

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

**State of Nature or Eden?
Thomas Hobbes and his Contemporaries
on the Natural Condition of Human beings.**

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Ph.D.

in the University of Hull

by

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For my parents Maureen and Geoff Thornton.

Dedicated to the memory of my grandmother
Gertrude Millea.

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Introduction

1. State of Nature - Philosophy or History?

In one of the most famous quotations from the history of political philosophy, Thomas Hobbes described the life of human beings in the state of nature as 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short'.¹ In this natural condition human beings lived alone, in a state of: equality, constant fear of death, war, and general insecurity. It was a state in which there was no dominion, no law, and no property. If human beings were reasonable, they would soon conclude that it was a state which was incompatible with their ultimate aim to avoid death, and then they would wish to leave it. For Hobbes, the state of nature was a logical account of the origins of society, but it was also a constantly recurring possibility, because it was any period of time in which a society lacked a common power to keep order. As Edwin Curley has pointed out, this was a description of England during the 1640s.² But for many of Hobbes' contemporaries, the state of nature was understood to be a description of the pre-historic origin of society.³ The problem for Hobbes' seventeenth century readers was how to reconcile his description of the condition of human beings before civil society came into existence, with the Biblical account of the original, perfect condition of human beings at the creation? As Sir Robert Filmer put it, Hobbes' state of nature simply contradicted 'the truth of the history of the creation',⁴ while Leibniz pointed out that since Hobbes did not deny the existence of God as the ruler of the world, there could

¹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan with selected variants from the Latin edition of 1668*, edited with an introduction and notes by Edwin Curley (Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., Indianapolis & Cambridge, 1994), chapter XIII, section 9, p. 76. All references to *Leviathan* will be to this edition.

² See Edwin Curley's introduction to *Leviathan*, p. xxi.

³ See R.E. Ewin, *Virtues and Rights - The Moral Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes* (Westview Press, Inc., Boulder, Colorado, 1991), pp. 94 & 96.

⁴ Sir Robert Filmer, *Observations concerning the Originall of Government, upon Mr Hobs Leviathan, Mr Milton against Salmasius and H. Grotius De Jure Belli* (1652), reproduced in *Patriarcha and Other Writings*, edited by J.P. Sommerville (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991), pp. 184-234, p. 188.

never have been such a time as the state of nature, i.e. there could never have been a time when human beings had lived without a common power.⁵

In both the *Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, and *De Cive* Hobbes did not claim that his state of nature had existed at a specific point in history, only that there were both past and present people who had lived, and were now living, in that condition.⁶ In *Leviathan* Hobbes admitted that the state of nature was never generally so, although again there were some people who were living in that awful state now - i.e. native Americans.⁷ But in the Latin edition of *Leviathan*, published in 1668, this claim was replaced by Hobbes' citation of the example of Cain's murder of Abel in defence of his war of all against all.⁸ Here for the first time, Hobbes finally associated his state of nature with a specific moment in Biblical history. But as we will see below, most of Hobbes' contemporary critics appear to have been unaware of his use of Cain and Abel.⁹

In this dissertation I want to try to explain how Hobbes' state of nature could have been understood by a contemporary readership, whose most important reference point for such a condition was the original, perfect condition of mankind, and their subsequent Fall, as set out in *Genesis*. As we will see throughout this dissertation many of Hobbes' contemporary critics used the account of *Genesis* to demonstrate that Hobbes' state of nature was both an impossibility, and also that it contradicted scripture. But this dissertation will show that it was possible for Hobbes' seventeenth century readers to see parallels between his account and Reformed interpretations of *Genesis*, a tradition which Hobbes appears to have been closer to than his contemporary critics. Having said

⁵ See *Thomas Hobbes - The Correspondence*, edited by Noel Malcolm (2 volumes, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994), Volume II, p. 717. Hereafter cited as *Hobbes' Correspondence*.

⁶ See Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, edited with an introduction by J.C.A. Gaskin (Oxford University Press, Oxford & New York, 1994), chapter XIV, section 12, p. 80. Hereafter cited as *Elements*. See also Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive*, or *On The Citizen*, edited and translated by R. Tuck & M. Silverthorne (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998), chapter I, section 13, p. 30. All references to the *Elements* and *De Cive* will be to these editions.

⁷ See *Leviathan*, XIII, 11, p. 77.

⁸ See *Leviathan*, XIII, 11, p. 77, footnote 7. Hobbes' use of the account of Cain and Abel will be discussed in more detail in chapter three on the war of all against all; and in chapter five on the creation of society. There has been some debate over whether the Latin version of *Leviathan*, although published after the English version, was, at least in part, written before it - see Curley's note on this in his edition of *Leviathan*, pp. lxxiii-lxxiv.

⁹ Though Richard Cumberland had read the Latin *Leviathan*, and referred to it at various points throughout his *De Legibus Naturae* - see for example Richard Cumberland, *A Treatise of the Laws of Nature... Made English from the Latin by John Maxwell* (London, 1727), p. 173.

that, I am not claiming that the Biblical context is the only context within which to place Hobbes' state of nature: Richard Ashcraft has written about possible New World sources for Hobbes' natural condition; David Wootton has shown how Hobbes' state of nature may have been based on his study of history, particularly Machiavelli; while George Klosko and Daryl Rice think that the account of the state of nature was influenced by Thucydides' account of the earliest people of Greece.¹⁰ But given the time and place in which Hobbes was read, the Biblical context must be important. Recently, both Christopher Hill and Philip Almond have demonstrated the centrality of the Bible, and particularly the account of the Fall, in seventeenth century thought, debate, and life. The Bible was the ultimate authority on every aspect of life, including politics, religion, morality and economics.¹¹ The 'reading of the Bible provided a model for all reading',¹² and scripture was read differently by Catholics and Protestants (including Lutherans and Calvinists), read in different editions, and 'alongside and through the medium of commentaries'.¹³

In an extensive study of the reading habits of the Buckinghamshire gentleman, Sir William Drake, from the 1620s to the 1660s, Kevin Sharpe has demonstrated that readers brought their own experiences, and particularly their reading of other texts, to any reading. Readers could also read things differently at different points in their lives.¹⁴ Readers took what made sense to them from what

¹⁰ See Richard Ashcraft, 'Hobbes' Natural Man: A Study in Ideology Formation', *Journal of Politics*, 33 (1971), pp. 1076-117; David Wootton, 'Thomas Hobbes' Machiavellian Moments', in *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain - History, Rhetoric and Fiction, 1500-1800*, edited by D.R. Kelley & D.H. Sacks (Woodrow Wilson Center Press & Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997), pp. 210-42, p. 231; and George Klosko & Daryl Rice, 'Thucydides and Hobbes's State of Nature', *History of Political Thought*, 6 (1985), pp. 405-10.

¹¹ See Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (The Penguin Press, London, 1993); and Philip C. Almond, *Adam and Eve in Seventeenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999). John Morrill has shown how Oliver Cromwell used Biblical allusions in his speeches and letters to demonstrate the parallels between the civil war in England (as well as his own role in that struggle), and various Old Testament accounts - see John Morrill, 'Cromwell and the Word of God', paper read to the History department research seminar at the University of Hull, October 27th, 2000, and as yet unpublished.

¹² R. Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*, translated by Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1987), p. 224.

¹³ Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions - The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2000), pp. 225-6 & 331, where Sharpe has also noted that for Sir William Drake, scripture reinforced arguments drawn from secular works, and that Drake 'read his Bible almost as a treatise of a new politics of interest rather than as a text of Christian commonweal'.

¹⁴ See Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*, pp. 34-6.

they read, and this was different under different circumstances, e.g. during peace as opposed to during war. Thus readers constructed their own meanings of texts.¹⁵ Alternatively, Stanley Fish has argued that it is not the text or readers themselves which produce meanings, but 'interpretive communities'. Both readers and writers are part of an 'interpretive community', which determines what people read; and who also share 'interpretive strategies'.¹⁶ Authors themselves 'always imagine the reader', and 'writing is conditioned by the readers expectations and desires'.¹⁷ By the end of the sixteenth century, the awareness of writers that their works were open to different interpretations, led to a change in writing.¹⁸ Authors developed various strategies for limiting the interpretations that readers could bring to their works. These included not only language and content, but also typography, marginal notes, and a layout of the page, which did or did not allow the space for readers to write their own notes.¹⁹ The frontispiece, dedication and preface could all be used to direct the reader to a particular interpretation of the text.²⁰ Even before the reader began to read, he might be influenced by the title, the size of the book, typography and layout, number of chapters, how it was bound, its price, and how (and what) he had heard about it.²¹

This dissertation will assess how Hobbes was read by his contemporaries, and will argue that Hobbes' seventeenth century readers brought their own reading of both the Bible, and scriptural commentaries, to their reading of Hobbes' political theory. Thus, it was their own views on the account of the creation and Fall, which determined their response to Hobbes' description of the state of nature, and that these views were in turn determined by the particular interpretations of *Genesis*, which the individual reader subscribed to. Tom Sorell has argued that Hobbes seems to have assumed 'as common ground between him and his readers the Biblical story of the Fall',²² but as we will see throughout this

¹⁵ See Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*, pp. 304 & 40.

¹⁶ S. Fish, *Is There a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1980), p. 14.

¹⁷ Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*, p. 59.

¹⁸ See T. Cave, *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1979), p. 327.

¹⁹ See Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*, pp. 44-51.

²⁰ See Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*, pp. 50-55.

²¹ See Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*, pp. 44-6.

²² Tom Sorell, *Hobbes* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1986), p. 34.

dissertation, the account of the Fall, and its consequences, was interpreted in a variety of ways. The dissertation will also compare Hobbes and his contemporary critics as readers of scripture, and will argue that Hobbes' political theory was closer to the Reformed understanding of *Genesis*. The majority of Hobbes' contemporary critics were either, or both Aristotelians and Arminians, who recognised that the Fall had corrupted human beings, although not to the extent implied by Hobbes' description of the natural condition. Since the Fall mankind retained sufficient knowledge of the requirements of natural law, and all human beings had the ability to attain salvation through God's universal grace. The critics wanted to look at human beings as they should have been, or as they ought to be; whereas Hobbes wanted to look at human nature as it was. As we will see throughout this dissertation, Hobbes' contemporary critics understanding of the natural condition was completely at odds with Hobbes' understanding. For the critics, the natural condition was the condition in which human beings had been created in Eden. Thus, their horror at Hobbes' description of a condition of war. Indeed, Hobbes' description seems to bear more resemblance to the fallen condition, as has been noted by a number of twentieth century Hobbes' scholars.

2. Hobbes' State of Nature as an account of the Fall?

Forty years ago Sheldon Wolin called Hobbes' state of nature 'a kind of political version of *Genesis*, without sacral overtones and without sin, but a fall nevertheless, from the highest level of human achievement, life in a civilised society'. According to Wolin, Hobbes' political order was a condition we once enjoyed, but have lost and must now attempt to recapture.²³ On Wolin's account, Hobbes' state of nature was a description of the disintegration of an already established society - this could have been England during the civil war. But if we understand the condition we once enjoyed to mean the original condition in Eden, then Hobbes' state of nature could be interpreted as Eden after the Fall, or a description of the Fall; and his civil society would then be a close approximation

²³ Sheldon S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision - Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought* (Little, Brown & Co. Inc., Boston, 1960), p. 264. Wolin, p. 274, has also noted that Hobbes' idea

of God's original intentions for human beings, bearing in mind their fallen nature. This seems to be an unlikely aim for Hobbes. More recently, Leo Rauch has described Hobbes' political theory as 'amounting to a secular re-telling of a religious myth: the Fall of Man... stripping it of its mythic elements... [but adding] some mythic elements of his own'.²⁴ Rauch claims there were no moral values in Eden before the Fall - God commanded Adam not to eat from the tree of knowledge, but did not tell him that it was wrong to do so, simply that in doing so Adam would die. In this way Eden before the Fall was similar to Hobbes' state of nature, where right and wrong had no place. Rauch sees further evidence that Hobbes was 'consciously presenting a secular version of the Fall in his use of the covenant'.²⁵

Many other Hobbes' scholars have commented on the resemblance between Hobbes' account, and that of the scriptural account of the Fall. According to Norberto Bobbio, Hobbes was in agreement with the Augustinian and Lutheran idea of the state as a remedy for the Fall, although for Bobbio, Hobbes' account was a secular version, in the sense that the state was 'not a remedy for sin, but a means of disciplining the passions'.²⁶ Johann Sommerville, although admitting that Hobbes said very little about the Fall, has noted that in some ways Hobbes' state of nature resembled the traditional view that since the Fall human nature had become corrupted, leading human beings to follow their passions, rather than reason. This had made the coercive power of the state necessary. Sommerville thinks that Hobbes might have been influenced by Augustine and Calvin, although he also notes the differences between these two thinkers and Hobbes; as well as noting that it was partly Hobbes' account of 'corrupted' (although Hobbes never called it that) human nature that provoked much of the criticism he received from his contemporaries.²⁷ Garrath Williams

that belief cannot be compelled by the sovereign was similar to the Lutheran idea of 'Christian Liberty'.

²⁴ Leo Rauch, 'Secular Fall and Redemption in Hobbes' *Leviathan*', in *Praise Disjoined: Changing Patterns of Salvation in 17th Century English Literature*, edited by W.P. Shaw (Peter Lang, New York, 1991), pp. 89-102, p. 99.

²⁵ Rauch, 'Secular Fall', pp. 100-1.

²⁶ Norberto Bobbio, *Thomas Hobbes and the Natural Law Tradition*, translated by Daniela Gobetti (University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1993), p. 68.

²⁷ See J.P. Sommerville, *Thomas Hobbes: Political Ideas in Historical Context* (MacMillan Press Ltd, Basingstoke & London, 1992), pp. 41-2.

has argued that the consequences of the Fall were central for Hobbes' own moral and political system,²⁸ while Cameron Wybrow claims that, for Hobbes, the Fall was 'a paradigm for good political theory'.²⁹ Francis Hood thinks that in disobeying the sovereign, human beings repeated Adam's sin,³⁰ and A.P. Martinich has noted that the connection Hobbes made between Christianity and political loyalty was derived from traditional accounts of the Fall, in which the first sin was disobedience, and its source was pride.³¹ For Michael Oakeshott, Hobbes created a new myth of the Fall and salvation of mankind. Oakeshott has described Hobbes as an ally of both Augustine and Aquinas, and claims his description of the war of all against all was indebted to Augustine, who used the example of Cain and Abel to prove the idea of universal hostility.³² Even such a secular interpreter of Hobbes as Quentin Skinner, while noting the connection between Hobbes and the patriarchalists, has commented on the 'curious parallel' between fallen man and Hobbes' 'assumption of innate wickedness as a political

²⁸ See Garrath Williams, 'Normatively Demanding Creatures - Hobbes, the Fall and Individual Responsibility', *Res Publica*, 6 (2000), pp. 301-19, p. 303. See also G. Manenschijn, "'Jesus is the Christ" - The Political Theology of *Leviathan*', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 25 (1997), pp. 35-64, p. 42, who thinks Hobbes related the limitations of human rationality to Adam's Fall.

²⁹ Cameron Wybrow, 'Hobbes as an Interpreter of Biblical Political Thought', in *Liberal Democracy and the Bible*, edited by Kim Ian Parker (Edwin Mellon Press, Lewiston, Queenston & Lampeter, 1992), pp. 39-71, p. 56.

³⁰ See F. C. Hood, *The Divine Politics of Thomas Hobbes: An Interpretation of Leviathan* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1964), pp. 175-6. See also R. J. Halliday, Timothy Kenyon & Andrew Reeve, 'Hobbes' Belief in God', *Political Studies*, 31 (1983), pp. 418-33, p. 427, who claim that Hobbes presented Adam as the first rebel; and Miriam M. Reik, *The Golden Lands of Thomas Hobbes* (Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1977), p. 150, who has argued that for Hobbes the English Civil War was a re-enactment of the Fall.

³¹ See A.P. Martinich, *The Two Gods of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Religion and Politics* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992), p. 307. But see also John W. Seaman, 'Hobbes and the Liberalization of Christianity', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 32 (1999), pp. 227-46, p. 235 who claims that Hobbes 'treats pride simply as a sin against other people', and in doing so 'ignores a critical dimension of the biblical understanding of pride', namely that pride towards others is a re-enactment of Adam and Eve's attempt to become as gods, by taking the knowledge of good and evil for themselves. As will become clear throughout this dissertation, I disagree with this view.

³² See Michael Oakeshott, *Hobbes on Civil Association* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1975), pp. 56, 58 & 82-3. Oakeshott appears to have been unaware of Hobbes' use of Cain and Abel. For Hobbes' similarity to Augustine see also: W.B. Glover, 'Human Nature and the State in Hobbes', in *Thomas Hobbes - Critical Assessments*, edited by Preston King (4 Volumes, Routledge, London, 1993), Volume IV, pp. 50-72, p. 52; H.A. Deane, *The Political and Social Ideas of Saint Augustine* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1963), pp. 46-50; M.J. Wilks, 'Saint Augustine and the General Will', in *Studia Patristica IX*, edited by F.L. Cross (Akademie-Verlag, Berlin, 1966), pp. 487-506; and my own unpublished B.A. dissertation, 'The Concepts of Peace in Saint Augustine and Thomas Hobbes' (History Department, King's College London, 1993).

premise', although Skinner would no doubt agree that Hobbes did not think human beings were evil by nature.³³

Other scholars have denied that Hobbes' account was an accurate reading of the Fall. Leo Strauss has noted that although it could be argued that Hobbes had 'not yet completely freed himself from the influence of the Christian Biblical tradition', nonetheless between writing the *Elements* and *Leviathan*, Hobbes moved further and further away from that tradition.³⁴ The Straussian interpretation of Hobbes has been continued by a number of scholars, including Paul Cooke. Cooke has noted the state of nature's similarity to *Genesis*, but claims that Hobbes' state of nature was 'a counter beginning' to the Biblical account of the human condition.³⁵ For Cooke, Hobbes failed to take into account 'the existential unquiet that is traceable to the story of the Fall', and this is what Christianity is all about.³⁶ Similarly, Pat Moloney has charged Hobbes with 're-reading the story of *Genesis*', so that 'Adam had no need of divine instruction, and Hobbes had no need of the story of Paradise'.³⁷ Moloney understands the criticisms of Hobbes' contemporaries as a clash between two seventeenth century discourses of political origins: commentaries on *Genesis* and the state of nature argument. He claims that eventually one replaced the other, that Hobbes was a

³³ Quentin Skinner, 'The Ideological Context of Hobbes's Political Thought', *Historical Journal*, 9 (1966), pp. 286-317, p. 300.

³⁴ Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes - Its Basis and Genesis*, translated by Elsa M. Sinclair (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1936), pp. 28 & 74. See also Richard Ashcraft, 'Leviathan Triumphant: Thomas Hobbes and the Politics of Wild Men', in *The Wild Man Within - An Image in Western Thought from the Renaissance to Romanticism*, edited by E. Dudley & M. E. Novak (University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 1972), pp. 141-81, p. 171, note 24, who comments on Sheldon Wolin's claim that Hobbes' state of nature was a political version of *Genesis*. For Ashcraft this is true in the metaphorical sense, but he claims that although 'historical treatments of *Genesis* from a political viewpoint were commonplace in seventeenth century literature... *Leviathan* is not, on the whole, a contribution to this genre'.

³⁵ Paul D. Cooke, *Hobbes and Christianity - Reassessing the Bible in Leviathan* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Lanham, Boulder, New York & London, 1996), pp. 8 & 86. See also Thomas L. Pangle, 'A Critique of Hobbes's Critique of Biblical and Natural Religion in *Leviathan*', *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 4 (1992), pp. 25-57, p. 35, who thinks Hobbes' account is in opposition to the Christian account of the Fall.

³⁶ Cooke, *Hobbes and Christianity*, p. 108.

³⁷ Pat Moloney, 'Leaving the Garden of Eden: Linguistic and Political Authority in Thomas Hobbes', *History of Political Thought*, 18 (1997), pp. 242-66, p. 266. Moloney has concentrated on Adam's language and knowledge. See also Joshua Mitchell, *Not by Reason Alone - Religion, History, and Identity in Early Modern Political Thought* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1993), p. 81, who has argued that Hobbes did not rely on Adam to articulate his positive theory of governmental conflict.

stage in this transition, and that in doing so Hobbes subverted traditional interpretations of *Genesis*.³⁸

3. Hobbes' own belief or unbelief.

So was Hobbes' state of nature a counter-beginning to the scriptural account, was it a subversion of that account? Or was the state of nature the pre- or the post-lapsarian condition? How was Hobbes' state of nature understood by his contemporary readers? Related to these questions is the matter of Hobbes' own beliefs, or lack of them. This has been the subject of much debate, both by Hobbes' contemporaries and scholars since. The following paragraphs provide a brief survey of the variety of views expressed by current scholars on Hobbes' personal religious beliefs, or lack of them.

Many Hobbes' commentators have seen the influence of Calvinism in his work. According to A.P. Martinich, Hobbes was Calvinist in theology, while favouring episcopacy in church government. In other words, Hobbes favoured the pre-Laudian order of the early seventeenth century English church.³⁹ For Phyllis Doyle, the conclusions on human nature arrived at by Calvinists were set out later by Hobbes in his political philosophy.⁴⁰ Mark Goldie informs us that Hobbes was often linked with Calvin, Luther and Ockham by such contemporary critics as Richard Baxter, Thomas Pierce and Ralph Cudworth.⁴¹ A letter written to Hobbes

³⁸ See Moloney, 'Leaving the Garden of Eden', p. 243. See also Ashcraft, 'Hobbes' Natural Man', p. 1098, who thinks that Hobbes and his contemporary critics held two opposing world views.

³⁹ See Martinich, *Two Gods*, pp. 33 & 45. For a review and criticism of Martinich's ideas, particularly his central thesis that Hobbes was a Calvinist, see H. Caton, 'Is *Leviathan* a Unicorn? Varieties of Hobbes Interpretations', *Review of Politics*, 56 (1994), pp. 101-25, especially pp. 108-13.

⁴⁰ See Phyllis Doyle, 'The Contemporary Background of Hobbes' "State of Nature"', *Economica*, 7 (1927), pp. 336-55, p. 342. Also on Hobbes' Calvinism see: Ronald Hepburn, 'Hobbes on the Knowledge of God', in *Hobbes and Rousseau - A Collection of Critical Essays*, edited by M. Cranston & R. S. Peters (Doubleday & Co., Inc., Garden City, New York, 1972), pp. 85-108, p. 85, who also comments on echoes of Tertullian and Aquinas in Hobbes. On Aquinas and Hobbes see: Timothy Fuller, 'Compatibilities on the Idea of Law in Thomas Aquinas and Thomas Hobbes', *Hobbes Studies*, 3 (1990), pp. 112-34; and J.K. Ryan, 'The Reputation of St. Thomas Aquinas among English Protestant Thinkers of the 17th Century', *New Scholasticism*, 22 (1948), pp. 126-208, pp. 146-59 on the debate between Bramhall and Hobbes; and pp. 159-66 on Hobbes' attitude to the Schoolmen.

⁴¹ See Mark Goldie, 'The Reception of Hobbes', in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450 - 1700*, edited by J.H. Burns & M. Goldie (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991), pp. 589-615, p. 593. See also Noel Malcolm, *Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology* (University of Cambridge Ph.D. thesis, 1982), p. 208, who notes Thomas Pierce's view of Hobbes as a Calvinist.

by the Calvinist Edward Bagshaw, describing Hobbes as an ally in the defence of Calvinist theology, supports this view.⁴² According to Stephen State, the dispute between Hobbes and Bramhall on the freedom of the will was a standard issue of contention between Calvinists and Arminians, and State has even compared their debate to the dispute between Luther and Erasmus.⁴³ Noel Malcolm has argued that Hobbes' thought was 'governed by [voluntarist] theological assumptions', and that it was ethical voluntarism which was the issue between Hobbes and many of his critics. Malcolm, like State, sees Bramhall's attack on Hobbes as an attack on some of the main ideas of Calvinism, although Malcolm admits that this does not mean that Hobbes himself was a Calvinist.⁴⁴

Other scholars have denied Hobbes' Calvinism. Richard Ashcraft acknowledges that although Hobbes' views on human beings shared similarities with Calvinism, he did not accept its most important part - that human beings 'were saved from their 'brutish' condition solely through the grace of Christianity'.⁴⁵ Patricia Springborg has pointed out that *Leviathan* was banned by the Calvinist synod of Utrecht, although Richard Tuck has demonstrated that Lambert Velthuysen, a member of the Utrecht city council, was one of a number of Dutch writers to support and use some of Hobbes' ideas.⁴⁶ In another work

⁴² See *Hobbes' Correspondence*, Vol. I, pp. 497-8. In this letter Bagshaw was referring to Hobbes' *Of Liberty and Necessity*, which can be found in *English Works*, edited by Sir William Molesworth (11 volumes, London, 1839-45), Volume IV, pp. 229-78. Bagshaw was a colleague of John Locke at Christ Church - see Jon Parkin, *Science, Religion and Politics in Restoration England - Richard Cumberland's De Legibus Naturae* (The Royal Historical Society, The Boydell Press, Boydell & Brewer Ltd, Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1999), pp. 23-4.

⁴³ See Stephen A. State, *Thomas Hobbes and the Debate over Natural Law and Religion* (Garland Publishing, Inc., New York & London, 1991), p. 90. State, p. 223, has also noted Hobbes' similarities to Hooker. See also his 'Hobbes and Hooker; Politics and Religion: A Note on the Structuring of *Leviathan*', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 20 (1987), pp. 79-96. On the debate between Hobbes and Bramhall see: L. Damrosch, 'Hobbes as Reformation Theologian: Implications of the Free-Will Controversy', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 40 (1979), pp. 339-52; and Jürgen Overhoff, *Hobbes's Theory of Volition. Scientific Premisses and Ethical Consequences* (University of Cambridge Ph.D. dissertation, 1998), chapter 3. This has since been published as *Hobbes' Theory of the Will: Ideological Reasons and Historical Circumstances* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., Lanham, Boulder, New York & London, 2000).

⁴⁴ Malcolm, *Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology*, abstract & pp. 203-4.

⁴⁵ Ashcraft, '*Leviathan* Triumphant', p. 146. Ashcraft, p. 170, note 20, also comments that Hobbes would have become familiar with the language of Calvinism during his time at Magdalen Hall, the centre of puritanism at Oxford. On Hobbes' departure from the Augustinian-Calvinist tradition see Richard Sherlock, 'The Theology of *Leviathan*: Hobbes on Religion', *Interpretation*, 10 (1982), pp. 43-60, pp. 57-8.

⁴⁶ See Patricia Springborg, 'Hobbes on Religion', in *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes*, edited by Tom Sorell (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995), pp. 346-80, p. 370-1, note

Tuck notes that 'Hobbes feared the moral and intellectual disciplines' of one particular type of Calvinism, that of Presbyterian Calvinism.⁴⁷

Other scholars have seen the influence of Luther, rather than Calvin, in Hobbes' work. George Wright has noted three main parallels between Hobbes and Luther: their views on the mortality of the soul; their attitudes towards atheism, idolatry and superstition; and their description of Christ as promise.⁴⁸ Joshua Mitchell has shown that Luther and Hobbes were drawn to the same question of the meaning of Christ's fulfillment, although they gave different answers to this question.⁴⁹ Patricia Springborg has commented on the similarity of Hobbes' and Luther's ideas on the artificial state.⁵⁰ According to Noel Malcolm, Hobbes' views on the authorship of the Pentateuch corresponded to those of Luther.⁵¹ And more recently, Jürgen Overhoff has demonstrated Hobbes' 'allegiance to Lutheran and Calvinist doctrines' in his *Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity and Chance*.⁵²

Another group of scholars have commented on Hobbes' Anglicanism.⁵³ According to Richard Tuck, Hobbes' religious ideas were close to orthodox Anglicanism by 1642, but this all changed with *Leviathan* where Hobbes put forward a new theology - a version of Christianity devoid of the religion of the

12; and Richard Tuck, *Natural Rights Theories: Their Origin and Development* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979), p. 139. See also *Hobbes' Correspondence*, Vol. I, p. 292.

⁴⁷ Richard Tuck, *Hobbes* (Oxford University Press, Oxford & New York, 1989), p. 30. See also various remarks by Hobbes against presbyterianism in *Leviathan*, especially XLVII, 4, p. 478 & 19-20, pp. 481-2.

⁴⁸ See George Wright, 'Thomas Hobbes' 1668 Appendix to *Leviathan*, Translation and Notes', *Interpretation*, 18 (1991), pp. 323-413, pp. 331ff. See also George H. Wright, *The Protestant Hobbes* (University of California, Berkeley, Ph.D. thesis, 1985), pp. 118 & 244; & on p. 123, Wright has also noted Hobbes' similarity to Ockham.

⁴⁹ See Joshua Mitchell, 'Luther and Hobbes on the Question: Who was Moses, Who was Christ?', in *Journal of Politics*, 53 (1991), pp. 676-700, p. 698.

⁵⁰ See Springborg, 'Hobbes on Religion', p. 356.

⁵¹ See Malcolm, *Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology*, p. 261. Isaac La Peyrère, the controversial Biblical commentator, and friend of Hobbes, also denied Moses' authorship of the pentateuch - see Richard H. Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère (1596-1676) His Life, Work and Influence* (E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1987), p. 69. On the other hand, Pangle, 'A Critique', p. 34, has noted that Hobbes' approach to scripture was 'anti-Lutheran'.

⁵² Jürgen Overhoff, 'The Lutheranism of Thomas Hobbes', *History of Political Thought*, 18 (1997), pp. 604-23, p. 607; and *Hobbes's Theory of Volition*, chapter 3. On Hobbes and Luther see also: Willis B. Glover, 'God and Thomas Hobbes', in *Hobbes Studies*, edited by K. C. Brown (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1965), pp. 141-68, p. 143, who also notes Hobbes' affinity to Calvin; and Shirley Robin Letwin, 'Hobbes and Christianity', *Daedalus*, 105 (1976), pp. 1-21, p. 3.

⁵³ This term has become problematic in recent times, but here it refers to a supporter of the structures and practices of the Church of England, and in this sense an Anglican might or might not also be a Calvinist.

gentiles.⁵⁴ For Tuck, this explains why many of Hobbes' clerical friends were not hostile to the *Elements* or *De Cive*, but were hostile to *Leviathan*.⁵⁵ Tuck has further argued, in complete contrast to Martinich, that the Anglicanism Hobbes favoured in the period 1640-43 was 'of a rather Laudian type',⁵⁶ and has also noted the similarity of Hobbes' ideas on God's grace, and hell, to those of a group of English Catholics, including Thomas White, Henry Holden and John Sargeant.⁵⁷ Hobbes demonstrated his anti-Catholicism with *Leviathan's* diatribe against Cardinal Bellarmine, and the Church of Rome, and in 1654 both *De Cive*, and *Leviathan* were put on the Papal Index.⁵⁸ One of Hobbes' contemporary critics, Roger Coke, was later to accuse Hobbes of being part of a Papist conspiracy to overthrow Charles II.⁵⁹ Other scholars have noted the similarities between Hobbes' ideas on hell and those of the Socinians,⁶⁰ as well as his interest in Hebraism.⁶¹

⁵⁴ See Richard Tuck, 'The Civil Religion of Thomas Hobbes', in *Political Discourse in Early Modern Britain*, edited by N. Phillipson & Q. Skinner (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993), pp. 120-38, pp. 130 & 133. See also Sommerville, *Thomas Hobbes*, pp. 118 & 124, where Sommerville explains Hobbes' attack on Anglicans in *Leviathan* as a result of Hobbes' belief that certain Anglicans had undermined his favour with Charles II.

⁵⁵ See Tuck, *Hobbes*, pp. 85-6.

⁵⁶ Tuck, 'Civil Religion', p. 124. Also on Hobbes' Anglicanism see: Paul J. Johnson, 'Hobbes' Anglican Doctrine of Salvation', in *Thomas Hobbes in his Time*, edited by R. Ross, H. W. Schneider & T. Waldman (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1974), pp. 102-28; Herbert W. Schneider, 'The Piety of Hobbes', in *Thomas Hobbes in his Time*, pp. 84-101, p. 92, who sees Hobbes as an Anglican with congregationalist sympathies, confirmed by Hobbes' support for Independency in *Leviathan*, XLVII, 20, p. 482; and H. G. Reventlow, *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World*, translated by J. Bowden (SCM Press Ltd, London, 1984), p. 204.

⁵⁷ See Tuck, 'Civil Religion', pp. 133-7. Malcolm, *Hobbes' Correspondence*, Vol. I, p. xxxiv, has pointed out that most of Hobbes' closest friends were either Catholic priests, or presbyterians.

⁵⁸ See Reik, *Golden Lands*, p. 128. See also State, *Thomas Hobbes*, p. 1, who notes that *De Cive* was banned in Holland in 1674.

⁵⁹ See A.P. Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999), pp. 312-3.

⁶⁰ See for example: Tuck, 'Civil Religion', p. 131; C. A. J. Coady, 'The Socinian Connection - Further Thoughts on the Religion of Thomas Hobbes', *Religious Studies*, 22 (1986), pp. 277-80; Peter Geach, 'The Religion of Thomas Hobbes', *Religious Studies*, 17 (1981), pp. 549-58; and Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes*, p. 76.

⁶¹ See Ronald Beiner, 'Machiavelli, Hobbes and Rousseau on Civil Religion', *Review of Politics*, 55 (1993), pp. 617-38, especially pp. 624-31; Daniel J. Elazar, 'Hobbes confronts Scripture', *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 4 (1992), pp. 3-24, p. 11; Harold Fisch, 'Authority and Interpretation: *Leviathan* and the 'Covenantal Community'', *Comparative Criticism*, 15 (1993), pp. 103-23, p. 111; Robert P. Kraynak, 'The Idea of the Messiah in the Theology of Thomas Hobbes', *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 4 (1992), pp. 115-37; and M. Roshwald, 'The Judeo-Christian Elements in Hobbes's *Leviathan*', *Hobbes Studies*, 7 (1994), pp. 95-124. While Joel Schwartz claims Hobbes favoured the Christian kingdom of God over the ancient Jewish kingdom - see his 'Hobbes and the Two Kingdoms of God', *Polity*, 18 (1985), pp. 7-24, p. 10

As we will see throughout this dissertation, many of Hobbes' contemporary critics thought that his views implied atheism. Robert South, for instance, referred to 'the great prevalence of that Atheistical Doctrine of the *Leviathan*',⁶² and in October 1666 *Leviathan* was named in a bill introduced in parliament against atheism and profanity.⁶³ Of recent Hobbes' scholars, Leo Strauss' attempt to uncover hidden meaning in Hobbes' work has apparently revealed his atheism.⁶⁴ Another Straussian, Paul Cooke, has described *Leviathan* as 'a conspiracy against Christianity', and that in it Hobbes' 'antipathy to Biblical religion is disguised to appear as genuinely religious'. Further, Hobbes was apparently addressing two different sets of readers - 'the sincerely religious', and 'the philosophically enlightened', the latter of which was capable of detecting Hobbes' intended, but hidden meaning.⁶⁵ Edwin Curley has seen irony in many of Hobbes' religious views, and has been involved in a dispute with Martinich over Hobbes' supposed Calvinism, but Curley thinks that any similarities between Hobbes and Calvin are superficial.⁶⁶ David Wootton has stated that he finds it 'impossible to understand why anyone would have written *Leviathan*... if their intention was not to deal a blow to religion'.⁶⁷ And for Quentin Skinner, Hobbes' use of particular rhetorical techniques in *Leviathan* was intended to ridicule both religion, and his opponents.⁶⁸

⁶² Robert South, 'A Sermon preached at Westminster Abbey April 30, 1676 on I Cor. III.19. For the Wisdom of the World, is Foolishness with God', in *Twelve Sermons preached upon several occasions, the second volume* (London, 1694), pp. 425-74, p. 438.

⁶³ See Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography*, p. 320.

⁶⁴ See for example Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1952), p. 34; *Natural Right and History* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1953), pp. 198-9; and 'On the Basis of Hobbes' Political Philosophy', in *What is Political Philosophy? And Other Studies* (The Free Press of Glencoe, Illinois, 1959), pp. 170-96.

⁶⁵ Cooke, *Hobbes and Christianity*, pp. 15 & 18.

⁶⁶ See Edwin Curley, 'Calvin and Hobbes, or Hobbes as an orthodox Christian', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 34 (1996), pp. 257-71; 'I Durst Not Write So Boldly' or, How to read Hobbes' theological-political treatise', in *Hobbes e Spinoza: Scienza e Politica*, edited by Daniela Bostrenghi, introduction by Emilia Giancotti (Bibliopolis, Naples, 1992), pp. 497-593; and footnotes throughout Curley's edition of Hobbes' *Leviathan*. For the debate between Curley and Martinich see also A.P. Martinich, 'On the Proper Interpretation of Hobbes' Philosophy', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 34 (1996), pp. 273-83; and Edwin Curley's 'Reply to Martinich', pp. 285-7.

⁶⁷ David Wootton, 'Unbelief in Early Modern Europe', *History Workshop Journal*, 20 (1985), pp. 82-100, p. 97.

⁶⁸ See Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996), especially pp. 394-425.

For the purpose of this dissertation, which is an attempt to explain how Hobbes was read and understood by his contemporaries, Hobbes' own personal beliefs or unbelief are in many ways irrelevant. But as will become increasingly clear throughout this work, my own view on this matter is that Hobbes' political theory indicates his knowledge of Augustinian, Calvinist, and particularly Lutheran doctrines. I remain unconvinced by the Straussian argument that Hobbes' use of scripture in the second half of *Leviathan* was a ploy to hide his atheism.⁶⁹ As Sharon Lloyd has pointed out, this cannot be what Hobbes was trying to do because his religious views were so unorthodox.⁷⁰ Stephen State has also made this point, and has noted that there were many ways for an author to publish unorthodox ideas, without fearing the consequences. Hobbes could have published anonymously, or under a pseudonym, or used the dialogue form.⁷¹ Alternatively, he could have decided not to publish at all. I am also unconvinced by the Straussian attempt to reveal hidden meaning in Hobbes' work, because how do we know that the hidden meaning we have revealed is the hidden meaning which Hobbes intended us to reveal? If the hidden meaning in Hobbes' works implied atheism, then the contemporary reaction to *Leviathan* demonstrated that his attempts to hide his atheism were unsuccessful. It seems more likely that Hobbes held certain religious beliefs, and that he was attempting to reconcile these with the findings of his political philosophy. Is it possible to take Hobbes seriously when he claimed, 'Do you think I can be an atheist and not know it? Or, knowing it, durst have offered my atheism to the press?'⁷² Can we also take him at his word when he said that he interrupted his plans to go back to work on *De Corpore* to begin *Leviathan*, which he tells us was a defence of God's laws against claims that the civil war in England was commanded by God?⁷³

⁶⁹ See also J.G.A. Pocock, 'Time, History and Eschatology in the Thought of Thomas Hobbes', in his *Politics, Language and Time* (Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1972), pp. 148-201, p. 162.

⁷⁰ See Sharon A. Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests in Hobbes' Leviathan: The Power of Mind over Matter* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992), p. 17. For Lloyd, in the second half of *Leviathan*, Hobbes was attempting 'to reconcile competing religious interests' by redescription.

⁷¹ See State, *Thomas Hobbes*, pp. 92-3 & 7-8.

⁷² Thomas Hobbes, 'Lessons to the Savilian Professors of the Mathematics', in *English Works VII*, pp. 181-356, p. 350, cited in Malcolm, *Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology*, p. 264.

⁷³ See Thomas Hobbes, 'The Life of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury', translated by J.E. Parsons, Jr., and Whitney Blair, *Interpretation*, 10 (1982), pp. 1-7, p. 4. Hereafter cited as *Hobbes' Prose Autobiography*.

Rather than speculate on Hobbes' own religious beliefs, or lack of them, I want to look at how Hobbes' state of nature was understood by a seventeenth century readership, which approached his political philosophy with certain theological assumptions, namely those of voluntarist protestantism.⁷⁴ I intend to examine all three versions of Hobbes' political theory: *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, *De Cive*, and *Leviathan*.⁷⁵ My method will entail an examination of the state of nature, noting significant changes in each of these works,⁷⁶ along with the criticisms of his contemporaries, and an examination of the views of protestant commentators on the first four chapters of *Genesis*, which describe the original condition of human beings, their Fall, and their life immediately after the Fall. In doing this, I want to point out the scriptural parallels between and divergences from Hobbes' account of the state of nature.

4. The Contemporary Reaction to *Leviathan*.

It is generally the case that human beings are more vociferous in criticism than praise, and the response to Hobbes is no exception to this. If we take a very quick look at Samuel Mintz's list of anti-Hobbes publications, in his book *The Hunting of Leviathan*, we might come to the conclusion that Hobbes had no supporters whatsoever.⁷⁷ But on closer examination, the list of works criticising Hobbes is not all it seems. Mintz himself has pointed out that the majority of Hobbes' contemporary critics were more worried by the atheistic implications of his

⁷⁴ Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests*, p. 19, claims the majority of Hobbes' readers were Calvinist predestinarians.

⁷⁵ The *Elements* was completed in May 1640 and circulated in manuscript form. It was published in two separate unauthorised parts, *Human Nature*, and *De Corpore Politico*, in 1650. *De Cive* was written between 1637 and 1640. It was first published in Paris in April 1642; an enlarged edition in 1647; and finally an English translation, which was probably not by Hobbes, in 1651. *Leviathan* was begun in 1646 in Paris, and published in London in April 1651. The Latin version of *Leviathan* was published in 1668.

⁷⁶ See François Tricaud, 'Hobbes's Conception of the State of Nature from 1640 to 1651: Evolution and Ambiguities', in *Perspectives on Thomas Hobbes*, edited by G.A.J. Rogers & A. Ryan (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988), pp. 107-23, for a detailed account of the changes in Hobbes' various presentations of the state of nature.

⁷⁷ See Samuel I. Mintz, *The Hunting of Leviathan - Seventeenth Century Reactions to the Materialism and Moral Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1962), pp. 157-60. On the contemporary reaction to Hobbes, see also John Bowle, *Hobbes and his Critics - A Study in Seventeenth Century Constitutionalism* (Frank Cass & Co Ltd, London, 1969) new edition with corrections, first edition published in 1951; and Goldie, 'The Reception of Hobbes'.

determinism, than by his political theory itself.⁷⁸ Quentin Skinner has shown that Hobbes had a number of supporters in both France and England; and has also demonstrated that of the works on Mintz's list, there are only twelve tracts which were entirely directed at Hobbes up until his death in 1679; and of these twelve, only six were mainly concerned with his political views.⁷⁹ Secondly, the list of anti-Hobbes publications stretches over the second half of the seventeenth century. It took up to fifty years for many of Hobbes' so-called contemporary critics to respond to his views. Hobbes' works kept their relevance throughout the second half of the seventeenth century, because the issues he had addressed in *Leviathan* remained relevant to debates on religious toleration, exclusion, popery and arbitrary government. When Hobbes died in 1679, during a lapse in the licensing laws, many of his works were reprinted, and because of their continuing relevance to contemporary debates, they provoked new responses.⁸⁰ But it is important to stress that *Leviathan* was not universally condemned. Hobbes had some supporters in England, for example John Webster, John Davies, and Philip Tanny (Tandy).⁸¹ Jon Parkin has also noted that Hobbes was received well amongst some groups, particularly students; and that his dispute with the Presbyterian Wallis, along with his anti-clericalism, brought him allies from the group of Independents at Oxford.⁸²

It is also important to stress that it was *Leviathan*, and not Hobbes' earlier works, that generally caused the hostile response from some of his contemporaries. Hobbes himself referred to the fact that *De Cive* was well received by educated men, whereas '*Leviathan* had made all the clergy my foe. *Each nest of theologians was hostile*'. But for Hobbes, their response to *Leviathan* actually had a beneficial effect - *Leviathan* was read even more as a result.⁸³ Royalist Anglicans appear to have had few problems with Hobbes'

⁷⁸ Mintz, *The Hunting of Leviathan*, p. vii.

⁷⁹ See Skinner, 'Ideological Context', p. 297. See also Quentin Skinner, 'Thomas Hobbes and his Disciples in France and England', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 8 (1966), pp. 153-67. *Hobbes' Correspondence* contains a number of letters from his French admirers. My own examination of the works on Mintz's list has shown that many of them were directed against 'Hobbism' and its supporters, rather than Hobbes' work itself.

⁸⁰ See Parkin, *Science, Religion and Politics*, pp. 224 & 213.

⁸¹ See Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography*, pp. 257-268.

⁸² Parkin, *Science, Religion and Politics*, pp. 163-4.

⁸³ *Hobbes' Prose Autobiography*, pp. 4-5; and *Hobbes' Verse Autobiography*, reprinted in Curley's edition of *Leviathan*, pp. liv-lxiv, p. lvii & lx. See also Skinner, 'Ideological Context', p.

earlier works.⁸⁴ Seth Ward wrote a ‘glowing’ preface to Hobbes’ *Human Nature* in 1650, but went on to become one of his fiercest critics.⁸⁵ Samuel Parker approved of *De Cive*, and used it against *Leviathan*.⁸⁶ William Lucy cited Hobbes’ views in the *Elements*, when they appeared to make more sense than the views Hobbes had expressed in *Leviathan*.⁸⁷ James Tyrrell cited *De Homine* to disprove Hobbes’ ideas on good and evil in *Leviathan*.⁸⁸ Of the contemporary critics whose works I have examined, Roger Coke alone specifically directed his attack against *De Cive*. In Coke’s case, given that he also accused Hobbes of being part of a Catholic conspiracy to overthrow Charles II, it seems likely that he had completely misunderstood Hobbes’ theory. Sir Robert Filmer’s critique was partly directed at *De Cive*, although Filmer approved of Hobbes’ ‘building’, but disliked his ‘foundation’,⁸⁹ while Thomas Tenison’s work was directed against all three versions of Hobbes’ political philosophy.⁹⁰

Why then was *Leviathan* received less well than *De Cive*? There seem to be two main reasons for this, the first of which was Hobbes’ religious opinions. Richard Tuck has cited Hobbes’ defence of independency, his views on the sovereign as sole interpreter of scripture, and his ideas on the Trinity and the soul’s mortality in *Leviathan* as the chief causes of offence to both Anglicans and Presbyterians.⁹¹ The Anglican divine Robert Payne’s references to Hobbes, in his correspondence with Gilbert Sheldon, demonstrate that it was the forty-second

294, who notes that according to a list of ‘the most vendible books in England’ of 1658, Hobbes’ various works on political theory were best sellers.

⁸⁴ See Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography*, p. 257. But see M. Dzelzainis, ‘Edward Hyde and Thomas Hobbes’s *Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*’, *Historical Journal*, 32 (1989), pp. 303-17, p. 316, who claims that Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon ‘found Hobbes unsound on the nature of political obligation from the start...’

⁸⁵ See Malcolm, *Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology*, p. 261. See also Parkin, *Science, Religion and Politics*, p. 155.

⁸⁶ See Parkin, *Science, Religion and Politics*, p. 38.

⁸⁷ See for example William Lucy, *Observations, Censures and Confutations of Divers Errors in the 12, 13, and 14 chap. of Mr. Hobs His Leviathan* (London, 1657), p. 138. Hereafter cited as Lucy, *Observations 1657*, as distinct from Lucy’s work of a very similar title, which examined all chapters of *Leviathan*.

⁸⁸ See for example James Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition of the Law of Nature, according to the principles and method laid down in the Reverend Dr. Cumberland’s (now Lord Bishop of Peterborough’s) Latin treatise on that subject. As also his confutations of Mr. Hobbs’s principles put into another method, with the Right Reverend Author’s approbation* (London, 1692), p. 336.

⁸⁹ Filmer, *Observations*, pp. 184-5.

⁹⁰ See Thomas Tenison, *The creed of Mr. Hobbes examined, in a feigned conference between him and a student in divinity* (London, 1670), Epistle Dedicatory.

⁹¹ See Richard Tuck’s introduction to his edition of *Leviathan* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991), pp. xxiii-xxiv, and also Tuck, *Hobbes*, p. 28.

chapter of *Leviathan*, on ecclesiastical power, that Payne objected to.⁹² A recently discovered letter from Payne to Hobbes confirms the view that it was Hobbes' anticlericalism and Erastianism that caused the hostile response.⁹³ Jon Parkin has argued that the main reason *De Cive* was more acceptable to Anglicans than *Leviathan*, was that in *Leviathan* Hobbes questioned the authority of scripture, and diminished God's involvement in giving the laws of nature their obligatory force.⁹⁴ Johann Sommerville thinks Hobbes' religious opinions were not so different in *De Cive* and *Leviathan*, but in *Leviathan* they were less guarded.⁹⁵ According to Quentin Skinner, it was *Leviathan*, rather than the earlier works that provoked so much hostility because of the change of polemical style.⁹⁶ The second reason for the hostile response to *Leviathan* was that a number of Hobbes' royalist readers thought that he had changed sides, and now supported Oliver Cromwell.⁹⁷ Extracts from Hobbes' political theory were even published, as propaganda for the new Republic, in *Mercurius Politicus*.⁹⁸

In this dissertation I hope to show that there were a number of other areas of disagreement between Hobbes and his contemporary critics, the first of which was voluntarism. Noel Malcolm has demonstrated that Hobbes' contemporary critics were mainly Arminians, Cambridge Platonists and Latitudinarians, and what united them against Hobbes was their anti-voluntarism. On many other doctrinal issues these groups of writers did not necessarily agree amongst themselves.⁹⁹ Jon Parkin has recently qualified Malcolm's argument by showing that it was not so much the critics' anti-voluntarism that united them against

⁹² See Anon., 'Illustrations of the State of the Church during the Great Rebellion', *Theologian and Ecclesiastic*, 7 (1848), pp. 169-75, 219 & 223-4.

⁹³ See Jeffrey R. Collins, 'Christian Ecclesiology and the Composition of *Leviathan*: A newly discovered letter to Thomas Hobbes', *Historical Journal*, 43 (2000), pp. 217-31, p. 230. This is a letter from Robert Payne to Hobbes, dated to the final months of 1649.

⁹⁴ See Parkin, *Science, Religion and Politics*, pp. 68-70.

⁹⁵ See Sommerville, *Thomas Hobbes*, p. 127.

⁹⁶ See Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric*, p. 394. It is noticeable that the amount of space given over to theological argument in each of Hobbes' works increased from the *Elements* to *Leviathan* - see Pangle, 'A Critique', p. 27.

⁹⁷ See Glenn Burgess, 'Contexts for the Writing and Publication of Hobbes's *Leviathan*', *History of Political Thought*, 11 (1990), pp. 675-702; Collins, 'Christian Ecclesiology', pp. 218, 222 & 227-8; Goldie, 'The Reception of Hobbes', pp. 603-4; and Quentin Skinner, 'Conquest and Consent: Thomas Hobbes and the Engagement Controversy', in *The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement 1646-1660*, edited by G.E. Aylmer (Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1972), pp. 79-98.

⁹⁸ See Skinner, 'Ideological Context', p. 311.

⁹⁹ See Malcolm, *Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology*, pp. 62, 209 & 260. See also Martinich, *Two Gods*, especially pp. 32-9, where Martinich also claims that Hobbes was a Calvinist.

Hobbes, but rather their rejection of Hobbes' extreme voluntarism, which amounted to a denial that it was possible to find evidence of God's will in nature.¹⁰⁰ Further, Hobbes' contemporary critics did not represent orthodoxy, but in fact were forced to criticise Hobbes because of the unorthodoxy of their own views.¹⁰¹ But in doing so, many of Hobbes' contemporaries actually incorporated some of his ideas.¹⁰² As Jon Parkin has put it, Hobbes' contemporary critics found many of his ideas 'too useful to be completely abandoned', thus *Leviathan* had 'to be tamed not killed'.¹⁰³ Secondly, Hobbes' critics were interested in arguments concerning origins, whereas Hobbes was much more concerned with how authority was to be maintained, and less concerned with how it originated. Thirdly, as Mark Goldie has noted, the attacks on Hobbes can be described as 'the last gasp of scholastic Aristotelianism'.¹⁰⁴ Hobbes' critics subscribed to the Aristotelian view that nature was the end and perfection of human existence. Hobbes denied this, and appears to have been closer to the Augustinian, Calvinist and Lutheran views that nature had been corrupted, or inverted by the Fall, although admittedly he never made this explicit.

The main argument of this thesis is that what determined how Hobbes' seventeenth century readers responded to his state of nature were their own views on the creation and Fall. Those of Hobbes' contemporaries who went into print against him were mainly Aristotelians, and Arminians, who thought that nature should be judged by her intention or perfection. Although they recognised that the Fall had corrupted human nature, it had not done so to the extent implied by Hobbes' description of the state of nature. Natural sociability and hierarchy were retained after the Fall. Further, the critics understood the natural condition as the original, perfect condition. Although human nature had been corrupted by the Fall, human beings still had the capacity to discover the basic requirements of

¹⁰⁰ See Parkin, *Science, Religion and Politics*, pp. 7, 92 & 171.

¹⁰¹ See Parkin, *Science, Religion and Politics*, pp. 6 & 163, acknowledging his debt to Noel Malcolm. See also Skinner, 'Ideological Context', p. 292, who notes that Hobbes' critics were not representative of contemporary political theory.

¹⁰² See Malcolm, *Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology*, p. 254. See also Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography*, p. 259; and Conal Condren, 'Confronting the Monster: George Lawson's Reaction to Hobbes' *Leviathan*', *Political Science*, 40 (1988), pp. 67-83, p. 67, who notes that Lawson's *Politica Sacra et Civilis* had much in common with *Leviathan*, despite Lawson's earlier criticisms of Hobbes.

¹⁰³ Parkin, *Science, Religion and Politics*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁴ Goldie, 'The Reception of Hobbes', p. 594.

natural law. Thus, reason and the laws of nature were sufficient to maintain peace amongst human beings in the natural condition.¹⁰⁵ Hobbes' views on human nature appear to have been closer to Augustinian, and Reformed interpretations, which argued that since the Fall nature had been inverted. Human beings had lost their dominion as a result of Adam's disobedience. Reason and the laws of nature were no longer sufficient to keep human beings in peace, without a human, coercive authority. Hobbes might well have thought that these things never had been enough - why else did Adam and Eve disobey God?

5. Hobbes and commentaries on *Genesis*.

This dissertation is an attempt to assess whether it was possible for Hobbes' seventeenth century readers to see similarities between Hobbes' description of the state of nature, and the scriptural account of the Fall. A number of Hobbes' contemporary critics understood the natural condition to mean the original, perfect condition of human beings at the creation, and as a result thought that Hobbes' war-like description contradicted scripture. In order to assess whether this would have been the view of all of Hobbes' seventeenth century readers, I will also examine a number of sixteenth and seventeenth century protestant commentaries on the first four chapters of *Genesis*, which described the condition of human beings at the creation, their subsequent fall, and their life immediately after the Fall. Hobbes himself was very dismissive of commentaries, he thought that they simply begot even more commentaries, because even commentaries required interpretation.¹⁰⁶ We do not know for sure that Hobbes had read any Biblical commentaries, although in the Latin version of *Leviathan* he claimed that there was nothing in it contrary to scripture, but admitted that in many places he

¹⁰⁵ Hobbes' contemporary critics also thought that human laws were ultimately dependent on rational principles; whereas Hobbes thought they were dependent on power and command.

¹⁰⁶ See *De Cive*, XVII, 18, p. 219; and also *Leviathan*, XXVI, 25, p. 182, where Hobbes was referring to commentaries on law. See also the following articles on Hobbes' Biblical interpretation: J. Farr, 'Atoms of Scripture: Hobbes and the Politics of Biblical Interpretation', in *Thomas Hobbes and Political Theory*, edited by M.G. Dietz (University Press of Kansas, Kansas, 1990), pp. 172-96; G. Shapiro, 'Reading and Writing in the Text of Thomas Hobbes', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 18 (1980), pp. 147-57; and T.B. Strong, 'How to write Scripture - Words, Authority and Politics in Thomas Hobbes', *Critical Inquiry*, 20 (1993), pp. 128-59, with Victoria Silver's response 'A Matter of Interpretation', pp. 160-70, and Strong's reply to Silver, 'When is a Text not a Pretext? A Rejoinder to Victoria Silver', pp. 172-8.

had 'departed from the opinions of individual theologians'.¹⁰⁷ This implied that he at least knew what those opinions were. Hobbes also had access to a number of commentaries, and other theological books, in the Earl of Devonshire's library at Hardwick Hall.¹⁰⁸ W.H. Greenleaf, and Richard Talaska have argued that Hobbes himself was responsible for ordering books for the Hardwick Library.¹⁰⁹ I am not sure what the evidence for this claim is - Greenleaf does not support his statement with evidence, and Talaska's book has not been published yet. I presume their evidence comes from Aubrey, who states that he had heard Hobbes say, 'that at his lord's house in the countrey there was a good library, and bookes enough for him, and that his lordship stored the library with what bookes he thought fitt to be

¹⁰⁷ *Leviathan*, XLVII (chapter in Latin version), 28, p. 487. Reik, *Golden Lands*, p. 75, has suggested that it was probably during his association with the Great Tew Circle that Hobbes was encouraged to study the influence of the Bible and theology on politics.

¹⁰⁸ See J.J. Hamilton, 'Hobbes' Study and the Hardwick Library', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 16 (1978), pp. 445-53, for a selection of the books Hobbes had access to at Hardwick Hall. I have visited Chatsworth to look at the catalogue of books compiled by Hobbes and his amanuensis, James Wheldon (*Early Catalogue of the Library*, Hobbes MSS E.1.A., dated by Hamilton as late 1620s, but dated by Skinner as 1630s - see Quentin Skinner, 'Thomas Hobbes: Rhetoric and the Construction of Morality', in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 76 (1990), pp. 1-61, p. 37). There are roughly 500 theological books which were in the library at Hardwick at the time. This catalogue will be published in Richard Talaska, *The Hardwick Library and Hobbes' Early Intellectual Development* (Philosophy Documentation Centre, Bowling Green, Ohio, forthcoming in 2002). I would like to thank His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, the Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement and the archivist at Chatsworth, Peter Day, for allowing me to consult the above mentioned catalogue. Also of interest is Chatsworth MS.E.2. This is a shopping list or an ideal library of books, which has been dated by Arrigo Pacchi as 1629-30, when Hobbes returned from his trip to the continent with Clifton, and is apparently in Hobbes' hand. According to Pacchi, Hobbes searched for the information on these books in the catalogue of the Bodleian Library of 1620 and even copied the mistakes from that catalogue. It contains 889 works divided into sections: science, grammar and languages, arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy, astrology, optics, miscellaneous philosophical tracts, military matters, and politics. Of particular interest for scholars of Hobbes' religious views are a number of books on witchcraft, the immortality of the soul, and treatises on state and religion - see Arrigo Pacchi, 'Una "Biblioteca Ideale" di Thomas Hobbes: Il MS E2 Dell'archivio di Chatsworth', in *Acme Annali Di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Universita degli Studi di Milano*, XXI (1968), pp. 5-42 (Thanks to Alessandra Polidori for providing me with a translation of this article). But see also Hamilton, 'Hobbes' Study', p. 447, for a slightly later dating of this catalogue as 1631; and *Hobbes' Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 874, where Noel Malcolm has argued that the list MS.E.2. was compiled by Robert Payne, possibly in 1631 as an aid to Hobbes' tuition of the Earl of Devonshire, and that it may only have come into Hobbes' possession after Payne's death.

¹⁰⁹ See W.H. Greenleaf, 'A Note on Hobbes and the Book of Job', *Annales de la Catedra Francisco Suarez*, 14 (1974), pp. 9-34, p. 16. See also Talaska, *The Hardwick Library*. My information for the contents of this book has been provided by a letter written by Professor Talaska to Peter Day, Keeper of Collections at Chatsworth. Mr. Day let me have a copy of the letter in which Talaska claims MSS E.1.A. is in Hobbes' handwriting, and that Hobbes himself ordered most of the books listed, for his own use, at the expense of the Earl of Devonshire. Unfortunately Professor Talaska died in 1998, and will never see the publication of the book which he had worked on for the last ten years.

bought...’, but whether ‘he’ refers to Hobbes or the Earl of Devonshire seems unclear.¹¹⁰

On Hobbes’ general reading, we have further evidence from Aubrey, who has commented that Hobbes ‘had very few bookes’, and that he ‘never sawe... above halfe a dozen about him in his chamber’, and these included a Greek Testament. Aubrey has also noted that Hobbes must have read a lot, considering how old he was, but that Hobbes ‘was wont to say that if he had read as much as other men, he should have knowne no more than other men’.¹¹¹ As Richard Peters has pointed out, because of the reference to Hobbes’ age, this must refer to his later life, and therefore cannot be used as evidence for his earlier reading, and possible influences.¹¹² Hobbes himself tells us that when he began his employment with the Earl of Devonshire, the Earl ‘offered [him] leisure as well as every sort of book for [his] studies’, and that he read Greek and Latin histories and classical poets.¹¹³ He went on to say that when he returned to England from a trip to the continent in 1636, and was contemplating writing his three part philosophy (body, man and citizen), he gathered materials for this purpose, but what these materials were is unknown.¹¹⁴ There are further references to Hobbes’ reading in his correspondence. In letters from Hobbes to various correspondents, he mentioned: Galileo’s dialogues;¹¹⁵ books on the Sabbath;¹¹⁶ John Selden’s *Mare Clausum* (1635); Sir Edward Herbert’s *De Veritate* (1624);¹¹⁷ and the

¹¹⁰ John Aubrey, *Brief Lives, Chiefly of Contemporaries, set down by John Aubrey, between the years 1669 and 1696*, edited from the author’s mss., by Andrew Clark, 2 volumes (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988), Volume 1, pp. 321-403, pp. 337-8. See also *Hobbes’ Verse Autobiography*, p. lv.

¹¹¹ Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, p. 349. See also pp. 332, 338 & 357 for references to Hobbes’ discovery of Euclid’s *Elements*, Cluverius’ *Historia Universalis*, and Spinoza’s *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*.

¹¹² See Richard Peters, *Hobbes* (Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1956), p. 18, who claims that at least until Hobbes was 40, he read copiously in the Hardwick Library. Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography*, p. 27, thinks that Hobbes did not make much use of the library.

¹¹³ *Hobbes’ Prose Autobiography*, p. 2. See also *Hobbes’ Verse Autobiography*, p. lv.

¹¹⁴ See *Hobbes’ Prose Autobiography*, p. 3.

¹¹⁵ This is *Dialogi dove si discorre i due sopra massimi sistemi del mondo* (Florence, 1632) - see *Hobbes’ Correspondence*, Vol 1, p. 19.

¹¹⁶ See *Hobbes’ Correspondence*, Vol 1, pp. 30-1. Noel Malcolm claims he is referring specifically to Peter Heylyn’s *The History of the Sabbath in Two Bookes* (1636), although he accepts that there were many books published on this topic after the Declaration of Sports of 1633, which Hobbes may also have been referring to.

¹¹⁷ See *Hobbes’ Correspondence*, Vol 1, p. 32.

petition against Bishops.¹¹⁸ Also in a letter from Henry Stubbe to Hobbes, Stubbe mentioned that he had sent Hobbes Wallis' book against Independents.¹¹⁹ A manuscript at Chatsworth demonstrates that Hobbes also read and summarised Scaliger's *De Subtilitate* (1557), probably between 1630 and 1635; and Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Ethics*.¹²⁰ And in *Behemoth* Hobbes recommended *The Whole Duty of Man* as a good system of morality.¹²¹

Hobbes may well have been hostile to scriptural commentaries, but this did not stop him from quoting at length from the Bible itself. Not only did Hobbes use many verses from the Bible throughout his works, but parts of his own prose were constructed in such a way so as to resemble certain verses of scripture.¹²² This of course, may or may not have been deliberate. Hobbes himself echoed the words of God to Adam regarding his nakedness in *De Cive*,¹²³ and in the introduction to *Leviathan* Hobbes claimed that the covenant which created the commonwealth resembled God's pronouncement of 'let us make man'.¹²⁴ Hobbes also alluded to *Genesis* in the *Elements*, when he asked his readers to 'consider

¹¹⁸ *A petition presented to the Parliament from the Countie of Nottingham. Complaining of Grievances under the Ecclesiasticall Government by Archbishops, Bishops, etc* (1641) - see *Hobbes' Correspondence*, Vol 1, p. 120.

¹¹⁹ John Wallis, *Mens sobria serio commendata* (1657) - see *Hobbes' Correspondence*, Vol 1, p. 333, and Malcolm's note p. 311.

¹²⁰ See Malcolm, *Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology*, p. 70. The relevant manuscript is Chatsworth MS A.8.

¹²¹ See Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth or the Long Parliament*, edited by F. Tonnies, with an introduction by S. Holmes (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1990), p. 47. First published unauthorised in late 1670s, and authorised in 1682. *The Whole Duty of Man* refers to [Richard Allestree], *The Whole Duty of Man Laid Down in a Plain Familiar Way* (London, 1658). Allestree was not so complimentary about Hobbes, whom he accused of 'demolishing the whole frame of virtue', in 'A Sermon Preached before the King', November 17, 1667, London, I, 6-7, cited in Ashcraft, 'Hobbes' Natural Man', p. 1081.

¹²² See Benjamin Milner, 'Hobbes on Religion', *Political Theory*, 16 (1988), pp. 400-25, p. 412 who points out the similarity of Hobbes' language in *Leviathan*, XXIX, 8, p. 212: 'Faith comes by hearing...' to the language of *Romans* X.14-17. Edwin Curley also notes this in his footnote to the text of *Leviathan*. See also David Johnston, *The Rhetoric of Leviathan - Thomas Hobbes and the Politics of Cultural Transformation* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1986), pp. 209 & 212 for the similarities between *Leviathan*, XLVII, 34, p. 484 and *Matthew* XII. 43-5; and *Leviathan*, Review & Conclusion, 14, p. 495 and *Matthew* IX. 17. Johnston has argued that Hobbes' aim was a cultural transformation of his readers, and it was this aim which necessitated a reinterpretation of scripture.

¹²³ See *De Cive*, XII, 3, p. 133.

¹²⁴ See *Leviathan*, Introduction, 1, pp. 3-4. See also Martinich, *Two Gods*, p. 48; Charles Cantalupo, "'By Art Is Created That Great... State": Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Hobbes's *Leviathan*', in *Heirs of Fame - Milton and Writers of the English Renaissance*, edited by M. Swiss & D. A. Kent (Bucknell University Press, Lewisburg & London, 1995), pp. 184-207, p. 188; Roshwald, 'The Judeo-Christian Elements', p. 98; and Ted H. Miller, 'Thomas Hobbes and the Constraints that Enable the Imitation of God', *Inquiry*, 42 (1999), pp. 149-76.

men... without covenants or subjection, one to another, as if they were but even now all at once created male and female'.¹²⁵ It is well known that the title of *Leviathan* itself is taken from the forty first chapter of the book of *Job*, and the title of Hobbes' account of the civil war, *Behemoth*, comes from the fortieth chapter of *Job*.¹²⁶

A number of scholars have commented on Hobbes' use of scripture, particularly in the second half of *Leviathan*. The predominant view is that Hobbes' use of scripture was rhetorical. On one view Hobbes used scripture simply because it was expected of a seventeenth century writer, and in this way it hid his apparent atheism.¹²⁷ But given Hobbes' unorthodox religious views, and the response of his contemporaries, his use of scripture certainly did not have this particular desired effect. In the Letter Dedicatory of *Leviathan* Hobbes actually drew the attention of his readers to his unusual scriptural interpretation, with the following statement: 'That which perhaps may most offend are certain texts of Holy Scripture, alleged by me to other purpose than ordinarily they use to be by others. But I have done it with due submission, and also (in order to my subject) necessarily; for they are the outworks of the enemy, from whence they impugn the civil power'.¹²⁸ Is this the action of a covert atheist? Quentin Skinner has argued that Hobbes used scripture to ridicule religion and his opponents,¹²⁹ while both Sharon Lloyd and David Johnston think that Hobbes used scripture as part of a process of re-educating his readers.¹³⁰ According to Johnston, Hobbes' aim was to 'expose the superstitious and magical elements in Christianity so that these could be expelled from Christian doctrine'.¹³¹ My own view is that Hobbes' use of scripture was by no means essential to the argument of the first half of *Leviathan*, or what we might call the specifically political part. Hobbes used scriptural examples as rhetoric to illustrate or support his political arguments, as

¹²⁵ *Elements*, XXII, 2, p. 126.

¹²⁶ See Curley's note to *Leviathan*, Introduction, p. 3; and Greenleaf, 'A Note on Hobbes', pp. 21-6, who discusses the various meanings of the word *Leviathan*. See also Patricia Springborg, 'Hobbes' Biblical Beasts: *Leviathan* and *Behemoth*', *Political Theory*, 23 (1995), pp. 353-75; and Cantalupo, 'By Art is Created', pp. 198-9.

¹²⁷ This view of Hobbes as atheist is taken by Leo Strauss and his followers - see section 3 on Hobbes' own belief or unbelief.

¹²⁸ *Leviathan*, Letter Dedicatory, p. 2.

¹²⁹ See Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric*, p. 405.

¹³⁰ See Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests in Hobbes' Leviathan*, p. 20.

¹³¹ Johnston, *The Rhetoric of Leviathan*, p. 130.

did many other seventeenth century theorists. But scriptural reinterpretation was essential for the second half of *Leviathan*, because Hobbes wanted to show the absurdities caused by the introduction of the philosophy of Aristotle into Christian doctrine, and particularly the separation of spiritual and secular powers which he believed had been partly responsible for causing men to disobey their rightful sovereign.¹³² And in this sense, Hobbes' ideas in the second half of *Leviathan* complement his criticisms of Aristotle, and his argument for obedience to civil sovereigns, in the first half of *Leviathan*.

Hobbes demonstrated his formidable knowledge of scripture in the trilogy which forms his political philosophy, and especially in *Leviathan*. Greenleaf's article is a useful place to start for references to specific Biblical commentators in Hobbes' works. These include: St. Jerome, Cardinal Bellarmine, the Anglican scholar Joseph Mede (or Mead), Calvin, Luther, Melanchthon, and William Perkins,¹³³ although Greenleaf neglected to mention Hobbes' references to Arius, Athanasius, Augustine, Beza, Eusebius, John of Damascus, Justinian, and Tertullian amongst others in *Leviathan*.¹³⁴ Greenleaf also notes that the preface to Hobbes' *Of Liberty and Necessity*, although admittedly not written by Hobbes himself, was a 'diatribe against scriptural commentators'.¹³⁵ I have selected commentaries on *Genesis* which Hobbes' seventeenth century readers would have

¹³² See *Leviathan*, XLVI, 18, p. 460.

¹³³ St. Jerome in *Leviathan* XXXIII, 1, p. 251, & 12, p. 254; Cardinal Bellarmine in numerous places in *Leviathan* XLII & XLIV; the Anglican scholar Joseph Mede (or Mead) in 'An Answer to Bishop Bramhall's Book, called the Catching of the Leviathan', in *English Works*, edited by Sir William Molesworth (11 volumes, London, 1839-45), Volume IV, pp. 281-384, p. 327; Augustine, Calvin, Luther, Melanchthon, and Perkins, in 'The Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity and Chance', in *English Works* V, pp. 64, 266, 298-9 - see Greenleaf, 'A Note on Hobbes', p. 17. Hobbes also referred to Luther approvingly in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, or *A True Ecclesiastical History from Moses to the time of Martin Luther*, translated into English from the Latin original (London, 1722), pp. 130-1 & 181, where as far as Hobbes was concerned Ecclesiastical History stopped with Martin Luther. For Hobbes and Bellarmine, see Patricia Springborg, 'Thomas Hobbes and Cardinal Bellarmine: *Leviathan* and the Ghost of the Holy Roman Empire', *History of Political Thought*, 16 (1995), pp. 503-31. For Hobbes and Reformation thinkers see M. Whitaker, 'Hobbes' view of the Reformation', *History of Political Thought*, 9 (1988), pp. 45-58. Whitaker, p. 49, has described *Leviathan* as a commentary on the Reformation.

¹³⁴ See Index of proper names in Richard Tuck's edition of *Leviathan*, pp. 503-7, which is more comprehensive than Curley's index to his edition of *Leviathan*, although Curley does print a very useful index of Biblical citations. Also see Hobbes' *English Works* XI, which is the index for the other ten volumes, for exact references. Hamilton's article 'Hobbes' Study' also has some useful references to Hobbes' citations of particular works by other authors.



had access to. These were found through keyword and date searches on the online version of the English Short Title Catalogue, as well as from the catalogues of the British Library, and Dr Williams's Library in London. Many of these works also appear on a list of theological books which were in the library at Hardwick Hall during the late 1620s, and 1630s.¹³⁶ Apart from the works of Augustine, Aquinas, Bellarmine, Beza, Bullinger, Calvin, Erasmus, Luther, and many other Church fathers, the Hardwick Library contained Biblical commentaries, and other theological works, by such widely read English writers as: Henry Ainsworth, Gervase Babington, Henoah Clapham, John Donne, John Downname, Joseph Hall, John Salkeld, and Andrew Willet. Having said that I want to stress that my aim is not to demonstrate that Hobbes read and was influenced by these books, but simply that the theological holdings of the Hardwick library could be seen as representative of those commentaries which were widely read in England in the first half of the seventeenth century.

6. State of Nature or Eden?

The aim of this dissertation then, is to explain how Hobbes' state of nature was understood by his contemporary readers, who approached his political philosophy with particular theological assumptions, and who had the scriptural version of the natural condition uppermost in their minds. Did Hobbes' description contradict, confirm, or subvert the scriptural account? As we will see throughout this dissertation, those of Hobbes' contemporary critics who went into print against *Leviathan* found it impossible to reconcile Hobbes' description with scripture. But this was not necessarily the case for all of Hobbes' seventeenth century readers. What determined how Hobbes' contemporary readers reacted to his description of the state of nature were their views on the effects of the Fall. Hobbes was loath to admit any reliance on authorities, and he wrote about commentaries in derogatory terms, but we cannot definitively conclude from this

¹³⁵ Greenleaf, 'A Note on Hobbes', p. 16. The preface was written by John Davies of Kidwelly, who published Hobbes' dispute with Bramhall without Hobbes' consent - see Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography*, p. 267.

¹³⁶ See Chatsworth MSS E.1.A.

that he had not read any scriptural commentaries.¹³⁷ In fact his citation of various commentators, along with his claim that he had departed from some of their opinions, seems to indicate exactly the opposite view. What we can say, is that for those of Hobbes' readers who subscribed to Augustinian, Calvinist, and most importantly Lutheran interpretations of *Genesis*, there were parallels to be seen between Hobbes' account of the state of nature, and the scriptural account of the creation and Fall, although on some points Hobbes could have been understood to have subverted that account. It is this I hope to demonstrate in this dissertation. My research also indicates that Hobbes himself had knowledge of Augustinian and Reformed interpretations of *Genesis*.

I would also like to state in advance that throughout this dissertation I will generally be using Hobbes' terms 'man' and 'men'. There has been much debate about the status of women in Hobbes' political theory. Hobbes himself was not particularly concerned with the relationship between men and women as individuals, but was more concerned with their role as parents, or more particularly their role as governors over families. His omission of specific references to women, especially in the commonwealth, has been taken by some current scholars as evidence of his patriarchal leanings.¹³⁸ I disagree with this view - when Hobbes used the term man, he used it as a universal name, and for

¹³⁷ Skinner, 'Ideological Context', p. 304, has argued that Hobbes' non-reliance on authorities was not unusual in political writing of the time.

¹³⁸ A number of Hobbes' commentators, although noting that in the state of nature women and men were equal, deny that Hobbesian equality also applied to women in civil society - see: Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Polity Press, Cambridge & Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1988); 'God Hath Ordained to Man a Helper: Hobbes, Patriarchy and Conjugal Right', *British Journal of Political Science*, 19 (1989), pp. 445-63; Teresa Brennan & Carole Pateman, 'Mere Auxiliaries to the Commonwealth: Women and the Origins of Liberalism', *Political Studies*, 27 (1979), pp. 183-200; Susan Moller Okin, 'Women and the Making of the Sentimental Family', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 11 (1982), pp. 65-88; and Christine Di Stephano, 'Masculinity as Ideology in Political Theory: Hobbesian Man Considered', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 6 (1983), pp. 633-44. Other scholars note that Hobbes made patriarchalist assumptions, but that these were either accidental to his theory, or did not necessarily imply that his theory was flawed - see: P. Abbott, 'The Three Families of Thomas Hobbes', *Review of Politics*, 42 (1981), pp. 242-58; K. Green, 'Christine de Pisan and Thomas Hobbes', *Philosophical Quarterly*, 44 (1994), pp. 456-75; Gordon J. Schochet, *The Authoritarian Family and Political Attitudes in 17th-Century England - Patriarchalism in Political Thought*, with a new introduction by the author (Transaction Books, New Brunswick & London, 1988), chapter XII; and Gabriella Slomp, 'Hobbes and the Equality of Women', *Political Studies*, 42 (1994), pp. 441-52. Another group of scholars think that Hobbes either subverted patriarchalism or destroyed it - see: R.A. Chapman, 'Leviathan Writ Small: Thomas Hobbes on the Family', *American Political Science Review*, 69 (1975), pp. 76-90; and Preston King, *The Ideology of Order: A Comparative Analysis of Jean Bodin and Thomas Hobbes* (Barnes & Noble, New York, 1974), especially chapter 15.

this reason we can take it to include both genders.¹³⁹ In fact, as we will see in chapters two and five, the Fall may explain some of the problems which have been raised by current Hobbes' scholars, about what appear to be Hobbes' rather contradictory views on women.

Finally, a note on the order of chapters. Each chapter in this dissertation examines a particular aspect, or aspects, of Hobbes' description of the state of nature, and assesses that description against both the criticisms of his contemporaries, and the scriptural account. The order of chapters mostly follows Hobbes' ordering of the various themes which make up his description of the state of nature in *Leviathan*. As a result, the chapter order does not exactly correspond with the scriptural account. As we will see throughout this dissertation, Hobbes' state of nature appears to contain elements of both the pre-lapsarian and post-lapsarian conditions.

¹³⁹ See Slomp, 'Hobbes and the Equality of Women', pp. 441-44; and also chapter two on equality and unsociability.

Chapter One: Good and Evil.

'For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil'. (Genesis III.5)

Hobbes' *De Cive* and *Leviathan* were among a number of books condemned and burnt by the University of Oxford in 1683. In the university's published decree, the eleventh proposition, 'repugnant to the Holy Scriptures, decrees of councils, writings of the fathers, the faith and profession of the primitive church, and also destructive of the kingly government, the safety of His Majesty's person, the public peace, the laws of nature and bonds of human society' was that in 'the state of nature there is no difference between good and evil, right and wrong...'¹

The aim of this chapter is to assess the substance of this accusation. Many of Hobbes' contemporary critics found his state of nature offensive, because they understood the natural condition as the original, perfect and peaceful condition of human beings at the creation. Thus Hobbes' description of an original war-like condition contradicted the scriptural account. George Lawson, the puritan rector of More in Shropshire, criticised his state of nature for this very reason. For Lawson, the original condition of human beings should have been a condition of peace, not war. But Lawson also thought that if by nature Hobbes actually meant the 'corruption of Nature, and the same not only original and native, but also acquired by perpetual acts, so far as to quench the light of Nature, and suppress the vigour of those Principles which God left as reliques of his image, then his Position may be true'.²

So was it possible for Hobbes' seventeenth century readers to understand his state of nature as a description of the corruption of human beings, in other words either as an account of the Fall, or the fallen condition? And if so, did

¹ 'The Judgement and Decree of the University of Oxford, Passed in Their Convocation, July 21, 1683, against Certain Pernicious Books and Damnable Doctrines, Destructive to the Sacred Persons of Princes, Their State and Government, and of All Humane Society', reproduced in *Divine Right and Democracy: An Anthology of Political Writing in Stuart England*, edited by D. Wootton (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1986), pp. 120-26, p. 123.

² George Lawson, *An Examination of the Political Part of Mr. Hobbs His Leviathan* (1657), reproduced in *Leviathan - Contemporary Responses to the Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, edited and introduced by G.A.J. Rogers (Thoemmes Press, Bristol, 1995), pp. 15-114, p. 17. On Lawson see Conal Condren, *George Lawson's Politica and the English Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989); and Condren, 'Confronting the Monster'.

Hobbes' views on good and evil contradict protestant ideas on the ability of fallen human beings to judge good and evil? Hobbes' state of nature can be understood in a number of ways. It was an original condition from which individuals created a commonwealth, and for a number of his contemporary critics this meant that it should have been the condition of human beings at the creation. The state of nature was also an imagined condition from which Hobbes was able to draw consequences about human behaviour.³ But crucially, the state of nature was also a constantly threatening possibility - a condition into which a weakened commonwealth had the potential to dissolve.⁴ In other words, it was a condition into which human beings living in civil society had the potential to fall, if they arrogated to themselves the judgement of good and evil, and in doing so disobeyed (or in extreme cases murdered) their rightful sovereign. If Hobbes' account was understood in this way, then it begins to look rather like the description of Adam and Eve's attempt to attain the knowledge of good and evil, contrary to God's command, which resulted in their Fall and subsequent expulsion from paradise. In the same way the Hobbesian individual's attempt to exercise private judgement, against the command of his civil sovereign, resulted in the disintegration of the commonwealth, and his fall into a state of nature.⁵

The problem for Hobbes' seventeenth century readers was that he did not specify whether he was describing the lives of fallen human beings, or human beings in their original perfect condition, although he had hinted that he was referring to fallen human beings when he claimed that he was interested in human beings as they were, not as they should have been. For Hobbes, if human beings were as they should have been, in other words if they could rule themselves, then there would have been no need for a common coercive power.⁶ But it was not until the Latin version of *Leviathan*, published in 1668, that Hobbes finally associated his state of nature with the example of Cain and Abel, and thus with

³ See A.P. Martinich, *A Hobbes Dictionary* (Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Oxford, 1995), pp. 292-3.

⁴ Bobbio, *Thomas Hobbes*, p. 42, has argued that this understanding of the state of nature was the one which Hobbes was most interested in.

⁵ In the introduction, it was noted that a number of Hobbes' scholars have commented on the similarity between Hobbes' account of the disintegration of the commonwealth, and the account of the Fall - see for example, Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, p. 264; Rauch, 'Secular Fall', p. 99; Hood, *The Divine Politics of Thomas Hobbes*, pp. 175-6 ; and Oakeshott, *Hobbes on Civil Association*, pp. 56, 58 & 82-3.

⁶ See *De Cive*, VI, 13, footnote, p. 84 & XVI, 15, p. 198; and *Leviathan*, XVII, 4, p. 107.

the post-lapsarian condition.⁷ Many of Hobbes' contemporary critics, even those who published after 1668, appear to have been unaware of Hobbes' own citation of Cain and Abel.⁸

But if Hobbes was describing the condition of fallen human beings, then his ideas were not that far removed from those of the moderate puritan, patriarch of Dorchester, and member of the Westminster Assembly, John White. While commenting on *Genesis* III.17, in prose that could have come directly from the pen of Hobbes himself, White described the life of fallen human beings as 'a life of pain and sorrow'.⁹ He went on to describe the apparently 'selfish' individuals familiar to readers of Hobbes. White claimed that a 'man, in this state of corruption, respects none but himself, and cares not on whom he layes the burthen, so he may ease himself', and that 'every man in his natural condition, is a self-lover, that is, a lover of himself only, without respect, either to God or community, both which therefore he must needs neglect for his own private interest'.¹⁰ Further, a 'man cannot naturally desire any thing, but under a shew and appearance of good' and yet man 'is an ill chooser of his own good'.¹¹ White also noted that the nature of man 'by the Art and Policy of Satan, is apt to be carried against all restraint and subjection'.¹² He went on to echo many of Hobbes' ideas on human desire for present good, while ignoring future evil: 'Men are easily to believe, and hope any thing of that which they affect and desire', and even the 'terroures of wrath to come cannot prevaile against strong and violent affections to things that are present'.¹³ For White, law was essential, and even the

⁷ Hobbes' own citation of Cain and Abel may have been in response to the criticism that his state of nature contradicted scripture. Cain and Abel will be discussed in more detail in chapter three on the war of all against all.

⁸ Richard Cumberland appears to have been the exception, by specifically referring to the English and Latin editions of *Leviathan* - see for example Cumberland, *A Treatise of the Laws of Nature*, pp. 173 & 357, although I have not found any references to Cumberland discussing Hobbes' use of Cain and Abel.

⁹ John White, *A Commentary upon the three first chapters of the first book of Moses called Genesis* (London, 1656), Book III, p. 212. White's commentary was published posthumously, and has separate pagination for each chapter of *Genesis*. References will therefore be made to chapter, as well as page number.

¹⁰ White, *A Commentary*, III, p. 148. But for White, I, p. 44, God had created human beings in a condition in which the good of the community was to come before the good of the individual.

¹¹ White, *A Commentary*, III, pp. 90-1.

¹² White, *A Commentary*, III, p. 43.

¹³ White, *A Commentary*, III, pp. 87-8.

‘most righteous amongst the Sons of men, Must and Needs to live under a law’.¹⁴ If God thought it necessary to give a law to Adam in his ‘state of perfection’, it was even more necessary for fallen human beings, because ‘besides all temptations from without, we have within us such a fountain of Corruption breathing out continually Inordinate lusts, that need the strongest bridle to keep them in and suppress them...’¹⁵ White cited two reasons for the necessity of law. Firstly, men could not distinguish between good and evil - only God knew what was good and it was God’s will which was the measure of goodness. Secondly, when we obeyed God’s law, we demonstrated our subjection to him, and also that we took his will (which was goodness) as the rule of our actions.¹⁶ Was it possible for Hobbes’ seventeenth century readers, who had similar views to those of John White, to see parallels between Hobbes’ ideas on good and evil, and the account of the Fall?

1. Hobbes on Good and Evil.

Hobbes thought that good and evil did not exist as concrete realities in nature. They were simply names which individuals applied to their own and other people’s actions. For Hobbes’ natural man, good was simply whatever pleased him, and evil whatever displeased him. And because ‘every man differeth from other in constitution, they differ also one from another concerning the common distinction of good and evil’.¹⁷ The actions which human beings called good and evil were different in different places and ages; and

divers men differ not only in their judgement on the senses (of what is pleasant and unpleasant to the taste, smell, hearing, touch, and sight), but also of what is conformable or disagreeable to reason in the actions of common life. Nay, the same man in divers times differs from himself, and one time praiseth (that is, calleth good) what another time he dispraiseth (and calleth evil); from whence arise disputes, controversies, and at last war.¹⁸

¹⁴ White, *A Commentary*, II, p. 70.

¹⁵ White, *A Commentary*, II, p. 75

¹⁶ See White, *A Commentary*, II, p. 70.

¹⁷ *Elements*, VII, 3, p. 44. See also *Leviathan*, VI, 8, p. 29.

¹⁸ *Leviathan*, XV, 40, p. 100.

There was nothing 'simply good. For even the goodness that we attribute to God Almighty is his goodness to us'.¹⁹ Good was always 'relative to person, place and time', and 'the nature of good and evil follows from the nature of circumstances'.

There

can be a common *good*, and it can rightly be said of something, *it is commonly a good*, that is, useful to many, or good for the state. At times one can also talk of a good for everyone, like health: but this way of speaking is relative; therefore one cannot speak of something as being *simply good*; since whatsoever is good, is good for someone or other.

Even when God created the world, and saw that his works were good, he did so because his works pleased him.²⁰

So Hobbes thought that there was nothing simply good or evil, but that good and evil were relative to person, time and place. Human beings named an action good or evil according to their passions, and because different men had different passions, and these were constantly changing, this meant that they also had different ideas about what was good and what was evil. Because the state of nature was a condition where good and evil were judged according to the passions, or the private appetite, of each individual, and these were different in each, there was no agreement on good and evil. As a result, the natural condition was a state of war. But according to Hobbes, once individuals found themselves in this condition, they 'easily recognize that this state is evil... and consequently that peace is good. Thus though they cannot agree on a present good, they do agree on a future good. And that is the work of reason; for *things present* are perceived by the senses, *things future* only by reason'.²¹

Hobbes' natural individuals could not agree on present goods, because of the variety of their passions, but they could agree on a future good demonstrated by reason. The problem was that men had an 'irrational desire' which made them

¹⁹ *Elements*, VII, 3, p. 44.

²⁰ Thomas Hobbes, *De Homine*, translated by Charles T. Wood, T.S.K. Scott-Craig, and Bernard Gert, in Thomas Hobbes, *Man and Citizen*, edited with an introduction by Bernard Gert (Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis & Cambridge, 1991), chapter X, section 4, p. 47. First published in 1658.

²¹ *De Cive*, III, 31, p. 55. This statement was omitted from the corresponding argument in *Leviathan*, XV, 40, p. 100, where Hobbes moved swiftly on from a description of a state of nature where private appetite was the measure of good and evil, to the claim that 'all men agree on this, that peace is good; and therefore also the way or means of peace... are good... and their contrary vices, evil'.

‘reject future goods for the sake of present goods (which inevitably entail unexpected evils)’.²² In *De Homine* Hobbes discussed the idea of apparent good and evil. Hobbes thought that when human beings deliberated over which course of action to take, they imagined the consequences of their actions. This meant that

the good and evil effect thereof dependeth on the foresight of a long chain of consequences, of which very seldom any man is able to see to the end. But for so far as a man seeth, if the good in those consequences be greater than the evil, the whole chain is that which writers call *apparent* or *seeming good*. And contrarily, when the evil exceedeth the good, the whole is *apparent* or *seeming evil*...²³

As a result, ‘inexperienced men that do not look closely at the long-term consequences of things, accept what appears to be good, not seeing the evil annexed to it; afterwards they experience damage. And this is what is meant by those who distinguish good and evil as *real* and *apparent*’.²⁴ Hobbes also thought that there were three kinds of good: ‘good in the promise, that is *pulchrum*; good in effect, as the end desired, which is called *jucundum, delightful*; and good as the means, which is called *utile, profitable*’. Correspondingly, there were three kinds of evil: ‘evil in promise is that they call *turpe*; evil in effect and end is *molestum, unpleasant, troublesome*; and evil in the means inutility, *unprofitable, hurtful*’.²⁵ As we will see throughout this dissertation, Hobbes was most interested in good and evil in effect.

For Hobbes, the lack of knowledge of good and evil was the main reason irrational creatures, such as bees and ants, could live together ‘in such good order and government, for their common benefit... free from sedition and war amongst themselves’; whereas human beings could not.²⁶ The common good of irrational creatures (peace and food) did not differ from their private good, whereas men’s private goods (property and dominion) were different in every man, and could not be common because of two passions: the desire to be superior to others; and the desire to have what seemed good immediately. Bees and ants lacked reason, and thus learning, which meant that they were content with their government, unlike

²² *De Cive*, III, 32, pp. 55-6.

²³ *Leviathan*, VI, 57, p. 34. See also *Elements*, VII, 8, p. 45.

²⁴ *De Homine*, X, 5, p. 48.

²⁵ *Leviathan*, VI, 8, p. 29. See also the similar discussion in *De Homine*, X, 5, p. 47.

²⁶ *Elements*, XIX, 5, p. 105. See also the corresponding accounts in *Leviathan*, XVII, 6 - 12, pp. 108-9; and *De Cive*, V, 5, pp. 71-2.

men, and some particular men, who criticised and desired change. Bees and ants were directed only by pleasure and pain. They did not have any conception of right and wrong, and thus as long as they were comfortable, they were not offended by others. But men made themselves judges of right and wrong in other men, and when they were most comfortable, that was when they were most troublesome.²⁷ These

creatures, though they have some use of voice (in making known to one another their desires and other affections), yet they want that art of words by which some men can represent to others that which is good in the likeness of evil, and evil in the likeness of good, and augment or diminish the apparent greatness of good and evil, discontenting men, and troubling their peace at their pleasure.²⁸

In the state of nature it was possible for human beings to get to the stage where they all agreed on a future good, i.e. peace. They could even get to the stage where they agreed on the virtues which led to peace. But they could not agree 'on their nature, that is, on what each one of them consists in'. In other words, human beings could agree on the end, but not on the means to that end. If an individual disliked another individual's good action, he simply called it a vice. Or an individual could redescribe a wicked action, which pleased him, as a virtue.²⁹ Quentin Skinner has demonstrated that Hobbes was concerned with a rhetorical technique called *paradiastolic* redescription, which enabled the redescription of virtue as vice, or vice as virtue.³⁰ According to Skinner, there were two problems with words for Hobbes. Firstly, there were many words, which had more than one meaning, especially when used in different contexts. Secondly, the problem was further exacerbated by the diversity of men's passions, which led to different men describing the same action in different ways - as either virtue or vice. Even if individuals agreed on the meaning of words which signified virtues and vices, they might not agree on the actions which fell into the category of virtue and vice.³¹ It was speech, and more particularly the art

²⁷ See *Elements*, XIX, 5, p. 106.

²⁸ *Leviathan*, XVII, 10, p. 108.

²⁹ *De Cive*, III, 32, pp. 55-6.

³⁰ See Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric*, p. 279ff.; and 'Rhetoric and the Construction of Morality', especially pp. 31-38, and on p. 29, where Skinner notes Thucydides' attack on *paradiastolic* speech, although he admits it was not referred to by name.

³¹ See Skinner, 'Rhetoric and the Construction of Morality', pp. 32-3.

of rhetoric, which caused the problems. In *De Cive* Hobbes described man's tongue as the 'trumpet to war and sedition'. It had the ability to 'make the Good appear Better, and the Bad Worse, than they really are'.³²

2. The 'seditious doctrines' of the Schoolmen.

Hobbes criticised those philosophers who had not dealt with the lack of agreement about which actions did, or did not, constitute the virtues. He claimed that these philosophers did not realise that whatever action led to peace was good, and whatever action led to war was evil. Hobbes accused them of constructing a moral philosophy, 'which is alien to the *moral law*... for they have taken the view that the nature of the *virtues* lies in a certain mean between two *extremes*, and vices in the *extremes* themselves, and this is patently false'.³³ Hobbes' target was the moral philosophy of the followers of Aristotle - the Schoolmen. Hobbes was critical of their moral philosophy because he thought it created a state of nature, or a state of war, within civil society, where private appetite replaced the civil laws (which included the laws of nature) as the measure of good and evil. Hobbes even went so far as to say that it was the political philosophy of Aristotle, and those Romans who had followed him, which was the cause of the civil wars concerning religion in Germany, France and England. According to Hobbes, Aristotle 'did not define virtue and vice by laws, but by praise and blame among the citizens'.³⁴

Hobbes thought that human beings constructed rules of good and evil according to their own passions, and he believed that the Schoolmen were an example of this practice. Because human beings had different passions, it followed that there could be no common rules of good and evil, and each individual would do whatever he considered good, even if that led to the dissolution of the commonwealth.³⁵ For Hobbes, the measure of good and evil 'without civil government, was the law of nature; and in it, the law civil, that

³² *De Cive*, V, 5, p. 71.

³³ *De Cive*, III, 32, p. 56.

³⁴ *Leviathan*, XLVI Latin edition, 23, p. 476.

determineth what is *honest* and *dishonest*, what is *just* and *unjust*, and generally what is *good* and *evil*'.³⁶ The laws of nature must be from reason, not passion, because reason was the same in all men, whereas passion was not.³⁷ Hobbes wanted to establish a moral philosophy which was based on unchanging reason, rather than constantly changing passions. His account of the laws of nature, which will be discussed in chapter four, was designed to achieve this aim.

In the chapter of *Leviathan* entitled 'Of those things that Weaken a Commonwealth', Hobbes described a number of 'seditious doctrines', which he thought had a tendency to incite rebellion. And in the English edition, although not in the Latin version, he claimed that three of these doctrines which were

pernicious to peace and government, have in this part of the world proceeded chiefly from the tongues and pens of unlearned divines who, joining the words of Holy Scripture together otherwise than is agreeable to reason, do what they can to make men think that sanctity and natural reason cannot stand together.³⁸

The first of these opinions was the doctrine that '*every private man is judge of good and evil actions*'. According to Hobbes, this doctrine would be true in a state of nature where there were no civil laws, and also in civil society in those areas of life not legislatively determined, and where each individual was his own judge of good and evil. But in all other cases within civil society, the civil law was 'the measure of good and evil actions', and the representative of the commonwealth, in other words the sovereign, was judge. 'From this false doctrine men are disposed to debate with themselves, and dispute the commands of the commonwealth, and afterwards to obey or disobey them, as in their private judgements they shall think fit. Whereby the commonwealth is distracted and *weakened*'.³⁹ As we will see in chapter four, in the state of nature, by right of nature, every individual was judge of what conduced to his own preservation -

³⁵ In *De Homine*, X, 4, p. 47, Hobbes stated that 'Aristotle hath well defined good as that which all men desire', but then went on to note the problems this caused because different men desired different things.

³⁶ *Leviathan*, XLVI, 11, pp. 456-7.

³⁷ See *Elements*, XV, 1, p. 82.

³⁸ *Leviathan*, XXIX, 8, p. 213. Hobbes' omission of this accusation from the Latin edition of *Leviathan* might have been an attempt to make his political theory less offensive.

³⁹ *Leviathan*, XXIX, 6, p. 212. This seditious doctrine was missing from the corresponding passage in the *Elements*, XXVII, 5, pp. 165-6, where Hobbes only referred to the doctrine that an individual cannot act against his conscience.

this meant that he was judge of good and evil, and his own interpreter of natural law. But this was not the case in the commonwealth, where the civil law was the measure of good and evil, and individuals had appointed a sovereign to arbitrate in disputes between them.

Another seditious doctrine, ‘that *whatsoever a man does against his conscience is sin*’ was a direct result of individuals making themselves judges of good and evil. For Hobbes, judgement and conscience were the same thing, and both could be erroneous. The man who was not subject to law sinned in everything he did against his conscience, because he had no other rule to follow but his own reason. But this was not the case in a commonwealth, where the law was the public conscience. If this were not so, the diversity of private opinions and private consciences would cause chaos - men would obey the sovereign only if it seemed good to them.⁴⁰ Earlier in *Leviathan* Hobbes had argued that the word ‘conscience’ was used by individuals ‘for the knowledge of their own secret facts and secret thoughts’, and also to refer to their own new opinions, which he claimed they only thought, but did not know, to be true.⁴¹ In *De Cive* Hobbes noted that sometimes an individual could regard an action performed by another individual as a sin, and yet if he himself performed the same action, he did not think he committed a sin. This was because whatever seemed good to any man, he therefore considered to be right. He used the example of a sovereign commanding a citizen to fight in a war, which the citizen believed to be unjust. The citizen must obey his sovereign and go to war, otherwise he would be taking upon himself the judgement of what was just and unjust, and this power belonged to the commonwealth.⁴²

A third seditious doctrine, which yet again was a result of individuals becoming judges of good and evil, was that ‘faith and sanctity are not to be attained by study and reason, but by supernatural inspiration or infusion...’ If this were the case, then any Christian could claim his own inspiration as the rule of

⁴⁰ *Leviathan*, XXIX, 7, p. 212; and also *Elements*, XXVII, 5, pp. 165-6.

⁴¹ *Leviathan*, VII, 4, p. 36. See also *Elements*, VI, 8, p. 42, where conscience was simply ‘opinion of evidence’, or an individual’s opinion of his own knowledge of something. As Edwin Curley has pointed out, this was not the traditional Christian view of conscience. For instance Calvin thought that conscience was a sense of morality which had been implanted in human beings by God - see Curley’s footnote to *Leviathan*, VII, 4, p. 36. But see the discussion of both Calvin’s and Hobbes’ views of conscience in chapter four on the laws of nature.

his action. In *Leviathan* Hobbes chose what may or may not have been a significant phrase to describe the result of this seditious doctrine: ‘And thus we fall again into the fault of taking upon us to judge of good and evil, or to make judges of it such private men as pretend to be supernaturally inspired, to the dissolution of all civil government’.⁴³ Interestingly, as if checking himself, in the Latin edition of *Leviathan* this sentence was replaced with: ‘This, again, is to arrogate to oneself the judgement of good and evil, and disregarding the laws of the commonwealth, to offer oneself to be governed either by one’s own discretion or by that of private men who fraudulently claim to have been supernaturally inspired’.⁴⁴

But what Hobbes took to be the Schoolmen’s rules of good and evil were not in fact that dissimilar to his own definitions of good and evil, which in a state of nature were simply what an individual judged would cause him pleasure or pain. Hobbes accused the Schoolmen of defining good and evil in exactly the same way, according to passion or private appetite, and thus creating a state of nature within civil society. For Hobbes, if we considered individuals ‘governed every one by his own law [then]... in the condition of men that have no other law but their own appetites, there can be no general rule of good and evil actions’.⁴⁵ But he also argued that it was the law of nature, which was the measure of good and evil outside civil government, or in a state of nature. The problem was, as we will see in chapter four, the law of nature did not in itself preserve peace without a common power to enforce it. Even if individuals in the state of nature had laws of nature, or common rules of good and evil, dictated by reason, their passions overpowered their reason, and they would ‘willingly break the law, whenever it seems that greater good or lesser evil will come to themselves from breaking it’.⁴⁶ In *Leviathan* Hobbes claimed that the laws of nature, ‘without the terror of some power to cause them to be observed, are contrary to our natural passions, that carry us to partiality, pride, revenge and the like’.⁴⁷ If members of a

⁴² See *De Cive*, XII, 2, pp. 132-3.

⁴³ *Leviathan*, XXIX, 8, p. 212.

⁴⁴ *Leviathan* (Latin version), XXIX, 8, p. 212. See also *De Cive*, XII, 6, pp. 135-6. This seditious doctrine was not mentioned in the *Elements*.

⁴⁵ *Leviathan*, XLVI, 32, p. 464.

⁴⁶ *De Cive*, V, 1, p. 69.

⁴⁷ *Leviathan*, XVII, 2, p. 106; and *Elements*, XIX, 1, p. 103.

commonwealth applied the moral philosophy of the Schoolmen, and judged good and evil according to passions, the state of nature would be the result. This was the reason human beings had left the natural condition, and created commonwealths. Judgement made according to the diversity of passions resulted in a condition which was contrary to the one passion all human beings shared - the desire for life, or the fear of death. Hobbes seems to have thought that there was both agreement and disagreement on good and evil in the state of nature. Human beings were always in a condition in which there were objective rules of good and evil, but as we will see in chapter four, on the laws of nature, this did not mean that they would necessarily follow these rules.

So the authors of the University of Oxford decree were correct in their assessment of Hobbes' ideas on good and evil in the state of nature. For Hobbes, in the natural condition good and evil were judged according to each individual's passions, which were different in every individual, and also constantly changing. Thus there could be no agreement on good and evil - they were relative to person, time and place. But this type of good, according to private appetite, was present good. There was another good, which Hobbes thought that it was possible for individuals to agree on. That was future good, which was demonstrated by reason. But there were a number of problems to be overcome in arriving at agreement on this future good. Firstly, individuals might well have come to an agreement on a future good, and even on the virtues which led to that future good, but they disagreed on which actions constituted those virtues. Secondly, human beings had an irrational desire to have whatever seemed good to them immediately, and they also desired to be superior to others. But the University of Oxford's valuation of the natural condition was different from that of Hobbes. As we will see throughout this dissertation, nature, for Hobbes, was not an ideal condition.

3. The Contemporary Reaction.

As we have seen above, Quentin Skinner has shown that Hobbes was concerned with a rhetorical device called *paradiastolic* redescription, or the redescription of

virtue as vice, and vice as virtue.⁴⁸ Robert South, chaplain to the Earl of Clarendon, and one of Hobbes' contemporary critics, also commented on the 'Similitude, Neighbourhood, and Affinity, which is between *Vice* and *Vertue*, *Good* and *Evil...*', and the difficulty most men had in discerning between good and evil.⁴⁹ In a sermon on *Isaiah* V.20, entitled 'The Fatal Imposture and Force of Words', directed against Hobbes amongst others, South informed his listeners that:

From the beginning of the World, to this day, there was never any great Villainy acted by Men, but it was in the strength of some great Fallacy put upon their Minds by a false representation of *Evil* for *Good*, or *Good* for *Evil*. *In the day, that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*, says God to *Adam*; and so long as *Adam* believed this, he did not eat. But, says the Devil, *In the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt be so far from surely dying, that thou shalt be Immortal, and from a Man, grow into an Angel; and upon this different account of the thing, he presently took the Fruit, and ate Mortality, Misery and Destruction to himself, and his whole Posterity... God commanded, and told Man what was Good, but the Devil sur-named it Evil, and thereby baffled the Command, turned the World topsy turvy and brought a new Chaos upon the whole Creation.*⁵⁰

Here South implied, and I think Hobbes and Quentin Skinner would agree, that the devil was guilty of *paradiastolic* redescription - the devil redescribed God's command to Adam and Eve, and in doing so good became evil. Thus since the Fall, human beings had imperfect knowledge of good and evil.

South went on to accuse Hobbes of two false opinions: that good and evil were not to be found in things themselves, but only in men's opinions; and that good and evil were originally found in the laws and commands of the civil sovereign.⁵¹ For South, this implied that morality changed as the opinions and laws of men changed. South thought that an action was morally good or evil according to whether it was agreeable, or disagreeable, to right reason, and

⁴⁸ See Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric*, p. 279ff.; and 'Rhetoric and the Construction of Morality', especially pp. 31-38.

⁴⁹ Robert South, 'The Fatal Imposture, and Force of Words set forth in a sermon preached on *Isaiah* V.20, May the 9th 1686', in *Twelve Sermons preached upon several occasions, first volume* (London, 1692), pp. 427-81, pp. 466 & 468. On South see: G. Reedy, *Robert South, 1634-1716: An Introduction to His Life and Sermons* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992); and I. Simon, *Three Restoration Divines: Barstow, South, and Tillotson* (Paris, 1967).

⁵⁰ South, 'The Fatal Imposture', pp. 431-2.

⁵¹ See South, 'The Fatal Imposture', pp. 437-9. The latter was the implication of Hobbes' claim that in the commonwealth the sovereign was the measure of good and evil. Thus before commonwealths, there was no measure of good and evil.

because reason was unchanging, then so was morality. If we considered actions generally, then their morality depended on circumstances, but a particular action came with a particular set of circumstances which defined it as good or evil.⁵² According to South, natural law came before all human and divine positive law. It was natural law which informed us of our duty to God and our neighbours. This duty to our neighbour 'is comprized in that great Rule, of *doing, as a Man would be done by.*' This

is as old as Adam, and bears date with humane Nature itself; as springing from that Primitive Relation of *Equality*, which all men as *fellow Creatures* and *fellow Subjects* to the same Supreme Lord, bear to one another, in respect of that common Right, which every man has *equally* to his life, and to the proper Comforts of life; and consequently, to all things actually necessary to the support of both.⁵³

In this sermon South attacked Hobbes, but it is worth noting that they shared some similar opinions on: natural equality; the right of self-preservation; the difficulty of discerning between good and evil; and the existence of laws of nature found out by right reason and encapsulated in the Golden Rule 'Do unto others as you would be done to'.⁵⁴ Jon Parkin has recently suggested that some of Hobbes' seventeenth century commentators, although apparently criticising Hobbes, actually appropriated some of his ideas.⁵⁵ South might be a good example of this. Alternatively, his ideas might have been derived independently of any reading of Hobbes. It might have been the case that both men simply shared a common intellectual heritage.

South's sermon is a good summary of contemporary reaction to Hobbes' account of good and evil. Hobbes' ideas were criticised by his contemporaries for a number of reasons. Firstly, his claim that in the commonwealth the civil law, or the command of the civil sovereign, was the measure of good and evil implied for many of his contemporary critics, that before commonwealths came into

⁵² See South, 'The Fatal Imposture', pp. 434-6.

⁵³ South, 'The Fatal Imposture', pp. 448-9.

⁵⁴ Admittedly Hobbes used a negative formulation of this rule, and his version of natural law concerned relations between human beings, and not relations between human beings and God. I will discuss Hobbes' laws of nature in chapter four.

⁵⁵ See Jon Parkin, 'Hobbism in the Later 1660s: Daniel Scargill and Samuel Parker', *Historical Journal*, 42 (1999), pp. 85-108; and Parkin, *Science, Religion and Politics*. See also Malcolm, *Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology*, p. 254, who first suggested this idea with reference to Richard Cumberland.

existence, there was no such thing as good and evil. More importantly, this implied that God did not give the laws of nature to his creation. For John Bramhall, the Arminian Bishop of Armagh, this was quite simply an insult to God. There had always been empires in the world, and Adam had the laws of nature written in his heart before there was such a thing as civil law. It was unbelievable that ‘God should create man and leave him presently without any rules to his own ordering of himself, as the Ostridge leaveth his eggs in the sand’.⁵⁶ The lawyer John Whitehall made a similar point, but put it more crudely with his rhetorical question, if ‘Cain had lain with his Mother, there being no positive Law to prohibit it at that time, that we know of, had it been no sin?’⁵⁷ James Lowde thought that Hobbes’ opinion supposed either ‘no God at all, or such an one, as doth not much concern himself in the Government of the World, but, leaves all to his Viceregent here below; obey the King, and you can scarce, according to him, disobey God’. Hobbes had made a God out of his *Leviathan* by granting him this power.⁵⁸ Similarly, John Eachard, vice-chancellor of Cambridge University, charged Hobbes’ sovereign with being ‘the maker of all good and evil’.⁵⁹

If the command of the civil sovereign was the measure of good and evil in the commonwealth, then this also implied that the laws of nature were changeable, as civil sovereigns changed. For James Tyrrell, critic of Filmer and friend of Locke,

those general, and universal Causes, which procure the preservation, or mischief of Mankind, do depend upon such fixt Principles in Nature, as are not to be altered by the judgment of any Judge, whether he be a single

⁵⁶ John Bramhall, *Castigations of Mr. Hobbes. His last animadversions, in the case concerning Liberty, and Universal Necessity, Wherein all his Exceptions about that Controversie are fully satisfied* (1658), reproduced in *Leviathan - Contemporary Responses to the Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, edited and introduced by G.A.J. Rogers (Thoemmes Press, Bristol, 1995), pp. 115-79, p. 135. See also John Dowel, *The Leviathan Heretical: or the charge exhibited in parliament against M. Hobbs, justified by the refutation on a book of his, entitled The Historical Narration of Heresie and the Punishments thereof* (Oxford, 1683), p. 82.

⁵⁷ John Whitehall, *The Leviathan Found Out: or the answer to Mr. Hobbes’s Leviathan, in that which my Lord Clarendon hath past over* (London, 1679), p. 23.

⁵⁸ James Lowde, *A Discourse concerning the Nature of Man, both in his Natural and Political Capacity. Born as he is a Rational Creature and Member of Civil Society. With an examination of some of Mr. Hobbs’s Opinions relating hereunto* (London, 1694), p. 163. I have been unable to find any biographical information on James Lowde.

⁵⁹ John Eachard, *Some Opinions of Mr Hobbs considered in a Second dialogue between Philautus and Timothy* (London, 1673), p. 241.

man in the state of Nature, or the Supream Powers in the Commonwealth.⁶⁰

John Shafte asked if there were no rules of good and evil prior to the existence of commonwealths, then how could commonwealths be founded on those principles? For Shafte,

without Natural Justice, Charity and Temperance, it is vain to think any Civil Government can subsist, the designe of all Civil Government being the execution of these Laws, in order to Self-preservation; there being no need of any Civil Magistrate, if these Laws could be made to be observed without their help...⁶¹

For similar reasons, Hobbes' contemporary critics also objected to his argument that justice and injustice only related to men in society, and not in solitude, because this also implied that before commonwealths came into existence, there was no such thing as justice or injustice. William Lucy, the Arminian Bishop of St. David's, admitted that justice and injustice were acquired, and not innate habits, but Lucy thought that even solitary individuals could acquire the virtue of justice, although he admitted that 'to act accordingly requires a present Object...'⁶² For Lucy, the virtues 'are those things which perfect the soule, which make the work and worker good, but no force doth that, neither doth it assist in doing but it is indifferent to good or bad...'⁶³ It was not possible for Hobbes' civil sovereign to compel justice, if there was no such thing as justice in the state of nature.

Hobbes' argument that the common good of human beings was different from individual private goods also came in for criticism from some of his contemporaries. For James Tyrrell, the private good of human beings did not differ from their common good, or at least it was not a sufficient reason for men to fall out.⁶⁴ Tyrrell admitted that there had been different ideas of some goods at different times, but there were goods which remained constant. These included:

⁶⁰ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 285. On Tyrrell see J.W. Gough, 'James Tyrrell, Whig Historian and Friend of John Locke', *The Historical Journal*, 19 (1973), pp. 581-610.

⁶¹ John Shafte, *The Great Law of Nature, or Self Preservation Examined, Asserted and Vindicated from Mr. Hobbes his Abuses. In a small discourse; part Moral, part Political, and part Religious* (London, 1673), p. 19. I have been unable to find any biographical information on John Shafte.

⁶² Lucy, *Observations 1657*, p. 128.

⁶³ Lucy, *Observations 1657*, p. 126.

⁶⁴ See Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 336.

loving and obeying God; duties to parents, friends and neighbours; the preservation of the lives, liberties and estates of innocent parties; and fidelity in marriage. These all had the common good of human beings as their aim. Tyrrell thought that it was

a matter of great moment to have a fixed and constant notion of Good; because as long as this is fluctuating and uncertain, all knowledge of our true Felicity (which is the greater Good of every man) as also of the Laws of Nature, and of all particular Vertues (which are nothing but the means and causes of obtaining this Good) will be likewise various, wandring and uncertain.⁶⁵

Quite simply, human beings needed a common good, otherwise good and evil would always be relative to individual men.⁶⁶

Tyrrell claimed that Hobbes himself acknowledged that private good and common good existed even outside civil society, and he cited Hobbes' *De Homine*, chapter ten: 'But we supposed the knowledge of the Common Good, to be a fit means to bring men both to Peace, and Vertue; because it is both amiable in its own Nature, and the surest defence of each man's private Good'.⁶⁷ Further, Hobbes admitted that it was a greater good which benefited many people, rather than fewer.⁶⁸ Tyrrell thought that Hobbes' error in his views on good and evil was caused by his lack of differentiation between natural and moral goods. A good was 'that which preserves, encreases, or perfects the Faculties and Powers of one or more things...'⁶⁹ A moral good was defined as:

those voluntary Actions and Habits which are conformable to the Law of Nature, or Reason, considered as given by God, as a Lawgiver, for a Rule of all our Humane, or voluntary Actions: For there are many natural Goods that conduce to a man's happiness, which are not morally good, nor are commanded by any Law.

⁶⁵ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 304.

⁶⁶ See Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 314.

⁶⁷ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 336. Tyrrell claimed he was citing 'the very last words' from chapter 10 of *De Homine*, but I have been unable to locate this quotation in either Hobbes' *Latin Works*, or the translation of *De Homine* which I have been using. Either Tyrrell was quoting from something else, possibly Cumberland, or Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, or he had access to a different version of *De Homine*.

⁶⁸ See Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 313. Tyrrell here cited Hobbes' *De Homine*, XI, 14, p. 53.

⁶⁹ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 306.

According to Tyrrell, all moral goods, i.e. commands of God, 'conduce to the happiness of mankind'.⁷⁰

Richard Cumberland, Bishop of Peterborough, admitted that there were private goods, separate from the common good; but Cumberland thought that human beings were aware of the difference when they acted. As Cumberland put it, there were:

certain Motions, Powers, and Actions of all Things whatsoever, and consequently also of Men, whence we perceive that something is done tending to the Preservation or more flourishing Condition of others, do *naturally imprint* upon us the notion of a *Good common to many*; and *because* the *Nature* of Things will not permit us, to think all kinds of Motions or Actions *equally* conducive to this End, that *therefore Nature* does sufficiently *instruct* us, That there is a *difference* between Things *good* and *evil*, whether they relate to many, or to Individuals.⁷¹

Cumberland also disagreed with Hobbes' claim that human beings pursued only their own private good, and that good was simply what the individual desired.⁷²

For Cumberland,

things are *first judg'd* to be *Good*, and that they are *afterwards desir'd*, only so far as they *seem Good*: That any thing is therefore *truly judg'd Good*, because its *Effect* or Force *truly helps* Nature: That a *Private Good* is that which profits *One*; *Publick*, which is of advantage to *Many*; *not* because it is *desir'd* from *Opinion*, whether true or false; or *delights*, for this or that Moment of time.⁷³

James Lowde thought that private good and common good had been linked together by God, who

in the wise and benign disposals of his Providence, has twisted our duty and our interest together: Goodness and Vertue have a natural tendency to make us as perfectly happy, as 'tis possible even in our civil and political Capacities; but then they are not therefore only Vertues, because profitable to the publick, but upon some other higher grounds and reasons being Vertues, they thus also, as parts of Godliness, *become profitable to all things; having the promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.*⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 312.

⁷¹ Cumberland, *A Treatise*, p. 61. On Cumberland see: Linda Kirk, *Richard Cumberland and Natural Law, Secularisation of Thought in 17th century England* (James Clark, Cambridge, 1987); and Parkin, *Science, Religion and Politics*.

⁷² See Cumberland, *A Treatise*, p. 171.

⁷³ Cumberland, *A Treatise*, p. 168.

⁷⁴ Lowde, *A Discourse*, pp. 161-2.

As we have seen, Hobbes' contemporary critics had a number of objections to his ideas on good and evil, but it appears to have been the implications of his views which they found most worrying. For instance, they were concerned by his claim that in commonwealths the sovereign was the measure of good and evil, for the simple reason that this implied that there was no such thing as good and evil before commonwealths came into existence. It also implied that either God did not exist, or was unconcerned for his creation; or that the laws of nature were not engraved on men's hearts by God, and that these laws were changeable. Hobbes' contemporary critics also denied his view that human beings sought their own private good; and that private good and common good were separate, and conflicted with each other.

The main area for disagreement between Hobbes and his contemporary critics, as Noel Malcolm has demonstrated, was voluntarism. Those seventeenth century writers who criticised Hobbes were either Arminians, Cambridge Platonists or Latitudinarians, and all of them were anti-voluntarist, whereas Hobbes was a voluntarist, nominalist or Ockhamist.⁷⁵ For voluntarists, things only existed as an effect of God's will, and this included moral values.⁷⁶ This meant that everything God wills was good, and 'nothing is willed by him because it is good in any prior, independent or absolute way'. This view was grounded in the Old Testament, and in Augustinian and Ockhamist theology, and it was a view which became a major part of protestant theology - Luther, Zwingli and Calvin were all voluntarists.⁷⁷ Francis Oakley has also described Hobbes as a voluntarist, and has shown that voluntarists also thought that there was a stable moral order, independent of God. Ockham, for instance, used the distinction between the absolute and ordained powers of God to ground the content of morality in God's will, while at the same time arguing that there was a natural morality, which all human beings knew through natural law, and which in turn

⁷⁵ See Malcolm, *Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology*, pp. 209 & preface. A number of other Hobbes' scholars have also noted Hobbes' voluntarism, and similarity to Ockham - see Sommerville, *Thomas Hobbes*, p. 47; and Wright, *The Protestant Hobbes*, p. 123.

⁷⁶ See Malcolm, *Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology*, pp. 82 & 133.

⁷⁷ Malcolm, *Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology*, p. 133. See also A. P. d'Entrèves, *Natural Law - An Introduction to Legal Philosophy* (Hutchinson & Co (Publishers) Ltd, London, second (revised edition), 1970, first published 1951), pp. 69-70.

was known by right reason.⁷⁸ Thus, God's will as the measure of good and evil, did not necessarily mean that there was no such thing as good and evil independent of God. As we have seen, it could be argued that Hobbes shared this view, as he seems to have thought that human beings were always in a condition in which there were objective rules of good and evil, or laws of nature. The problem was, as we will see in chapter four, human beings had difficulty discovering these rules, and then interpreting and applying them.

Opposed to the voluntarist view of morality was that of essentialism, or rationalism.⁷⁹ A number of Hobbes' contemporary critics, such as South, Shafte, Tyrrell, Bramhall and Lucy appear to have subscribed, if only in part, to rationalist arguments. On this view God commanded something because it was good in itself. Good and evil existed in nature, independently of God, or human sovereigns. Good and evil were found in the things themselves, and not in the opinions of men, or in the names applied by human beings to whatever they desired or feared. But not all of Hobbes' contemporary critics were rationalists or essentialists. Jon Parkin has recently qualified Noel Malcolm's argument by showing that a number of Hobbes' critics, such as Richard Cumberland and Samuel Parker, began from the same voluntarist premises as Hobbes, but went on to draw very different conclusions. Parkin argues that it was not the critics' anti-voluntarism that was the issue, but rather their rejection of Hobbes' extreme version of voluntarism. Thus Malcolm's argument fails to recognise the complexity of the issue, which divided Hobbes from his contemporary critics. Richard Cumberland, for instance, could agree with Hobbes that good was a product of God's will, but he denied Hobbes' claim that natural reason was incapable of telling us anything certain about God's will. For Cumberland, enough evidence of God's will could be found in nature, to provide us with a high degree of probability. This evidence was demonstrated by natural rewards and

⁷⁸ See Francis Oakley, *Omnipotence, Covenants and Order - An Excursion in the History of Ideas from Abelard to Leibniz* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London, 1984), pp. 81-2, where Oakley also wonders if Hobbes 'really meant it'. See also Oakley's 'The Absolute and Ordained Power of God in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Theology', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 59 (1998), pp. 437-61; and 'The Absolute and Ordained Power of God and King in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: Philosophy, Science, Politics, and Law', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 59 (1998), pp. 669-90.

⁷⁹ See Malcolm, *Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology*, p. 27.

punishments.⁸⁰ Hobbes, on the other hand, thought that such probable, rather than certain, evidence of God's will was simply not good enough. Parkin has further argued that Cumberland wanted to reconcile protestant theology with scholastic natural law theory.⁸¹ Thus to lump the contemporary critics into two such distinct, and apparently opposing categories, as voluntarism and rationalism, is to simplify the issue. The example of Cumberland demonstrates that the distinction between the two groups is not necessarily a clear one.

Another difference between Hobbes and his contemporary critics was their method of argument. Hobbes' critics were interested in origins, and interpreted his state of nature as an original condition, a condition before actual historical commonwealths came into existence. In this way, it was also understood as the original, perfect condition of human beings at the creation. Due to their own understanding of 'nature' as perfection, or a description of how human beings ought to behave, the critics, as Samuel Mintz has argued, thought that Hobbes too was describing 'what human conduct *ought* to be'. As a result they believed that Hobbes' state of nature described 'a programme of libertinism', where 'unbridled lust, greed, stealth, and force were... entirely "justifiable", and limited only by the need for self-preservation'.⁸² But as Mintz has also pointed out the critics misunderstood Hobbes. They failed to realise that his state of nature was not intended to be a description of how human beings ought to behave, but rather how human beings actually behaved, or at least had the potential to behave. In fact, Hobbes' state of nature appears to bear a greater resemblance to the fallen condition. But his critics were unable to see this resemblance, because of their interpretation of the meaning of the term 'by nature', and also because of their valuation of this term.

For the critics nature was both the end and perfection of human existence; but it was also the beginning. It was the condition in which human beings had been created by God in Eden. Bishop Bramhall, for instance, thought that the 'primigenious and most natural state of mankind, was in Adam before his fall,

⁸⁰ See Parkin, *Science, Religion and Politics*, pp. 7, 92 & 171

⁸¹ See Parkin, *Science, Religion and Politics*, pp. 8, 56 & 72.

⁸² Mintz, *The Hunting of Leviathan*, p. 32.

that is, the state of innocence'.⁸³ Similarly for Samuel Parker, the Bishop of Oxford, because God began the creation of human beings in 'a Single Person, by whom the Community of Men was to be Propagated, that must be the State of Nature in which it was first founded'.⁸⁴ Even if Hobbes' state of nature was a description of the lives of fallen human beings, the Fall had not corrupted individuals to the extent described by Hobbes. The knowledge of good and evil had been corrupted, but not completely obliterated by the Fall. Due to their understanding of nature as perfection, and a description of how human beings ought to behave, the critics assumed that Hobbes' state of nature also described how he thought human beings ought to behave. They assumed that Hobbes thought disagreement on good and evil was a good. They failed to understand that the state of nature was not a description of what human beings ought to be. It was not an ideal condition for Hobbes, but was intended to be an horrific condition, in which no rational human being would want to live, or ever return to. It was almost as if Hobbes were saying, if nature was so perfect why did human beings ever leave it?⁸⁵

Hobbes' state of nature could be understood as a description of the consequences of the Fall, or in other words the consequences for human beings who judged good and evil according to their passions. As we will see in chapter four, on natural law, there were laws of nature in Hobbes' state of nature, but human beings had difficulty discovering them, interpreting them, and applying them in particular circumstances. They also had a tendency to reject future goods for more immediate goods, which were dictated by their passions. For Hobbes, the laws of nature themselves were unchangeable, but the actions they prescribed

⁸³ Bramhall, *Castigations*, p. 155.

⁸⁴ Samuel Parker, *A Discourse of Ecclesiastical Politie: wherein the Authority of the Civil Magistrate over the Consciences of Subjects in Matters of External Religion is Asserted; The Mischiefs and Inconveniencies of Toleration are Represented, And all pretenses pleaded in behalf of Liberty of Conscience are Fully Answered* (London, 1670), p. 124. On Parker see: Parkin, 'Hobbism in the Later 1660s'; and Gordon J. Schochet, 'Between Lambeth and *Leviathan*: Samuel Parker on the Church of England and Political Order', in *Political Discourse in Early Modern Britain*, edited by N. Phillipson & Q. Skinner (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993), pp. 189-208.

⁸⁵ Rousseau thought that God had removed men from the state of nature immediately after the creation, but Rousseau still wanted to ask what would have happened to human beings if they had been left to themselves - see Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality', in *The Social Contract and Discourses*, translation and introduction by G.D.H. Cole (J.M. Dent Ltd., London, 1973), pp. 31-126, p. 51.

in particular circumstances changed as those circumstances changed. This was why individuals created a commonwealth with a civil sovereign, who laid down one interpretation of natural law, and how it was to be applied in particular circumstances, thus turning natural law into civil law. Hobbes agreed with the Schoolmen that human beings judged good and evil according to their passions, but he thought that this could not form the basis for a moral philosophy, because the diversity of passions led to disagreement. Such a philosophy also allowed virtue to be redescribed as vice, and vice as virtue. Hobbes criticised the Schoolmen because they had failed to consider the problem of the lack of agreement on which actions did or did not constitute the virtues. They had failed to realise that whatever action led to peace was good, and whatever action led to war was evil. Hobbes thought that reason by itself was not enough to keep men in peace. If it had been, human beings would have been able to rule themselves, and would not have needed the state.

As we will see throughout this dissertation, what determined whether or not Hobbes' seventeenth century readers found his description of the state of nature convincing were their views on the effects of the Fall. Many of Hobbes' contemporary critics were Aristotelians and Arminians,⁸⁶ who believed that although the Fall had corrupted human beings, it had not done so to the extent implied by Hobbes' description. Natural sociability and hierarchy remained. Further, nature should be judged from her intention or perfection - reason and the laws of nature were sufficient to prevent men from committing violent actions in the natural condition. Hobbes' protestant voluntarism put his understanding of nature closer to the views of those commentators, like Jean Calvin, for whom 'the whole order of nature was subverted by the sin of man',⁸⁷ or Martin Luther who argued that since the Fall, natural endowments had become corrupted by sin, and

⁸⁶ See Martinich, *Two Gods*, especially pp. 32-9, where Martinich also claims Hobbes was a Calvinist. Arminians and Calvinists held differing views on who exactly would attain salvation and how best to achieve this aim. For Calvinists God had foreordained those who would be saved and those who would be damned, and there was no way of knowing who were among the elect, and who were among the reprobate. Arminians believed in the free will of all individuals to attain salvation through God's universal grace, and the sacraments of the Church.

⁸⁷ Jean Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses called Genesis*, translated by the Rev. J. King, 2 volumes (W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1948), Volume I, p. 177. See also p. 129, where Calvin also claimed that through the disobedience 'the order of nature, which God has appointed, has been inverted by us'.

man desired to be without God. Further, after the sin no law was put upon Adam.⁸⁸ As we will see in chapter four, on the laws of nature, Hobbes' own views were in agreement with a number of aspects of Reformed views on the problems with natural law since the Fall. Although not commenting on the Fall, Norberto Bobbio has described Hobbes' state as a 'machine produced by human beings in order to compensate for the shortcomings of nature, and to replace the deficient products of nature with a product of human ingenuity, that is, an *artificium*'.⁸⁹ For Hobbes' seventeenth century readers, the crucial aspect of such a statement would have been whether or not the shortcomings of nature were a result of the Fall, and thus the corruption of nature; and also the extent to which Adam and Eve's disobedience had in fact corrupted human nature.

4. The Scriptural Account.

In both *De Cive* and *Leviathan* Hobbes used *Genesis* II.16-17 & III.5 & 11 to support his theory that subjects should not make themselves judges of good and evil, and thus question or disobey the commands of their sovereign.⁹⁰ The following passage appeared in *De Cive*:

When private men claim for themselves a knowledge of *good* and *evil*, they are aspiring to be as Kings... The oldest of God's commands is... *Do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, and the oldest of the devil's temptations is... *You will be as gods knowing good and evil*. The first reproach God made to men is... *Who told you that you were naked, unless you have eaten of the tree of which I told you not to eat?* as if he were saying, how did you decide that the nakedness in which it seemed

⁸⁸ See Martin Luther, *Works, Volume I, Lectures on Genesis Chapters 1-5*, edited by J. Pelikan (Concordia Publishing House, Saint Louis, Missouri, 1958), pp. 165 & 183. See also Henoah Clapham, *A Briefe of the Bible, drawne first into English Poesy, and then illustrated by apt annotations; together with some other necessary appendices* (Edinburgh, 1596), p. 21, who noted that after the Fall 'Nature finallie is overthrowne'.

⁸⁹ Bobbio, *Thomas Hobbes*, p. 36.

⁹⁰ Hobbes did not mention Adam and Eve by name in the *Elements*, although there were some references to the creation and Fall. In *Elements*, XIX, 11, p. 102, Hobbes claimed that punishment was instituted before sin, which must refer to God's threat of death to Adam and Eve. In *Elements*, XXII, 9, p. 129, the dominion of human beings over animals was from the law of nature, not God's positive law, otherwise those men living before scripture would not have had this right. In *Elements*, XXVIII, 3, p. 173, because God created male and female and told them to multiply, sovereigns were bound by the laws of nature to make civil laws which would increase mankind. In *Elements*, XXIV, 3, p. 138, monarchy was instituted by God at the creation. This patriarchal argument will be discussed in further detail in chapter five, on the creation of society.

good to me to create you, was dishonourable, except by usurping for yourselves a *knowledge* of good and evil?⁹¹

Hobbes again echoed *Genesis* in his discussion of the seditious doctrine of the legality of tyrannicide. According to Hobbes, if the tyrant held power rightfully, 'the divine question applies: Who told you that he was a Tyrant, unless you have eaten of the tree of which I told you not to eat? For why do you call him a Tyrant whom God made a King, unless you, a private person, are claiming for yourself a knowledge of good and evil?'⁹²

Philip Almond has demonstrated that the account of the Fall was the focus for seventeenth century debates on such diverse subjects as vegetarianism, the status of women, and the ideal structure of society and government.⁹³ Many of Hobbes' seventeenth century readers would have been familiar with protestant interpretations of the sixteenth and seventeenth verses of the second chapter of *Genesis*, which referred to God's command to Adam to abstain from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. One of a number of questions asked by various commentators on these verses, was why was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil so named? Following Augustine, most protestant commentators thought that the tree got its name from the event.⁹⁴ Andrew Willet, the Calvinist rector of Barley in Hertfordshire and prolific Biblical commentator, agreed with Augustine, and thought that those opinions which argued the tree of knowledge took its name because it either gave reason and understanding, or sharpness of wit, were false. So were the opinions that claimed it was named because Adam and Eve were led to eat from it by the same natural instinct that all animals had, or because of Satan's false promise that they would become as gods knowing good and evil.⁹⁵ For Hobbes' future critic, Alexander Ross, the tree of knowledge was

⁹¹ *De Cive*, XII, 1, p. 132.

⁹² *De Cive*, XII, 3, p. 133. As far as Hobbes was concerned this was exactly what Englishmen did when they executed Charles I. The seditious doctrine that tyrannicide is lawful was missing from *Leviathan*, but appeared in both the *Elements* and *De Cive*. Presumably this can be explained by the fact that *Leviathan* was published after the death of Charles I, and Hobbes may not have wanted to anger the new regime in England, who had committed regicide / tyrannicide.

⁹³ See Almond, *Adam and Eve*, p. 2.

⁹⁴ See Saint Augustine, *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, translated by H. Bettenson (Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1984), Book XIV, chapter 18, p. 578.

⁹⁵ See Andrew Willet, *Hexapla upon Genesis* (Cambridge, 1605), p. 28. See also John Salkeld, *A Treatise of Paradise* (London, 1617), pp. 75-81, where Salkeld denied that the tree had the power

not named 'because it had power either to beget knowledge in Adam, or to augment his knowledge... for Adam was created with perfect knowledge... but it was so named from the event: for man knew now what was good and evill by experience, having transgressed in eating of this tree'.⁹⁶ Similarly John Trapp, the parliamentarian minister of Weston-on-Avon in Gloucestershire, thought that God's command forewarned Adam and Eve 'that they should know by woefull experience, unlesse they abstained, what was the worth of good, by the want of it; and what the presence of evill, by the sence of it'.⁹⁷

For most protestant commentators, Adam and Eve were created in God's image, and therefore had perfect knowledge, but in eating the forbidden fruit they gained experience of good and evil.⁹⁸ For Alexander Ross, Adam was created the ruler, father, and teacher of all mankind, and thus had knowledge of everything as soon as he was created.⁹⁹ Ross interpreted the serpent's promise as a further degree of knowledge, because 'the eyes of the body were opened already, and good and evill is not the object of bodily eyes, but of the minde, which is the eye of the soule'.¹⁰⁰ Once they had eaten the fruit their eyes were opened, but this should not be interpreted as meaning they were

blinde before, nor had they now more libertie of will than they had, or greater knowledge: but now they know evill by experience, which before they knew by science; and their eyes are said to bee opened, because they perceive, their nakedness is ignominious, and their affections inordinate, which before were decent and holy.¹⁰¹

to give knowledge, and thought it was either an ironic reminder of Satan's deception of Adam and Eve, or it was named because of the event.

⁹⁶ Alexander Ross, *An Exposition on the Fourteene first Chapters of Genesis, by way of Questions and Answere. Collected out of Ancient and Recent writers: Both briefly and subtilly propounded and expounded.* (London, 1626), p. 43. See also Theodore Haak, *The Dutch Annotations upon the whole Bible... ordered and appointed by the Synod of Dort, 1618 and published by Authority, 1637* (London, 1657), *Genesis* II.9. This book has no pagination, references will be made to chapter and verse of *Genesis*. Alexander Ross' critique of Hobbes' *Leviathan* was entitled *Leviathan drawn out with a hook, or Animadversions upon Mr Hobbs his Leviathan* (London, 1653), and it was mainly an attack on Hobbes' specifically religious views.

⁹⁷ John Trapp, *A Clavis to the Bible, or a new Comment upon the Pentateuch* (London, 1650), p. 23.

⁹⁸ See for example Sir Walter Raleigh, *A History of the World* (London, 1614), pp. 69-70. This allowed commentators to explain why Adam and Eve were tempted by the serpent's promise that they would become as gods, knowing good and evil.

⁹⁹ See Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 50.

¹⁰⁰ Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 60. See also Haak, *Dutch Annotations*, *Genesis* III.7.

¹⁰¹ Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 64. See also Raleigh, *A History of the World*, pp. 69-70.

A number of commentators also described Adam and Eve's knowledge before the Fall, as theoretical, scientific or speculative. It was only after their disobedience that they attained experience, or experimental knowledge, of good and evil. Andrew Willet compared Adam and Eve's knowledge, before the Fall, to the knowledge a rich man had of poverty - this knowledge was purely theoretical, as the rich man had no actual experience of being poor, he could only imagine what it might be like. According to Willet, through their disobedience, Adam and Eve acquired 'an experimental knowledge... [of] what good they had lost, and what evil they were fallen into'. Before their fall, they only had 'a speculative knowledge of good and evil...'¹⁰² After the Fall, Adam and Eve had an 'experimental knowledge of evil', but this was 'not the wisdom of a happy man, but the experience of a miserable man'.¹⁰³ Joseph Hall, successively Bishop of Exeter and Norwich, put it slightly differently - man 'looked for speculative knowledge, when he should have looked for experimental: he thought it had been good to know evil'.¹⁰⁴ For John Salkeld, the royalist, former jesuit, and protestant convert, God gave this command so that Adam 'might know by wofull experience... the difference between good and evill; so that whereas before hee knew it onely by contemplation, now he should find it by a lamentable experience'.¹⁰⁵ Hobbes' argument that individuals only realised the natural condition was an evil, once they had fallen into it; and that it was reason which demonstrated the future good of peace in civil society, could be understood to be in agreement with these views.

Adam and Eve attained experience of good and evil through their disobedience, but for many commentators, since the Fall man's reasoning faculty had become corrupted.¹⁰⁶ For Henry Holland, the Calvinist vicar of St. Bride in

¹⁰² Willet, *Hexapla upon Genesis*, p. 28.

¹⁰³ Willet, *Hexapla upon Genesis*, p. 41.

¹⁰⁴ Joseph Hall, *Contemplations upon the Principal Passages of the Holy Storie*, in *Works* (London, 1634), p. 778.

¹⁰⁵ Salkeld, *A Treatise of Paradise*, p. 152.

¹⁰⁶ See for example, John Greene, *The First Man, or A Short Discourse of Adam's State* (London, 1643), p. 9. The *ESTC* describes Greene as a feltmaker. Almond, *Adam and Eve*, pp. 12-13, has noted that for Saint Augustine, the image of God in man (that is memory, will, and understanding) was destroyed by the Fall. Luther also subscribed to this view; and Almond also thinks this was true of Calvin, although he also admits this has been debated. Almond also notes that for Catholic thinkers supernatural gifts such as grace and virtue were lost, but natural gifts such as reason and domination over animals were retained.

London, those who ate from the tree of knowledge, contrary to God's command, lost 'their excellent libertie and bee possest with extreme and present miserie'.¹⁰⁷ Since the Fall, the reasoning faculty 'has become so vaine, that in spiritual things it cannot discern between truth and errour, evill and goodnesse'.¹⁰⁸ Alexander Ross thought that after the Fall, Adam's posterity would have attained knowledge by sense and experience, but before the Fall this would have happened sooner and with more ease.¹⁰⁹ For Thomas Cooper, the Bishop of Winchester, although the serpent promised them they would become as gods by knowing good and evil, they were 'made almost equal to beasts', and 'became more mad and foolish, than other common creatures'.¹¹⁰ Christopher Hampton, the Archbishop of Armagh, noted that Adam was 'not absolutely deprived of naturall faculties, and endowments of reason... but they are depraved and decayed...'¹¹¹ Similarly for John Downname, puritan divine and member of the Westminster Assembly, after the Fall God left 'some relics of our dignity and first condition' in both men's minds and bodies. Firstly, in our minds are 'Common principles of good and evil... both for knowledge of God, and of our duties to our brethren... And from this light that every one carryeth about him...commeth the Law of nature, that nature which now wee have since the Fall of Adam'.¹¹² Secondly, we have a 'conscience when we doe amisse, whereof naturally some seeds are left in every one, the better to repress the unbridled course of our affections...'. But for Downname, both the light of nature and conscience, although not corrupt in themselves, were corrupt in men because they were 'defiled with sinne'.¹¹³ Law had now become necessary, according to John White, because of men's inability to distinguish between good and evil.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁷ Henry Holland, *The Historie of Adam, or the foure-fold state of Man, Well formed in his Creation, Deformed in his Corruption, Reformed in Grace, and Perfected in Glory* (London, 1606), p. 9.

¹⁰⁸ Holland, *The Historie of Adam*, p. 6.

¹⁰⁹ See Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 50.

¹¹⁰ Thomas Cooper, *A Brief Exposition of such chapters of the Old Testament as usually are read in Church* (London, 1573), p. 101.

¹¹¹ Christopher Hampton, *The Threefold State of Man upon Earth* (Dublin, 1620), p. 32.

¹¹² John Downname, *The Summe of Sacred Divinitie. Briefly and Methodically Propounded: More largely & cleerelly handled and explained* (London, ca 1628?), pp. 249-50.

¹¹³ Downname, *The Summe of Sacred Divinitie*, p. 250.

¹¹⁴ See White, *A Commentary*, II, p. 70.

Hobbes also thought that since the Fall human beings could not correctly distinguish between good and evil. The following passage appeared in the chapter of *Leviathan* entitled 'Of Dominion Paternal and Despotical':

For the cognisance or judicature of *good* and *evil*, being forbidden by the name of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, as a trial of Adam's obedience, the devil to inflame the ambition of the woman, to whom that fruit already seemed beautiful, told her that by tasting it they should be as gods, knowing *good* and *evil*. Whereupon, having both eaten they did indeed take upon them God's office, which is judicature of *good* and *evil*, but acquired no new ability to distinguish between them aright. And whereas it is said that, having eaten, they saw they were naked, no man hath so interpreted that place as if they had been formerly blind, and saw not their own skins; the meaning is plain, that it was then they first judged their nakedness (wherein it was God's will to create them) to be uncomely, and by being ashamed did tacitly censure God himself.¹¹⁵ And thereupon God saith *Hast thou eaten*, etc. as if he should say, doest thou that owest me obedience, take upon thee to judge of my commandments? Whereby it is clearly (though allegorically) signified that the commands of them, that have the right to command are not by their subjects to be censured, nor disputed.¹¹⁶

Quentin Skinner has described this discussion in *Leviathan* as an example of a rhetorical technique called *apodioxis*, or 'the figure we invoke when we repudiate an imagined objection that it would have been ludicrous to put forward'. Skinner claims that Hobbes' discussion of God's words, 'who told you, you were naked?', was 'reduced to absurdity' in *Leviathan*, with his comment that no one had interpreted this as meaning Adam and Eve were blind before, whereas in a similar discussion in *De Cive* Hobbes had 'contented himself' with observation 'in plain terms'.¹¹⁷ But Skinner's view is simply incorrect, because as we have seen above Alexander Ross also commented that this should not be interpreted as meaning they were blind before.¹¹⁸ Skinner is correct in the sense that this particular interpretation of God's words was generally dismissed by commentators, but it was not considered too ridiculous to mention. Ross himself was probably following Saint Augustine, who had similarly commented that it

¹¹⁵ The Latin edition has 'God's work', rather than 'God himself'. This appears to be an example of Hobbes' attempt, in the Latin *Leviathan*, either to clarify his position, or to make it less offensive.

¹¹⁶ *Leviathan*, XX, 17, pp. 134-5. See also *De Homine*, X, 2, p. 38, where Hobbes claimed that Adam must have understood God's command in a 'supernatural manner'.

¹¹⁷ Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric*, pp. 420-1.

was not the case ‘that the first human beings had been created blind, as is commonly believed among the uneducated...’¹¹⁹ Were both Augustine and Ross also using ridicule? If anything, Hobbes indicated his own knowledge of scriptural commentary here, to the point where he appears to have been paraphrasing the commentaries.

Edwin Curley has found Hobbes’ account of the Fall ‘puzzling’. Firstly, Hobbes denied that Adam and Eve acquired any new ability to distinguish between good and evil. And secondly, he believed that it was only after they had eaten from the tree that they judged their nakedness to be shameful. If, as Hobbes claimed, they acquired judicature of good and evil, but even so were unable correctly to distinguish between them, then why did they judge their nakedness to be shameful? Curley thinks this would only have been possible if it was the case that nakedness was not by nature shameful, but only if it was a violation of God’s command.¹²⁰ This seems to be the correct interpretation. The nakedness in which God created them was not shameful, but Adam and Eve judged it to be so, because they were unable correctly to distinguish between good and evil. Garrath Williams has also addressed Curley’s objection, and has commented that Hobbes treated ‘their new judgement, about their nakedness, as an act of rebellion’. According to Williams, Hobbes dismissed the possibility that Adam and Eve judged correctly. All Hobbes was concerned with was ‘their decision to judge the matter at all’.¹²¹

Similarly for a number of protestant commentators, God’s command not to eat from the tree of knowledge showed man the knowledge he should not desire to have. According to Jean Calvin, the knowledge of good and evil was the cause of such ‘great misery’, when man ‘tried to ascend higher than was lawful’.¹²² Because this knowledge was ‘sought in preference to the favour of God’, after the Fall this ‘knowledge was therefore accursed’.¹²³ For Thomas Cooper, God’s command should be understood as ‘a type or figure of perfect knowledge of good and evil, which becometh the wisdom of God alone...

¹¹⁸ See Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 64.

¹¹⁹ Augustine, *City of God*, XIV, 18, p. 578.

¹²⁰ See Curley’s note to *Leviathan*, XX, 17, pp, 134-5.

¹²¹ Williams, ‘Normatively Demanding Creatures’, pp. 303 & 306.

¹²² Calvin, *Commentaries*, p. 183.

whereunto God would not have Man arrogantly to aspire, as a thing farre above his condition'.¹²⁴ Adam and Eve understood good by the loss of the goodness they had before, and 'they knew by experience in sin what was evil'. But as Cooper pointed out, they paid a huge price - not only the loss of immortality, but 'the loss of eternal felicitie and love of God'.¹²⁵ Unfortunately, as Joseph Hall noted, God did not realise how attractive knowledge was to mankind, so 'who can hope to avoid error, when even man's perfection is mistaken?'¹²⁶

For protestant commentators, God's command was the measure of good and evil in Eden. According to Martin Luther, the tree itself 'was not deadly by nature', in fact the tree was good and produced good fruit.¹²⁷ But the tree of knowledge 'was poison for man', because of God's command which forbade them to eat from it.¹²⁸ Similarly for John Salkeld, 'God gave not this law in any object of itselfe otherwise evill, or of its own nature good: to the end that the vertue of his obedience might be the more illustrious; because it deriveth not his excellencie, from the materiall object, but from the formall, the sole subjection to Almighty God'.¹²⁹ Henoeh Clapham, the pastor of an English congregation in Amsterdam, thought that God's command demonstrated to Adam that he 'should do Good in not eating of it; but hee should do Evill in eating of it',¹³⁰ while, the Brownist, Henry Ainsworth, specifically connected it with the law, in this case God's law, as the guide to good and evil. According to Ainsworth, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was 'so named, because Gods law which forbad man to eat of this tree, should teach what is good and evil; be a rule of obedience, shewing mans goodnes and righteousnes, if he did obey, (as Deut. 6.25.) or his evil, if he did transgresse: for the *knowledge of syn is by the law*, Rom. 3.20'.¹³¹

¹²³ Calvin, *Commentaries*, p. 157.

¹²⁴ Cooper, *A Brief Exposition*, p. 95.

¹²⁵ Cooper, *A Brief Exposition*, p. 101.

¹²⁶ Hall, *Contemplations*, p. 778.

¹²⁷ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 95-6. See also Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 42; and White, *A Commentary*, II, p. 68. As Almond, *Adam and Eve*, p. 192, has pointed out most commentators on *Genesis* thought that the effects of eating the fruit could not be natural, because otherwise they would have been forced to explain how something evil could have existed in paradise.

¹²⁸ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 229.

¹²⁹ Salkeld, *A Treatise of Paradise*, pp. 149-50.

¹³⁰ Clapham, *A Briefe of the Bible*, p. 19.

¹³¹ Henry Ainsworth, *Annotations upon the first book of Moses, called Genesis. Wherein the Hebrew words and sentences are compared with, and explaind by the ancient Greek and Chaldee versions: but chiefly, by conference with the holy Scriptures* (Amsterdam, 1616),

God's command was also seen as a trial of obedience.¹³² The presbyterian minister, Benjamin Needler claimed that God forbade Adam 'the eating of something that is wholesome to the body, and delightful to the taste' as a real trial of obedience. And further, that the 'forbidding to eat, was not from any sinne in the action, but from the will of the Law-giver'.¹³³ According to William Whateley, the puritan vicar of Banbury, Adam had

in regard of naturall power... ability to eate and not eate of that as any other, but God did take away from him the morall liberty of eating of it, and by his authority saw good to abridge his liberty, and this alone to make it appeare to Adam, that he was an absolute and a soveraigne Lord over him, and had full power and authority to forbid him what he saw good to forbid, and to command what he saw good to command. So the Lord did here call Adam to a profession of his absolute subjection to God his Maker, and of Gods absolute right to himselfe and all other creatures.¹³⁴

Henry Ainsworth noted that besides 'the law of nature, graven on Adam's hart, whereby he was bound to love, honour and obey his Creator: God here giveth him (for a trial of his love), a significative Law, concerning a thing of it self indifferent, but at the pleasure of God made unlawfull and evil for man to doe; that by observing this outward rite, he might testifie his willing obedience unto the Lord'.¹³⁵

The majority of protestant commentators thought that God gave Adam and Eve this command so they would know they were subject to God, and owed him obedience.¹³⁶ According to Alexander Ross, God forbade Adam and Eve to

Genesis, II.9. This book has no pagination, references will therefore be made to chapter and verse of *Genesis*.

¹³² See for example, Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 42; White, *A Commentary*, II, p. 68; and Salkeld, *A Treatise of Paradise*, p. 152.

¹³³ Benjamin Needler, *Expository Notes with Practical Observations towards the opening of the five first Chapters of the first book of Moses called Genesis* (London, 1654), p. 41. See also White, *A Commentary*, II, p. 69; and James Ussher, *A Body of Divinitie* (London, 1645), p. 132, who thought that Adam and Eve broke all ten commandments by eating the fruit - cited in Almond, *Adam and Eve*, p. 193, note 138.

¹³⁴ William Whateley, *Prototypes, or, The Primary Presidents out of the Booke of Genesis. Shewing, the Good and Bad things they did and had. Practically applied to our information and reformation* (London, 1640), pp. 4-5.

¹³⁵ Ainsworth, *Annotations*, *Genesis* II.16. See also John Richardson, *Choice Observations and Explanations upon the Old Testament* (London, 1655), *Genesis* II.17. This book has no pagination, references will be made to chapter and verse of *Genesis*.

¹³⁶ See for example, Gervase Babington, *Certaine plaine, briefe and comfortable notes upon everie chapter of Genesis. Another edition... Perused by him againe, and in sundry places enlarged with some additions* (London, 1596); Clapham, *A Briefe of the Bible*, p. 19; and Salkeld, *A Treatise of Paradise*, p. 149.

eat from the tree 'First, to let him know, that he was but a creature and servant and therefore had a Lord whom hee must serve and obey, Secondly, to let him see, that hee had free-will and power both to chuse and refuse any thing hee pleased. Thirdly, to exercise him in obedience'.¹³⁷ This was also the reason God gave Adam and Eve a positive command, as well as the law of nature, so that they would know that God was their sovereign and should be obeyed. For Benjamin Needler, God gave Adam a positive command, as well as natural law written in his heart, so that 'God's dominion and power over man might be the more acknowledged'. Otherwise men may have simply submitted to God's command because it was in accordance with natural law.¹³⁸ Needler gave the example of heathens who 'abstaine from many sinnes, not because forbidden by God, but as dissonant to their natural reason'.¹³⁹ Similarly John Salkeld noted that the law of nature,

which God had infused into the nature of man... would not have beene a sufficient tryall of Adams obedience: because it is not altogether manifest by the law of nature that God is sole and supreme Lord over all mankinde: for some doe imagine that the law of nature is a propertie onely due unto a reasonable creature, as every species, or kinde of living creatures hath their particular propertie agreeing to their nature.¹⁴⁰

On these interpretations, God himself thought that the law of nature was not a sufficient test of obedience. We will see in chapter four, on natural law, that Hobbes' own views were in agreement with a number of aspects of Reformed interpretations of natural law.

For protestant commentators, the measure of good and evil in Eden was God's command, regardless of the content of that command. Similarly for Hobbes, there was 'nothing simply and absolutely so [good or evil], nor any common rule of good and evil to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves, but from the person of the man (where there is no commonwealth), or (in a commonwealth) from the person that representeth it, or from an arbitrator or judge...'¹⁴¹ Hobbes described God's rule over Adam and Eve as both natural, and

¹³⁷ Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 46.

¹³⁸ Needler, *Expository Notes*, p. 40.

¹³⁹ Needler, *Expository Notes*, p. 41. But see Ainsworth, *Annotations, Genesis II.16*. - the law of nature obliged Adam to love, honour and obey God.

¹⁴⁰ Salkeld, *A Treatise of Paradise*, p. 150.

¹⁴¹ *Leviathan*, VI, 7, p. 29.

by agreement. In other words, Adam and Eve were not in a state of nature, they had a sovereign, and were thus living in a commonwealth. Hobbes went on to note

that by the precept not to eat from the tree of the *knowledge of good and evil* (whether it is *judgement of Good and Evil* that is forbidden here, or eating some fruit from a tree) God required utterly simple obedience to his precepts, without argument as to whether the precept was *Good or Bad*; for without the command, the fruit of the tree has nothing in its nature by which its eating could be morally *bad*, i.e. a *sin*.¹⁴²

As we have seen above, Hobbes cited the seditious doctrine of the private judgement of good and evil actions as a cause of the disintegration of commonwealths. How did Hobbes' views on this compare with protestant interpretations of the cause of Adam and Eve's fall? For protestant commentators, unbelief came before pride as the cause of the Fall. According to Martin Luther, Adam and Eve doubted and abandoned God's word.¹⁴³ God gave them a command not to eat from the tree of knowledge, and although they had true knowledge of God, as well as sound reason, God's command was beyond their understanding and simply 'had to be believed'.¹⁴⁴ But Eve desired a 'different kind of wisdom, a wisdom apart from the word' - the knowledge of evil, and this knowledge was death.¹⁴⁵ Jean Calvin also cited unbelief as the cause of the Fall, and all sin.¹⁴⁶ God's command was a trial of their obedience, and 'a token of their subjection'.¹⁴⁷ Whilst Eve had faith in God, she could look at the tree and have no desire to eat from it. But once she lost her faith and 'obedience to the word, she corrupted herself'. Then she judged the tree to be good and persuaded herself it was 'desirable for the sake of acquiring wisdom'. But Eve made a mistake in 'not regulating the measure of her knowledge by the will of God'.¹⁴⁸ Adam and Eve desired 'to know more than was lawful, in order that they might become equal

¹⁴² *De Cive*, XVI, 2, p. 188

¹⁴³ See Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 147, 149 & 162.

¹⁴⁴ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 94, 109 & 154. See also Ross, *An Exposition*, pp. 61-2.

¹⁴⁵ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 154 & 160-1.

¹⁴⁶ See Calvin, *Commentaries*, p. 153.

¹⁴⁷ Calvin, *Commentaries*, pp. 125-6.

¹⁴⁸ Calvin, *Commentaries*, pp. 150-1.

with God'.¹⁴⁹ Now since the Fall, all human beings 'desire to know more than is right, and more than God allows'.¹⁵⁰

Most English commentators followed Luther's and Calvin's interpretations of the cause of the Fall. For John White, Satan's 'main endeavour was to take off and sever mans heart from God, and cutting in sunder those two bands of faith and obedience by which he adhered unto God, to draw him away to infidelity and rebellion against his own Lord and Master'.¹⁵¹ According to John Greene, 'when the devil 'chargeth God with falsehood, and hatred, and the like we read not of any reply to cleare God, made by them, but rather a full entertaining of his discourse...' Although Adam and Eve were created with perfect knowledge, they lost their knowledge and strength the moment the temptation began. Then they did not debate whether what the devil said was good or evil, right or wrong. Often 'the act of evil, and the act of good is performed with equal delight, although the consequence prove various'. While they sinned, they did not know they had sinned, it was only after the event that 'the guilt and shame which followed caused them to know'.¹⁵²

Although unbelief was the cause of the Fall, it was the devil who persuaded Eve to doubt the word of God. For Jean Calvin, the devil re-interpreted God's command, and told Eve that God gave them the command not to eat from the tree, because God did not want them to become equal with him.¹⁵³ The devil equated 'equality with God', with 'the perfect knowledge of good and evil', and told them that once they had eaten from the tree, and become as gods, God himself would not be able to punish them.¹⁵⁴ Martin Luther described the devil's questioning of Eve as an attempt to 'draw men away from the Word or to corrupt it'.¹⁵⁵ It was as if the devil had said, why would God who created you, and gave you dominion over everything, give you a command not to eat from this tree? The devil tried to persuade Eve that God did not in fact command this, and that God

¹⁴⁹ Calvin, *Commentaries*, p. 153.

¹⁵⁰ Calvin, *Commentaries*, pp. 150-1.

¹⁵¹ White, *A Commentary*, III, p. 11.

¹⁵² Greene, *The First Man*, p. 8.

¹⁵³ See Calvin, *Commentaries*, p. 150. See also Trapp, *A Clavis to the Bible*, pp. 30-1, who noted that the devil charged God with envy.

¹⁵⁴ Calvin, *Commentaries*, pp. 150-1.

¹⁵⁵ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 146

wanted them to have the knowledge of good and evil.¹⁵⁶ This attempt to induce doubt in Eve's mind was successful, and she re-phrased God's threat that they would surely die, with the words, 'Lest perchance shall we die'.¹⁵⁷ Now since the Fall, this 'slyness and villainy of Satan is imitated by all heretics. Under the appearance of something good, they rob men of God and of His Word before their very eyes...'¹⁵⁸ For Luther, this distortion of God's word by the papists and other sects had led people astray.¹⁵⁹

For protestant commentators, unbelief was the cause of Adam and Eve's Fall, and indeed of all sin. Adam and Eve were persuaded to doubt God's word by the devil's *paradiastolic* redescription of God's command, which made evil appear good. Hobbes was also worried by the redescription of virtue as vice, and vice as virtue. This was the problem with a moral philosophy based on passions. In Hobbes' state of nature, each individual was his own judge of good and evil, but in the commonwealth the sovereign was judge. In Eden, God's command was the measure of good and evil, regardless of what he commanded, and regardless of what Adam and Eve judged to be good and evil. What was true for God in Eden, was also true for Hobbes' civil sovereign, or 'mortal god'.¹⁶⁰ The consequence of Adam and Eve's disobedience was their expulsion from paradise, and their punishment with death. The consequence of the Hobbesian individual's disobedience was the disintegration of the commonwealth, and the return of the state of nature, or a state of war, where it was unlikely that individuals would live to attain old age.

5. The State of Nature as an account of the Fall?

This chapter has demonstrated that for those of Hobbes' seventeenth century readers who subscribed to the protestant interpretations of *Genesis* outlined above, there were important parallels to be seen between Hobbes' account of the role of private judgement of good and evil in the disintegration of

¹⁵⁶ See Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 152 & 158.

¹⁵⁷ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 154-5.

¹⁵⁸ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 148.

¹⁵⁹ See Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 150.

¹⁶⁰ *Leviathan*, XVII, 13, p 109.

commonwealths, and the account of the Fall. As we have also seen, Hobbes himself was aware of these parallels, and used the account of scripture as rhetoric to support his own view of the dangers of individuals exercising their private judgement against the command of the civil sovereign. In doing so, Hobbes used arguably the most important and catastrophic event in Biblical history to demonstrate to his audience that they themselves had the potential to recreate this event, if they too disobeyed the command of their civil sovereign.¹⁶¹ The Fall had brought death into the world, and the disobedience of members of a commonwealth would result in a similar catastrophe for human beings, that is the dissolution of the commonwealth, and their fall into a state of nature, where it was unlikely that they would live to see their old age. Pat Moloney has argued that Hobbes did not need the story of paradise.¹⁶² Although the story of paradise was not essential for Hobbes' argument, it added rhetorical weight, by illustrating that even in Eden, God himself was not sufficient to keep human beings in obedience. This was even more the case now since the corruption of human beings by the Fall. In agreement with the Christian view, that the state had come into existence as a result of the Fall, human beings now needed a visible, human, coercive power to maintain order.

Hobbes' contemporary critics were horrified by Hobbes' state of nature, because they could not contemplate the possibility that human beings could ever have been placed in such a condition by God. They had a number of objections to Hobbes' views on good and evil. Firstly, his argument that the civil sovereign was the measure of good and evil implied that, before commonwealths came into existence, there was no such thing as good and evil. It also implied that God had not given the laws of nature to human beings. For Hobbes' critics this quite plainly contradicted the account of scripture, which clearly stated that Adam (and Eve) were created in the image of God, and thus had perfect knowledge of good and evil, although the scriptural account was silent on exactly when they were given the laws of nature.¹⁶³ Secondly, these writers also thought that even in the natural condition human beings had been ruled by God, who had given them both

¹⁶¹ See Hood, *The Divine Politics of Thomas Hobbes*, pp. 175-6; Halliday et al, 'Hobbes' Belief in God', p. 427; and Reik, *The Golden Lands*, p. 150.

¹⁶² See Moloney, 'Leaving the Garden of Eden', p. 266.

a positive command, as well as the laws of nature engraved on their hearts. Thus, their understanding of the natural condition was completely at odds with Hobbes' view that it was a condition without government. Their valuation of the natural condition, as an ideal condition, was also in complete opposition to that of Hobbes.

But we have to ask the question, if Adam and Eve had perfect knowledge of good and evil, then why did they disobey God? The interpretations of *Genesis* outlined above indicate that although Adam and Eve were created in the image of God, God did not want them to have knowledge of good and evil. We have also seen that a number of protestant commentators thought that Adam and Eve's knowledge was theoretical, scientific, or speculative, and it was only after the Fall that they acquired experience of good and evil. Adam and Eve's disobedience indicates that even in Eden they were unable correctly to apply this theoretical knowledge. On the voluntarist account, whereby something was good simply because God commanded it, it was almost irrelevant whether there was another way to discern good and evil, because human beings should obey without question. The views of protestant commentators on *Genesis*, outlined in this chapter, also demonstrated that although God had given the laws of nature to the first human beings, he had also given them a positive command, because natural law was not a sufficient test of obedience. Natural law was difficult to discover, interpret and apply in particular circumstances. The disobedience of the first human beings demonstrated that even in the Edenic condition, God, his positive command, and the laws of nature failed to prevent Adam and Eve's disobedience. If this was so in Eden, then it must be even more so now since the Fall.

Hobbes' critics failed to understand that on his account Adam and Eve were not in the natural condition until after the Fall. Before that they were subject to a common power, who gave them a positive command, as well as the laws of nature engraved on their hearts. For Hobbes, God was a common power in Eden, and yet Adam and Eve still disobeyed him.¹⁶⁴ The account of the Fall demonstrated that God himself was not sufficient to maintain order in the

¹⁶³ See the discussion in chapter four on natural law.

¹⁶⁴ Hobbes also thought that God could have afflicted Adam with death, regardless of whether he had sinned, or not - see *Leviathan*, XXXI, 6, p. 237.

apparently perfect condition of Eden. Thus 'fallen' human beings needed a visible, human, coercive power. Hobbes' contemporary critics failed to see his state of nature as a fallen condition for two main reasons. Firstly, because of a difference in their method of argument these writers were interested in origins, and viewed the natural condition as an original condition, before commonwealths came into existence. In this way it was also understood as the condition of the first human beings in Eden. Secondly, because of their mainly Aristotelian understanding of the term 'nature', the natural condition was seen as both the end and perfection of human existence. And again in this way it was also understood as the beginning of human existence in Eden. On both understandings, nature was an ideal condition. Hobbes, on the other hand, thought that nature was far from an ideal condition. Indeed, if nature was so perfect, then why did human beings ever leave it, and create commonwealths? For Hobbes, it was the commonwealth which was the better condition, and in his version of events individuals fell from the civil or artificial condition, which Hobbes thought was good, into the state of nature, which Hobbes thought was evil. The account of *Genesis*, on the other hand, described the Fall from the natural and perfect condition of Eden, into a condition in which God permitted the creation of the state. Thus, for those of Hobbes' readers who understood the natural condition as Eden, Hobbes had completely reversed the valuation of the scriptural account.

But for those of Hobbes' readers who subscribed to Augustinian, Calvinist and Lutheran interpretations of *Genesis*, there were a number of important parallels to be seen between Hobbes' state of nature and the scriptural account of the Fall. In fact Hobbes' use of the scriptural account suggests his own knowledge of Reformed interpretations of *Genesis*. Hobbes thought that good and evil were names applied by individuals to objects, actions and events which either pleased or displeased them. Many protestant commentators on *Genesis* thought that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil got its name from the event. Once Adam and Eve had eaten from the tree of knowledge, they knew good and evil by experience. When they were banished from paradise, they came to know good by its absence, and evil by its presence. Similarly, when the Hobbesian individual found himself in the natural condition, he knew that this condition was evil, and

that peace in civil society was good. This was the future good demonstrated by reason.

For both Hobbes and voluntarist protestant commentators on *Genesis*, God's command was the measure of good and evil in Eden. The fruit of the tree of knowledge was not evil by nature, but because of God's command. The rationalist view of morality, subscribed to by Hobbes' contemporary critics, whereby good and evil existed in nature independently of God's command, was denied by the majority of protestant commentators.¹⁶⁵ God's command was also a trial of obedience, and demonstrated to Adam and Eve that they had a lord whom they were subject to. This was also the reason God gave Adam and Eve a positive command, as well as the laws of nature, otherwise they would only have obeyed God because it was in accordance with natural reason. Further, for John Salkeld the laws of nature were not a sufficient trial of obedience, because they did not necessarily demonstrate that God was their sovereign. On these interpretations, God himself thought that the laws of nature were insufficient by themselves. We will see in chapter four, on natural law, that Hobbes' views were not in opposition to Reformed interpretations. Hobbes himself thought that human beings easily broke the laws of nature, because of their desire to be superior to others, and their desire to have what seemed good to them immediately. We have also seen above that Hobbes had described inexperienced individuals who imagined the consequences of their actions, but were not able to do so far enough into the future, and thus did not see the evil annexed to what they thought was good. Hobbes' seventeenth century readers could have seen in Adam and Eve a good example of those individuals - they desired to have what seemed good to them immediately, and to be superior to others. They failed to consider the consequences of their actions for others, and they failed to see the evil which came with what they believed to be an apparent good. Quite simply, they desired to be as gods, knowing good and evil.

For protestant commentators, God's command also showed man the knowledge he should not desire to have. As a result of the disobedience, since the Fall the reasoning faculty had become corrupted, and law had become necessary

¹⁶⁵ See also Rauch, 'Secular Fall', pp. 100-101 - there were no moral values in Eden.

because of man's inability to distinguish between good and evil. Both the light of nature, and conscience, although not corrupt in themselves, were corrupt in human beings. Similarly for Hobbes, human beings were now unable correctly to distinguish between good and evil, and this was why they must take their civil sovereign's command as the rule of their actions. Finally for protestant commentators, the cause of the Fall was unbelief. The devil persuaded Eve to doubt the word of God, by redescribing his command to make evil appear good. For Hobbes, when individuals took it upon themselves to judge good and evil, they questioned or doubted the commands of their sovereign, and in doing so they fell into a state of nature. Exacerbating this problem was the redescription of virtue as vice, and vice as virtue. If Hobbes' readers failed to understand that their sovereign's command was the measure of good and evil in the commonwealth, then they could be led into disobedience by clever orators, just as Adam and Eve were led into disobedience in Eden by the serpent's redescription of God's command. Hobbes' political theory was designed to show the importance of obedience to civil sovereigns, and this was why he chose the most important event in Biblical history to support his view.

In his work on Hobbes' theory of the will, Jürgen Overhoff has demonstrated that Hobbes' contemporary critics interpreted Lutheran and Calvinist doctrines 'in line with the standard interpretation of Reformation theology as adopted and preached by the Laudian Church', but that in doing so they showed how far they had moved away from the doctrines of Luther and Calvin themselves. Hobbes, on the other hand, was a more accurate interpreter of orthodox Reformed doctrines.¹⁶⁶ This chapter has shown that Hobbes' use of the account of the Fall, in his political theory, could have been understood by his seventeenth century readers to be in agreement with Reformed interpretations of *Genesis*. We have also seen above, that for at least one protestant commentator, John Downname, there was a distinction to be made between nature before and after the Fall.¹⁶⁷ This might have been the crux of the matter between those seventeenth century readers who subscribed to Reformed interpretations, and could perhaps see parallels between Hobbes' account and scripture; and Hobbes'

¹⁶⁶ Overhoff, *Hobbes' Theory of Volition*, pp. 193 & 189.

¹⁶⁷ This will be discussed in relation to natural law in chapter four.

contemporary critics, who had moved away from the doctrines of Luther and Calvin, and thought that Hobbes' account completely contradicted scripture. We will see throughout this dissertation that Hobbes' description of human nature could be understood to have taken account of the effects of the Fall, and particularly the corruption of reason, and the division of mankind into the elect and reprobate. Hobbes' state of nature could be understood as an account of what we might call the fall of 'fallen' human beings, both regenerate and unregenerate, from the commonwealth. The account of *Genesis* described the fall of apparently perfect human beings from the apparently perfect condition of Eden. Although Hobbes' account shared parallels with the scriptural account, Hobbes could be understood to have questioned whether the Edenic condition itself was perfect. Even in Eden, God himself was not enough to prevent Adam and Eve's disobedience.

Chapter Two: Equality and Unsociability.

'And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground...' (Genesis II.7)

We have seen in the previous chapter that the majority of Hobbes' contemporary critics understood nature as the end and perfection of human existence, but also as the beginning of human existence in Eden. In this chapter I want to assess two particular aspects of Hobbes' description of human beings - their natural equality and unsociability - against the criticisms of his contemporaries, and against protestant interpretations of the account of the creation.

1. Hobbes and Natural Equality.

The state of nature was a condition in which human beings were equal in the sense that they had roughly equal powers.¹ This applied to all adult men and women living in the natural condition.² Hobbes admitted that there were differences of strength and intellect, but these were 'not so considerable as that one man can thereupon claim to himself any benefit to which another may not pretend as well as he'. Differences in physical strength did not affect this equality - one human being might be physically weaker than another, but he still had the ability to kill the stronger individual, 'either by secret machinations, or by confederacy with others that are in the same danger with himself'.³ Hobbes claimed that little force was necessary in order to kill another human being.⁴ And even if an individual had the utmost confidence in his own ability, he could not believe that he was naturally superior to others. Thus, those 'who have equal power against each other, are equal; and those who have the greatest power, the power to kill, in fact have equal power'.⁵ Differences in intellectual ability also

¹ See *Elements*, XIV, 2, p. 78; *De Cive*, I, 4, p. 26; and *Leviathan*, XIII, 1, p. 74. They also had equal rights - see chapter four on the right of nature, and also *Leviathan*, XIII, 13 & XIV, 4; *Elements*, XIV, 6-14; and *De Cive*, I, 7-15.

² See *De Cive*, IX, 3, p. 108; and *Leviathan*, XX, 4, p. 128. In the *Elements*, XXIII, 2, p. 131, Hobbes claimed men had more strength than women, but this still did not entitle them to dominion over children. This will be discussed in further detail in chapter five on the creation of society.

³ *Leviathan*, XIII, 1, p. 74.

⁴ See *Elements*, XIV, 2, p. 78; and *De Cive*, I, 3, p. 26.

⁵ *De Cive*, I, 3, p. 26.

did not affect this equality. In fact according to Hobbes, if we ignored taught intellectual ability, such as rhetoric and science, and also intellectual ability, which was attained by experience, such as prudence, we found that human beings were equal in 'the faculties of the mind'. In other words, human beings were equal in those faculties of mind which they had from birth. The reason for this was that each human being thought he was wiser than others, and this, according to Hobbes, was proof of their equality - they were equal in being contented with their share of wisdom, which they thought was greater than anyone else's share.⁶

Hobbes' argument for natural equality was particularly directed against Aristotle, and his followers. Hobbes criticised Aristotle's claim that naturally some human beings were made to serve, because of their physical strength; while others were made to rule, because of their intellectual ability. According to Hobbes, it went against both reason and experience that the relationship of master and servant was introduced by 'difference of wit'. Any inequalities between human beings had been introduced by civil laws, and by the consent of human beings themselves. Hobbes' main argument against Aristotle was that human beings themselves thought they were equal, and would 'rather govern themselves than be governed by others'.⁷ He used the example of a battle between the wise and the strong, and claimed that men of intellectual ability rarely won in battle against men of strength.⁸ He also admitted that even if it was the case that nature had made men unequal, men 'think themselves equal'.⁹ According to Hobbes, Aristotle's foundation of natural inequality not only weakened 'the whole frame of his politics', but also gave 'men colour and pretences, whereby to disturb and hinder the peace of one another'. As 'long as men arrogate to themselves more honour than they give to others, it cannot be imagined how they can possibly live in peace'.¹⁰ For Hobbes, problems were caused when certain human beings

⁶ *Leviathan*, XIII, 2, p. 74-5.

⁷ *Leviathan*, XV, 21, p. 96. See also *Elements*, XVII, 1, p. 93, where Hobbes claimed that human beings could never agree on those people who were so stupid that they could not govern themselves; but also that men generally thought themselves as capable of governing other men, as of being governed by others.

⁸ See *Leviathan*, XV, 21, pp. 96-7.

⁹ *Leviathan*, XV, 21, pp. 96-7; and *De Cive*, III, 13, pp. 49-50.

¹⁰ *Elements*, XVII, 1, p. 93. In *De Cive*, I, 15, p. 31, Hobbes claimed that because of equality of strength and other faculties, human beings could not expect to live long in the state of nature.

assumed superiority over others, against both reason and nature.¹¹ Even if individuals thought that they were better than others, they must act as if they were equal.

2. The Contemporary Reaction.

Hobbes' view that all men were equal by nature was not shared by a number of his contemporaries. These writers thought that Hobbes' argument contradicted the evidence of experience, and particularly objected to his equation of natural equality with equality of ability in killing. According to John Bramhall, this meant that if 'the son have as strong an arme, and as good a cudgell as his father, he is as good a man as his father'.¹² James Tyrrell also disagreed with Hobbes' claim that the weaker could kill the stronger, and thought that this could happen by chance but 'this will not make the match to be equal'.¹³ Hobbes' argument reduced men to the level of beasts, if a weak insect could sometimes destroy a man by force or surprise. Tyrrell used the example of 'a Pope who was choaked by swallowing of a Fly in his Drink, which if it could be supposed to be done by the Fly on purpose, would make the Fly and the Pope to be equal by Nature'.¹⁴ He agreed with Hobbes that civil inequality had been introduced by civil laws, and that men were by nature equal, in the sense that they should allow other human beings the same liberties that they allowed themselves. But Tyrrell also thought that there was a 'natural inequality of strength and power amongst men, both in body and mind...', and all we had to do was to observe men to see that this was the case.¹⁵

Hobbes' views on natural equality were also thought to contradict the ideas of Aristotle. Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, accepted Hobbes' law of

¹¹ See *Elements*, XVI, 5, p. 89. In both the *Elements* and *De Cive*, although not in *Leviathan*, Hobbes cited scriptural proof for his argument that human beings should 'content themselves with equality' - see *Elements*, XVIII, 6, p. 100, where Hobbes cited *Matthew* XXII.39-40; and *De Cive*, IV, 11, p. 62, where he cited *Matthew* V.3, *Proverbs* VI.16-19, XVI.5, XI.2, and *Isaiah* XL.3.

¹² Bramhall, *Castigations*, p. 156.

¹³ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 268.

¹⁴ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 269-70. For the use of similar examples see also Lowde, *A Discourse*, p. 153; and William Lucy, *Observations, Censures and Confutations of notorious errors in Mr. Hobbes His Leviathan, and his other bookes* (London, 1663), p. 138. Hereafter cited as Lucy, *Observations 1663*.

¹⁵ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 267.

nature, 'that every man must acknowledge every other man for his equal by nature', and agreed with Hobbes that this was 'true as to the essentials of human nature'. But Clarendon also thought that some human beings were fitter to govern than others. Hobbes' reasoning that most men would rather govern themselves did not contradict Aristotle, as he had claimed it did. According to Clarendon, the question was 'Whether Nature hath made some men worthier, not whether it hath made all others so modest as to confess it'. He used the example of animals, of which some 'by nature are fitter for nobler uses, and others for vile, and to be only Beasts of burden'.¹⁶ Similarly for human beings, 'Nature it self hath a bounty which she extends to some men in a much superior degree than she doth to others'. Every human being had experience of people, who although they had been given the same education and other advantages, had different faculties and intellects, 'which can proceed from no other cause, but the distinction that Nature her self made between them'.¹⁷

Hobbes' contemporary critics also thought that his ideas on natural equality contradicted the scriptural account of the creation. According to the political writer Roger Coke, Hobbes' view was not only false, but also 'destructive to all faith, and truth of Sacred History'. God created Adam as a universal monarch over his wife and children, as well as other animals. Since Adam, God had not created men - the human species had continued itself by generation. As a result, it was now impossible that 'any two Men in the world can be equal, where God does not make them so', for all human beings were born into subjection to their parents.¹⁸ God gave Adam supreme power, but 'not as Father, Husband, or Master of a Family', because at the time of God's pronouncement Eve had not been created, and therefore Adam was not a father, husband or master. But once Eve was created, Adam had dominion over her as both monarch

¹⁶ Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, *A Brief View and Survey of the dangerous and pernicious errors to Church and State in Mr. Hobbes's book, entitled Leviathan* (1676), reproduced in *Leviathan - Contemporary Responses to the Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, edited and introduced by G.A.J. Rogers (Thoemmes Press, Bristol, 1995), pp 180-300, p. 198. On Clarendon and Hobbes, see Perez Zagorin, 'Clarendon and Hobbes', *Journal of Modern History*, 57 (1985), pp. 593-616.

¹⁷ Clarendon, *A Brief View and Survey*, p. 199.

¹⁸ Roger Coke, *A Survey of the Politicks of Thomas White, Mr. Thomas Hobbs, and Hugo Grotius* (London, 1660), p. 26.

and husband.¹⁹ William Lucy also thought that the example of Adam and Eve disproved Hobbes' description of the state of nature, because they 'were made without question in no state of enmity, nor in an absolute equality, but such a difference as was necessary for two friends which might assist one another wishing each other good and the good of each other was the good of both, the hopes of each the hopes of both'.²⁰

In some ways Hobbes would not have disagreed with the views of Tyrrell and Clarendon. Hobbes admitted that experience demonstrated that there were differences between human beings, but he thought that these were not great enough for one individual to be so superior to others, that he could rule over them, for any length of time, in the natural condition. In such a condition, each individual only had his own power to protect himself. One human being might be physically weaker than another, but he might also have greater intellectual abilities, which meant that despite his lack of strength, he could kill the other. Hobbes was simply trying to say that the characteristics of one individual will often be balanced out, by other quite different characteristics in another individual; in such a way that neither could claim that under any imaginable circumstances, they were superior to the other. For Hobbes, human beings were equal, but this did not mean they were identical. William Lucy's understanding of Hobbesian equality, as absolute equality, is quite simply incorrect. Hobbes' natural individuals had roughly equal, but different powers.²¹ Hobbes' views on Aristotle also suggest that he thought it was human beings who had, at various times, artificially decided that brains were superior to brawn; and thus at other times, could just as easily have decided that strength was superior to intellectual ability. This could also be applied to the superiority of one gender over another; or indeed to the superiority of any single group over any other group. How then did Hobbes' account compare to the scriptural account of the creation? For his contemporary critics it plainly contradicted scripture, but was this the case for all of Hobbes' seventeenth century readers?

¹⁹ Roger Coke, *Elements of Power and Subjection* (London, 1660), p. 35.

²⁰ Lucy, *Observations 1657*, p. 80.

3. The Scriptural Account.

In *De Cive* Hobbes imagined human beings in a condition in which they had ‘emerged from the earth like mushrooms and grown up without any obligation to each other’.²² Similarly in the seventh verse of the second chapter of *Genesis*, ‘God formed man of the dust of the ground’. Most protestant commentators interpreted this verse as demonstrating the equality, frailty and humility of human beings. According to the poet and divine John Donne, ‘in being earth we are equall’, both in life and even more so in death, ‘where there is no means to distinguish royall from plebeian, nor catholick from hereticall dust’.²³ Jean Calvin thought that it was God’s way of demonstrating man’s humility, as a counter-balance to his creation of Adam in his own image, ‘lest men should use [the former] as an occasion of pride’.²⁴ The creation of man out of earth was also interpreted as demonstrating the frailty of human beings.²⁵ As Walter Raleigh so bluntly put it,

Nature assureth us by never-failing experience, and Reason by infallible demonstration, that our times upon the earth have neither certaintie nor durabilitie, that our bodies are but the Andviles of paine and diseases, and our Mindes the Hives of unnumbered cares, sorrowes, and passions: and that (when we are most glorified) we are but those painted posts, against which Envie and Fortune direct their darts...²⁶

²¹ We will see in chapter three that Hobbes described two different types of human beings living in the state of nature.

²² *De Cive*, VIII, 1, p. 102. This replaced the passage in the *Elements* in which Hobbes echoed *Genesis* by asking us to consider human beings, as if they had just been created male and female - see below.

²³ John Donne, *Two Sermons preached before King Charles, upon the xxvi verse of the first chapter of Genesis* (Cambridge, 1634), Second Sermon, pp. 3-4. Hobbes may well have heard Donne preach *A Sermon upon the viii. verse of the i. chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, preached to the Honourable Company of the Virginian Plantation, 13 Novemb. 1622* (London, 1623). Noel Malcolm, ‘Hobbes, Sandys and the Virginia Company’, *Historical Journal*, 24 (1981), pp. 297-321, p. 303; Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography*, p. 64; Sommerville, *Thomas Hobbes*, p. 11; and Patricia Springborg, ‘*Leviathan*, Mythic History, and National Historiography’, in *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain - History, Rhetoric, and Fiction, 1500-1800* edited by D.R. Kelley & David Harris Sacks (Woodrow Wilson Center & Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997), pp. 267-97, p. 269, have all noted this.

²⁴ Calvin, *Commentaries*, p. 111. See also Cooper, *A Brief Exposition*, p. 94.

²⁵ See for example Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 35; Whateley, *Prototypes*, p. 3; and Babington, *Comfortable Notes*, p. 9.

²⁶ Raleigh, *A History of the World*, p. 28.

John Trapp added that man's creation out of dust also noted 'our vility and impurity',²⁷ while Andrew Willet noted that man was created out of earth because he was to live on earth.²⁸

At first glance, Hobbes' views on equality, and the frailty of the human body were supported by these interpretations. But Hobbes put a rather different slant on things with his argument that human beings were equal, because they were equally capable of killing each other, and that little force was necessary to kill a human being. This also demonstrated the frailty of the human body, but it did so in quite a different way from the interpretation of a writer like Raleigh, whose comment on human frailty referred rather to human susceptibility to diseases and emotional problems. Hobbes' description of human beings springing out of the ground as adults also subverted a number of important interpretations of *Genesis*. According to Jean Calvin, while other animals 'arose out of the earth in a moment', God formed man gradually, because he wanted to distinguish man from other animals 'by some mark of excellence'. God created the dead body of man out of dust, and then gave it a soul, which gave man life. 'God did not command [Adam] immediately to spring alive out of the earth', because he wanted to show man he was superior to other animals.²⁹ Similarly, Martin Luther interpreted this verse of *Genesis* as God's demonstration of the superiority of human beings over other animals, 'created by a unique counsel and wisdom and shaped by the finger of God'. Adam was 'a dead and inactive clod before he is formed by the Lord'. For Luther, God was the potter, and man the clay, and this remained the case throughout man's life.³⁰

On these interpretations, Hobbes' account of men springing out of the ground like mushrooms, without reference to a gradual creation, was more in line with God's creation of animals, than with God's creation of human beings. And yet these interpretations of Calvin and Luther did not contradict Hobbes' idea of natural equality, because for Calvin and Luther this verse of *Genesis*

²⁷ Trapp, *A Clavis to the Bible*, p. 22.

²⁸ See Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis*, pp. 31-2.

²⁹ Calvin, *Commentaries*, pp. 111-2. See also Hampton, *The Threefold State of Man*, p. 7; and Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis*, p. 32.

³⁰ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 83-5. See also Hobbes' similar language in his discussion of God's justice - 'God has an obligation to His creatures no more than a potter to his clay' - see

demonstrated man's superiority over irrational creatures, not over other men. Here Hobbes' rhetoric directed his readers towards the scriptural account, and even resembled it superficially. But when they looked more closely, all was not what it seemed. Hobbes' views on natural equality were, to a certain extent, supported by the interpretations of *Genesis* mentioned above. But crucially, Hobbes interpreted equality and frailty rather differently. For Hobbes, human beings were equally capable of killing, and all human beings could easily be killed by others. Similarly, Hobbes' description of human beings emerging from the earth as adults, although superficially resembling God's creation of man out of the dust of the ground, must, if his readers followed the interpretations of Calvin and Luther, be either animals, or human beings without souls.

Hobbes also alluded to *Genesis* in the *Elements*, when he asked his readers to 'consider men... without covenants or subjection, one to another, as if they were but even now all at once created male and female'.³¹ With this statement, Hobbes directed his readers to the first reference of the account of the creation in *Genesis* I.27.³² This verse described God's creation of male and female, although as a number of commentators noted, both were given the same name - 'man' - to teach them that they were one.³³ This interpretation was supported by a later verse in *Genesis* chapter five, 'Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created'.³⁴ Jean Calvin thought that in this verse Moses assigned 'a common name indiscriminately to both, in order that posterity might learn more sacredly to

Thomas Hobbes, *Thomas White's De Mundo Examined*, translated by Harold Whitmore Jones, (Bradford University Press, London, 1976), chapter XXXVIII, section 2, p. 461.

³¹ *Elements*, XXII, 2, p. 126. In *De Cive* this statement was replaced by the famous men springing out of the ground like mushrooms description - see above.

³² The controversial Biblical commentator Isaac La Peyrère used the two different accounts of the creation from *Genesis* chapter one, where male and female were created; and chapter two, where a particular male (Adam) and female (Eve) were created, to demonstrate that there had been men created before Adam - see Isaac La Peyrère, *A Theological Systeme upon that presupposition that Men were before Adam* (London, 1655); and *A Discourse upon the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth verses of the fifth chapter of the Epistle of S. Paul to the Romans* (London, 1655). On La Peyrère himself, and his friendship with Hobbes, see Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère*, p. 5.

³³ See for example Clapham, *A Briefe of the Bible*, p. 18.

³⁴ See Ainsworth, *Annotations, Genesis* II.17; and Richardson, *Choice Observations, Genesis* III.20.

cherish this connection between each other, when they saw that their first parents were denominated as one person'.³⁵

The exact nature of the relationship between Adam and Eve, before the Fall, was interpreted in a variety of ways by protestant commentators. For Martin Luther, Eve was created as Adam's equal in all respects.³⁶ Before the Fall, Eve 'was very free and, as the sharer of all the gifts of God, was in no respect inferior to her husband'. Before the disobedience, 'she would not only not have been subjected to the rule of her husband, but she herself would also have been a partner in the rule which is now entirely the concern of males'.³⁷ According to Luther's interpretation of *Genesis* II.23, 'she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man', Eve must be called "she-man" or "virago" because she performed 'similar activities in the home'.³⁸ Luther described marriage as a partnership, in which 'the husband differs from the wife in no other respect than in sex; otherwise the woman is altogether a man'.³⁹ Similarly for Andrew Willet, Eve was not created to be either against Adam, or a servant to him, but

shee was made like unto man, as well as in proportion of bodie, as in qualities of the mind, being created according to the image of God: as also for that shee was meete for man, necessarie for the procreation and education of children, and profitable for the disposing of household affairs... This maketh a manifest difference betweene woman, which is alwaies before man, cohabiting and conversing with him, and other females which after their copulation, forsake their males.⁴⁰

Eve's equality was also demonstrated, for a number of commentators, by her creation from the body of Adam. According to Joseph Hall, Eve was created out of man, rather than from the earth or the inferior creatures, to show her equality. God created Eve from Adam while he was sleeping, so that Eve would have no reason to be dependent on Adam. If 'the Woman should have been made,

³⁵ Calvin, *Commentaries*, p. 228. For Calvin, this demonstrated natural sociability - see the discussion below.

³⁶ See Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 115. But see below for Luther's rather contradictory remarks on Eve's equality and inferiority.

³⁷ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 203.

³⁸ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 138.

³⁹ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 137.

⁴⁰ Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis*, p. 36, although Willet was also prone to contradictory remarks regarding Eve's equality or inferiority - see below. Here Willet cited Luther, but did not tell us which particular work he was referring to. The similarity to Hobbes' comments on the Amazons is interesting - see chapter five on the creation of society.

not without the paine, or Will of the Man, she might have been upbraided with her dependance, and obligation. Now shee owes nothing but to her Creator'.⁴¹ Similarly for John Trapp, Eve was created from a rib from Adam's side,

not of the head; (the wife must not usurp authority over her husband) nor yet of the foot; she is not a slave, but a fellow-helper. A bone, not of any anterior part, she is not *pralata*, preferred before the man: neither yet of any hinder part, she is not *post-posita*, set behind the man; but a bone of the side, of the middle and indifferent part; to shew, that she is a companion, and the wife of thy covenant, *Mal.2.14*. A bone she is from under the arm, to put man in mind of protection and defence to the woman. A bone not far from his heart, to put him in mind of dilection and love to the woman. A bone from the left side (as many think likely) where the heart is, to teach, that hearty love ought to be betwixt married couples.⁴²

Alexander Ross thought that man and woman were one flesh for a number of reasons, including the fact that a husband had 'right and power... over the body of his Wife, and the Wife over her husband, 1. *Cor. 7*'.⁴³

The creation of Eve was also interpreted as the creation of another, or a 'second-self' for Adam, by a number of commentators following Calvin.⁴⁴ According to Calvin, when God created Eve from Adam, Adam was then complete, he beheld 'another self. And he gives to his wife a name taken from that of man' - manness.⁴⁵ God's pronouncement of 'I will make him an help' in the creation of Eve, as opposed to the pronouncement of 'Let us make' in the creation of Adam, had been interpreted by some as marking 'the distinction between the two sexes', and has shown 'how much the man excels the woman'. Calvin admitted that although his interpretation was not contrary to this, it was different. For Calvin, God created the human race 'in the person of the man... [thus] the common dignity of our whole nature was without distinction, honoured with one eulogy, when it was said, "Let us make man"...' And it was not necessary for God to repeat this when he created woman. Calvin interpreted the creation of Eve from Adam as God's intention 'that both male and females should spring from one and the same origin'. According to Calvin, this explained

⁴¹ Hall, *Contemplations*, p. 776.

⁴² Trapp, *A Clavis to the Bible*, p. 27.

⁴³ Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 58.

⁴⁴ See for example Trapp, *A Clavis to the Bible*, p. 25.

⁴⁵ Calvin, *Commentaries*, p. 135. See also Haak, *Dutch Annotations, Genesis II.23*.

Genesis I.27, 'God created man... male and female created he them'. In this way 'Adam was taught to recognise himself in his wife, as in a mirror; and Eve, in her turn, to submit herself willingly to her husband as being taken out of him'.⁴⁶ If men and women had been created from different sources 'there would have been occasion either of mutual contempt, or envy, or contentions'.⁴⁷ Calvin noted that Moses used the word 'built' when referring to the creation of the woman, 'to teach us that in the person of the woman the human race was at length complete, which had before been like a building just begun', and also to tell us that 'legitimate family order was then instituted'.⁴⁸

As we have seen above, Hobbes thought that adult individuals were equal by nature, because they had roughly equal powers, and were all equally capable of killing. In the natural condition, this applied to both men and women. As Hobbes put it, 'whereas some have attributed the Dominion to the Man onely, as being of the more excellent Sex; they misreckon in it. For there is not alwayes that difference of strength, or prudence between the man and the woman, as that the right can be determined without War'.⁴⁹ Hobbes also referred to natural individuals using the terms 'man', or 'men'. Gabriella Slomp has argued that Hobbes used the term 'man' as a universal name, which referred to an abstraction or mental image. One universal name was given to many things because they had similar qualities. For Hobbes, men (males) might have had roughly equal power in the state of nature, but they also had different desires and aversions. Therefore the only qualities that all men shared were their vital and voluntary motions - the power in each individual to feel, think, deliberate, desire and act. As women also shared these qualities, Slomp concludes that Hobbes' definition of man was gender-free.⁵⁰ Although there were instances when Hobbes specifically used the term 'women', in the state of nature Hobbesian individuals, regardless of gender, were equal. They were all equally capable of killing, and they all had equal rights.

⁴⁶ Calvin, *Commentaries*, pp. 132-3.

⁴⁷ Calvin, *Commentaries*, pp. 133-4. See also Salkeld, *A Treatise of Paradise*, p. 172.

⁴⁸ Calvin, *Commentaries*, pp. 133-4.

⁴⁹ *Leviathan*, XX, 4, p. 128. Elsewhere, whilst discussing succession to a monarchy, Hobbes admitted that generally men 'are naturally fitter than women, for actions of labour and danger' - see *Leviathan*, XIX, 22, p. 126. In a similar discussion in the *Elements*, XXIII, 14, p. 134, Hobbes claimed that women have governed wisely in places all over the world, but they 'are not so apt thereto in general as men'.

⁵⁰ See Slomp, 'Hobbes and the Equality of Women', pp. 441-4.

Hobbes made this particularly clear for women, as well as men, when he discussed rights over children.⁵¹ All inequalities between human beings were introduced in civil society, by the consent of human beings themselves - this included women's subjection to men.⁵²

Protestant interpretations of the relationship between Adam and Eve, before the disobedience, generally supported Hobbes' views on the equality of human beings. God created two human beings, and regardless of gender they were equal in all respects. When Adam and Eve were first created, they were both called man. Gender was a difference, but not a reason for the inferiority of one to another. Eve was created as another or a 'second self' for Adam, and both were created in the image of God. Eve's creation from a rib from Adam's side demonstrated that she should be neither above or below the man, but his equal, although for Calvin this equality did not contradict the fact that Eve should willingly submit to her husband.⁵³ For Alexander Ross, Adam and Eve even had rights over each other's bodies. Luther's views, although implying that there was government in paradise, also stated that this government was to be shared between male and female. Hobbes' views on natural equality were not in opposition to these interpretations of *Genesis*, but for these commentators the relationship between Adam and Eve also demonstrated natural sociability. Eve was created to be Adam's companion, for the procreation of the human race, and to help in the government of the family. According to Calvin, Adam and Eve were created from the same source to note their equality, but also their natural sociability. If they had been created from different sources, then they would have quarrelled with each other. Hobbes' views on natural equality may well have been supported by the scriptural account, but what about his views on natural (un)sociability?

⁵¹ See chapter four on the right of nature; chapter five on the creation of society; and also Hobbes' chapters on paternal dominion in *Elements* XXIII, *De Cive* IX, and *Leviathan* XX.

⁵² This in itself has implications for God's punishment of Eve after the Fall - I will discuss this in chapter five on the creation of society.

4. Hobbes on Natural Unsociability.

'And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone...' (Genesis II.18)

Hobbes thought that the society of irrational creatures, such as bees and ants, was natural, but the society of human beings was not, because it was difficult for human beings to live together peacefully in society for any length of time, without a common power over them.⁵⁴ According to Hobbes, amongst bees and ants there was a 'natural concord... [which] is the work of God by the way of nature; but concord amongst men is artificial, and by way of covenant'.⁵⁵ Hobbes thought that human beings were not naturally sociable, they were not born fit for society. Previous writers (particularly Aristotle) who had assumed this, had done so wrongly, because of their 'superficial view of human nature'.⁵⁶ Hobbes admitted that human beings sought each other's company for a variety of reasons - for instance, from birth children needed others to look after them.⁵⁷ But civil societies were 'Alliances, which essentially require good faith and agreement'. Children and the uneducated were ignorant of the force of alliances, and 'those who do not know what would be lost by the absence of Society are unaware of their usefulness'. Because all men were born as children, all were born unfit for society, and the majority remained so throughout their lives, because of lack of training. Further, 'even if man were born in a condition to desire society, it does not follow that he was born suitably equipped to enter society... even those who arrogantly reject the equal conditions without which society is not possible, still want it'.⁵⁸ So Hobbes admitted the possibility that human beings were born desiring society, but even so this did not necessarily mean that they had the required qualities to live in society. Human beings had to be educated to live in

⁵³ See the discussion below of the views of those commentators who described Eve as both equal and subject to Adam.

⁵⁴ See *Elements*, XIX, 5, p. 105; *Leviathan*, XVII, 6 - 12, pp. 108-9; and *De Cive*, V, 5, pp. 71-2.

⁵⁵ *Elements*, XIX, 5, p. 106. See also *De Cive*, V, 5, p. 72; and *Leviathan*, XVII, 12, p. 109, where there was no mention of natural accord being the work of God, only nature.

⁵⁶ *De Cive*, I, 1, p. 21.

⁵⁷ Almond, *Adam and Eve*, p. 38, cites man's defenceless at birth as a result of the Fall.

⁵⁸ *De Cive*, footnote to I, 2, pp. 24-5.

society. From this it followed that they were not born fit for society, and thus were not naturally sociable.

Hobbes was worried that his claim that human beings were naturally unsociable would imply that he also thought they were all evil. He admitted that this was probably true, as it was clearly stated in scripture, but he nevertheless thought that human beings were not evil by nature, i.e. from birth.⁵⁹ The reason for this was that even though from birth men desired to have whatever pleased them, and to avoid whatever might bring them harm, these passions in themselves were not evil. But the actions that proceeded from them could be evil, if they were contrary to duty. Hobbes used the example of children, who lacked reason, and did not have the ability to do harm, thus they were not evil. But if these same children grew to adulthood, still lacking reason, but now having the ability to do harm, then they were to be accounted evil.⁶⁰ But Hobbes also claimed that we could not tell good and bad men apart, 'and even if there were fewer evil men than good men, good, decent people' would still have to be on their guard, and even 'get the better of others... to protect themselves by all possible means'.⁶¹

Hobbes described the natural condition of human beings as a state of solitude. Hobbes' imaginary 'mushroom men' were solitary in the sense that they had grown to adulthood without any obligations to one another, but they were not actually alone.⁶² Although Hobbes thought that human beings were naturally unsociable, he also thought they sought out each other's company, and experience could tell us that the reason was because they wanted to acquire 'honour or advantage from them'.⁶³ This was confirmed by observing what men did when they met each other - they compared themselves with others, and hoped that in doing so they would have a better idea of themselves. It was glory that they enjoyed, not society. It was clear from experience that 'every voluntary encounter is a product either of mutual need or of the pursuit of glory', and reason also confirmed this. 'All society, therefore exists for the sake of either advantage or of

⁵⁹ See *De Cive*, preface to the readers, 11-12, pp. 10-11. Hobbes did not give exact scriptural references for this statement, but presumably he was referring to the doctrine of original sin.

⁶⁰ See *De Cive*, preface to the readers, 12-13, p. 11.

⁶¹ *De Cive*, preface to the readers, 11-12, pp. 10-11. See also chapter three for Hobbes' discussion of two types of individuals in the state of nature.

⁶² See *De Cive*, VIII, 1, p. 102; and *Leviathan*, XIII, 13, p. 78.

⁶³ *De Cive*, I, 2, p. 22.

glory, i.e. it is a product of love of self, not love of friends'. But according to Hobbes, 'no large or lasting society, can be based upon the passion for glory', because 'glorying, like honour is nothing if everybody has it'.⁶⁴ Human beings sought out other people, and could increase the advantages of this life by doing so, but 'this is much more effectively achieved by Dominion than by their help'. Quite simply, it was the desire for dominion, or in Augustine's phrase, the lust for domination or *libido dominandi*,⁶⁵ which was natural, as opposed to sociability. Individuals would rather seek dominion over others, than alliance or friendship with them.

So Hobbes' state of nature was populated by solitary, adult individuals. They were solitary in the sense that they had no obligations to each other, although they were not actually alone. When Hobbes claimed that human beings were not naturally sociable, he did so because he thought that they were not sociable from birth - they become sociable through living in society. Human beings, because they were born as children, were not born fit for society. They had to be educated to it, because society was an alliance, which required agreement between many individuals. Human beings were not born with the qualities necessary for them to enter society, although they could learn how to make agreements. But although Hobbes thought that individuals were naturally unsociable, he also thought they sought out each other's company. They did this for a variety of mainly selfish reasons. Some individuals, such as children, needed other human beings to look after them. Some human beings sought out others to compare themselves with, in order to feel superior - either intellectually or physically. But for Hobbes, this was not society, but dominion and subjection. Human beings sought power over others, rather than the equal relationship of friends or allies. At best, they sought society for mutual need. They did not seek society for love of friends, but for love of self. Human beings were not naturally sociable, because it was the desire for dominion, rather than society, which originated in nature. Hobbes' contemporary critics were horrified by his argument, because again as far as they were concerned, it contradicted experience, Aristotle, and scripture.

⁶⁴ *De Cive*, I, 2, pp. 23-4.

⁶⁵ See for example Augustine, *City of God*, XIX, 14-15, pp. 874-5.

5. The Contemporary Reaction.

The main area of disagreement between Hobbes and his contemporary critics was the meaning of the term 'by nature'. For many of Hobbes' contemporary critics the phrase 'by nature' was understood in the Aristotelian sense - man was by nature a political animal, because the end of human existence was to live in the *polis* or state. Richard Cumberland cited Aristotle's statement that 'we ought to judge of Nature from her Intention or perfect State'. Cumberland admitted that the word nature was derived from *nascor* (to be born), but when we referred to human nature, 'we mean that *Force of Reason*, whose first *Rudiments* only are to be found in new-born *Infants*'. This meant that we could say man is by nature 'fitted for *propagating* his Species', even though the man in question might be a child, or impotent, or without a woman to help conceive the child. Cumberland also used the example of plants, which had the potential to provide nourishment, but could only do so once they had grown with the help of sun and rain.⁶⁶ In other words, it was the potential for society that made human beings naturally sociable. As James Lowde put it, if children were considered reasonable creatures in the sense that they could attain reason, then men must be naturally sociable in the sense that they could become fit for society. Both nature and necessity also proved that man was a sociable creature. Firstly, from the nature of human beings, because

the very fundamental Laws of Nature suppose either a Society, or something answerable to it... *Do to others, as we desire others should do to us*, and we are generally as much oblig'd to the duties of Justice and Honesty to others, as of Prudence and Caution to our selves; and this necessarily supposes a Society, or something like it, a state of Friendship.

And secondly, from necessity we must be sociable creatures, since our 'subsistence necessarily requires the aid and assistance of others, otherwise the very Birth of a Child would be the certain exposing of it to destruction'.⁶⁷

Hobbes thought that previous writers, in describing human behaviour, had included in their description characteristics which themselves had been created by life in society. In other words, their description included human behaviour which

⁶⁶ Cumberland, *A Treatise*, p. 96.

⁶⁷ Lowde, *A Discourse*, pp. 164-5.

had been taught, or learnt. Hobbes' version stripped human behaviour down to its bare essentials, and for many of his contemporary critics this meant that his description only seemed to take into account our 'animal' qualities.⁶⁸ James Tyrrell claimed that Hobbes

only takes the measure of Humane Nature, from those Passions which precede the use of Reason, Experience and Discipline... Whereas according to the Opinion of the best Philosophers, we suppose the truer nature of man, ought rather to be taken from his utmost Perfection, viz. his Reasons, or the power of deducing Effects from their Causes; by which alone, he is distinguished from Brutes...

Tyrrell accused Hobbes of opposing experience and discipline to nature, and argued that 'whatever men learn by either of these, they must still attain to it by the force of their Rational Natures, and those Faculties of Reason and Speech, which Brutes are not capable of: And therefore the nature of a Creature is best judged of from the utmost Perfection it attains to...'⁶⁹ Most philosophers had realised that human beings, because they were born as children, were born unfit for society, but these philosophers argued that men were born fit for society, because of the end of human existence, rather than its origin.⁷⁰ For Tyrrell, 'by nature' meant 'something that is by Nature inseparably proper to its subject, as to a Fish to swim...'⁷¹

Hobbes' statement that the concord of human beings was artificial, whereas the concord of irrational creatures was natural, also provoked criticism from some of his contemporaries. James Tyrrell thought that 'the true natural Causes intrinsical to Men as they are Animals, and which can bring them to consent to the exercise of Peace, and mutual Benevolence amongst themselves, are alike with those that are found in other Animals, even the fiercest, and cruellest...'⁷² Agreements, or covenants, between human beings were made by the power of human beings' rational and animal natures, and human beings, like other animals, had a natural propensity to concord with those of their own kind.⁷³

⁶⁸ For example, Lowde, *A Discourse*, pp. 151-2, who claimed that this must be what Hobbes meant by 'nature', when he argued in *De Cive* that men were not wicked by nature, that is from birth.

⁶⁹ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 256-7.

⁷⁰ See Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 258.

⁷¹ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 265.

⁷² Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 345.

⁷³ See Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 346.

Tyrrell admitted that there were some men who, led by their passions, were more cruel than wolves, bears and serpents, but he strongly objected to Hobbes tarring all human beings with the same brush.⁷⁴ Samuel Parker thought that the natural sociability of human beings was demonstrated, in part, by the differences between men and animals. He cited the fact that for men, unlike animals, procreation could and did take place at any time, and was not confined to a specific mating season. This led human beings to marry and live in family groups.⁷⁵

Hobbes had also argued that human beings were not naturally sociable, because they sought society for selfish reasons. A number of Hobbes' critics agreed with him up to a point, that fear, personal advantage and glory played their part in leading human beings to society; but they did not agree that this meant human beings were not naturally sociable. According to James Tyrrell,

tho' it be granted, that men either from a peculiar agreement of dispositions, or that they suppose they can sooner obtain some particular end or advantage, in some mens Conversation than others; and do therefore prefer such mens Company before others; yet does not this prove, That man is not naturally a Sociable Creature: Since he himself grants, That men can neither live comfortably, nor be so much as bred up, or preserved, without the help and society of others. Therefore as he is determined to the end, viz. happiness, and self-preservation, he is likewise as necessarily determined to the means, (viz.) Society.⁷⁶

Self-interest did not contradict natural sociability, 'provided the Common Bonds of Society be not broken and disturbed, by any mans more particular Interests or Inclinations'. Tyrrell thought that Hobbes had confused 'natural society, which is absolutely necessary for man's preservation, with these particular Clubs or Companies which men keep for their greater pleasure or advantage'.⁷⁷

The main area for disagreement between Hobbes and his contemporary critics, on the reasons men sought society, were their differing views on private and common good. Hobbes thought that in nature individuals had a tendency to seek their own private good, rather than the common good. His critics thought

⁷⁴ See Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 349. Here Tyrrell referred to Hobbes' statement in *De Homine*, X, 3, p. 40, 'so man surpasseth in rapacity and cruelty the wolves, bears, and snakes, that are not rapacious unless hungry...'

⁷⁵ See Samuel Parker, *A Demonstration of the Divine Authority of the Law of Nature and the Christian Religion* (London, 1681), p. 51.

⁷⁶ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 259.

⁷⁷ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 260.

that individuals realised that their own private good was best achieved through the common good. While agreeing with Hobbes that fear was a strong motive for human beings creating commonwealths, John Shafte thought that human beings were naturally sociable, and that,

each man's private happiness... [was] linked together with, knit and united to the happiness and felicity of the rest of his Fellows, as to this life; the greatest pleasures whereof are found to consist in society, and the benefits we have by the mutual commerce, company and injoyment of one another...⁷⁸

Similarly for James Tyrrell, 'God has not so designed us to good for others, as that we should neglect all care of our selves...' Tyrrell used the example of marriage which was good for the individual, but also good for society, in that its end was the propagation of mankind.⁷⁹ According to Tyrrell, it was possible that in

Civil Societies or Commonwealths, a man may propose to himself his own Security, Profit, or Honour, as a reason why he bestows his time and labour, or ventures his life in the service of the Publick: And yet he may farther propose to himself the love of his Countrey, or the good of the Commonwealth, as the great End of his Actions.⁸⁰

To summarise the views of Hobbes' contemporary critics, we can first of all say that the main disagreement between these writers and Hobbes was their understanding of the term 'by nature'. The majority of Hobbes' critics understood this term in the Aristotelian sense - man was by nature a social animal because of the end of human existence, and its perfection. They criticised Hobbes for basing his account on man's animal-like qualities, instead of describing the perfection of man. They accepted that because human beings were born as children, they were not born fit for society, but they thought that human beings were naturally sociable because they had the potential for society. Hobbes' account was also thought to contradict experience, which demonstrated the necessity of society for an individual's preservation. Hobbes' critics agreed with him up to a point that private interest could lead human beings into society, but for these writers the private good was best achieved within the common good, and it was quite

⁷⁸ Shafte, *The Great Law of Nature*, pp. 36-7.

⁷⁹ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 260.

⁸⁰ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 262.

possible for individuals to act according to both types of good. They also admitted that there were some cruel men who behaved badly, and there were some men who wanted superiority, but this did not necessarily apply to all human beings.

Hobbes' understanding of the term 'by nature' was in complete contrast to the understanding of his critics. Hobbes' objection to the work of previous writers, on the subject of human nature, was that they had included in their description characteristics which themselves had been formed by life in society. For Hobbes, 'by nature' meant according to those faculties we had from birth. For this reason, when we tried to find the essentials of human nature, we needed to discard all the characteristics created by life in society. We needed to look at human beings in the raw, uncivilised by the advantages of society. We needed to look at human characteristics untouched by education. This was why Hobbes imagined adult human beings having grown up without society. These individuals had no learnt behaviour, only what came completely naturally to them. It is almost as if these individuals were adults, but with the minds of children. Apart from these individuals imagined by Hobbes, there was another example of individuals created as adults available to both Hobbes and his contemporaries - the example of Adam and Eve.

Hobbes' description of human beings springing out of the earth as adults directed his readers to the Biblical account, but his contemporary critics thought that his description completely contradicted scripture. John Bramhall claimed that this description of human beings in the state of nature was a 'drowsie dream of [Hobbes'] own feigning', that it was dishonourable to God, and should be called 'the state of degenerated nature', rather than mere nature.⁸¹ According to Bramhall, Hobbes' supposition was 'both false and Atheistical'. Human beings were 'created by God, not many suddenly, but one to whom all his posterity were obliged as to their father and ruler'.⁸² For Samuel Parker, if we believed Hobbes' account of men springing out of the earth as mushrooms, then we must believe that 'there never was any Author of Humane Nature', and that human beings 'out of Diffidence and Jealousie one of another for want of acquaintance shun'd

⁸¹ Bramhall, *Castigations*, p. 155.

⁸² Bramhall, *Castigations*, pp. 176-7. See also Filmer, *Observations*, p. 187.

Society, and withdrew like all other Beasts of Prey into Dens and secret Retirements, where they lived poor and solitary as Bats and Owls, and subsisted like Vermine by robbing and filching from one another...’ Then if we found this ridiculous, we must believe that ‘there was a first Author and Creator of Mankind’ who, according to Hobbes’ description of the state of nature, ‘contrived things so ill’.⁸³ Either way it was dishonourable to God. When God created human beings, he had man’s welfare and happiness in mind. Human beings had a ‘common Right and Title to Happiness... [which] cannot be obtain’d without Society, nor Society subsist without mutual Aids of Love and Friendship, because we are not self-sufficient, but stand in need of mutual assistances’.⁸⁴

Hobbes’ description of human beings springing out of the ground like mushrooms, with no obligations to each other, was also thought to contradict experience, because all human beings were born of parents. James Lowde could not ‘willingly think, that Mr. Hobbs did really believe, that once upon a time men started out of the Earth, like Mole-hills...’⁸⁵ Human beings were born into subjection to their parents. They ‘came into the World, by the ordinary methods of Generation, by way of Father and Son, therefore there must needs be a subordination and inferiority among ‘em, a dependance upon one another in respect of Causality, and an Obligation in respect of Duty and Obedience’.⁸⁶ Similarly according to Thomas Tenison, Archbishop of Canterbury, ‘to talk of such a state of nature as supposeth an Independency of one person upon another, is to lay aside not only the History of Moses, but also of Experience, which teacheth that we are born Infants, (of Parents, for that reason, to be obey’d)...’⁸⁷

The scriptural account of the creation proved the natural sociability of human beings. As Richard Cumberland put it, Adam and Eve

were so far from entring into a State of Enmity, that we *read*, “They contracted a Friendship at first sight,” which could not subsist without Fidelity and Gratitude, limiting their Self-love; and presently *follows*, “A

⁸³ Parker, *A Discourse*, pp. 125-6.

⁸⁴ Parker, *A Discourse*, pp. 121-2. See also Parker’s similar argument for natural sociability in his *A Demonstration*, pp. 25-30.

⁸⁵ Lowde, *A Discourse*, p. 168.

⁸⁶ Lowde, *A Discourse*, p. 155.

⁸⁷ Tenison, *The creed of Mr. Hobbes*, p. 132. See also Parker, *A Discourse*, p. 123. Thomas Tenison was the ‘Hobbist’, Daniel Scargill’s tutor - see Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography*, p. 329; and Parkin, ‘Hobbism in the Later 1660s’, p. 88. On Tenison see E.F. Carpenter, *Thomas Tenison, Archbishop of Canterbury: His Life and Times* (SPCK, London, 1948).

Desire of propagating their Species, and consequently of preserving it.” But seeing, according to this History, our first Parents had only themselves and their Children, to consider as Parts of human kind, it is *manifest*, “That in the singular friendly intercourse between themselves as Husband and Wife, and Natural Affection toward the Children to be born of them, is contained Humanity towards all, as the less is contained in the greater”.⁸⁸

Similarly for the former Catholic, and former deist, Charles Gildon, if we allowed ‘that Mankind had a Progressive Beginning, that we were born of our Parents, they of theirs, and so on till we come to some first Parents, made immediately by the Hand of God, out of Nothing, or out of the Earth...’, then we must also realise that there were:

Ties of Relation, the Mutual Love of Children, and Parents, Brothers, and Sisters, Wives, and Husbands, with the Consanguinities, and Friendships contracted by those Conjunctions, united Men into Families first, and then spread to larger Extent in common Interest, and Reciprocal Kindness, which could never be so in a Moment dissolved...⁸⁹

As we will see in chapter three, on the war of all against all, both Gildon and Tyrrell appear to have forgotten the fratricide described in the fourth chapter of *Genesis*.

6. The Scriptural Account.

Hobbes claimed that there was nothing in God’s word that was contrary to reason.⁹⁰ Thus according to Hobbes, the account of scripture should have been in line with the findings of reason, as set out in his political philosophy. If we return to *Genesis*, in the eighteenth verse of the second chapter, ‘the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone’. For protestant commentators, this implied that Adam was created as a solitary individual. As John Salkeld pointed out, ‘there was some time betweene the creation of the man, and the womans production’, but it was not a simple task to determine exactly how long, other

⁸⁸ Cumberland, *A Treatise*, p. 34.

⁸⁹ Charles Gildon, *The Deists Manual: or, a Rational Enquiry into the Christian Religion. With some considerations on Mr. Hobbs, Spinoza, the Oracles of Reason, Second Thoughts, etc.* (London, 1705), p. 198.

⁹⁰ See *Leviathan*, XXXII, 2, p. 246.

than that it did not exceed six days.⁹¹ A number of commentators thought that God's pronouncement, regarding Adam's solitude, implied that up to that point, Adam was alone because God thought it expedient for him to be alone. According to Joseph Hall, when Adam was first created he did not need a helper. 'If Man had craved an helper he had grudged at the condition of his Creation, and had questioned that which he had; perfection of being'. But God saw that Adam would be comforted by a helper. God 'sees our wants, and fore-casts our relieve, when we think ourselves too happy to complaine'.⁹² Similarly according to Benjamin Needler, 'God created man alone, and Moses saith that all that God made was very good'. This verse did not mean that it was an evil or a sin for man to be alone, but instead it meant it was not expedient for man to be alone.

Solitude

was not onely good for man, when he was first created, but also expedient, so long as it pleased God he should be in such a condition, although it was not expedient he should continue in it, because of the propagation of mankind, and of the Church of God, which God had determined from eternity, for the advancement of his own glory.⁹³

Alexander Ross thought that God created Adam in solitude, to allow him to live 'a private life a while', so that he might appreciate 'the comforts of the married life', and also that he might love God more for providing him with those comforts.⁹⁴

But for many commentators on *Genesis*, God's pronouncement, that it was not good for man to be alone demonstrated the natural sociability of human beings. Jean Calvin thought that God's pronouncement proved 'that man was formed to be a social animal'. This pronouncement was not directed to Adam alone, but was 'a common law of man's vocation', which all should regard except those whom God had specially exempted.⁹⁵ Similarly, Martin Luther interpreted this verse of *Genesis* as God 'speaking of the common good of the species, not of personal good', because Adam already had innocence, which was personal good. Before the creation of Eve, Adam 'was not yet in possession of the common good

⁹¹ Salkeld, *A Treatise of Paradise*, p. 167.

⁹² Hall, *Contemplations*, p. 776. See also Babington, *Comfortable Notes*, pp. 10-11.

⁹³ Needler, *Expository Notes*, pp. 49-50.

⁹⁴ Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 57.

⁹⁵ Calvin, *Commentaries*, p. 128.

which the rest of the living beings who propagated their kind through procreation had'.⁹⁶ Adam was alone, without a partner to help him procreate and preserve the human race. For many commentators, God made Adam and all other creatures for one end - to increase and multiply.⁹⁷ If Adam had remained alone, this would not have been possible - Christ himself would not have been born, and the members of God's Church would not have increased in number.⁹⁸

God's subsequent creation of Eve also proved the natural sociability of human beings. For Andrew Willet, Eve was created 'for mutuall societie and comfort', 'for the propagation of the world', 'for the generation and encrease of the Church of God', and 'because of the promised seede of the woman, of whome came our Saviour Christ after the flesh'.⁹⁹ Thomas Cooper added that Eve was also created to help govern the family.¹⁰⁰ John Salkeld could think of no reason for God's creation of two different sexes, other than 'for generations sake'. According to Salkeld, considering that the man was more perfect than the woman, then this must have been the case, otherwise God would only have created males.¹⁰¹ Generally, God's creation of Eve was seen as marking the institution of marriage, as well as demonstrating its importance.¹⁰² For Benjamin Needler, Eve's creation from Adam's rib demonstrated 'the cordiall affection, and intimacy of Communion that there should be between man and wife...'¹⁰³ These interpretations were a complete contradiction of Hobbes' account.¹⁰⁴

Although protestant commentators thought that the creation of Eve, as a companion for Adam, proved natural sociability, they also had no problems in describing the relationship between Adam and Eve as one of dominion and subjection, even before the Fall. Gervase Babington, successively Bishop of Llandaff, Exeter and Worcester, implied Eve's equality when he claimed that Eve was created from Adam's side, rather than 'of the head of man, lest shee should

⁹⁶ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 115-6.

⁹⁷ See for example Cooper, *A Brief Exposition*, p. 95; and Joannes Thaddeus, *The Reconciler of the Bible* (London, 1655), p. 6.

⁹⁸ See Ross, *An Exposition*, pp. 48-9.

⁹⁹ Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁰ See Cooper, *A Brief Exposition*, p. 95.

¹⁰¹ Salkeld, *A Treatise of Paradise*, p. 181.

¹⁰² See Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 115-36.

¹⁰³ Needler, *Expository Notes*, p. 54.

¹⁰⁴ We will see in chapter five that there were pairs and families in Hobbes' state of nature, and their concord 'dependeth on natural lust' - see also *Leviathan*, XIII, 11-12, pp. 77-8.

be proud and look for superiority. Not of the foot of man, lest shee should be contemned and used as farre his inferiour; but of his side, that shee might be used as his fellow, cleaving to his side as an inseparable companion of all his haps whilst they two live'. And yet Babington also thought that the companion God created for Adam was also his subject. As Babington put it,

as the ribbe receiveth strength from the brest of man, so doth the woman from her husband: his counsell is her strength, his brest should she account of to be ruled and governed by in all her wayes, and seeke to please him and ease him from all griefes as she any way can, knowing ever that shee is most weake without her husbands brest, from which commeth all strength and good comfort at all times.¹⁰⁵

Both Adam and Eve were created in the image of God, but there were a variety of views on what exactly constituted the image of God in human beings, and whether it was equal in both male and female. For a number of protestant commentators, the moment Eve was created she was subjected to Adam. According to John Downame, the 'soveraigntie of the man over the woman, is declared in the Scriptures by divers arguments'. These included: the creation of the woman for the man, and out of the man; the order of creation; and Adam's naming of Eve. Man was 'the head and chiefe; Woman the comfort and companion of his life'. Adam's sovereignty was honourable, partly because he had 'such an excellent Creature subject to him'.¹⁰⁶ For Jean Calvin, Eve was created in God's image, but 'the order of nature implies that the woman should be the helper of man'.¹⁰⁷ Calvin claimed that 'Moses intended to note some equality' between man and woman, with his use of the phrase 'meet for him'. But the 'obligation of both sexes is mutual, and on this condition is the woman assigned as a help to the man, that he may fill the place of her head and leader'.¹⁰⁸ Even Martin Luther, contradicting the view I have ascribed to him above, while commenting on *Genesis* I.28, 'male and female created he them', argued that Eve was different from Adam, 'having different members and a much weaker nature'. Although Eve shared in justice, wisdom and happiness, and 'was a most beautiful work of God, nevertheless [she] was not the equal of the male in glory and

¹⁰⁵ Babington, *Comfortable Notes*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁶ Downame, *The Summe of Sacred Divinitie*, pp. 71-2.

¹⁰⁷ Calvin, *Commentaries*, p. 129.

prestige'. But Eve, like Adam, was created in God's image and, along with Adam, had rule over everything. Luther compared Adam and Eve to the sun and the moon, respectively, but stressed that the female sex was inferior to the male sex.¹⁰⁹ For Benjamin Needler, if we considered Adam and Eve as rational creatures, they were both created after the image of God, but considered according to sex, the male was superior to the female.¹¹⁰ Similarly for Christopher Hampton, 'the woman was partaker as well as the man' in 'the integretie and rightness of the inner man', because 'in the Lord there is neyther male nor female'. But the image of God in man was 'to be placed in authoritie and government' - 'ecclesiastical and oeconomical power was given to the man, and denyed to the woman'.¹¹¹

These interpretations of *Genesis* saw Eve as roughly equal to Adam, in the sense that she too had been created in the image of God. But if Eve was considered by sex, rather than as a rational creature, she was also weaker, inferior or even subject to Adam.¹¹² The order of the creation also demonstrated Eve's inferiority. For Andrew Willet, both Adam and Eve were created in the image of God, although Adam was the first and principal creation.¹¹³ Eve was created from Adam's body to show 'the pre-eminence that man hath over woman', but Willet also noted the other arguments for Eve's creation from Adam, including the bond of love between the two.¹¹⁴ Similarly, Henry Ainsworth thought that Eve's creation from Adam demonstrated her subjection to him. But she was also created as 'his second self, like him in nature, knit unto him in love, needfull for procreation of seed, helpful in all duties, present alwayes with him, and so very meet and commodious for him'.¹¹⁵ For Joannes Thaddeus, following St. Paul, 'man came nearer to the Image of God in respect of his dominion, and the end,

¹⁰⁸ Calvin, *Commentaries*, pp. 130-1.

¹⁰⁹ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 68-9. But see above, for various statements from Luther which contradict the views expressed here.

¹¹⁰ See Needler, *Expository Notes*, pp 24-5.

¹¹¹ Hampton, *The Threefold State of Man*, p. 13.

¹¹² Almond, *Adam and Eve*, p. 155, has noted that the first three chapters of *Genesis* could be used to justify either feminism or misogyny.

¹¹³ See Andrew Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis and Exodus* (Cambridge, 1633), p. 13.

¹¹⁴ Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis*, p. 37.

¹¹⁵ Ainsworth, *Annotations, Genesis II.18*.

because the woman was made out of the man, and for the man'.¹¹⁶ William Whateley described Eve as 'a reasonable soul', although she was also created subject to Adam. She was made from Adam's bone 'to instruct her and him both of their duty, that shee should acknowledge her subjection unto him... and to instruct him that he should account her deare unto him and make precious reckoning of her, using her as in a manner his equall...'¹¹⁷

Eve's creation out of man, as well as for man, was also interpreted as demonstrating her inferiority.¹¹⁸ For John Salkeld, Eve was created from Adam's side 'to signifie the mediocritie of her condition', as well as the love and respect she should have had for Adam. Eve was at least 'equall in stature with man, or not farre inferiour in greatnes unto him'.¹¹⁹ But Salkeld also thought that man was more perfect than woman, 'for the most part... [although] not alwaies, because the female also was necessary for the naturall propagation of mankinde', and he also described the woman as 'a declining from perfection'.¹²⁰ Similarly for Alexander Ross, although Eve was 'of equall dignitie with the man', she was made from Adam's left side, closest to the heart, and as the left side was the weaker, 'so is the woman the weaker vessell'. Further, Eve was made from Adam, rather than the earth, 'to shew that Adam is the beginning of the woman, and of all mankinde'.¹²¹ Eve was Adam's companion, and was created for Adam, but both were reasonable souls, both were given the same command by God, and both could hope for salvation. Adam and Eve both 'have the same definition and essential properties... male and female make no essential difference'.¹²² But although Adam and Eve were created equally in the image of God, 'yet the image of God is seene in man more perfectly, in respect that man is both the beginning and end of the woman'.¹²³

¹¹⁶ Thaddeus, *The Reconciler of the Bible*, p. 3. I have been unable to find any biographical information on Joannes Thaddeus.

¹¹⁷ Whateley, *Prototypes*, pp. 3-4.

¹¹⁸ For example, Clapham, *A Briefe of the Bible*, p. 19.

¹¹⁹ Salkeld, *A Treatise of Paradise*, pp. 173-4.

¹²⁰ Salkeld, *A Treatise of Paradise*, pp. 182-3.

¹²¹ Ross, *An Exposition*, pp. 54-5.

¹²² Ross, *An Exposition*, pp. 56-7.

¹²³ Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 23.

Finally, Adam's naming of Eve, even before the Fall, demonstrated her inferiority. For John Trapp it marked 'her infirmity, and duty of submitting to her husband'.¹²⁴ According to Andrew Willet, before the Fall Eve

should have been obedient to man, but of a loving societie to be made partaker of all his counsells, not of an urging necessities as now [since the Fall]; whereby the woman in respect of her weakness both with her will dependeth of her husband, for her direction and provision of things necessarie, and against her will shee often indureth the hard yoke of an unequall commander.¹²⁵

Similarly, both William Whateley and Alexander Ross claimed that Eve was content to be subject to Adam before the Fall, but after the disobedience her subjection became unwilling and troublesome.¹²⁶ These interpretations of the relationship between Adam and Eve contradicted Hobbes' views on natural unsociability. And yet they also demonstrated that Adam and Eve's relationship was one of dominion, and subjection, thus confirming Hobbes' view that it was dominion, and not society, that originated in nature.

7. State of Nature as Eden?

Hobbes' state of nature was a condition, in which human beings had roughly equal abilities, both physical and intellectual. This applied to all adult men and women in the natural condition. All individuals were equally capable of killing, or of being killed by others. All were equal in the state of nature, because no one individual was strong enough, or clever enough, to obtain dominion over the rest for any length of time. Hobbes' state of nature was not a sociable condition - he saw nature as the complete opposite of society, which was artificial and had to be created by agreement. Hobbes accused previous writers of including in their description of human nature, characteristics which had themselves been created by living in society. Hobbes wanted to look at human beings who had no experience of society, and that is why he imagined adults having grown up immediately, without any obligations to each other. These adults had no taught or

¹²⁴ Trapp, *A Clavis to the Bible*, p. 28. See also Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis and Exodus*, p. 31; and Ainsworth, *Annotations, Genesis II.19*.

¹²⁵ Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis*, pp. 51-2.

¹²⁶ See Whateley, *Prototypes*, pp. 7 & 9; and Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 58.

learnt behaviour, only what came completely naturally to them. But although Hobbes thought that human beings were not naturally sociable, he also admitted that they sought out others, so why then was their society not natural? The answer was two-fold. Firstly, human beings were not naturally sociable because they were born as children, and were thus born unfit for society. They could learn to be sociable, but could only do so by living in society. Secondly, the reason individuals looked for company was self-love, rather than love of their fellows. Hobbes thought that in nature, equal human beings found it easier to seek dominion over others, rather than friendship or alliance with them. It was a desire for dominion which originated in nature, whereas society originated in agreement, or contract.

We have seen in chapter one that due to both their understanding of nature as perfection, and their method of argument from origins, Hobbes' contemporary critics understood the natural condition as Eden. For these writers, the account of the creation demonstrated that there had always been a natural hierarchy - Adam and Eve were not equals, but friends; and Adam had dominion over Eve from the creation. Both Aristotle and experience confirmed this natural hierarchy - nature had given human beings different talents and abilities, which fitted them for different activities. The scriptural account was also thought to demonstrate natural sociability. God did not create many human beings suddenly, as mushrooms springing from the ground, but rather one man and one woman, who loved each other at first sight, and from whom all human beings were descended. All human beings were born of parents, and these families loved and cared for one another, and also had obligations to one another. Although the critics granted that men had selfish motives for seeking out others, this did not mean that they were not naturally sociable. They also admitted that there were also some men who were cruel and violent, but this did not apply to all human beings. Quite simply, society was necessary for preservation, and all human beings realised that their own private good was best achieved within the common good.

For Hobbes' contemporary critics, nature was to be judged from her intention or perfection. Human beings were naturally sociable because of their potential to live in society. For these writers, Hobbes' 'mushroom men', born as adults with no obligations to each other, must have been in a state of degenerated

nature, not mere nature. But it is this view which might well have separated those of Hobbes' contemporary readers who subscribed to Reformed interpretations of *Genesis*, and perhaps could see parallels between his state of nature and the fallen condition; from his contemporary critics, whose understanding of nature as perfection, or the Edenic condition, led them to the conclusion that Hobbes' account contradicted scripture. Hobbes' description of the state of nature could be read as closer to an Augustinian account, according to which since the Fall, there had come into being two groups of human beings - the elect and the reprobate - but only God could distinguish between them. In complete contrast to his critics, Hobbes thought that it was safer to assume that all human beings had the potential to be hostile, rather than to assume that they all had the potential to be sociable.

Hobbes' critics understood the natural condition as Eden, but we have seen in chapter one that Hobbes thought that Adam and Eve were not in the natural condition until after the Fall. And yet this chapter has demonstrated that Hobbes' account of the state of nature shared some similarities to protestant interpretations of the pre-lapsarian condition. Hobbes' readers could have noted that a number of aspects of his account were confirmed by scripture, although on some points he could have been understood to have subverted the scriptural account. The second account of the creation in *Genesis* described God's creation of human beings from the earth. This was thought to demonstrate both the equality and frailty of human beings, and was a counter-balance to the first account of the creation, in which human beings had been created in the image of God. Male and female were created, but both were given the same name - 'man'. Hobbes' view, that human beings were equal, was supported by scripture, but his argument that individuals were equally capable of killing, or of being killed, was a subversion of the scriptural account, which for protestant commentators demonstrated human susceptibility to physical and mental ailments. Further, Hobbes' account of adults springing out of the ground also subverted the Biblical account of God's creation of human beings, which was thought to have been a gradual creation. The 'mushroom men' described by Hobbes must have been either animals, or human beings without souls.

Hobbes' seventeenth century readers could also have noted that his description of natural solitude was supported by the interpretations of God's pronouncement, that it was not good for man to be alone, which implied that before that pronouncement God created Adam alone, because he thought it was expedient for man to be alone. God created Adam in a perfect condition, and in solitude. Adam did not desire society, and he would have questioned the will of his creator if he had wished for a companion. God created Adam alone, so that he would appreciate the benefits of society. But Adam, like individuals in Hobbes' state of nature, did not remain alone for long. God's pronouncement, that it was not good for man to be alone, changed everything. God now thought that it was necessary for Adam to have a companion, for the procreation of the human race. This pronouncement, along with the creation of Eve, proved natural sociability. God created Eve to be Adam's companion, she was created as another, or a second-self for Adam. Both Adam and Eve were created in the image of God, and considered as reasonable creatures, Eve was Adam's equal. But if considered by sex, Eve was weaker, inferior or subject to Adam, although before the Fall she was content to be subject to Adam, whereas after the Fall her subjection became unwilling and troublesome. This account of the original, perfect condition appears far removed from Hobbes' state of nature.

And yet the account of Adam and Eve could be understood to support Hobbes' view that it was the desire for dominion, and not society, which originated in nature. In Hobbes' account of the natural condition, he imagined many individuals like Adam, with no experience of society. These individuals were unaware of the benefits of society. They were not born fit for society, but had to be educated to it. They were not naturally sociable because they were not sociable from birth. For Hobbes, human beings were equal by creation - either at birth, or as created by God or imagined by Hobbes as adults. But the moment human beings came into contact with one another in the natural condition, they sought dominion over their fellows. Hobbes claimed that problems were caused when individuals assumed superiority over others, against reason and nature. He argued that individuals sought society through love of self, rather than love of friends, but by doing so, what they actually sought was dominion. In nature, the

help of other human beings was much more effectively achieved by subjecting them, than by making an alliance with them.

Hobbes chose to describe his natural condition, at least in part, with allusions to the scriptural account of the creation. We have seen that there were two main protestant interpretations of the creation. On one account, God created equal human beings (perfect nature), and Eve's subjection was a punishment for the disobedience (corrupted nature). On the other account, Eve was from the beginning, although created as Adam's equal in some respects, was also created subject to him, although this was a willing subjection (perfect nature), and her further subjection after the Fall was unwilling (corrupted nature). If Hobbes' state of nature was equated with Eden, then his account was in agreement with the first interpretation that saw Eve as Adam's equal before the Fall, and her subjection to him was a punishment for her disobedience. But if Hobbes' state of nature was equated with the fallen condition, then his argument for natural equality contradicted both interpretations, because both stated that Eve was subjected to Adam after the Fall, although this was an unwilling and troublesome subjection. Having said that, it could be argued that Hobbes' commonwealth shared similarities with the second account, where roughly equal human beings consented to a sovereign willingly, just as Eve willingly submitted to Adam before the Fall. Was Hobbes trying to recreate the type of subjection that had existed in Eden - a willing, and therefore lasting subjection?

In chapter one it was argued that Hobbes' views on the role of the private judgement of good and evil, as the cause of the disintegration of the commonwealth into a state of nature, shared important parallels with the scriptural account of the Fall. This chapter has demonstrated that Hobbes' state of nature could be understood to contain elements of both the Edenic and the fallen conditions. So was Hobbes' state of nature an account of the Edenic condition, the process of the Fall, or the fallen condition? It seems likely that it was recognisable to his readers, because it could be understood to have been built from fragments of all three of these conditions. For Hobbes' seventeenth century readers, his description of human nature could be understood to have taken into account aspects of what we might call both perfect human nature, as well as fallen human nature. Since the Fall there had come into being two types of human

beings - the elect and the reprobate. Because we could not distinguish between these two types of human beings from their actions, it was safer to assume that all men fell into the category of the reprobate. We will see this in more detail in the next chapter, which discusses Hobbes' own citation of the account of Cain murdering Abel.

Chapter Three: The War of All against All.

'Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him...' (Genesis IV.8)

Hobbes thought that human beings who lived in the state of nature, or a condition which lacked a common power to arbitrate their disputes, would naturally be in a condition of war. In the Latin edition of *Leviathan* he cited the example of Cain and Abel in defence of this claim, with the following statement: 'But someone may say: there has never been a war of all against all. What! Did not Cain out of envy kill his brother Abel, a crime so great he would not have dared it if there had at that time been a common power which could have punished him?'¹ But as Edwin Curley has noted, most seventeenth century English men would have understood that Cain was living under a power able to punish him - that power was God;² and further that God did punish Cain immediately by cursing him from the earth, by making him a vagabond, and by marking him, so that he would not be killed by others.³

This use of the account of the murder of Abel by Cain did not appear in the English edition of *Leviathan*, where Hobbes instead referred to 'the savage people in many places of America'.⁴ Nor did it appear in the earlier versions of Hobbes' political theory. So why did Hobbes refer to it in the Latin *Leviathan*? Quentin Skinner may provide the answer to this question, with his suggestion that Hobbes changed the presentation of his political theory, as he began to doubt the power of reason alone to persuade. According to Skinner, beginning with the 1647 edition of *De Cive*, Hobbes moved further towards the realisation that reason needed to be combined with rhetoric, for his argument to have any power over the minds of his readers. For Skinner, this culminated in the Latin version of *Leviathan*, which Skinner has described as 'arguably the most rhetorical of

¹ *Leviathan*, Latin edition, XIII, 11, p. 77, footnote 7. Oakeshott, *Hobbes on Civil Association*, pp. 56, 58 & 82-3, has stated that Hobbes' description of the war of all against all was indebted to Augustine, who used the example of Cain and Abel to prove the idea of universal hostility, although Oakeshott appears to have been unaware of Hobbes' own use of Cain and Abel.

² *Leviathan*, XIII, 11, p. 77, footnote 7.

³ See *Genesis* IV.11-14.

⁴ *Leviathan*, XIII, 11, p. 77.

Hobbes's works'.⁵ But if Skinner's claim is correct, and Hobbes' citation of Cain and Abel was an example of such rhetoric, then what purpose did this example serve, especially as many of Hobbes' readers would not have believed that there was no power able to punish Cain? The example of Cain also seems inappropriate in light of Hobbes' claim that a son could never be in the state of nature, although at the time of Abel's murder, Cain was an adult, and thus for Hobbes no longer under the authority of his parents.⁶ Would Hobbes' seventeenth century readers have been convinced by his assertion that the example of Cain and Abel was evidence for a natural war-like condition?

1. Hobbes' War of All against All.

Hobbes described the condition of human beings, 'before they came together into society [as] a war of every man against every man'.⁷ But although the state of nature was a state of war, it was not necessarily a condition of actual fighting. Hobbes defined war as 'a tract of time wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known'.⁸ Thus the natural condition was not necessarily a condition in which each individual was fighting every other individual, but it was a condition in which all had the intention or disposition to fight, if at some point it became necessary. In the *Elements* Hobbes defined war as 'that time wherein the will and intention of contending by force is either by words or actions, sufficiently declared'.⁹ Although this could mean a physical attack on another individual, it could also mean a drawn sword, a word, a thought, or a look of hatred.

The war of all against all was caused by disputes over good and evil, natural equality, natural unsociability, and all individuals having a right to all.¹⁰

⁵ Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric*, p. 427. Hobbes' use of Cain and Abel might also have been in response to contemporary criticisms that his account contradicted scripture.

⁶ See *De Cive*, footnote to I, 10, pp. 28-9. See also the discussion on paternal dominion in chapter five.

⁷ *De Cive*, I, 12, p. 29. See also *Elements*, XIV, 11, p. 80; and *Leviathan*, XIII, 8, p. 76, which has 'during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe'.

⁸ *Leviathan*, XIII, 8, p. 76.

⁹ *Elements*, XIV, 11, p. 80.

¹⁰ Hobbes' views on good and evil, natural equality and unsociability have already been discussed in chapters one and two. Hobbes' theory of natural rights will be discussed in chapter four.

Although human beings were equal by nature, there were some differences, which proceeded from 'the diversity of their passions'. There were some human beings, who were 'vainly glorious, and hope for precedency and superiority above their fellows, not only when they are equal in power, but also when they are inferior'. These individuals, even when they were subject to another in civil society, would seek to rebel against authority. There were other human beings, 'who are moderate, and look for no more but equality of nature'. In the *Elements* Hobbes described the vain-glorious individuals as the 'greatest part of men', who provoked the modest men through 'vanity, or comparison, or appetite', until eventually, 'they must determine the pre-eminence by strength and force of body'.¹¹ These human beings had assumed superiority over others, against both reason and nature. In *De Cive* Hobbes argued that 'there is in all men a will to do harm, but not for the same reason or with equal culpability'. In the case of the vain-glorious individual, who thought he was superior to others, and 'wants to be allowed everything', the 'will to do harm is derived from vain glory and over-valuation of his own strength'; and in the case of the modest individual it was derived 'from the need to defend his property and liberty' against the vain-glorious individual.¹² In the state of nature, even if the majority of individuals were modest men and there were only a few vain-glorious men, those men who allowed others equality would 'be obnoxious to the force of others, that will attempt to subdue them', and from this proceeded diffidence and mutual fear.¹³ The differences between these two groups of individuals had all but disappeared by the time Hobbes came to write *Leviathan*. Here Hobbes claimed that the attempts at invasion by the individuals I have called vain-glorious, would force the modest men to attempt to increase their power. For Hobbes, these modest individuals had to do this, simply in order to survive.¹⁴ In the account of *Leviathan*, even those individuals who were content with natural equality, had to behave as vain-glorious individuals.

¹¹ *Elements*, XIV, 4-5, p. 78. See also the similar discussions in *De Cive*, I, 4, p. 26; and *Leviathan*, XIII, 4, p. 75.

¹² *De Cive*, I, 4, p. 26.

¹³ *Elements*, XIV, 3, p. 78.

¹⁴ See *Leviathan*, XIII, 4, p. 75.

Hobbes described three main causes of quarrel between human beings in the natural condition. These led individuals to fear and distrust one another, and ultimately to war with one another.¹⁵ The first cause of quarrel was competition, whereby men invaded for gain, to acquire dominion over other men's persons and property. The second cause was diffidence (distrust), whereby men invaded for safety, to defend their persons and property against the invasion of others; and the third was glory, whereby men invaded for reputation, 'for trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other sign of undervalue, either direct in their persons, or by reflection in their kindred, their friends, their nation, their profession, or their name'.¹⁶ In *De Cive* Hobbes described a variety of this final cause of conflict, which he called 'Intellectual dissension', where in disagreeing with another individual, we either accused him of error, or even worse we called him a fool. Hobbes thought that the 'bitterest wars are those between different sects of the same religion and different factions in the same country, when they clash over doctrines or public policy'.¹⁷

Although Hobbes thought that the bitterest wars were fought over intellectual disagreements, he claimed the most frequent cause of men hurting each other was competition, when individuals attempted to acquire dominion over the property and persons of other individuals.¹⁸ Competition between individuals was a consequence of natural equality, because 'from the equality of ability ariseth equality of hope in the attaining of our ends'.¹⁹ Although human beings had different passions, the end of their passions was sometimes the same. If two or more individuals had a passion for a thing which could not be enjoyed in common, or divided, then the stronger must have it alone. This could only be decided by fighting, and ultimately the death or subjection of one.²⁰ But why

¹⁵ Jonathan H. Scott, 'The Peace of Silence: Thucydides and the English Civil War', in *The Certainty of Doubt - Tribute to Peter Munz*, edited by M. Fairburn & W.H. Oliver (Victoria University Press, Wellington, 1996), pp. 90-116, pp. 100-1, has noted that Hobbes' three causes of quarrel between human beings in the state of nature were similar to Thucydides' account of the causes of the Peloponnesian War.

¹⁶ *Leviathan*, XIII, 6 & 7, p. 76.

¹⁷ *De Cive*, I, 5, p. 26. See also *Leviathan*, XIII, 2, p. 75, for men's 'vain conceit of their own wisdom'; and *Elements*, XIV, 4, p. 78. Human beings were equal, but each individual thought that he was wiser than others.

¹⁸ See *De Cive*, I, 6, p. 27; and also *Elements*, XIV, 4, p. 78.

¹⁹ *Leviathan*, XIII, 3, p. 75. It was also a consequence of the right of all to all - see chapter four.

²⁰ See *De Cive*, I, 6, p. 27; *Elements*, XIV, 4, p. 78; and *Leviathan*, XIII, 3, p. 75.

couldn't they agree that one of them would have it, or they would take it in turns to have it? Hobbes thought that such an agreement was highly unlikely in a condition which lacked a common power to arbitrate in disputes. In such a condition, each individual only had the 'single power' of another individual to fear.²¹ This meant that if individual A decided he wanted a piece of land, which individual B was already living on, and if A decided to take B's land, then the only consequence A had to fear was that B would attempt to defend himself. If A was a vain-glorious individual and thought himself superior to B, then A would have nothing to fear by invading B, but everything to gain. But once A had gained this land from B, A himself would have to remain constantly on guard, in case another individual tried to take the land from him. In the *Elements*, and *De Cive* Hobbes presented this kind of dispute as a result of the right of nature. One man invaded with right and the other resisted with right, and the result was perpetual war.²²

The second cause of quarrel in the state of nature was diffidence, or distrust, when individuals attempted to defend their persons and property against the invasion of others. This cause of quarrel involved one individual defending himself against the invasion of another individual, who had been acting on the first cause of quarrel - competition. A number of Hobbes' contemporary critics linked diffidence with Hobbes' separate argument that individuals should anticipate danger by invading others, in order to prevent any future attack.²³ According to Hobbes, although individuals were roughly equal in the natural condition, dominion should be allowed to those that could achieve it, as it was necessary for 'a man's conservation'.²⁴ In the *Elements* and *De Cive* Hobbes argued that because our right of nature, or our right of self-preservation, proceeded from danger, and danger proceeded from equality, we should prevent equality before the danger arrived. If a man in the state of nature had managed to get another into his power, either because the other was a child, or weaker, then it was in his interest to make sure that this 'subdued person' did not become an

²¹ *Leviathan*, XIII, 3, p. 75.

²² See *De Cive*, I, 12, p. 29; *Elements*, XIV, 11, p. 80; and *Leviathan*, XIII, 3, p. 75. The right of nature will be discussed in chapter four.

²³ Both Cumberland, *A Treatise*, p. 85, and Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 333, equated diffidence and anticipation - see the discussion below on the contemporary reaction to Hobbes.

enemy in the future.²⁵ But in *Leviathan* Hobbes went much further, and claimed that for preservation's sake an individual should anticipate danger, and 'by force or wiles... master the persons of all men he can, so long till he see no other power great enough to endanger him'.²⁶ It seems to me that there is a huge difference between preventing those who are already in your power from becoming enemies in the future (the earlier versions); and actively attempting to subdue as many other individuals as possible (*Leviathan's* account). It might be possible to explain this change by the context. The civil war made it imperative for Hobbes to demonstrate the sheer horror of this condition of war of every individual against every other individual. This could also explain why in the account of *Leviathan*, Hobbes seems to have assumed that there would be many more vain-glorious men than modest men, because even modest individuals were now behaving as vain-glorious individuals.²⁷

The third cause of quarrel described by Hobbes was glory, when individuals came into conflict with others because they felt undervalued by them, or they had different opinions. It was this cause of quarrel which led to the bitterest wars. Hobbes thought that human beings generally had a high opinion of themselves, and hated 'to see the same in others'.²⁸ Further, 'since all the heart's joy and pleasure lies in being able to compare oneself favourably with others and form a high opinion of oneself, men cannot avoid sometimes showing hatred and contempt for each other, by laughter or words or a gesture or other sign'.²⁹ Those on the receiving end of the contempt of others often reacted very badly, because they too had a 'vain conceit of [their] own wisdom'.³⁰ In the natural condition, the individual that felt he was being undervalued by another individual would attempt 'to extort a greater value from his contemners, by damage, and from others, by the example'.³¹

²⁴ *Leviathan*, XIII, 4, p. 75.

²⁵ *De Cive*, I, 14, p. 31. See also *Elements*, XIV, 13, pp. 80-1.

²⁶ *Leviathan*, XIII, 4, p. 75.

²⁷ Also, because we could not tell good and bad men apart, we had to act as if all were evil, or at least capable of behaving badly - see the discussion below.

²⁸ *Elements*, XIV, 4, p. 78.

²⁹ *De Cive*, I, 5, p. 26. See also Hobbes' law of nature against hatred and contempt in *Elements*, XVI, 11, p. 92; *De Cive*, III, 12, p. 49; and *Leviathan*, XV, 20, p. 96.

³⁰ *Leviathan*, XIII, 2, p. 75.

³¹ *Leviathan*, XIII, 5, p. 76.

The three causes of quarrel, between the two types of human beings in the state of nature, led to a war of all against all. This war was perpetual because of the natural equality of human beings. No single individual was powerful enough to put a stop to the war, either by force, or arbitration. Also no single individual was strong enough, or clever enough, that he could feel confident in preserving himself in this condition. Thus the natural condition was contrary to the good of men, because in this war of all against all, the ultimate outcome was death.³² Nature itself was destroyed by this state of war,³³ and Hobbes thought it would be a miracle if 'even the strongest survive[d] to die of years and old age'.³⁴ But although Hobbes argued that the natural condition of human beings was a condition of war, he also claimed that this condition 'was never generally so, all over the world'. But at the same time, he gave a number of contemporary examples as evidence for the state of war. Firstly, 'the savage people in many places of America (except the government of small families, the concord whereof dependeth on natural lust) have no government at all, and live at this day in that brutish manner as I said before'.³⁵ Secondly, if we looked at peaceful societies, which had disintegrated because of civil war, we would also see how human beings lived in a condition which lacked a common power. And thirdly, after claiming 'there had never been any time wherein particular men were in a condition of war one against another', Hobbes noted that at all times kings and princes of different states have been in this condition of war, each against the other.³⁶ For Hobbes, the state of nature existed wherever human beings lived without a common power to arbitrate in their disputes.

As we have seen, Hobbes' natural condition was a war of all against all. Although this did not necessarily entail each individual fighting every other individual, it did entail all individuals having the intention to fight, in order either to dominate others, to defend themselves against others, or to secure their reputation. This war was caused by the differences between human beings,

³² See *Elements*, XIV, 12, p. 80, and *De Cive*, I, 13, p. 30.

³³ See *Elements*, XIV, 12, p. 80.

³⁴ *De Cive*, I, 13, p. 30.

³⁵ Hobbes' views on the family will be discussed in chapter five.

³⁶ *Leviathan*, XIII, 11-12, pp. 77-8. See also *Elements*, XIV, 12, p. 80, where Hobbes claimed the state of nature was confirmed 'both by the experience of savage nations that live at this day, and by the histories of our ancestors... where we find the people few and short lived'.

derived from their different passions, which gave some men a desire to dominate, while others were content with natural equality. But it was also caused by the similarities between human beings - their natural equality gave similar ends to those different passions, leading to competition over the same piece of property, or person. When one individual invaded another, the other individual was forced to defend himself. The right of all to all meant that both parties acted by right. Another cause of quarrel in the state of nature was a consequence of the high opinion individuals had of themselves. This caused conflict when one individual felt undervalued by another. Although there was no settled or permanent dominion in the natural condition, if an individual could achieve temporary power or dominion over another, he should be allowed it, for preservation's sake. This led individuals to take pre-emptive action - to invade others, before they themselves were invaded. In chapter two it was argued that Hobbes thought that the desire for dominion, rather than society, was natural, because individuals sought dominion over others, rather than friendship with them. But this desire for dominion did not result in permanent or settled dominion, because of natural equality - no single individual was powerful enough to subdue all others. For Hobbes, dominion was power, and in the natural condition human beings had roughly equal power. As a result the war was perpetual.

2. The Contemporary Reaction.

Hobbes' contemporary critics were generally horrified by his description of the natural condition of human beings as a war of all against all. These writers understood the natural condition as the original condition of human beings, created by God. As a result, Hobbes' description was thought to contradict the account of scripture completely, and was also seen as dishonourable to God.³⁷ As Samuel Parker commented, it was impossible to imagine that God would have

sent his Creatures into... such a Condition as should oblige them to seek their own mutual Ruine and Destruction; so that had they continued in that state of War he left them in, they must have lived and died like

³⁷ An example was 'The Judgement and Decree of the University of Oxford', pp. 121 & 123, which cited Hobbes' state of war as a doctrine 'repugnant to the Holy Scriptures...'

Gladiators, and have unavoidably perish'd at one time or other by one anothers Swords.³⁸

For Parker, we denied God's goodness if we believed, like Hobbes, that 'he would frame a Creation to destroy it self'. This could only be the case if, we believed that, God's 'Design was to sport himself in the folly and madness of his Creatures', which could not possibly have been true. Thus if we believed 'the Creation of Man were a Product of the Divine Wisdom or Goodness, his natural State must have been a condition of Peace, and not such a State of War, that should naturally tend to his Misery, Ruine, and utter Destruction'.³⁹ Similarly for William Lucy, Hobbes' state of war could never have been, because human beings had always lived under God, who 'keeps all men in awe from perpetrating things against that law which is written in their hearts'.⁴⁰

Hobbes' state of war also contradicted experience. Samuel Parker described Hobbes' natural condition as 'repugnant to the Real State of things', an 'unwarrantable Liberty of Invention', and a 'lamentable Fiction'. It was 'infinitely false and absurd', and 'so far from being suitable to the Natural Frame of things, that 'tis absolutely inconsistent with it'.⁴¹ For Thomas Tenison, Hobbes' state of nature had 'no firmer support than the contrivance of [his] own fancy'.⁴² History taught us that human beings were not barbarous.⁴³ Similarly, Charles Gildon claimed that the history of mankind disproved Hobbes' state of war. Human beings had always lived in families, in which they had obligations to each other, as well as love for each other. This 'Reciprocal Kindness... could never be so in a Moment dissolved, but by some Frantick Disease, that running like an Irresistible Plague over all Mankind, should, I will not say persuade, but compel them to quit their safety, and Peace, for Insecurity, Danger and Disquiet'.⁴⁴ Gildon admitted that there may be some war-like human beings, but not 'all men are so fond of

³⁸ Parker, *A Discourse*, p. 126. See also Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 352-3, who cited Parker almost word for word.

³⁹ Parker, *A Discourse*, pp. 127-8.

⁴⁰ Lucy, *Observations 1663*, p. 148.

⁴¹ Parker, *A Discourse*, pp. 119-20.

⁴² Tenison, *The creed of Mr. Hobbes*, p. 131.

⁴³ See Tenison, *The creed of Mr. Hobbes*, p. 133.

⁴⁴ Gildon, *The Deists Manual*, pp. 198-9. See also Lucy, *Observations 1663*, pp. 148-9, who cited the natural disposition of human beings to marry, have children and care for their children to disprove Hobbes' state of war.

fighting'. Hobbes 'must suppose all Mankind mad, to suppose, that any such State of Nature ever was'.⁴⁵ Similarly for William Lucy, a 'universal war between all individuals of mankind [had] never yet [been] experienced'.⁴⁶ If, like Hobbes, we imagined adult individuals with no obligations to each other, for instance as if they were shipwrecked on an 'uninhabited coast', these individuals 'would be in a state of peace rather than warre'. They would not attempt to destroy each other, but would take care of each other, because of their 'common interest... in humanity... [which] is writ in every mans heart', and they would secure their 'owne condition more against misfortunes' by doing so.⁴⁷

Hobbes' description of the natural condition as a state of war made human beings no better than animals.⁴⁸ According to the Cambridge Platonist, Ralph Cudworth, Hobbes' principles 'slander[ed] Humane Nature, and ma[d]e a Villain of it'.⁴⁹ William Lucy thought that Hobbes' argument, that natural equality caused men to become enemies, made 'Men to be beasts, or if they have more wit than beasts, to be by that only enabled to be more barbarous and beastly than Beasts themselves'.⁵⁰ Similarly, Bishop Bramhall claimed that 'the Hobbian nature of man, is worse than the nature of Bears, or Wolves, or the most savage wild beasts'.⁵¹ Bramhall imagined a group of men, who through war, or persecution, or crimes committed by themselves, were forced to leave civilisation, or were shipwrecked, and 'by long conversing with savage beasts, lions, beares, wolves, and tygers, should in time become more brutish... than the brutes themselves'. But this was not 'the universal condition of mankind', but 'an accidentall degeneration'.⁵² Hobbes' principle that it was lawful 'to suppresse

⁴⁵ Gildon, *The Deists Manual*, pp. 196-7.

⁴⁶ Lucy, *Observations 1663*, p. 153.

⁴⁷ Lucy, *Observations 1663*, pp. 148-9.

⁴⁸ See for example Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 320-1

⁴⁹ Ralph Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe: the First Part; wherein all the reason and philosophy of Atheism is confuted; and its impossibility demonstrated* (London, 1678), p. 891. On Cudworth see: R.L. Colie, *Light and Enlightenment: A Study of the Cambridge Platonists and the Dutch Arminians* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1957); C.A. Patrides, *The Cambridge Platonists* (Arnold, London, 1969); and Perez Zagorin, 'Cudworth and Hobbes on Is and Ought', in *Philosophy, Science and Religion in England 1640-1700*, edited by R. Kroll, R. Ashcraft & P. Zagorin (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992), pp. 128-48. Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography*, p. 330, has noted that Cudworth was one of the signatories to the order to expel the 'Hobbist' Daniel Scargill from Cambridge.

⁵⁰ Lucy, *Observations 1663*, p. 142.

⁵¹ Bramhall, *Castigations*, p. 142.

⁵² Bramhall, *Castigations*, p. 176.

[others] and cut their throats without warning' was destructive 'to the public peace and tranquility of the World, but much more pernicious to the Commonwealth itself...'⁵³

Many of Hobbes' contemporary critics failed to understand that his natural condition was not necessarily a condition of actual fighting, but a description of the disposition of human beings to fight, if it became necessary. But those critics who noted his definition of war as intention were generally unconvinced by it. James Tyrrell granted that Hobbes' comparison of 'the state of War to the nature of Foul-weather' was correct, but Tyrrell also thought that 'the bare inclination to hurt' was not 'an actual War, till there hath been some signs or tokens of hostility expressed'.⁵⁴ William Lucy objected to both Hobbes' definition of war as 'a tract of time', and his comparison of war to 'the nature of foule weather'. He denied Hobbes' claim that 'the weather [is] foule if there be onely an inclination to foulness', and as a result thought that 'a disposition to war makes no war'. It was quite possible for an individual to hate another, and yet not go to war with him. Lucy further accused Hobbes of 'impropriety of speech', because although one can say 'single men hate one another, contend one with another, fight one with another, are at enmity one with the other, but [they are] not at war, [because] that is proper to publique persons, or Nations, only'.⁵⁵

It is interesting to note that these writers denied Hobbes' argument that the natural condition was a state of war, because of the disposition of individuals to war. And yet as we have seen in chapter two, on equality and unsociability, their arguments against Hobbes' views on natural unsociability were stated in rather similar terms - human beings were naturally sociable, because they had the potential to be sociable. The terms 'disposition' and 'potential' do not have exactly the same meaning: disposition is an inclination or tendency to something; whereas potential means possible, or capable of being or becoming something, but both terms refer to the future. Hobbes' critics failed to understand his argument for the natural condition as a state of war, grounded on the intentions of individuals, and not necessarily their actions. And yet they also failed to

⁵³ Bramhall, *Castigations*, p. 143.

⁵⁴ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 327.

⁵⁵ Lucy, *Observations 1663*, pp. 150-1.

understand Hobbes' argument that human beings could not be described as naturally sociable, or sociable from birth, simply because they had the potential to be sociable. In fact Hobbes seems to have completely turned the Aristotelian argument on its head, with his description of man's potential to be hostile, either before the institution of commonwealths, or once the structure of civil society had been removed. It is almost as if Hobbes' natural condition was a demonstration of how ridiculous Aristotelian ideas were - that the Schoolmen could say in all seriousness that human beings were naturally sociable, because they had the potential to be sociable, whereas for Hobbes we could just as easily say human beings were naturally hostile, because they had the potential to go to war. Although history and experience gave us examples of the capacity of human beings to care for one another, it also gave us examples of their capacity to hurt one another. Perhaps a combination of both views of human nature would provide a more accurate picture.

As we have seen in chapter two, Hobbes' contemporary critics generally denied his views on natural equality, because they contradicted the accounts of scripture, experience and Aristotle. But those critics that granted Hobbes' natural equality, found it difficult to imagine that it could possibly have caused conflict in the state of nature. According to James Tyrrell, equality 'rather perswades to amity and concord'.⁵⁶ Similarly for Samuel Parker, the natural equality of human beings should 'persuade and force men to Friendship, and to assist and oblige each other by all the Offices of love and kindness'. Because of the great difference in power between one single individual, and all individuals, it was natural for human beings to seek the assistance of others.⁵⁷ According to John Shafte, natural equality made it unreasonable for one human being to attempt to kill another, as the other individual would also attempt to kill him. In this case, he would be acting against both the law of nature, and the interests of self-preservation.⁵⁸

It was quite simply unreasonable for naturally equal human beings to fight one another. For this reason, Hobbes' contemporary critics also denied his claim

⁵⁶ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 267. See also Lowde, *A Discourse*, p. 157.

⁵⁷ Parker, *A Demonstration*, p. 31.

⁵⁸ See Shafte, *The Great Law of Nature*, p. 8.

that human beings had a desire to hurt one another. According to James Tyrrell, 'none but a Fool, a Wicked man, or a Mad-man can have any desire to hurt another, who hath given him no provocation for it...' Tyrrell admitted that there were some men who tried to take more than they 'deserve, or really need', but even these men did not have a will to hurt anyone, only those that got in their way, 'and whose Goods, or other things, they may think may be useful for themselves'. Tyrrell also commented on Hobbes' admission, that there were some modest men who will allow equality to others. For Tyrrell, if

this modest man judges according to right reason... [then the] violent or proud man... cannot acquire any right to the liberty or goods of others, from his own unreasonable judgment, and false estimation of his own strength or merit: Nor is this self-defence, of the modest or honest man, properly a desire to hurt the other, but only a necessity to defend himself against his assaults, since he had no intention to hurt him, before this violent man gave him a just provocation.⁵⁹

James Lowde agreed with Hobbes that there may be some individuals who want superiority over others, and also had a desire to harm others. But Lowde also thought that there were 'some more modestly vertuous, who out of consciousness of their own inabilities, and out of due respect to other Mens Merits above their own, who would quit their pretences to Empire, and willingly live in obedience to others'. Those individuals that aimed at superiority did so through 'inordinate Pride and Ambition', rather than 'the dictates of nature and right reason'.⁶⁰ Similarly Thomas Tenison noted that 'if one shall intrude into the possession of another who is contented with a modest share, being moved only by ambition and wantonness of mind; he seemeth to be no other than an unrighteous aggressor'.⁶¹ Tenison thought that 'if any person endeavours, by such unnatural practices, as I have mention'd, to encrease his outward safety, or brutish delight, he, in truth, destroyeth by his iniquity more of himself than he can preserve by his ambition and lust'.⁶²

As the views expressed above demonstrate, many of Hobbes' contemporary critics objected to his description of the natural condition of human

⁵⁹ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 272-3.

⁶⁰ Lowde, *A Discourse*, p. 156.

⁶¹ Tenison, *The creed of Mr. Hobbes*, p. 138.

⁶² Tenison, *The creed of Mr. Hobbes*, p. 139.

beings, because it only seemed to take into account the passions, and failed to consider reason and experience.⁶³ For William Lucy, this made all men monsters, and made 'Nature her self a Monster'. Lucy admitted that 'the passions of men are extreamly unruly things, when they get the dominion, and carry men to all manner of wickedness', but human beings have reason, 'by which they can, and doe governe their Passions to act what is fit, not what is delightful'.⁶⁴ Lucy also agreed with Hobbes up to a point that 'Feares urge men to a thousand desperate actions', and admitted that if human beings did not have reason, 'they could not be secured from feares, without either destruction of other men, or subduing them'.⁶⁵ But human beings were reasonable and sociable creatures, and this meant that they knew 'if they should have such feare, there could be no peace to men'. Lucy further argued that 'there is in the heart of every man, a thought of a GOD who... hath punitive justice; to whom vengeance belongs...' It is this thought of God which 'keeps the universal kind of man in some awe from perpetuating such barbarous acts...'⁶⁶ James Tyrrell described reason as the 'principal part of Man', which governed all other faculties. Men were 'not necessarily impelled by these Passions, as meer Machines are driven or moved by the Wind, or Weights', but they are 'governed, and restrained by Reason, or fear of future evil', which meant that individuals did not hurry into war. Tyrrell pointed out that in *De Cive* Hobbes himself admitted that individuals could not agree on present good, because of the variety of passions, but could agree on future good through reason.⁶⁷

If Hobbes had taken reason as well as passion into account, the three causes of quarrel he had described would not lead to war between human beings. In the case of Hobbes' first cause of quarrel, competition, reason would restrain the two individuals who desired the same thing, and the result would not have to be decided by fighting, and ultimately the death of one. As William Lucy noted, 'although men may like, and approve what another hath; yet the violence of few mens affections runs to such a height in malice, as to do mischief in so high a

⁶³ See for example Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 320-1.

⁶⁴ Lucy, *Observations 1663*, pp. 143-4.

⁶⁵ Lucy, *Observations 1663*, p. 145.

⁶⁶ Lucy, *Observations 1663*, p. 146.

⁶⁷ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 320-1, following Cumberland, *A Treatise*, pp. 84-5.

nature, for their content, as to destroy a man'. An individual in possession of a piece of land would not fear a neighbour, as the probability of his neighbour invading him was small. Even in a condition which lacked a common power, the conscience would be 'enough to keep men in awe', and thus prevent them from invading others. For Lucy, when two men had equal title to the same place, 'they will either debate it by reason, or else fight it out, and the strongest arme will get possession'. But it was not conquest which gave the victor the right, but occupancy. And once an individual had occupancy, 'it will be unjust for any to meddle with it whilst it is in his possession'. This 'title of Occupancy is a most sacred and just title, and gives dominion to the possessor, such as all men, in all Ages, have revered'.⁶⁸ Lucy cited the example of *Genesis* chapter thirteen, which described an agreement between Abraham and Lot, in which they had decided to live apart because the land could not support both their families, and this had previously caused conflict between them. According to Lucy, 'Abraham was more potent than Lot, and could have compelled him to go whither he pleased', and yet Abraham gave Lot a choice of which land to occupy.⁶⁹

As the example of Abraham and Lot demonstrated, human beings were capable of settling such a dispute reasonably. Richard Cumberland agreed with Hobbes that when one individual invaded another individual's property, this had a tendency to lead to war, but for Cumberland,

right Reason dictates... that greater damage is to be apprehended from this open'd Sluice of all Evils, than can be compensated by the hope of the trifling Advantage, which can be procur'd by the Injury, especially in that State, where no Civil Government is suppos'd, which might restrain Anger and Revenge within some bounds; and where one Contention may breed others without end; and the least Strife may bring Life in danger.⁷⁰

Similarly, James Tyrrell granted that 'this may be true amongst Brutes; as also amongst brutish and unreasonable men'; but God has given human beings reason, which means they can either divide the property where this can be done, or agree

⁶⁸ Lucy, *Observations 1663*, pp. 145-6.

⁶⁹ Lucy, *Observations 1663*, p. 143. Hobbes himself had cited this example in *De Cive*, IV, 4, p.60, in the chapter entitled 'Natural Law is Divine Law', as evidence for his claim that common ownership caused conflict. It was also evidence that human beings themselves had distributed the community of things - see chapter four on the right of nature.

⁷⁰ Cumberland, *A Treatise*, p. 253.

to use it in turns, or allow the first possessor to have it.⁷¹ Further, God had not ‘made so niggardly a distribution of things’, that human beings had to compete for those things necessary for life, such as the fruits of the earth.⁷² For Tyrrell, like Lucy, the ‘Rules of Reason, and Equity’ gave possession to the first occupant, who according to these rules thought it ‘reasonable that he should be... permitted to enjoy it’. Similarly, other individuals who had a desire for the same thing would, according to the rules of reason and equity, allow the first possessor to enjoy it.⁷³

When Hobbes’ contemporary critics moved on to discuss his second cause of quarrel, diffidence, they specifically linked it with Hobbes’ further claim that individuals in the natural condition should anticipate danger by invading others, and should subdue as many individuals as possible until there was no power great enough to threaten them. Again, most of Hobbes’ critics thought that this would be acting against reason. For James Lowde, natural equality made it unreasonable for an individual to attempt to subject all other individuals, until there was no other great enough to oppose him.⁷⁴ Similarly, James Tyrrell thought that it was highly unlikely that any individual would think he was able ‘by his own single strength’ to ‘master and subdue all those he will be afraid of’, until there is no one left to threaten him. On this account ‘a man (like a Game-Cock) would be forced to fight a Battel, or two, every day whilst he lived’. In the case of fighting cocks, we find that they live to fight about twelve or thirteen battles, and Tyrrell thought that this would be about the same for individuals in Hobbes’ state of nature.⁷⁵

Diffidence did not give an individual the right to kill another, simply because at some point in the future that other individual may pose a threat to him. There must be ‘some sufficient signs’ of intention to harm, without which, an individual could kill ‘any of his Children, or Servants, or even his Wife her self, if he did but fancy they went about to murther, or rob him’.⁷⁶ Even if, as Hobbes

⁷¹ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 275-6.

⁷² Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 276. Filmer, *Observations*, p. 188, also made this point, and claimed that Hobbes’ description of men attempting to destroy one other might be true if food was in short supply.

⁷³ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 321-2.

⁷⁴ See Lowde, *A Discourse*, p. 157. See also Shafte, *The Great Law of Nature*, p. 23, where an attempt to subdue others in the state of nature would result in death, rather than preservation.

⁷⁵ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 323-5.

⁷⁶ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 326-7.

claimed, there were some individuals who took ‘pleasure in contemplating their own Power in Acts of Conquest’, a single individual had never been powerful enough to subdue the rest. Men have always combined together, and chosen one man as their leader, because they respected him for his ‘Integrity, or Courage’. Even

Nimrod himself, (who is supposed the first Tyrant, or Conqueror,) ever have enlarged the Bounds of his Empire by his own single strength, or that of his particular Family, without such a Combination which requires Compacts between the Persons that make it; and when they once do this, they are then no longer in the meer state of Nature, having set up and acknowledged a common Power over them to keep them in awe...⁷⁷

If Hobbes’ third cause of quarrel, glory, was governed by fear and reason, it would also not lead to war. James Tyrrell noted that ‘even among those that labour under this Passion of Vain-glory, there are many in whom fear of others is a much more predominate passion, and such will rather take an affront, than venture to beat or kill another to revenge it’. If the passion of vainglory could be ‘mastered by another stronger Passion; why may it not also be overpowered by Reason?’⁷⁸ Tyrrell thought that a rational individual would realise that he could not force others to value him, simply by fighting every one who did not value him. He also commented on Hobbes’ claim in *De Cive* that intellectual disagreement caused the bitterest wars, and admitted that differences of opinion could cause strife between men, but this did not imply that all men had a desire to hurt others. There were many men of an ‘equal and reasonable disposition’, who did not want to hurt others, and ‘though they often differ from them in opinion’, but ‘they must take all others for fools, if they prefer their own Judgment before another Man’s’.⁷⁹ Tyrrell denied Hobbes’ claim that the worst wars were those fought between different religious groups, or different factions within a country. This could not be the case in the state of nature, because according to Hobbes these groups only came into existence in the commonwealth.⁸⁰ Both Tyrrell and

⁷⁷ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 323-5. See also p. 264, where Tyrrell claimed that if a man did increase his natural power, it was by other men choosing him as leader because of his bravery or virtue, or because he was their father.

⁷⁸ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 332.

⁷⁹ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 273.

⁸⁰ See Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 273-4. See also Cumberland, *A Treatise*, p. 137. In chapter two on equality and unsociability, I noted that Hobbes objected to those philosophers who had

Richard Cumberland also denied Hobbes' observation that human beings liked to compare themselves with others, in order to think highly of themselves, and this led them to show hatred and contempt. For Tyrrell, this did 'not proceed from Nature, or Reason, but from foolish Customs, and bad Education'. Individuals often did have different opinions, 'without giving one another the lie, or any just occasion of offence'.⁸¹ Cumberland thought that Hobbes had simply given all men his own characteristics. He admitted that there were some such 'foolish and envious' men, but that 'the Reason or Force of wiser Men may easily restrain [them] from hurting All'.⁸² For Cumberland, it was our desire for honour, which led us to virtuous actions and thus to peace.⁸³

The passions Hobbes had argued led to war, would, when guided by reason lead to peace. As Richard Cumberland noted, a comparison of the causes (i.e. the passions) of these effects demonstrated that when governed by reason, they 'seem more powerfully to persuade to universal Benevolence, and that Peace, which may reasonably be expected from the Exercise thereof, than that War of all against all...'⁸⁴ James Tyrrell agreed with Hobbes that 'mens Lusts and Passions do often encline them to War and contention', but he also thought that 'God hath given Man Reason to foresee, as also to prevent the evils of War'; and had also 'endued them with as strong Passions (as Mr. H. acknowledges) to incline them to peace'.⁸⁵ He granted that the 'same Passions may in some men produce different effects', but overall if the passions that tend to peace 'are more strong and powerful than those that excite them to War, then certainly Peace will

included in their descriptions of natural human behaviour, characteristics which themselves had been formed by society. Hobbes wanted to look at human beings before they had become civilised by society. Here it appears that Hobbes himself found it difficult to exclude all civilised characteristics from his description of human beings. Hobbes' view that the bitterest wars were caused by disagreements over religion and politics was given in the first chapter of *De Cive*, 'Man without civil society'. It seems likely that Hobbes made this claim to demonstrate the parallels between the causes of quarrel in the natural condition, and the causes of the civil war in England, i.e. disagreements over religion and politics. See also Thomas S. Schrock, 'King David and Uriah the Hittite in the Political Thought of Thomas Hobbes', *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 4 (1992), pp. 59-114, p. 107, note 72, for intellectual vain glory as the main cause of the civil war.

⁸¹ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 275.

⁸² Cumberland, *A Treatise*, pp. 137-8. See also Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 337.

⁸³ See Cumberland, *A Treatise*, p. 137, who cited Cicero's claim that the 'praise of good men' is 'true glory, or such Honour as can be attain'd out of civil Society'. See also Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 335.

⁸⁴ Cumberland, *A Treatise*, p. 85.

⁸⁵ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 276. See also pp. 332-3.

be their more constant and Natural State'.⁸⁶ Tyrrell thought that Hobbes had failed to stress this enough. For Tyrrell, it was fear of death, and other miseries, which was the strongest influence on men's actions. And reason 'can never prompt considering men to believe themselves naturally in so dangerous and miserable a State, as this which Mr. H. supposes; much less to fall into it on purpose, without just cause given'.⁸⁷

As the above arguments demonstrate, Hobbes' contemporary critics objected to his war of all against all for a number of reasons. Hobbes' account contradicted the account of scripture - human beings had always lived under God, whose laws of nature, engraved in their hearts, prevented them from killing each other. Hobbes' account was also dishonourable to God, because God did not create human beings in a condition of war. And finally, Hobbes' account also contradicted experience - human beings had parents, who had a natural disposition to love their children. Hobbes' views made human beings no better than animals. The critics particularly objected to his description of human nature, which only seemed to take into account the passions, and failed to take into account reason and experience. For Hobbes' contemporary critics, human beings had reason, and it was this faculty which guided their passions, and proved that the natural condition was a state of peace, rather than war. Reason, the laws of nature, the conscience and God were sufficient to maintain peace amongst human beings in the natural condition.

But in some ways Hobbes would not have disagreed with some of these apparent criticisms of his ideas. For instance, to John Shafte's claim that natural equality made it unreasonable for individuals to kill others, Hobbes would have argued yes, but in nature where there was no common judge, who decided what was reasonable or unreasonable in particular circumstances? Some individuals thought that it was reasonable to kill others. Some individuals thought that it was reasonable to want more than others. But in nature who decided on this? Hobbes' answer was that human beings decided for themselves. William Lucy's argument that Abraham and Lot divided land between them simply proved Hobbes' point that it was human beings themselves who had agreed to distribute property,

⁸⁶ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 333.

⁸⁷ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 334.

because it had caused conflict.⁸⁸ Similarly, James Tyrrell's claims, that passion when guided by fear and reason would lead to peace, and that fear of death was the strongest influence on human actions, were in agreement with Hobbes' own views. Again, Hobbes' contemporary critics misunderstood him because of their understanding of 'nature' as perfection, or a description of how human beings ought to behave. This perfection of human existence was understood to be the original condition of human beings at the creation. The critics assumed that Hobbes' state of nature was a description of how he thought human beings ought to behave, and as a result were horrified by his description of a condition of hostility.

Hobbes' contemporary critics were also mistaken in their claim that his description of natural human behaviour only took the passions into account. Hobbes' state of nature, as a condition of war, was caused as much by natural reason, as by passion. As we will see in chapter four, on the laws of nature, Hobbes thought that reason in the state of nature was each individual's own reason, and it could be fallible. Right reason did not exist in the natural condition, where each individual took his own passions for right reason. For Hobbes, it was the laws of nature, which should be the guide to the actions of individuals. These laws were discoverable by natural reason, but the problem was that passions often prevented this discovery, and even if individuals discovered the laws of nature, they needed help in interpreting them. Further, individuals often violated those laws, because in their interpretation they failed to consider the consequences for other individuals. They failed to put themselves in the place of others. Thus, Hobbes' natural condition was a condition of war, not only because of human passion, but also because the only rule of action each individual had in the natural condition was his own natural reason. In the natural condition, each individual had the liberty to act on what his own reason and judgement dictated to him. Natural individuals took courses of action in order to satisfy their immediate desires, and these courses of action were dictated by their own natural reason. It was both reason and passion which therefore created the state of war. Hobbes' contemporary critics thought that reason was potentially perfect, and also

⁸⁸ See chapter four on the right of nature.

sufficient to prevent men from committing violent actions. Hobbes' views, on the other hand, could be understood to suggest that he thought that the Schoolmen had failed to take into account the effects of the Fall. Reason had been corrupted by the disobedience of the first human beings, and as a result God, the laws of nature, and the individual conscience were no longer sufficient to maintain peace amongst human beings, without a human, coercive authority.

Hobbes' account of the natural condition was a description of the consequences for human beings, of judging good and evil according to their own individual passions. The disintegration of the commonwealth into the state of nature was a consequence of individuals following the moral philosophy of the Schoolmen. As we have seen in chapter one, Hobbes thought that the Schoolmen's rules of good and evil were simply according to their own passions, and he also accused them of a number of seditious doctrines which led to the dissolution of the commonwealth, all of which involved the private judgement of good and evil. Hobbes' natural condition demonstrated that a moral philosophy, in which each individual took his own passions for right reason, created a state of war, rather than a state of peace. His argument that the natural condition was a condition of war, because of the intention or disposition of human beings, was also an attack on the Schoolmen, who had argued that human beings were naturally sociable, because of their disposition to society. Hobbes wanted to show how ridiculous such a claim was, because it could equally be argued that the disposition of human beings was to invade, hurt and kill others. For Hobbes, it all came down to a matter of intention. In the natural condition it was not possible to distinguish between good and bad men from their actions, because in such a condition even good men were forced to commit wicked actions. A.P. Martinich has dubbed this 'the great ignorance and fear argument' - because we do not know who is good and who is evil, it is safer to assume that all human beings are evil.⁸⁹ As we will see below, Hobbes' views on intention demonstrated the protestant character of his thought, and in particular his allegiance to the theory of the Two Cities, which argued that since the Fall, God had arbitrarily predestined two groups of human beings (the elect and the reprobate), who lived on earth

⁸⁹ Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography*, p. 206.

mixed up together, and only God could distinguish between them.⁹⁰ Hobbes' political theory could be understood to take both these groups into account.

But for many of Hobbes' critics, not only was his description of the natural condition contrary to the original, perfect condition of human beings at the creation, it was also an inaccurate description of the condition of fallen human beings. A number of Hobbes' critics cited the account of Cain and Abel as evidence for this.⁹¹ Firstly, the example of Cain and Abel demonstrated that the right of nature did not give one individual a right to kill or invade another.⁹² Secondly, God's immediate punishment of Cain proved that human beings did not have a right to do what they wanted with other individuals, but had their right confined by the law of nature.⁹³ God showed his disapproval of murder with his immediate punishment of Cain. As James Tyrrell put it, although

after the Fall of Adam, man's Nature was degenerated into that state we now find it, wherein mens Passions, I own, do too often domineer over their Reason; and that Cain, through Malice and Envy, slew his Brother, as we read in *Genesis*. Of this state of War, as it is the first Example of man's Degeneracy, so it is also of God's dislike, and punishment of this cruel Sin of Murther, which is indeed but the effect of this Author's state of War.⁹⁴

For Roger Coke, if as Hobbes claimed, 'God made Man in the state of pure nature... in such a cut-throatly condition, and so much worse than other creatures, that men might *jure naturali* everlastingly kill one another, and commit no offence, if the *King* or *Civitas* does not restrain it', then how could God 'in justice have punished Cain for killing Abel', unless Cain and Abel made Adam their king by pact, and Adam gave them 'a Law not to kill one another', which according to Coke, Hobbes nowhere claimed.⁹⁵ For both Tyrrell and Coke, Hobbes' views contradicted scripture, which told us that God punished Cain immediately.

⁹⁰ Hobbes seems to have subscribed to the theory of the Two Cities - see for example: *De Cive*, XVII, 5, p. 207, & 22, p. 222; and *Leviathan* XLI, 3-5, pp. 328-30, & XLIV, 27-29, pp. 426-8.

⁹¹ Most of Hobbes' critics wrote their response to his ideas in the form of critiques of the English *Leviathan*. As a result, we cannot be sure that they were responding directly to his own citation of Cain and Abel in the Latin version, although as I have mentioned elsewhere Richard Cumberland had read the Latin edition.

⁹² See Whitehall, *The Leviathan Found Out*, p. 37. Hobbes' right of nature will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

⁹³ See Lucy, *Observations 1663*, pp. 182-3.

⁹⁴ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 357.

A number of Hobbes' contemporary critics also cited Cain and Abel to disprove Hobbes' theory of common ownership in the natural condition. For William Lucy Cain and Abel's sacrifices to God demonstrated that human beings had property from the beginning, given to them by God, and that they had no right to do what they pleased.⁹⁶ Similarly for John Whitehall, 'Cain and Abel had their distinct properties, and offered accordingly, when there was no Commonwealth formed, that we know of; and in all probability there was none'.⁹⁷ Hobbes' critics appear to have agreed that Cain and Abel lived in the natural condition,⁹⁸ or a condition before commonwealths came into existence, but this condition was not as Hobbes described it. In this natural condition, Cain and Abel had property, did not have a right to kill other individuals, and lived under a common power with the ability to punish them. How did their views compare with the interpretations of sixteenth and seventeenth century commentators on *Genesis*?

3. The Scriptural Account.

Although Hobbes' contemporary critics have noted a number of areas of disagreement between his description of the state of war, and the scriptural account of Cain's murder of Abel, for any of Hobbes' seventeenth century readers who were familiar with the various interpretations of the fourth chapter of *Genesis*, there were important parallels to be seen between Hobbes' account, and that of scripture. Firstly, according to one influential protestant commentator, Heinrich Bullinger, the account of Cain and Abel demonstrated that there were two types of people on earth, who would always be in disagreement with one another. Abel was 'an example of God's seed, and of a regenerate true faithfull Christian man'; whereas Cain was 'a seed of the Serpent, a childe of the Devill...' The example of Cain and Abel demonstrated what God meant when he said: 'I will put enmitie between the seed of the woman and thy seed'. It was as if God were saying, 'There shall be two manner of people, the one shall cleave unto

⁹⁵ Coke, *A Survey of the Politicks*, pp. 32-3.

⁹⁶ See Lucy, *Observations 1663*, pp. 175-6. See also Coke, *Elements*, pp. 34-5.

⁹⁷ Whitehall, *The Leviathan Found Out*, p. 44.

Christ, the blessed seed, the other shall cleave unto the Devill. And these two generations shall in no wise agree, but be at variance in faith and religion'.⁹⁹ These two brothers 'have set forth before us, the whole battell and strife, which the world, the citie of the devill... shall make against the citie and citizens in whom Christ is the head, unto the end of the world'.¹⁰⁰ Joseph Hall wondered 'at the contrary dispositions and estates' of the first two brothers. If 'the priviledges of Nature had been worth anything, the first borne Child should not have been a Reprobate'. But even good men produce bad children, and 'even good breeding cannot alter destinie'. Hall described Cain as the butcher of his brother, and asked, 'Who could wonder at dissentions amongst thousands of brethren, when he sees so deadly opposition betwixt two, the first roots of brotherhood? who can hope to live plausibly, & securely amongst so many Cains, when he sees one Cain the death of one Abel?' It was the devil that caused enmity between Cain and Abel, and it was the devil who caused quarrels now between one man and another.¹⁰¹

The account of Cain and Abel demonstrated for many commentators that the first quarrel between human beings was over religion. As Joseph Hall put it, 'the first man that dyed, dyed for Religion',¹⁰² while John Trapp noted that these

Theological hatreds... are most bitter hatreds, and are carried on for most part, with Cain-like rage, and bloody oppression. No fire sooner breaks forth, none goes out more slowly, then that which is kindled about matters of Religion: and the nearer any come to other, the more deadly are their differences, and the more desperate their designes, one 'gainst another. The *Persians* and *Turks* are both *Mahometans*, and yet disagreeing about some small points in the Interpretation of their *Alchoran*; the *Persians* burn whatever Books they find of the *Turkish* Sect. And the *Turks* hold it more meritorious to kill one *Persian*, then seventy *Christians*. The *Jew* can better brook a *Heathen* then a *Christian*... The Pope will dispense

⁹⁸ We have seen in previous chapters that the critics also thought Adam and Eve were in the natural condition before the Fall. Thus the critics made no distinction between the pre-lapsarian and the post-lapsarian conditions.

⁹⁹ Heinrich Bullinger, *Looke from Adam, and behold the Protestants Faith and Religion* (London, 1624), pp. 22-3. See also Babington, *Comfortable Notes*, p. 22.

¹⁰⁰ Bullinger, *Looke from Adam*, p. 24.

¹⁰¹ Hall, *Contemplations*, p. 779.

¹⁰² Hall, *Contemplations*, p. 780. See also Bullinger, *Looke from Adam*, p. 24. For these commentators Abel was the first martyr.

with *Jews*, but not with *Protestants*. *Lutherans* will sooner joyn hands with a *Papist* then a *Calvinist*...¹⁰³

As we have seen above, Hobbes also thought that the bitterest quarrels were between different religious and political groups over doctrine. He also described two types of human beings: those who desired to dominate others, and those who were content with natural equality - I have called them vain-glorious and modest men. I have also noted in chapter two that in *De Cive* Hobbes had made a separate reference to good and bad men. It seems likely that these were the same types of human beings, that Hobbes had described in the natural condition as vain-glorious and modest, but that in this condition he did not refer to them as good and bad, because in the state of nature there was apparently no good and evil, and even good men were forced to commit wicked actions. Hobbes' argument, that there were two types of human beings, bore at least a superficial resemblance to these interpretations of *Genesis*, although Hobbes did not describe human beings as children of God, or children of the devil. Neither did he mention the devil as the cause of conflict between them. Hobbes also did not describe the vain-glorious and modest individuals as either good or bad men. By saying nothing, he left it for his readers to make an assumption one way or the other. Hobbes' seventeenth century readers might have assumed that the vain-glorious individuals were evil, and the modest men good; but in *Leviathan's* account of the natural condition even those individuals who were content with natural equality were forced to behave as vain-glorious individuals in order to survive. Did this therefore mean that all individuals were evil in the natural condition? Hobbes admitted that the scripture clearly stated that all men were evil, but he thought that it was not possible to distinguish between good and bad men.¹⁰⁴ The reason for this was that in the state of nature individuals were judged by their intentions, and not their actions.¹⁰⁵ Only the individual himself, and God could know what those intentions were.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Trapp, *A Clavis to the Bible*, p. 48. See also Needler, *Expository Notes*, pp. 156-7, who used the same examples of Persians versus Turks; Jews versus Christians; and Lutherans versus Calvinists.

¹⁰⁴ See *De Cive*, preface to the readers, 11-12, pp. 10-11.

¹⁰⁵ See *De Cive*, III, 27, p. 54; and *Leviathan*, XXVII, 3, p. 191. In civil society the morality of individuals was judged by their actions. I owe this reference to my supervisor, Glenn Burgess - see

For protestant commentators, the account of Cain and Abel demonstrated that it was not possible to tell good and bad men apart, on the basis of their outward works. Both Cain and Abel offered sacrifices to God, but God chose to honour one, and not the other. For Benjamin Needler, the scripture made it clear that the difference between the sacrifices of Cain and Abel ‘consisted in the persons who offered, and not in the offering... *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain*’.¹⁰⁷ Further, Cain ‘did that which was good, when he brought an offering to the Lord, but he did not do well’. The reason for this is that a ‘work that is good, as to the matter of it, may by reason of a defect in the principle, or end, become starke naught’.¹⁰⁸ It was the intention that was important, or as Joseph Hall put it, ‘God, which (in good) accepts the will for the deed, condemnes the will for the deed in evill. If there be an evill heart, there will be an evill eye; and if both these, there will be an evill hand’.¹⁰⁹ Outwardly both Cain and Abel appeared to be good men, they both offered sacrifices to God. But God honoured their sacrifices according to their intentions.

God’s regard for Abel’s offering, but not for the offering of Cain, proved the protestant stress on faith over works. According to Jean Calvin, ‘God looks into the hearts... [and] estimates works not otherwise than as they proceed from the heart’.¹¹⁰ For Martin Luther, Abel’s sacrifice was offered in faith, whereas Cain put ‘his trust in the prestige of his primogeniture... he despises his brother as an insignificant and worthless being’.¹¹¹ According to Luther, ‘a person rather than his work is accepted by God and [further] that a person does not become righteous as a result of a righteous work, but that a work becomes righteous and good as a result of a righteous and good person...’¹¹² Heinrich Bullinger described Abel as

his ‘On Hobbesian Resistance Theory’, *Political Studies*, 42 (1994), pp. 62-83, p. 82. Leo Strauss has noted that although Hobbes was in agreement with the Christian tradition in believing that intention was more important than action, he differed from that tradition because he thought it was not possible to distinguish between just and unjust actions in the natural condition, or in other words independently of civil law - see Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes*, p. 23.

¹⁰⁶ See for example *Leviathan*, XXX, 30, p. 233 & XL11, 79, p. 373.

¹⁰⁷ Needler, *Expository Notes*, pp. 138 & 143. See also Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis and Exodus*, p. 49.

¹⁰⁸ Needler, *Expository Notes*, pp. 149-50.

¹⁰⁹ Hall, *Contemplations*, p. 780.

¹¹⁰ Calvin, *Commentaries*, p. 194.

¹¹¹ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 251. See also p. 267.

¹¹² Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 257.

simple, godly, and of a constant faith in God... And for this faiths sake did his sacrifice please God: but Cains pleased him not, for his heart was not right with God: he was a dissembler, greedie, and unfaithful person, which set his heart and minde upon earthly things, alway despising Gods word, and following his own tentation.¹¹³

For many commentators, who followed Calvin, Cain was a hypocrite.¹¹⁴

William Whateley noted that Cain performed

the outward work of religion, but performed it not out of faith and with a desire thereby to do true honour to God, and give himselfe unto God, and to get grace from God to make him his, but barely out of custome or respect to his Fathers authority who had so trained him up, or out of a kinde of imperfect naturall devotion, that he might seem to himselfe good, and nourish in himselfe good hopes of escaping Hell and getting Heaven...¹¹⁵

Cain quite simply served God outwardly, but was 'a bad man and lived not well'.¹¹⁶ Similarly, Gervase Babington thought that the sacrifices of Cain and Abel demonstrated 'the difference betwixt a true heart and a false, a true godly man or woman and a sinner'. Both brought sacrifices, but 'one thinketh anything good enough, and the other in the zeale of his soule, and the fulnesse of his Lord, thinketh nothing good enough'. God showed his contempt for 'so unwilling worship, so cold love and grudged gifts'. God respected Abel's sacrifice, but not Cain's, because he 'respecteth first the person, and then the gift', whereas 'men regard chiefly the gifts, and then the persons according to their gifts...'¹¹⁷ Contrary to this, John Trapp argued that God did not regard Cain's sacrifice because it was 'of the fruit of the earth; as he loved the possession of this world, and the service of the body (which yet can have no continuance) and followed after bodily lusts...'¹¹⁸

Hobbes' argument that it was not possible to distinguish between good and bad men in the natural condition, on the basis of their actions was in

¹¹³ Bullinger, *Looke from Adam*, p. 23.

¹¹⁴ See Calvin, *Commentaries*, p. 196. See also Eusebius Pagit, *The Historie of the Bible* (London, 1627), p. 4; Richardson, *Choice Observations, Genesis IV.4*; and Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 75.

¹¹⁵ Whateley, *Prototypes*, p. 18. See also Ainsworth, *Annotations, Genesis IV.7*; Anon., (erroneously attributed to Thomas Hayne), *A Briefe Discourse of the Scriptures* (London, 1614), p. 18; Anon., *The Doctrine of the Bible, or The Way to True Happiness* (London, 1613), p. 3; and Clapham, *A Briefe of the Bible*, p. 24.

¹¹⁶ Whateley, *Prototypes*, p. 20.

¹¹⁷ Babington, *Comfortable Notes*, p. 21.

agreement with the protestant stress on faith over works, as demonstrated by the account of Cain and Abel.¹¹⁹ The doctrine of justification by faith was central to protestantism, both Lutheranism and Calvinism. Since the Fall, God had arbitrarily predestined the elect and the reprobate, and only God knew who truly believed, and thus whether they would be saved or damned. Human beings could not contribute to their salvation through the performance of good works, or aided by the sacraments of the Church. It was this doctrine which separated the orthodox Reformed view from Arminianism, which believed in God's universal grace, and the free will of all human beings to attain salvation.

Most English commentators on *Genesis* followed both Luther and Calvin, in noting the meanings of the names Cain and Abel. Cain meant obtained, acquired, gotten, or a possession; and Abel meant vanity, unprofitable, useless, worthless, or a soon vanishing vapour.¹²⁰ For Gervase Babington, this 'diversity of names' signified 'a diversity of affection in the namers'. Babington took two lessons from this: firstly, 'the prepostorous love that is, in many parents' often means they think more highly of the worst children, and less well of the better. Secondly, 'it teacheth the lot of the godly in this world many times, even from their cradle, to bee held in lesse regard than the wicked'.¹²¹ Here Babington followed Martin Luther, who had argued that when Adam and Eve named their sons, they showed that they preferred one above the other. This also seemed to be confirmed for Luther by Adam giving Cain an occupation which was concerned with government, whereas Abel's occupation was domestic. Luther thought that, in showing their preference, Adam and Eve were partly responsible for Cain's sin.¹²² These interpretations supported Hobbes' view that it was not possible to tell good and bad men apart - Adam and Eve demonstrated this when they named

¹¹⁸ Trapp, *A Clavis to the Bible*, p. 46.

¹¹⁹ Hobbes thought that both faith and obedience were necessary for salvation, where obedience was 'the will or effort to obey' - see *De Cive*, XVIII, 3, p. 236. See also *Elements*, XXV, 10, pp. 151-2; and *Leviathan*, XLIII, 3-5, pp. 398-400, & 19-23, pp. 407-10.

¹²⁰ See Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 242-3; Calvin, *Commentaries*, p. 191; Ainsworth, *Annotations, Genesis IV.1-2*; Richardson, *Choice Observations, Genesis IV.2*; Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 74; Whateley, *Prototypes*, p. 15; and Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis and Exodus*, p. 49.

¹²¹ Babington, *Comfortable Notes*, p. 20.

¹²² See Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 245-6.

their sons. They also confirmed Hobbes' view that natural individuals named good and evil according to their passions.¹²³

This interpretation of the meanings of the names of Cain and Abel was subscribed to by those commentators who followed both Augustine and Luther in describing Cain and Abel as the origins of the earthly and heavenly cities.¹²⁴ According to Alexander Ross, 'in the persons' of Cain and Abel we see 'the wicked and the Church of God'. Cain's name (possession) was an apt name for the wicked, for they seeke nothing else but Possessions and Honours in this world; and therefore Caine built a Citie: so the wicked laboureth to be secure, to have rest and ease in this world'. Abel's name meant 'Vanitie and Sorrow: so is the estate of the godly, their life heere is but vanitie, and they account all things but vanitie; their life is sorrow, they weepe for their sinnes, and for the vanities of this world, and because they are persecuted by the posteritie of Caine'.¹²⁵

John Trapp also took this view, and cited another divine, Hugh Broughton, who saw in Cain and Abel's names 'advertisements for matter of true continuance and corruption. Cain betokeneth possession in this world: And Abel betokeneth one humbled in minde, and holding such possession vain'.¹²⁶ As we have seen above, a number of Hobbes' critics cited the account of Cain and Abel as evidence that property had existed from the creation, thus disproving Hobbes' theory of an original common ownership. But as we will see in chapter four, Hobbes' view demonstrated his agreement with Augustine's and Luther's theories

¹²³ See *Elements*, VII, 3, p. 44; and *Leviathan*, VI, 8, p. 29. See also chapter one on good and evil.

¹²⁴ See Augustine, *City of God*, XV, 2, p. 596; and Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 252-4, who also claimed that the Papists were the Church of the wicked, whereas he and his followers were the true Church.

¹²⁵ Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 74. See also Trapp, *A Clavis to the Bible*, p. 45; and Hall, *Contemplations*, p. 780.

¹²⁶ Trapp, *A Clavis to the Bible*, p. 45. While discussing Cain's conception, and particularly which qualities or defects Cain received from God, and which from his parents, Trapp compared Cain's creation to the work of a watchmaker. According to Trapp, a 'skilful Artificer makes a clock of all his essential parts most accurately, onely he leaves the putting of all parts together to his unskilful apprentice; who so jumbles together the several joynts that all falls to jarring, and can keep no time at all, every wheel running backward-way. So God most artificially still perfects both body and soul: but our sacred parents put all out of frame, and set every part in a contrary course to Gods will' - see Trapp, *A Clavis to the Bible*, p. 46. Here Trapp cited another English divine, John Yates (d. c. 1660), minister of St. Andrew's, Norwich, who wrote *A Modell of Divinitie catechistically composed* (London, 1622). Hobbes used a similar analogy in *De Cive*, preface, 9, p. 10; and *Leviathan*, Introduction, 1, p. 3. Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric*, p. 387, has argued that Hobbes' use of the machine metaphor was designed to demonstrate that the commonwealth was not God-given. But the use of a similar metaphor by both John Trapp and John Yates appears to deny, or at least qualify, Skinner's statement.

of the Two Cities, which argued that private property only came into existence after the Fall, with the creation of the earthly city built by Cain.

At first sight the account of Cain and Abel also appears to be evidence for Hobbes' argument, that it was natural equality that was at least partly responsible for causing conflict in the natural condition. Who could be more equal than two brothers? Further, according to both Luther and Calvin, although not explicitly stated in *Genesis*, it was probable that Cain and Abel were twins. But having said this, both Luther and Calvin thought that Abel was subject to Cain by birth.¹²⁷ God made this clear when he saw how angry Cain was, because God had more regard for Abel's sacrifice, than for Cain's offering. According to Heinrich Bullinger, God told Cain that he should not be angry with his brother, because

he shall doe thee no hurt nor harme: he shall also not be Lord over thee, nor minish thy right: Yea he shall have respect unto thee, and thou shalt have dominion over him, and so keepe thy birth-right, and still remaine the first borne, although his sacrifice be acceptable unto mee and not thine.¹²⁸

Similarly, William Whateley thought that God wanted Cain to know that he did not intend 'to take away the superiority which... age gives'. Abel would be Cain's inferior 'in respect of government', although Abel was Cain's superior 'in vertues'.¹²⁹ For the anonymous author of *A Briefe Discourse of the Scriptures*, Adam named his first son Cain because 'he had gained a goodly Possession'. He then named his second son Abel, 'that is *Vanitie*, to shew that if a man have never so large Kingdomes or Possessions, or be never so nobly borne, as *Kaine* was... it is all but *Vanitie, and vexation of minde*'.¹³⁰ Andrew Willet described Abel's subjection to Cain as 'both by the law of nature, and his owne ready disposition'.¹³¹

These interpretations contradicted Hobbes' argument for natural equality. And yet Hobbesian equality was a rather strange concept. It was not an absolute equality, but a rough equality where differences in strength and intellect were not

¹²⁷ See Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 243; and Calvin, *Commentaries*, pp. 189 & 203. See also Ainsworth, *Annotations, Genesis IV.7*.

¹²⁸ Bullinger, *Looke from Adam*, p. 25. See also Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 76; and Haak, *Dutch Annotations, Genesis IV.7*.

¹²⁹ Whateley, *Prototypes*, pp. 19 & 20.

¹³⁰ Anon., *A Briefe Discourse of the Scriptures*, p. 19.

so great that one single individual would always have the advantage. Hobbes' argument was in agreement with William Whateley's view that one individual could be superior in one faculty, but not in another. Hobbesian equality also did not prevent the existence of dominion, even if that dominion was only insecure and temporary.¹³² We have also seen in chapter two, on equality and unsociability, that Hobbes thought problems were caused when individuals assumed superiority over others against both reason and nature. Hobbes' seventeenth century readers could have seen in Cain a scriptural example of why we could not say that one human being was naturally superior to another. Cain might have been the elder, but this did not make him the better man. And for one influential Biblical commentator, Martin Luther, although from the beginning 'by divine right the first-born enjoyed the prerogative of rule and priesthood, nevertheless they lost it, and those who were born later were given preference over them'. Elder sons 'were deprived of their right', because 'they despised and lorded it over their brothers'. For Luther, Cain was the prime example of an elder brother who had lost his right.¹³³

For a number of commentators, Cain was also an example of an individual who thought highly of himself. William Whateley noted that Cain's anger at God, for not regarding his sacrifice, shows 'a predominancy of pride and blindness, that out of an high opinion of himselfe hath his mind mufled as it were from seeing his owne faults...'¹³⁴ Similarly, Gervase Babington called Cain a hypocrite, and noted 'how hypocrites, though they be hypocrites, yet can they not abide to be served like hypocrites, no they will not give God himselfe (much lesse man) leave to deale with them as they deserve'.¹³⁵ We have seen above, that Hobbes also

¹³¹ Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis and Exodus*, p. 49, which supports Hobbes' view that authority involved consent.

¹³² As we will see in chapter four, dominion was allowed for preservation's sake. In chapter five, we will also see that dominion within families existed in Hobbes' state of nature.

¹³³ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 243-4. See also John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, edited by Peter Laslett (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988), *Ist Treatise*, section 112, p. 223, 'it could not be, that Cain as Elder, had a natural Dominion over Abel; for the words are conditional: *If thou doest well* and so personal to Cain, and whatever was signified by them, did depend on his Carriage and not follow his Birth-right, and therefore could by no means be an Establishment of Dominion in the First-born in general'; and *Ist Treatise*, section 111, p. 222, 'God or Nature has not anywhere, that I know, placed such Jurisdiction in the First-born, nor can Reason find any such Superiority amongst Brethren'.

¹³⁴ Whateley, *Prototypes*, p. 19.

¹³⁵ Babington, *Comfortable Notes*, p. 21.

thought every individual thought highly of himself, and hated to see similar qualities in others. And further, if an individual felt he was being undervalued by others, he could not help but show his feelings either by words or other signs.¹³⁶ The account of *Genesis* tells us that when God showed that he valued Abel's sacrifice more highly than Cain's, 'Cain was very wroth and his countenance fell'.¹³⁷ Cain, as Abel's superior by birth, was angry that God did not value his offering, as highly as God valued the offering of his apparently inferior brother. Cain first of all showed his anger on his face, and then by his action in killing Abel.

For commentators on *Genesis*, the cause of Cain's murder of Abel was envy. According to Alexander Ross, Cain killed Abel for two reasons, the first of which was 'Envie, because God accepted his sacrifice; and therefore he thought that Abel should have obtained his birth-right'.¹³⁸ Joseph Hall described envy as 'the corrosive of all ill minds, and the roote of all desperate actions'. Cain should have felt joy that his brother's sacrifice had been accepted, and 'his Brothers example should have excited, and directed him'. But Cain was not the only human being to suffer from envy. There

was never any nature without envie; Every man is borne a Cain; hating that goodnesse in another, which he neglecteth in himselfe. There was never envie that was not bloody; for if it eate not anothers hearte, it will eate our owne: but unless it be restrained, it will surely seed it selfe with the blood of others, oft-times in act, all-wayses in affection...¹³⁹

Similarly for William Whateley, 'wee have the same nature that Caine, the same corruptions, full of pride, full of hypocrisie, full of ignorance of God, and apt to be bold to any evil if wee may conceale it from men'. But if God has preserved us from those corruptions, let us not assume superiority over others, but give thanks to God.¹⁴⁰

Envy was also described as unreasonable and unjust. William Whateley argued that envy was 'one of the most unreasonable faults, that is, as hating a man because hee is not as miserable as himselfe, or at least because he is more happie

¹³⁶ See *Elements*, XIV, 4, p. 78.

¹³⁷ *Genesis* IV.5. See also *Leviathan*, VI, 56, p. 34, 'the best signs of passions present are in the countenance...'

¹³⁸ Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 76. Cain's killing of Abel was also instigated by Satan.

¹³⁹ Hall, *Contemplations*, p. 780.

than himselfe'.¹⁴¹ According to Benjamin Needler, the sin of envy 'opposeth the Providence of God, grieving that God should dispose of his blessings, as he doth'. Envy is also 'a most unjust sinne, for it is offended with nothing but that which is good'. An 'envious man is more unhappy then other sinners, others are troubled for their own evils, the envious man for other mens good'.¹⁴² Cain was angry that Abel's sacrifice was regarded, and 'in his passion seems to be void of reason'. When 'a man is intemperate, unjust, passionate, he acts not onely against Scripture, but against principles of reason, and ingenuity'.¹⁴³ Needler went on to claim that Cain did not kill Abel in passion, but 'maliciously, and with premeditation'. He killed Abel 'for righteousnesse sake'.¹⁴⁴

If we recall Hobbes' three causes of quarrel between individuals in the natural condition, it was possible for Hobbes' readers to see some parallels between the account of Cain's murder of Abel, and Hobbes' third cause of quarrel, glory.¹⁴⁵ This cause of quarrel caused individuals to invade others when they felt undervalued, or had a difference of opinion. They invaded in order to secure their reputation. Cain was an individual who thought highly of himself, and hated to see similar qualities in others. Cain envied Abel, because God valued his brother's sacrifice more highly than his own. Cain felt undervalued and reacted accordingly. And yet the account of Cain and Abel could also be interpreted so as to support Hobbes' claim that individuals in the natural condition should anticipate danger. As we have seen above, a number of Hobbes' critics specifically linked anticipation with his second cause of quarrel, diffidence. On this account, Cain feared that his younger brother would take his birthright, and in order to prevent this, he murdered him. Cain's murder of Abel could also be explained with reference to Hobbes' first cause of quarrel, competition. Cain already had dominion over Abel's person, as first born. Now he wanted to acquire Abel's property, and in doing so God's honour.¹⁴⁶ Hobbes'

¹⁴⁰ Whateley, *Prototypes*, p. 25.

¹⁴¹ Whateley, *Prototypes*, p. 19.

¹⁴² Needler, *Expository Notes*, p. 142. See also Anon., *A Briefe Discourse of the Scriptures*, p. 18.

¹⁴³ Needler, *Expository Notes*, pp. 145-6.

¹⁴⁴ Needler, *Expository Notes*, p. 155.

¹⁴⁵ We have already seen that Hobbes' claim, that disputes over religion caused the bitterest wars, was supported by the quarrel between Cain and Abel.

¹⁴⁶ Hobbes' views on the peaceful society of bees and ants are relevant here - there was no competition for dignity and honour among them, which in men created hatred and envy, and led to

readers may well have been able to apply all three causes of quarrel to explain Cain's murder of Abel, but Hobbes' theory could also be understood to support an interpretation of scripture, in which it was Abel who provoked his brother. On Hobbes' account, Abel might have attacked his brother through diffidence, because he saw that Cain was angry with him, and he feared that Cain would kill him. Abel might also have attacked his brother, through competition, in order to obtain Cain's birthright. Finally, Abel might have felt undervalued because his parents named him 'vanity' or 'useless'; whereas they had shown their preference for Cain by naming him 'possession'. This led Abel to attack Cain in pursuit of 'glory'. Either way, Abel was unsuccessful, and the outcome was his own death. If the scriptural account was interpreted in this way, then Abel could be held equally responsible for his own death. This would also mean that Hobbes' theory denied that Abel was a good man, and Cain an evil man. For Hobbes' seventeenth century readers this would have been an unpalatable conclusion.

As we have seen above, Hobbes himself thought that envy was the reason that Cain had killed Abel. Only God could have judged Cain's intention in killing Abel. God had judged Cain, and punished him immediately. What then of Hobbes' claim that Cain dared to kill Abel because there was no common power with the ability to punish him? For a number of commentators, God's questioning of Cain after Abel's murder, and his response to God, demonstrated that he did not recognise the obligation of the laws of nature, or that there was any power over him. Martin Luther thought that Cain's reply to God, that he was not his brother's keeper, demonstrated 'that the care of his brother [was] a matter of no concern to him'.¹⁴⁷ In doing this, he also admitted that 'the Law... "Love your neighbour as yourself" was of no concern to him; and likewise the command... "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to another."' This Law was not promulgated for the first time in the Decalog but is written in the hearts of all men'.¹⁴⁸ Luther also claimed that Cain thought that he could murder Abel 'by right, as it were, because he is the first-born'.¹⁴⁹ What is interesting about these

war - see *Elements*, XIX, 5, p. 105; *Leviathan*, XVII, 6 - 12, pp. 108-9; and *De Cive*, V, 5, pp. 71-2.

¹⁴⁷ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 275.

¹⁴⁸ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 277-8.

¹⁴⁹ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 282.

statements is firstly, Luther, like Hobbes, has used the negative formulation of the Golden Rule.¹⁵⁰ Secondly, Luther's interpretation also seems to support Hobbes' claim that human beings in the state of nature had no obligations to each other, or at least they thought that they did not. And finally, for individuals in Hobbes' state of nature, the right of nature gave them a right to kill other human beings, if they thought it necessary for their own preservation.¹⁵¹

A number of other protestant commentators argued that Cain did not recognise a power over him. For William Whateley, when Cain lied to God about his brother's murder, he denied 'in his heart that God was present in all places and saw all things'. Cain also accused God of being unjust, when he told God that his punishment was greater than he could bear.¹⁵² While commenting on *Genesis* IV.8, where Cain spoke to Abel to persuade him to go into the field, where he would kill him, Andrew Willet noted 'the paraphrase of Hierusalem... that Cain affirmed, there was no Judge, that governed the world, not no other life but this, nor reward for the righteous, or punishment for the wicked, because his oblation was not accepted, as well as his brothers: Abel did hold the contrary'.¹⁵³ On these interpretations, Cain could be seen as an example of the individuals Hobbes had described in the natural condition, whose only guide to action was their own natural reason. Hobbes thought that natural individuals took their own passions as right reason, as the reason for their actions. For Hobbes, although the laws of nature were the guide to actions, and were easily discoverable by those individuals who used their natural reason, many individuals were unable to discover them, because of their passions. Further, even if through natural reason, they were able to discover the laws of nature, they needed help in interpreting those laws. For Hobbes, human beings violated the laws of nature when they failed to realise those duties to other human beings, which were necessary for their own preservation. On Hobbes' account, Cain violated the laws of nature, when he declared that his brother was of no concern to him. Cain knew the laws of nature by natural reason, but followed his own interpretation of those laws. Cain did not act against reason, but in line with what his own natural reason

¹⁵⁰ See *Matthew* VII.12

¹⁵¹ See chapter four on the right of nature.

¹⁵² Whateley, *Prototypes*, p. 21.

dictated to him. His own interpretation of the laws of nature led him to kill his brother.

The interpretations of Whateley and Willet also implied that Cain was an atheist. Hobbes defined an atheist as an individual who denied the existence of God. According to Hobbes, most individuals knew God existed by the light of reason. But God's existence was not known by all men, because some were 'constantly in pursuit of pleasure, wealth or honour', others did 'not have the habit, the ability or the concern to reason correctly', and others were quite simply fools. Atheists fell into the category of fools, and Hobbes cited 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God', as evidence for this.¹⁵⁴ Hobbes therefore classed atheism as a sin of imprudence, rather than injustice; and claimed that atheists were punished by God, and civil sovereigns as enemies.¹⁵⁵ And yet Cain cannot be an atheist, because in a number of ways he showed that he knew God existed. Cain offered a sacrifice to God, and felt undervalued when God accepted his brother's offering, but not his. He also lied to God about his brother, and then cried out to God that his punishment was greater than he could bear.

Although as we have seen, a number of commentators thought that Cain did not recognise God's power, this did not prevent God from punishing Cain. Why then did Hobbes claim that Cain would not have dared to kill Abel, if there had been a common power with the ability to punish him? Hobbes must have been aware that the eleventh to the fifteenth verses of the fourth chapter of *Genesis* described God's immediate punishment of Cain. As Gervase Babington put it, we should 'marke the wrath, sharpe is his hand upon this offender, and yet most just'.¹⁵⁶ Cain was cursed from the earth - the ground would not provide him with crops. He was also made a fugitive and vagabond. God's punishment of Cain was a 'two-fold disquiet, one bodily, he being to wander from one Country to another; the other spiritual, his conscience, which ever followed him, not suffering him to enjoy any rest, but keeping him in perpetual fear of

¹⁵³ Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis and Exodus*, p. 50.

¹⁵⁴ *De Cive*, XIV, footnote to 19, p. 164. Here, Hobbes cited *Psalm* LIII.1. On the position of the atheist in Hobbes' theory, see Richard Woodfield, 'Hobbes on the Laws of Nature and the Atheist', *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, 15 (1971), pp. 34-43.

¹⁵⁵ See *De Cive*, XIV, 19, pp. 163-4.

¹⁵⁶ Babington, *Comfortable Notes*, p. 22.

vengeance'.¹⁵⁷ Similarly according to John Richardson, Bishop of Ardagh, and contributor to the Westminster Assembly's *Annotations on the Bible*, Cain 'was cast out from society with [his] kindred and acquaintance; from God's presence, and the communion of his Church, and pursued still with a guilty conscience'.¹⁵⁸ For a number of commentators, Cain was actually more a fugitive from his own conscience than a fugitive on earth.¹⁵⁹ Joseph Hall described the conscience as God's deputy. For Hall, the 'troubled conscience projecteth fearfull things', and Cain who 'feared not to kill his brother', now fears 'that whosoever meets him will kill him'. The consequence for Cain, of God's punishment, was that 'Cain finds that he killed himselfe more than his brother'. According to Hall, we 'should never sin, if our fore-sight were but as good as our sense; The issue of sin would appear a thousand times more horrible than the act is pleasant'.¹⁶⁰

But most commentators also noted that God mitigated Cain's punishment, when he cried out that it was greater than he could bear.¹⁶¹ God marked Cain and decreed a punishment for anyone that tried to kill him. A number of commentators addressed the question of why God did not punish Cain with death, and they came up with a variety of answers. According to Benjamin Needler, God prescribed earthly punishments for Cain, because 'wicked men are not so greatly feared with the punishments of the life to come, as careful to avoid calamities for the present, and indeed herein man *becomes like the beasts that perish*, which are carried with an hurry to things present, and sensible'.¹⁶² God also kept Cain alive for the propagation of mankind. He did not make an example of Cain, because due to 'the scarcity of persons then living... there was then less feare of doing hurt by example'.¹⁶³ For John Richardson, God 'would have [Cain] preserved alive, (though a life likely worse then death) as a monument of his justice against

¹⁵⁷ Haak, *Dutch Annotations*, Genesis IV.12.

¹⁵⁸ Richardson, *Choice Observations*, Genesis IV.12.

¹⁵⁹ See Trapp, *A Clavis to the Bible*, p. 50; Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 77; and Whateley, *Prototypes*, p. 23.

¹⁶⁰ Hall, *Contemplations*, pp. 780-1. See also Anon., *A Briefe Discourse of the Scriptures*, p. 18.

¹⁶¹ Andrew Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis and Exodus*, p. 50, thought the reason that Cain thought his punishment was greater than he could bear was because he feared that 'every man might have liberty to kill him'.

¹⁶² Needler, *Expository Notes*, p. 164.

¹⁶³ Needler, *Expository Notes*, pp. 171-2. See also Thaddeus, *The Reconciler of the Bible*, p. 9.

murder and fratricide... Not for love to Cain, but to prevent future murder'.¹⁶⁴ William Whateley noted that the law punishing murder with death was not yet in existence.¹⁶⁵ And Alexander Ross argued that God did not punish Cain with death for a number of reasons. 'Firstly, to shew that he abhorres murther: secondly, hee would have him to live long in feare and torment: thirdly, that by him being so long in torment and miserie, others might be warned to abhorre murther; fourthly that hee might have the longer time to repent his sinne'.¹⁶⁶ For many commentators, Cain's earthly punishment was far worse than death. For John Trapp it meant 'that he might every day be dying: having a hell in his conscience, and standing in fear of every man he met with'.¹⁶⁷

These interpretations contradicted Hobbes' claim that there was no common power with the ability to punish Cain. But interestingly, a number of commentators noted that God's punishment actually appeared to be a benefit, and this taught us a valuable lesson. According to William Whateley, God gave Cain health, children, and prosperity, in the hope that Cain could be drawn away from sin.¹⁶⁸ The lesson we learnt from Cain's benefits concerns 'the bounty of God which gives great outward benefits to the worst men, thereby assuring your selves that hee will provide well enough for you that are his owne people'.¹⁶⁹ For Andrew Willet, following Ambrose, we learnt

that we are not to measure Gods favour by the accidents of this life... Abel... *a just, innocent, devout man in his young yeares is taken away:* whereas wicked Cain liveth long, begetteth children, buildeth Cities: which is an evident demonstration of another life after this...¹⁷⁰

Similarly Joseph Hall asked, 'who dare measure God's love from outward events, when he sees wicked Cain standing over bleeding Abel, whose sacrifice was first accepted, and now himselfe is sacrificed?'.¹⁷¹ Quite simply, the account of Cain and Abel, like the account of *Job*, taught us that good men often suffered, while

¹⁶⁴ Richardson, *Choice Observations*, Genesis IV.15. See also Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis and Exodus*, p. 50; and Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 79.

¹⁶⁵ See Whateley, *Prototypes*, p. 22. Presumably Whateley was referring to the commandment 'thou shalt not kill'.

¹⁶⁶ Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 79. With his third and fourth reasons, Ross followed Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 301 & 307.

¹⁶⁷ Trapp, *A Clavis to the Bible*, p. 52.

¹⁶⁸ See Whateley, *Prototypes*, p. 22.

¹⁶⁹ Whateley, *Prototypes*, p. 26.

¹⁷⁰ Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis and Exodus*, p. 53.

evil men prospered, and that we could not question God's purposes in this. A number of commentators also noted that God's punishment did not change Cain's behaviour. For Heinrich Bullinger, Cain became 'more wicked, dealt altogether ungodly, set first his minde upon earthly things, thought to exalt his name upon earth, and builded the first citie... he begat sonnes and daughters, but little feare of God was before their eyes...'¹⁷² Similarly Andrew Willet, following Josephus, thought that 'Cain was not amended by this punishment, but waxed worse and worse, giving himselfe to rapine, robbery, oppression, deceit'.¹⁷³

Hobbes had argued that Cain would not have dared to kill Abel if there had been a common power with the ability to punish him. The scriptural interpretations outlined above suggest that Cain killed his brother, because he thought he could literally get away with murder. Cain thought that there was no power that could punish him, and in a sense his punishment, or rather the benefits he received, confirmed this. Hobbes' views indicate that he thought God's punishment of Cain, like God's punishment of Cain's parents, was simply not punishment enough. On Hobbes' account Cain's punishment could even be interpreted as a natural punishment - in Cain's case he suffered unbearable guilt after murdering his own brother. Cain's conscience might have accused him after the event, but it did not prevent him from killing Abel. Hobbes' view that individuals needed a common human power to fear, and that in the natural condition, although God was the greater power, the fear of men was usually the greater fear was confirmed by the account of Cain and Abel.¹⁷⁴ The fear of God did not prevent Cain from killing Abel, but after the fratricide, Cain feared that other men would kill him.¹⁷⁵

4. State of Nature as fallen condition?

Hobbes' contemporary critics cited the account of Cain's murder of Abel as evidence against Hobbes' description of the state of nature as a condition of war.

¹⁷¹ Hall, *Contemplations*, p. 780.

¹⁷² Bullinger, *Looke from Adam*, p. 25.

¹⁷³ Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis and Exodus*, p. 51.

¹⁷⁴ See *Leviathan*, XIV, 31, p. 88.

¹⁷⁵ This will be discussed in more detail in chapter five on the creation of society.

They appear to have agreed with Hobbes that Cain and Abel lived in the natural condition, or a condition before commonwealths came into existence.¹⁷⁶ But the critics thought that the scriptural account demonstrated that human beings did not have a right to hurt, kill, or invade others. God's immediate punishment of Cain proved that his right was confined by the law of nature. The account of Cain and Abel also demonstrated that there had been private property from the beginning.¹⁷⁷ Hobbes' critics thought that scripture, history and experience taught us that generally human beings were not barbarous, but loved and cared for one another, and this was especially true for members of families. Hobbes' description of the state of nature, as a condition of war, was quite simply dishonourable to God. The critics had also argued that Hobbes had only taken the passions into account, and had failed to consider reason. For these writers, natural reason was sufficient to control the passions, and prevent human beings from perpetrating wanton violence against others in the natural condition. Naturally equal individuals would realise that it was not reasonable to fight with one another, or to attempt to subdue one another. The fear of God, the laws of nature, and the individual conscience were all capable of maintaining peace in the natural condition.

And yet the interpretations of *Genesis* outlined above tend to prove Hobbes right, and his contemporary critics wrong, and in doing so have demonstrated that Hobbes' account of human nature was closer to orthodox Reformed views, than were the arguments of his contemporary critics. Having said that, there were some aspects of Hobbes' description which could have been seen as a subversion of scripture. Firstly, although his argument bore a superficial resemblance to the theory of the Two Cities, with his description of two types of human beings, and the quarrels between them, Hobbes failed to mention whether these human beings were good or bad men; or children of God or children of the devil. He also did not mention the devil as the cause of conflict between individuals. And although his readers could apply Hobbes' three causes of quarrel to Cain, it was also possible to apply them to Abel, and on the latter interpretation

¹⁷⁶ We have seen in previous chapters that the critics also understood the natural condition as Eden. Thus, they appear to have made no distinction between the pre-lapsarian and post-lapsarian conditions.

Abel was as responsible as Cain for the quarrel between them. This would also imply that it was not necessarily the case that Cain was an evil man, and Abel a good man. But we have also seen, that for protestant commentators it was not possible to tell good and bad men apart from their outward works. Only God could look into men's hearts and see their true intentions, and thus judge whether they were good or evil. Hobbes also shared this view, and in doing so subscribed to the central doctrine of protestantism, that is justification by faith, rather than works.

Secondly, according to scripture, Cain was Abel's superior by birth, thus denying Hobbes' argument for natural equality. And yet the account of Cain and Abel demonstrated that the privileges of nature were not really worth very much - Cain might have been the elder, but this did not make him the better man. For Hobbes' readers, Cain was a good example of why we could not say that one individual was naturally superior to another. Finally, and most importantly, the scriptural account also seemed to contradict Hobbes' argument that there was no common power with the ability to punish Cain. The fourth chapter of *Genesis* outlined God's immediate punishment of Cain. But Hobbes had never denied that God did not punish Cain immediately - he did not refer to this at all. Instead he simply stated that Cain would not have dared to kill Abel, if there had been a common power that could have punished him. On Hobbes' account, Cain did not recognise God's power over him, and thought he could literally get away with murder. Hobbes thought Cain killed Abel through envy, not because he believed Abel's death was necessary for his own preservation. His action was therefore a wrong against God and natural law, and God punished him immediately.¹⁷⁸

But for those of Hobbes' seventeenth century readers, who subscribed to the views of the protestant commentators outlined above, there were important parallels to be seen between Hobbes' account of the war of all against all, and the murder of Abel by Cain. The idea that Cain killed Abel through envy, after God had shown that he valued Abel's sacrifice more highly than his own, was in agreement with Hobbes' claims that human beings had a high opinion of themselves, hated to see similar qualities in others, and were capable of reacting

¹⁷⁷ I will return to this in chapter four on the right of nature.

¹⁷⁸ This will be discussed in more detail in chapter four on the right of nature.

violently if they felt undervalued by others. In fact Cain was a prime example of such an individual. Hobbes' argument that there was no common power with the ability to punish Cain also seems to be in agreement with the theory of the Two Cities. Cain as a child of the devil did not recognise God's power - he demonstrated this by his intention in sacrificing to God, and also by his action in killing Abel. Further, on Luther's interpretation, Cain showed that both his brother, and the laws of nature were of no concern to him, and also that he could kill his brother by right, as first-born. For Andrew Willet and William Whateley, Cain's words to God demonstrated that he did not recognise God's power. On these interpretations the example of Cain and Abel supported Hobbes' view that individuals had no obligations to each other, and did not recognise either the laws of nature, or a common power with the ability to punish them. This was also confirmed by the interpretations of God's punishment of Cain as a benefit, and those which noted that Cain's behaviour was not changed by his punishment. On Hobbes' account, Cain's punishment, i.e. a guilty conscience, was simply a natural consequence of his action. The fear of God's punishment, the laws of nature, and his own conscience were not enough to prevent Cain from killing his brother. Thus human beings needed a visible, human power to fear. For one commentator, Benjamin Needler, the scriptural account also implied that in killing his brother, Cain acted on his passions, against both reason and scripture, and yet Needler also thought that Cain acted with premeditation. On Hobbes' account, Cain could have been seen as an example of an individual who mistook his own passions for right reason, or for the reason of his action. Thus Cain killed his brother, according to his own natural reason. It seems, that Hobbes' war of all against all, was not that dissimilar to the interpretations of the fourth chapter of *Genesis* which I have outlined above.

Why then did Hobbes' critics cite Cain and Abel to disprove Hobbes' state of nature, or war of all against all? They did so in order to demonstrate that even in the fallen condition the laws of God and nature were obligatory. Thus, although in the fallen condition Cain murdered his brother, he did not have a right to do so, his right was confined by the law of nature, and his crime was punished immediately by God. Hobbes' critics believed that reason, the laws of nature, the conscience and the fear of God were sufficient to either prevent the majority of

men, in the natural condition, from perpetrating violence, or to punish them after the event. But as we have seen in this chapter, the account of Cain and Abel was interpreted in a rather different way by Reformed commentators. On these interpretations, the laws of nature, the conscience and the fear of God were insufficient to prevent Cain from killing his own brother. In doing so they tend to confirm Hobbes' account. Hobbes' use of the account of Cain and Abel indicates his own knowledge of scripture, and also that he could be read as being closer than his contemporary critics to the Reformed commentary tradition.

Hobbes' contemporary critics thought that human beings were sociable because of their potential for society, and that this was demonstrated by nature. But Hobbes thought that it was just as likely that nature demonstrated man's potential to be hostile. The account of Cain and Abel was an excellent example to use in support of this view. According to the theory of the Two Cities, beginning with Cain and Abel, there had come into existence two groups of people - the elect and the reprobate, who lived on earth mixed up together. It was not possible for human beings to distinguish between them from outward works. Only God could look into their hearts and see their intentions. Judging from outward works, both Cain and Abel appeared to be good men, because they both offered sacrifices to God. Similarly, if we examined Cain's life after the killing, and imagined having no knowledge of his crime, we might think that Cain was and had been a good man. After all, he was 'rewarded' with a family, long life, and a kingdom; while Abel was 'punished' with death. For protestant commentators, the account of Cain and Abel demonstrated that good men often suffered while evil men prospered.¹⁷⁹ It also demonstrated that God's will was beyond our understanding, and that his intentions and purposes were not made manifest in nature. As John Trapp put it, 'God most artificially still perfects both body and soul: but our sacred parents put all out of frame, and set every part in a contrary course to Gods will'.¹⁸⁰ Hobbes was loath to admit any reliance on authorities, but by citing the example of Cain and Abel, he indicated his own knowledge of Augustinian and Reformed interpretations of the scriptural account. For those of Hobbes' readers,

¹⁷⁹ Hobbes discussed this question in relation to the account of Job in *De Cive*, XV, 6, p. 174; and *Leviathan*, XXXI, 6, p. 236, and argued that God's power meant that he could have afflicted Job, regardless of whether Job had sinned, or not.

who also subscribed to these interpretations of *Genesis*, there were important parallels to be seen between Hobbes' state of war, and Cain's murder of Abel.

¹⁸⁰ Trapp, *A Clavis to the Bible*, p. 46.

Chapter Four: The Right and Law of Nature.

'And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die'. (Genesis II.16-17)

1. Hobbes and Natural Right.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Hobbes thought that the natural condition of human beings was a state of war. This was caused by disagreement over good and evil, natural equality, and natural unsociability, but it was also a result of the right of all men to all things.¹ Hobbes began his inquiry into natural justice with a theological assumption, namely that God had given the earth to human beings in common. In the Epistle Dedicatory of *De Cive* Hobbes informed his readers, that when he began to think about natural justice he was

alerted by the very name of justice (by which is meant a constant will to give every man his right) to ask first how it is that anyone ever spoke of something as his own rather than another's; and when it was clear that it did not originate in nature but in human agreement (for human beings have distributed what nature had placed in common), I was led from there to another question, namely for whose benefit and under what necessity, when all things belonged to all men, they preferred that each man should have things that belonged to himself alone. And I saw that war and every kind of calamity must necessarily follow from community in things, as men came into violent conflict over their use; a thing all seek by nature to avoid.

Hobbes went on to say that it was for this reason, that he obtained 'two absolutely certain postulates of human nature: one, the postulate of human greed, by which each man insists upon his own private use of common property; the other, the postulate of natural reason, by which each man strives to avoid violent death as the supreme evil in nature'.² Hobbes' description of the right of nature was a combination of these two postulates of human nature - passion and reason.

¹ See *De Cive*, I, 12, p. 29; and *Elements*, XIV, 11, p. 80. In *Leviathan* Hobbes at one point argued that the right of all was a consequence of the war of all, and at another point changed his mind and claimed that the right to all caused the war of all - see *Leviathan*, XIII, p. 78 & XVIII, 10, p. 114. Two of Hobbes' contemporaries noticed this change - see Cumberland, *A Treatise*, p. 83; and Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 317.

² *De Cive*, Ep. Ded., 9-10, pp. 5-6.

In *Leviathan* Hobbes claimed that previous authors had confused right with law, so he set out exact definitions of both terms. The right of nature was defined as:

the liberty each man hath to use his own power, as he will himself, for the preservation of his own nature, that is to say, of his own life, and consequently of doing anything which, in his own judgement and reason, he shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto... RIGHT consisteth in liberty to do or to forbear.

Hobbes defined liberty as 'the absence of external impediments'; and went on to say that although these external impediments could remove part of an individual's power to do what he liked, they could not stop him from using any power he had left, depending on what his own judgement and reason dictated to him.³ In other words, the right of nature was the liberty to do, or not to do, any action which an individual judged to be conducive to his own preservation. How much liberty an individual had, depended on how many external impediments were present. The right of nature was a right for an individual to act on his own reason, with the aim of preserving his life. For Hobbes, right was to law, as liberty was to obligation.⁴ Hobbes stressed that right was not created by law, but a natural liberty left by the law - right covered the area of human existence where law did not reach.⁵ Laws 'are those restraints by which we agree mutually to abridge one another's liberty', and the laws of God and nature allowed individuals a greater liberty than that allowed by civil law.⁶ Presumably because in the state of nature, the laws of nature only obliged the conscience.⁷

The right of nature allowed an individual to preserve his life, by whatever means seemed necessary to him. By definition, this meant that the right of nature involved the individual in the private judgement of good and evil. In the state of

³ *Leviathan*, XIV, 1-3, p. 79.

⁴ See *Leviathan*, XIV, 3, p. 80. In *De Cive*, VII, 18, p. 101, Hobbes claimed that 'the state of nature has the same relation to the civil state, i.e., liberty has the same relation to subjection, as desire has to reason or a beast to a Man'.

⁵ See *Elements*, XXIX, 5, p. 179; and *De Cive*, XIV, 3, p. 156.

⁶ *Elements*, XXIX, 5, p. 179. But civil law and natural law contain one another - see *Leviathan*, XXVI, 8, p. 174. On Hobbes' discussion of liberty in response to classical republican theories, see Quentin Skinner, 'Thomas Hobbes on the Proper Signification of Liberty', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (1990), pp. 121-51. On p. 130, Skinner notes that the laws of nature do not restrict our liberty.

⁷ In the state of nature, where the laws of nature only obliged conscience (judgement), the laws of nature were not a great enough impediment to an individual's liberty. This will be discussed in further detail below in the section on the laws of nature.

nature every man, by right of nature, could do whatever he liked to whomever he liked. He could possess, use and enjoy anything, even another's body.⁸ Nature made men desire what was good for them, and avoid what was evil. Death, and the pain that accompanied it, was the greatest enemy of nature, so it was not against reason for an individual to do everything he could to preserve himself. That 'which is not against reason, men call RIGHT'.⁹ Thus it was a right of nature for men to preserve their lives. A right to an end also entailed a right to the means to that end. Therefore it was also a right that men preserve themselves by whatever means necessary, and further that they were sole judges of both the prospective danger, and the means to avoid it.¹⁰ Every thing a man willed must, according to his own judgement, be good for him, and his own preservation must be the end he desired. Therefore, 'every man by nature hath right to all things', and right and profit were the same thing.¹¹ But Hobbes stressed that this only applied to men in the purely natural state. Here nothing done against any man was wrong, although it was possible 'to sin against God, or to violate the Natural laws... if [an individual] claims that something contributes to his self-preservation, but does not believe that it does so'.¹²

According to Hobbes, 'natural right does not accept that anything that arises from the need for self-preservation is a vice'.¹³ In the state of nature, every individual had a right to preserve himself by any means, which he himself judged necessary. This meant that in 'the judgement of the person actually doing it, what was done was rightly done, even if it was a wrong, and so was rightly done'.¹⁴ How could a wrong be rightly done? There were wrongs in the state of nature, but they were not wrong if, according to the judgement of the individual, their aim was his own preservation, and in this case they were wrongs rightly done. Hobbes used the example of a son who killed his father - this killing would not be a wrong against his father if, in the son's judgement, the death of his father would

⁸ See *Elements*, XIV, 10, p. 79; *Leviathan*, XIV, 4, p. 80; and *De Cive*, I, 10, p. 28.

⁹ *Elements*, XIV, 6, p. 79.

¹⁰ See *Elements*, XIV, 6-9, pp. 78-9. See also *De Cive*, I, 7-9, pp. 27-8. The corresponding paragraph is in chapter XIV of *Leviathan* - 'Of the First and Second Natural Laws and of Contracts'.

¹¹ *Elements*, XIV, 10, pp. 79-80. Also see *De Cive*, I, 10, p. 28.

¹² *De Cive*, footnote to I, 10, pp. 28-9.

¹³ *De Cive*, Ep. Ded. p. 4.

¹⁴ *De Cive*, footnote to I, 10, pp. 28-9.

contribute to the son's preservation. In this case it would be a wrong, rightly done. But, if the son killed his father, and did not believe that in doing so it would aid his own preservation, but killed for some other reason, then this was a wrong against God and natural law. Hobbes thought that natural punishments followed breaches of natural law.¹⁵ In this case the son would find out just how necessary his father was for his own preservation, and thus whether the killing of his father was really right. The natural punishment of such an action might be the son's own death, or unbearable guilt.

As we have seen, Hobbes thought that in the natural condition individuals were judged according to their intentions, not their actions,¹⁶ and only God could judge those intentions.¹⁷ According to Hobbes, when justice and injustice were attributed to individuals, 'they signify proneness and affection, and inclination of nature, that is to say, passions of the mind apt to produce just and unjust actions'.¹⁸ This meant that we could call a man just, not because of his action, but because of his 'aptitude to do such action'. As a result, a man could be called just, even if he had committed an unjust action; and a man could be called unjust, even if he had committed just actions. Both types of men hated to sin, but for different reasons. The unjust man, who abstained from injuries, 'declareth plainly that the justice of his actions dependeth on civil constitution, from whence punishments proceed; which otherwise in the estate of nature be unjust, according to the fountain from whence they proceed'.¹⁹ An individual 'is to be called just, who does just things because the law so instructs, and unjust things only because of weakness'. The just or righteous man 'delights in doing justice'. The unjust or unrighteous man 'does just things because of the penalty attached to the law, and unjust things from the wickedness of his heart'. He disregards justice, or thinks that 'the measure of it is present advantage, not a man's agreement'.²⁰ Hobbes thought that in the natural condition 'nothing can be unjust'. Right and wrong,

¹⁵ See *Leviathan*, XXVIII, 8, pp. 204-5; and XXXI, 40, p. 243.

¹⁶ See *De Cive*, III, 27, p. 54; and *Leviathan*, XXVII, 3, p. 191.

¹⁷ See for example *Leviathan*, XXX, 30, p. 233 & XL11, 79, p. 373.

¹⁸ *Elements*, XVI, 4, p. 89. David Boonin-Vail, *Thomas Hobbes and the Science of Moral Virtue* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994), pp. 109 & 144, has argued that Hobbes' moral philosophy was intended to demonstrate what made just people, rather than what made just actions.

¹⁹ *Elements*, XVI, 4, p. 89.

justice and injustice 'are qualities which relate to men in society, not in solitude'.²¹ In the state of nature, or outside the commonwealth, where there was no law, it was ridiculous to talk about just and unjust actions. In a condition where individuals were judged by their intentions, who could say whether a particular action was right or wrong, except the individual concerned, and God? For Hobbes, it was in civil society that human beings had decided that it was wrong to kill others, and also under what particular circumstances.

The right of nature also gave a right of temporary and insecure dominion, if again an individual judged it necessary to his own preservation. In *Leviathan* Hobbes stressed that the state of nature was a state of equality, and that there was no dominion of persons before civil government.²² Because everyone had a right to everything in the state of nature, it was not possible to invade someone else's right, because where all had a right, it was as if no one had a right.²³ But although all adults were to be accounted equal in the natural condition, if an individual could achieve power over another, he should be allowed it.²⁴ In the *Elements* and *De Cive* Hobbes explained this in the following way. Because the right of self-preservation proceeded from danger, and danger proceeded from equality, individuals might think it best to destroy equality before the danger arrived. If an individual in the state of nature had managed to get another into his power, either because the other was a child, or because he was weaker, then it was in his interest to make sure that this 'subdued person' did not become an enemy in the future.²⁵

The right of nature, or the right of all to all, also meant that there was no permanent, private property in the state of nature, 'no mine and thine distinct, but only that to be every man's that he can get, and for so long as he can keep it'.²⁶ The right of nature, or the right of self-preservation, whereby each individual was his own judge of the means to his own preservation, was a right of all to all. But

²⁰ *De Cive*, III, 5, p. 46. See also *Leviathan* XV, 10, p. 93, where Hobbes noted that just and unjust men were often referred to as righteous and unrighteous.

²¹ *Leviathan*, XIII, 13, p. 78.

²² See *Leviathan*, XIII, 1, p. 74; and XVI, 10, p. 103. Hobbes' views on natural equality have been discussed in chapter two, where it was also noted that the desire for dominion was natural.

²³ See *De Cive*, XIV, 9, p. 158.

²⁴ See *Leviathan*, XIII, 4, p. 75; *De Cive*, I, 14, pp. 30-1; and *Elements*, XIV, 13, pp. 80-1.

²⁵ *De Cive*, I, 14, p. 31. See also *Elements*, XIV, 13, pp. 80-1.

this right of all men to all things was useless, because if all had it, then it was as if there was no right at all. I could say this is mine, but you would have an equal right to it, so neither of us could enjoy it.²⁷ Where each individual was his own judge, there was no judge; and where each individual 'carveth out his own right, it hath the same effect, as if there were no right at all'.²⁸ For Hobbes, when two individuals desired the same thing, which could not be divided, the result was a battle to decide who would have it. One man invaded with right, and the other resisted with right, and the result was perpetual war.²⁹ The consequence of the right of all to all was that the natural state of men, 'before they came together into society was... a war of every man against every man'.³⁰

To summarise Hobbes' right of nature, it was a right which all individuals had, and in the natural condition it was a right to all. But because all had this right to all, it was actually useless - where all had a right it was as if no one had a right. It was a right which allowed one human being to dominate another, if that human being considered it necessary for his own preservation. It was a right for one human being to kill another, in order to preserve his own life. It was a right, which meant that there could be no wrong in the state of nature - everything an individual did, in the state of nature, with the intention of preserving his life was rightly done. It was a right which had to be given up in order to create a commonwealth, and yet human beings could not give up that part of it which related to self-defence.³¹

2. The Contemporary Reaction.

Hobbes' contemporary critics found his description of the right of nature particularly objectionable for a number of reasons. Firstly, for these writers the sole end of the right of nature was not self-preservation. As Richard Cumberland

²⁶ *Leviathan*, XIII, 13, p. 78. See also *Leviathan*, XVI, 10, p. 103, for no dominion of persons before civil society.

²⁷ See *De Cive*, I, 11, p. 29.

²⁸ *Elements*, XVII, 6, p. 95.

²⁹ See *De Cive*, I, 12, p. 29; *Elements*, XIV, 11, p. 80; and *Leviathan*, XIII, 3, p. 75.

³⁰ *De Cive*, I, 12, p. 29. See also *Elements*, XIV, 11, p. 80; and *Leviathan*, XIII, 8, p. 76, which has 'during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe'.

put it, the preservation of an individual's life was not the most important thing because 'Life it self is to be parted with for a *greater good*, such as the *Salvation of a Man's Soul*, the *Glory of God*, and the *common Good of Men*. These are not to be given up, altho it were necessary to the Preservation of Life'.³² For James Tyrrell, 'the bare preservation of... Life and Members, as the only end of living... may be enjoyed by those who are really very miserable...'³³ William Lucy agreed with Hobbes that the right of nature included a right of self-preservation, but Lucy thought that 'the life of man is not the principall thing of mans happiness...', because the end of man was to glorify God.³⁴ Hobbes' argument that because preserving our life was not against reason, this made it a right, was false.³⁵ Experience demonstrated that 'many men throw and take away their owne lives...', and it was not the case that death brought with it the loss of all power, and the greatest bodily pain.³⁶

Although Hobbes' contemporary critics might have agreed that at least part of the right of nature included the right of self-preservation, they did not agree that this gave all a right to all. James Tyrrell thought that a right to all was unnecessary for the preservation of life, 'since such an unlimited Right, or rather Licence, can be so far from conducing to any man's preservation, that if any men should ever have gone about to put it in practice, it would have long since produced not only their own destruction, but that of all Mankind'.³⁷ For John Whitehall, Hobbes' right of all to all meant that:

a Man may by nature do that to another that he would not have another do to him. He may take his Neighbours goods or life by deceit or violence, though he would not have an other take his; for would any Man have an other take his goods or life by fraud or violence? Tis impossible to humane nature to suppose it.

It also meant that '*Cain's* killing *Abel* was lawful; and that *Oliver's* Army might in the Year 1651 take all the propriety of the people of *England*, as they had taken

³¹ Hobbes' views on laying down rights will be discussed below in the section on the laws of nature. The transfer of rights from mothers to fathers will be discussed in the final chapter on the creation of society.

³² Cumberland, *A Treatise*, p. 77.

³³ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 279.

³⁴ Lucy, *Observations 1657*, pp. 138, 195 & 142-3.

³⁵ See Lucy, *Observations 1657*, p. 160.

³⁶ Lucy, *Observations 1657*, pp. 140, 144 & 147.

³⁷ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 280-1.

the King's...' ³⁸ John Shafte agreed with Hobbes, that human beings in the state of nature had a right to everything, but according to Shafte if there were competitors, then the right was to 'a just and equal portion of it'. It was from this equality that, Shafte thought, we could deduce the rules for living in the state of nature. ³⁹ For Sir Robert Filmer, Hobbes actually contradicted himself by arguing that human beings had a right to all, even to one another's bodies, and at the same time claiming that originally fathers were sovereigns, with the power of life and death over their children. ⁴⁰

The right of nature, that is the right of self-preservation, did not give human beings a right to invade, hurt or kill others. As John Shafte put it, 'what rational man will pretend, that because he hath a right and liberty granted him by God or Nature, to preserve his own life, or another mans, will conclude, that hereby is intended to him a Grant of a Right and Liberty to destroy himself or another?' ⁴¹ William Lucy again agreed with Hobbes that a right to the end (i.e. self-preservation) also entailed a right to the means to that end, but 'though a man have right to his body or life, yet hee hath no right to preserve it by unlawfull actions...' Neither was 'this right... of such a transcendent power', that he should kill other human beings in the pursuit of his own preservation. ⁴² According to Lucy, the right of nature, given by God at the creation, did not give men a right over other men, only over those creatures specified. All right that any man had must either come from nature as a parent, or from a covenant. ⁴³ Lucy also agreed with Hobbes that an individual could use his own strength, for his own

³⁸ Whitehall, *The Leviathan Found Out*, p. 37. We have seen in chapter three, on the war of all against all, that God's punishment, which actually appeared as a benefit, could be understood to suggest that Cain's murder of his brother was not necessarily unlawful.

³⁹ Shafte, *The Great Law of Nature*, p. 13.

⁴⁰ See Filmer, *Observations*, p. 187. On Filmer see: Peter Laslett, 'Sir Robert Filmer: The Man versus the Whig Myth', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 5 (1948), pp. 523-46; and Laslett, 'The Gentry of Kent in 1640', *The Cambridge Historical Journal*, 9 (1948), pp. 148-64. On Filmer's political thought see: J.W. Allen, 'Sir Robert Filmer', in *The Social and Political Ideas of some English Thinkers of the Augustan Age, A.D. 1650-1750*, edited by F.J.C. Hearnshaw (George C. Harrap & Co Ltd, London, 1928), pp. 27-46; James Daly, *Sir Robert Filmer and English Political Thought* (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1979); R.W.K. Hinton, 'Husbands, Fathers and Conquerors', *Political Studies*, 15 (1967), pp. 291-300; Schochet, *Patriarchalism in Political Thought*; J.P. Sommerville, 'From Suarez to Filmer: A Reappraisal', *Historical Journal*, 25 (1982), pp. 525-40; and *Politics and Ideology in England 1603-1640* (Longman Group Ltd, Harlow, Essex, 1986), chapter 1.

⁴¹ Shafte, *The Great Law of Nature*, p. 4.

⁴² Lucy, *Observations 1657*, pp. 163-4.

preservation, but 'when some greater good shall be proposed to him of the good of his family, his Nation, the glory of God in his vertuous death, then this life is to be neglected and contemned, as a limb is to be lost rather than a life, the lesse good rather than the greater, so a private life rather than that of a Nation'.⁴⁴

Hobbes' contemporary critics were particularly worried by the distinction he made between right and law, which implied to them that right conflicted with law.⁴⁵ For William Lucy, 'there is no right to anything but by law'.⁴⁶ Human beings could not have a right of nature, unless that right had been permitted by the law of nature, which was given at the creation. The right of nature was the authority granted by that law to use or do anything, as described in *Genesis* I.28-9.⁴⁷ But this right of nature was not to be used by human beings as they pleased, and Lucy cited the example of Cain and Abel as evidence of this. According to Lucy,

Cain and Abell brought Oblations to GOD of those things over which they had a most peculiar dominion, they pay'd God as it were a tribute out of those things hee gave them a right to by that law of nature which he gave them at their creation, from whence it appeares that man hath not such right to any thing, much lesse to all things to doe what he pleaseth with or to them, for then they had had no right to have neglected that duty of Oblation, and then they could have done nothing by which God should have put a difference betwixt Cain and his Oblation and Abell and his Oblation as he did.⁴⁸

It was the law of nature which created and confined right. According to William Lucy, 'where there is no positive law of God's or mans prohibiting them, only the law of nature is of force to restraine mens actions and to give right to every thing; and without doubt God can be displeas'd with nothing that is right...'⁴⁹ Lucy cited the nineteenth chapter of *Genesis*, which described the Sodomites, who attempted 'an unjust act against two strangers'. He asked the question, if they acted by right, why was God so angry with them that he burnt down the city? According to Lucy, 'Mr. *Hobs* would have told [God] there is no

⁴³ See Lucy, *Observations 1657*, pp. 176-7. In *De Cive*, XV, 5, p. 173, Hobbes himself had argued that 'all right over others is either from Nature or Agreement'.

⁴⁴ Lucy, *Observations 1657*, pp. 168-9.

⁴⁵ For example see Coke, *A Survey of the Politicks*, To the Reader & p. 31.

⁴⁶ Lucy, *Observations 1657*, p. 172.

⁴⁷ See Lucy, *Observations 1657*, p. 174.

⁴⁸ Lucy, *Observations 1657*, pp. 175-6.

positive law forbidding it and that lust given all things to all men by Nature, and it is lawful for any man to doe any thing to any man'.⁵⁰ Lucy also used the example of Cain and Abel, and argued that if Hobbes had been Cain when God questioned him, he 'would have told God thou hast given him to me and I had a right to doe what I would with him, by thy Commission... and now I have taken him away by that naturall right which thou hast given men'. As far as Lucy was concerned, Hobbes had 'out Cained *Cain* himself in his justification of these horrid acts by his Principles'.⁵¹ God's punishment of these two acts demonstrated that the '*Sodomites* and *Cain* had transgressed some Law (which could be none but the law of Nature), it must needs shew that these men had no right to doe what they would with any thing that is with other persons, but had their right confined in many acts by the law of nature...'⁵²

For many of these writers, right without law was actually useless. According to John Whitehall, there was 'nothing... more apparent, that Right is worth nothing, except there be Law to recover it, and therefore they must get together; and in having of Law to recover Men's rights, lies the grand foundation of peace, which is the greatest worldly happiness of mankind; and so are clearly consistent in the same matter'.⁵³ James Tyrrell noted that Hobbes himself admitted that this right to all was of no use, because all individuals possessed it.⁵⁴ According to Tyrrell, the right of nature did not conflict with the law of nature, and thus it was possible to commit a wrong against another person in the state of nature. If the right of nature gave one individual a right to something, then another individual could not take it away, without committing a wrong against that person.⁵⁵

The right of nature was a right permitted by the law of nature. Thus, it did not give an individual the right to judge what conduced to his own preservation,

⁴⁹ Lucy, *Observations 1657*, p. 180.

⁵⁰ Lucy, *Observations 1657*, pp. 181-2

⁵¹ Lucy, *Observations 1657*, pp. 182-3.

⁵² Lucy, *Observations 1657*, p. 183.

⁵³ Whitehall, *The Leviathan Found Out*, p. 40.

⁵⁴ See Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 296.

⁵⁵ See Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 294 & 298. Although Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 300, also noted that Hobbes thought it was possible to injure another out of civil government - the case of a son who killed his father, but did not believe that his action was necessary for his own preservation. For Hobbes this was a wrong against God and natural law, but not against the person concerned.

as the laws of nature guided human judgement in this matter. For James Tyrrell, if this was not the case, then a man 'may give a false Sentence, and suppose those things to be necessary for his preservation which really are not...' In a state of nature, 'a man's own judgment can confer no Right upon him, when he quits the only true Rules of his Judgment, which in this State can only be the Laws of Nature, or right Reason, and the nature of things, and Mankind, from whence only they are drawn'.⁵⁶ William Lucy agreed with Hobbes that each individual was his own judge in the state of nature, but like Tyrrell, Lucy thought that judgement should be guided by the laws of nature.⁵⁷ For Sir Robert Filmer, the right of nature prescribed for 'every man to live in peace... so he may tend to the preservation of his life'. If, as Hobbes claimed, by right of nature an individual was at liberty to do whatever he thought necessary for his own preservation, 'then in the first place nature must teach him that life is to be preserved'. This meant that the right of nature and the law of nature should be the same thing.⁵⁸

Hobbes' views on the right of all to all were quite simply an insult to God; and they also reduced human beings to the level of animals. As Clarendon put it,

Nor can anything be said more contrary to the Honor and Dignity of God Almighty, then that he should leave his master workmanship, Man, in a condition of War of every man against every man, in such a condition of confusion, *That Every man hath a right to every thing, even to one anothers body*; inclin'd to all the malice, force and fraud that may promote his profit or his pleasure, and without any notions of, or instinct towards justice, honor, or good nature, which only makes man-kind superior to the Beasts of the Wilderness.⁵⁹

Similarly for Sir Robert Filmer, Hobbes' right of nature implied that God created human beings 'in a condition worse than any beasts, as if he made men to no other end by nature but to destroy one another', or even eat one another. Filmer admitted that if resources had been scarce, then lack of food might have been a cause of men fighting each other, but 'God was no such niggard in the creation', and as a result there was plenty to go around, and no need for human beings to fight each other.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 284-5. See also Cumberland, *A Treatise*, p. 77.

⁵⁷ See Lucy, *Observations 1657*, pp. 165-6.

⁵⁸ Filmer, *Observations*, pp. 188-9.

⁵⁹ Clarendon, *A Brief View and Survey*, pp. 195-6.

⁶⁰ Filmer, *Observations*, p. 188.

Hobbes' description of the right of nature was thought to contradict the scriptural account, which demonstrated that there never was such a condition, where all had a right to all, because God made Adam a universal monarch, and this included giving him property rights.⁶¹ According to Sir Robert Filmer, God created Adam and Eve and gave Adam dominion over Eve, and their children; as well as over the whole earth, and all creatures on it. While Adam was alive, this meant that no one could have a right to anything, except with Adam's permission.⁶² Richard Cumberland thought that Hobbes' right of all to all could not be proved from, 'an original holding all things in common'. Cumberland cited John Selden, who had proved from *Genesis* I.28 that "private Dominion was a most acknowledg'd Right from the days of Adam," as you may see in his *Mare Clausum*, I. 8. c. 4...⁶³ Further, *Genesis* did not tell us,

"That Adam and Eve had such a Right to all things, as made it lawful for them" (if they had thro' a mistake imagined it conducive to their own Preservation,) "to wage War with GOD, and with one another, without the Provocation of Injury: and so mutually deprive one another of Food and Life." On the contrary, there are *Intimations*, That they knew, and acknowledged, the obligation of all those things, that were then requisite to the common Good of the KINGDOM OF GOD in its yet infant-state." The Exercise of the divine Dominion in giving Laws, and the Derivation of human Property from the Gift of God both there spoken of, oblige us to acknowledge such a Division of Property, as we have affirmed to be necessary. Nay, without violating the Donation of God, neither of our first Parents could rob the other of the Necessities of Life, much less of Life it self.⁶⁴

On the other hand, William Lucy agreed that nature had given all things to all men, and cited the same verse - *Genesis* I.28. Lucy claimed that this 'guift was made by the law of nature at the first Creation', and that God re-gave this gift to Noah after the flood, and then this right was given in common to Noah's sons.⁶⁵

To summarise, Hobbes' contemporary critics agreed that at least part of the right of nature was a right of self-preservation, although they also thought that

⁶¹ See Coke, *A Survey of the Politicks*, p. 26.

⁶² See Filmer, *Observations*, p. 188. See also Coke, *Elements*, pp. 34-5, for Cain and Abel holding property given to them by Adam, as monarch of the world.

⁶³ Cumberland, *A Treatise*, p. 80. Gordon Schochet has noted that Selden thought that Adam had dominion over the world, but he also implied there had been common property - see Schochet, *Patriarchalism in Political Thought*, p. 97.

⁶⁴ Cumberland, *A Treatise*, p. 33.

⁶⁵ Lucy, *Observations 1657*, pp. 184, 185 & 187.

human beings should give up their lives for a greater good, such as their salvation. But they disagreed with Hobbes that the right of nature, or the right of self-preservation, meant that all had a right to all, because this was simply not necessary, and was likely to lead to destruction. The right to all could only mean a right to a fair and equal portion. The scriptural account proved that there had never been such a right of all to all, or an original common ownership. The critics also disagreed with Hobbes' claim that the right of nature gave one individual a right over another, a right to kill another, or to commit unlawful actions. Finally and most importantly, they disagreed with Hobbes' argument that, by right of nature, each man was his own judge in the state of nature, and the implication that the right of nature conflicted with the law of nature. This could not be the case, because the laws of nature were given by God at the creation, and the right of nature was a right prescribed by those laws, which in turn should guide men's judgement.

But in many ways Hobbes would not have disagreed with some of these views. Hobbes wanted to find out how and why individual human beings came to call things their own. In other words, how and why the community of things was distributed amongst individuals. Hobbes wanted to show that it was human beings alone that had distributed property amongst themselves. Thus, rights over property, women, and children in civil society were all artificial. Hobbes would have agreed with James Tyrrell that if the right of all to all had ever been practised by human beings, it would have resulted in their destruction. This was exactly Hobbes' point. This is why human beings gave up their absolute liberty and distributed the community of things. Hobbes would also have agreed with Tyrrell's comment that, the individual judgement involved in, the exercise of the right of nature might lead some human beings to take courses of action, which were not really necessary for their own preservation. But Hobbes' point was that where there was no common judge, as in the state of nature, there was also no one to judge what was, or was not, necessary for an individual's preservation, except God and the individual concerned. In a condition where private appetite was the measure of good and evil, and each individual was his own judge, a condition which lacked government, or a common power recognised by all living there, who could say whether an individual's action was lawful or not? Who decided

what was a fair and equal portion? And who decided that a right to all was, or was not, necessary for an individual's ability to preserve himself? Hobbes' answer was that each individual decided for himself, and the result was conflict. This is why human beings created the commonwealth, and replaced many private judgements with one public judgement. Finally, Hobbes would also have agreed with John Whitehall that right without law was useless. The right to all, or the absolute liberty of the state of nature, was no liberty at all. True liberty could only be had with obligation, in other words in the commonwealth, under civil law.

The main area for disagreement between Hobbes and his contemporary critics over his discussion of the right of nature was the definition of the term 'right'. For Hobbes, right was a liberty from law, although laws restricted the scope of rights. The right of nature was a liberty for an individual to act on his own reason, to do that which he judged necessary for preservation. Noel Malcolm has equated Hobbes' right of nature, with what the American jurist Hohfeld has described as a 'privilege right', which does not involve any duty on the part of others to help one individual to exercise his right. Hobbes' natural rights did not come with corresponding duties on the part of other individuals. This is in contrast to Hohfeld's definition of a 'claim right', which involves a duty on the part of other individuals not to interfere with the exercise of one individual's right.⁶⁶ For Hobbes' contemporary critics, rights were created by law, and involved acting in accordance with law. The right of nature was thus a right for an individual to act in accordance with the law of nature, and natural rights came with corresponding duties. The critics' views on natural rights suggest they fall into Hohfeld's category of 'claim rights'. Hobbes stated that previous authors had confused right with law - his contemporary critics appear to have been an example of those authors he had referred to. Hobbes had also claimed that *Leviathan* was a defence of God's laws, against claims that the civil war in England was commanded by God?⁶⁷ Hobbes' definition of right as liberty from law was designed to deny the argument that the laws of God, or nature, had given Englishmen a right to disobey their king. Because right was liberty from law, it could not have been the case that God's laws, or the laws of nature, had permitted

⁶⁶ See Malcolm, *Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology*, pp. 174-6.

⁶⁷ See *Hobbes' Prose Autobiography*, p. 4.

disobedience. Instead Charles I's subjects had disobeyed him by taking a liberty for themselves.

3. Hobbes and Natural Law.

As we have seen, Hobbes' contemporary critics thought that his description of the right of nature implied that right conflicted with law. In the *Elements* and *De Cive* Hobbes accused previous authors of using the term 'natural law', without defining it.⁶⁸ Hobbes equated the law of nature with right reason, and he defined right reason 'in men's natural state', not as 'an infallible Faculty, but the act of reasoning, that is, a man's own true Reasoning about actions of his which may conduce to his advantage or other men's loss'.⁶⁹ It was reason, rather than passion, because men's passions differed, whereas reason 'is the same in all men, because all men agree in the will to be directed and governed in the way to that which they desire to attain, namely their own good, which is the work of reason'.⁷⁰ A law of nature was defined as 'a precept or general rule, found out by reason, by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life or taketh away the means of preserving the same, and to omit that by which he thinketh it may be best preserved... LAW determineth and bindeth to one of them'.⁷¹ The law of nature was a rule found out by reason, whose specific aim was the preservation of an individual. The law of nature forbade individuals to carry out actions, the consequence of which would be the destruction of their lives, or the consequence of which would be relinquishing the means to preserve their lives. Law, according to Hobbes, 'was brought into the world for nothing else but to limit the natural liberty of particular men, in such manner as they might not hurt, but assist one another, and join together against a common enemy'.⁷² For Hobbes, right was a liberty for individuals to act on their own

⁶⁸ See *De Cive*, II, 1. p. 33; and *Elements*, XV, 1, p. 82.

⁶⁹ *De Cive*, II, 1. p. 33. This was a change from *Elements*, XV, 1, p. 82, where it was simply equated with reason, rather than right reason; and also *Leviathan*, XIV, 3, p. 79, where it was 'found out by reason'.

⁷⁰ *Elements*, XV, 1, p. 82.

⁷¹ *Leviathan*, XIV, 1 - 3, p. 79.

⁷² *Leviathan*, XXVI, 8, p. 175.

natural reason. The laws of nature limited the scope of natural rights (or liberties) in the natural condition, and led individuals to come together into society.

The first law of nature, and the foundation of all others, was 'to seek peace when it can be had; when it cannot, to look for aid in war'.⁷³ The first part of this rule (to seek peace) was the fundamental law of nature, and this was an obligation for an individual to use his own power, to act in accordance with what, in his own judgement, would further his preservation, i.e. peace. The second part (to look for help in war) was 'the sum of the right of nature, which is by all means we can, to defend ourselves', and this was a liberty for an individual to use his own power, to act in accordance with what, in his own judgement, would further his preservation, i.e. defence. All other laws of nature were derived from this fundamental law, 'by which men are commanded to endeavour peace'.⁷⁴ The first law of nature, derived from the fundamental law, was that 'every man divest himself of the right he hath to all things by nature'.⁷⁵ When human beings retained the right to all things, and to each other's persons, then war was the result, and war was against the law of nature, 'the sum whereof consisteth in making peace'.⁷⁶ This seemed immediately to cancel out the second part of the fundamental law, for an individual must give up his liberty (or at least some of it), to use his own power to act in accordance with what he judged to be conducive to his own preservation. But there was an important qualification, which Hobbes did not add immediately in the *Elements* or *De Cive*, but did add immediately in *Leviathan*. That qualification was that the law of nature, which obliged individuals to lay down rights, only did so if others were willing to do the same. According to Hobbes, this laying down of rights when others did the same, was also the law of the Gospel: 'whatsoever you require that others should do to you, that do ye to them'.⁷⁷ But as Edwin Curley has pointed out, although both Luther and Aquinas thought that the law of nature prescribed the Golden Rule, Hobbes used it out of context, because when it was used in the Bible, for example *Luke*

⁷³ *De Cive*, II, 2, p. 34. See also *Elements*, XV, 1, p. 82, for the same argument in a slightly different presentation.

⁷⁴ *Leviathan*, XIV, 4-5, p. 80.

⁷⁵ *Elements*, XV, 2, p. 82; and see also *De Cive*, II, 3, p. 34, where this was described as the first law of nature. But in *Leviathan*, XIV, 5, p. 80, it became the second law of nature.

⁷⁶ *Elements*, XV, 2, p. 82. But see also *Elements*, XVII, 15, p. 99, where the sum of the law of nature 'is to be sociable with them that will be sociable, and formidable to them that will not'.

6:27-31, it was a command to love our enemies and be good to them. Hobbes' condition that others must also be willing to lay down their rights was not present in the Biblical account.⁷⁸

It was a law of nature that every man should be willing to lay down his rights, when others were willing to do the same. This was achieved through a contract or covenant, but this was of no use, unless it was also a law of nature that 'every man is obliged to stand to, and perform, those covenants which he maketh'.⁷⁹ In *De Cive* this was described as keeping faith, and Hobbes stressed that we must keep faith with everyone we made agreements with, regardless of whether they kept faith with others, or did not believe in keeping faith.⁸⁰ This statement qualifies Edwin Curley's objection, and puts Hobbes in agreement with the Biblical application of the Golden Rule. Hobbes went on to say that without this law of nature, agreements would be pointless, and we would in fact contradict ourselves, if we made an agreement, and then did not believe we were obliged to keep it. We should either make agreements and keep to them, or not make agreements at all. This law of nature, to keep agreements even when others did not, seems to contradict Hobbes' earlier statement that individuals only gave up rights, when others were willing to do the same. And yet it does not contradict the earlier statement, if we understand that when Hobbes said that other men must be willing to do the same, he did not mean that individuals actually had to perform the action of laying down rights, but that they must have the intention to lay down rights. The problem was how did one individual know another individual's intention, except by their actions? According to Hobbes, we could know 'the thoughts and passions of other men', by knowing our own in similar circumstances.⁸¹ Also, Hobbes probably imagined a situation in which individuals simultaneously laid down rights, and created a sovereign power to enforce the terms of their covenant. This would create a condition of security, in which individuals could feel reasonably certain that others would also give up their right to all.

⁷⁷ *Leviathan*, XIV, 5, p. 80.

⁷⁸ See Curley's footnote 6 to *Leviathan*, XIV, 5, pp. 80-1.

⁷⁹ *Elements*, XVI, 1, p. 88. See also *De Cive*, III, 1, p. 43; and *Leviathan*, XV, 1, p. 89.

⁸⁰ See *De Cive*, III, 1-2, pp. 43-4.

⁸¹ *Leviathan*, The Introduction, 3, p. 4.

Hobbes claimed that the 'laws of nature are immutable and eternal; what they forbid can never be lawful; what they command, never unlawful'.⁸² *Leviathan* added that 'it can never be that war shall preserve life and peace destroy it'.⁸³ The ends (peace and defence), and the means (virtues of character) of reason never changed, and they could not be changed by custom or civil laws.⁸⁴ Having said that the laws of nature were 'immutable and eternal', Hobbes went on to argue that they were not always obligatory. According to Hobbes, the 'force... of the law of nature is not *in foro externo*, till there be security for men to obey it; but is always *in foro interno*, wherein the action of obedience being unsafe, the will and readiness to perform is taken for the performance'.⁸⁵ In other words, the laws of nature always obliged in conscience, but only obliged the actions of individuals where there was security. Because the laws of nature concerned the conscience, it was possible to break them by any action contrary to them. But it was also possible to break them by any action in conformity with them, if the conscience itself was not directed towards observation of the laws.⁸⁶ Considered as 'dispositions of mind', then only in the conscience were they laws and thus obligatory. Actions, on the other hand, differed according to circumstances and civil law - what was rational and fair at one time, might be considered irrational and unfair at another time.⁸⁷ The laws of nature themselves were unchangeable, but their application in particular circumstances did change.

The laws of nature prescribed what was reasonable under the circumstances - what was reasonable in a time of peace was different from what was reasonable in a condition of war. Individuals were not 'obliged by nature, i.e. by reason, to keep all the laws in a state of mankind in which they are not practised by others'. In fact, to observe some natural laws in this situation would actually be a violation of natural law. For instance, individuals would violate the fundamental law of nature, by endeavouring peace when it could not be had.⁸⁸ Hobbes claimed that it was reasonable, i.e. in conformity with the law of nature,

⁸² *De Cive*, III, 29, p. 54.

⁸³ *Leviathan*, XV, 38, p. 100.

⁸⁴ See *De Cive*, III, 29, pp. 54-5.

⁸⁵ *Elements*, XVII, 10, p. 97. See also *Leviathan*, XV, 36, p. 99.

⁸⁶ See *Elements*, XVII, 13, p. 98; *De Cive*, III, 28, p. 54; and *Leviathan*, XV, 37, p. 99.

⁸⁷ *De Cive*, III, 29, p. 54.

⁸⁸ *Elements*, XVII, 13, p. 98. See also *De Cive*, III, 28, p. 54; and *Leviathan*, XV, 37, p. 99.

to steal from thieves, and to do everything we could against those who would stop at nothing against us. In a time of war, it was unreasonable to behave as a modest man would behave in a time of peace, for the simple reason that it would probably result in our death, and thus was against reason, i.e. natural law. But there were some natural laws which did not cease even during war - Hobbes specified the law against weakening the reasoning faculty.⁸⁹

In the *Elements*, although not in *De Cive* or *Leviathan*, Hobbes claimed that the laws of nature 'are made only for the protection and defence of them that keep them'.⁹⁰ For this reason, it was a general law of nature that 'those particular laws be so far observed, as they subject us not to any incommodity, that in our own judgements may arise, by the neglect thereof in those towards whom we observe them'.⁹¹ This meant that the laws of nature only required a readiness to observe them, when other men did not observe them. Individuals 'are obliged to keep them, whenever keeping them seems likely to achieve the end for which they were made'.⁹² The laws of nature were easy to observe because 'they require only an effort (but a real, sustained effort)'.⁹³ In the state of nature what 'is done of necessity, or in pursuit of peace, or for self-preservation is done rightly. Apart from this, all infliction of harm on men is a violation of natural Law and a wrong against God'.⁹⁴ Violation of the laws of nature 'consists in false reasoning or in stupidity, when men fail to see what duties towards other men are necessary for their own preservation'.⁹⁵ Hobbes realised that it was possible that human beings would find it difficult to observe the laws of nature, because of their passions, but he thought that in calmer moments there was a simple test to find out if their actions would be against the natural laws or not. That test was for a person 'to think himself into the other person's place'. This maxim was expressed even

⁸⁹ See footnote to *De Cive*, III, 27, p. 53. This particular law of nature was not present in the *Elements*, and in *Leviathan*, XV, 34, p. 99, Hobbes claimed it only applied to particular men, not to men as a whole.

⁹⁰ *Elements*, XVII, 10, p. 97.

⁹¹ *Elements*, XVII, 10, p. 97. This is the qualification that Hobbes added immediately in *Leviathan*.

⁹² *De Cive*, III, 27, p. 54.

⁹³ *De Cive*, III, 30, p. 55.

⁹⁴ *De Cive*, III, 27, p. 54.

⁹⁵ *De Cive*, II, 1, pp. 33-34.

more simply in the negative formulation of the Golden Rule, 'Do not do to another what you would not have done to you'.⁹⁶

The 'practice of natural law is necessary for the preservation of peace, and security is necessary for the practice of natural law'. As long as the individual thought he was insecure, his right to preserve his own life by whatever means necessary remained. But 'he will satisfy the requirements of natural law if he is ready to welcome peace when it can be had'. The problem was that the laws of nature 'do not guarantee their own observance as soon as they are known'. All laws were silent among arms, and in the case of natural law this was true 'if it is applied to actions rather than to state of mind'.⁹⁷ The laws of nature obliged in conscience in times of insecurity, but did not oblige as far as actions were concerned. In a time of insecurity, the first law of nature told individuals to rely on their right of nature. Individuals must then use their liberty to do what, according to their own natural reason, they judged necessary to preserve themselves. In a condition of war, it was simply unreasonable to behave peacefully, because it might result in death. The question then, for Hobbes, was how to create a situation where individuals would have the security to enable them to put natural law into practice. The answer, for Hobbes, was to create a commonwealth, ruled by a civil sovereign, who would enforce one interpretation of natural law, which just happened to be civil law. This was how Hobbes dealt with the problem of the moral philosophy of the Schoolmen, which had failed to consider the disagreement over which actions did or did not constitute the virtues.

If there were laws of nature in the state of nature, then why was it a condition of war? Why were the laws of nature ineffective in preserving peace in the state of nature? According to Hobbes, the actions of individuals proceeded from their wills, and their wills proceeded from hope and fear.⁹⁸ Most individual's wills were governed by fear, but where there was no coercive power, in other words in the state of nature, there was no fear, so there the will was

⁹⁶ *De Cive*, III, 26, p. 53. See also *Leviathan*, XV, 35, p. 99. This would also be in line with Hobbes' idea that if we know what our own thoughts and passions are in certain circumstances, then we can know what other men's thoughts and passions are.

⁹⁷ *De Cive*, V, 2 - 3, pp. 69-70.

⁹⁸ See *De Cive*, V, 1, p. 69. See also *De Cive*, VI, 11, p. 80, where the will was governed by the opinion each man had of good and evil.

governed by other passions, such as covetousness, lust and anger.⁹⁹ The individual 'cannot govern his own will, though his will govern his actions; which dependence of the actions on the will, is that which properly and truly is called liberty'. Even Adam, who had the chance of immortality, could not govern his own will.¹⁰⁰ The laws of nature were 'not enough to preserve Peace', because individuals 'willingly break the law, whenever it seems that greater good or lesser evil will come to themselves from breaking it'.¹⁰¹ In *Leviathan* Hobbes argued that the laws of nature 'without the terror of some power to cause them to be observed, are contrary to our natural passions, that carry us to partiality, pride, revenge and the like'.¹⁰²

But it was not only passion which led human beings to break the laws of nature. Natural law was also ineffective in creating peace in the state of nature, because of human reason. Hobbes thought that human beings did not have reason from birth, neither did reason come with experience. Reason was 'attained by industry'.¹⁰³ Hobbes also claimed that reason was not infallible, and that in the natural condition the 'act of reasoning' was 'a man's own true Reasoning about actions of his which may conduce to his advantage or other men's loss'. Although in the commonwealth all individuals regarded the civil law as right reason, in the natural condition it was not possible for an individual to 'distinguish right reason from false except by making comparison with his own'. Thus in the natural condition, 'each man's own reason must be regarded not only as the measure of his own actions... but also as the measure by which to judge the reasoning of others'.¹⁰⁴ In *Leviathan* Hobbes further claimed that because the natural condition lacked right reason, if individuals were involved in a dispute, they had to appoint an arbitrator, whose reason would be taken by every individual for right reason. Without an arbitrator in nature, individuals 'will have every of their passions, as it comes to bear sway in them, to be taken for right reason'.¹⁰⁵ In

⁹⁹ See *Elements*, XX, 6, p. 112. But see *Leviathan*, XIV, 31, p. 88, where there were two possible fears to keep men to their covenants in the state of nature: the fear of other men, and the fear of God. Also individuals lived in constant fear of violent death in the natural condition.

¹⁰⁰ Hobbes, 'The Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance', pp. 101-2.

¹⁰¹ *De Cive*, V, 1, p. 69.

¹⁰² *Leviathan*, XVII, 2, p. 106. See also *Elements*, XIX, 1, p. 103.

¹⁰³ *Leviathan*, V, 17, p. 25.

¹⁰⁴ *De Cive*, II, footnote to 1, p. 33.

¹⁰⁵ *Leviathan*, V, 3, p. 23.

other words, in a condition which lacked a common power natural individuals thought their own individual passions should be taken for right reason.

For Hobbes, it was the laws of nature which should be the guide to the actions of individuals. These laws were easily discoverable for those who 'without partiality and passion' used their natural reason. But the problem was that most men were 'blinded by self-love or some other passion', and although they were able to discover these laws, they needed help in interpreting them.¹⁰⁶ This is why the laws of nature, or the moral virtues, although naturally reasonable, only became law over actions in a condition of security, or in other words in a commonwealth, when the sovereign made them civil law.¹⁰⁷ According to Hobbes, in the natural condition it was 'false reasoning or stupidity', which led human beings to violate the laws of nature, when they failed to see 'what duties towards other men are necessary to their own preservation'.¹⁰⁸ In other words, although through natural reason they were able to discover the laws of nature, they often violated those laws, because in their interpretation they failed to consider the consequences for other individuals. They failed to put themselves in the place of others. Thus, Hobbes' natural condition was a condition of war, not only because of human passion, but also because the only rule of action each individual had in the natural condition was his own natural reason.¹⁰⁹ Hobbes equated this natural reason with private judgement, and also with conscience.¹¹⁰ In the natural condition, each individual had the liberty to act on what his own reason and judgement dictated to him.¹¹¹ Natural individuals took courses of action in order to satisfy their immediate desires, and these courses of action were dictated by their own natural reason. It was both reason and passion which therefore created the state of war. And yet, for Hobbes, it was these two features of human nature - passion and reason, which could also lead

¹⁰⁶ *Leviathan*, XXVI, 21, p. 180.

¹⁰⁷ See *Leviathan*, XXVI, 22, pp. 180-1.

¹⁰⁸ *De Cive*, II, footnote to 1, pp. 33-4.

¹⁰⁹ See *Leviathan*, XXIX, 7, p. 212.

¹¹⁰ See *Leviathan*, XXXVII, 13, p. 300. He also claimed that natural reason was 'the undoubted word of God' - see *Leviathan*, XXXII, 2, p. 245.

¹¹¹ *Leviathan*, XIV, 2, p. 79.

human beings to peace.¹¹² But in order to achieve this, individuals needed a condition of security provided by a civil sovereign.

To summarise Hobbes' argument, the laws of nature were rules found out by reason, which aimed at the preservation of an individual. In the state of nature, or a condition of insecurity, the laws of nature always obliged the conscience, but did not oblige actions. Although the laws of nature were immutable and eternal, they were easily broken in a condition which lacked a common power to enforce them, and where each individual was his own interpreter of natural law. In the state of nature individuals had a tendency to act on their passions, and seek their own immediate good. In doing this, they failed to consider future evils which might be attached to this apparent good, and they also failed to consider the consequences for other individuals. But although the laws of nature were easily broken, Hobbes thought that there was a simple test whereby an individual could judge whether his action would be in accordance with natural law. That test was to imagine himself in the place of others. This was all well and good in a condition of security, but in the natural condition individuals did not trust others, but dreaded them. The answer, for Hobbes, was to create a condition of security, where human beings could agree on a future good demonstrated by reason, or in other words they could practice natural law.

Hobbes described a number of other laws of nature, which were presented in three different versions in the *Elements*, *De Cive* and *Leviathan*.¹¹³ The most important change for Hobbes' seventeenth century readers, as we will see below, related to the question of whether Hobbes thought that the laws of nature were obligatory because they were God's laws. According to Hobbes, because law was a command, 'these dictates, as they proceed from nature, are not commands; they are not therefore called laws in respect of nature, but in respect of the author of nature, God Almighty'.¹¹⁴ More specifically in *De Cive*, they were God's laws as set out in the scriptures, because 'holy scripture is the utterance of God, who

¹¹² The incorporation of the right of nature into the fundamental law of nature meant that natural law prescribed both peace and war, when peace could not be had.

¹¹³ See *De Cive*, III, 9-25, pp. 48-53; *Elements*, XVI, 8-13, pp. 90-92; & XVII, 1-8, pp. 93-96; and *Leviathan*, XIV, 4-5, p. 80 & XV, 1-34, pp. 89-99, for three slightly different accounts of the laws of nature. For a detailed account of the changes see Tricaud, 'Hobbes's Conception of the State of Nature'.

¹¹⁴ *Elements*, XVII, 12, p. 97; & XVIII, 1, p. 99.

issues commands in all things with the highest right'.¹¹⁵ Elsewhere though, Hobbes claimed that the laws of nature were simply 'convenient articles of peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement',¹¹⁶ or 'conclusions or theorems concerning what conduceth to the conservation and defence of themselves',¹¹⁷ and that 'the force of the command, or law of nature, is no more than the force of the reasons inducing thereunto'.¹¹⁸ Also, in the *Elements*, and *De Cive* the chapters on the laws of nature were immediately followed by chapters which gave scriptural support for these laws, but this was not the case in *Leviathan*.¹¹⁹ Was it the case that by the time Hobbes came to write *Leviathan*, he did not believe the laws of nature were obligatory because they were God's laws? Howard Warrender has argued that Hobbes thought that the laws of nature obliged Christians, non-Christians and atheists in both the state of nature, and civil society. Christians could take the laws of nature as God's commands, and non-Christians and atheists could take them as rational principles of prudence.¹²⁰ As we will see below, on Warrender's interpretation Hobbes was in agreement with Reformed views.

4. The Contemporary Reaction.

Hobbes' contemporary critics had a number of objections to his description of the laws of nature. Firstly, his idea that the sole end of the laws of nature was self-preservation was quite simply wrong. These writers followed Aquinas, for whom natural law was an interpretation of human nature, and of the relation of human beings to God and the universe. On this account, there were three groups of

¹¹⁵ *De Cive*, III, 33, pp. 56-7.

¹¹⁶ *Leviathan*, XIII, 14, p. 78.

¹¹⁷ *Leviathan*, XV, 41, p. 100.

¹¹⁸ *Elements*, XVI, 1, p. 87.

¹¹⁹ See *Elements*, XVIII, entitled 'A confirmation of the same out of the word of God'; and *De Cive*, IV, entitled 'That the natural law is the divine law'. In *Leviathan* the chapters on the laws of nature were followed by chapter XVI, entitled 'Of Persons, Authors, and Things Personated'.

¹²⁰ See Howard Warrender, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes - His Theory of Obligation* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1957), pp. 83 & 99. On this question see also Warrender, 'Hobbes' Conception of Morality', in *Hobbes' Leviathan: Interpretation and Criticism*, edited by B.H. Baumrin (Wadsworth Pub. Co. Inc., Belmont, California, 1969), pp. 67-82; and in the same volume, A.E. Taylor, 'The Ethical Doctrine of Hobbes', pp. 35-48; and S.M. Brown, Jr., 'Hobbes: the Taylor Thesis', pp. 49-66. See also B.T. Trainor, 'Warrender and Skinner on Hobbes',

natural law which concerned self-preservation; specific ends such as sexual relationships; and God and society.¹²¹ According to Charles Gildon, the laws of nature were threefold - they concerned our duty to ourselves, our neighbours and God, but 'they all naturally proceed from that universal Maxim, or Principle, which God has implanted in all Mankind, *Self-Love*, or *Self-Preservation*'.¹²² Although he admitted that the 'general Defection of Mankind from these Laws, thus established by God, rendered their force too inefficacious to attain the end they were designed for', and it was necessary for Christ, to restore them, nonetheless for Gildon, the light of nature had not been totally extinguished.¹²³ John Bramhall accused Hobbes of omitting laws of nature which concerned our duty to other men, and that Hobbes had also forgotten 'the main and principal laws of nature, which contain a man's duty to his God, and the principal end of his creation'.¹²⁴ Hobbes' third law of nature, concerning gratitude, contained no mention of gratitude to our creator. God had written the laws of nature in our hearts, and these were more effective as a means to preserve society than Hobbes' laying down of rights in a covenant.¹²⁵ For James Tyrrell, it was from Hobbes'

Ignorance, or Inconsideration of this great Principle of the Common Good of Rational Beings, that he first fell into those Errors, and made private Self-preservation not only the first motive (which had been true enough) but also the sole end of all Moral Actions, which is altogether false, and below the dignity, not only of a Philosopher, but a Man.¹²⁶

Tyrrell claimed that Hobbes himself admitted that it was false reasoning, and failure to understand our duties towards other men that caused violation of the laws of nature.¹²⁷

Hobbes' acknowledgement that there were laws of nature was thought to contradict his state of nature, because it meant that human beings had always lived under government. According to William Lucy,

Political Studies, 36 (1988), pp. 680-91; and Brian Barry, 'Warrender and his Critics', *Philosophy*, 43 (1968), pp. 117-37.

¹²¹ See d'Entrèves, *Natural Law*, p. 42.

¹²² Gildon, *The Deists Manual*, p. 210.

¹²³ Gildon, *The Deists Manual*, pp. 218-20.

¹²⁴ Bramhall, *Castigations*, pp. 177 & 116.

¹²⁵ See Bramhall, *Castigations*, pp. 117 & 118.

¹²⁶ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 252.

¹²⁷ See Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, p. 288.

there is no man borned in this world without a Law and a common Power over him and others, the Law is that writ in their hearts, and this is it which St. Paul speakes, *Rom. 2. 15.* Which shews the law written in their hearts that law of Nature, that practique law which is writ in the heart of every man and this common Power is GOD...¹²⁸

God had given human beings the laws of nature, and men lived in 'horror and dread' of breaking those laws. Although

men may doe and act against those Lawes, yet untill a long custom of living hardned their hearts, or some such wicked principles as his have by degrees stollen an approbation in their understandings (by degree I say for I thinke it not possible to be done in an instant) untill then it is not possible for men to sin against these without an accusation of their Consciences...¹²⁹

Similarly for John Bramhall, there had never been a time when human beings had lived without God and government, thus Hobbes' state of nature was a nonsense.

According to Bramhall,

The Image of God is not altogether defaced by the Fall of man, but that there will remaine some practical notions of God and goodnesse; which, when the mind is free from vagrant desires, and violent passions, do shine as clearly in the heart; as other speculative notions do in the head.¹³⁰

For Bramhall, the condition of mere nature should be the state of innocence - the state Adam was in before his Fall. Even if we assumed Hobbes was describing Adam's corrupted nature, after the Fall, there was no such condition as that which he had described.¹³¹

The laws of nature also disproved Hobbes' state of nature, because they tended to peace. For Clarendon, if the laws of nature were immutable and eternal, and showed us how to accommodate ourselves to other human beings, and all human beings were bound by them, then the state of nature should have been a state of peace, and thus the covenants Hobbes had described were unnecessary. Further, if

Nature hath thus providently provided for the Peace and Tranquillity of her Children, by Laws immutable & eternal, that are written in their

¹²⁸ Lucy, *Observations 1657*, pp. 123-4.

¹²⁹ Lucy, *Observations 1657*, pp. 124-5.

¹³⁰ Bramhall, *Castigations*, p. 116. This is in agreement with Hobbes' idea that in quiet moments when individuals think, they will realise that their actions must be governed by the law of nature - 'do unto others...'

¹³¹ See Bramhall, *Castigations*, p. 155.

hearts: how come they fall into that condition of war, as to be every one against every one, and to be without any other cardinal Virtues, but of force and fraud?¹³²

For Samuel Parker, Hobbes' claim that the laws of nature were not God's laws, but 'only so many Rules of Art', meant that the natural condition was one of his own creating, not God's. The actual natural condition created by God 'must have been a condition of Peace, and not such a State of War that should naturally tend to his Misery, Ruine, and utter Destruction'.¹³³

Hobbes' argument that there were laws of nature also contradicted his claim that there was no justice or injustice in the state of nature. As Ralph Cudworth put it, given 'their main *Fundamental Principle*, that by *Nature* nothing is *Unjust* or *Unlawful*... then can there be no *Laws of Nature*; and if there be *Laws of Nature*, then must there be something Naturally Unjust and Unlawful'.¹³⁴ If the aim of the laws of nature was peace and preservation, and yet the state of nature was a war of all against all, then were the laws of nature really laws, and thus obliging? Charles Gildon noted that Hobbes' ideas implied that the laws of nature were changeable, and he cited Hobbes' claim that the laws of nature were a convenient means to draw men to agreement, in order to escape the inconveniences of the state of nature. But according to Gildon, the law of nature was planted in man by God, and

by consequence is of Eternal Original, and not Casual or by a Treaty of Peace, or Consent of People compell'd to the Agreement by the Inconveniences they had experienced in the contrary, and by consequence alterable, as often as each Party shall think it for his particular Benefit, which is a Principle, that justifies all the Dishonesty and Villany in the World.¹³⁵

Hobbes' critics found it difficult to believe that his laws of nature were really laws. Ralph Cudworth called Hobbes' laws of nature '*Jugling Equivocation*, and a meer *Mockery*...', because they say they are theorems, or they are not properly laws because they need someone to command them.¹³⁶ Bishop Bramhall also commented on this, and pointed out that Hobbes had argued that

¹³² Clarendon, *A Brief View and Survey*, p. 202. See also Bramhall, *Castigations*, p. 156

¹³³ Parker, *A Discourse*, pp. 127-8.

¹³⁴ Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System*, p. 894.

¹³⁵ Gildon, *The Deists Manual*, p. 219.

the laws of nature were law because they were given by God in Scripture, but then claimed that it was the sovereign who gave scripture its authority. Bramhall also noted the contradiction in Hobbes' argument that the laws of nature were immutable and eternal, and yet they were silent in the war of all against all.¹³⁷

James Lowde could not understand why the laws of nature did not

lay as great an obligation upon us for Obedience, as those inordinate Passions of Nature? Especially if we consider, that obedience to these dictates of reason are more fit and proper means in order to self-preservation, than the prosecution of those mere rights of nature, as he calls them, violence and anticipation.

Although acknowledging that history gave us examples of barbarous and inhumane actions, Lowde claimed that history also gave us examples 'of Mercy and Compassion to others, of a generous condescension and self-denial of our selves, and of an universal love and good will to Mankind, sufficient to confute the scandals cast upon humane nature upon this account'.¹³⁸

Hobbes' contemporary critics had particular problems with his idea that the laws of nature only obliged actions where there was security. For John Shafte, the laws of nature obliged both in conscience and action, and that further 'the actual performance of the Laws of Nature are always consistent with Self-preservation'. If this were not the case, then human beings would always be obliged 'to desire Self-preservation but must not use the means to secure it'. Shafte completely disagreed with Hobbes' argument, that sometimes we would put ourselves in danger, by obeying the laws of nature. For Shafte, it was not against the law of nature, or reason, for human beings to be cautious in their dealings with others, especially if they did not know them well. But although it was lawful for a man 'to defend and preserve his own right, he must not prejudice anothers; for that were to provoke and pull those dangers upon himself, against which he desires to secure himself'. The Golden Rule, 'Do unto others...' told us not to injure others.¹³⁹ According to James Tyrrell,

unless the Laws of Nature regard the outward Actions of men, they cannot partake of the nature of laws, nor do they carry any obligations along with them, because it is impossible to seek Peace with others, or to depart from

¹³⁶ Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System*, pp. 894-5.

¹³⁷ See Bramhall, *Castigations*, pp. 163-4 & 177.

¹³⁸ Lowde, *A Discourse*, pp. 165-6.

¹³⁹ Shafte, *The Great Law of Nature*, pp. 20-1.

our natural Rights by any internal Act of the Mind alone, without outward Actions, and most of those Actions do in their own nature necessarily regard, and concern others besides our selves.

For Tyrrell, if there were no natural laws in the state of nature, then there were no natural rights either - it was only possible to have a right, when that right was permitted by law.¹⁴⁰ To Hobbes' claim that in certain circumstances we would put ourselves in danger, if we acted according to the laws of nature, Tyrrell replied that we did not need perfect security to observe the laws of nature,

for the Will of God, the first Cause, being known, whereby he establishes these Laws, there will arise a certain obligation to the performance of such external Actions; though some men may be so wicked, as to break, or neglect them, and to practice evil and violent Actions towards those that would observe them.

Human beings were under a greater obligation to the laws of nature, than to civil law. The implication of Hobbes' argument that the practice of natural law depended on security, was that civil law, as well as natural law, was not obligatory - because even a civil state did not provide perfect security.¹⁴¹

To summarise the views of Hobbes' critics, they had four main objections to his description of the laws of nature. Firstly, they objected to his claim that self-preservation was the sole end of the laws of nature. For the critics, the laws of nature told us of our duties not only to ourselves, but also to our neighbours, and to God. Secondly, the laws of nature actually contradicted Hobbes' description of the state of nature, because they tended to peace. Thirdly, the very existence of the laws of nature also contradicted Hobbes' state of nature. The fact that the laws of nature had been engraved on men's hearts by God from the beginning, meant that there had never been a time when human beings had lived without laws, thus Hobbes' state of nature could never have been. Even the Fall of mankind had not completely erased the laws of nature from human hearts. Finally, the critics were concerned by Hobbes' argument that natural law did not oblige both action and conscience, and they wondered whether Hobbes thought that it was actually obligatory at all?

¹⁴⁰ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 375-6.

¹⁴¹ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 376-8.

It seems to be the implications of Hobbes' ideas which caused the most offence. Hobbes' claim that self-preservation was the sole end of the laws of nature, implied that his laws of nature did not concern men's duties to God, and other human beings. But Hobbes' critics were simply wrong when they argued his laws of nature did not concern relations with other human beings. The laws of nature were rules for individuals to follow in their dealings with other people, and human beings violated natural law when they failed to put themselves in the place of others.¹⁴² As far as relations with God were concerned, Hobbes claimed we could know by natural reason that God existed, by reasoning back until we arrived at the first cause of everything, but other than this individuals had no natural knowledge of God.¹⁴³ Hobbes' critics also could not understand, if there were laws of nature in the state of nature, then how could it have been a condition of war, and also a condition which lacked a common power? The only way they could resolve this problem was by arguing that Hobbes' laws of nature could not really be laws, and thus obliging, especially when they considered his claim that they only obliged actions where there was security.

For Hobbes' contemporary critics, although human beings had been corrupted by the Fall, reason, conscience, natural law, and the thought of God remained sufficient to maintain peace amongst them in the natural condition. Hobbes denied this, and thought that although natural law was obligatory, human beings had difficulty discovering the laws of nature, interpreting them and applying them in particular circumstances. Hobbes thought that reason, the individual conscience, the laws of nature, and the fear of God himself were not enough to keep human beings in peace in the state of nature. Natural law needed to be transformed into civil law, commanded and enforced by a human, coercive authority. Hobbes' views could be understood to suggest that even in Eden, God's positive command had failed to prevent Adam and Eve's disobedience. Now since the Fall, reason had been corrupted, and was no longer sufficient (if it ever had been) to keep human beings in peace.

¹⁴² See also *De Cive*, III, 32, p. 56, where Hobbes made it explicit that he had only described laws of nature which were 'relevant to our preservation against the dangers which arise from discord'.

¹⁴³ See *Leviathan*, XI, 25, p. 62.

5. The Scriptural Account.

For many of Hobbes' critics it was impossible to reconcile his description of both the right and law of nature, with the account of scripture. As evidence against Hobbes' description of the right of all, these writers cited God's grant of dominion to Adam in the first chapter of *Genesis*. For many of these writers, the account of *Genesis* was the story of God giving rights to human beings. These rights were given by God in conjunction with law, and did not create the extreme condition of war which Hobbes had described. But Hobbes' contemporary critics appear to have been divided on whether Adam alone was given rights over the earth, or whether the earth was given to human beings in common. For writers such as Filmer and Cumberland, God's grant was to Adam alone, and it also included dominion over other human beings, while William Lucy agreed with Hobbes that the earth was given to men in common. Paul Cooke has recently argued that Hobbes reinterpreted the Bible, in order to get scripture to support his political theory. In this way the Bible became the story of God giving natural rights to human beings.¹⁴⁴ The views of Hobbes' critics appear to qualify Cooke's claim, for if Hobbes was guilty of this, then so were some of his contemporaries.

Hobbes' theological assumption that God gave the earth to men in common, and that property and commonwealths came into existence together, was supported by those commentators, like Luther, who subscribed to Saint Augustine's theory of the Two Cities. For Augustine, and Luther, private property came into existence along with the earthly city, which was built by Cain, after the Fall. Both theologians thought that God's words, 'Let them have dominion', was a grant of dominion over the creatures, not over other men; although for Augustine God's words were directed to Adam and his male posterity, whereas Luther thought that both male and female were given dominion. According to Augustine, God gave Adam everything he needed, and also one simple command to obey. In 'paradise, before his sin, man could not, it is true, do everything; but he could do whatever he wished, just because he did not want to do whatever he

¹⁴⁴ See Cooke, *Hobbes and Christianity*, p. 2.

could not do'.¹⁴⁵ When Adam disobeyed God, God gave Adam control over himself, but that control put Adam at odds with himself. The punishment of Adam's disobedience was the disobedience itself. Now since the Fall, human beings desire to do what they cannot do.¹⁴⁶ For Martin Luther, both Adam and Eve became 'the rulers of the earth, the sea, and the air', and this dominion was over other creatures.¹⁴⁷ According to Luther, as a result, man could 'make use of all the creatures as he wishes, according to his will'.¹⁴⁸

God gave Adam and his posterity the free use of all things, but with one restraint - Adam was given a positive command, by which he was forbidden to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. According to Jean Calvin, with God's words to Adam that he should subdue the earth, Adam was put 'in possession of his right'. God gave Adam and his posterity 'authority over all living creatures. He appointed man... lord of the world'. But 'God confine[d]... the food of mankind within certain limits'.¹⁴⁹ Similarly for Sir Walter Raleigh, God gave man 'the liberall choice of all things, with one only prohibition, to trie his gratitude and obedience'. God 'gave man to himselfe, to be his own guide, his owne workeman, and his owne painter, that he might frame or describe unto himselfe what hee pleased, and make election of his owne forme'.¹⁵⁰ Protestant interpretations of *Genesis* confirmed Hobbes' view that human beings were given liberty, and that liberty came before law.¹⁵¹ But not surprisingly, scripture was silent on Hobbes' idea that the right of nature gave human beings a right to subject, kill, hurt, or invade others.

¹⁴⁵ Augustine, *City of God*, XIV, 15, pp. 574-5. In *Leviathan* (Latin version), Appendix, Chap. i, On the Nicene Creed, 62, p. 512, Hobbes made the following rather interesting comment: 'In the generation of a human being from a human being [God] willed from eternity that only a man be produced, who cannot do whatever he wishes. But in the generation of man in a supernatural way, by the Holy Spirit, he willed from eternity to produce a man who could do whatever he wishes, i.e., a man who was also God'. Hobbes, or rather 'B' was referring to Jesus Christ, but he could have been referring to *Adam* who was also created by the Holy Spirit. The similarity to Augustine's words is interesting.

¹⁴⁶ See Augustine, *City of God*, XIV, 15, pp. 574-5.

¹⁴⁷ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 66-7. See also Ainsworth, *Annotations, Genesis* I.26; Clapham, *A Briefe of the Bible*, p. 19; and Haak, *Dutch Annotations, Genesis* I.26.

¹⁴⁸ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 73.

¹⁴⁹ Calvin, *Commentaries*, pp. 96-9. See also Anon., *A Briefe Discourse of the Scriptures*, pp. 13 & 14.

¹⁵⁰ Raleigh, *A History of the World*, p. 32.

¹⁵¹ God gave *Adam* (and *Eve*) complete liberty, and then a positive command to restrict that liberty - see for example Ainsworth, *Annotations, Genesis* II.16; Holland, *The Historie of Adam*, pp. 4-5; and Willet, *Hexapla upon Genesis*, p. 16.

The scriptural account of the creation of Adam and Eve was also cited as evidence against Hobbes' account of natural law. We have already seen that although Hobbes thought that there were laws of nature, he also thought that in the natural condition individuals had problems discovering those laws, interpreting them, and then applying them in particular circumstances. Hobbes thought that reason, the laws of nature, the individual conscience and God himself were not sufficient to prevent men from committing violence. In chapter three we have seen that this view was confirmed by the account of Cain's murder of Abel. We have also seen in chapter one, on good and evil, that a number of protestant commentators thought that God gave Adam and Eve the laws of nature at their creation, but that he also gave them a positive command, so they would know God was their sovereign and should be obeyed. Without a positive command, Adam and Eve might have obeyed God simply because it was in accordance with natural reason. Further, the law of nature did not, by itself, demonstrate that God was their sovereign and should be obeyed. But it is interesting to note, as John White did in his commentary on the first three chapters of *Genesis*, that the laws of nature were not mentioned in the scriptural account of the creation. As White put it, the laws of nature were 'written in all mens hearts by Nature, that is manifest to all men by Natural reason', but he admitted that they were not mentioned in 'this brief history, as being sufficiently known without relation'.¹⁵²

Although Hobbes never made it explicit that his account of the laws of nature referred to natural law since the Fall, as distinct from pre-lapsarian natural law, a brief survey of Reformed interpretations supports the idea that Hobbes' account was in agreement with the problems associated with natural law in the fallen condition. All of the Magisterial Reformers agreed that natural law was engraved in men's hearts by God. For Martin Luther, natural law was given by God, and was perfect and unchangeable.¹⁵³ Luther associated the natural law with equity, and the Golden Rule, which 'teaches that I should do as I would be done

¹⁵² White, *A Commentary*, II, pp. 118-119.

¹⁵³ See J.T. McNeill, 'Natural Law in the Teaching of the Reformers', *Journal of Religion*, 26 (1946), pp. 168-82, p. 169. I owe this and the following references on the Reformers and Natural Law to Johann Sommerville.

by'.¹⁵⁴ Jean Calvin agreed with Luther, and thought that 'the law of God which we call the moral law is nothing else than a testimony of the natural law, that is, of the conscience, which has been engraven by God in the minds of men, the entire principle of this equity... has been prescribed in it. This alone must be the scope, the rule and the end of all laws'.¹⁵⁵ Philip Melanchthon described natural law as 'a standard for judging morals', implanted in human beings by God. It was a knowledge of principles.¹⁵⁶ Similarly for Heinrich Bullinger, the law of nature was

an instruction of the conscience, and, as it were, a certain direction placed by God himself in the minds and hearts of men, to teach them what they have to do and what to eschew. And the conscience, verily, is the knowledge, judgement, and reason of a man, whereby every man in himself, and in his own mind, being made privy to every thing that he either hath committed or not committed, doth either condemn or else acquit himself. And this reason proceedeth from God...¹⁵⁷

Hobbes' contemporary critics had accused him of omitting laws of nature which concerned our duties to God. We have already seen above that some protestant commentators thought that the laws of nature did not necessarily demonstrate to the first human beings that God was their sovereign. Although the Reformers agreed that the law of nature was engraved on men's hearts by God, they were divided on whether natural law was of equal extent to the law of Moses. Melanchthon associated the natural law with the Ten Commandments, but he also thought that the law of Moses went beyond the requirements of natural law, with its commands regarding love and fear of God.¹⁵⁸ Luther thought that the commandments concerned with the Sabbath and images were ceremonial and judicial laws, and were thus not part of the moral law. In his own 'catechetical versions of the Decalogue', Luther actually omitted the second commandment, regarding images. He also denied that Christians were bound by the letter of the law of Moses, because he believed when Christ came he would make new

¹⁵⁴ Luther, *Treatise of Secular Power* (1523), cited in McNeill, 'Natural Law', p. 170.

¹⁵⁵ Calvin, *Institutes*, IV, xx, 14-16; *Opera*, II, 1164-67, cited in McNeill, 'Natural Law', p. 181.

¹⁵⁶ McNeill, 'Natural Law', p. 173.

¹⁵⁷ Heinrich Bullinger, *The Decades of Heinrich Bullinger*, cited in McNeill, 'Natural Law', p. 178.

¹⁵⁸ *Melanchtoni opera, Corpus Reformatorum*, XVI, 23ff., cited in McNeill, 'Natural Law', p. 174.

commandments.¹⁵⁹ Christians were obliged by the commandments, but only because they mirrored the natural law, and not because they were the law of Moses. The Ten Commandments could not be Moses' law, because human beings lived under them, even before Moses had been born. But even if Moses had not lived, all human beings would have been ruled by the Ten Commandments, not because they were the law of Moses, but because they mirrored the law of nature.

As Luther put it,

in one law which runs through all ages, is known to all men, is written in the hearts of all people, and leaves no one from beginning to end with an excuse, although for the Jews ceremonies were added and the other nations had their own laws, which were not binding upon the whole world, but only this one, which the Holy Spirit dictates unceasingly in the hearts of all.¹⁶⁰

Calvin and Bullinger, on the other hand, equated the natural law with all of the Ten Commandments, although for Calvin before natural law was written down, human beings easily forgot its requirements.¹⁶¹

Although the laws of nature were perfect and unchangeable, reason through which human beings discovered natural law had been corrupted by the Fall. Martin Luther thought that all human beings had natural laws engraved on their hearts, but human reason was 'so corrupt and blind' that it 'fails to understand the knowledge native to it', or it 'knowingly neglects and despises it'.¹⁶² John T. McNeill has shown that Luther was following Aquinas, who thought that natural law had not been obliterated, but 'it is nevertheless blotted out in the case of a particular action insofar as reason is hindered because of concupiscence or some other passion, in applying a general principle to a particular action'.¹⁶³ Similarly for Melancthon, since the Fall, the laws of nature, or the moral principles, were 'not equally agreed upon', because the Fall had brought about 'a certain dimness', which had lessened human ability to distinguish between good and evil. Natural law demonstrated that we should obey

¹⁵⁹ P.D.L. Avis, 'Moses and the Magistrate: A Study in Protestant Legalism', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 26 (1975), pp. 149-72, pp. 153-4. Avis also claims that Luther, unlike other Reformers, used an '*a priori* doctrine of natural law to distinguish different levels in the Bible'.

¹⁶⁰ Cited in Avis, 'Moses and the Magistrate', p. 154.

¹⁶¹ See McNeill, 'Natural Law', pp. 182 & 178.

¹⁶² Cited in McNeill, 'Natural Law', p. 169.

¹⁶³ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, ii.94.6, cited in McNeill, 'Natural Law', p. 169.

God, but since the Fall unrighteousness had won out.¹⁶⁴ Although the law of nature was ‘really the law of God concerning those virtues which the reason understands, for the divine law has been imprinted on the minds of men: but in this enfeebled state of nature it has been obscured’.¹⁶⁵

The Reformers thus made a distinction between natural law before and after the Fall.¹⁶⁶ According to Heinrich Bullinger, the law of nature enabled human beings to distinguish between good and evil. The ‘beginning of this law is not of the corrupt disposition of mankind, but of God himself, who with his finger writeth in our hearts, fasteneth in our nature, and planteth in us a rule to know justice, equity and goodness’. But since the Fall,

the disposition of mankind being flatly corrupted by sin, as it is blind, so also is it in all points evil and naughty. It knoweth not God, neither doth it love the neighbour; but rather is affected with self-love toward itself, and seeketh still for its own advantage. For which cause the apostle said, “that we by nature are the children of wrath”. Wherefore the law of nature [is so called only] because God hath imprinted or engraven in our minds some knowledge, and certain general principles of religion, justice, and goodness, which because they be grafted in us and born together with us, do therefore seem to be naturally in us.¹⁶⁷

In other words, human beings still referred to the law of nature by the same name, but it was not the same law which they were given before the Fall. Human reason was corrupted by the Fall, and this according to McNeill implied ‘a defect in natural law when it is viewed as an aspect of actual human nature, that is, human nature not as it was created but as it exists since the Fall’. But when natural law was viewed as divine law it was immutable and eternal.¹⁶⁸

Jean Calvin thought that human beings had lost their supernatural abilities as a result of the Fall, while their natural abilities, i.e. understanding and will, had been corrupted.¹⁶⁹ It was reason, or understanding, which distinguished objects,

¹⁶⁴ McNeill, ‘Natural Law’, p. 173.

¹⁶⁵ *Melanchtoni opera, Corpus Reformatorum*, XVI, 23ff., cited in McNeill, ‘Natural Law’, p. 174.

¹⁶⁶ Both State, *Thomas Hobbes*, p. 153, and d’Entrèves, *Natural Law*, p. 41, note the distinction between primary and secondary natural law.

¹⁶⁷ Heinrich Bullinger, *The Decades of Heinrich Bullinger*, cited in McNeill, ‘Natural Law’, p. 178.

¹⁶⁸ McNeill, ‘Natural Law’, p. 175.

¹⁶⁹ See Peter J. Leithart, ‘Stoic Elements in Calvin’s Doctrine of the Christian Life. Part 1: Original Corruption, Natural Law, and the Order of the Soul’, *Westminster Theological Journal*, 55 (1993), pp. 31-54, p. 37.

and either approved or disapproved of them. The will then followed what the understanding judged to be good, and avoided what the understanding judged to be evil.¹⁷⁰ Since the Fall, reason had become incapable of discerning the natural law, and unable to guide the will, which now followed the passions of our corrupt nature, rather than the dictates of reason. Man did not aim for what was truly good for him, but followed ‘the inclination of his nature, without reason or deliberation’.¹⁷¹ Now since the Fall, unregenerate human beings could not reason correctly, and the fallen understanding had incomplete knowledge of heavenly things, such as ‘the knowledge of God, the knowledge of his will, and the rule of conduct for life’.¹⁷² But all human beings had knowledge of natural law, through their ‘conscience’, or ‘sense’. Calvin defined conscience in two ways: firstly in a spiritual sense as ‘the faculty within the soul that comforts men when they do good, and accuses them when they do evil’; and secondly as ‘the faculty in all men that perceives the law of nature’. The other method of perceiving natural law was ‘sense’. Moral sense, or natural sense, was agreeable to the natural law, as set out in the Mosaic law.

All human beings, whether regenerate or unregenerate, had some knowledge of the natural law, and the ability to obey it to a certain extent. Even heathens had natural law, and their law was compatible with the Mosaic Law.¹⁷³ But although human beings had knowledge of natural law, and thus knew what they ought to do, they were ‘unwilling and unable to do it’.¹⁷⁴ Natural law was violated through ‘passion, or a belief that it is unjust’.¹⁷⁵ The light of nature had been dimmed by the Fall, and was now useless in unregenerate human beings. The seeds of religion and morality themselves had been corrupted, and the conscience perverts ‘every decision, so as to confound vice and virtue’.¹⁷⁶ Man’s natural moral sense became ‘illusory’, when he attempted to apply its principles in particular circumstances.¹⁷⁷ Now since the Fall, the main purpose of natural law ‘is to render sinners inexcusable. This would not be a bad definition: natural

¹⁷⁰ See Leithart, ‘Stoic Elements’, pp. 47-8.

¹⁷¹ Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.2.26-27, cited in Leithart, ‘Stoic Elements’, p. 45.

¹⁷² Leithart, ‘Stoic Elements’, pp. 37-8.

¹⁷³ Leithart, ‘Stoic Elements’, pp. 38-41.

¹⁷⁴ Leithart, ‘Stoic Elements’, p. 42.

¹⁷⁵ McNeill, ‘Natural Law’, pp. 179-181.

¹⁷⁶ Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, cited in Leithart, ‘Stoic Elements’, p. 43.

law is that apprehension of the conscience which distinguishes sufficiently between just and unjust, and which deprives men of the excuse of ignorance, while it proves them guilty by their own testimony'.¹⁷⁸

This brief examination of protestant interpretations of natural law, and the problems associated with it since the Fall, has demonstrated that Hobbes' own account put him closer to the views of Luther, Calvin, Melanchthon and Bullinger, than the views of his contemporary critics. Hobbes occasionally described the laws of nature as being engraved in human hearts by God, and he also equated them with equity, the Golden Rule, and the undoubted word of God.¹⁷⁹ Hobbes, along with Luther and Melanchthon, also thought that the laws of nature were not of equal extent to the Ten Commandments.¹⁸⁰ We have seen above that although Hobbes thought the laws of nature were immutable and eternal, he also thought that they were not effective in keeping peace in the state of nature. There were a number of problems caused by the passions, which meant that human beings had a tendency to reject future goods in favour of more immediate goods. Problems were also caused by the fallibility of natural reason. This meant that human beings had difficulty discovering natural law, and then interpreting it and applying it under particular circumstances. Hobbes had criticised the Schoolmen for this very reason - they had not dealt with the problems caused by disagreement over which actions did or did not constitute the virtues. Although he never made it explicit, Hobbes' account was also in agreement with the Reformed view that reason, through which human beings discovered the laws of nature, had been corrupted by the Fall, and now it was difficult to apply its principles in particular circumstances.

The Reformers had made a distinction between natural law before and after the Fall. The majority Reformed view was that now, since the Fall, the purpose of natural law was to leave no one with an excuse - the conscience let

¹⁷⁷ Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.2.23, cited in Leithart, 'Stoic Elements', p. 44.

¹⁷⁸ Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.2.22, cited in Leithart, 'Stoic Elements', p. 43.

¹⁷⁹ On the laws of nature written in men's hearts by God see for example: *De Homine*, XIV, 5, p. 73; *Elements*, XXIX, 7, p. 180 & 10, p. 182; *Leviathan*, XXXVI, 6, p. 282; and XLII, 37, p. 351. On the law of nature as the word or law of God see for example *Leviathan*, XLII, 11, p. 339; XLII, 131, p. 395; XLIII, 5, p. 399; XLIII, 22-3, pp. 409-10.

¹⁸⁰ See *Leviathan*, XLII, 37-39, pp. 352-3, for Hobbes' argument that only the second table of the ten commandments was applicable to all human beings; whereas the first table was specifically directed at God's peculiar people, and that this also applied to the Judicial and Levitical Laws.

human beings know if they had done wrong. But for the Reformers, as for Hobbes, conscience was not enough by itself - it might accuse human beings after the event, but it did not prevent them from breaking laws. Only the threat of earthly punishment was a great enough deterrent, and even that did not prevent some human beings from breaking even civil laws. We have seen in chapter one that God gave Adam and Eve a positive command, as well as the law of nature, because natural law was thought to be an insufficient test of obedience. It was also thought that the law of nature did not make it apparent that God was their sovereign and should be obeyed. The account of the Fall demonstrated that even God's positive command was not enough to prevent Adam and Eve from disobeying him. Similarly, as we have seen in chapter three, the account of Cain's murder of Abel demonstrated that the laws of nature, the conscience, and the fear of God were not enough to prevent Cain from killing his own brother.

The problem for Hobbes' seventeenth century readers was that he did not specifically attribute the corruption of reason to the Fall, although I have mentioned elsewhere that Hobbes had indicated that he was describing fallen human nature, when he stated that he was interested in human beings as they were, rather than as they should have been; and he also associated the state of nature with the pre-lapsarian condition, with his citation of Cain's murder of Abel. But there was no sense in Hobbes' political theory that at some point, i.e. before the Fall, human reason was perfect. From this we could assume one of two things: either Hobbes thought that human reason was never perfect; or, Hobbes failed to mention the Fall, because he was writing political philosophy, which he thought was separate from theology.¹⁸¹

6. Hobbes as Reformed Theologian?

We have seen that Hobbes' contemporary critics objected to his description of the right of nature for a number of reasons, the most important being the implication that right conflicted with law. For these writers, the right of nature was permitted

¹⁸¹ See Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore*, reproduced in part, in *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, edited with an introduction by J.C.A. Gaskin (Oxford University Press, Oxford & New York, 1994), chapter I, section 8, p. 191.

by the law of nature, which was given at the creation. It was not a right to all, and thus there was no original common ownership. Self-preservation was not the sole end of the right of nature, and thus it was not a right to hurt, kill, or invade others. The law of nature created and confined right, and also guided human judgement. Hobbes' views were thought to contradict scripture. God had created Adam and made him a universal monarch. As a result, no one had a right to anything except through Adam. But we have also seen above that the right of nature was not referred to by name in scripture, although Hobbes' argument that liberty came before law was confirmed by protestant interpretations of God's grant to Adam, and in some cases Eve. Having said that, unsurprisingly, there was no mention in *Genesis* of a right to hurt, kill, or invade others. This was a liberty that human beings had taken for themselves.

We have also seen that Hobbes' contemporary critics cited the scriptural account of Cain's murder of Abel to deny his description of the right of nature. God's immediate punishment of Cain, for the murder of his brother, proved that human beings did not have a right to kill, and that in killing his brother Cain had broken the law of nature. The sacrifices that both brothers offered to God was evidence that there was private property from the beginning, and also that human beings did not have a right to do as they pleased. But we have seen in chapter three that a number of aspects of Hobbes' description were supported by the account of Cain and Abel. Firstly, Hobbes' theological assumption of an original common ownership was in agreement with Augustine's theory of the Two Cities, subscribed to by Luther, according to which private property came into existence along with the earthly city, built by Cain. Secondly, Hobbes' definition of the right of nature as a liberty from law was confirmed by Cain's answer to God's questioning, that he was not his brother's keeper. With this statement, Cain demonstrated that he did not recognise either any obligation to his brother, nor the laws of nature, nor God himself. Cain killed his brother because he thought he could get away with it, and the laws of nature, the fear of God, and his own conscience failed to prevent this. On Hobbes' account the laws of nature failed to restrict Cain's liberty or right.

Hobbes had argued that the right of nature gave individuals a right to kill other individuals, if they judged it necessary to their own preservation. But if an

individual killed another individual for some other reason, without really believing it was necessary for his own preservation, then this action would be a wrong against God and natural law. Hobbes had used the example of a son killing his father, but his readers could have substituted this for a quarrel between two brothers. On Hobbes' account, if Cain really believed that the death of his brother was necessary for his own preservation, then he did not commit a wrong by killing Abel. But if Cain killed Abel for some other reason, for instance envy, then this was a wrong against both God and natural law. Hobbes himself thought that envy was the reason that Cain had killed Abel, and not because Cain believed Abel's death was necessary for his preservation. Thus on Hobbes' account Cain had committed a wrong. But if we looked at the consequences of Cain's action, we might wonder whether Cain had in fact committed a wrong. As we have seen in chapter three, although Cain was punished by God, God mitigated his punishment, so much so that it appeared as a benefit - Cain lived a long life, took a wife, had children, and built a city.¹⁸² Hobbes' critics had argued that God's immediate punishment of Cain proved that he had broken the law of nature. But God's mitigation of Cain's punishment, so that it appeared as a benefit, might lead us to believe that Cain had not in fact been punished, and therefore had not committed a wrong. Quite simply, God's punishment, which appeared as a benefit, did not prove, as the critics had argued, that Cain had broken the law of nature.

Hobbes' critics also objected to his account of the laws of nature. For these writers, self-preservation was not the sole end of natural law - Hobbes had omitted laws of nature which concerned relations with other men, and with God. Further, the very existence of the laws of nature contradicted Hobbes' argument that the state of nature was both a condition which lacked a common power, and a condition of war. The only way the critics were able to reconcile these apparent problems was by arguing that Hobbes' laws of nature could not really be law, and thus obligatory. But Hobbes' laws of nature were really laws and obliged the consciences of human beings in the state of nature. The problem, for Hobbes, was that their existence and their obligation over conscience, or as a command of God, was just not sufficient to keep men in peace. Hobbes thought that there were

¹⁸² See the scriptural account in chapter three, pp. 141-2.

a number of reasons for the ineffectiveness of the laws of nature in the state of nature. Firstly, natural reason was fallible, and as a result there were problems in discovering the laws of nature, interpreting them, and applying them in particular circumstances. All of these problems were caused by the passions. A.P. d'Entrèves has argued that different meanings of natural law were a consequence of different understandings of the term 'nature'.¹⁸³ The majority of Hobbes' contemporary critics understood nature in the Aristotelian sense, as the end and perfection of human existence. In this way, it was also understood as the original, perfect condition of Eden. The critics found Hobbes' description objectionable, because they thought that nature was an account of how human beings should have been, and this included the perfection of human reason. In such a condition, the conscience, and the fear of God were enough to keep most men from breaking the laws of nature, and thus ensure peace. But even if Hobbes was describing the lives of fallen human beings, the Fall had not erased the laws of nature, or the thought of God from human hearts. For Hobbes, if the laws of nature or reason had been enough, human beings would not have needed to live in commonwealths. We have seen in chapter one that this view was confirmed by those protestant commentators who thought that God had given Adam and Eve a positive command, as well as the laws of nature, because natural law was not enough by itself to ensure their obedience. Unfortunately even God's positive command had not prevented Adam and Eve from disobeying him.

Chapter three has demonstrated that a number of aspects of Hobbes' account of the laws of nature, and their ineffectiveness in the natural condition, were confirmed by the scriptural account of God's punishment of Cain after the murder of Abel. This chapter has also demonstrated that Hobbes' account of the laws of nature was closer than the views of his critics to the Reformed view of the problems associated with natural law, and human reason since the Fall. Although natural law was immutable and eternal, reason, through which human beings discovered it, had been corrupted by the Fall. Since the Fall, human beings found it difficult to apply the principles of natural law, and the conscience had a tendency to confuse virtue and vice. Now, the conscience did not prevent human beings from committing a wrong, but simply accused them after the event. For

¹⁸³ See d'Entrèves, *Natural Law*, p. 17.

Hobbes the Schoolmen had failed to deal with the problem of which actions constituted virtue or vice. Natural law was not only difficult to discover because of the passions, but it was also difficult to interpret and apply in particular circumstances. Hobbes' civil sovereign was designed to provide the solution to this problem, by giving natural law one interpretation, and setting out how it was to be applied in particular circumstances, thus converting natural law into civil law. Hobbes had argued that natural law only obliged actions where there was security. The laws of nature were only effective in creating peace in a condition of security, provided by a civil sovereign. In a condition of insecurity, where their application was open to interpretation, they simply contributed to the war of all against all.

Chapter Five: The Creation of Society.

'And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch'. (Genesis IV.16-17)

1. Hobbes on the escape from the State of Nature.

As we have seen in chapter two, Hobbes thought that human beings were not naturally sociable, but he also thought that they sought out the company of other individuals, and they did so for a number of mainly selfish reasons: to satisfy basic physical, sexual, or emotional need; or in order to have other individuals to compare themselves with. According to Hobbes, experience of what individuals did when they met each other demonstrated that 'every voluntary encounter is a product either of mutual need or of the pursuit of glory'. And from this it followed that all 'society, therefore exists for the sake of either advantage or of glory, i.e. it is a product of love of self, not love of friends'. But for Hobbes, 'no large or lasting society, can be based upon the passion for glory', because 'glorying, like honour is nothing if everybody has it'.¹

If glory could not be the origin of lasting society, what was? According to Hobbes, human beings sought out other people, and could increase the advantages of this life by doing so, but 'this is much more effectively achieved by Dominion than by their help'. It was the desire for dominion which was natural, rather than society. Individuals would rather seek dominion over others, than ally with them. But there was one thing that led individuals to society, rather than dominion, and that was fear of the harm other men might do to them, particularly if that harm resulted in their death. In 'the absence of fear, men would be more avidly attracted to domination than to society'. Therefore it was mutual fear which was the 'origin of large and lasting societies'.² Again, experience could confirm this. According to Hobbes, by

a Principle well known to all men by experience and which everyone admits, that men's natural Disposition is such that if they are not

¹ *De Cive*, I, 2, pp. 23-4.

² *De Cive*, I, 2, p. 24.

restrained by fear of a common power, they will distrust and fear each other, and each man rightly may, and necessarily will, look out for himself from his own resources.³

Even those who denied this in words, nevertheless admitted it as a truth by their actions - men locked their doors and armed themselves, even against their own children and servants; countries guarded their borders even in times of peace.⁴ And these were men who apparently lived in commonwealths. In order to counter the objection that if men feared each other that much, they would not have been able to come together in society, Hobbes defined fear as 'any anticipation of future evil'.⁵ In other words, the cause of society was fear of what the future might bring, rather than fear of what was already present. An individual might have been attacked today, and disposed of his opponent, but who knows if he would be able to do the same tomorrow, when another individual came to attack him. In the natural condition, human beings lived in constant fear of what the future might bring. It was this future evil which was demonstrated by reason.

Eventually individuals realised that living in the constant fear that others would attempt to take away their property, or even worse, attempt to kill them, was no way to live. They realised that they must come together in a large enough group, so that they would rarely feel threatened. In order to do this, they must make agreements with one another. This was the formation of the commonwealth. Hobbes assumed that it was a basic characteristic of human nature that if individuals had nothing to fear, then they would attempt to dominate as many other individuals as possible.⁶ It was fear which made individuals realise that although they might be able to dominate others today, that might not be the case tomorrow. For instance, if dominion was based on physical strength or intellect, then as human beings got older these faculties weakened. Thus, they became less able to dominate others, and less able to protect and preserve themselves. For Hobbes, 'we are driven by mutual fear to believe that we must

³ See *De Cive*, preface to the readers, 10, p. 10.

⁴ *De Cive*, preface to the readers, 11, pp. 10-11.

⁵ *De Cive*, footnote to I, 2, p. 25. See also *Leviathan*, XIII, 10, p. 77 & 12, p. 78.

⁶ As mentioned in earlier chapters, although Hobbes thought that there were two types of human beings (vain glorious and modest individuals), he also thought that in a condition of war even those individuals content with natural equality would be forced to behave as vain-glorious individuals.

emerge from such a state and seek allies; so that if we must have a war, it will not be a war against all men nor without aid'.⁷ In *Leviathan*, the individual's escape from the state of war, consisted 'partly in the passions, partly in his reason'. The 'passions that incline men to peace are fear of death, desire of such things necessary to commodious living, and a hope by their industry to obtain them. And reason suggesteth convenient articles of peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement'.⁸ Passions were the reason human beings created the commonwealth, and the laws of nature showed them how to achieve this aim.

2. The Contemporary Reaction: Hobbes versus Divine Right.

Chapter two has considered the objections of Hobbes' contemporary critics to his views on the natural equality and natural unsociability of human beings. There it was argued that their objections to Hobbes revolved around their different definition of the term 'nature'. The majority of Hobbes' contemporary critics understood nature in three ways. Firstly, in an Aristotelian sense, they understood that human beings were naturally sociable because of their potential to live in society. Society was essential for human beings, and their potential remained unfulfilled without it. According to Aristotle, there was a natural inequality of human beings - some human beings were naturally suited to rule, while others were naturally suited to serve - this was confirmed by experience. But secondly, many of Hobbes' critics also understood nature as the original, perfect condition of human beings at the creation. God's creation of Eve demonstrated natural sociability; and Adam's dominion over Eve demonstrated a natural hierarchy. Because Hobbes' contemporary critics thought that the natural condition was one of sociability and inequality, they could not understand how it could possibly have been a condition of war. If the natural condition was not a condition of war, then fear could not be the reason for the emergence of commonwealths.

Thirdly, and most importantly, for many of Hobbes' critics, society and government were natural, because they were created by God. Roger Coke denied

⁷ *De Cive*, I, 13, p. 30. See also *De Cive*, I, 15, p. 31; and *Elements*, XIV, 14, p. 81, where it was a dictate of reason.

⁸ *Leviathan*, XIII, 14, p. 78. The laws of nature have been discussed in chapter four.

Hobbes' claim that fear was both the beginning of civil society, and the cause of all religion and worship.⁹ All rights and government of both kings and kingdoms 'is from God immediately'.¹⁰ Government had never been created by covenants, and monarchy was its original form.¹¹ Charles Gildon thought that 'Humane Society, Propriety, Government and all Rules prescribed for the benefit and security of them are all divinely sanctioned'.¹² Similarly for George Lawson, 'Civil Government derives its Being from Heaven: for it is part of Gods Government over mankind...' God 'reserves the supreme and universal Power in his own hands', and also had the ability to depose rulers, or transfer government, as he pleased. 'To think that the sole or principal Cause of the constitution of a civil State is the consent of men, or that it aims at no further end then peace and plenty, is too mean a conceit of so noble an effect'.¹³ Following *Romans XIII*, power 'is always derived from God... and he takes it from one, and gives to another, either in an extraordinary or an ordinary way of Providence: as by giving a finall victory, or inclining men's hearts...'¹⁴ But Lawson also claimed that 'Commonwealths are by consent', and 'there is no power which can govern without consent not only of man, but also and especially of God, who either in justice and severity, or in mercy doth change and alter the Kingdoms of the world at will and pleasure. For he alone doth rule in heaven and earth at all times'.¹⁵

Hobbes' argument, that it was fear which led human beings themselves to create the commonwealth, implied for some of his contemporary critics that subjects could resist their king. Samuel Parker thought that Hobbes' theory destroyed 'the Safety of all Societies of Mankind in the World'. If individuals contracted to create society, solely for personal safety and private interest, then this meant that their contract could easily be broken. It also implied that anyone

⁹ See Coke, *A Survey of the Politicks*, pp. 24-5.

¹⁰ Coke, *Elements*, p. 39. See also William Sherlock, *The Case of the Allegiance due to Sovereign Powers, stated and resolved, according to scripture and reason, and the principles of the Church of England, with a more particular respect to the oath lately enjoyed, of allegiance to their present Majesties* (London, 1691), p. 15.

¹¹ See Coke, *A Survey of the Politicks*, p. 34.

¹² Gildon, *The Deists Manual*, p. 224.

¹³ Lawson, *An Examination*, p. 16.

¹⁴ Lawson, *An Examination*, p. 23.

¹⁵ Lawson, *An Examination*, pp. 24 & 47.

could rebel against the king, and take his title from him.¹⁶ Similarly for John Dowel, if

the fundamental law of Nature is *self Preservation*, and for fear that end should not be attained, pacts are entred into, but if after those pacts that design cannot be accomplished, then pacts are void: and therefore if people have a suspicion that the Prince will destroy them, they may take up Arms. And if the Prince be devested of his Government, the People are no longer obliged to obey him, and upon this account of *Self-Preservation*, they are to submit to those who can protect them.¹⁷

Dowel found it hard to believe 'that the Book called *Leviathan* was writ in defence of the Kings Power, Temporal and Ecclesiastical; since it manifestly asserts the cause of Usurpers'.¹⁸ According to Dowel,

This *Leviathan*, if the Principles were admired, justified the Actions of his Enemies; he casts this Imputation of the *Rump*, that they were obeyed onely for fear... if Fear be the great inducement to Government, they according to his Principles are to be condemned who out of the same fear obeyed the *Rump*.¹⁹

Quite simply for Dowel, 'No person that hath suckt in *Hobs* his Principles, can be a loyal Subject...'²⁰

Dowel was not the only writer to notice that, in the context of the early 1650s, Hobbes' views implied support for the engagement. Marchamont Nedham recommended his own treatise, and Hobbes' arguments, for submission 'to all nonsubscribers, whether Royal or Presbyterian'.²¹ Current Hobbes' scholars have also commented on this aspect of Hobbes' theory. Quentin Skinner has argued that Hobbes was contributing to the arguments for the engagement in *Leviathan*.²² More recently, Glenn Burgess has described Hobbes as 'the most reluctant

¹⁶ Parker, *A Discourse*, pp. 128-9. See also John Whitehall, *Behemoth Arraign'd: or a vindication of property against a fanatical pamphlet stiled Behemoth: or, the History of the Civil Wars of England, from 1640 to 1660* (London, 1680), pp. 2-3.

¹⁷ Dowel, *The Leviathan Heretical*, pp. 135-6.

¹⁸ Dowel, *The Leviathan Heretical*, p. 137.

¹⁹ Dowel, *The Leviathan Heretical*, pp. 134-5.

²⁰ Dowel, *The Leviathan Heretical*, p. 142. On p. 137, Dowel claimed that 'Oliver gaining the *Protectorship*, was so pleased with him on those accounts, that the great place of being *Secretary* was profered him'.

²¹ Marchamont Nedham, *The Case of the Commonwealth of England Stated*, edited by Philip A. Knachel (Folger Documents of Tudor and Stuart Civilisation, University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1969), pp. 138-9.

²² See Skinner, 'Conquest and Consent'; and 'Ideological Context', pp. 286-317. See also Collins, 'Christian Ecclesiology', p. 222.

Engager imaginable', and 'an Engager despite himself'.²³ Burgess claims that Hobbes intended *Leviathan* to be a defence of monarchy, but that between its writing (c. 1647) and publication (1651), circumstances changed around him, so that when Hobbes finally published *Leviathan*, 'he found himself with a book supporting a cause already lost'.²⁴ Burgess has pointed out that Hobbes himself later claimed that he had not intended *Leviathan* to be a defence of Cromwell's title, but he admitted that a couple of paragraphs in the review and conclusion were relevant to the engagement controversy.²⁵ It was in these paragraphs, where Hobbes added another law of nature, in which he unsuccessfully attempted to clarify his position, and as it were to disengage himself from the engagers, only to find himself justifying any successful rebellion.²⁶ It was, in other words, an accidental implication of Hobbes' general theory, which led to his contemporary critics believing he was a supporter of Cromwell. In *De Cive* Hobbes made his preference for monarchy over other forms of government clear, although he also admitted that it was the only part of his political theory which was stated with probability.²⁷ But if we understand *Leviathan* as the third version of a theory, originally put forward in the early 1640s in the *Elements of Law*, which was intended as a defence of the king against parliament, then can we really believe it was possible for Hobbes to have switched sides? As Glenn Burgess has suggested, Hobbes' contemporary critics misunderstood him, because they read *Leviathan* in the context of the 1650s, rather than the 1640s.²⁸

3. The Scriptural Account of Cain building a City.

Although, as we have seen in chapter three, on the war of all against all, many of Hobbes' contemporary critics subscribed to the Aristotelian view that human beings were naturally sociable, and thus were never in the condition of war that Hobbes had described, this view was not supported by the interpretations of

²³ Burgess, 'Contexts', p. 681. Also against the view that *Leviathan* was written to contribute to the engagement controversy, see Reventlow, *The Authority of the Bible*, p. 205.

²⁴ Burgess, 'Contexts', p. 677.

²⁵ See Burgess, 'Contexts', p. 678.

²⁶ See Burgess, 'Contexts', pp. 680-1.

²⁷ See *De Cive*, preface to the readers, 22, p. 14.

²⁸ See Burgess, 'Contexts', pp. 683 & 701.

protestant commentators on the fourth chapter of *Genesis*, which described Cain murdering his brother Abel. For those of Hobbes' readers who were familiar with the account of Cain and Abel, there were also parallels to be seen to Hobbes' views on the reasons individuals created the commonwealth. God's punishment of Cain, for the murder of his brother, led Cain to build a city. For sixteenth and seventeenth century commentators on *Genesis*, there were a variety of views on why Cain built a city. For a number of commentators, Cain built a city in order to oppress other people. Having noted that Cain's punishment 'to be a wanderer... to find a permanent dwelling place nowhere - involves civil government', Martin Luther further argued that 'Cain did not build the city on account of fear and for his defense but because of his sure hope of success and his pride and lust for ruling'.²⁹ Walter Raleigh noted that Cain either enclosed a city 'for his owne defence, or (as Josephus writteth) to oppresse others thereby',³⁰ while Alexander Ross thought that Cain

might the more securely tyrannize and prey upon other mens goods and lands: for he is the first King and Conquerour in the world: and therefore Kings should not delight in Conquering kingdomes without blood, least they be counted the successours of Caine and Nimrod, that mighty Hunter...³¹

In the theory of the Two Cities put forward by Augustine, and subscribed to by Luther, Cain was the origin of the earthly city, or the city of man.³² As Augustine put it, 'the first founder of the earthly city was... a fratricide, for, overcome by envy, [Cain] slew his own brother, a citizen of the Eternal City, on pilgrimage in this world'.³³ According to Augustine, 'the earthly city was created by self-love... the earthly city glories in itself... looks for glory from men... [and] lifts up its head in its own glory...'³⁴ Cain's building of a city was also compared to the founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus, although in this case 'both brothers were citizens of the earthly city', and both sought glory. Augustine

²⁹ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 294 & 315. See also p. 312, where Luther noted that 'the descendants of Adam were discouraged by continuous warfare with the sons of men and succumbed with the exception of eight persons who were preserved'.

³⁰ Raleigh, *A History of the World*, p. 72.

³¹ Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 80.

³² See Augustine, *City of God*, XV, 5, p. 596; and Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 252-4.

³³ Augustine, *City of God*, XV, 2, pp. 600-1.

³⁴ Augustine, *City of God*, XIV, 28, p. 593.

thought that Romulus killed Remus because ‘his aim was to glory in the exercise of power’, and as long as Remus remained alive, Romulus’ ‘sovereignty was diminished... Therefore, in order that the sole power should be wielded by one person, the partner was eliminated...’ According to Augustine, the conflict between Romulus and Remus ‘demonstrated the division of the earthly city against itself.’³⁵

For a number of commentators, when Cain built a city he did so for love of wordly things, and from vain glory. According to Gervase Babington, in

Cains building a Cittie and calling it after his sonnes name, we see the care of the wicked ever. More to desire to magnifie themselves, then to glorifie God, more to seeke after a name in earth, then a life in heaven, more to establish their seede with townes and towers, then with Gods favour. But such course is crooked and like Cains here. If we desire a name, the love of God and his word, the love of Christ and his trueth is the way.³⁶

For Alexander Ross, Cain built a city because he ‘was worldly-minded, placing his happiness in the cities and forts of this world, and not looking for that city whose builder and maker is God...’³⁷ William Whateley noted that although building a city is ‘for the replenishing of men with people, and the commodious habitation of men borne into the world... a good and commendable thing in it selfe... [but] men may easily and often doe transgresse much in the manner of doing it’.³⁸ In Cain’s case, it was ‘a piece of vaine-glory’, and it was through boastfulness that he named it after his son.³⁹ John Trapp also thought that Cain named the city after his son, because this ‘is the ambition of worldly men; their names are not written in heaven; they will propagate them therefore upon earth, as *Nimrod* by his tower. *Absolom* by his pillar, *Cain* by his city...’⁴⁰

Other commentators followed Calvin, in arguing that Cain built a city because of fear. For Calvin, Cain’s action in building a city was ‘a sign of an agitated and guilty mind’. Adam and the others were able to live ‘dispersed through the fields’, because they were less afraid. But Cain wanted to separate

³⁵ Augustine, *City of God*, XV, 2, pp. 600-1.

³⁶ Babington, *Comfortable Notes*, p. 22.

³⁷ Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 80.

³⁸ Whateley, *Prototypes*, p. 17.

³⁹ Whateley, *Prototypes*, p. 22.

⁴⁰ Trapp, *A Clavis to the Bible*, pp. 53-4.

'himself from the rest of men'. Calvin thought that it was fear which drove Cain 'within the walls of a city, that he may fortify himself in a manner before unknown'. Once the city had been built, 'supercilious vanity breaks forth'. Thus, Cain named the city after his son because his 'pride was mixed with his diffidence and anxiety'.⁴¹ John Trapp thought that Cain built a city in order to relieve his guilty conscience,⁴² while for Alexander Ross it was for 'his better securitie, for hee was in continuall feare'.⁴³ Andrew Willet denied that

Cain neither built him a citie, to be defended against wild beastes, which was the first cause, as Plato thinketh, that mooved men to build cities: for this reason might as well have mooved the righteous seed to have done it: neither because man is a sociable creature and loveth companie, as Aristotle: for this reason might as well have caused Adam to build, as Cain: but it is most like because Cain was a fugitive and runnagat, he would build him a citie to stay in and to be a defence unto him, as though Gods curse should not have taken place...⁴⁴

Benjamin Needler thought that Cain built a city for his security against beasts, and for his defence against those who might try to kill him. But that in doing so, Cain attempted to 'evade the sentence God has pronounced against him, that he should be a runagate and a vagabond'.⁴⁵ Cain might have built a city, but he was still in exile from his home, and from God. According to Needler, Adam's son Seth, and his descendants, did not need to build a city because 'the Lord had given them the plenty of the earth, and this was a stronger defence to them then the walls of any City: but Cain, who was departed from the presence of the Lord, was compelled to build a City for his defence: not for pleasure, but for security'.⁴⁶

These interpretations, of the seventeenth verse of the fourth chapter of *Genesis*, demonstrated that Hobbes' seventeenth century readers could have seen important parallels between Hobbes' account, and the scriptural account of Cain building a city. In fact, Hobbes' own account seems to indicate that he was aware

⁴¹ Calvin, *Commentaries*, p. 216.

⁴² Trapp, *A Clavis to the Bible*, pp. 53-4.

⁴³ Ross, *An Exposition*, p. 80. See also Ainsworth, *Annotations, Genesis, IV.17*; and Haak, *Dutch Annotations, Genesis IV.17*.

⁴⁴ Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis and Exodus*, p. 51.

⁴⁵ Needler, *Expository Notes*, pp. 173-4. Needler, pp. 175-6, also addressed the question of how Cain's construction of a city fitted with God's punishment that he should be a vagabond. According to Needler, God did not set a time limit for his punishment; and also God's pronouncement was a threat, which could 'be mitigated', rather than a prophecy, 'which is always fulfilled'.

⁴⁶ Needler, *Expository Notes*, pp. 175-6.

of the interpretations of Cain building a city, and had learnt the lessons of the scriptural account. It would have been possible for Hobbes' readers to see, in his account of the creation of the commonwealth, various aspects of the account of Cain building a city. Hobbes' views were in agreement with those of Calvin and others, who thought that Cain built a city because of his fear, although admittedly not always the same sort of fear. And yet Hobbes could be understood to have taken account of the other interpretations, which saw Cain building a city because he was worldly minded, in order to oppress others, and for security and defence. Hobbes' arguments that all society existed for the sake of love of self, and was a product of glory; but that no lasting society could be based on glory also appear to be supported by Augustine's theory of the Two Cities. According to Augustine, Rome fell because it was founded on glory. Similarly for Hobbes, if the earthly city was to be lasting, it could not be founded on glory, although it could be founded on fear of death, security in the knowledge that we would be preserved, and desire of those things necessary for a comfortable life.

Why then did Hobbes' contemporary critics fail to see these parallels? There were two main reasons for this. Firstly, due to their definition of the term 'nature', they understood the natural condition as the original, perfect condition of Adam and Eve in Eden, rather than the condition of fallen human beings. Thus Adam's dominion was the model for monarchy. Even when they attempted to associate Hobbes' natural condition with fallen human nature, they appear to have had different views of the extent to which human beings were corrupted by the Fall. Hobbes' contemporary critics believed that natural hierarchy and sociability were retained after the Fall. Further, because nature was understood as perfection, they wanted to look at human beings, as if the Fall had never taken place. Hobbes, on the other hand, appears to have been closer to the views of Augustine, Luther and Calvin, that the Fall had subverted or inverted the order of nature, and that man had lost his dominion over the earth after the disobedience.⁴⁷ Secondly, and most importantly, for Hobbes' contemporary critics, Cain was the first tyrant, he was not the first monarch. Christopher Hill has shown that Cain (and Nimrod) were used by both royalist and parliamentary political writers as a symbol of

⁴⁷ See Almond, *Adam and Eve*, p. 13.

corrupt monarchy, and oppressive rule. Milton, for instance, compared Charles I to Cain, as well as describing the war between England and Scotland as a fratricidal war.⁴⁸ The account of Cain and Abel had a democratic meaning for radicals such as Gerard Winstanley, and demonstrated that a hierarchy based on birth did not necessarily provide the best governors. Cain was a symbol for all exploitation, and the account of the two brothers demonstrated the arbitrariness of God's decrees - good men, like Abel, suffered, while evil men, like Cain, prospered.⁴⁹ Hobbes' contemporary critics appear to have been unaware of his own use of the account of Cain and Abel, but even so for these writers Cain represented degenerated nature, not perfect nature. But for any of Hobbes' readers who subscribed to Augustine's theory of the Two Cities, Cain, regardless of whether or not he was a tyrant, was the founder of the earthly city.

4. Hobbes on the Creation of the Commonwealth.

Although we have seen that Hobbes thought that the state of nature was a condition of equality, he also thought that by right of nature, for the sake of self-preservation, if an individual could achieve dominion, or power over another, he should be allowed it. But in the natural condition that dominion, if based on physical strength or superior intellect, was temporary and insecure, and at some point the subjected individual might break free. For instance, if he was a child, as he grew older, stronger, and wiser, he would find it easier to rebel against his parents. In order to make dominion, or power over another individual lasting, it had to be turned into authority, through the consent of the subjected individual. According to Hobbes, when one man acquired dominion over another a little kingdom was created. This marked the beginning of commonwealths.

There was, for Hobbes, only one reason why men, 'who naturally love liberty and dominion over others', would subject themselves to another, and that was for self-preservation.⁵⁰ But from this one cause of subjection, proceeded two

⁴⁸ See Hill, *The English Bible*, pp. 207, 221, 244, 204 & 206. See also p. 220 - Cromwell himself was compared to *Nimrod*.

⁴⁹ See Hill, *The English Bible*, pp. 204-6 & 208. See also pp. 387-9, for John Bunyan's similar view of Cain and Abel.

⁵⁰ *Leviathan*, XVII, 1, p. 106; and see *Elements*, XIX, 11, p. 107

types of subjection. Firstly, subjection 'to him that invadeth or may invade him for fear of him'. This produced a body politic, arising naturally by compulsion, through natural force, and from which proceeded paternal and despotic dominion.⁵¹ Of these two types of dominion, despotic dominion took place immediately, but paternal dominion took place in the future, upon the birth of children.⁵² Secondly, 'men may join amongst themselves to subject themselves to such as they shall agree upon for fear of others'. This produced a body politic, 'which is like a creation out of nothing by human wit', and 'for the most part is called a commonwealth in distinction from the former', although this was the general name for both.⁵³ For Hobbes, there were two kinds of commonwealth. In the natural commonwealth a 'Lord acquires citizens for himself by his own will', and men subjected themselves to the one they feared; and in the commonwealth by design, which could also be called political, 'the citizens impose a Lord upon themselves by their own decision, whether that be one man or one group of men with sovereign power', and men subjected themselves to the one they trusted, through fear of the rest.⁵⁴ In *Leviathan* these types of commonwealth were called the commonwealth by acquisition and the commonwealth by institution, and they were created in three ways: voluntary subjection, conquest in war, and the dominion of parents over children.⁵⁵

The commonwealth by institution, or political commonwealth, was created when 'men agree amongst themselves to submit to some man, or assembly of men, voluntarily, on confidence to be protected by him against all others'.⁵⁶ In a commonwealth by institution men submitted to a sovereign power through fear of one another, and not through fear of the sovereign they instituted.⁵⁷ There were, for Hobbes, three types of instituted commonwealth: democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy. In both the *Elements* and *De Cive*, while comparing monarchy and aristocracy, and in particular the inconveniences for

⁵¹ *Elements*, XIX, 11, pp. 107-8; & XX, 1, p. 109.

⁵² See *Elements*, XXII, 2, p. 126. This future aspect of paternal dominion was omitted from the accounts of *De Cive* and *Leviathan*.

⁵³ *Elements*, XIX, 11, pp. 107-8 & XX, 1, p. 109.

⁵⁴ *De Cive*, V, 12, p. 74.

⁵⁵ See *Leviathan*, XVII, 15, pp. 109-10. In *Leviathan* Hobbes seemed reluctant to describe the commonwealth by acquisition as natural, other than that it was created by natural force.

⁵⁶ *Leviathan*, XVII, 15, p. 110.

⁵⁷ See *Leviathan*, XX, 2, p. 127; *De Cive*, V, 12, p. 74 and *Elements*, XIX, 11, p. 108.

subjects in both, Hobbes stated that he would ignore arguments from example and testimony. These included the arguments: 'that the world, as it was created, so also it is governed by one God', and 'that paternal government, which is monarchy, was instituted in the beginning from the creation; and that other governments have proceeded from the dissolution thereof, caused by the rebellious nature of mankind, and be but pieces of broken monarchies cemented by human wit...'⁵⁸ These statements were missing from the corresponding chapter in *Leviathan*.

So why didn't Hobbes take the easy option, and use these arguments to demonstrate the superiority of monarchy - these would have been arguments that his readers were familiar with? Why, in fact, did he mention these arguments at all? Perhaps Hobbes thought that the mere mention of scriptural arguments might add weight to his case, without his having to subscribe to them. It seems more likely that the context provides the answer. At the time of writing the *Elements* and *De Cive*, the conflicts between parliament and Charles I had been intensifying since 1625, resulting in Charles' eleven year personal rule from 1629 to 1640. The Scots had rebelled in 1638, leading to more conflict with parliament, and eventually to civil war between 1642 and 1646.⁵⁹ In this period of time, arguments from example or experience simply demonstrated that the people, or their representatives, could and indeed were opposing the king. Thus we can understand why, in the earlier works, Hobbes said he did not want to use the above arguments from example and testimony. Also, if we consider his view that the Civil War was at least in part caused by religion, then we can understand why Hobbes felt that he must provide a theory in support of monarchy, which ignored traditional scriptural arguments - scripture was open to interpretation.⁶⁰ Hobbes must have thought that at this time any theoretical support for obedience to kings, could not be grounded either on scripture - both royalists and parliamentarians

⁵⁸ *Elements*, XXIV, 3, p. 138; and see also *De Cive*, X, 3, p. 117, which gave the additional example of God's people living under kings.

⁵⁹ The *Elements of Law* was completed in May 1640 and circulated in manuscript form. It was published in an unauthorised version in 1650. *De Cive* was written between 1637 and 1640. It was first published in Paris in April 1642; an enlarged edition was published in 1647; and finally an English translation, which was probably not by Hobbes, in 1651.

⁶⁰ See Hobbes, *Behemoth*, pp. 2-3. *Behemoth* was written in 1670, and was published unauthorised in 1679, and authorised in 1682.

believed that God was on their side - or on experience - the people of England had taken up arms against their king.

Hobbes' commonwealth by acquisition was created in two ways, the first of which was despotic dominion, and which once enlarged became a despotical kingdom. In this case, dominion was 'acquired by conquest or victory in war', when one man submitted to another through fear of death.⁶¹ It involved 'a covenant from him that is overcome, not to resist him that overcometh'.⁶² The victor spared the life of the conquered, and in return the conquered now 'owes the victor service and obedience, as absolute as may be, except what is contrary to divine laws'.⁶³ In this way, 'a little body politic' was created consisting of master (sovereign) and servant (subject). Once the master had acquired dominion 'over a number of servants so considerable that they cannot by their neighbours be securely invaded', then this became a kingdom despotical.⁶⁴ It was not the victory that gave the right of dominion, but the covenant, or agreement from the conquered that in return for his life being spared, he would not resist the conqueror.⁶⁵ But if a servant captured in war was kept in chains or prison, then it was to be assumed that no covenant had passed between him and his captor, because the natural bonds of imprisonment 'have no need of strengthening by the verbal bonds of covenant'. In this case, the servant was actually a slave, and had no obligation to his master, and had the right to free himself by whatever means necessary.⁶⁶ Did the despotical kingdom mark the end of the state of nature, and the beginning of commonwealths? It did once it had become large enough to be able to defend itself, against any other group of individuals in the natural condition.

Paternal dominion, which once enlarged became a patrimonial kingdom, was another variety of the commonwealth by acquisition. In the *Elements* Hobbes described paternal dominion as not taking place immediately, but in the future

⁶¹ *Leviathan*, XX, 10, p. 130.

⁶² *Elements*, XXII, 2, pp. 126-7.

⁶³ *De Cive*, VIII, 1, p. 103.

⁶⁴ *Elements*, XXII, 2, p. 127. See also *Leviathan*, XX, 15, p. 132. But this argument was omitted in *De Cive*.

⁶⁵ See *Leviathan*, XX, 11, p. 131.

⁶⁶ *Elements*, XXII, 3, p. 127.

when children were born.⁶⁷ The dominion of parents over children in the state of nature belonged first to the mother, and then by derivative right to the father. Hobbes asked the question, how was it possible for one individual to have the right of dominion over a child, which proceeded from the generation of two human beings?⁶⁸ The answer could not be that the right of dominion came from generation, for ‘God hath ordained to man a helper; and there be always two that are equally Parents’.⁶⁹ In other words, dominion attained by generation created divided authority.⁷⁰ For Hobbes, both parents could not have dominion, since no man could obey two masters.⁷¹ So which parent was the child subject to? Hobbes returned to the state of nature, where there were ‘no laws of matrimony... no laws for the education of children, but the law of nature, and the natural inclination of the sexes, one to another, and to their children’.⁷² Because all adults (including women) were accounted equal, the right of nature made the master victor over the conquered. Thus the right of nature gave dominion over the child to he, or she, who first had the child in his, or her, power.⁷³ Because the child was a part of the mother’s body until she gave birth, the right of dominion belonged to the mother.⁷⁴

The right of dominion was not derived from generation, but from preservation.⁷⁵ According to Hobbes, a child was subject to its mother not because the mother ‘begat him, but from the child's consent, either express, or by

⁶⁷ See *Elements*, XXII, 2, p. 126. This seems to indicate that at least in the *Elements* account of the natural condition, there were no children. Thus the birth of children must mark the beginning of commonwealths. It also might indicate that this account of the natural condition fits the model of the Edenic condition, where Adam and Eve lived alone, before the birth of their sons.

⁶⁸ See *Elements*, XXIII, 1, p. 130; and *Leviathan*, XX, 4, p. 128.

⁶⁹ *Leviathan*, XX, 4, p. 128. Pateman, ‘God Hath Ordained to Man a Helper’, p. 453, cites this line of scripture as evidence that Hobbes thought that the father was the principal agent in generation. But if we consider the second part of this sentence, it seems more likely that Hobbes saw this as evidence of the equality of men and women. Pateman seems to have taken it for granted that helper implies inferior. As we have seen in chapter two, not all commentators on *Genesis* interpreted this verse as Pateman has done.

⁷⁰ John Locke was later to criticise Sir Robert Filmer’s patriarchal theory on the grounds that Filmer had forgotten mothers. See Locke, *Two Treatises*, I, 55, p. 180, where Locke criticised Filmer’s argument for Adam’s authority as a father, on the grounds that both parents shared authority over children; and *Two Treatises*, I, 61, pp. 184-6, where he criticised Filmer for his failure to realise that the fifth commandment enjoined obedience to both parents - Filmer had conveniently forgotten the last three words of this commandment - ‘and thy mother’.

⁷¹ See *De Cive*, IX, 1, p. 108; and *Leviathan*, XX, 4, p. 128.

⁷² *Leviathan*, XX, 4, p. 129.

⁷³ See *De Cive*, IX, 2, p. 108.

⁷⁴ See *Elements*, XXIII, 1, p. 130. This is missing in *De Cive*.

⁷⁵ Man’s defenceless at birth was an outcome of the Fall - see Almond, *Adam and Eve*, p. 38.

other sufficient arguments declared'.⁷⁶ In the state of nature, it was the mother who could choose either to nourish or abandon her child. If she preserved the child, she could reasonably expect that the child would not grow up to become her enemy, otherwise no one would preserve their children.⁷⁷ In *De Cive* and *Leviathan* Hobbes added that unless a woman declared a man to be the father of a child, it could not be known who was the father.⁷⁸ In 'the state of nature every woman who gives birth becomes both a mother and a Mistress'. Those who claimed it was the father who had dominion, simply because of 'the superiority of his sex', were wrong. Reason demonstrated that 'the inequality of natural strength is too small to enable the male to acquire dominion over the female without war'.⁷⁹ And custom gave us the example of the Amazons, and women who had sovereign power, who made decisions about their children.⁸⁰

In the state of nature, 'the mother is originally the Mistress of the children, and the father or anyone else is their Master by derivative right'.⁸¹ There were a number of ways in which one human being could acquire a right of dominion from another. A mother could relinquish her right over her child - she could abandon the child, and then whoever preserved the child acquired the right of dominion. In the state of nature, 'where all things belong to all men', the mother could reclaim her child, or acquire dominion over any other child, by the same right as anyone else - if she preserved its life.⁸² Whoever had dominion over the child could do whatever he, or she, liked with the child - sell the child into slavery or adoption, or even kill it.⁸³ A parent was incapable of wronging a child, so long as that child was under the parent's authority.⁸⁴ A mother could become subject to another individual, and in so doing whoever became her master also acquired right over her children. This was accomplished in a number of ways. If the mother

⁷⁶ *Leviathan*, XX, 4, p. 128

⁷⁷ See *Elements*, XXIII, 3, pp. 130-1; *De Cive*, IX, 3, p. 108; and *Leviathan*, XX, 5, pp. 129-30. Hobbes seems to have had no concept of the unconditional love of parents for their children.

⁷⁸ See *De Cive*, IX, 3, p. 108; and *Leviathan*, XX, 5, p. 129.

⁷⁹ *De Cive*, IX, 3, p. 108. Although in *Leviathan*, XIX, 22, p. 126, Hobbes claimed that 'men are naturally fitter than women for actions of labour and danger'; and in XXI, 16, p. 142, he referred to the 'natural timorousness' of women.

⁸⁰ See *Elements*, XXIII, 5, p. 131; *De Cive*, IX, 3, p. 108; and *Leviathan*, XX, 4, p. 129.

⁸¹ *De Cive*, IX, 7, p. 110.

⁸² *De Cive*, IX, 4, p. 108.

⁸³ See *Elements*, XXIII, 8, p. 132.

⁸⁴ See *De Cive*, IX, 7, p. 110. In this case, if a child had given its consent to its parent, everything the parent did was authorised by the child.

became captive in war, then dominion over her children belonged to whoever had acquired dominion over her, whether that person was the biological father of the child, or not.⁸⁵ If the mother was a citizen of a commonwealth, then the sovereign of that commonwealth had dominion over both the mother and the child. If a woman ‘gives herself to a man to share her life with him’, on the condition that he had power over her, then that man also had power over her children. But if the woman was the partner with power in this relationship, then she also had dominion over children. This was particularly important for sovereign queens, otherwise they would lose their power by marrying and having children. Generally, if the relationship of a man and a woman was a union in which one was subject to the power of the other, the children belonged to the partner with power.⁸⁶ Where there was no contract, dominion belonged to the mother.⁸⁷ If a man and woman entered into a partnership in the state of nature, in which neither was subject to the other, such as covenants of ‘cohabitation for society of bed only’, and covenants of copulation, the covenant decided who would have dominion.⁸⁸ But because commonwealths had generally been established by fathers, it was men that now had dominion over children.⁸⁹

When paternal dominion was enlarged, a patrimonial kingdom or monarchy by acquisition was created.⁹⁰ But for Hobbes, there was a difference between a family and a commonwealth. The family, consisting of father or

⁸⁵ See *Elements*, XXIII, 4, p. 131, where Hobbes described it as absolute subjection; and *De Cive*, IX, 5, p. 109.

⁸⁶ See *De Cive*, IX, 5, p. 109. See also *Leviathan*, XX, 6, p. 130. I cannot agree with Carole Pateman, who claims that women do not take part in the social contract - see Pateman, ‘God Hath Ordained to Man a Helper’, p. 461. In the Latin *Leviathan*, XLII, 78a, p. 372 (a paragraph which did not appear in the English version), Hobbes stated that ‘authority does not take account of masculine and feminine’. See also Hobbes’ similar statement, ‘though man be male and female, authority is not’, in ‘Considerations upon the Reputation, Loyalty, Manners and Religion of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury, written by himself, by way of letter to a learned person (John Wallis, D.D.)’, in *English Works*, Volume IV, pp. 409-40, p. 434. This was written in 1662. Hobbes’ language here is similar to the language of *Galatians* III.28 - ‘there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus’. We will see below that one of Hobbes’ contemporary critics, William Lucy thought that because Hobbes had claimed individuals created civil society for peace and preservation, these aims applied to all individuals, including women. Thus women took part in the covenant.

⁸⁷ See *Leviathan*, XX, 5, p. 129.

⁸⁸ *Elements*, XXIII, 4-5, p. 131. In *De Cive*, IX, 6, pp. 109-10, once commonwealths had been created, if a man and woman entered into a relationship of concubinage, then the civil laws decided who had dominion over children.

⁸⁹ See *De Cive*, IX, 6, p. 110; and *Leviathan*, XX, 4, p. 129.

⁹⁰ See *Elements*, XXIII, 10, p. 133.

master, children and servants, was a sort of little monarchy, as long as it was not part of a larger commonwealth. But a family was only properly a commonwealth, when it became large enough to be able to defend itself.⁹¹ Much earlier in *Leviathan* Hobbes had claimed that governing a family and a kingdom were different sorts of business,⁹² although elsewhere he compared kings to fathers of families, and the sovereigns of the three different kinds of commonwealths to the three sorts of masters of families.⁹³

Hobbes' description of dominion in families is confusing for a number of reasons. Hobbes claimed that there was no dominion in the state of nature,⁹⁴ but that mothers had dominion over children in the state of nature, and that a son was never in the state of nature. How do we explain these apparently contradictory statements? Firstly, Hobbes stressed that the state of nature was a state of equality, and that there was no dominion of persons before civil government.⁹⁵ Because everyone had a right to everything in the state of nature, it was not possible to invade someone else's right, because where all had a right, no one had a right. This also meant that all sexual partnerships were permitted, honour due to parents was according to each man or child's own judgement, and killing was permitted.⁹⁶ But although all adults were to be accounted equal in the state of nature, if a man could achieve power over another, he should be allowed it.⁹⁷ Indeed it was in any individual's interest to do so. But in a condition where all had a right to all, this dominion was not secure. The case of parent and child was a good example of insecure dominion, because children grew into adults, and thus became as capable as their parents of killing.⁹⁸ On this account, the family, as Hobbes thought of it (as a relationship of dominion and subjection), could not exist in his state of nature. But Hobbesian equality only applied to adults, so dominion over children, or the fact that children at least at birth subjected themselves to adults in order to survive, did not detract from this state of equality,

⁹¹ See *De Cive*, IX, 10, p. 112; *Elements*, XXIII, 10, p. 133; and *Leviathan*, XX, 15, p. 132.

⁹² See *Leviathan*, VIII, 12, p. 40.

⁹³ See *Leviathan*, XLII, 70, p. 368 & XLII, 82, p. 374.

⁹⁴ Although the desire for dominion was natural.

⁹⁵ See *Leviathan*, XIII, 1, p. 74 & XVI, 10, p. 103.

⁹⁶ See *De Cive*, XIV, 9, p. 158.

⁹⁷ See *Leviathan*, XIII, 4, p. 75; *De Cive*, I, 14, pp. 30-1; and *Elements*, XIV, 13, pp. 80-1.

⁹⁸ The patriarchal theory, which compared the king's power to the power of the father in the family, had not prevented Charles I's subjects from resisting him, and then executing him.

and as a result the family could exist there. Was the birth of children in the state of nature the beginning of dominion? Was it also the beginning of commonwealths? A passage from *De Cive* leads us to believe that it was. In this paragraph Hobbes discussed objections to his claim that 'property and commonwealths came into being together'. Hobbes noted that objections to this idea, based on the fact that 'property in things existed in fathers of families before the institution of commonwealths', did not hold, because he had already said that a family was a small commonwealth. 'Fathers of different families who share no common father or master, have a common right to all things'.⁹⁹ So there were families, or little commonwealths, in a state of nature in relationship to each other.¹⁰⁰

Having said that the state of nature was a state of equality (between adults), and that there was no dominion (over adult persons) before civil states come into existence, Hobbes went on to say that it was women who had dominion over children in the state of nature. But he also made the contradictory claims: that in the state of nature children were absolutely subject to fathers;¹⁰¹ and that a son was never in the state of nature.¹⁰² Elsewhere he claimed that before the formation of commonwealths, human beings lived in families, in which fathers were sovereign.¹⁰³ Further, these families were continually at war with one another, and enlarged their dominion to become kingdoms.¹⁰⁴ With the exception of the first reference to the *Elements*, where children were absolutely subject to fathers, the other references did not mention the state of nature, but described the time before commonwealths came into being. In *A Dialogue between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws of England*, the philosopher made the following statement: 'it is evident, that Dominion, Government, and Laws, are far more Ancient than History, or any other writing, and that the beginning of all Dominion amongst men was in Families; in which, first, the Father of the Family by the Law of nature was absolute Lord of his Wife and

⁹⁹ *De Cive*, VI, 15, p. 85.

¹⁰⁰ See Schochet, *Patriarchalism in Political Thought*, chapter XII on Hobbes and the family.

¹⁰¹ See *Elements*, XX, 16, p. 116.

¹⁰² See *De Cive*, footnote to I, 10, pp. 28-9

¹⁰³ See *De Cive*, XIII, 14, p. 150; *Leviathan*, X, 51, p. 55; XXII, 26, p. 153; XXVII, 51, p. 203; and XXX, 11, p. 224.

¹⁰⁴ See *Leviathan*, XVII, 2, pp. 106-7; and XXII, 31, p. 154.

Children'. This was confirmed by history and scripture, but again there was no mention of the state of nature.¹⁰⁵

There are a number of possible explanations for Hobbes' apparent contradictions on exactly who had dominion over children in the natural condition. Firstly, Hobbes may have argued that it was women who had dominion over children, in order to demonstrate to his mainly male readership what an awful place the state of nature was, and thus to explain why human beings, particularly males, had to leave this condition and create civil society. Secondly, and more likely, there were two states of nature in Hobbes' political theory, and these were created by two methods of argument, which contradicted each other, and which Hobbes himself failed to distinguish sharply enough.¹⁰⁶ In one state of nature, which we might call philosophical, the use of reason demonstrated the natural equality (and unsociability) of all human beings, including women. It also demonstrated that because women gave birth to children, it was women who, at least initially, had dominion, or power, over children. But in order to demonstrate that all authority was based on consent, Hobbes first of all described why mothers had original dominion, and then described how this authority over children was transferred from mothers to fathers. A mother might well have acquired authority over a child, because she had given birth to that child, but the father or mother maintained authority through consent. Once this transfer of authority over children from mothers to fathers had been completed, the philosophical state of nature, arrived at by arguments from reason, became what we might call the historical state of nature, arrived at by arguments from history and experience. In this state of nature, Hobbes gave us an account of how societies actually developed, and this account, as many of his contemporary critics pointed out,

¹⁰⁵ Thomas Hobbes, *A Dialogue between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws of England*, edited with an introduction by J. Cropsey (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1971, paperback edition 1998), pp. 158-9. Cropsey notes that Hobbes never referred to the state of nature by name in this work. He dates its composition as some time between 1662 and 1675. It was first published in 1681 (see *A Dialogue...*, introduction, pp. 13 & 3). Richard Tuck and Edwin Curley date its composition as 1666 (see *De Cive*, Principal Events in Hobbes' Life, p. xlvii; and *Leviathan*, Chronology, p. liii).

¹⁰⁶ See Schochet, *Patriarchalism in Political Thought*, p. 236.

demonstrated that it was men who had dominion over both women, and children.¹⁰⁷

Gordon Schochet has argued that it was the agreement of fathers of families which created the commonwealth by institution, although Schochet admitted that Hobbes himself did not state this directly.¹⁰⁸ But given Hobbes' views on the status of women in the natural condition, it could just as easily have been an agreement between mothers of families. Either way, families or commonwealths by acquisition came into being, with either parent at the head of each family. Then these families made an agreement, and submitted themselves to a common power, thereby creating the commonwealth by institution. Alternatively, these individual families warred with one another, and attempted to increase their power by subduing other families. This created what Hobbes referred to as despotic dominion.

To summarise, in Hobbes' view society was not natural, it was artificial. Hobbes thought that it was human beings themselves who created the commonwealth, and they did so for self-preservation, in order to escape the horrors of the natural condition, where they lived in constant fear that they would either be killed by other individuals, or that their insecure property would be taken away from them. The desire for dominion existed in the natural condition, and in fact Hobbes thought that individuals should try to attain dominion for preservation's sake, but this dominion was insecure and temporary. For Hobbes, any dominion based on the qualities nature had given individuals could not be long lasting. Children grew into adults, became less dependent on their parents, and more capable of resisting them. As adults got older, their physical and mental faculties weakened, and they were thus less able to dominate their children. Individuals were roughly equal, in the sense that one individual might be physically stronger than others; but this advantage could be outweighed by another individual having greater intellect, so much so that neither could gain the advantage completely. Individuals could attain dominion naturally, by sheer

¹⁰⁷ See the discussion on the contemporary reaction below, and also Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes*, p. 60, who argues that Hobbes thought that the historical origin of most commonwealths was patrimonial monarchy.

physical power, or by begetting children. But there was a difference between attaining this dominion and holding on to it. Dominion could only be lasting, if the subjected person gave his continuing consent to the victor, thereby turning dominion or power into authority.¹⁰⁹

Hobbes wanted to provide a new theoretical justification for the maintenance of obedience. The theories of divine right and patriarchy had failed to prevent the people of England from resisting their king, and ultimately killing him. These theories had concentrated on the origins of authority, and not on how authority was to be maintained. For Hobbes, it was simply not good enough to claim that kings must be obeyed because their authority originated in God, or their authority originated in fatherly power. There must be a continuing reason for obedience. It might well have been the case that dominion had been acquired by begetting children, or conquest in war, but there was a huge difference between attaining such dominion, either by generation or force, and then holding on to it. It was agreement, or consent, which created lasting authority, and stable commonwealths. To some extent Hobbes kept the patriarchal idea that authority in the family and commonwealth were similar, but he destroyed the idea that either type of authority was natural, and argued that both kinds of authority were based on consent. Authority could not be based on the power of fathers, because there were two human beings involved in the generation of children, and this created divided authority.¹¹⁰ Hobbes also thought that authority could not be based on fatherly (or parental) power, for the simple reason that children grew into adults, and became capable of resisting, or even killing, their parents. Hobbes accomplished the complete destruction of patriarchal ideas by claiming it was women who originally had dominion over children.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ See Schochet, *Patriarchalism in Political Thought*, p. 238. See also Tricaud, 'Hobbes's Conception of the State of Nature', p. 112, who has argued that in *Leviathan's* state of nature, war was waged between groups or families, rather than individuals.

¹⁰⁹ See also King, *The Ideology of Order*, p. 188 - the contract did not explain the origins of civil society, but how it continued its existence.

¹¹⁰ Divine right theory also created divided authority.

¹¹¹ Preston King thinks Hobbes was arguing against original paternal power, rather than in favour of original maternal power - see King, *The Ideology of Order*, p. 204. For Hobbes' destruction or subversion of patriarchy see also Keith Thomas, 'The Social Origins of Hobbes' Political Thought', in *Hobbes Studies*, edited by K.C. Brown (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1965), pp. 185-230; and Chapman, 'Leviathan Writ Small'.

5. The Contemporary Reaction: Hobbes versus the Patriarchalists.

For many of Hobbes' critics, his views on the creation of the commonwealth contradicted contemporary experience, history and scripture, which all confirmed that the origin of authority was to be found in the family. Bishop Bramhall accused Hobbes of taking 'a pride in removeing all ancient land-marks, between Prince and subject, Father and child, Husband and Wife, Master and servant, Man and Man'. Hobbes had caused as much confusion as 'a hog in a garden of herbs'.¹¹² For Samuel Parker, to 'be a Subject is as natural upon being born, as to be a Man'. All human beings, because they were born as children, were born under government, under the power of parents.¹¹³ Richard Cumberland deduced the origin of civil society from the law of nature, which 'commands the Settlement of Property', and the law of nature which 'enjoins a peculiar Benevolence of Parents towards their Children'. It was as a 'consequence of that Benevolence, our first Parents must have granted to their Children, when of Age, both a Patrimony of their own, out of that full Dominion, which they had over all things by the former of these Laws, and also a paternal Power over their own Offspring'.¹¹⁴ For Cumberland, 'Mankind, and consequently, all states and families, have descended from one Man and one Woman, and that, therefore all Authority derives its Original from that which is most Natural, the PATERNAL'.¹¹⁵

A number of writers described how commonwealths had developed, by tracing their origins to the first families, and even to Adam himself.¹¹⁶ According to Richard Cumberland, there was 'no *antienter Authority*, under God, over Things and Persons, than is that of *Fathers of Families* over their Wives and Children, and after them, of their *eldest Sons*'. As human beings increased in numbers, the heads of families divided dominion between their sons, 'by giving each an absolute Command over his own Family, or over many; whence many

¹¹² Bramhall, *Castigations*, p. 161.

¹¹³ Parker, *A Discourse*, pp. 123-4.

¹¹⁴ Cumberland, *A Treatise*, pp. 32-3. See also p. 80, private dominion had been in existence since the days of Adam.

¹¹⁵ Cumberland, *A Treatise*, p. 307.

Monarchies might arise...' Other families created aristocracies and democracies in a similar way.¹¹⁷ Charles Gildon noted that,

while the world was in its infancy, the Fathers of Families might naturally have the Power of decision among their own Children. But when Families Multiplied, Disputes betwixt Families required a Third Person necessarily to decide Controversies, and to see Justice impartially done, and this was the Rise of Governments.¹¹⁸

Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon attempted to relate Hobbes' state of nature to the scriptural account of the earliest human beings. According to Clarendon, God gave

Man, the dominion over the rest of his Creation, he gave him likewise natural strength and power to govern the World with peace and order: and how much soever he lost by his own integrity, by falling from obedience to his Creator, and how severe a punishment soever he under-went by that his disobedience, it do's not appear that his dominion over Man-kind was in any degree lessened or abated.

During his own lifetime, Adam was 'the sole Monarch of the World'. Further, his dominion was 'over a very numerous People', and during that time government was not instituted by covenants or contracts. Adam's son Seth continued this dominion, and then Noah after him. After the Tower of Babel was built 'the Generations of Noah... did divide the Nations in the Earth', but this division was performed 'with method and order'. It was not 'an irregular and confus'd dispersion, that every man went whither he listed, and settled himself where he liked best, from whence that Institution of Government might arise which Mr. *Hobbes* fancies'.¹¹⁹ As human beings increased in numbers, but did not live as long as Adam, they did not have as many children. As a result, 'they who had the Sovereign Powers exercis'd less of the Paternal Affection in their Government, and look'd upon those they govern'd as their mere subjects, not as their Allies'.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ See for example Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha*, reproduced in *Patriarcha and Other Writings*, edited by J.P. Sommerville (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991); and Raleigh, *A History of the World*.

¹¹⁷ Cumberland, *A Treatise*, p. 33.

¹¹⁸ Gildon, *The Deists Manual*, p. 224.

¹¹⁹ Clarendon, *A Brief View and Survey*, pp. 220-1. François Peleau, one of Hobbes' correspondents thought that the existence of families meant that Hobbes' state of nature could never have existed, although he also thought that after Noah's death, Shem, Japhet, and Ham could have waged war with one another - see *Hobbes' Correspondence*, Vol. I, pp. 331-2.

¹²⁰ Clarendon, *A Brief View and Survey*, p. 222.

But not all of Hobbes' contemporary critics thought that the authority of civil sovereigns originated in the power of fathers. George Lawson accused Hobbes of confounding 'Oeconomical power with Political'.¹²¹ Lawson thought that Hobbes' arguments, that paternal dominion was acquired by generation, and despotic dominion by conquest, were wrong. According to Lawson, power in the family and the commonwealth were different types of power. In 'a family there is a threefold power acquired; the power of an husband over his wife by marriage, covenant, or contract; the power of parents over their children, by generation; the power of Masters over their servants, acquired several waies; for some servants are slaves, some are free...' A master had more power over those slaves, or servants, who were 'born and bought', than the power he had over those who were hired. There was thus 'a difference of Despotical power even in a Family; the one is more absolute, the other more limited'. As far as civil sovereignty was concerned, there were two ways in which it could be acquired - 'either justly or unjustly'. Civil sovereignty was justly acquired either 'in an extraordinary way, as by special unction and designation from God', or 'in an ordinary manner, and that is either by the Law of Nature, or by institution'.¹²² Lawson also stated that although he was 'no enemy to Monarchy', he did not believe that it was necessarily the best form of government for all people, at all times, and under all circumstances. In scripture, we 'do not read that God did ever immediately institute a form of Government to any people except to *Israel*; yet that was not Monarchical'.¹²³

Hobbes' argument that paternal dominion was derived from consent, rather than generation, was thought to contradict scripture. John Whitehall commented that if paternal dominion was not derived from generation then 'why should Children be bound to honour their Parents by the Law of God; or by the Law Civil why should Parents be bound to provide for their Children. It must be either upon the account of generation or no way; for there is no other reason to be given for the said Laws'.¹²⁴ According to Roger Coke, Hobbes' views on paternal dominion implied that Adam did not have 'any power to restrain his Sons, or give

¹²¹ Lawson, *An Examination*, p. 45.

¹²² Lawson, *An Examination*, p. 46.

¹²³ Lawson, *An Examination*, p. 43.

them Law, as Father', because according to Hobbes paternal dominion was not from generation.¹²⁵ Although Adam was given 'Dominion over all Creatures, yet it was not intended that he alone should so enjoy his Dominion, that others of his own kind should be wholly deprived of the use and benefit of them, without which they could not possibly subsist'. When Cain and Abel were born, although Adam's dominion over the creatures continued, Cain and Abel had 'property in the Fruit of the Ground'. If we followed Hobbes' reasoning, 'this property could not be given to them by Adam as Father; for the Fathers power arising from generation, and the person being only generated, the Fathers power extends no further'. Cain and Abel's property was given to them by Adam as monarch.¹²⁶

The idea that paternal dominion was derived from consent, and not from generation, also contradicted experience. William Lucy thought that Hobbes' views on paternal dominion were simply inconsistent, because at one point he argued that paternal dominion was acquired by generation, and then contradicted himself by arguing it was based on consent. For Lucy, it was not possible for a child to give his consent to be governed by his parents. A child's consent was like that of 'a Pig, or any Infant Beast; he can wish for a Teat, and cry for it when he lacks it, and be satisfied with any that is offered'. If Hobbes' doctrine was correct, the child would 'chuse his Nurse who gave him suck, not the Mother who gave him being'. Further, children cannot tell their parents apart, and thus cannot give their consent to one or the other. Even as the child began to acquire reason, he still needed to be governed by his parents. And when the child reached the age of twenty one, 'he is generally thought fit to govern his estate... yet even then, until his death, he owes obedience to his Parents, and they have dominion over him, whether he consents or not'.¹²⁷ Sir Robert Filmer thought that it was just not

¹²⁴ Whitehall, *The Leviathan Found Out*, p. 46

¹²⁵ Coke, *A Survey of the Politicks*, pp. 32-3. According to Henry Parker, Adam's failure to punish Cain for the murder of Abel demonstrated that Adam did not have political authority - 'But we do not find that Adam did claim any such power, or sin, in not claiming it; We find rather that the whole stock of Mankinde them living, were the Judges that Cain feared' - see [Henry Parker], *Jus Populi: or, A Discourse Wherein Clear Satisfaction is Given*, (London, 1644), p. 3, cited in Schochet, *Patriarchalism in Political Thought*, p. 105.

¹²⁶ Coke, *Elements*, pp. 34-5.

¹²⁷ William Lucy, *An Answer to Mr. Hobbs His Leviathan: with Observations, Censures, and Confutations of Divers Errours, beginning at the seventeenth chapter of that book* (London, 1673), pp. 65-6.

possible for a child to 'express consent, or by other sufficient arguments declare it before it comes to the age of discretion'.¹²⁸

Hobbes' contemporary critics were horrified by his argument that dominion over children in the natural condition belonged to whoever preserved the child. According to Bishop Bramhall, Hobbes 'might as well tell us in plain termes, that all obligation which a child hath to his parent, is because he did not take him by the heeles and knock out his braines against the walls, so soon as he was born'.¹²⁹ William Lucy denied Hobbes' argument that the child owed obedience to whoever it was that preserved it, even if this individual was a complete stranger. According to Lucy, 'preservation [was] not so great a benefit as being', and it was the parent who gave the child being.¹³⁰ Hobbes' argument that parents could choose whether to preserve or expose their children horrified his contemporary critics for one main reason. According to Hobbes, it was this power which gave mothers original dominion over children. William Lucy claimed that there had never been a law in any country which allowed parents to kill their children, neither was this permitted by the law of nature, 'which dictates nothing more clearly than the Love of Parents to their children'. Even if this were the case, 'the Husband hath power to restrain it'. If the woman had such a power, but chose not to exercise it, this did not give her dominion.¹³¹ Because the mother was under the father's dominion, 'she cannot act any considerable matter either to her self, or for her child, without the Fathers leave'.¹³² Hobbes' view would actually have given the midwife, or nurse, dominion, as they could both be said to have had initial power over the child.¹³³ Quite simply, Hobbes' argument had turned all traditional arguments for authority upside down - Hobbes gave wives dominion over husbands, children over parents, servants over masters, and subjects over Kings.¹³⁴

Hobbes' argument that it was women who originally had dominion over children also contradicted both the account of scripture, and the evidence of

¹²⁸ Filmer, *Observations*, pp. 191-2.

¹²⁹ Bramhall, *Castigations*, pp. 156-7.

¹³⁰ Lucy, *An Answer*, pp. 76-7.

¹³¹ Lucy, *An Answer*, pp. 75-6.

¹³² Lucy, *An Answer*, p. 75.

¹³³ See Lucy, *An Answer*, p. 74. Preston King has also made a similar claim - see King, *The Ideology of Order*, p. 206.

contemporary experience. Charles Gildon argued that men must have propriety over their wives, so that they knew who their children were, and it was also necessary for the conveyance of property.¹³⁵ According to Sir Robert Filmer, God gave Adam dominion over Eve 'as being the nobler and principal agent in generation'. Hobbes' claim that only the mother knew who was the father of her child, and thus rights over the child belonged to her, was also against contemporary practice. As far as Filmer was concerned, if the woman did not have a husband, then the child did not have a father. If she did have a husband, then regardless of whether that man was the biological father or not, he was still considered to be the father of the child. 'No child naturally and infallibly knows who are his true parents, yet he must obey those that in common reputation are so', otherwise God's commandment to honour parents would be of no use.¹³⁶ Similarly for William Lucy, if the man and woman were married, then the child was the father's; if they weren't married, 'the people must father it, and provide for it'. Lucy anticipated Hobbes' objection - that there was no marriage in the state of nature - but Lucy thought this was false, because there had always been marriage, or some other form of union.¹³⁷ Lucy also noted Hobbes' reasoning that paternal dominion over children could not arise from generation, because there were two parents, but Lucy thought that generation 'exacts an obedience to them both, yet with subordination to the Father... because the woman her self must be obedient to the Father...' This was plainly set out in *Genesis* III.16.¹³⁸

Hobbes' views not only implied that women were equal to men, but also seemed to imply that women were superior to men, at least in their role as parents. This contradicted the subjection of women to men, which was prescribed by God's punishment of Eve for her disobedience in *Genesis* III.16. According to Roger Coke, the scripture commanded 'Wives to be subject to their Husbands', and the reasons for this were many: the end of the woman's creation; the fact that she was made from man, and for man; and that the man was created first, and

¹³⁴ See Lucy, *An Answer*, pp. 75-6.

¹³⁵ See Gildon, *The Deists Manual*, pp. 221-2.

¹³⁶ Filmer, *Observations*, p. 192.

¹³⁷ Lucy, *An Answer*, p. 74.

¹³⁸ Lucy, *An Answer*, p. 66.

given dominion before the woman was created.¹³⁹ Hobbes' claim that, in the state of nature, there were no laws of matrimony also contradicted the scriptural account. As Bishop Bramhall put it, 'Doth this man believe in earnest that marriage was instituted by God in Paradiſe, and hath continued ever ſince the creation?'¹⁴⁰ Similarly, William Lucy noted that the third chapter of *Genesis* proved 'there was never ſuch a time or place, for God gave the Law of the Wives ſubjection to her Husband in Paradiſe'. It was the firſt law God gave to human beings after their diſobedience.¹⁴¹ Lucy anticipated Hobbes' poſſible retort, that God's command that women ſhould be ſubject to their huſbands was a poſitive law, and thus not univerſal. Lucy denied this, and claimed that the ſubjection of women to men was according to the law of nature, that 'the reſt of the body ſubmits to the Head'.¹⁴²

Hobbes' argument that women were to be accounted equal by nature, becauſe there was not a great enough diſtinction in ſtrength and prudence, between men and women, to make one ſuperior to the other, was thought to be irrelevant. For William Lucy, it might be the caſe that ſome women were ſtronger or cleverer than their huſbands, but becauſe this was not generally ſo, then the 'ſacred Laws of governing and obeying muſt not be varied for ſuch few particular inſtances'.¹⁴³ Hobbes' example of the Amazons was not appropriate for his argument, becauſe they were 'an inſtance from a Lawleſs Conjunction, where man and woman meet together, like beaſts, to enjoy that carnal familiarity, but not like rational creatures to cohabit together in an Oeconomical Diſcipline'.¹⁴⁴ It was wiſdom, not ſtrength, which enabled certain individuals to govern. Lucy granted that ſome women might have greater prudence, or ſtrength, than ſome men, but 'if ſhe have more wit, let her uſe it to the gaining and winning him to vertue; if ſhe have more ſtrength, let her uſe it to the aſſiſtance of her Huſbands weakneſs: by that means her excellencies will be employed to their right uſes; ſhe

¹³⁹ Coke, *Elements*, p. 34.

¹⁴⁰ Bramhall, *Caſtigations*, pp. 156-7.

¹⁴¹ Lucy, *An Answer*, p. 73.

¹⁴² Lucy, *An Answer*, p. 68.

¹⁴³ Lucy, *An Answer*, p. 67, where he alſo denied Hobbes' view that the differences between men and women had to be decided by war. For Lucy, only nations could be at war with one another - individuals fight or brawl.

¹⁴⁴ Lucy, *An Answer*, p. 72.

shall be a helper to him, not a Ruler over him'. This was confirmed by various places of Scripture, including the third chapter of *Genesis*.¹⁴⁵

For at least one of Hobbes' critics, his argument for the natural equality of women was contradicted by his further claim that because commonwealths had generally been founded by men, the subjection of women had been decided by civil laws. William Lucy thought that Hobbes had contradicted himself, because he had also argued that individuals created the commonwealth for peace and preservation, and this meant that women and children, as well as men, had this interest. It seems that Lucy, unlike Carole Pateman, thought that Hobbes' theory implied that women, as well as men, took part in the social contract.¹⁴⁶ But Lucy thought that history demonstrated it was 'the Fathers of Families, not the Rabble' who had created commonwealths, and this meant that Hobbes' claim that commonwealths were created by universal consent was false.¹⁴⁷ According to Lucy, single or widowed women were 'free to dispose of themselves as they pleased', but married women had to submit to their husbands, 'and be governed in their domestick affairs according to his discipline'. Wives must submit to their husbands, but this did not mean that every woman was subject to every man.¹⁴⁸ Lucy also noted that Hobbes' argument, that dominion over children in the state of nature was decided between the man and woman by contract, was contradicted by his further claim that it was unlikely contracts would be kept in the natural condition, without the fear of a common power. For Lucy, in the natural condition, human beings should follow God's commands, which subjected women to their husbands, and made men superior.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Lucy, *An Answer*, p. 68.

¹⁴⁶ Pateman's thesis is that classical contract theory creates a new, modern form of patriarchy, which originates in conjugal right or men's right of sexual access to women. Pateman admits that Hobbes, alone of all the classical theorists, thought that men and women were equal in the state of nature, but she still thinks Hobbes is a patriarchalist, although one who rejects paternal right. In Hobbes' state of nature naturally equal women became vulnerable while pregnant. They were then conquered by men and became servants. Mother right was destroyed, families were created, and it was the heads of these families, i.e. men, who took part in the social contract. Further, men ruled these families as masters, rather than fathers - in other words men's dominion over women took the form of despotic dominion - see Pateman, 'God Hath Ordained to Man a Helper', and *The Sexual Contract*.

¹⁴⁷ Gordon Schochet has pointed out that on his interpretation of the commonwealth by institution being created by fathers of families, Hobbes was not in disagreement with his contemporary critics - see Schochet, *Patriarchalism in Political Thought*, p. 239.

¹⁴⁸ Lucy, *An Answer*, pp. 69-70.

¹⁴⁹ See Lucy, *An Answer*, pp. 71-2.

The very existence of the family was thought to contradict Hobbes' state of nature. As James Lowde noted, 'the government of small families is incompatible with the state of absolute independency... where everyone hath a right to everything, and every man an enemy each to other...'¹⁵⁰ Lowde was also critical of Hobbes' view that a great family could be a little commonwealth, but that this did not apply to a little family, in other words to a family which was unable to protect itself. For Lowde, the 'Question here is not, whether the Families be small or great, or upon what their concord doth depend; but whether the notion and being of a Family, doth not destroy his supposed State of Nature'. Lowde also thought that natural lust would actually lead to war rather than concord.¹⁵¹ Similarly, Thomas Tenison thought that Hobbes' inclusion of families in the state of nature, along with his comparison between the natural condition and native Americans, meant that Hobbes denied his own state of nature, because wherever there were families, there was also government.¹⁵² For Tenison, Hobbes' view that a family could only be a commonwealth, if it had strength enough to defend itself, implied that Athens, Corinth and Lacedaemon were not commonwealths, as they were weaker members of a much larger commonwealth - the Greek Empire.¹⁵³

It was simply not possible for the natural condition to be a state of war, if there were families within it. According to James Tyrrell,

if we follow the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures, it is then certain, That all Mankind being derived from one Man, and one Woman, their Children could never be in this state of war towards their Parents, by Mr. H's own confession; much less could the Parents ever be so unnatural towards their Children, who were made out of their own Substance; nor yet could the Brothers, or Sisters, who partake of the same Human Nature derived from their Common Parents, and who were bred up together from their Infancy in a state of Peace and Amity, be rationally supposed presently to have fallen together by the ears without any other cause, or provocation given, than Mr. H's Passions of mutual distrust, and desire of glory.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Lowde, *A Discourse*, p. 158.

¹⁵¹ Lowde, *A Discourse*, p. 159, where Lowde also had problems with Hobbes' idea of similar desires sometimes causing war and sometimes causing peace.

¹⁵² See Tenison, *The creed of Mr. Hobbes*, pp. 133-4.

¹⁵³ See Tenison, *The creed of Mr. Hobbes*, p. 136.

¹⁵⁴ Tyrrell, *A Brief Disquisition*, pp. 356-7.

William Lucy thought that Hobbes' claim that, in the natural condition, the only laws, regarding marriage and the education of children, were the laws of nature, and the natural inclination of the sexes one to another, and to their children, contradicted the idea that the natural condition was a state of war. It was simply not possible for parents and children to be at war with one another.¹⁵⁵ As we have seen in chapter three, scripture provided Hobbes' readers with an example of one brother killing another.

Hobbes' critics completely denied his ideas on women and the family, because they believed his views contradicted contemporary experience, history and scripture. For the majority of the critics, all authority originated in fatherly power - it was not based on consent, but on generation. They were particularly horrified by his argument that women had dominion over children, because this implied that women were not only equal to men, but superior to them, although Hobbes himself never argued for the latter. The very existence of families, in Hobbes' state of nature, disproved his argument that this state was a condition of war, because members of families loved and cared for one another. Also, wherever there were families, there was also government. Thus the state of nature was not a condition which lacked a common power.

We have seen earlier that for two of Hobbes' contemporary critics, William Lucy and John Bramhall, Hobbes had turned all traditional arguments for authority upside down. It seems likely that this was exactly Hobbes' intention, and that his target was both the patriarchalists, and the Schoolmen, who had argued that some human beings were naturally superior to others. For Hobbes, if we actually thought about such a statement it was simply incorrect - the example of men and women proved this. Reason demonstrated that in the natural condition it was women, not men, who had dominion over children. Experience demonstrated that some women were stronger, or cleverer, than their husbands. Did this mean they should have dominion over their husbands? Both reason and experience also demonstrated that children grew into adults, and threw off the dominion of their parents. Hobbes was trying to demonstrate that all authority was artificial. Commonwealths had been founded by men, and it was men who

¹⁵⁵ See Lucy, *An Answer*, pp. 71-2.

had decided on the subjection of women. Charles Gildon's view that men must have propriety over their wives, so that they knew who their children were, proved Hobbes' argument that it was human beings themselves who had created authority. If commonwealths had been founded by women, it might well have been the case that men would have been considered inferior. For Hobbes, we could not say that authority was God-given, because God's decrees appeared arbitrary to human judgement. We have seen in chapter three that Cain killed his own brother, was punished by God, but this punishment appeared to be a benefit. In his critique of Thomas White's *De Mundo*, Hobbes had argued that God's intention for human beings to rule over other creatures could not be deduced naturally, because it could just as easily be deduced that it was God's intention that human beings should be eaten by animals.¹⁵⁶ Presumably, this could also be applied to men's rule over women, the rule of the elder over the younger, the wiser over the stronger; or the rule of any particular group, over any other group.

But as we have seen above, on Gordon Schochet's interpretation of the commonwealth by institution, as an agreement between fathers of families, Hobbes' views were not so different from those of his contemporary critics, who thought that all authority originated in fatherly authority.¹⁵⁷ Schochet has distinguished three different types of patriarchalism. Firstly, anthropological patriarchalism (e.g. Cumberland and Clarendon), whereby the writer gave a historical account of the development of families into societies. Secondly, moral patriarchalism (e.g. Filmer), whereby political authority which originated in fatherly authority was used to justify obedience to the state. And finally, ideological patriarchalism (e.g. the fifth commandment and James I), in which a simple analogy was drawn between fatherly and political power, but without the use of historical and moral principles.¹⁵⁸ Schochet has argued that Hobbes, like the majority of his contemporary critics, identified paternal and political authority, but that his claim that both were based on consent was new.¹⁵⁹ On

¹⁵⁶ See Malcolm, *Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology*, p. 179, citing Hobbes' *Thomas White's De Mundo Examined*, chp. XXXVII. See also Hobbes' comment in *De Cive*, VIII, 10, pp. 105-6, that dominion over animals had its origin in the right of nature, and not in divine positive right.

¹⁵⁷ Although as I have noted above, it could have been an agreement between mothers of families.

¹⁵⁸ See Schochet, *Patriarchalism in Political Thought*, pp. 10-14.

¹⁵⁹ See Schochet, *Patriarchalism in Political Thought*, p. 241. See also Ashcraft, 'Leviathan Triumphant', p. 161, for Hobbes' redefinition of patriarchy.

Schochet's account, Hobbes seems to have used elements of anthropological patriarchalism, as did his critics, Cumberland and Clarendon.

For the most part, those of Hobbes' contemporary critics considered here, subscribed to the view that authority was both natural and God-given.¹⁶⁰ George Lawson seems to have been the exception in this particular group of writers, with his distinction between authority in the family and state; and also his claim that although authority in the state was God-given, it was also based on consent. The latter of Lawson's views indicates why Hobbes' contemporary critics misunderstood him. For Hobbes' critics, the argument that authority originated in God, or originated in fatherly power, was sufficient to keep human beings in peace. Hobbes, on the other hand, was less concerned with how authority originated, and more concerned with how it was to be maintained. For Hobbes, it was not enough to argue that human beings should obey their sovereign, because his authority originated in God, or in fatherly power. Subjects needed a continuing reason for obedience. Contemporary experience had demonstrated that the theories of divine right and patriarchalism had failed to prevent the people of England from disobeying their king.

Hobbes' contemporary critics thought that human beings had always lived in society, and under some form of government, and that it was completely natural for them to do so. Hobbes, on the other hand, saw nature in complete contrast to society. Hobbes' state of nature was designed to present a picture of human existence, devoid of all characteristics of society, and government. This included the institutions of marriage and the family, which Hobbes thought only came into being with commonwealths. In Hobbes' state of nature, there were no laws of matrimony, and no laws regarding children. But there were men and women who came together for the sexual act, and then decided whether they would stay together or not. If children were conceived as a result, then adults and children might choose to live in family groups. But in a condition without laws concerning marriage and the family, they could also choose not to stay together. For Hobbes, it was human beings themselves who had created the institutions of marriage and the family. As far as Hobbes' critics were concerned, there had

¹⁶⁰ See also Goldie, 'The Reception of Hobbes', p. 604.

never been such a condition. The scriptural account demonstrated that marriage was instituted by God at the creation; and that Eve was either always subject to Adam, or was made subject to her husband as a result of the Fall.

6. The Scriptural Account of the relationship between Adam and Eve.

If we return to scripture, although we can find an account of the relationship between men and women in Eden, there was no mention of children. There were no children in paradise. Cain and Abel were born after the disobedience, and scripture was silent on exactly which parent had dominion. But the creation of Eve was unanimously interpreted as the institution of marriage, and this was further confirmed by Adam's pronouncement in *Genesis* II.24, 'Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife'. Commentators were of course keen to point out, that this particular verse should not also be interpreted to mean, that once children had grown up and married, they should no longer honour their parents.¹⁶¹ But although Martin Luther agreed with these interpretations, he thought that this particular verse of *Genesis* was Adam's prophecy, 'about the life of married people, about their own dwelling place, about the division of dominion over the entire world, so that individual families might live in their own little nest', at a time when there 'were no fathers and mothers yet, and no children'.¹⁶²

Chapter two has outlined the two main protestant interpretations of the relationship between Adam and Eve. On one account, God created equal human beings, and Eve's subjection was a punishment for her disobedience. On the other account, Eve was from the beginning created subject to Adam, although she was also his equal in certain respects. Eve's subjection before the Fall was willing, but her further subjection after the disobedience was unwilling. Martin Luther fell into the first category of protestant commentators, which was also the minority

¹⁶¹ See for example Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis and Exodus*, p. 31-2; Ainsworth, *Annotations, Genesis*, II.24; Babington, *Comfortable Notes*, p. 12; Cooper, *A Brief Exposition*, p. 96; and Needler, *Expository Notes*, pp. 55-6.

¹⁶² Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 139. See also pp. 115-36, where Luther claimed the creation of Eve marked the institution of marriage, and also demonstrated its importance.

view.¹⁶³ For Luther, although Eve was Adam's equal before the Fall, since the Fall she was 'placed under the power of her husband', and now bears this subjection unwillingly. The man 'rules the home and the state, wages wars, defends his possessions, tills the soil, builds, plants, etc.'¹⁶⁴ The woman stayed at home, and looked 'after the affairs of the household, as one who has been deprived of the ability of administering those affairs that are outside and concern the state. She does not go beyond her most personal duties'.¹⁶⁵ Luther noted that in contemporary practice, the woman was 'the mistress of the house just as [the man] was its master, except that the wife was made subject to the man by the Law which was given after sin'. Since the Fall, although women were subjected to their husbands, 'even now the wife can be called "virago" because she has a share in the property'.¹⁶⁶ Her punishment of subjection to Adam was a result of her disobedience.¹⁶⁷ After the Fall, although women 'cannot perform the functions of men, teach, rule, etc. In procreation and in feeding and nurturing their offspring they are masters'.¹⁶⁸

The other interpretation of *Genesis* saw Eve created as roughly equal to Adam, but also subject; and then made further subject as a punishment for her disobedience. This was the view of Jean Calvin, who thought that after the Fall, Eve was 'cast into servitude'. Before the Fall, she had also been subject to her husband, 'but that was a liberal and gentle subjection'.¹⁶⁹ John Richardson compared Eve's subjection to Adam, after the Fall, to that of Abel to Cain, or in other words of younger son to first-born son. God's punishment of Eve was the imposition of a further rule over Eve, additional to that already possessed by Adam at the creation, and this rule was more troublesome to the woman.¹⁷⁰ John White noted that God himself had prescribed women's subjection, and it was

¹⁶³ See Margaret R. Sommerville, *Sex and Subjection. Attitudes to Women in Early-Modern Society* (Arnold, London & New York, 1995), p. 31.

¹⁶⁴ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 202.

¹⁶⁵ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 203.

¹⁶⁶ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, pp. 137-8.

¹⁶⁷ See Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 115.

¹⁶⁸ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, p. 203.

¹⁶⁹ Calvin, *Commentaries*, p. 172. See also Needler, *Expository Notes*, p. 106; and Willet, *Hexapla on Genesis and Exodus*, p. 43. All following Augustine's idea of a loving subordination - see for example, Augustine, *City of God*, XIX, 14, pp. 872-4.

¹⁷⁰ See Richardson, *Choice Observations*, *Genesis* III.16. See also Haak, *Dutch Annotations*, *Genesis* III.16; and Ainsworth, *Annotations*, *Genesis*, III.16.

easier for women 'to obey, then to prescribe and direct'. Women's subjection was for a short time, and would be rewarded in heaven. But White also pointed out that in 'matters of duty she obeys only the command of God, and not of man'.¹⁷¹ Further, a wife's subjection to her husband required 'not only an outward conformity to the husbands commands, but besides, an inward subjection of the heart to his Will'. This meant that she must lay 'aside her own wisdom to receive directions from his mouth, as God requires his people to obey him, in doing not that which is right in their own eyes, but what he shall command'. It was important that the woman's subjection was not burdensome, but that she submitted, 'not only out of necessity, but with all cheerfulness conscionably'. According to White, in the estate to come, there would be no subordination between husband and wife.¹⁷²

Other commentators noted that Adam should exercise his rule over his wife with love. For John Trapp, Adam was not commanded to rule over Eve, but to love her, and 'he must make her yoke as easie as may be'.¹⁷³ Similarly for Gervase Babington, Eve was made subject to Adam after the Fall as a punishment. But Babington stressed that

this authority of the Man may not imbolden him any way to wrong his Wife, but teacheth him rather what manner of Man he ought to be: namely, such an one, as for gravity, wisdom, advise, and all government, is able to direct her in all things to a good course. And her subjection should admonish her of her weakness and need of direction, and so abate all pride and conceit of her selfe, and work true honour in her heart towards him, whom GOD hath made stronger than her selfe, and given gifts to direct her by. This I say this authority in the Man and subjection in the Woman should effect. But alas, many men are rather to be ruled than to rule, and many Women fitter to rule, than to be ruled of such unruly husbands. On the other side, many men for ability most fit and able to rule, yet for pride in the heart, where subjection should be, shall have no leave to rule.¹⁷⁴

Joannes Thaddeus commented that, after the Fall, the 'woman is under the power of the man in oeconomicall government, whilst she obeyeth and is subject as the

¹⁷¹ White, *A Commentary*, III, pp. 207-8.

¹⁷² White, *A Commentary*, III, pp. 208.

¹⁷³ Trapp, *A Clavis to the Bible*, pp. 40-1.

¹⁷⁴ Babington, *Comfortable Notes*, p. 18.

body is to the head; but in conjugall union, the man hath not power over his own body'.¹⁷⁵

Hobbes' account of the relationships between: men and women; and parent and child; could be understood to have combined aspects of both the pre-lapsarian and post-lapsarian conditions. Hobbes demonstrated the Lutheranism of his thought, with his view that it was women who had dominion over children (since the Fall). But he also could be understood to have taken into account Calvin's view that Eve's subjection before the Fall was willing, and involved her consent. Gervase Babington's claim that although Eve was punished with subjection to her husband, it is sometimes the case that women are fitter to rule than men, seems to confirm Hobbes' view that we could not say that nature or experience demonstrated that one human being was superior to another.

7. State of Nature as Eden, the process of the Fall, and the fallen condition?

This chapter has examined Hobbes' ideas on how and why society came into existence. Hobbes, unlike his contemporary critics, saw nature and society in complete opposition to one another. The natural condition of human beings was a state of war, which was caused in part by natural equality and all individuals having a right to all. In such a condition, human beings lived in constant fear that they would either be killed by others, or their insecure property would be invaded, and taken away from them. Human beings were not naturally sociable, because they were not born fit for society. They became sociable by living in society. Having said that, Hobbes thought that human beings sought out others, but they did so for love of self rather than love of friends. It was the desire for dominion, rather than society, which originated in nature. All society existed either for advantage, or glory, but Hobbes thought that no large or lasting society could be founded on glory. It was fear which led human beings to create lasting society. But we have seen above, that Hobbes indicated his knowledge of Augustinian and Reformed interpretations of *Genesis*, with his ideas on the creation of society. His view that individuals created society through fear was supported by Calvin's

¹⁷⁵ Thaddeus, *The Reconciler of the Bible*, p. 7. Here Thaddeus followed Augustine - see for example, Augustine, *City of God*, XIV, 16-27, pp. 577-93.

interpretation of the fourth chapter of *Genesis*, which described Cain building a city. Andrew Willet also pointed out that if man was naturally sociable then Adam, and not Cain should have been the first to build a city. In Augustine's theory of the Two Cities, Cain was the founder of the earthly city, and this city was created through self-love and glory. Hobbes' views also suggest that he might have thought that the Schoolmen's superficial view of human nature could be attributed to their failure to account for the effects of the Fall on human beings.

The majority of Hobbes' critics had a completely different understanding of nature. Human beings were naturally sociable, and had always lived in society, in a natural hierarchy, and under some form of government. For this reason, the natural condition was a peaceful condition, and thus fear could not be the origin of society. Further, all kings and governments derived their power from God. Due to both their Aristotelian understanding of nature as perfection, and their method of argument from origins, Hobbes' contemporary critics understood the natural condition as Eden. God created Adam and Eve, and Eve was subject to Adam from the very beginning. Adam was not only the first husband, and father, but he was also the first monarch. Thus society and government had existed from the creation. But for Hobbes' critics, even if his state of nature described the fallen condition, natural sociability and hierarchy were retained after the Fall. Adam's dominion was not lessened by his disobedience, and Cain was the first tyrant, not the first monarch.¹⁷⁶ Further, because of their understanding of nature as perfection, the critics wanted to examine nature, as if the Fall had never taken place.

This chapter has also examined Hobbes' ideas on the creation of authority, specifically the authority of husband over wife, and parent over child. Hobbes' contemporary critics thought that his views on authority turned all traditional arguments upside down. They contradicted history, experience, and scripture. The origin of authority was to be found in the family. Adam, the first father and husband, was also the first monarch, and his dominion was not lessened by the Fall.¹⁷⁷ For the critics, paternal dominion was derived from generation, and it was

¹⁷⁶ Hobbes thought tyranny was simply monarchy disliked - see *Leviathan*, XIX, 2, pp. 118-9.

¹⁷⁷ John Locke was later to argue against Filmer, that it was highly unlikely that God's punishment of Adam after the disobedience would have made him both a 'Universal Monarch over all

the father who was the principal agent in that generation. The idea that a parent could choose whether or not to preserve the child horrified many of his contemporary critics. This was particularly worrying, because it was this argument which gave women original dominion over children, and this implied not only women's equality to men, but even women's superiority over men, at least in their role as parents. It might have been the case that some women were stronger or cleverer than some men, but scripture told us that Eve was created as Adam's helper, and she was subject to Adam. Hobbes' argument that there was no marriage in the state of nature also contradicted scripture - Eve's creation marked the institution of marriage. If there were families in Hobbes' state of nature then it could not be a condition of war, because members of families loved each other. Neither could the state of nature be a condition without government, because wherever there were families there was also government.

If Hobbes' seventeenth century readers understood the natural condition as the original, perfect condition, as many of his contemporary critics did, then his view that women were equal to men was in agreement with the interpretation of Luther that saw Eve as Adam's equal before the Fall, and her subjection to Adam as a punishment for her disobedience. The Fall could then explain the problems raised by a number of current Hobbes' scholars, most notably Carole Pateman, who have pointed out that although Hobbes argued that women were equal to men by nature, once the commonwealth had been created, it was men who had authority in families. For Hobbes, in the state of nature, there were no laws of matrimony. Thus there were no wives and no husbands, there were only individual men and women. Once commonwealths were created (after the Fall), wives were subjected to their husbands. But Hobbes could also be understood to have taken into account the interpretation of Calvin, and those that followed him, that Eve was both equal and willingly subject to Adam before the Fall, whereas after the Fall her subjection was unwilling. Indeed Hobbes' theory of consent could have been interpreted as recreating the type of subjection which existed in Eden - a willing, and therefore lasting subjection. Again, Hobbes could be

Mankind', and at the same time 'a day labourer for his Life' - see Locke, *Two Treatises*, I, 45, p. 172.

understood to have combined elements of various Reformed interpretations of both the pre- and post-lapsarian conditions.

But if, as I have argued elsewhere, Hobbes' readers understood his state of nature to be the fallen condition, then his views on women's equality seem to completely contradict the Biblical account, which for all commentators demonstrated that, after the Fall, Eve was punished with subjection to Adam, although this subjection was unwilling and troublesome to the woman. And yet, it could be argued that Hobbes' view, that the natural condition was one of equality, but dominion (if insecure and temporary) existed there, was in agreement with Eve's unwilling subjection, after the Fall. Interestingly, one of Hobbes' contemporary critics, William Lucy, raised two questions about Eve's subjection, which could be used to argue that Hobbes' account was in agreement even with the account of women's subjection after the Fall. Firstly, according to Lucy, God's punishment meant that wives were subject to their husbands, but it did not mean that all women were subject to all men. Thus, in Hobbes' state of nature, where there were no laws of matrimony, and thus no wives or husbands, there could be no subjection of wives to their husbands. There were only individual men and women, who were roughly equal to one another. But we are still faced with the problem that, for many protestant commentators, marriage was instituted in paradise, and continued after the Fall. Thus, as most of Hobbes' contemporary critics pointed out, there had never been a time without marriage. Having said that, Hobbes could be understood to be in agreement with Luther's view that *Genesis* II.24 described Adam's prophecy about the future life of married people.

Secondly, William Lucy also noted that Hobbes might have understood God's punishment of Eve as a positive command, directed to her alone, and therefore not universally applicable to all women. The view of John Richardson, that Eve's subjection to Adam could be compared to Abel's subjection to Cain, also seems to support Hobbes' idea that dominion could not be based on the qualities nature had given human beings. Cain might well have been the elder brother, and had dominion over Abel, but this did not make him the better man. The same could be true of Eve's subjection to Adam. As Gervase Babington pointed out, in some cases women were fitter to rule than men, thus proving

Hobbes' point that it was all completely artificial - human beings themselves had decided on the superiority of men over women.

Hobbes' ideas on women having dominion over children were not supported by the scriptural account of the original, perfect condition, because Adam and Eve had not had children at that point, although God had commanded them to increase and multiply. The birth of children came after the Fall, and in the fourth chapter of *Genesis* there was no mention of which one of the two parents had dominion over Cain and Abel. This particular chapter of *Genesis* was also silent on the idea that dominion over the child belonged to whoever preserved it. But there are a number of examples, from later chapters of *Genesis*, of women (and men) abandoning their children, and women becoming mothers of children who they themselves had not conceived. Abraham's wife Sarah, who was barren, gave Abraham her slave Hagar to conceive a child (*Genesis XVI.3*). Lot was prepared to give up his two daughters to the men of Sodom, as long as the angels remained safe. Lot's daughters later conceived children with their father (*Genesis 19*). Hagar left her son to die, until God himself intervened (*Genesis XXI.15*). God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac (*Genesis XXII.2*). Jacob's wife Rachel asked her husband to give her children through her maid Bilhah (*Genesis XXX.4*). More famously Moses himself was 'abandoned' by his biological mother, and preserved by Pharaoh's daughter, who became his mother (*Exodus II.3-10*). And God himself sacrificed his only son Jesus.

Hobbes' contemporary critics assumed dominion belonged to the father, simply because they also believed that Adam had dominion over Eve. But Cain's murder of Abel seems to indicate, that neither parent was able to exercise his or her dominion over Cain, at least as an adult, because neither Adam or Eve were able to prevent him from killing his brother. Further, Cain was subsequently punished by God, and not by his parents. The account of Cain's murder of Abel also disproved the critics' claim that members of families loved and cared for one another. But as we have seen above, for one influential protestant commentator, the Fall had resulted in a division of authority. Martin Luther thought that since the Fall, it was Eve who was master over children. Women, who had previously shared in the power to teach and rule, become masters over children. Men became masters in the home and the state. So for Luther, it was possible for the male to be

lord over the household, and this was not affected in any way by the female being lord over children. Whereas for Hobbes' contemporary critics, his view that women had dominion over children, also implied that women had dominion over men. Hobbes' views appear to have been in agreement with Old Testament law which, according to Margaret Sommerville, gave women status only in their role as mothers.¹⁷⁸ Yet again, Hobbes' political theory suggested his own knowledge of Reformed interpretations of *Genesis*.

Hobbes had stated that he would ignore the argument that the first form of instituted government was paternal monarchy, and that other forms of government had proceeded from its dissolution, because of the rebellious nature of human beings. Hobbes was concerned with how authority was to be maintained, and less concerned with how it originated. His theory was designed to demonstrate that dominion, based on the qualities nature had given human beings, could not be secure or long lasting. Women were as equally capable of killing as men. Children did not remain children forever. As they grew older, stronger, and wiser, they too became as capable of killing as their parents. Hobbes thought that it was a desire for dominion, or power over others, which originated in nature. But in order to make this dominion secure and long lasting it had to be turned into authority. This was achieved through an agreement, whereby one individual gave his or her consent to be ruled by another. It was agreement, and consent, which created lasting, and stable commonwealths. Could Hobbes have been understood as trying to recreate the willing subjection which had existed in Eden, in order to maintain obedience in his commonwealth?

¹⁷⁸ See Sommerville, *Sex and Subjection*, p. 254.

Conclusion

1. Reading Hobbes.

This dissertation has shown that Hobbes' seventeenth century readers brought their own reading of both the Bible, and scriptural commentaries, to their reading of Hobbes' political theory.¹ It was their own views on the account of the creation and Fall, which determined their response to Hobbes' description of the state of nature, and that these views were in turn determined by the particular interpretations of *Genesis*, which the individual reader subscribed to. Tom Sorell has argued that Hobbes seems to have assumed a knowledge of the account of the Fall as common ground between himself and his readers.² And yet as we have seen, the Fall, and its consequences were interpreted in a variety of ways. This dissertation has shown that Hobbes' contemporary critics thought that his account of the state of nature completely contradicted scripture. But the response of Hobbes' seventeenth century critics is not necessarily a good basis to judge his fit with the religious culture of the age. Hobbes was writing at a time of theological change. He had been educated in a Calvinist world, but was read by his contemporary critics in a world in which Calvinism was waning. This dissertation has shown that Hobbes seems to fit better into an Augustinian, Calvinist, and particularly Lutheran context. For those of Hobbes' readers who subscribed to Augustinian, and Reformed interpretations of the scriptural account of the creation and Fall, there were a number of important parallels to be seen, although on some aspects of the state of nature Hobbes could have been understood to have subverted scripture. Further, Hobbes' account of the state of nature appears to have combined elements of both the pre-lapsarian and post-lapsarian conditions. This might have been because Hobbes' analysis of human nature could be understood to have taken into account aspects of both perfect human nature, as well as fallen human nature. Since the Fall there had come into existence two types of human beings - the elect and the reprobate. Further, because we could not distinguish between these two types of human beings from their actions, it was

¹ See also Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*, pp. 34-6.

safer to assume that all men fell into the category of the reprobate. Alternatively, Hobbes might have thought, like Joseph Hall, that 'even man's perfection is mistaken'.³ Having said that, Hobbes indicated his own knowledge of protestant interpretations of *Genesis*, with his use of both scriptural allusions, and the accounts of Adam and Eve's disobedience, and Cain's murder of Abel.

But although, as was noted in the introduction, many current Hobbes' scholars have commented on the resemblance between Hobbes' description of the state of nature and the account of the Fall, none of his contemporary readers did, or at least they did not go into print to argue that Hobbes' account was in agreement with a Reformed understanding of scripture.⁴ There are a number of possible explanations for this. Firstly, any of Hobbes' readers who read his account in agreement with Reformed understandings of *Genesis* may not have felt the need to publish their views. As I argued in the introduction it is a fact of human nature that we are more likely to voice our complaints or criticisms, than to voice our praise. It was also noted in the introduction that the printing history of *Leviathan* attested to its popularity, and that although the list of anti-Hobbes literature compiled by Samuel Mintz appears to be extensive, on closer examination only six books were mainly taken up with criticisms of Hobbes' political theory. Relatively speaking then, the attacks on the specifically political part of Hobbes' philosophy appear to have been few. This could also mean that for many of Hobbes' readers, his description of the state of nature was either not offensive, or alternatively was not read with the Biblical context in mind. Secondly, it was argued in chapter five that Hobbes' contemporary critics misunderstood the argument of *Leviathan*, because they read it in the context of the 1650s, when the theory presented there had originally been conceived in the 1630s, and might well have been informed by earlier traditions. Both Phyllis Doyle and A.P. Martinich have shown the similarity of Hobbes' views to those of Elizabethan and Jacobean Calvinists. These views had become unpopular by the

² See Sorell, *Hobbes*, p. 34.

³ Hall, *Contemplations*, p. 778.

⁴ It was noted in chapters one and two that two of Hobbes' contemporary critics, George Lawson and John Bramhall, thought his description might have been an account of degenerated nature. Also, François Peleau wrote to Hobbes to tell him that he was being pressed for proofs of the state of nature's existence, and that Peleau had cited the time after Noah's death, when his sons Shem,

1640s.⁵ As I have argued throughout this dissertation, those who read and criticised Hobbes from the 1650s onwards subscribed to different views of human nature (particularly on the extent of the Fall's corruption) to those Calvinists of the first three decades of the seventeenth century. Thirdly, with the publication of *Leviathan*, Hobbes acquired the reputation of atheism, immorality and libertinism.⁶ Jon Parkin has suggested that those of Hobbes' contemporaries, like Richard Cumberland and Samuel Parker, who shared common ground with him in some areas, were forced to criticise him in order to distance themselves from his apparent atheism.⁷ It might have been the case that many of Hobbes' readers who agreed with his account of the state of nature, did not feel able to go into print to support Hobbes for fear of being branded as atheists or libertines.

Hobbes' state of nature could be understood in a number of ways. Firstly, it was an original condition from which individuals created a commonwealth, a condition which had existed at some point in either history, or pre-history. A number of Hobbes' contemporary critics, in this way, understood the state of nature as the condition of human beings at the creation in Eden. On this understanding of the natural condition as an original, perfect condition, Hobbes' description of a state of war clearly contradicted the scriptural account of a peaceful Eden. Secondly, the state of nature was also a philosophical condition, a logical account of how commonwealths were created, and an imagined condition from which Hobbes was able to draw consequences about human behaviour. Finally, the state of nature could be understood as a condition into which a commonwealth had the potential to dissolve, if its citizens rebelled and attempted to resist their sovereign. In this way, not only did it resemble the contemporary situation in England during the civil war, but it also resembled the condition following Adam and Eve's rebellion against God in Eden. The problem for Hobbes' seventeenth century readers, and his readers ever since, was that he never made it clear in which way it should be understood. Further, he managed - unlikely as this would seem to a modern audience - to leave his contemporary

Japhet, and Ham could have waged a similar war - see Malcolm, *Hobbes' Correspondence*, Vol 1, p. 331.

⁵ See Doyle, 'The Contemporary Background'; and Martinich, *Two Gods*, p. 33.

⁶ See Mintz, *The Hunting of Leviathan*, especially chapter vii on libertinism.

⁷ See Parkin, *Science, Religion and Politics*, p. 117.

readers uncertain as to whether he was describing the lives of fallen human beings, or human beings in their original condition, although he had commented that he was interested in human beings as they were, and not as they should have been. We have also seen that he associated his state of nature with the account of Cain and Abel, although admittedly this was not until the Latin version of *Leviathan* of 1668, and thus may have been in response to his critics.

So why did Hobbes not explicitly mention the Fall in his account of the state of nature? Again, there are a number of possible explanations. Firstly, if we assume Hobbes was the atheist many of his contemporary critics believed him to be, then he would not have subscribed to the view of the original perfection of human beings, and their subsequent corruption by the Fall. Having said that an explicit mention of the Fall might have worked to hide his atheism. Secondly, and I think more likely, Hobbes failed to mention the Fall, because he was writing political philosophy, which he thought was separate from theology.⁸ It was also argued in chapter five that Hobbes wanted to provide a purely secular justification for obedience to kings, and the new context of *Leviathan's* publication made this particularly important, because Hobbes thought that divine right and patriarchal theories, both grounded on scripture, had failed to prevent the people of England from disobeying and then executing their king. Hobbes felt that he must provide a theory in support of monarchy, which ignored traditional scriptural arguments - scripture was open to interpretation. Having said that Hobbes himself was not averse to using scripture, including the account of the Fall, to convince his audience of the validity of his own findings. Thirdly, it is possible that Hobbes knew he would not even need to refer to the account of the Fall explicitly, because he realised that his readers would be able to see the parallels. Finally, Hobbes wanted to look at human beings as they were - it was thus irrelevant to consider human beings as they should have been. His political theory was designed to address contemporary problems, and to show seventeenth century human beings the rights and duties of sovereigns and subjects.

It was noted in the introduction, that a reader's response to a particular work could be influenced even before he had begun reading, by such things as the

⁸ See *De Corpore*, I, 8, p. 191.

material condition of the book, the title, frontispiece and dedication.⁹ Quentin Skinner has argued that the titles of Hobbes' trilogy of political philosophy were all rhetorical, and that *Leviathan* took its name from the 'monster of the deep' described in the book of *Job*, because Hobbes thought that the commonwealth was created through our deepest fears.¹⁰ But it seems more likely that Hobbes' seventeenth century readers would have taken the title *Leviathan* at face value, that is as a Biblical reference. So how was the word understood by Hobbes' contemporary readers? W.H. Greenleaf has demonstrated that 'leviathan' could be understood in a variety of ways in the seventeenth century, including as a reference to Satan, Antichrist, or King of Babel. But the most common meaning was someone of 'formidable power or enormous wealth', and in this sense it was used as an image of worldly power, particularly government. The word 'leviathan' was translated as whale or sea monster. It is derived from the Hebrew '*Lavah*', which means joined or associated, and Greenleaf has noted the parallels between the Biblical creature's overlapping scales, and the illustration for *Leviathan's* title page. Another mythical sea monster, known as *Rahab* in Hebrew, symbolised the state of chaos, before God had imposed order.¹¹ Patricia Springborg has also commented on the meaning of the word and has argued that if interpreted literally, *Leviathan* was a demonstration of divine omnipotence; whereas interpreted allegorically, it referred to the devil, or a figure for tyrants.¹² So before Hobbes' contemporaries even began to read his political theory, they might have had different preconceived ideas about what exactly the book would contain, based on their own understanding of its title.

It was not only the title of Hobbes' *Leviathan*, which contained a scriptural reference, but also the illustration for the frontispiece, which was a graphic representation of his political theory, depicting the person of the sovereign, constructed from the persons of the people. Crowning the illustration was a verse from the book of *Job*, 'Upon earth there is not his like', which directed his readers to a Biblical explanation of why good men often suffered,

⁹ See Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*, pp. 40 & 44-55.

¹⁰ See Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric*, pp. 388-9. Skinner, p. 298, argues that *The Elements of Law* was named to associate that work with Euclid's *The Elements of Geometry*, and *De Cive* was named because in it Hobbes wanted to destroy the classical idea of the citizen.

¹¹ Greenleaf, 'A Note on Hobbes', pp. 21-8.

while evil men prospered. But for Hobbes' seventeenth century readers, this particular Biblical citation might have been as important for the lines of scripture it omitted, which referred to 'the children of pride'. Did this verse direct Hobbes' readers not only to *Job*, but to the account of the Fall?¹³ Similarly, the frontispiece of *De Cive* contained an illustration of the Last Judgement, with the damned descending to hell, and the saved ascending into heaven.¹⁴ Did this indicate to Hobbes' readers that his work could be understood to have taken into account the division of human beings into the elect and the reprobate? If we assume that Hobbes himself instructed the artists of both title pages, then he might well have used these illustrations, along with the various scriptural accounts and allusions in the work itself, for rhetorical purposes, to direct his readers to an interpretation of his writing, which was in agreement with scripture.

2. Anti-Aristotelianism.

We have seen throughout this dissertation that Hobbes' contemporary critics found it impossible to reconcile his description of a natural war-like condition with the account of scripture. Those seventeenth century writers who went into print against Hobbes were, for the most part, Aristotelians.¹⁵ For these writers, nature was both the end and perfection of human existence, and it was also unchanging. Human beings were naturally sociable, because of their potential, and their need, to live in society, and there was also a natural hierarchy amongst them. But not only was nature the end of human existence, it was also understood as the beginning of human existence, and specifically associated with the creation of the first human beings in Eden. Natural hierarchy was confirmed by the account of *Genesis*, which informed us that God gave Adam dominion over the earth, and this included dominion over other human beings. Eve's creation for Adam demonstrated both natural sociability and hierarchy. Thus for the critics, Hobbes' description of a natural hostile and equal condition could not have been

¹² See Springborg, 'Hobbes's Biblical Beasts', pp. 358-60.

¹³ On the frontispiece of *Leviathan* see also Keith Brown, 'The Artist of the *Leviathan* Title-page', *British Library Journal*, 4 (1978), pp. 24-36; and Martinich, *Two Gods*, pp. 362-7.

¹⁴ See M.M. Goldsmith, 'Hobbes's Ambiguous Politics', *History of Political Thought*, 11 (1990), pp. 639-73, p. 642.

an account of perfect nature, but must have been an account of degenerated nature.

Hobbes had a number of objections to the philosophy of Aristotle and the Schoolmen. We have seen in chapter one that he described a number of doctrines, which he thought led to the dissolution of the commonwealth - all of which involved the private judgement of good and evil. For Hobbes, the Schoolmen's moral philosophy was simply a description of their own passions, which were constantly changing, different in different individuals at different times, and thus could not provide common rules of good and evil. He also cited the mixing of scripture with Aristotle's philosophy as one of the four causes of what he referred to as 'spiritual darkness'.¹⁶ According to Hobbes, the Protestant Reformation had taken place because the introduction of Aristotle into Christianity had created 'so many contradictions and absurdities as brought the clergy into a reputation both of ignorance and fraudulent intention, and inclined people to revolt from them, either against the will of their own princes, as in *France* and *Holland*, or with their will, as in *England*'.¹⁷

The 'seditious doctrines' of the Schoolmen had permitted men to disobey their king, to think that laws rather than men govern, that monarchy was tyranny, and that only under democracy could men have liberty.¹⁸ The Schoolmen's doctrine of separated essences had resulted in the separation of the spiritual and secular powers, and had made men frightened to obey their sovereign's commands.¹⁹ Aristotle's philosophy, or 'Aristotelity', as Hobbes called it, had become a 'handmaid' to the Roman religion, and had given the Pope power over kings.²⁰ Because Aristotle was taught in the universities, his authority was great, and his philosophy was not questioned. As Hobbes put it, the 'insignificant speech' of the Schoolmen had 'a quality, not only to hide the truth, but also to make men think they have it, and desist from further search'.²¹ Quite simply, Aristotle's philosophy had made each individual think he could decide for

¹⁵ See Goldie, 'The Reception of Hobbes', p. 594.

¹⁶ *Leviathan*, XLIV, 3, p. 412.

¹⁷ *Leviathan*, XII, 31, p. 73.

¹⁸ See *Leviathan*, XLVI, 35-6, p. 465. See also *De Cive*, X, 8, pp. 121-2.

¹⁹ See *Leviathan*, XLVI, 18, p. 460.

²⁰ *Leviathan*, XLVI, 13, p. 458.

²¹ *Leviathan*, XLVI, 40, p. 467.

himself what was good and evil, and just and unjust. It had led to 'a civil war in which many thousands of citizens were killed, and the king slaughtered in a most unworthy death'.²²

According to Hobbes, Aristotle had derived the rights of a commonwealth, not from nature, but simply from the practice of his own *polis*.²³ The Schoolmen had brought assumptions from their own societies into their philosophy, and Hobbes' contemporary critics were a prime example of this practice. These assumptions included: the dominion of fathers over children, the superiority of the wiser over the stronger, or the elder over the younger - none of which could be proved from nature. For Hobbes, dominion based on the qualities nature had given individuals, such as gender, age, strength, or intellect could never be secure and long lasting. Aristotle's argument for natural inequality was against both nature and experience. Nature was not unchanging, and it was the changeability of the natural condition, which made it such an insecure place to be. As people got older, their mental and physical faculties weakened, and they became less able to hold on to any dominion they had managed to obtain. For Hobbes, as long as human beings attempted to assume superiority over others, they could never live in peace.

Hobbes also accused Aristotle and the Schoolmen of having a superficial view of human nature. They had included in their description of human nature, characteristics which themselves had been formed by life in society. Hobbes saw nature and society as complete opposites. He thought that we could not say that scripture, history and experience demonstrated that human beings were naturally sociable, because we could just as easily say that they demonstrated that men were naturally hostile. In fact the latter option seemed more likely, as it would explain why individuals had left the natural condition and created commonwealths. It was almost as if Hobbes were saying to the Schoolmen, if the natural condition was an ideal condition, then why did human beings ever leave it? If human beings could have ruled themselves, there would have been no need

²² *Leviathan*, XLVI (Latin edition), 23, p. 476.

²³ See *Leviathan*, XXI, 9, p. 140.

for the coercive power of the state. Hobbes' dislike of Aristotle and Aquinas put him completely in agreement with Martin Luther.²⁴

3. Hobbes' Protestantism.

Not only were the majority of Hobbes' contemporary critics Aristotelians, they were also Arminians, whereas Hobbes' voluntarism put him closer to orthodox Reformed views.²⁵ Hobbes' critics thought that when we used the term nature, we should be referring to nature's intention and perfection. They recognised that the Fall had corrupted human beings, but not to the extent implied by Hobbes' description. Natural sociability and hierarchy were retained after the Fall. Further, because they understood nature as perfection, they did not want to consider degenerated nature at all, but wanted to look at human beings, as if the Fall had never taken place. Human beings were still potentially perfect. Thus, the fear of God, the obligation of the laws of nature, and the individual conscience were sufficient to maintain peace amongst men in the natural condition. But an examination of Hobbes' state of nature, alongside protestant interpretations of the creation, the Fall, and the life of human beings immediately after the Fall, has suggested Hobbes' knowledge of Augustinian, Calvinist, and particularly Lutheran doctrines. In fact, Hobbes shows himself to be a more accurate interpreter of orthodox protestant doctrines, than his contemporary critics.²⁶ Having said that I am not arguing that Hobbes was a protestant, neither am I arguing that he was a particular kind of protestant. Instead I am arguing that he used ideas that were informed by the protestant tradition, and that it was possible for his contemporary readers who subscribed to the scriptural interpretations outlined in this dissertation to see parallels to Hobbes' views.

Hobbes demonstrated the protestant character of his thought in a number of areas. Firstly, in his views on the importance of intention. Central to

²⁴ See George Wright, 'Hobbes and the Economic Trinity', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 7 (1999), pp. 397-428, pp. 397-8.

²⁵ Thus confirming Noel Malcolm's view that ethical voluntarism was the issue between Hobbes and his contemporaries, and that Hobbes' voluntarist theology was a foundation, rather than a consequence of his philosophy - see his *Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology*.

²⁶ Thus confirming Jürgen Overhoff's view - see his 'The Lutheranism of Thomas Hobbes', and *Hobbes's Theory of Volition*.

protestantism was the doctrine of justification by faith alone.²⁷ This doctrine distinguished Calvinists and Lutherans, from Arminians, who believed in the free will of all individuals to attain salvation through God's universal grace, and the sacraments of the Church. For those protestants who subscribed to Augustine's theory of the Two Cities, since the Fall there had come into existence two groups of human beings - the elect and the reprobate, who lived on earth mixed up together. God had arbitrarily predestined these two groups, and only he knew who would be saved, and who would be damned. Human beings could not contribute to their own salvation in any way, except through faith. Similarly, Hobbes thought that it was not possible to tell good and bad men apart, on the basis of their outward works. Only God could look into their hearts and judge their true intentions. Because individuals in Hobbes' state of nature could not distinguish between good and bad men, it was safer to assume that all men were evil. In this way, Hobbes' political theory could be understood to have taken into account the effects of the Fall on human beings.

Secondly, although Hobbes never specifically attributed the fallibility of reason to the Fall, his account of the laws of nature could be understood to be in agreement with Reformed interpretations of the problems associated with natural law since the disobedience. Even in Eden, God had given Adam and Eve a positive command, because natural law was not a sufficient test of obedience. Further, according to the Reformed view, although natural law was immutable and eternal, reason, through which human beings discovered it, had been corrupted by the disobedience. Since the Fall, human beings found it difficult to apply the principles of natural law, and the conscience had a tendency to confuse virtue and vice. Hobbes thought that the Schoolmen had failed to deal with the problem of disagreement over which actions constituted virtue or vice. Hobbes' civil sovereign, or 'mortal god', was designed to provide the solution to this problem, by giving natural law one interpretation and setting out how it was to be applied in particular circumstances, thus converting natural law into civil law.²⁸

²⁷ Hobbes thought that both faith and obedience were necessary for salvation, where obedience was 'the will or effort to obey' - see *De Cive*, XVIII, 3, p. 236. See also *Elements*, XXV, 10, pp. 151-2; and *Leviathan*, XLIII, 3-5, pp. 398-400, & 19-23, pp. 407-10.

²⁸ According to Skinner, 'Rhetoric and the Construction of Morality', pp. 54-5, the appointment of a judge solved the problem of *paradiastole*.

Finally, Hobbes was in agreement with the voluntarist view that God's will was beyond our understanding, and that his intentions and purposes were not made manifest in nature. The account of Cain and Abel demonstrated the arbitrariness of God's decrees. It demonstrated that good men often suffered, while evil men prospered. For instance, if we examined Cain's life after the killing of his brother, and imagined having no knowledge of Cain's crime, we might be led to believe that Cain was and had been a good man. After all, he was 'rewarded' with a family, long life, and a kingdom; while Abel was 'punished' with death. Hobbes seems to have taken the view that even in Eden, God was not enough to maintain order. God's positive command had not prevented Adam and Eve from disobeying him, and this was even more the case now, since the corruption of human beings by the Fall. God's rewards and punishments were not immediate enough, and also not obvious enough. The scriptural accounts of Adam and Eve, and Cain and Abel demonstrated this. The account of Cain and Abel also demonstrated why we could not say that authority was God-given. God sometimes allowed evil men, like Cain, to rule.

One of Hobbes' contemporary critics pointed out that Hobbes had turned all traditional arguments for authority upside down. This dissertation has shown that Hobbes' description of the state of nature could be understood to have taken Calvin's idea that through the disobedience, 'the order of nature, which God has appointed, has been inverted by us' to its extreme logical conclusion.²⁹ Thus, Hobbes' state of nature, a condition of unsociability, equality and war, was a complete inversion of God's creation of human beings in a sociable, hierarchical, and peaceful condition. This seems to be the crux of the argument between Hobbes and his contemporaries. The critics recognised that nature had been corrupted by the Fall, although not to the extent implied by Hobbes' description. But they also thought that nature should be judged by her intention or perfection, almost as if the Fall had never taken place. Hobbes, on the other hand, wanted to look at how human beings were, not how they should have been. His political theory indicates that he was closer to the Augustinian and Reformed view that nature had been completely inverted by the Fall. This dissertation has shown that

²⁹ Calvin, *Commentaries*, p. 129.

the contemporary reading of Hobbes' account of the state of nature owed much to the reader's own interpretation of the consequences of this catastrophic event.

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