Prologue

No part of Hobbes's legacy is as well known as his account of the natural condition of mankind – his "state of nature." Hobbes did not coin the term. Christians had known it for centuries as one of the designations for the condition of man in the opening chapters of Genesis, sometimes referring to the age before the Fall, but occasionally assigned to antediluvian human beings as well.[1] Before them, Greeks and Romans had used one or another variant of it to describe the condition of men prior to the establishment of societies that formed the starting point of their anthropologies. The political undercurrents in these uses are evident, and others had explored them before Hobbes. As the young Hobbes went about the business of the Cavendishes, for instance, Grotius described the state of nature, in the context of a discussion of succession, as a condition in which there was no jurisdiction.[2] Yet, as a result of what Hobbes did with this term between 1640 and 1651, the state of nature became not simply a mandatory point of reference for emulators and critics alike, but also an element of basic political calculus familiar far beyond the confines of philosophical debates regarding obedience. Many of those to whom the details of the social contract and the minutiae of the law of nature mean nothing nevertheless recall having come across the description of a life that is "solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short."

The stark contrast between the misery that accompanies anarchy and the peace that comes from government, however imperfect, seems enough to explain the appeal of the image of the state of nature. Here is a powerful and succinct account of a condition sufficiently undesirable to cause one to reconsider one's plans for rebellion. Hobbes's description of the state of

[1] See, e.g., William of Ockham, *Dialogue*, III.ii.III.6; cf. Offler, "The Three Modes of Natural Law in Ockham."

[2] Grotius, *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, II.vii.xxvii. This book, along with other works of Grotius's, was available in the Hardwick library, according to a catalog in Hobbes's hand, dating from the late 1620s (Devonshire Mss., Chatsworth HS/E/1A).

nature, however, is puzzling. If it is the most memorable element of his political thought, it is also the one that violates, in the most blatant ways, the principles that he considered necessary for civil philosophy. Hobbes locates the source of conflict in disagreement, and declares his intention to begin from the right foundations. His works are thus riddled with definitions of everything from the most mundane details of human nature and behavior to the fundamentals of the body politic. Yet, despite his insistence on the need for precision, he composed a different account of the state of nature in each of his several political treatises. To make matters more frustrating, within the confines of any single treatise, he describes the state of nature in ways that confuse, rather than clarify.

A reasonable reader might wonder whether such a condition existed and, if so, where, when, and for whom. Alas, Hobbes's answers range from the Amazons, Cacus, and Polyphemus, to the Indians and the ancient Germans; include thought experiments in which one is invited to consider men as though they had sprung from the earth fully formed, like mushrooms; suggest that the state of nature is an inference made from the passions; and liken it to civil war and, with an important qualification, to the relations between sovereigns. Hobbes's explicit claims regarding the state of nature, coupled with the numerous associations that the use of this term and its imagery would have evoked in the minds of his readers, make for an image so hard to pin down as to sometimes defy even that simple juxtaposition with civil society. It would seem that the other side of that contrast promises a condition of complete peace, but can one ever escape this manifold state of nature completely?

Although these questions are by no means confined to the state of nature, the evolution of that concept exemplifies the difficulties involved in making sense of Hobbes's several, unusually rich, and challenging political treatises, and provides a unique vantage point from which to address the issues surrounding the interpretation of Hobbes's works. Over the years, commentators have struggled to reconcile those treatises with one another and to situate Hobbes both in his time and in the traditions that shaped him and his interlocutors. To do so, they have invoked paradigm shifts, life-changing discoveries, political and legal disputes, and even unusual work habits. These explanations contain a certain degree of truth, but for the most part, the interpretations that they have yielded are unsatisfactory, either because they do not accord with Hobbes's own assessment of what he was up to, or because they emphasize only certain aspects of his thought or disregard key evidence.

In addition to several versions of a comprehensive political treatise, Hobbes also left us several assessments of his own work. These are often dismissed as self-serving or revisionist, yet Hobbes was remarkably consistent in those assessments, and insisted that he was devoted to persuading his readers of the benefits of peace. We also have substantial evidence which

suggests that Hobbes disseminated drafts of his work to various readers and was very much interested in revising them according to their feedback. This method is in keeping with Hobbes's avowed aim, and returns the focus of an inquiry into the meaning of his political thought where it belongs: on the role of persuasion toward peace. There is no better prism for such an inquiry than Hobbes's most effective, elusive, and unlikely image: the state of nature.

Although he praised modesty as the utmost political virtue, Thomas Hobbes was a man with immodest goals. He proclaimed civil philosophy no older than his book *De Cive*, and saw himself as engaged in a persistent attempt to change the political behavior of those around him, so as to put an end to conflict. In the Epistle Dedicatory of his earliest political treatise, for instance, Hobbes declares, "it would be an incomparable benefit to commonwealth, if *every man* held the opinions concerning law and policy here delivered."[3] In *De Cive*, he expresses the hope that he will convince readers to bear a certain amount of inconvenience in their private affairs, "*because humane affairs cannot possibly be without some*," by persuading them to consider their best interests for themselves, rather than allowing "*ambitious men through the streames of your blood to wade to their owne power*."[4] In *Leviathan*, Hobbes addresses the reader only rarely and usually indirectly, but he opens the book by announcing that he has done most of the work, leaving the reader the simple task of comparing Hobbes's findings to himself and his own experience.[5] In the main body of that treatise, Hobbes urges the sovereign who has been persuaded by his teaching to adopt it and spread it to his subjects.[6] A handful of years after the publication of *Leviathan*, he judged that his book had "framed the minds of a thousand gentlemen to a conscientious obedience to present government, which otherwise would have wavered in that point."[7]

It is not uncommon for a writer to think that everyone else who has written on his subject matter was wrong, and that he has uncovered the truth where others have failed. Even so, Hobbes's claim was unusually immodest. Proposing to guide not only one's sophisticated interlocutors, but everyone, to the same conclusion is an extraordinarily tall order, and doing so by inviting

[3] *The Elements of Law*, xvi, emphasis added.
[4] *De Cive*, Pref., § 20.
[5] *Leviathan*, Introduction: 2.
[6] *Leviathan*, Review and Conclusion: 395; cf. XXX: 179; *EW*, VII: 335. In his prose autobiography, Hobbes describes *Leviathan* as a work that, he hoped, would be acceptable to his fellow countrymen (*OL*, I: xvi).
[7] *Six Lessons to the Professors of the Mathematics* (*EW*, VII: 335–36). Cf. *The Elements of Law*, Ep. Ded.; I.1.1; *De Cive*, Ep. Ded., §§ 4–10; *Leviathan*, XXXI: 193. Hobbes's intention was not lost on his contemporaries (see, for example, Ward 1654: 51–61). On Hobbes's attempt to persuade his readers, see Farr, "Atomes of Scripture," esp. 184–88.

readers to participate in the process, a risky proposition. Yet, this is precisely what Hobbes promised to do in presenting his successive treatises on politics, and this is why he insisted that his method amounted to a civil science.[8]

It is widely believed that the model for this science was geometry. The founding myth behind this belief is a famous anecdote from Aubrey's brief life of Hobbes. It tells of a moment, during a trip to the continent, when Hobbes "discovered" Euclid:

> He was (vide his life) 40 yeares old before he looked on geometry; which happened accidentally. Being in a gentleman's library in …, Euclid's Elements lay open, and 'twas the 47 El. libri I. He read the proposition. "By G –," sayd he, "this is impossible!" So he reads the demonstration of it, which referred him back to such a proposition; which proposition he read. That referred him back to another, which he also read. Et sic deinceps, that at last he was demonstratively convinced of that trueth. This made him in love with geometry.[9]

This episode has been given a pivotal role in attempts to make sense of Hobbes's thought, which presents some singular challenges, as it is rare for a theorist of his stature to have left us with five attempts at a comprehensive political theory, four of which were composed and circulated over a little more than eleven years. The first of these came in 1640, when he wrote a two-part treatise in English, entitled "The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic" and distributed it to a few friends and acquaintances.[10] Two years later, while in exile, in Paris, he printed a Latin treatise entitled *Elementorum Philosophiæ Sectio Tertia De Cive*, which also circulated privately. In 1647, Elzevir published a revised version of that treatise, this time entitled *Elementa Philosophica De Cive*, and bearing some important additions. These works were followed by the English *Leviathan*, in 1651, which was in turn published in a Latin translation, with certain significant changes, in 1668.

[8] *Leviathan*, XVIII: 94, although it should be noted that Hobbes usually refers to "civil philosophy." See, for example, Hobbes's repeated invitations to the reader to consider his contemporaries' misunderstanding of *nosce teipsum* and correct it (*EL*, I.5.14; *Leviathan*, Introduction: 2). In *De Cive*, Hobbes notes that one who wishes to introduce a sound doctrine should begin with the Universities [ab Academiis], whence young men "imbued with its foundations, can instruct the common people in private and in public." Such instruction, argues Hobbes, would allow men to "entertain true doctrines suitable to their own understandings, and the nature of things" (XIII.9).

[9] Aubrey, *'Brief Lives,'* I: 332. According to Malcolm, "Aubrey's manuscript gives the name of the city as '… a'" (*Aspects of Hobbes*, 9, note 34), which suggests that the incident took place in Geneva. Cf. *The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, I: 10, n. 23. In his own account of this incident, Hobbes also notes that he was struck less by the theorems themselves and more by Euclid's method of reasoning. He writes of his trip to France and Switzerland: "In peregrinatione illa inspicere coepit in elementa Euclidis; et delectatus methodo illius non tam ob theoremata illa quam ob artem rationandi diligentissime perlegit" (*T. Hobbes Malmesburiensis Vita*, *OL*, I: xiv).

[10] Three copies of this work survive at Chatsworth (Devonshire Mss., Chatsworth HS/A/2A; HS/A/2B; HS/A/2C), and four in the British Library (Egerton 2005; Harl. 1325; Harl. 4235; Harl. 4236), which also has a copy of the first thirteen chapters of the first part, "Humane nature" (Harl. 6858).

This unusually rich set of primary sources has given rise to certain well-entrenched orthodoxies that enjoy widespread support despite obvious evidentiary problems. In one way or another, these revolve around Hobbes's Euclidean moment. Two are old and venerable, because they claim their origins in Hobbes's writings. According to the first of these, Hobbes was a rabid anti-Aristotelian whose conversion to science provided him with new means to challenge the authority of the schools.[11] The second holds that he believed it possible to construct a civil science, the truth of which would be evident to reasonable individuals in the same way that the truth of geometrical theorems is.[12] More recent ones consider Hobbes a humanist who, once converted to science, pit his civil philosophy against rhetoric and tried to base it exclusively on reason, only to discover eventually that the complete separation of reason and eloquence is not possible.[13] According to this last story, *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive* belong to Hobbes's "scientific" phase, and *Leviathan* marks his begrudging acceptance of the fact that reason unaided by "powerfull Eloquence" will not suffice.[14] On the basis of these views, it is not unusual to see Hobbes's intellectual development described as a series of "turns," the most important of which was from humanism to science, the very turn that is encapsulated in Hobbes's Euclidean moment.[15] None of these stories is unfounded. Indeed, they rest on apparently strong evidence, some of it from Hobbes's works and some from his biography.

[11] See, for example, *Leviathan*, XII: 59; XV: 76–77; XVII: 86; cf. Aubrey, '*Brief Lives*,' I: 357; Harwood's introduction to *A Briefe of the Art of Rhetorique*, 11; Robertson, *Hobbes*, 9; Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 35; Peters, *Hobbes*, 16; Leijenhorst, *The Mechanisation of Aristotelianism*, 1–4, 219–22; Leijenhorst, "Insignificant Speech"; Sorell, "Hobbes and Aristotle"; Sorell, "Hobbes's UnAristotelian Political Rhetoric."

[12] See, for example, *The Elements of Law*, Ep. Ded.; *De Cive*, Ep. Ded. and Pref.; *Leviathan*, Introduction. Cf. Goldsmith, *Hobbes's Science of Politics*. According to Skinner, "Hobbes's conception of civil science in *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive* is founded on the belief that scientific reasoning possesses an inherent power to persuade us of the truths it finds out" (*Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*, 426).

[13] Compare, in particular, *The Elements of Law*, Ep. Ded. with *Leviathan*, A Review and Conclusion. The broad consensus that Hobbes was a humanist conceals the considerable disagreement about what that means. See, for example, Reik, *The Golden Lands of Thomas Hobbes*, 25–34; Tuck, *Hobbes*, 1–11; Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*, Chapter 6; Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography*, the title of Chapter 3. Strauss also uses the term (*The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 44), but with an important qualification that we will discuss in Chapter 2. On the shift from outright hostility to rhetoric toward a more conciliatory position, see Johnston, *The Rhetoric of Leviathan*; Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography*, 97. Skinner claims that *Leviathan* "reflects a remarkable change of mind on Hobbes's part about the proper relations between *ratio* and *oratio*" (*Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*, 334).

[14] *Leviathan*, A Review and Conclusion: 389. See, for example, Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*.

[15] However, not everyone accepts the separation of the two. Tuck, for instance, sees scientific pursuits as part and parcel of humanism (*Hobbes*, 12–13; *Philosophy and Government*, 283–84).

Faced with this body of work, and erring on the side of context, certain commentators have challenged the general notion that anything like Hobbes's "political theory" could exist. If authors respond to their historical settings, then closer attention to those settings should yield greater detail about the stimuli and motives behind the composition of any particular text. This closer focus seems especially apt in the case of Hobbes since it provides a prima facie explanation for his many variations on the theme of civil philosophy; it must be that the differences between his political works are the result of Hobbes's response to changing circumstances, and the period that encompasses these works was sufficiently eventful to justify the publication of several different treatises in a relatively short period of time. Thus, beyond the obvious differences between them – such as their titles, size, and scope – *The Elements of Law*, *De Cive*, and *Leviathan* must also be different works insofar as they were occasioned by different motives, rendering the search for a consistent Hobbes tantamount to a quest for the Holy Grail.[16]

Yet, despite having been adopted enthusiastically by contextualist historians of political thought, the view that Hobbes's intellectual development consisted of a series of turns had a very different point of departure. Its most forceful and influential proponent, Strauss, argued first that Hobbes's moral attitude constituted a break with tradition, in particular with Aristotelianism, and second, that it predated his turn to science, which only served as window dressing for that moral attitude in Hobbes's subsequent political treatises.[17] Strauss's account also made the earliest case for the significance of rhetoric in Hobbes's thought, an argument that has also become central to some of the more influential recent interpretations.[18] Thus, interestingly, those commentators who see Hobbes as largely consistent and those who see the search for consistency as quixotic have come to share a lot of common ground.[19]

That there are important differences on the way from the *Elements* to the Latin *Leviathan* is indisputable. The question is, what do those differences say about Hobbes's aims and method? Some of the answers offered by the aforementioned interpretations are unsatisfactory. For instance, interested readers are asked to believe that Hobbes went through a phase during which he thought it possible to persuade others without recourse to rhetoric. Or that his admiration for geometry was such that he thought it possible to simply transfer its methods to politics. If one were to object that

[16] The metaphor is Baumgold's ("UnParadoxical Hobbes," 689); cf. McNeilly, "Egoism in Hobbes." The manifesto of this approach is Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas."

[17] See Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, but cf. Oakeshott, *Hobbes on Civil Association*, 141–58.

[18] The most notable examples here are Johnston, *The Rhetoric of Leviathan* and Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*.

[19] Dienstag captures Skinner's gradual shift toward Strauss nicely in his review of *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* ("Man of Peace," 703).

the Hobbes who emerges from these accounts is hopelessly naive, their proponents might defend themselves by pointing to the fact that he was, after all, the same person who insisted that he had squared the circle.[20] The main difficulty with these propositions, however, is not that they sound implausible, but that they overlook crucial evidence.

Hobbes identifies the inconstant signification of terms as the source of conflict and devotes a significant portion of his political treatises to definitions, including the proper definitions of fundamental concepts and methods. A program of this sort can have far-reaching consequences since it calls into question the meanings of terms that are considered familiar and used with abandon. Yet, having declared his intention to establish an entire system, Hobbes does not hesitate to redraw the map of knowledge and redefine what constitutes the appropriate method for each realm of inquiry, as well as what sort of expectations one ought to have from each field. While it is clear, given his interest in precision, that these classifications should be taken seriously, it is also possible to take them too far.[21]

The problems involved in the application of these divisions to Hobbes's own enterprise are numerous and significant. For instance, given Hobbes's apparent embracing of the notorious distinction between philosophy and history, according to which the former yields certainty whereas the latter only prudence, and his observation that "experience concludeth nothing universally," why does he commend history for its practical utility in his edition of Thucydides, and why does he invite the reader to test his propositions against his own experiences in *Leviathan*?[22] One might be tempted to respond that the former work belongs to his "humanist" phase, during which he still took history seriously, and the latter to his reconciliation with the inescapability of rhetoric.[23] And yet, it is in the *Elements*, the first political treatise of his allegedly scientific period, that Hobbes describes the science "from which proceed the true and evident conclusions of what is right

[20] See, for example, Hobbes, *Quadratura Circuli*; *T. Hobbes Malmesburiensis Vita* (*OL*, I: xix). Cf. Jesseph, *Squaring the Circle*, 3.

[21] We will see in Chapter 5, for instance, that Hobbes's assessment of the power and workings of poetry blurs the line between it and philosophy considerably. See Lemetti's discussion of the relationship of the mind to science as a continuum, along which one may encounter wisdom and "semi-scientific thinking" ("The Most Natural and the Most Artificial," 62–63). Weinberger argues that for Hobbes "[a]ll 'philosophy' is reason, but not all reason is 'philosophy'" ("Hobbes's Doctrine of Method," 1342). Cf. Kahn, *Rhetoric, Prudence, and Skepticism in the Renaissance*, 181; Strong, "How to Write Scripture," 143; Struever, "Dilthey's Hobbes and Cicero's Rhetoric," 243–44; Vickers, "'Tis the Goddesse of Rhetorick," 27; Biletzki, "Thomas Hobbes," 61.

[22] See, for example, *De Corpore*, I.1.2–8; *The Elements of Law*, I.4.10; *Leviathan*, III: 11.

[23] Strauss makes the former argument (*The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 79–107), although a version of it is implicit in Skinner's description of Hobbes's view of Thucydides (*Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, 13). For the latter argument, see Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*, esp. 426–37.

and wrong, and what is good and hurtful to the being and well-being of mankind [as what] the Latins call *sapientia*, and we by the general name of wisdom," and adds that "generally, not he that hath skill in geometry, or any other science speculative, but only he that understandeth what conduceth to the good and government of the people, is called a wise man."[24] Nor is this an aberration. In *De Homine*, the last part of his tripartite system to be published, Hobbes notes the utility of wisdom for its ability to provide some protection, and the crucial role that natural histories and civil histories play in providing "the evidence on which rests the science of causes" in physics and civil and moral science, respectively.[25]

The other antithesis, between reason and rhetoric, is equally questionable, for it rests on the assumption that Hobbes's persistent and vehement attacks on rhetoric in the *Elements* and *De Cive* should be taken simply at face value. Assuming, for a moment, that such a thing as communication without rhetoric were possible, one would then have to wonder what to make of an author's various propositions whose literal meaning is either puzzling or contravenes other statements he has made. For instance, in the opening lines of the *Elements*, Hobbes describes the contents of that work as "opinions," hardly a designation that inspires confidence in scientific certainty.[26] In that same work, he claims that the difference between rhetoric and teaching is that there is controversy in the former, but absolutely no controversy in the latter – a criterion that precludes the very possibility of teaching.[27]

"Rhetoric," however, does not refer simply to a humanistic discipline or to a very particular practice. It is also a designation invoked to signal disapprobation of someone's views and intentions, in an attempt to delegitimize his authority and message.[28] This was no less true in Hobbes's day than it is today, and it is hardly surprising that a comprehensive attack on well-established doctrinal traditions would include an attempt to challenge their authority by accusing them of self-interested, insincere, manipulative, or even nonsensical language.[29] Even those who recognize that Hobbes often

[24] *The Elements of Law*, II.8.13. Aubrey notes that

> [a]fter [Hobbes] began to reflect on the interest of the king of England as touching his affaires between him and the parliament, for ten yeares together his thoughts were much, or almost altogether, unhinged from the mathematiques; but chiefly intent on his *De Cive*, and after that on his *Leviathan*: which was a great puttback to his mathematicall improvement ('*Brief Lives*,' I: 333).

[25] *De Homine*, XI.8, 10.

[26] *The Elements of Law*, xvi. Cf. Weinberger, "Hobbes's Doctrine of Method," 1339.

[27] *The Elements of Law*, I.13.3.

[28] See, for instance, Hobbes's highly rhetorical autobiography, in which he claims that he wrote not for scholars, but for those of sound judgment, in language "pure and clear, and not rhetorical" (*T. Hobbes Malmesburiensis Vita*, *OL*, I: xvii).

[29] See, for example, meaning 2c of "rhetoric, n.1" and meaning 1a of "rhetorical, adj," in OED Online (September 2012), Oxford University Press, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/165178; http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/165181 (accessed August 3, 2013).

uses the term "rhetoric" in this sense, however, tend to focus on *Leviathan* and more or less accept the earlier works as earnest attempts to steer clear of rhetorical practices. I wish to suggest here that doing so is a mistake, for it causes us to lose sight of certain important features of these works and their role in Hobbes's project. As Tuck has observed, even though Hobbes's approach in the *Elements* and *De Cive* is in many ways different from the one he chose in *Leviathan*, the earlier treatises are every bit as rhetorical.[30]

This contention might strike one as problematic. After all, Hobbes himself has billed his treatises as scientific and has placed them in explicit opposition to rhetoric. The first thing to note, therefore, is that we will be using the term "rhetoric" not in the way that Skinner defines it, namely as "a distinctive set of linguistic techniques … derived from the rhetorical doctrines of *inventio*, *dispositio* and *elocutio*, the three principal *elementa* in classical and Renaissance theories of written eloquence," but rather in the way that Hobbes himself defines it, namely as "that Faculty, by which wee understand what will serve our turne, concerning any subject, to winne beliefe in the hearer."[31] The latter understanding may, of course, include some of those distinctive techniques, either consciously or unconsciously, but it is clearly broader than, and in no way constrained by, the former. It takes account of the fact that "science" and "reason" are terms of approbation much in the way that "rhetoric" is a term of disapprobation.[32] More importantly, it encompasses all those techniques that even a scientist committed to scientific inquiry in earnest would have to use in order to persuade his audience of his discoveries.[33] As Bacon put it in *Of the Wisdom of the Ancients*, fables are "of prime use to the sciences, and sometimes indispensable: I mean the employment of parables as a method of teaching, whereby inventions that are new and abstruse and remote from vulgar opinions may find an easier passage to the understanding."[34]

That Hobbes drew a sharp distinction between rhetoric and science in order to buttress his claims does not mean that we must accept that distinction as an absolute and unquestionable fact.[35] Neither, however, does it mean that Hobbes's interest in and talk of science was just a façade, for if he had discovered what he took to be universal principles of human behavior and universal reactions to rhetorical appeals, then his method for dealing with them would constitute a science of the sort that from the nineteenth century

[30] See the introduction to his edition of *Leviathan* (xxxviii, n. 52). Cf. Johnston, *The Rhetoric of Leviathan*, 23; Slomp, *Thomas Hobbes and the Political Philosophy of Glory*, 1–3; Nauta, "Hobbes the Pessimist?"

[31] Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*, 6; *A Briefe of the Art of Rhetorique*, I.2. Cf. *The Elements of Law*, II.8.14.

[32] See, for instance, *Decameron Physiologicum*, *EW*, VII: 73. Cf. Weinberger, "Hobbes's Doctrine of Method"; Keller, "In the Service of 'Truth' and 'Victory.'"

[33] See Biletzki, "Thomas Hobbes," 64.

[34] *The Works of Francis Bacon*, VI: 698; cf. Cicero, *De inventione*, I.ii.2.

[35] Tuck, for instance, finds Hobbes's science "of an extremely exiguous kind" (*Hobbes*, 114).

onward has been described as psychology.[36] This understanding of science may be at odds with the way in which Hobbes defines natural philosophy, but it is consistent with the way in which he understands civil philosophy, or what in the *Elements* he refers to as the science of right and wrong.[37] Strauss wonders whether "Hobbes's earliest scientific ambition was perhaps to write an analysis of the passions, in the style, i.e., according to the method of the *Rhetoric*."[38] In fact, in a letter to his patron in 1635, Hobbes expresses his hope that Robert Payne could give "good reasons for y^{e} facultyes & passions of y^{e} soule, such as may be expressed in playne English," noting that if Payne could do so, he would be the first, but adding that "if he can not I hope to be y^{e} first."[39] Hobbes offered a sketch of his theory of the faculties and passions of the soul in the *Elements* not long thereafter, but he continued to add to it in his subsequent political treatises.

It is not only Hobbes's alleged turn to science, however, that poses problems for those who see his development as consisting in a series of phases marked by turns. Equally debatable is the widespread agreement in characterizing his early phase as "humanist."[40] On the surface, the term might appear to have a consistent meaning, and its application to Hobbes might strike one as fitting, in light of his education and strong interest in ancient authors. Yet, the degree to which this term is problematic becomes apparent as soon as one observes the meanings that commentators attach to it. Some, for example, consider it an appropriate description of Hobbes's education in the "Renaissance curriculum of a sixteenth-century grammar school with its emphasis on a fluent and stylish grasp of Latin and, *though to a lesser extent*, Greek."[41] As we will see, this emphasis on Latin is problematic in general when it comes to Hobbes's environment. It is especially misleading, however, when it comes to Hobbes himself, who was primarily interested in Greek rather than Roman authors and texts. There is abundant evidence of this preference, but suffice it to note that if Hobbes's literary output were to be placed on a shelf in chronological order, on the one end we would find his translation of Thucydides' history, and on the other his translations of Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, with nothing Roman in between. Hobbes

[36] Cf. Struever, "Dilthey's Hobbes and Cicero's Rhetoric," 233–34, 244.

[37] See, for example, the chart that accompanies *Leviathan*, IX; cf. *The Elements of Law*, II.8.13.

[38] Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 131.

[39] Hobbes to William Cavendish, Paris, August 15/25, 1635 (*The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, I: 29).

[40] Once again, agreement extends from Strauss to Skinner, although the former notes that Hobbes's humanism was "peculiar" because of Hobbes's interest in history (*The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 44). Skinner, on the other hand, finds that interest in keeping with humanism (see, for example, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*, 231).

[41] Tuck, *Hobbes*, 2, emphasis added. Skinner presents a more detailed argument along similar lines (*Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*, 215–38).