually are content . . . to be spectators of the misery of their friends'. Aristotle had merely said: καὶ αἱ περιπέτεια καὶ τὸ περὶ μικρὸν σώζεσθαι ἐκ τῶν κινδύνων πάντα γὰρ θαυμαστὰ ταῦτα (*Rhetoric*, i, 11, § 24). As early as his *Rhetoric*-digest Hobbes gives these paragraphs a harsher turn: 'And other men's dangers, so they be near. And to have escaped hardly' (*English Works*, vol. vi, p. 442).

³ Cf. *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 7, § 7 with Bacon, Essay xix, and *De homine*, cap. 11, art. 15, *in fine*, with Bacon, *Works*, ed. Spedding and Ellis, vol. iii, p. 426 f. We have already indicated the fundamental harmony between Bacon and Hobbes in another connexion (pp. 89 ff. and 98). Modern investigators usually under-estimate Bacon's influence on Hobbes, simply because they over-estimate the significance of Galileo's method for Hobbes's political philosophy.

into consideration the personal and literary relationship between Bacon and the young Hobbes,¹ it corroborates the more far-reaching contention that this difference precedes the 'discovery' of Euclid in Hobbes's life also.

But the new moral attitude is one thing, and the consciousness of its novelty and the rebellion against tradition, which is the concomitant of that consciousness, is another. Hobbes's break with tradition was doubtless the result of his turning to mathematics and natural science. Precisely for this reason he became conscious of the antagonism of the new moral attitude to the whole tradition, only in the form of antagonism between the new and the traditional *science*. That the main point was not the proclamation, but the grounding of the new ideals, that such grounding, that political science in general, was possible and necessary—this fundamental assumption of the philosophic tradition was not doubted for a moment by Hobbes, who has otherwise cast the tradition, as a whole, aside. Before he became acquainted with Galileo and Euclid he in principle kept—in spite of the doubts and dissatisfaction to which his turning to history bears witness—to traditional political philosophy. After his 'discovery' of Euclid, he became clearly aware of the need for a new political philosophy. The possibility and necessity of political philosophy as a science is always taken as a matter of course. Not the idea of political science but its method became a problem through the study of Euclid. That, however, means that the might of the scientific tradition, which did not permit the more fundamental question of the purport of science as such to come up, is the reason why the need for a reform of political philosophy comes into being primarily as the need of a new method in political philosophy, and why it is felt only in the moment when Hobbes becomes acquainted with the new method.

The explicit break with the whole tradition of political philosophy, which Hobbes claims—and rightly—to be the first to make, thus becomes possible only after 'Euclid'. This fact is incontestable, but what 'Euclid' signifies in this connexion is more important and more obscure. According to Hobbes's own view, the application of mathematical method to political

¹ Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. Clark, Oxford, 1898, i, 331.

philosophy means that politics is now for the first time raised to the rank of a science, a branch of rational knowledge. That politics hitherto was not a science is shown clearly enough by the fact 'that they that have written of justice and policy in general, do all invade each other, and themselves, with contradiction'. The reason for this is that in politics up to that time, not reason, but passion had found expression. The only completely passionless, purely rational science, and therefore the only science, which is already in existence, is mathematics; thus only by orientating oneself by mathematics, i.e. by progressing as mathematicians do from self-evident principles by means of evident conclusions,¹ can politics be reduced 'to the rules and infallibility of reason'. Political philosophy must be just as exact and accurate as the science of lines and figures. But exactitude in political philosophy has a scope and significance quite different from that of mathematics; exact passionless mathematics is indifferent to passions; exact passionless political philosophy is in conflict with the passions.² And exact political philosophy attacks not only the passions themselves but also and especially the opinions which are born of the passions and nourished by them, those opinions which are in their turn the strongest weapon of the passions; and therefore, as all opinions of the good and the fitting, considered as opinions, and as distinct from true knowledge, are the product and the weapon of passion, exact political philosophy attacks all opinions of the good and fitting.³ The need for exact political philosophy is thus justified by no means only in reference to the failure of traditional political philosophy, but also and especially in reference to the wrongness of opinions as such,⁴ which is betrayed first by the fact that most opinions

¹ '... si ... doctrinae moralis et civilis fuissent demonstratae, cur non credam et illas pro mathematicis haberi debuisse? Non enim subiectum, sed demonstrationes faciunt mathematicam.' *Opera latina*, vol. iv, p. 23. Cf. also loc. cit., p. 390.

² *Elements*, Ep. ded. and Pt. I, ch. 13, §§ 3-4; *De cive*, Ep. ded. and praefatio; *Leviathan*, ch. 4 (p. 15) and 11 (pp. 52 ff.); *De corpore*, cap. 1, art. 1 and 7.

³ *De cive*, Ep. ded. and cap. 3, art. 31-2.

⁴ For in spite of its wrongness traditional political philosophy already shows an attempt to find a remedy for the unreliability of opinion. Cf. *De cive*, cap. 3, art. 32.

are wrong.¹ Because all opinion as such is wrong, the true knowledge of the good and fitting must be opposed to all opinion, must be exact knowledge, completely free of the character of opinion. Thus Hobbes's political philosophy is directed not only against the political science of tradition, but against all norms and values which are based on opinion, against any and every system of morals which is popular and pre-scientific. The ideal of exact scientific political philosophy means, therefore, that only science discloses to man the obligatory aims of his volition and action.² Thus, with this ideal there is already the anticipation of the systematic overstepping of ordinary values, a morality opposed to pre-scientific morality, a truly paradoxical morality and a form of politics which is Utopian and outstrips all experience. Whereas scientific mathematics does not stand in opposition to pre-scientific mathematics, to everyday counting and reckoning, scientific moral and political philosophy as Hobbes understands it is opposed to pre-scientific morals and politics, i.e. to everyday praise and blame. Confronted with this significance of 'mathematical' exactness in political philosophy, a significance which could not be foreseen from the mathematical standpoint, one cannot hold that it is a sufficient explanation of Hobbes's reform of political philosophy to recall Hobbes's opinion that mathematics is the model for all the sciences and for political philosophy in particular, and therefore to emphasize the importance of the 'discovery' of Euclid in Hobbes's life. One must try rather to define the philosophical meaning of the turning to 'Euclid' on the basis of what that turning means for political philosophy.

During his humanist period Hobbes had tried to remedy the (alleged or real) defects of Aristotle's moral philosophy by studying history in order to discover the forces which in reality determine men. Precisely by this he had endangered the possibility of taking up a free position towards men's actions and conduct. As though he had become aware of this danger, as though his eyes had been opened to the precariousness of any and every subjection to 'reality', he turned away from history,

¹ *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 13, § 3 and ch. 17, § 14.

² Therefore Hobbes can say: 'regula aliqua et mensura certa . . . quam hactenus nemo constituit . . .' *De corpore*, cap. 1, art. 7.

outset avoids the fallacy of concluding from what is or was, what ought to be.¹ Aristotle's orientation by words has as a necessary result incapacity to formulate an uncompromising criticism of opinion, passions—and in view of the connexion between opinion, passions, and sensuality—sensuality. Plato, on the other hand, is the classical critic of sensuality.² Liberation from the spell of words is necessary because speech, above all, speech about good and evil, is indefinite and ambiguous, the origin of all strife and all contradiction. Strife and contradiction cease, when it comes to counting, reckoning, and weighing.³ Thus Plato's insight into the problematic nature of speech is inseparable from his esteem for mathematics.⁴ Plato is thus, not only in fact but also according to Hobbes's opinion, the originator of at least the demand for an exact and paradoxical political science. Therefore, for a thorough understanding of the new political science, the examination of Hobbes's conception of Plato is indispensable.

The most profound expression which Hobbes finds for the difference between Plato and Aristotle is that Plato's philosophy starts from ideas, and Aristotle's from words; that Plato frees himself from the spell of words, whereas Aristotle remains under that spell. This judgement appears at first sight to be a caricature of the actual position, a caricature which was almost inevitable, for Hobbes, as a result of his disdain for classical philosophy, did not consider an unbiased study of the sources necessary. For, in truth, it is precisely Plato who originally 'takes refuge' in speech, and Aristotle was in so far only his disciple and successor. And as for the difference between Plato and Aristotle, which develops in the course of an approach which was common to them both, it consists rather in this, that Plato, much more than Aristotle, orientates himself by speech. Thus the basis for Plato's theory of the strict unity of virtue is that since, whenever we speak of virtue

¹ Cf. *Elements*, Pt. II, ch. 9, § 8 and *Leviathan*, ch. 21 (p. 113) with *Leviathan*, ch. 31 (p. 197) and ch. 20, *in fine*.

² *Opera latina*, vol. v, p. 251.

³ Cf. *Elements*, Ep. ded. with Plato, *Euthyphro*, 7 B-C.

⁴ '... in the school of Plato (the best of the ancient philosophers) none were received that were not already in some measure mathematicians.' *English Works*, vol. vii, p. 346. Cf. also *Leviathan*, ch. 46 (p. 365).

is the result of 'divinely inspired madness', a 'purification' of the soul, a conversion of the whole soul. It is essentially wisdom.¹ True virtue differs, therefore, from pseudo-virtue, by nothing else than its reason.² Pseudo-virtue is pseudo-virtue because its aim is not virtue itself, but the appearance of virtue, reputation for virtue, and the honour which results from that reputation.³ Pseudo-virtue seeks what is imposing and great, true virtue what is fitting and right.⁴ One gains the clearest conception of the antithesis between true and pseudo-virtue, if one compares the life and fate of a truly just man, who has no appearance of justice, whose justice is hidden,⁵ with the life and fate of a truly unjust man, who enjoys a reputation for justice and whose injustice is hidden.⁶ It is not a mere matter of chance that Plato thus compares the just and the unjust, and not the courageous man and his opposite. Courage, the virtue of the warrior, is inseparable from military glory. No virtue seems more brilliant,⁷ more worthy even of reverence than courage; for courage is the standard ideal of the Lacedaemonian and Cretan laws. And yet it is the lowest virtue.⁸ Its problematic nature shows itself in full clearness only when one considers it not in its archaic form, in which its sense is, as it were, narrowed and limited by obedience to law, and in which, for that very reason, it is hidden wisdom,⁹ but when one considers it apart from this limitation, in itself. This consideration of courage in isolation is all the more fitting, since courage seems more sharply delimited from other virtues

¹ *Phaedo*, 68 c-69 c; *Phaedrus*, 244 D and 256 E; *Symposium*, 203 A; cf. *Republic*, 518 c and 521 c.

² The question of the reason as the one reason especially characterizes Plato's theory of the change of constitutions, as Aristotle stresses in controversy. (See *Politics*, 1316.)

³ *Theaetetus*, 176 B; *Republic*, 363 A and 367 B.

⁴ Cf. *Republic*, 423 C and E.

⁵ Compare the completely different treatment of the problem of 'hidden' virtue in Aristotle's *Eth. Nicom.* (1178^a28 ff.) and *Politics* (1263^b8 ff.).

⁶ *Republic*, 365 A ff.

⁷ *Eth. Nicom.* 1177^b16 f.

⁸ *Legg.*, 630 c-631 c (cf. 963 E ff.). The scale of virtues set up in the passage mentioned also influences the structure of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, in so far as there a beginning is made with courage, and we then rise to justice and finally to science (respectively wisdom).

⁹ Cf. *Protagoras*, 342 B, with *Republic*, 429 c-430 c.

and thus form only one species of men among others, and are thus under allegiance to the laws of the State, which has as its aim the maintenance of the whole and not the happiness of the parts. The law of the ideal State compels the philosophers to take thought for other men and to watch over them and not 'to turn whither each will'.¹ Because the pursuit of philosophy as a human undertaking is under a higher order, justice, with regard to men, stands higher than wisdom. Whereas Aristotle, by unreservedly setting theoretic life higher than ethical virtue, unconditionally oversteps the limits of the State and thus indirectly attains the possibility of recognizing virtues which are not really political virtues but virtues of private life,² for Plato there are only political virtues.³

When Hobbes, following Plato, recognizes the ideal of an exact paradoxical moral philosophy, the chain of reasoning which we have just indicated and which is implied in this ideal, becomes the backbone of his political philosophy. In his moral philosophy also, the antithesis between pseudo-virtue, which aims at reputation and honour, and true virtue is a constituent part. He also teaches that true virtue on the one hand, and pseudo-virtue and vice on the other, differ only in their reason.⁴ He also finds himself forced into searching criticism of the natural ideal of courage. He also recognizes only political virtues. For him also the antithesis between the fitting and the great is of supreme importance, and as a result he also distrusts rhetoric, in a way which recalls Plato.⁵ Con-

¹ *Republic*, 519 D-520 C. Another expression for this is that philosophizing means striving to die, but the philosopher may not end his life at his own will. Cf. *Phaedo*, 61 D ff. and *Crito*, 48 B-E.

² It is connected with this that Aristotle, differing from Plato, distinguishes between *σοφία* and *φρόνησις*. Cf. particularly *Eth. Nicom.* 1140^b7 f. (the recognition of the 'popular' characterization of Pericles as *φρόνιμος*) with *Gorgias*, 515 C ff.

³ That the expression 'political virtue' is used by Plato (as also by Aristotle and Plotinus) not in this sense, but in order to characterize popular virtue, important as it otherwise is, need not be taken into consideration here.

⁴ Compare the polemic, which is based on this theory, against the Aristotelian conception of virtue in *De cive*, cap. 3, art. 32. The next source of this polemic is probably Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis, Prolegomena*, §§ 43-5. Grotius takes as his authority for his criticism of Aristotelian moral philosophy the Platonists *inter alios*.

⁵ 'A pleader commonly thinks he ought to say all he can for the benefit

much knowledge of the artificial body as the production of that body. Political philosophy analyses the existing State into its elements only in order that by a better synthesis of those elements the right State may be produced. The procedure of political philosophy is, therefore, much less like the procedure of physics than that of the technician, who takes to pieces a machine that has broken down, removes the foreign body which prevents the functioning of the machine, puts the machine together again; and who does all this in order that the machine may function. Thus political philosophy becomes a technique for the regulation of the State. Its task is to alter the unstable balance of the existing State to the stable balance of the right State.¹ Only in so far as political philosophy becomes a technique of this kind can it make use of the 'resolutive-compositive' method. That means that the introduction of this method into political philosophy presupposes the previous narrowing-down of the political problem, i.e. the elimination of the fundamental question as to the aim of the State. The introduction of Galileo's method into political science is thus bought at the price that the new political science from the outset renounces all discussion of the fundamental, the most urgent question.

This neglect of the truly primary question is the result of Hobbes's conviction that the idea of political philosophy is a matter of course. Hobbes does not question the possibility and necessity of political philosophy; in other words, he does not ask first 'what is virtue?' and 'can it be taught?' and 'what is the aim of the State?', because these questions are answered for him by tradition, or by common opinion. The aim of the State is for him as a matter of course peace, i.e. peace at any price. The underlying presupposition is that (violent) death is the first and greatest and supreme evil.² This presupposition does not seem to him to require criticism, debate, or discussion.³ After finding this presupposition as a principle when he analysed the existing State, he proceeds to deduce from it the right State; diametrically opposed to Plato, whose con-

¹ Cf. E. Cassirer, *Die Philosophie der Aufklärung*, pp. 25 ff.

² Not that peace is the condition of all civilization. See particularly *De cive*, cap. 1, art. 2, *in fine*.

³ Cf. Plato, *Apology*, 29 A-B.

the credit of being the first to see that the idea of Sovereignty lies at the very root of the whole theory of the State; and the first to realize the necessity of fixing precisely where it lies, and what are its functions and its limits.' By this also Hobbes stands in contrast to classical political philosophy: 'Amongst the most notable omissions of Greek philosophy is the absence of any clear attempt to define the nature of Sovereignty, to determine its seat, or settle the ultimate sanction on which it rests.'¹ The two fundamental innovations which are to be attributed to Hobbes, the subordination of law to right and the recognition of the full significance of the idea of sovereignty, are closely connected. One sees their common origin when one retraces the condition which made possible the problem of sovereignty. In classical times the analogy to that modern problem is the question 'Who or what shall rule?' The answer of antiquity runs 'The law.' Philosophers who could not acquiesce in the divine origin of law justify this answer in the following way: the rational should rule over the irrational (the old over the young, the man over the woman, the master over the slave) and therefore law over men.² A problem of sovereignty arises only when the right to rule on the part of reason and reasonable people is called into question. The doubt falls at first only on the applicability³ of the principle, that he or what is rational is justified in ruling. Granting that there are men who by force of reason are undoubtedly superior to others, would those others submit to them merely on this ground, and obey them? would they recognize their superiority?⁴ But

¹ Loc. cit., p. 55.

² '... lex est ratio summa insita in natura, quae iubet ea, quae facienda sunt, prohibetque contraria. Eadem ratio cum est in hominis mente confirmata et confecta, lex est.' It is true 'populariter interdum loqui necesse erit et appellare eam legem, quae scripta sancit quod vult aut iubendo aut vetando, ut vulgus appellat. Constituendi vero iuris ab illa summa lege capiamus exordium, quaeque saeculis omnibus ante nata est quam scripta lex ulla aut quam omnino civitas constituta.' Cicero, *Legg.*, I. 6. 18-19.

³ Interest in application at the same time causes the turning to history. There is thus a direct connexion between Bodin's interest in history (see above, p. 83 f. and 94) and his theory of sovereignty. Compare his *République*, II, ch. 6, *in princ.*

⁴ Compare especially the polemic against Aristotle's *Politics* in *De cive*, cap. 3, art. 13 and in *Leviathan*, ch. 15 (pp. 79-80). 'Would you have every man to every other man allege for law his own particular reason? There is not

doubt does not stop at that. It is denied that any considerable difference in reasonableness exists between men. In all practical affairs, one man is, in principle, as wise as any other, bent on the perception of his interest and as capable of perceiving that interest as any other. By nature all men are equally reasonable; and as far as the superiority gained by study, experience, and reflection is concerned, it is insignificant because 'it is possible long study may increase, and confirm erroneous sentences . . . and of those that study, and observe with equal time, and diligence, the reasons and resolutions are, and *must* remain discordant'.¹ Because reason is essentially impotent, it is not enough to reply that reason is the origin and seat of sovereignty. Thus it becomes fundamentally questionable which of the men who are equal and alike is to rule over the others, and under which conditions and within which limits they have a claim to rule. Thus the *problem* of sovereignty arises. Because all men are equally 'reasonable', the reason of one or more individuals must arbitrarily be made the standard reason as artificial substitute for the lacking natural superiority of reason in one or more: '(The) common measure of all things that might fall in controversy . . . some say, is right reason: with whom I should consent, if there were any such thing to be found or known *in rerum natura* . . . But . . ., seeing *right reason is not existent*, the reason of some man, or men, must supply the place thereof; and that man, or men, is he, or they, that have the sovereign power.'² For the same cause which made the substitution of sovereign power for reason necessary, i.e. because reason is impotent, the rational 'law of nature' also loses its dignity.³ In its place we have the 'right of nature' which is, indeed, according to reason but dictated not by reason but by the fear of death. The break with rationalism is thus the decisive presupposition for the concept

amongst men a universal reason agreed upon in any nation, besides the reason of him that hath the sovereign power.' *English Works*, vol. vi, p. 22.

¹ *Leviathan*, ch. 26 (p. 143); cf. ch. 13 (p. 63).

² *Elements*, Pt. II, ch. 10, § 8. Cf. *Leviathan*, ch. 5 (p. 19). 'Yet though (the reason of him that hath the sovereign power) be but the reason of one man, yet it is set up to supply the place of that universal reason, which is expounded to us by our Saviour in the Gospel . . .' *English Works*, vol. vi, p. 22.

³ Cf. above, p. 24.