Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition

JEAN HAMPTON

In *Leviathan* Hobbes mounted a famous, or notorious, argument for the creation and maintenance of an absolute sovereign as the means to secure peace. He postulated a "state of nature" in which people would find themselves unable to cooperate or keep contracts without government, but argued that these people would be able to keep a social contract among themselves creating a ruler, and that it was in their self-interest to create only a ruler with absolute power.

Both problematic and influential, this justification for the state is the subject of the present book. Professor Hampton presents a new and comprehensive analysis of Hobbes's argument that draws on recent developments in game and decision theory to establish whether the argument does, or can be made to, succeed. She generalizes her findings to exhibit the structure of any social contract argument, showing its strategy for justifying the state and for explaining the state's structure. Lucidly written throughout, this book will interest students of Hobbes's theory, and of the social contract tradition in political thought.

HOBBES AND THE SOCIAL CONTRACT TRADITION

Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition

JEAN HAMPTON

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by
Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521368278

First published 1986
First paperback edition 1988
Reprinted 1990, 1995

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data

ISBN 978-0-521-26184-8 Hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-36827-8 Paperback

TO RICHARD

Contents

Acknowledgments

This book has been long in the writing, and I have many people to thank for their help along the way.

I am indebted to those people who aided me when I began the project of understanding Hobbes's argument in my doctoral dissertation; in particular, to John Rawls, whose own modern contractarian theory initially sparked my interest in traditional social contract arguments, and to Israel Scheffler, Quentin Skinner, and Richard Tuck.

There have been numerous philosophical conversations with colleagues since then that have helped me to develop my interpretation further. For their help in such conversations I want to thank David Gauthier, Thomas Hill, Gregory Kavka, Warren Quinn, Christopher Morris, Don Hubin, Robert Gerstein, and Stephen Munzer. I am also grateful to the students in my Hobbes seminar at the University of Pittsburgh in the winter of 1984 and to the students in my seminars on contractarian thinking at UCLA in 1982 and 1984. This book has become clearer as a result of their lively questions and challenges.

Any work in philosophy, particularly one in the history of philosophy, builds on the work of others. I am happy to acknowledge two important debts: first, to David Gauthier's *The Logic of Leviathan,* and second, to J. W. N. Watkins's *Hobbes's System of Ideas.* I have disagreed with both, yet learned much from both.

Cambridge University's Rare Book Room and UCLA's William Clark Library provided valuable resources for historical research into the seventeenth century. And I wish to thank UCLA for providing grant support that enabled me to spend time away from teaching and to obtain research assistance. An earlier version of Chapter 2 was read at the Hobbes Tercentenary Congress at Boulder, Colorado, in August 1979, and portions of Chapters 2 and 3 were read at the Conference on the History of Ethics at the University of California, Irvine, in January 1984 (later published as "Hobbes's State of War" in *Topoi,* Winter 1985). The comments I received from the participants in both conferences were very helpful. I also want to thank the Philosophy Department at the University of Pittsburgh, whose invitation to me to visit during the winter of 1984 gave me a stimulating environment in which to work.

I have been very fortunate to have had excellent help in preparing the manuscript for publication: Thanks go to Linda Bidasio and Diane Wells for their word-processing skills and to Betty Wilson and Kristin Carnohan for all sorts of clerical help. Thanks also go to my research assistants Steven Reynolds and Julie Heath Elliott for patient and careful work.

Finally, I must acknowledge a deep indebtedness to two members of my family:

first, to my husband, Richard Healey, who has been not only a faithful and invaluable philosophical interlocutor during the writing of this book but also my best friend; second, to Andrew Hampton-Healey, who provided the final impetus I needed to finish it.

Jean Hampton
University of California, Los Angeles

A Note on Texts and References

I have used the author/date system of referencing for all works except those of Hobbes. In order to make the references to Hobbes's work complete, readily understandable, and inconspicuous, I have adopted the following conventions when citing Hobbes:

1. *Leviathan:* Because there is no standard edition of this work, I have referred to the pagination in the original 1651 edition, also given in the Macpherson and Oxford (1952) editions of the book. However, in order to help readers who use other editions to find the passages cited, I have also included the chapter number and the number of the paragraph in the chapter in which the passage occurs. As long as the reader is using an edition of *Leviathan* that has not altered the original paragraph construction of the 1651 edition, this system should make possible easy location of all references. Hence, citations to *Leviathan* will take the following form: *(Lev,* chapter number, number of paragraph in chapter, page number of 1651 edition). All quotations from *Leviathan* use the 1651 text in Macpherson's edition.

2. *De Cive (Philosophical Rudiments Concerning Government and Society):* Here I have used the edition in Volume ii of *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes,* edited by W. Molesworth. Citations are as follows: *(DC, EW* ii, chapter number, section number, page number).

3. *Elements of Law:* Frederick Tönnies's edition has been used (Cambridge University Press, 1928), and references take the following form: *(EL,* part number, chapter number, section number, page number).

4. *De Homine:* I have used Bernard Gert's translation in his *Man and Citizen* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1968), and references are as follows: *(DH,* chapter number, section number, page number).

5. *De Corpore:* I have used the edition in Volume i of the *English Works;* references take the following form: *(De Corp, EW* i, part number, chapter number, section number, page number).

6. References to all other works by Hobbes cited in the text will be to the editions of those works in Molesworth's *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes* and will take the following form: (name of work, *EW,* volume number, page number).

7. References to passages found in epistle dedicatories or prefaces will contain the abbreviation "ep. ded." or "pref."

References to Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* will always be to Peter Laslett's edition (Cambridge University Press, 1963, and Mentor, 1965). When referring to

A Note on Texts and References

Book II of this work, I shall be using its common title *The Second Treatise.* Citations from Book II will be as follows: *(2T,* section number, page number in Laslett edition).

All quotations from the works of Hobbes, Locke, and other seventeenth- and eighteenth-century political theorists will preserve the original spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure.

Introduction

> It is not to revive the corpse of past erudition that I have any desire, but rather to make more vivid the life of today, and to help us envisage its problems with a more accurate perspective. Otherwise my task would be as ungrateful as it is difficult . . . We [must] see our own day as from a watch tower. We are trying to know more closely the road we have been travelling.
>
> J. N. Figgis, *Studies of Political Thought From Gerson to Grotius 1414–1625*

It would be difficult to find a time in history more tumultuous than the period of the English Revolution and Puritan protectorate from approximately 1640 to 1660. In the midst of the tumult, many people offered prescriptions for curing the nation's disorders and achieving its long-lasting health. Hobbes's argument for the institution of an absolute sovereign in his masterpiece *Leviathan* is the most famous and celebrated of those prescriptions, and in this book I will be undertaking an extensive examination of Hobbes's political theory based primarily on his statement of it in *Leviathan* and supported by many of his political and philosophical writings.

However, my concerns go beyond mere analysis of the Hobbesian political position. In recent years, philosophers and historians have displayed considerable interest in social contract theories. But there has been confusion and controversy over the structure and justificational force of social contract arguments, as well as a good deal of perplexity over the nature of the argument used by Hobbes to establish the institution of the sovereign. In this book I want to tackle both problems at once, hoping to shed light on the general structure of all social contract arguments by analyzing and explaining Hobbes's contractarian argument.

Hobbes's argument is well suited for this philosophical purpose, not only because it is probably the finest of the traditional social contract arguments but also because Hobbes worked hard to make its architecture clear in order to persuade his readers of his political conclusions. In all of his political writings he maintains that it was *bad reasoning* that had plunged England and other European political societies into chaos during the seventeenth century, so that the only effective cure for this disorder was to give members of these societies a sound, rational argument for the correct political structure of a state as rigorous as any of Euclid's geometric proofs: "Geometry therefore is demonstrable, for the lines and figures from which we reason are drawn and described by ourselves; and civil philosophy is demonstrable, because we make the commonwealth ourselves." ("Six Lessons to the Professors of the Mathematics," *EW* vii, ep. ded., 184; see also *DC*, *EW* ii, pref., xiii–xiv) Hence I will be taking Hobbes's geometric analogy seriously, isolating the major premisses and examining

the inferences of his argument. And if I find that a step is inadequately justified by Hobbes, I will try to justify it by other means. I hope to accomplish more than a description or explication of Hobbes's political philosophy; I am attempting a rethinking of his position. Rather than being merely a commentator or critic, I will attempt to be Hobbes's interlocutor. Only if one tries, in this way, to get the best possible statement of Hobbes's argument for absolute sovereignty will one be able to understand where and why that argument fails, and an understanding of that failure will help us to understand what structure a social contract argument must have if it is to succeed.

My commitment to presenting *Leviathan* as a book that attempts to put forward a unified "geometric" argument places me squarely within the traditional "systematic" camp of Hobbes interpreters, whose approach has been recently attacked by a group of "antisystematic" interpreters emphasizing natural law in their reconstructions of Hobbes's position. Led by A. E. Taylor and Howard Warrender, these critics argue that one cannot get Hobbes's political conclusions to follow from his natural philosophy or his human psychology, and that the political argument in *Leviathan* should be reconstructed to show that the justification for absolute sovereignty must rest on the foundation of natural law developed in medieval Christian philosophy. This attack on the systematic approach has generated interesting debates about how the pieces of Hobbes's argument go together, and it has focused attention on a perennially difficult problem for the systematic interpreters — the role of Hobbes's laws of nature in his argument.

However, this book is an attempt to present a single argument for absolute sovereignty resting on Hobbesian premisses about the nature of human beings, their psychology, and their "moral" relationships, each step of which is either explicit in *Leviathan* or consistent with the positions Hobbes takes on psychology, ethics, and natural philosophy. The only way to put to rest the worry that there is no coherent "geometric deduction" for absolute sovereignty in *Leviathan* is to present one. That is what I propose to do.

I will not, however, contend that Hobbes's geometric deduction succeeds. On the contrary, it is invalid, and I will be concerned to determine both where and why it fails. Warrender and others are not, therefore, wrong to suspect that Hobbes's conclusion does not follow from his materialist premisses, but they are wrong to deny that Hobbes's primary intention in *Leviathan* was to derive that conclusion from those premisses. Moreover, I shall contend that at every vulnerable point in his argument Hobbes wavers, putting forward views to shore up his shaky argument that are importantly at odds with the political conclusion he wants to justify. The passages in which these views are expressed are favorites of the antitraditionalist school, and when I bring these discordant ideas together in Chapter 8, I will show that they form the seeds of a Lockean-style social contract argument. Indeed, if Locke needed a source book of ideas for his own political theory, he needed to look no farther than *Leviathan*. So the antitraditionalist interpreters' claim that there are Lockean views in *Leviathan* is right, but I shall argue that they are wrong to see these ideas as constitutive of the main and "official" Hobbesian argument.

Giving such a rational reconstruction of Hobbes's argument does not preclude taking a historical approach to his work; on the contrary, the historical background is a highly

useful supplement to the philosophical analysis of his argument. Placing Hobbes's argument in historical context reveals and clarifies many of the assumptions and theoretical underpinnings of that argument and makes explicit what problems his theory of the state was designed to solve. Indeed, this historical discussion is useful in bringing to light the reasons any philosopher would have for espousing an "alienation" social contract theory. Nonetheless, my commitment to history does not imply slavish adherence to Hobbes's statement of his own argument. I am not loath to use contemporary philosophical and mathematical tools (such as the tools of game theory) to reconstruct his argument. Hobbes meant his work to be appreciated as a philosophical argument for absolute sovereignty, not as an exhibit in a museum of seventeenth-century political beliefs. Hence, the use of any tools of logic or any modern conceptual distinctions that will help to advance, clarify, or improve Hobbes's argument for his political theory is fully in accordance with his purposes and true to the spirit of his work.

Of course, in one sense, most of us in the twentieth century are already confident that the argument fails in some way, for we believe that there is no successful argument for a polity as distasteful to us as absolute sovereignty. An investigation of Hobbes's argument and an appreciation of its failure can help us to explain our rejection of this type of government and thus make more sophisticated our own political beliefs. However, the principal reason for studying Hobbes's work is that doing so will improve our understanding of social contract theories generally. For example, we can learn from an analysis of Hobbes's political theory that it is an example of one *kind* of social contract argument that began to develop as early as the twelfth century, when a debate arose among Roman law theorists concerning a passage in Justinian's *Digest* known as the *lex regia:*

> What pleases the prince has the force of law, because by the *lex regia,* which was made concerning his authority, the people confers to him and upon him all its own authority and power. [Morrall 1971, 46; from the *Digest* of Justinian, I, 4, I]

The commentators on the *Digest* were prepared to accept this statement as good evidence that the ruler's power was derived from the people, but they could not agree on how that transfer of power had occurred. When the people "conferred" their power on the ruler, did they surrender their power to him? Or did they merely lend him that power, reserving the right to take it from him if they saw fit? This was more than just an academic dispute about the interpretation of a text; at issue was the fundamental relationship between the ruler and the ruled, and theorists who gave different answers to this question advocated very different polities. If power was merely loaned to the ruler, rebellion against him could be condoned if he violated the conditions attached to that loan. But if the people's grant of power was a surrender, there were no such conditions, and the people could never be justified in taking back that power via revolution.

As English society in the seventeenth century warred over the issue of the nation's political structure, Hobbes put forward the finest statement ever of the position that the ruler is instituted when the people surrender their power to him — what I call an "alienation" social contract theory. Later in the same century, Locke became the most famous spokesman for the position that the ruler's power is only loaned to him — what I call the "agency" social contract theory. My analysis of Hobbes's argument is

designed to clarify the structure and strategy of all alienation arguments and to illuminate, by contrast, the different features of an agency social contract argument.

However, one of the most important ways in which a study of Hobbes's social contract theory illuminates other theories in this tradition is by making clear how any social contract argument works as a justification of the state. The belief that such arguments are without justificational force has been widespread since the seventeenth century. David Hume assumed that proponents of this argument used the social contract as a historical explanation of the state's creation, and he brilliantly ridiculed any historical claims these theories might have had (Hume 1965; 1978, III, ii, viii). Defenders of the argument countered that social contracts were only "hypothetical," but more recent philosophers have wondered how a merely hypothetical contract can justify anything. As Dworkin says, "A hypothetical contract is not simply a pale form of an actual contract; it is no contract at all." (1976, 17–18) One of the tasks of this book is to explain the sense in which an agreement instituting a ruler is supposed to be hypothetical and yet justificational and, in particular, how it introduces the notion of consent into the argument for the state's legitimacy. However, using Hobbes's theory, I will make this explanation in a way that will strike many readers as iconoclastic: I will argue that *there is no literal contract* in any successful social contract theory! Only when the nature of the agreements in these arguments is correctly understood can their justificatory and explanatory structure be appreciated. And although I will be explicitly concerned in this book to use this analysis to clarify the strategies of traditional contractarian arguments, such as those put forward by Hobbes, Locke, and Kant, I will at least suggest how this study is relevant to an understanding of the strategies of modern contractarian arguments designed to justify certain conceptions of justice or morality put forward by such contemporary political theorists as John Rawls. I will also argue that this study can educate us about the intellectual roots of the modern state and in this respect lead us to appreciate more fully the theoretical foundations of twentieth-century political philosophy.

Therefore, I hope that by the end of the book the reader will endorse the sentiments of Figgis cited at the outset of this Introduction (1916, 3–4), agreeing that this study of history has enabled us to ascend a watchtower, from which to gain perspective on contemporary political philosophy.

CHAPTER 1

"Of Man": The Foundation of Hobbes's Political Argument

> He that is to govern a whole nation, must read in himself, not this or that particular man, but Man-kind.
>
> Hobbes, *Leviathan*

1.1 THE PREMISSES OF HOBBES'S ARGUMENT

Every political philosopher is influenced by the economic, social, and political events of the time, and Hobbes's work was particularly responsive to the political turmoil of his day. He was born in 1588, just before Philip II of Spain sent the Armada to attack England during Spain's war with The Netherlands. During his childhood, a civil war raged within France between Protestant Huguenots and the Catholic crown. The Thirty Years' War ravaged Europe during all of his early adult years, from 1618 to 1648. And England itself was plunged into civil war and disorder from 1642 to 1649. Cromwell waged war against Ireland, Scotland, and Holland during his protectorship, and two other wars between England and The Netherlands erupted in 1665 and 1672. During the 1670s, Holland was also engaged in a war against France, along with Austria, Spain, and the German principalities. And in 1679, the year of Hobbes's death, political turmoil in England was increasing as, once again, opponents of a Stuart king prepared to overthrow him.

Given this kind of violent political turmoil, it is not suprising that a philosopher should come to hold a view of human beings as creatures who will, if unchecked, inevitably behave violently toward one another. And Hobbes uses this conception of human beings to argue that we are creatures who can live in peace only if we subject ourselves to an absolute sovereign. The first presentation of Hobbes's argument for absolute sovereignty was in the *Elements of Law,* which circulated in manuscript form in 1640, arousing enough ire among Parliament members and sympathizers to force Hobbes to flee to Paris. The second presentation was made in *De Cive,* published in Latin in 1642, the second (1646) edition of which was translated and published in English under the title *Philosophical Rudiments Concerning Government and Society* in 1651. However, Hobbes's final and most sophisticated presentation of the argument was in *Leviathan,* published in English in 1651 and translated (with some changes) into Latin by Hobbes himself and published (in Amsterdam) in 1668. It is the presentation of Hobbes's argument in *Leviathan* on which we will concentrate.

THE FOUNDATION OF HOBBES'S POLITICAL ARGUMENT

In this chapter, I want to discuss certain critical premisses of the Hobbesian argument. Because Hobbes's political and philosophical beliefs were designed to form a unified, integrated system, I would have liked to have included a complete discussion of how Hobbes's fundamental metaphysical and epistemological beliefs ground his political conclusions. But such a project would have forced me to write another book in addition to this one, and there are already good discussions of the connections among Hobbes's metaphysical, epistemological, and political positions.[1] Hence, in this chapter, I intend to do something more limited: I will analyze and discuss certain philosophical beliefs about the nature of human beings and the "moral laws" obligating them that act as premisses in Hobbes's argument for absolute sovereignty.

Curtailing the discussion in this way is something that Hobbes himself would accept. While he insisted that the human being is both a "natural body" and a part of the "Body Politic" (*DH*, ep. ded., 35; *De Corp*, *EW* i, I, 6, 6, 72; *Lev*, intro., 4, 2), he nonetheless believed that natural and political philosophy

> do not so adhere to one another, but that they may be severed. For the causes of the motions of the mind are known, not only by ratiocination [science], but also by the *experience* of every man that takes the pains to observe those motions within himself. [*De Corp*, *EW* i, I, 6, 6, 73; emphasis added]

So without getting too deeply involved in the principles of natural philosophy, which Hobbes, as a materialist, believes explain all human behavior, I want to discuss aspects of Hobbes's conception of the person that are supposed to be *empirically confirmed* and that underlie premisses in his argument for absolute sovereignty.

Some readers will think that by using the phrase "conception of the person" I am referring to Hobbes's psychology of human beings. This is not so. The psychological analyses of human behavior given by Hobbes in his writings already presuppose a certain view of what a person is — one might call it a "metaphysical" view. It is what Martin Hollis (1977) has called a "model of man." Moreover, his conception of the person involves a certain meta-ethical position (best expressed in *Leviathan* and *De Homine*) that we must understand if we are to appreciate both the structure of his argument and the prescriptive conclusions he reaches.

1.2 HOBBES'S RADICAL INDIVIDUALISM

In his article "The Social Contract as Ideology," David Gauthier (1977) argues that Hobbes is a "radical contractarian" who holds

> that individual human beings not only can, but must, be understood apart from society. The fundamental characteristics of men are not products of their social existence . . . man is social because he is human, not human because he is social. In particular, self-consciousness and language must be taken as conditions, not products, of society. [1977, 138]

Gauthier is right to find in Hobbes's theory a very strong brand of individualism, one that regards individual human beings as conceptually prior not only to political society but also to *all* social interactions. In fact, his method of argument both relies on and reveals his view that human beings are individuals first and social creatures

1 See, for example, J. W. N. Watkins (1965a), and M. M. Goldsmith (1966).

second. J. W. N. Watkins argues (1965a, 52–65; 1965b, 242–8; see also Randall 1940; 1961) that in his social contract argument Hobbes is implicitly making a certain kind of use of the "resolutive-compositive" method expounded by the Paduan scientists of his day. Harvey, Galileo, and other exponents of this method taught that the best way to understand a system, process, or event is to resolve it into its components, analyze these components, and then recompose them via a theory that explains their interrelationships and interactions. Hobbes's admiration for Harvey and Galileo is well known. And his acceptance of their method is evident in all three of his political writings. In *De Cive,* he writes:

> Concerning my method, I thought it not sufficient to use a plain and evident style in what I have to deliver, except I took my beginning from the very matter of civil government, and thence proceeded to its generation and form, and the first beginning of justice. For everything is best understood by its constitutive causes. For as in a watch, or some such small engine, the matter, figure, and motion of the wheels cannot well be known, except it be taken insunder and viewed in parts; so to make a more curious search into the rights of states and duties of subjects, it is necessary, I say, not to take them insunder, but yet that they be so considered as if they were dissolved; that is, that we rightly understand what the quality of human nature is, in what matters it is, in what not, fit to make up a civil government, and how men must be agreed amongst themselves that intend to grow up into a well-grounded state. [*DC, EW* ii, pref., xiv]

Likewise, in *Leviathan,* Hobbes sets out to describe the nature of the state, the "artificial man," and does so first by considering "the *Matter* thereof, and the *Artificer*; both [of] which is *Man*" (*Lev,* intro., 2, 2). He concludes by seeing how these parts coalesce and unify themselves through the actions of agreement and authorization.[2]

However, when looking for "constitutive causes," Hobbes expects to find parts that are, in effect, "wholes" themselves. Just as he believes that dissection of a watch, or even of a human body, produces components that are separately defined but interacting parts of a unified mechanism ["For what is the *Heart,* but a *Spring;* and the *Nerves,* but so many *Strings;* and the *Joynts,* but so many *Wheeles,* giving motion to the whole Body . . . ?" (*Lev,* intro., 1, 1)], so, too, does he think that dissection of the state results in the discovery of separately defined human individuals who, after instituting the sovereign, are interacting parts of this "artificial man." This is why he thinks it makes sense to speak of a presocietal "state of nature" in which men are "even now sprung out of the earth, and suddenly, like mushrooms, come to full maturity, without all kind of engagement to each other." (*DC, EW* ii, 8, 1, 109) In his view, when we theoretically sunder society and put men into this natural state, human individuals are not destroyed when they are stripped of their social connections; rather, they are best revealed by that sundering. Although he admits that people certainly develop interests and ideas as a result of living in a society and cooperating with one another,[3] he contends that people's basic features and defining characteristics arise "from nature, that is, from their first birth, as they are merely sensible creatures, they have this disposition. . . ." (*DC, EW* ii, pref., xvi) And he believes that human beings have natural desires and motivations that, if unchecked, will lead them into extreme and continual conflict with one another.

2 In *De Corpore* there is a fairly extensive discussion of how philosophy follows a method that is both resolutive and compositive in nature; see Part I, Chapter 6, "Of Method."

3 For example, see *Leviathan* (13, 9, 62) on the advantages of culture and industry obtained in civil society and lost in a state of war.

It is important to note that Hobbes's use of the resolutive-compositive method does not generate this individualist position. Aristotle also accepts a resolutive-compositive method of analysis in political matters (1941a, 1252a, 20–30), but for him the constituents of the state are not isolated asocial individuals, but individuals in certain fundamental social relationships with others; namely, master and slave, husband and wife, father and children. (See the *Politics,* 1253b, 4–6.) Moreover, Aristotle argues that society is conceptually prior to the individual person, a position that Hobbes is directly contradicting in his own political writings. So, although it might be easy from our post-Hobbesian perspective to see the resolutive-compositive method as presupposing radical individualism, in fact it only *reveals* rather than creates Hobbes's view of human beings and their connections to one another in society.

In order to understand the exact nature of Hobbesian individualism, I want to explore the way in which this method shows how human beings are parts of a larger social whole; this, in turn, requires us to classify certain properties that any part of a larger whole might have. This classification is not an attempt to exhaust the types of properties that one can isolate in any system of parts, but for our purposes the following three kinds of properties are most important:

1. *Intrinsic properties.* These are properties an object has not in virtue of being a part of a larger whole but simply in virtue of being that object. For example, an airplane wing has the property of being made of metal; this is an intrinsic property, because the wing will have it whether or not it is affixed to the body of the plane. Likewise, an intrinsic property of a human being is having a heart; it is a feature we have in virtue of being such a creature.
2. *Functional properties.* These are properties that an object has in virtue of being part of a whole; specifically, they are properties that relate to or derive from the object's performance of certain roles basic to the purpose or nature of the whole itself. For example, in the human body, the stomach has the functional property of digesting proteins. And in a car, the transmission has the functional property of transmitting power from the engine to the drive shaft. Moreover, being a professor or a janitor or a pilot is an example of a functional property, insofar as it arises out of a person's performance of a role in the social group of which the person is a member.
3. *Interactive properties.* Not all objects that are parts of wholes have these properties, because they are properties that an object *develops over time* as it interacts with other parts of a whole, and not all such objects are able to change so that these new properties can be created. Moreover, these properties result from interaction between some or all of the parts of the whole and either the intrinsic properties of the object or its previously developed interactive properties. We see the development of an interactive property when the teeth of two cogs in a watch, as they come together, wear each other down. Each cog's property "being worn down" is interactive, because each develops as a result of the cogs' interaction. We might also say that a dog's ability to do tricks is an interactive property of the dog, because it is the result of the animal's association with human beings. Finally, we attrib-

> ute interactive properties to human beings when they have interacted with other human beings or with other features of their natural environment. Examples of this sort of property in human beings include the following: having a taste for certain foods, such as ice cream or curry; certain sorts of physical abilities, such as the ability to ski; speaking a certain language, such as English or Hindi.

Using this terminology, we can now be clearer about what Hobbes is assuming when he characterizes his "state of nature." For Hobbes, not only our reflexes and animal abilities but also our basic human characteristics, capacities, and desires are *intrinsic* properties. He is not denying that we have functional or interactive properties; one's occupation in the community or one's ability to speak a particular language are clearly examples of such properties. Rather, he is maintaining that these properties are not fundamental to our nature as persons and that we possess intrinsically all motivations and abilities that are characteristically human.

There is overwhelming evidence in all of Hobbes's writings that he is an ardent supporter of this "radically individualist" perspective on human beings. I have already quoted the passage in *De Cive* explaining that in his argument he treats human beings as if they were "even now sprung out of the earth, and suddenly, like mushrooms, come to full maturity, without all kind of engagement to each other." (*DC, EW* ii, 8, 1, 109) Of course, none of us arrives at adulthood so quickly and so asocially. But Hobbes maintains that the social interaction necessary for our physical survival in our childhood years does not in any way play a role in forming us *as human beings*. Indeed, he argues that if we enter into cooperative interactions with other people, it is only because we perceive these interactions to be in our interest in some way: "We do not therefore by nature seek society for its own sake, but that we may receive some honour or profit from it; these we desire primarily, that secondarily." (*DC, EW* ii, 1, 2, 3) That is, we desire society only insofar as it has *instrumental value* for us, which means that our individuality grounds our sociality, not the reverse.

Watkins (1965a, 101ff.) and Michael Oakeshott (1947, liv) have also discussed Hobbes's "privacy thesis," which is importantly connected with the radical individualism I am attributing to him. Hobbes's privacy thesis is the view that our thoughts, beliefs, and emotions are "cut off" from others and confined to the "cell walls" of our person. Throughout *Leviathan,* Hobbes's discussion of human beings assumes that minds never meet, that ideas are never really shared among human beings, and that each of us is always and finally isolated from every other individual. Such a thesis is a natural part of a philosophical perspective that regards human beings as social because they are human, rather than the reverse. It also fits nicely with Hobbes's materialist metaphysics. By saying that "conceptions or apparitions are nothing really, but motion in some internal substance of the head" (*EL,* I, vii, 1, 28; see also *Lev,* 1), Hobbes imprisons those conceptions and apparitions within the person in whom those bodily motions are occurring.

Even our ability to speak a natural language, something that, more than anything else, appears to be evidence for understanding human beings as inherently social creatures, is regarded by Hobbes as an ability in no way dependent for its creation or development on social interaction of any kind. In Chapter 4 of *Leviathan,* Hobbes's

account of human speech makes the individual the source of language, and he regards language as of instrumental value only: Words are needed only as "marks" to help us remember our thoughts (*Lev,* 4, 3, 12–13) or as "signes" to help us communicate with other human beings in order to better pursue the satisfaction of our desires (*Lev,* 4, 3, 31). Thus, Hobbes makes language a remarkably private and individual affair.

Many of Hobbes's critics in the seventeenth century disliked his radical individualism intensely. Ralph Cudworth maintained, in the spirit of Aristotle, that

> a man cannot apprehend himself as a being standing by itself, cut off, separated, and disjointed from all other beings . . . but looks upon himself as a member lovingly united to the whole system of all intellectual beings. [cited by Passmore 1951, 72; and Watkins 1965a, 101]

And Hobbes's critics were particularly fond of attacking his individualist analysis of the family. In *Leviathan,* Chapter 20, and in *De Cive,* Chapter 9, Hobbes maintains, true to his radical individualism, that family bonds are not natural to individuals but only artificially forged and coerced contracts between an inferior (e.g., the child, the wife) and a superior (e.g., the parent, the husband), the latter providing protection for the former in exchange for obedience. Bishop Bramhall made it clear that he regarded this view as plainly crazy:

> [Hobbes] might as well tell us in plain termes, that all the 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. [1658, 534; see also Lawson 1657, 48; and Filmer 1652, 6]

Bramhall and other critics went on to insist that there are *natural* ties of affection binding one person to another that are constitutive of our humanity and that generate commonly shared ethical principles that all rulers must heed. Nonetheless, other thinkers in the seventeenth century found this individualist perspective attractive. As I shall discuss later, the fact that even some of Hobbes's critics attempted to deduce universal moral laws from individual self-interest shows how enticing people in that age found the idea that moral and political theories must start with a view of the "raw" individual, stripped of any social connections.

However, Hobbes's radical individualism is not attractive or compelling to many twentieth-century thinkers, who, in this post-Hegelian, post-Marxist century, believe that fundamental human abilities, such as the capacity to reason mathematically, to learn a language, and to act morally, develop only because each of us interacts with other human beings, and who think that our identities as persons depend on roles we play and have played in family, school, city, and nation-state. Indeed, some Hobbesian critics have argued that this view of human beings is itself a product of the historical period in which Hobbes's thought developed. For example, C. B. Macpherson has argued (1977, chap. II, esp. 23 and 61; 1968) that the behavior that Hobbes attributes to human beings is not "natural" at all but is in fact the behavior of men and women in a "bourgeois market society" (1968, 38). Macpherson even tries to make into an *explicit* premiss in Hobbes's argument the idea that people in the "state of nature" seem in fact to be bourgeois men and women. He argues that in order to comprehend "Hobbes's argument from the physiological to the social motion of man, a social assumption is needed besides the physiological postulates" (1968, 46), for otherwise we will not understand why Hobbes believed that an absolute sovereign was necessary for peace.

But to "fix" Hobbes's argument in this way is to seriously misunderstand the

conceptual foundations of his argument. We must distinguish between our appraisal of Hobbes's conception of the person and that conception itself. Although we may reject Hobbes's individualism and seek to understand it as a product of his time, we must attribute to him the individualist view that, as many historians have noted, was so attractive to philosophers in that early capitalist period. And we must recognize that it was important for Hobbes that an initial premiss of his argument be that human beings are not in any fundamental way products of their social environment. Indeed, even from Macpherson's standpoint, it would have been unusual for a person in Hobbes's time and place to hold any other view. Therefore, although I will discuss the social context of Hobbes's thought throughout this book because I eschew his radical individualism, I will not attribute to him nor insert into his argument what he would have considered to be false assumptions about our sociality. And, contrary to what Macpherson says, it will never be necessary to make use of such assumptions in order to see why Hobbes thought that absolute sovereignty was the sole legitimate form of government.

Indeed, I will conclude this book by arguing that the entire social contract argument presupposes at least a moderate individualism.[4] And the extent to which we modern political philosophers should want to use this method of argument to justify our political conclusions depends on whether or not we can embrace the individualism inherent in this method.

1.3 Hobbes's Materialist Psychology

The Materialist Metaphysics

Hobbes's espousal of such a radical individualism is connected with his unabashed acceptance of a materialist picture of man. This materialist position was obviously connected with the new "natural philosophy" of his day, and Harvey's physiological theories were major influences on Hobbes's philosophy of mind and his views on human psychology and physiology.[5] It is a position that many Western philosophers have found attractive since the seventeenth century, and its twentieth-century descendant is generally called physicalism.

The first fundamental component of Hobbes's materialism is almost too obvious to state:

1. There is only one world, which various languages and styles of explanation characterize differently.

Languages with different domains do not establish independent worlds, as some twentieth-century philosophers (for example, Goodman) would have it; for Hobbes, there is only one world, although more than one way of describing it. Second, Hobbes believes that the language of physics, which contains in its domain fundamental objects recognized by this science, can give us a *complete* description of the events of the universe:

2. There is no change in the world without a physical change.

4 See Chapter 9, Section 9.2.

5 See Watkins (1965a, chap. 3) for a discussion of this influence.

Third, he endorses a belief that Quine (1977, 187) says follows from article 2:

3. The materialist language has [or will have] in its domain all and only those fundamental objects that exist.

This means that only the materialist language can explain events by referring to the ultimate existent objects in the universe. It also means that the only existent objects are physical — any object that exists either is one of the ultimate physical particles or is a compound of those ultimate particles. Hobbes's belief in this precept explains his adamant opposition to Cartesian views of the self.[6]

Perhaps even more important, Hobbes believes that an explanation of an event in materialist language must have a certain form:

4. A materialist explanation of an event will always be in terms of the operation of the fundamental physical objects in accordance with laws [which for Hobbes are deterministic].

The importance of article 4 is that it tells us how explanations of the actions of objects that are compounds of the fundamental physical objects will proceed. Hobbes's use of the resolutive-compositive method of his day essentially amounts to a commitment to what is generally called a "mechanistic" explanation of natural phenomena.[7] The nature of a compound is explained by resolving it into its component parts, and then recomposing it by detailing the operation of these components according to natural laws, so that it is treated as a mechanism, that is, as a system of physical parts interrelated and operating according to physical laws.

In all of his writings Hobbes shows himself firmly committed to this materialist view (and 'commitment' is the appropriate word here, because neither in Hobbes's day nor now have these four precepts been proved to be true). But he also embraces a fifth precept that twentieth-century physicalists are much more reluctant to embrace:

5. It is possible to reduce both ethical and psychological language to talk of matter, motion, and the laws of nature.

Indeed, it is an assumption of his "geometric" approach to philosophy that even as the state can be resolved into its component parts to reveal individual human beings as its constituents, these human beings can be resolved into parts to reveal fundamental material particles as their constituents. And in *De Corpore,* Hobbes insists that the explanation of human behavior is to be found in the study of physics:

> After *physics* we must come to *moral philosophy,* in which we are to consider the motion of the mind, namely, *appetite, aversion, love, benevolence, hope, fear, anger, emulation, envy,* etc.; what causes they have, and of what they be causes. And the reason why these are to be considered after *physics* is, that they have their causes in sense and imagination, which are the subject of *physical* contemplation. [*De Corp, EW* i, I, 6, 6, 72–3]

Moreover, he insists that recomposing these material parts of a human being into a whole human organism involves making reference to the (deterministic) natural laws of motion that these ultimate particles always obey, one of which is Galileo's law of inertia. (See *De Corp, EW* i, I, 6, 6, 72–3, and II, 9, 7, 124–5.)

6 See Hobbes's "Objections to Descartes's *Meditations*" (1976, 60–78), particularly objection II.

7 This is Daniel Dennett's word for it (1982, 150–73).

In Hobbes's view, analyzing the complicated physical structure of a human being helps us to understand not only how the parts of the human "engine" work but also what fundamental desires and motivations each human being possesses *intrinsically,* in virtue of the way one's body functions. And these intrinsic motivations are important presuppositions in Hobbes's moral and political conclusions. As we have already noted, Hobbes believed that *Leviathan* could have been a book that would first have reduced human beings to organisms with a certain physiological structure, then defined certain desires or aversions that human beings have intrinsically in virtue of how their bodies function, and, finally, used these desires to explain how these human beings could be successfully recomposed into a society. In fact, Hobbes was not able to pull off this full-scale reductionist project (and from the tone of his discussion in Chapter 6 of *Leviathan,* he appeared to believe not only that any psychological state could be reduced to a physical state but also the more controversial thesis that there was a *unique* reduction of a psychological state to a physical state). But he did believe that he had enough of a sense of what the reduction would be like, and what the fact of reducibility tells us, to be able to construct a psychological theory of human behavior (which is also empirically confirmable) to be used later in his political argument. Consider Hobbes's explication of sensation:

> The cause of Sense, is the Externall Body, or Object, which presseth the organ proper to each Sense, either immediately, as in the Tast and Touch; or mediately, as in Seeing, Hearing, and Smelling: which pressure, by the mediation of the Nerves, and other strings, and membranes of the body, continued inwards to the Brain and Heart, causeth there a resistance, or counter-pressure, or endeavour of the heart, to deliver it self: which endeavour because *Outward,* seemeth to be some matter without. And this *seeming,* or *fancy,* is that which men call *Sense.* [*Lev,* 1, 4, 3]

Hobbes then uses the idea that external affectation of bodily organs is responsible for our images of external objects in an attempt to offer a materialist explanation of human motivation. After distinguishing between "vitall" motion, or the internal movements of our bodily parts (e.g., movement of the blood), and "voluntary" or "animal" motion, that is, the external movements of the body (e.g., movement of a limb), he explains the origin of voluntary motion by showing its connection with our perceptions and ideas:

> conceptions and apparitions are nothing really, but motion in some internal substance of the head; which motion not stopping there, but proceeding to the heart, of necessity must there either help or hinder that motion which is called vital; when it helpeth, it is called DELIGHT, contentment, or pleasure . . . but when such motion weakeneth, or hindereth the vital motion, then it is called PAIN. . . . [*EL,* I, vii, 1, 28; see also *Lev,* 6, 1, 23]

Then, Hobbes continues, either the vital motions that initiate an image in the brain increase, in which case one experiences pleasure and initiates voluntary motion toward the object, or else these vital motions decrease, in which case one experiences pain and begins voluntary motion away from the thing sensed. The former is called man's appetite, desire, or love for that object; the latter is man's hatred of or aversion to it.[8]

8 See *Elements of Law* (I, vii, 2, 22) and *Leviathan* (6, 2, 23). In *Leviathan,* Hobbes also defines what he calls "endeavours," which are "the small beginnings of [voluntary] motion" (*Lev,* 6, 1, 23). Watkins (1965a, chap. vii) discusses this rather nonmaterialist concept and its influence on Leibniz.

Hobbes goes on to distinguish two kinds of appetite and aversion, corresponding to two of the properties we have already defined. The first is "intrinsic":

> Of Appetities and Aversions, some are born with Men; as Appetite of food, Appetite of excretion, and exoneration, (which may also and more properly be called Aversions, from somewhat they feele in their Bodies). . . . [*Lev*, 6, 4, 24]

The second kind (accounting for the vast majority of desires) is "interactive":

> The rest, which are Appetites of particular things, proceed from Experience, and triall of their effects upon themselves, or other men. For of things wee know not at all, or believe not to be, we can have no further Desire, than to tast and try. [*Lev*, 6, 4, 24]

And because human bodies and their environments are variable, interactive desires will differ between human beings and will vary within a given human being over time:

> And because the constitution of a mans Body, is in continuall mutation; it is impossible that all the same things should alwayes cause in him the same Appetites, and Aversions: much lesse can all Men consent, in the Desire of almost any one and the same Object. [*Lev*, 6, 6, 24]

In this way Hobbes accounts for the great variety of desires among human beings.

GLORY AND SELF-PRESERVATION

The bulk of Chapter 6 of *Leviathan* and Chapter XI of *De Homine* are taken up with using this materialist psychology to explain the origin and nature of various passions and emotions.

Because of its prominence later on in Hobbes's argument, I want to introduce briefly his account of our passion for glory. In fact, Hobbes defines two kinds of "glorying"—a healthy sort, and an unhealthy sort:

> *Joy*, arising from imagination of a mans own power and ability, is that exultation of the mind which is called GLORYING: which if grounded upon the experience of his own former action, is the same with CONFIDENCE: but if grounded on the flattery of others; or onely supposed by himself, for delight in the consequences of it, is called VAINE-GLORY. [*Lev*, 6, 19, 26–7]

And, as we shall see, he goes on to implicate vainglory, grounded on flattery rather than reality, in his explanation of violence in the state of nature. It appears from the tone of the discussion of glory in Chapter 6 that Hobbes means us to understand it as a desire for personal advancement that is somehow biologically intrinsic and that is so strong in us that when we cannot see it satisfied by the reality of our own powers and abilities in the world, we lie to ourselves and inflate those powers and abilities. Yet the intrinsic nature of this passion is certainly questionable, because glorying seems to presuppose a comparison of oneself with other human beings, which would make it a passion that could only develop in a social context. In Chapters 2 and 3 we shall be discussing at some length the question whether the desire for glory can be understood as intrinsic or only as interactive and socially developed.

However, I want to concentrate here on the desire for self-preservation, which is the more important of the two desires insofar as it is critical both to Hobbes's account of human warfare and to his justification of absolute sovereignty. This desire is clearly intrinsic, and Hobbes grounds its importance to us in the fact that we are naturally

averse to anything that hinders our internal vital motions, above all, death, insofar as it is the complete cessation of vital motion:

> necessity of nature maketh men . . . to avoid that which is hurtful; but most of all that terrible enemy of nature, death, from whom we expect both the loss of all power, and also the greatest of bodily pains in the losing. . . . [*EL*, I, xiv, 6, 71; see also *DH*, xi, 6, 48]

It is important to be clear on the fact that although all people pursue self-preservation, they do not all desire the same object. Each person wants his own self-preservation above all else, not the self-preservation of everyone. And because each person has a different object of desire, conflicts between people as they pursue these different goals are, in Hobbes's eyes, inevitable. Indeed, Hobbes's belief that these conflicts would be pervasive and greatly damaging to each person in the state of nature is, as we shall discuss, one of the most important tenets of his political argument.

It is undeniable that this aspect of Hobbesian psychology is crude and overly simplistic. Although normal human beings clearly have a very powerful desire to preserve themselves, it seems implausible for Hobbes to insist that this desire is *always* prior to *all* other desires in *everyone*. Moreover, it is unclear how Hobbes wants us to understand this desire for life. Is it really plausible to suppose that we are interested in the length of life alone, and not the quality of that life? Imagine having to make a choice between two actions, the first of which will give you enormous pleasure and allow you thirty more years of life, whereas the second will allow you thirty-one years of life but will cost you that pleasure and also bring you considerable pain. Might not many, even most, people prefer a rich, pleasure-filled life to a longer but pleasureless and/or painful existence?

Even Hobbes seems prepared to accept that this might be a better account of most people's psychological predilections, because he qualifies the primacy of the desire for life over death in *De Homine*:

> though death is the greatest of all evils (especially when accompanied by torture), the pains of life can be so great that, unless their quick end is foreseen, they may lead men to number death among the goods. [*DH*, XI, 6, 48–9]

Hobbes is acknowledging here that there are situations in which people will naturally favor death rather than life. However, the situation he describes is highly unusual, one in which a person's body is undergoing torturous pain, either because of disease or because of the actions of others. Nor is the sort of choice described in the previous paragraph commonly presented to us. It would seem to be Hobbes's position that in most, although not all, circumstances, our fundamental desire to enhance our bodily motions is one that will lead us to avoid "that terrible enemy death."

Nonetheless, Hobbes does little to make more precise or sophisticated his psychological view that this desire is usually (but not universally or continually) of primary importance to human beings. And Watkins (1965a, 166–8) worries that one might judge Hobbes's entire political theory as unsound on the basis that it appears to be founded on the unqualified and thus implausible psychological assumption that death is always feared above all else by the normal human being. However, such a judgment is premature at this stage. Even if the notion that all people primarily desire their self-preservation in all circumstances is implausible, it is undeniable that this desire is frequently a very important one for almost all of us; so perhaps this kind of signifi-

cance is all Hobbes needs (and wants) the desire to possess in order for his arguments to be effective. However, in later chapters we shall be concerned to see if this is true, that is, whether Hobbes can assume a milder and thus more plausible view of the importance of this desire for us, or whether he needs an implausibly strong assumption of this desire's importance in order to derive his political conclusions, such that his argument can be declared unsound.

However, we are required on Hobbes's behalf to elaborate on and make more sophisticated this psychological assumption in one important way, for otherwise he will not even be able to get his argument for the institution of an absolute sovereign off the ground. If the primacy of the desire for self-preservation is understood to be a kind of side constraint on human action, then human beings would be creatures who would never do anything to risk their lives if faced with a choice between a risky course and a safe course of action. And yet Hobbes believes this is manifestly false. As we shall discuss in Chapters 2 and 3, Hobbes argues in Chapter 13 of *Leviathan* that precisely because people desire to preserve themselves, they will deliberately go to war with others if they believe that doing so will enable them to gain greater material advantages. But this means he believes that people will indeed be prepared to risk their lives in the short run (even when they have a nonrisky course of action available to them) in order to further the security of their lives substantially in the long run. To use the terminology of Jon Elster (1979, chap. 1), Hobbes makes the assumption that human beings are "global" maximizers, not "local" maximizers. A local maximizer is one who is capable only of maximizing some quantity in a specific choice. But a global maximizer can do something more: Specifically, if faced with two alternatives, one can choose the nonmaximal course of action now in order to put oneself in a position that will allow one later to reap even more of the quantity one desires than the short-term maximal option would have allowed. Hobbes assumes that when human beings pursue their self-preservation, they will do so as *global* maximizers, able to take one step backward in order that later they can go two steps forward. Specifically, they are prepared to place their lives in jeopardy in the short run for the sake of gaining greater security of life in the long run.

Of course, not every risk of life would be worth taking for a Hobbesian individual. Placing one's life in some degree of jeopardy for the sake of achieving this goal strikes Hobbes as reasonable, but too much jeopardy he regards as craziness. Unfortunately, *Leviathan* contains no explicit account of precisely when risk taking is rational; yet, as we shall see time and again in later chapters, Hobbes continually needs such an account in order to explain and appraise not only the generation of war in the state of nature but also the rationality of living under a sovereign rather than remaining in the state of nature. The most natural account of risk taking to attribute to him is the Bayesian account, represented by the expected-utility calculation. According to this view, one should perform that risky action among available alternatives whose expected utility is greatest, where that expected utility is calculated by multiplying the utility of each possible outcome of the action by the probability of that outcome occurring, and then adding the products. This calculation expresses our intuition that the rationality of taking a risk is dependent on how much one stands to gain, how much one stands to lose, and how likely it is that one will lose. Indeed, these intuitions seem to be shared by Hobbes, because in his story of the development of

war in the state of nature, in Chapter 13 of *Leviathan,* there are many situations in which people in this state perceive the risk of losing their lives in war to be low enough and the gains from winning the war to be high enough to make it rational for them to take these risks.

This calculation also presupposes that it makes sense to measure something called "utility," which modern philosophers and economists define as "subjective preference." Of course, Hobbes defines no such notion, but his definition of 'good' in Chapter 6 of *Leviathan* (a definition we shall discuss at length in Section 1.5) as "the object of any mans appetite or desire" (*Lev,* 6, 7, 24) shows that, like modern utilitarians and economists, he perceives value as determined by individuals' subjective preferences and would certainly welcome measurement of these preferences if such measurement were possible.[9] Of course, that last "if" is a big one, but we certainly cannot debate the troublesome issue of utility's measurement here, and we shall assume for the sake of Hobbes's argument that at the very least an intrapersonal measurement of utility is possible.

IS HOBBES'S PSYCHOLOGY MONISTIC OR PLURALISTIC?

Does the fact that Hobbes presents our desire for preservation as only one of a number of different, and possibly conflicting, desires show that he is a psychological pluralist rather than a psychological monist? The first position is standardly understood to involve the claim that our desires *cannot* be ultimately reduced to one overriding desire, whereas the latter position is supposed to involve the claim that they can. I shall argue that if psychological monism is given this interpretation, Hobbes does not advocate it. However, I shall also contend that if psychological monism is understood in another, quite plausible way, Hobbes does indeed espouse it in all of his political writings.

On the face of things, Hobbes appears to be a psychological pluralist. Our various desires for glory or self-preservation seem to be separate and often competing incentives to action. And although the desire for self-preservation is the strongest of them all, Hobbes certainly does not argue that our other desires are derived from it. Rather, it is natural to take Hobbes's position to be that this (intrinsic) desire is just one of many desires we have, although the most powerful of them.

However, there are passages in which Hobbes explains why the desire for self-preservation is preeminent, and from these passages a monistic picture emerges, albeit not the sort that theorists such as Bentham have espoused. As the passage quoted earlier from *The Elements of Law* shows, Hobbes believes that it is because we will experience excruciating pain as we die that we fear death and desire self-preservation above all else. But this means that the desire for self-preservation is being explained as a function of our fundamental nature as pleasure pursuers and pain avoiders. However, note that in this passage Hobbes does not call pleasure an object of desire. Similarly, as we saw earlier, in *De Homine,* Hobbes admits that it is normal for people to desire death rather than life when life involves enormous pain. And this view clearly seems to presuppose that a human being's most fundamental pursuit is for pleasure, although note once again that pleasure is not characterized by Hobbes as an object of desire.

9 David Gauthier (1979b, 548) mounts a similar argument for this conclusion.

Finally, given Hobbes's account of the origin of voluntary motion, it would seem that the search for pleasure and the avoidance of pain are basic not only to our physiological makeup but also to the foundation of all desires, including the desire for self-preservation. Hobbes's position in Chapter 6 of *Leviathan* is that "desiring something" is the causal result of "experiencing an increase in bodily motions," an increase that will become even greater when the object is obtained. But this motion is the physiological correlate, according to Hobbes, of the psychological state "feeling pleasure"; "This motion, which is called Appetite, and for the appearance of it *Delight* and *Pleasure,* seemeth to be, a corroboration of Vitall motion, and a help thereunto." (*Lev,* 6, 10, 25) Hence, it seems that no matter what object one pursues, one is doing it in order to experience what that object will produce, namely, pleasure, defined as the enhancement of vital motion. Insofar as he holds this position, Hobbes's psychology would appear to be monistic — not because he makes all desires functions of one ultimate desire but because he makes all desires functions of *a single biological mechanism* in which a physical process correlated with the experience of pleasure plays a central role.

But it is important to be clear about exactly what Hobbes's nonstandard psychological monism claims. Of course, he believes that the objects we desire can be various: self-preservation, glory, food, peace, and so forth. But the reason we pursue these objects is that our bodies are biologically programmed to increase vital motion, and our motions respond to the attainment of these objects by increasing (where this increase is the physiological correlate of experiencing pleasure). One may not be aware that the reason that something is an object of one's desire is because one's body responds to it as a pleasure producer. For example, I might not be aware that the reason that I want chocolate is because it will give me pleasure; I might know only that I want the chocolate. But whether or not we are aware of the mechanism by which something becomes an object of desire for us, Hobbes believes that the mechanism is exactly the same for all the desires we have.

Bentham might say that I have just put Hobbes's position badly, because I have said that pleasure pursuit is the source of all desire, when in fact, according to Bentham, pleasure pursuit is itself a desire, and indeed the desire that generates all others. But I believe that Hobbes would find Bentham's way of talking misleading and unintuitive. The experience of pleasure, for Hobbes, is not something we desire; as we have seen, he never describes pleasure as an object of desire, only as something that creates desire in us. We are biologically constructed to pursue an increase in vital motion (i.e., pleasure), and when specific objects cause this increase in us, appetites for the objects are formed. We no more desire pleasure than we desire to have our blood circulate; our pursuit of the increase in bodily motions is biologically programmed in us, only causing our desires, not itself something that we desire. A Hobbesian could even offer the following plausible diagnosis of Bentham's mistake: Bentham (and his followers) may have believed that the only way to attribute a goal to a human being was to make it an object of desire. Yet biologists are continually attributing goals to nonconscious biological systems, and this practice has been defended by some philosophers who argue that it is necessary to produce adequate explanations of biological phenomena. For example, Matthen and Levy (1984) argue that an adequate explanation of the human immune system must involve attributing