CHAP. 4 OF *THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO HOBBES'S LEVIATHAN*, ED. PATRICIA SPRINGBORG (CUP 2007)

Hobbes on the Natural Condition of Mankind

KINCH HOEKSTRA

> Political orders are kept secure not only by means of distance from what would destroy them, but sometimes by means of proximity thereto: for when the citizens are afraid, they hold firmly to the political order. Therefore those who think on behalf of the political order must contrive causes of fear, that the citizens may be on guard and like sentries at night not relax their watch; and they must make what is distant appear to be at hand.
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> Aristotle, *Politics* 1308a24–30

I

It is natural to reflect on human nature and the nature of political society by speculating about how humans were or would be outside of such society. In writing the first part of his *Leviathan*, 'Of Man', and looking forward to the second, 'Of Commonwealth', Hobbes includes a chapter 'Of the *Natural Condition* of *Mankind*, As Concerning Their Felicity, and Misery'. He famously determines that in such a condition there is much misery, and precious little felicity.

The first part of *Leviathan* is devoted to the question of human nature, and although there are scattered references to people's reactions to one another, it is not until chapter xiii that Hobbes systematically reflects on how the human beings he has been describing would interact. Although it is generally regarded as the starting point of his political theory, Hobbes places his account of the natural condition (along with his analyses of the law of nature and personation, both of which have some place in the natural condition) squarely in

[p. 110] his theory of man. This is brought out by Hobbes's reference in *Leviathan* to 'the natural condition of mankind' rather than 'the state of nature'.

Hobbes asserts in this chapter that men are by nature roughly equal in their mental and physical capacities. The inequalities that do exist do not result in a stable hierarchy, because the stronger are still highly vulnerable to the weaker, those who are weaker in one respect may be stronger in another, and there are few if any who consider themselves essentially inferior. The natural condition is thus one in which people have equal hope of attaining what they desire. Because they often desire the same thing, while not recognizing anyone's exclusive claim to it, they try to subdue or destroy each other if their desire or perceived need for it is great enough. Nor can one opt out of this situation and cultivate what one wants for oneself, for this will encourage others to come to take it away for gain or for glory, with the possible outcome of servitude or death. Facing such a prospect, one will 'anticipate', attacking the other rather than waiting to be attacked. The best strategy to obtain security is to master as many others as one can; but because this is true for everyone, the ensuing situation will be one in which each is prepared to attempt to conquer each other.

Even if people could congregate without hostile competition for scarce goods, they are concerned for reputation and prone to be at one another's throats as soon as they feel insulted. Hobbes concludes that the natural condition is a war of all against all, for every person is disposed to fight every other, and there is no established authority to prevent them from acting on this disposition. Conflict will ensue, for some people will try to conquer for reputation and others for gain; and the possibility of such aggression will prompt still others to try to subdue possible aggressors in order to protect themselves. This general condition of enmity precludes the security and stability necessary to develop arts, letters, engineering, and durable collective enterprises; everyone lives in 'continual fear and danger of violent death', and the life of natural man is 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short'.[1]

To bolster the idea that such a condition of war is natural to man, Hobbes points out that even when we have the stability and security provided by laws and a system to punish those who infringe them, we confirm his analysis by distrusting our fellow citizens – by locking

[p. 111] our doors and taking other measures against theft and attack. To persuade those who would question the very existence of this condition of war, Hobbes adduces three examples of such a condition (adding in the Latin *Leviathan* the instance of Cain's murder of Abel): 'the savage people' in many places of America at the time he was writing; the manner of life in which men find themselves in civil war; and the gladiatorial posture of sovereigns toward one another.[2] In later passages, he treats any division of sovereignty as tantamount to this conflict between sovereigns or would-be sovereigns; anything short of unified and absolute sovereignty is, or at least threatens quicklyto become, a state of war.

In this condition of enmity there is no common or overarching power, and therefore there is no law. Without law, there is no property, but only *de facto* possession; nor is there justice or injustice, understood as obedience to or infringement of law. In one of his more famous and more Machiavellian phrases, Hobbes declares that 'Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues'.[3] Although nature places us in this condition of war, this does not mean we must remain there. For nature also supplies us with passions (fear of death, desire for the goods to live well, and the hope to attain those goods) that incline us to peace if it can be had. And reason suggests that peace may be obtained by following the rules of self-preservation that Hobbes calls the laws of nature. So runs chapter xiii.

II

Readers of Hobbes's account of the natural condition of mankind would have been struck by how different it was from the prevailing contemporary view. According to the orthodox portrayal, in his natural condition man was as created by God and before his corruption by Adam's sin. Many believed that by converting to Christ they would regain this state: because '*Nature* is of it self *excellent*', John Saltmarsh assures us, conversion brings us to 'a more *purely natural* condition'.[4] To put it in scholastic terms, man's natural condition is that which accords with his natural *telos* or end.[5] There could hardly be a more dramatic contrast to this portrait of prelapsarian harmony or subsequent salvation than the account Hobbes provides. Contemporaries accused him of impiety, thinking it an affront to God to say that he had placed human beings in such a condition of misery – an

[p. 112] affront they thought was exacerbated by the position that redemption from this condition was to be found without appeal to him. Such accusations may have encouraged Hobbes to alter the title of the chapter in the Latin *Leviathan* to 'Of the Condition of Humankind insofar as it concerns the felicity *of the present life*'.[6]

Hobbes has more in common with another important tradition of biblical interpretation, in which the natural condition of man is asserted to be that of his *corrupt* nature. In this Augustinian tradition, marked by a sharp division between those who are and who are not saved, man in his natural state is not opposed to man in his fallen state, but to man in the state of grace. A clear exposition of this view is provided by Christopher Love in his sermons of 1646.[7] Writing in the midst of the disorder of war, Love observes that 'Order is the staffe of a Commonwealth, if every man might doe what he list, and what is right in his own eyes, nothing but ruine and destruction would presently follow. . . . If the Laws and foundations of a Commonwealth be subverted and destroyed, there will be nothing but ruine.'[8] Drawing on Ephesians 2:12, Love sees a parallel between this lawless situation of private judgement and 'the state of *Nature*', or 'Men in their naturall condition' who are '*by nature children of wrath*'.[9] 'Man in the state of Nature' is 'without *Christ*, and an Alien from the Common-wealth of Israel, and a stranger to the Covenants of promise'.[10]

As Love points out, Paul does not address this description to the unconverted, but to the converted Ephesians, to have them 'remember, that they were men without Christ, and aliens to the Commonwealth of Israel', and to warn them of the manifold 'miseries, and afflictions, and sufferings' that they will meet if they relapse.[11] 'God wil have us cal to minde our former sinfulnesse, because this wil make us more watchful and circumspect, that we do not run again into those sins that we were guilty of before conversion.'[12] For Hobbes, too, the natural condition lacks law and commonwealth, and is a condition of misery analogous to that of damnation.[13] The Hobbesian natural condition is not one of primitive perfection, but of the misery and conflict that attend all those who have not yet been converted to the cause of commonwealth. And like Paul's purpose in painting a dark picture for the Ephesians, Hobbes's primary aim in providing his portrait of natural misery is to frighten his readers into holding firmly to the order already established over them.

[p. 113] Hobbes writes less to persuade the apolitical to institute commonwealth than to exhort those who are already citizens to a punctilious obedience. Salvation is already theirs; they need only embrace it.

Hobbes reveals a contemporary source of inspiration for his understanding of the natural condition when he refers to 'the savage people in many places of *America*'.[14] Europeans thought that in America they had found humanity in a more natural and less civilized state. On the illustrated title-page of his *De Cive*, Hobbes draws on this idea, and on the iconographical tradition of contrasting America with Europa as ideal female types. In his turn, Hobbes represents the condition of liberty as a glum native in a feather skirt standing against a backdrop of primitive warfare, and the condition of rule as a serene monarch in rich robes standing against a backdrop of tranquil prosperity. In the earlier works, pictures of Americans had sometimes been counterposed with those of primitive Europeans, to make the point that in observing the Americans the Europeans behold a near likeness of how they were – 'for to showe', as one of them puts it, 'how that the Inhabitants of the great Brettanie haue bin in times past as sauuage as those of Uirginia'.[15] Some elements of Hobbes's description of the natural condition can be traced back to early anthropological accounts of the Americans. Most strikingly, his famous litany of what that condition lacks ('there is no place for industry, . . . no culture of the earth, no navigation , no account of time, no arts, no letters, no society') is an adaptation of a hyperbolic trope, characterizing uncivilized peoples by a negative list, which became conventional in the century after Columbus landed.[16]

There are ancient precedents, too, for Hobbes's remarkably dark picture of natural man, for a number of classical writers (and their commentators) rejected the tradition of a primitive Golden Age.[17] So Lucretius describes a time when men lived much like solitary animals, without fire or clothes or houses, without agriculture or navigation, without law or government.[18] While Lucretius also notes the freedom of primitive humanity from the perils that come with civilized commonwealth, his emphasis is on the privations and dangers of the prepolitical condition. They would not have survived, Lucretius says, if they had not learned to make compacts of mutual advantage.[19]

Another locus of ideas about the nature of primitive humanity was the series of accounts by writers who sought to prove the importance

[p. 114] of a particular art by considering the human race without it.[20] The initial form of this claim (later reasserted by Aristophanes, Suetonius, and Horace) was probably on behalf of poetry. Without poetry, its proponents maintain, humans were in a desperate fight for mere survival, and without any of the benefits of civilization.[21] Rhetoricians retorted that it was rhetoric that had saved humanity from dire need, a wise leader persuading the dispersed people to leave their savagery behind by keeping agreements and obeying laws.[22] Sophists and philosophers pressed a similar claim. Protagoras, according to Plato, usurped the accomplishments of the poets and others, saying that Homer, Hesiod, Simonides, and their like brought about civilization by practising the sophistic art in disguise; and Seneca makes a related claim for philosophy.[23] Hobbes follows this tradition, writing in *De Corpore* that it is due to philosophy that we have architecture, navigation, geography, engineering, and so on; and that without civil philosophy in particular we would be in a situation of complete want, solitude, and slaughter.[24]

Hobbes distinguishes himself from most of the preceding thinkers when he makes clear that the natural condition is not simply to be identified with an original or primitive condition. He even admits that Adam exercised paternal government.[25] We are in the natural condition whenever we are without the artifice of commonwealth, whether before it is set up or after it breaks down. Civil war might better be described as a postpolitical condition than a prepolitical one; and that the relation between sovereigns is a condition of war implies that the natural condition may coexist with commonwealth, for with regard to one another all commonwealths are always in such a condition. There can be no doubt that Hobbes's thought was shaped by accounts of, and by his own experience of, civil war and international conflict. But to understand his characterization of the natural condition, nothing is more important to grasp than the *logic* of conflict that follows from his view of human nature.

III

This logic of natural conflict has frequently been assimilated to the game-theoretical model of the prisoner's dilemma.[26] In the Hobbesian natural condition, everyone would be better off if they were all to refrain from attacking one another; but because the risks for each

[p. 115] individual of not attacking outweigh those of attacking, they all end up attacking. What is needed is a way to change the cost-benefit matrix, making cooperation more profitable for each person than conflict. This can be seen as the role of the sovereign, who sets a stiff punishment for attacking or otherwise disobeying, and so enables covenant-keeping and peace.

This model of the natural condition may be too simple. If there are repeated interactions between the same individuals, for example, the proper model may be an iterated prisoner's dilemma rather than a one-shot prisoner's dilemma. And if we have repeated encounters, it may be sensible to adopt a strategy of tit-for-tat, and to be prepared to cooperate initially in the hopes that the other may also foresee a series of interactions and thus consider the same strategy. If others are similarly disposed, a kind of reciprocal altruism could arise as the best way to ensure one's self-interest in the long run. The problem for Hobbes's theory would be that we would thus develop cooperation without having to institute sovereignty. Interactions in the natural condition, however, are unlikely to encourage such behaviour. For reciprocal altruism to develop, the initial interactions must be low risk, rather than situations that may well be a matter of killing or being killed. But because of the uncertainty and threat that each person poses to each other, and because debilitating or eliminating another may significantly decrease one's future risk, initial interactions in the natural condition as depicted by Hobbes are unlikely to be low risk. Iteration itself will not be reliable, for the dilemma may never recur with the same people, especially when lives are at stake: and if there is a high enough chance that a dilemma will not be iterated (or that the other may think that there is a high enough chance that it will not be), then it will become rational to treat it more like a one-shot dilemma. Similarly, the benefits that would accrue from iteration in an assurance game (in which one tries to convince the other to cooperate by cooperating) will not look likely enough to encourage reassuring behaviour. Without a general assurance of nonaggression, Hobbes says, one who moves unilaterally to bring about peace will instead merely expose himself as prey.[27]

Hobbes's emphasis on the role of the passions in the natural condition may be thought to vitiate any analysis in terms of the strategies of rational choosers. He says in *De Cive* that the natural

[p. 116] condition is the domain of passion, whereas civil society is the domain of reason; and in *Leviathan* he claims that he has shown in chapter xiii that 'that miserable condition of war … is necessarily consequent … to the natural passions of men' without sovereignty.[28] On the other hand, Hobbes indicates that the logic of anticipation that leads to the condition of war is a *reasonable* strategy for pursuing security.[29] He wants to show that even with natural reason, and even if many or most humans have moderate aims, war will ensue nonetheless. A rational choice model can in any case proceed instrumentally, taking as rational that which appears to further one's aims, regardless of whether those aims are based on passions or something else. The common pitfall of assimilating Hobbes to such models remains that of simplifying his account by setting aside those elements that do not fit.

Hobbes says that the three principal causes of quarrel to be found when we consider the nature of man are competition, diffidence, and glory.[30] Conflict may arise from passion (desire for what another has or wants, fear of attack, pride in conquest), and may be exacerbated by natural reason or prudence (the other is likely to attack me from one of these motives; therefore, I should attack first to obtain the first-mover's advantage). That Hobbes offers three different motives that would make the natural condition one of war may be seen as a strength of the theory, rather than a lack of economy. For it allows for greater human diversity than would reliance on a single motive, and it overdetermines the result. Many preceding theories of human nature had taken one or another of these features to be dominant: man was basically naturally competitive, or timorous, or proud. Hobbes shows that according to any such view, conflict will ensue; moreover, if the population consists of some who primarily seek glory, others who primarily seek gain, and others who primarily seek safety, they will be prone to end up in a condition of conflict all the more rapidly (because the timorous, for instance, will have more reason to fear depredation and so will be more likely to anticipate). That Hobbes includes the three causes of conflict, and allows for others (for these are the three 'principal' causes), tells us something about the status of his model. It is not meant to show how conflict may be generated from the most parsimonious assumptions; rather, it is supposed to reflect a range of characteristics that are sufficiently widely shared as to show the relevance of the conclusion. Hobbes is content

[p. 117] to bracket some considerations as what we might call statistically insignificant: for example, in making his case for the natural equality of the faculties of mind, he sets aside science, 'which very few have, and but in few things'; and he holds that we must assume that people keep covenants from fear rather than 'a generosity too rarely found to be presumed on'.[31] The argument from the natural condition is supposed to proceed from premises that are true generally but not universally.

IV

If the natural condition is based on a general and multivalent view of human nature, this casts doubt on the common view that it is a kind of theoretical limit case. Does Hobbes think that the natural condition of war of all against all ever did or could exist? His readers have long denied it; but if the scenario is unreal, it is hard to see how it is supposed to be pertinent, and more particularly how it can tell us anything about the nature of our obligations. Some have accordingly treated the natural condition as the grounding for a hypothetical covenant: if you *were* in this situation and you *would* therein covenant, then you *ought* to be guided, as by a regulative ideal, by the agreement you would there make.[32] Even if it could be made plausible that an agreement I might have undertaken in other circumstances can obligate me as does an agreement that I do undertake in my actual circumstances, there is little evidence that Hobbes thought it was plausible.

To determine whether the natural condition itself is real or ideal, it would be helpful to know whether Hobbes thought of the examples he gives as *instantiations* of the natural condition or as *illustrations* or approximations of such a condition. To the objection that there has never been such a natural condition of war of all against all, he retorts: 'What? Did Cain not kill his brother Abel out of envy, so great a misdeed that he would not have dared it, had there then stood over him a common power that could have punished him?'[33] Hobbes believes that although 'it was never generally so, over all the world' that people lived in this condition, 'there are many places where they live so now'.[34] He provides an example with a problematic caveat: 'For the savage people in many places of *America* (except the government of small families, the concord whereof dependeth on natural

[p. 118] lust) have no government at all'.[35] On the one hand, this exception is in tension with the argument in chapter xvii that people cannot be bound together in any kind of government by natural concord.[36] On the other, it presents a dilemma: either the natural condition ceases when there are small families, in which case the example appears to fail and a doubt arises about whether a significant number of individuals could find themselves in such a condition; or there can be small families in the natural condition, in which case that condition is not one of a war of each individual against each other. Hobbes does not take a consistent position on this issue: sometimes he talks of families in the natural condition, sometimes he says that where there is familial authority there is no natural condition, and sometimes he says that a family is a commonwealth if and only if it is sufficientlylarge.

The two subsequent examples are even more remote from a war among individuals. First, Hobbes says that 'it may be perceived what manner of life there would be where there were no common power to fear, by the manner of life which men … use to degenerate into, in a civil war'.[37] Although it is possible that Hobbes means this only as an illustration ('it may be perceived' herefrom what life in the natural condition would be like), references elsewhere suggest that he thinks that in both this and the next case, that of international relations, there is a genuine condition of war.[38] If so, the dilemma recurs. In the international scene, conflict will generally be between even larger groups. Yet there is a way of thinking of the conflict as interpersonal, and indeed Hobbes describes this 'condition of war' as that between independent 'kings and persons of sovereign authority', who are always 'in the state and posture of gladiators'.[39] And in chapter xvi, Hobbes explains how, like lesser corporate bodies, the commonwealth itself can be understood as united in one person. This raises a crucial disanalogy, however, with the 'war of every man against every man': Hobbes is explicit that the aggressive stance of sovereigns toward one another is for the good of their subjects, and that 'there does not follow from it that misery which accompanies the liberty of particular men'.[40] This kind of natural condition, therefore, is not so miserable, and we need not even seek to escape it. And no wonder, for sovereignty, despite implying hostility to other sovereign states, is what Hobbes recommends as the way *out* of the natural condition of war.

[p. 119] If warring families, civil wars, and international relations are natural conditions, as Hobbes suggests, then we can put to rest one of the most enduring objections to his theory. This is that because the natural condition is one of isolated individuals locked in warfare with one another, there is therefore no community in which language could arise; and because language is necessary for covenants, there can be no way to covenant out of the natural condition (contrary to Hobbes's theory). One of several weak points to this objection is that language could arise in the aforementioned groups of families, factions, or states. And even if we set these aside, there is still the possibility of linguistic community among the conquest and defence groups that Hobbes treats as integral to the natural condition of war.[41] Not least, those in a post-political natural condition will have language.

Montesquieu and Rousseau mount the influential related criticism that the portrait Hobbes purports to provide of natural man instead represents socialized man, and that the miseries he describes are those of human society rather than of the natural condition.[42] The crucial case is that of glory, one of the principal causes of conflict, for the pursuit of glory is arguably born as a social desire.[43] This would present a problem if Hobbes means to prohibit all society in the natural condition. In the most extreme sentence of his characterization of the natural condition he does say that there are 'no arts, no letters, no society',[44] but there are many indications that society may be found there. Hobbes's inclusion of glory as a source of quarrel is itself an indication that he allows social forces in the natural condition, and such forces would apparently accompany the groups mentioned. What is more, Hobbes says that of the 'three principal causes of quarrel', competition drives men to master the persons, wives, children, and cattle of others; diffidence, to defend them with violence; and glory, to attack others 'for reputation', whether of themselves or 'their kindred, their friends, their nation, their profession, or their name'.[45] As this is meant to illustrate the causes of quarrel that we find 'in the nature of man', it may be that Hobbes is not here referring to features exclusive to situations without sovereignty, but to enduring aspects of human nature that will lead to conflict both in civil society and (especially) out of it.[46] This then would resemble his attempt to show that nature renders men apt to destroy one another by appealing to the suspicion we have that others may attack or despoil us even within civil society.[47]

[p. 120] Hobbes thinks of human nature as constant from the natural condition to civil society, though the same basic motives may lead to different actions depending on whether the situation promises reliable security.

V

It may be objected that there is a vital difference between natural and civil human beings, for only the latter are moral beings. Hobbes sometimes suggests that morality is born with commonwealth, whereas the natural condition exists beyond good and evil: 'The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, have there no place'.[48] Let us first consider the case of justice and injustice, and then turn to right and wrong.

If justice and injustice are respectively defined as obedience to and violation of civil law, then of course they will have no place where there is no such law.[49] If, however, they are defined in terms of the fulfilment or the violation of covenants, then the picture is not so clear, for sometimes Hobbes suggests that there can be covenants in the natural condition.[50] Early in chapter xv, he defines 'injustice' as violation of a covenant and 'just' as anything that is not unjust. According to this definition, *everything* in the natural condition is just (unless there can be covenants therein, in which case there can also be injustices), whereas according to the dictum from chapter xiii, *nothing* is there just or unjust. The argument in chapter xv is that 'justice is the constant will of giving to every man his own', but in the natural condition all have a right to all things, thus nothing is one's own. 'Therefore where there is no commonwealth, there nothing is unjust.' Hobbes ties this closely to his definition in terms of covenants, for what is one's own is determined by covenants.[51]

In treating justice as a particular law of nature, and in later characterizing it simply as obedience to the natural law, Hobbes suggests that it could have a place even where there is no civil law.[52] So it is not surprising that he does acknowledge that there is a sense in which justice is taken to be a virtue and injustice a vice. This kind of justice is 'rarely found', Hobbes observes, and consists of 'a certain nobleness or gallantness of courage … by which a man scorns to be beholden for the contentment of his life to fraud or breach of promise'. One whose will is framed by 'apparent benefit' cannot

[p. 121] be just in this sense.[53] Even this kind of justice will make scanty appearance in the natural condition, for those few who are disposed to generosity would rarely be able to show it where the imperatives of survival are so exigent.

If right and wrong had *no* place in the natural condition, as Hobbes states in chapter xiii, then the laws of nature, which he equates with the requirements of morality, would not apply outside of commonwealth.[54] Hobbes says bluntly that in the natural condition 'every man has a right to everything, even to one another's body'.[55] In the natural condition one has a right to do whatever one thinks will conduce to self-preservation. Outside of commonwealth, there is no object or action of which one can say that the right of nature does not include it or that the law of nature prohibits it – *unless* we consider the intention as part of the action. One has the right to torture someone else in the natural condition, for example, but only if one thinks this will aid one's own preservation. 'To hurt without reason, tendeth to the introduction of war, which is against the law of nature, and is commonly styled by the name of *cruelty*.'[56] Harming another without the purpose of one's own preservation is wrong and sinful (though in the natural condition it is not, in Hobbes's usual sense, unjust).

When there is not sufficient security, one is not obliged to act according to the laws of nature.[57] This is not to say that the laws of nature do not oblige in the natural condition, for they there 'oblige *in foro interno*, that is to say, they bind to a desire they should take place'.[58] What the laws of nature oblige us to in the natural condition is 'an unfeigned and constant endeavour'.[59] 'The laws of nature are immutable and eternal', so they apply to natural as well as to civil humans.[60] But what does this amount to? Are we here seeing a neglected moralist who emphasizes the role of intentions in assessing moral character? Or are these just shrewd concessions that turn out to be limited to politically irrelevant cases? Is Hobbesian morality inaccessible and inapplicable to anyone else, and thus without a role in the civic arena?

Hobbes does harness moral evaluation in at least two ways. First, he sets up a series of arguments to show that we are morally bound to obey the sovereign power over us. Second, he argues that anyone beyond the reach of sovereign command is obligated to seek peace – the essential requirement of which is precisely the effective sway of

[p. 122] sovereign authority. Hobbes attempts to invert the expected values of his readers, maintaining that submission to the artifice of Leviathan is not only prudentially but also morally superior to retaining or regaining their natural liberty. Hobbes supplements his appeal to morality with arguments to show that fear and interest also dictate that we should do what is necessary to avoid the natural condition. As self-preservation is required by the moral law (and by divine law), these arguments are also meant to further the moral case for obeyingthe authority that provides for our security.

Placing Hobbes's stance in its contemporary context illustrates his distinctive position in the history of political thought. Richard Overton, for example, thinks it self-evident that 'by naturall birth, all men are equally and alike borne to like propriety, liberty and freedome', and that they are naturally inclined to preserve themselves; he concludes that it is reasonable and just that they protect themselves from the 'craft' and 'might' of their neighbours.[61] Overton employs this position in a radical argument for enlarging the effective rights of the people and limiting the authority of the king. Robert Filmer, by contrast, attempts to shore up authority and preempt rebellion by denying the natural equality and liberty of mankind and asserting the natural authority of kings. 'Whereas if they did but confute this first erroneous principle [viz., 'the natural liberty and equality of mankind'], the main foundation of popular sedition would be taken away.'[62]

Unlike Filmer, Hobbes insists that the natural condition is one of liberty, equality, and the most extensive individual rights imaginable. He argues, however, that these free and equal people are in a condition of utter wretchedness and insecurity – not in spite of their liberty and equality, but because of them. We clamour for liberty, for equality, or for rights without realizing that we are demanding misery and destruction. We naturally prefer felicity and self-preservation, so if Hobbes makes us realize this, he will bring us to obey, and save us from ourselves.

NOTES

1. *Lev.*, xiii, 9, 62/76.
2. *Lev.*, xiii, 10–12, 62–3/77–8.
3. *Lev.*, xiii, 13, 63/78. 'Vis & Dolus in Bello Virtutes Cardinales sunt' (p. 65 of *Leviathan . . .* , in *Thomae Hobbes Malmesburiensis Opera*

Philosophica, Quae Latinè scripsit, Omnia (Amsterdam, 1668)); refer to Machiavelli, *Discorsi* 2.13, and Guicciardini's comments thereon. See also the opening of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, Aristotle's view that seditions are effected either by force or fraud (*Politics*, 5.4 and 5.10; cf. *Discorsi*, 2.32), and the commentaries on Aristotle (e.g., John Case, *Sphaera Civitatis* 5.4.3 and 5.4.5). Machiavelli and Hobbes are twisting an earlier view, to be found for example in Brasidas' claim that in war force is more honourable than fraud (Thucydides 4.87). See the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*: setting aside honour, advantage amounts to security, that is, the avoidance of immediate or anticipated danger by force and fraud ('vis et dolus': 3.2(3), 3.4(8)).

4. John Saltmarsh, *Free-Grace: or, The Flowings of Christs Blood freely to Sinners* (London, 1645), 178.
5. Even in the wake of Hobbes, Samuel Pufendorf feels it necessary to open his chapter on the state of natural man by clarifying that we are not to understand by this a most perfect condition in which men are in the greatest possible accord with the direction of nature (*De Jure Naturae et Gentium* (Amsterdam, 1688), 105).
6. Emphasis added: 'De Conditione generis Humani quantùm attinet ad felicitatem praesentis vitae'.
7. Christopher Love, *The Naturall Mans Case stated, or An Exact Map of the Little World Man, Considered in both his Capacities, Either in the state of Nature, or Grace*, 2nd edn (London, 1652) (on p. 110 of this posthumously published work, Love says that the war has been going on for four years). See also Saltmarsh, *Free-Grace*, 1–5. The difference of interpretation is sometimes narrowly about which state counts as the natural condition, rather than over central tenets of the doctrine of salvation or the Fall.
8. Love, *The Naturall Mans Case stated*, 109.
9. Love, *The Naturall Mans Case stated*, 1, 2, 3.
10. Love, *The Naturall Mans Case stated*, 3, 4. See Nicholas Smyth, *A Description of the Natural Condition of Being in the flesh* (n.p., 1657), for example, 4: 'the natural man is not subject to the law of God'.
11. Love, *The Naturall Mans Case stated*, 5, 54.
12. Love, *The Naturall Mans Case stated*, 14.
13. The parallel is vividly illustrated on the title page of the 1642 *De Cive*.
14. *Lev.*, xiii, 11, 63/77.
15. Theodor de Bry (ed.), *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia, of the commodities and of the nature and manners of the naturall inhabitants* (Frankfurt, 1590); quotation from the title-page of the section on the Picts. See Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, xiv, 12 and *De Cive*, i, 13.

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16. *Lev.*, xiii, 9, 62/76. Earlier parallels abound, including passages in Le Roy, Montaigne, Shakespeare, and Purchas (Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), esp. 194–201, 377–8; see also the examples given by Giuliano Gliozzi, *Adamo e il nuovo mondo. La nascita dell'antropologia come ideologia coloniale: dalle genealogie bibliche alle teorie razziali (1500–1700)* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1977), 305–6 n 64, 379, 411–12).
17. Proponents of the view of an original Golden Age include Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 109–201; Empedocles, frr. 128, 130; and Plato, *Statesman*, 271d3–272b4.
18. Lucretius 5.925–1027. See Diodorus Siculus 1.8; Vergil, *Aeneid* 8.314–18; and Horace, *Satires* 1.3, 99–106 (where Horace adds that unlike the distinction between objects of desire and aversion, that between justice and injustice has no place in nature). Hobbes shows his familiarity with this kind of account in the opening section of his *De Corpore* (I, i, 1), which was finally published in 1655.
19. Lucretius 5.1019–27. In these lines, Lucretius draws directly on Epicurus, who had said that 'justice is nothing on its own, but whenever and wherever people interact with one another it is a kind of compact not to harm or be harmed' (*Kuriai Doxai* 33; cf. 31, 32, and 36, and Plato, *Republic*, 2.358e3–359b5). See *Lev.*, xiii, 13, 63/78: 'Justice and injustice are none of the faculties neither of the body, nor mind. If they were, they might be in a man that were alone in the world. They are qualities that relate to men in society, not in solitude.' Clarendon, for one, thinks that Hobbes has taken his ideas of the natural condition and the invention of government from 'the Fancy and Supposition of Heathen Philosophers', particularly the Epicureans ('Of Liberty' (1670), in *The Miscellaneous Works of the Right Honourable Edward, Earl of Clarendon . . . Being a Collection of Several Valuable Tracts* , 2nd edn (London, 1751), 143).
20. On this theme, see Felix Heinimann, 'Eine vorplatonische Theorie der τε′χνη', *Museum Helveticum* 18 (1961).
21. Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 1030–6; Suetonius, *De Poetis*, fragment (probably from the proem) quoted in Isidore of Seville, *Etymologia*, 8.7.1–2; Horace, *Art of Poetry*, 391–407.
22. Cicero, *De Inventione*, I, ii, 2–3; see Isocrates 3 (*Nicocles or the Cyprians*), 5–7, and Cicero, *De Oratore*, I, viii, 33.
23. Plato, *Protagoras*, 316d3–9; Seneca, *Epistles*, 90.
24. *De Corpore*, I, i, 7. Hobbes also expresses this view in *A Discourse upon Gondibert* (Paris, 1650), which he wrote while composing *Leviathan* (132). In the epistle to *De Corpore*, Hobbes claims that civil science is

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no older than his *De Cive*; but then how can we account for the many commonwealths that antedated it? Hobbes's answer is that all such commonwealths were fragile and prone to sedition. This is broadly consistent with the account Hobbes found in Thucydides of early times, when shifting alliances were formed for conquest and defence, and aggression and plunder were accepted ways of life. But he may have to confess either that some measure of civil security can exist without civil philosophy, or that there has been some approximation of civil science in the past.

25. *The Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance*, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, ed. Sir William Molesworth (London: John Bohn, 1839–45), 5:184. See *The Elements of Law*, xxiv, 3, and *De Cive*, x, 3.
26. Related topics are treated by David P. Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan: The Moral and Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); Gregory S. Kavka, *Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); and Jean Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
27. *Lev.*, xiv, 5, 65/80.
28. *De Cive*, x, 1 (cf. i, 12; vii, 18; and *Lev.*, xiv, 18, 68/84–5; *Lev.*, xvii, 1, 85/106). See *Lev.*, xiii, 10, 62/77, where the conclusion that the natural condition must be one of warfare is an 'inference made from the passions'.
29. *Lev.*, xiii, 4, 61/75; note too that at xiii, 14, 63/78, Hobbes specifies passions that incline men to *obedience* (cf. xi, 4–5, 48/58).
30. *Lev.*, xiii, 6, 61/76.
31. *Lev.*, xiii, 2, 60/74; xiv, 31, 70/87 (cf. xxvii, 19, 155/196).
32. For a sophisticated construal along these lines, see Kavka, *Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory*.
33. 'Quid, nonne fratrem suam Abelem invidiaˆ interfecit Cain, tantum facinus non ausurus, si communis potentia quae vindicare potuisset tunc extitisset?' (1668 edn of the Latin *Leviathan*, 65). That no one would attempt such a terrible undertaking if there were a sovereign authority to punish is false unless idealizing assumptions are made about the efficacy of the authority and the psychology of the citizen; and in any case, Genesis suggests that there was an authority with the right to punish. Cain was arguably under the rule of Adam (especially given Hobbes's reading of family relations in the natural condition), and God swiftly punished him. Hobbes's invocation of Cain may have been prompted by the chorus of critics of *De Cive* and the English *Leviathan* who complained that his view of primitive humanity was inconsistent with the

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Bible. While the example is an effective rejoinder to those who assumed that the scholastic doctrine of natural sociability sat easily with Genesis, it also calls into question the orthodoxy of the position (usually attributed to Hobbes) that humans are without political authority until they create it.

34. *Lev.*, xiii, 11, 63/77.
35. *Lev.*, xiii, 11, 63/77.
36. See *Lev.*, xvii, 12–13, 87/109.
37. *Lev.*, xiii, 11, 63/77.
38. See, for example, *De Cive*, xiii, 7, 13; *Lev.*, xviii, 20, 94/117; xix, 11, 98/123; xlii, 125, 316/393; *De Corpore*, I, i, 7.
39. *Lev.*, xiii, 12, 63/78.
40. *Lev.*, xiii, 13, 63/78; xiii, 12, 63/78.
41. See *Lev.*, xiii, 1, 60/74; xiii, 3–4, 61/75; xiii, 7, 62/76.
42. See Montesquieu, *De l'Esprit des Loix* (Geneva, [1748]), 1.2, 6–7; *The Political Writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau*, ed. C. E. Vaughan, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915), 140–1, 159–60 (*Discours sur l'inégalité*), 293–307 (*Que l'état de guerre naît de l'état social*, Neuchâtel MS 7856), and 453–4 (*Contrat social*, Geneva MS français 225).
43. In *Lev.*, vi, 39, 26–7/31, however, Hobbes says that whereas vainglory is grounded only on fantasy or the flattery of others, glory may be grounded on the experience of one's own former actions. According to this definition, glory does not necessarily depend on social recognition.
44. *Lev.*, xiii, 9, 62/76.
45. *Lev.*, xiii, 7, 62/76.
46. *Lev.*, xiii, 6, 61/76.
47. *Lev.*, xiii, 10, 62/77.
48. *Lev.*, xiii, 13, 63/78.
49. See *Lev.*, iv, 8, 14/17–18; xiii, 13, 63/78; xxvi, 4, 137/173; xxx, 20, 181–2/229.
50. For this definition, see *Lev.*, xv, 2, 71/89. For covenants in the natural condition, see *Lev.*, xiv, 27, 69/86; xiv, 31, 70–1/87–8; xx, 4, 103/128–9; xxii, 29, 122/153.
51. *Lev.*, xv, 3, 71–2/89 (italicization altered).
52. *Lev.*, xv, 1–15, 71–5/89–95; xv, 39, 79/100.
53. *Lev.*, xv, 10, 74/93.
54. Hobbes goes on to talk only about justice and injustice, as we have seen (*Lev.*, xv, 2–3, 71–2/89), and in the Latin version he drops the claim about there being no right and wrong in the natural condition.
55. *Lev.*, xiv, 4, 64/80.
56. *Lev.*, xv, 19, 76/96.

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57. *Lev.*, xv, 36, 79/99.
58. *Lev.*, xv, 36, 79/99.
59. *Lev.*, xv, 39, 79/100.
60. *Lev.*, xv, 38, 79/99.
61. Richard Overton, *An arrow against all tyrants and tyrany…* (London, 1646), [3]. Thomas Edwards lists this as one of the currently common 'corrupt Opinions and Principles' (*The third Part of Gangraena. Or, A new and higher Discovery of the Errors, Heresies, Blasphemies, and insolent Proceedings of the Sectaries of these times* (London, 1646), 1, [17]).
62. *Patriarcha and Other Political Works of Sir Robert Filmer*, ed. Peter Laslett (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1949), 54. Patriarcha, written in the late 1630s, is subtitled *A Defence of the Natural Power of Kings against the Unnatural Liberty of the People*.