

HOBBES ON GETTING BY WITH LITTLE HELP FROM FRIENDS

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I

Hobbes's political thought contains a sustained attack upon friendship. Reading his political philosophy as a deductive system, as *Leviathan* purports to be, it comes across as if this assault upon friendship is something that falls out during the derivation of political science, something that follows from thinking first principles in politics through to their necessary conclusions. But when one considers the preponderance of examples that portray friendship negatively amidst his historical reflections, whether pertaining to events in recent English history or to the history of the ancient world, whether recounted at length, as in *Behemoth*, or in the anecdotal references scattered throughout his treatises for the purpose of giving substance to his abstractions, it seems rather that his concern for the political problem of friendship is one of the principal motivations behind the construction of his philosophical system. In focusing on the subject of friendship in Hobbes, one can see how both types of knowledge Hobbes recognizes, science and experience, cooperate in the production of his political philosophy.

This cooperation is evident in the examples he selects to illustrate the epistemological theory developed in the earliest chapters of *Leviathan*.¹ [1] Hobbes endeavors to reason

¹ [1] To be sure, Hobbes does not get past the opening of the dedicatory letter before he draws attention to the dangers of friendships in politics. The volume is dedicated "To My Most Honour'd Friend Mr. Francis Godolphin, of Godolphin." Hobbes proceeds to concede that this book may not be so well received, for it is likely to offend all interested parties among his contemporaries. (Hobbes here insists that he is not writing for or about particular men in his own time, but rather, about matters political in the abstract--although his own depiction of human nature suggests that such impartiality

must be reckoned extremely rare (L 26.21). Hobbes is therefore either concealing his partialities or revealing his pride). Aware that his friend may be put in an uncomfortable position as a result of this dedication, Hobbes suggests a way of excusing the dedicatee from the anticipated notoriety of the book (L LD pp. 1-2) just as his name is tied to it for all time instead of vanishing into relative obscurity. Whatever the effect this dedication may or may not have had on the fortunes of Mr. Godolphin, the dedication does at least have the effect of drawing attention to the precariousness of friendships in politics, when the highest honour a friend may bestow threatens to bring its recipient disrepute and danger. Hobbes was (unlike John Locke) a man blessed with many learned personal friends (John Aubrey's "The Brief Life" in J.C.A. Gaskin's EL, p. 243), and it is perhaps telling that he did not dedicate this most infamous work of his to any of them. He would instead praise some of them later in the dedicatory letter of his less controversial *De Corpore*.

1[2] An index of the abbreviations used in this paper for texts written by Thomas Hobbes:

B *Behemoth, or the Long Parliament*, edited by Ferdinand Tönnies (Chicago :
University of
Chicago Press, 1990)

DBT "A Discourse Upon the Beginning of Tacitus," in *Three Discourses*, edited by
Noel B.
Reynolds and Arlene W. Saxonhouse (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,
1995)

dC *On the Citizen*, edited and translated by Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne,
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

dCorp *De Corpore*, in *English Works*, vol. 1, edited by Sir William Molesworth (London , 1839)

dH *De Homine*, translated by Charles T. Wood, T.S.K. Scott-Craig and Bernard Gert,
in *Man
and Citizen*, edited by Bernard Gert (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991)

DR "A Discourse of Rome " in *Three Discourses*

EL *The Elements of Law*, edited by J.C.A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press,
1994)

L *Leviathan*, edited by Edwin Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994)

systematically to the foundations of a commonwealth from the physical fundamentals of human nature. In the first chapter, having described the basis of Sense according to his materialistic metaphysics, Hobbes criticizes the theory of visible, audible and intelligible species taught by "the philosophy schools, through all the Universities of Christendom." His target here is less that modified Aristotelian theory or the institution of the University itself than it is the Schoolmen themselves. They represent a fraternity whose members endeavor to secure their own power and advance that of their ecclesiastical superiors through the dissemination of nonsensical doctrines, whereby professional and political elites may be controlled for the subsequent manipulation of society as a whole. Throughout his works, Hobbes depicts the Universities as a well-organized conspiracy in the service of foreign powers, reckoning them among the foremost instigators of civil unrest. In *Leviathan*, he does not get past the first chapter without drawing his reader's attention to them and to the political problem of subversive associations generally.

As his epistemological theory proceeds, Hobbes indirectly emphasizes the danger of close personal friendships in politics. His description of the Imagination in the second chapter leads to a discussion of dreams. While explaining the commonplace experience of fearful dreams and visions, he decides to draw upon the extraordinary example of Marcus Brutus, Julius Caesar's favorite and murderer, who reportedly experienced superstitious apparitions (L 2.7).² [2] Then in the third chapter, while detailing the mechanism of an ordinary unguided train of thoughts, his example deals not only with the fate of Charles I, who was betrayed by the English aristocracy (B pp. 114-115), but it also tells a convoluted story that reminds the reader of Judas

Iscariot's treachery (L 3.3).³ [3] Thus, within the first three chapters, long before he has started to address political subjects directly, Hobbes refers in passing to the two greatest betrayals of the ancient world and to two of the parties he holds responsible for the sedition and strife of his own time. Half of these examples are strictly political, whereas the others involve religious entanglements.

II

3 [3] The purpose of this chapter is to show that all thoughts, however seemingly disconnected, have necessary connections which could be discerned upon reflection. Hobbes therefore subtly invites the reader to wonder why his materialistic, mechanistic theory of the operations of the mind leads him to devise the example of the Roman penny that allows him to reference, of all things, the betrayal of Christ.

3[4] The quarrel between justice and friendship is the subject of the opening sequence of *The Godfather*, in the conversation between the Don and the undertaker. The undertaker asks the Don to kill the two boys who assaulted his daughter, and is willing to pay him anything. But the Don is greatly offended. He does not deal in contract killing ♦ not because he doesn't deal in killing, but rather, because he does not deal in contracts. Contracts are at the heart of conventional justice. The Don operates on the basis of the exchange of benefits. And he is in a position where he rarely loses out by performing first (cf. L 15.5; EL 15.10). When he asks someone in his debt to do a service for him on some future day that may or may not come, it gets done. Note that there is nothing unusual about a contract to do something illegal. The Don recognizes that the law is something strictly conventional too. Senators and judges and policemen are real; the law is not. The law is open to interpretation, manipulation and circumvention, the responsibility of Tom his adoptive son, lawyer and *consiglieri*. And Senators and judges and policemen may be befriended, bought, persuaded, or removed. Apparently, unlike Hobbes, the Don expresses recognition of the existence of natural justice, and it is something regarding which he has some expertise. Because the undertaker's daughter is not dead he observes that the murder of the two boys would not be justice. Once the undertaker offers his friendship to the Don instead of his checkbook, the Don promises to exact the "justice" requested of him as a gift. Of course, justice cannot be a gift, or at least, conventional justice cannot be a gift. Whether or not the Don's perception of and navigation through the world in terms of friends and enemies alone, and his concomitant appraisal of conventional justice and the law, renders him a fool, as Hobbes would suggest (L 15.4), may perhaps be judged best by considering the fate of his beloved family.

Relationships of justice and injustice and those of friends and enemies constitute separate categories that interact differently in different political arrangements and situations. The domain of friendship predominates in any society in which patronage relationships are pervasive. Honor is of much greater concern in such a society (L 10.48). Hobbes's political philosophy is designed to establish the supremacy of justice while minimizing relationships of benefit and return. Even though he is an outspoken proponent of monarchy, it would be a mistake to suppose that the conventions and institutions (i.e., the modes and orders) of a fully developed Hobbesian monarchy would much resemble those of a traditional European monarchy, given that he seeks to liberate politics, to the extent that it may be accomplished, from the sorts of relationships that permeate and sustain the traditional form. But just as human society cannot sustain itself on the basis of friendship alone without suffering "a great deal of grief," needing a power to "over-awe them all" (L 13.5), establishing and enforcing justice while positing and more effectively pursuing the common good (L 13.13; 17.12; dC 1.2; EL 19.4), it also belongs to human nature that individuals always prefer some goods to others, and therefore, some people to others. Partialities among men can be weakened, managed and monitored, but not eradicated. Hobbes does not identify every act of friendship as illegal or an injustice (being the same for him), but he is well aware that the love of one's own is the root of injustice.⁴ [4] And of the civil virtue of justice, and the natural virtue of charity, which together contain all morality (dH 13.9), the former must be reckoned substantially more reliable, especially since the adverse consequences of failing to practice it are more certain.

No two men are natural friends, in any sense that Hobbes calls anything natural. When men "seek each other's company and enjoy associating with each other," it is not by nature, "but by choice" (dC 1.2). Rather, all men are by nature enemies (L 13.8-9; EL 20.2). With their differing opinions and passions and incompatible strivings, all men are "diverse ways offensive one to another" (EL 14.4, cf. 14.11). Even shared passions and pursuits, the very things which could form the basis of partnerships, do naturally instead instigate hostilities (EL 14.5, 10). By nature men have countless potential legitimate causes of quarrel and no standards of conduct to adhere to upon confronting one another. Even after a commonwealth is instituted, vestiges of their old universal animosity remain ever-present among its subjects, even within families (L 13.10; dC P pp.10-11). Meanwhile, everyone outside one's own commonwealth remains, in principle, an enemy (L 13.10; dC 6.9).

What, then, is a friend? Befitting his trademark lack of sentimentality, Hobbes counts friends among "powers instrumental," powers which are "means and instruments to acquire more (L 10.2; cf. EL 8.4), that is, means "to obtain some future apparent good" (L 10.1). It is "strengths united," essentially no different from any faction or league (L 10.3). In effect, anyone is your friend if they will do what you want them to do, but only insofar as they will do it without being required to do it by the law, and only so long as they do what you want, or continue to want to do so.⁵ [5] It is the domain of trust and doubt in human relations (EL 9.9). It makes no

5 [5] That final clause recognizes Hobbes's own usual emphasis on the intention of an actor in situations outside the domain of justice (L 13.8, 15.36). Note that on Hobbesian grounds, Dale Carnegie's famous title, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, is redundant.

5[6] As Hobbes would have it, men are enemies by nature, for numerous natural reasons. And they are therefore commanded by the natural law to seek peace, which cannot be done without seeking confederates and practicing trust and mutual assistance. But, when they do so, and a commonwealth is the necessary result, it is designated by Hobbes something artificial rather than

difference what goal is being pursued, and a man's personal evaluation of another's character, or his personal disposition toward him, are likewise irrelevant.

In their origins, friendships and the societies they become develop as "instruments of defense," as a "provision against fear" (dC 1.2n2; cf. dH 11.6; EL 14.14). Only eventually might friendships contribute to giving a man cause "to compare oneself favorably with others and form a high opinion of oneself," the source of "all the heart's joy and pleasure" according to Hobbes (dC 1.5), or develop into one of "the ornaments and comforts of life, which by peace and society are usually invented and procured" (EL 14.12). Men are directed by the laws of nature and their own "fear of oppression" (L 11.9) to escape the natural condition. Because "no one can live securely without the aid of allies" (L 15.5OL; dC 1.13) men must join together with others and eventually institute a commonwealth ruled by a sovereign that ensures the execution of justice.⁶

[6] But this transition cannot be effected without men seeking confederates and practicing trust and mutual assistance, trading in the abstract and pervasive vulnerability of the war that renders

natural. It is called artificial in the obvious sense, that men made it. It is not a given, both in that it cannot be taken for granted, and in that it was not a gift. It is also artificial because mutual assistance cannot be secured without speech (L 4.3), and Hobbes argues that speech itself is artificial. I will forego an inquiry into Hobbes's distinction between the natural and the artificial in the present investigation, suggesting only here that his distinction seems artificial, and it is unclear why his own natural philosophy does not undermine it, as did that of his former employer, Francis Bacon. Hobbes is prepared for the criticism, however, and replies, "I am not denying that we seek each other's company at the prompting of nature," continuing, "all men are born unfit for society; and very many (perhaps the majority) remain so throughout their lives, because of mental illness or lack of training." He concludes, "man is made fit for society not by nature, but by training" (dC 1.2n1; cf. dCorp 1.7). This response raises more questions. Is religion the mental illness to which he refers here? Could men be rightly trained, so as to become trustworthy and just, or must treachery and injustice be counted upon instead forevermore? He suggests elsewhere that religion cannot be abolished (L 12.23), presumably because they will always be ignorant of natural causes, because they will lack scientific training and knowledge.

every man the out and out enemy of every other for the particular and precarious dangers of invariably uncertain friendships. Men first learned to form a "confederacy," Hobbes suggests, when some two or more agreed to gang up on another who would probably defeat any of them one on one (L 13.1). In the state of nature, preemptive defenses are not only unobjectionable but entirely necessary, even encouraged. Thus, to say that friendships have as their origins the need for defense is to say they have their origins in instigating attacks, as co-combatants, intending to "dispossess or deprive" others of their possessions or their lives (L 13.3). He recommends seeking the aid of others precisely when peace does not look hopeful (dC 1.15), that is, for the sake of making war not peace. Unfortunately, "the mutual aid of two or three men is of very little security" (EL 19.3). Before a commonwealth can be created, Hobbes argues, sufficient forces must unite so that together they no longer feel a pressing danger from the outside (L 17.3; dC 5.3). Any multitude of men so allied must continue growing precisely because it must reckon on the continual multiplication of its enemies as well, until either they are beaten or they join up too (dC 1.14). Hobbes furthermore indicates that within such a multitude, even before a sovereign power is formally established, there is probably someone who has "master[ed] the persons" of the others (L 13.4). Compulsion is a necessary element in any "coalition for defense," otherwise private interests will undermine any hope for mutual assistance (dC 5.4). Thus, even though men are reckoned equal in the condition of mere nature, inequalities among them begin to arise as soon as they start combining. Politics, the rule of fear and the imposition of might and therefore inequality begins with friendships, well before an official fountain of justice is established to turn that might into right. Hobbes plainly rejects any notion that equality could be a condition of friendship.

How does one make friends? How does one man get another man to do what he wants him to do? The other man has to be convinced that he will be benefited in return, even if his benefit is negative rather than positive, an escape or relief from harm rather than the obtaining of a gift. Hobbes observes, "of the voluntary acts of every man the object is some good himself" (L 14.8; cf. 12.27; dC 1.2; EL 16.6). And what one man regards as a benefit to himself is relative to him, to his own appetites and aversions, to his own endeavors, as well as to his own circumstances, and so also does the relative situation of the beneficiary to his benefactor predict how well a benefit will be received, and how well or whether it might be repaid (cf. L 11.7).⁷ [7] There can be no external standard of parity to determine whether or not the returns made for benefits given are satisfactory. In the realm of justice, specific duties, entitlements and punishments may be objectively quantified. In the realm of friendships, it is a subjective question whether another man has demonstrated his friendship sufficiently or not.

Friends are acquired, Hobbes indicates, through the use of a man's natural powers, including his strength, beauty or good birth, his experience and talents, persuasive speech, or the giving of gifts. Friends may also be obtained through mutual friends, or through a man's acquisition of wealth, reputation, or "good luck" (which Hobbes calls "the secret working of God") (L 10.1). "Riches joined with liberality" is the most convenient means for acquiring both

7 [7] Hobbes explicitly encourages relationships of benefit and return in one particular scenario as being well suited to advancing the common good: "to receive benefits, though from an equal or inferior, as long as there is hope of requital, disposeth to love; for in the intention of the receiver, the obligation is of aid and service mutual; from whence proceedeth an emulation of who shall exceed in benefiting, the most noble and profitable contention possible" (L 11.7). The recommendation for politics and economics implied by this passage will be given consideration toward the end of this investigation.

7[8] The master-servant relationship is a formal relationship and a matter of justice (cf. L 15.21).

"friends and servants," whereas a rich but illiberal man will soon discover that he has effortlessly made many enemies (L 10.4; cf. dH 11,7)8 [8] . And an ordinary frugal man denies himself the opportunities to achieve great things (L 11.15). Lacking riches, the next best route is to combine eloquence and flattery in order to win many friends (L 11.16). Riches will follow.

On Hobbes's reckoning, the desire for power ♦ and in particular material gain, political power, and reputation (although perhaps also and less often, knowledge) ♦ is the motor of friendship, as it is the cause of human motivation generally (L 10.15; cf. B pp. 2-4).9 [9] Family is a source of friends, or rather a kind of friendship, but its concerns are generally reducible to the aforementioned as well, at least insofar as family matters are politically relevant, which they arguably always are. Sometimes shared ideas are what link friends, but the activity of their friendship will involve considerations of wealth and power soon enough. And religion is but one kind of idea that brings men together.

9 [9] Personal security is a matter of these three combined. Even the barely ambitious person, Hobbes argues, must continue to seek power for the sake of securing what little he wants to protect. Even the person who wants to live withdrawn from the world in order to seek knowledge alone for its own sake cannot avoid having these concerns. He still needs food and shelter, he must hope that powers do not arise who would declare him dangerous, and he should prefer a reputation for harmlessness to one for wisdom.

9[10] Gifts are made, Hobbes explains, "in hope to gain thereby friendship or service from another (or from his friends), or in hope to gain the reputation of charity or magnanimity," (which is tantamount to a hope to gain friends, for that is what such a reputation will bring,) "or to deliver his mind from the pain of compassion," (typically accompanied by the desire that the recipient should do him the favor of perhaps ameliorating his condition, or at least, simply going away so as bring him no future pain--for one may readily feel compassion for the sufferer of misfortune he has encountered but just this once, but come to loathe the nuisance whom he finds occupying the same street corner every day, year after year after year,) "or in hope of reward in heaven," (which is to purchase God's favor) (L 14.12).

It is worth emphasizing that friendships that are bought with money are just as much a friendship as any other. Men try to buy even God's friendship with sacrifices (cf. L 31.31; dH 14.2). Hobbes argues that any agreement made under duress is valid where laws do not exist to say otherwise, because all agreements there are made in a sense under duress, especially that most important agreement to obey a sovereign (L 14.27). Likewise, there is a sense in which every benefit given is a purchasing of friendship, for the sake of receiving future benefits in return, or a purchasing of peace, for the sake of averting some harm and ceasing hostilities among enemies (EL 9.17). In such cases, there is no formal contract between the persons involved--otherwise it would be a matter of justice not friendship. And there will be no official, rightful third party to enforce compliance, although there may well be unofficial powers to which that task is informally assigned. But Hobbes maintains that there is no benefit given without an expectation of benefit to oneself, most often in the form of a return, and the possibility of any "mutual help," without which there is no society and no peace, depends on that reciprocity (L 15.16; dC 3.8; EL 16.6).¹⁰ [10] As Hobbes explains, "Benefits oblige" (L 11.7).¹¹ [11]

¹¹ [11] In that sense, friendships can be somewhat akin to contracts, but they are commonly less specific in their terms ♦ although the expected return is oftentimes clearly conveyed to the recipient of certain kinds of benefits ♦ and it is not up to the law to regulate or enforce their terms. The law can declare certain kinds of associations or transactions among men and certain shared purposes to be unlawful, but among those which are lawful, it is not up to the law to declare any exchange of benefit and return, or failure thereof, to be unjust.

I maintain that Hobbes does not need to genuinely believe that there is in fact absolutely no incidence of altruism among men. As with several other things he claims to be universal with respect to human behavior, what he really means is that it must be reckoned as if it were universal, for the sake of making political science reliable. If altruism is written out of politics, though it happens to happen from time to time, no harm is done. The politics that relies upon any altruism at all, however, will soon meet its ruin. The same holds for the rare man of "generosity" who will keep his promises without fearing any consequences for breaking them,

It is useful to reiterate the instrumental nature of friendship. Friendship is not a good in itself. "Friends are secondary," in that men do not seek friends for the sake of friendship, but for the honor, profit, and other advantages that follows from having them (dC 1.2). In general, society as a whole, Hobbes maintains, "is a product of love of self, not love of friends" (dC 1.2). The leading passions that bring men together are "fear of death, desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living and a hope by their industry to obtain them" (L 13.14). And through their own industry, men desire to "nourish themselves and live contentedly" (L 17.13). Friendships are good insofar as they help men accomplish these goals; they have no value in themselves that could be cherished in the absence of the political preconditions that secure these goods, except inasmuch as they help to reestablish them. Men do not enjoy friendships, or have any love for society itself for that matter, except for the safety and opportunities, or rather the successes they bring. For "the pleasure [men] take in one another's company," Hobbes argues, "by which men are said to be sociable by nature" is actually but a part of "the joy a man taketh in

for there are such men, but they cannot "be presumed on" (L 14.31). Not only in the domain of justice when it is the same thing as breaking the law, is there good reason to fear the consequences of breaking one's word. In the domain of friendships, there are often good reasons to fear the consequences of failing to keep one's word. Friendships are not always nice. Alliances are often based on fear and force (dC 14.4). Men in the state of nature who betray their allies probably will not do well for long without the protection of their new confederates, supposing them to be reliable (cf. DBT p. 46). There are perhaps plenty of situations, where justice has been established, in which a man would have nothing serious to worry about if he did not keep his word when he would not have to do so, signaling thereby the withholding of friendship. This kind of situation would be especially commonplace where there is a great difference of power between the persons involved, and the greater power is doing the withholding. Indeed, it is one of the advantages of becoming a powerful man is that he can "ignore a favor-seeker" with confidence (dH 11.13). Nevertheless, Hobbes, in his endeavor to criticize friendships, says that the generous man is one concerned with glory or pride. Glory, for Hobbes, is generally vain, and pride is a sin against the law of nature. It would be better for the common good if occasions for such private generosity were minimized and men were not so concerned about their honor.

the fruition of any present good" (EL 9.16). Those, like the Schoolmen, who insist on the natural sociability of men, have reversed causes and effects. Society and friendship are second-order goods, and the pleasure they apparently bring is but a byproduct or epiphenomenon.

IV

Not only does Hobbes portray friendships as strictly instrumental and strip them of any moral component, he also emphasizes repeatedly how entirely unreliable friendship is. The distinction between friend and enemy is paper thin. "In a condition of war where every man to every man is an enemy," as Hobbes explains, "there is no man can hope by his own strength or wit to defend himself from destruction without the help of confederates" (L 15.5). Also in that situation, "some will take for friends whom others take for enemy" (L 17.5), so that all confederacies are going to be an unreliable mixture of friends and enemies. But technically speaking, if every man is an enemy under those conditions, then in principle all of one's confederates are. Where justice does not reign, only covenants turn enemies into allies (L 28.23), but where justice does not reign, covenants cannot be reckoned on. Hobbes warns against performing first in any agreement where the other person cannot be forced to fulfill his side of the bargain. But keeping his side of the bargain is the essence of relations among friends, and it is necessary to form and sustain society, though Hobbes calls it betraying oneself to one's enemies (L 14.18; cf. dC 3.27). Put plainly, "everyone is an enemy to everyone whom he neither obeys nor commands," (dC9.3). Only the fear of adverse consequences in the future convinces a man to keep his word rather than betray his friends, and while there may be good reasons to fear exclusion or reprisal, that fear is much less reliable in the domain of friendship than it is in the realm of justice. These observations regarding the state of nature serve therefore as cautionary

lessons. One should not expect it to be at all easy to reestablish a peaceful society once the present one has been dissolved. And any man who endeavors to dissolve it must realize that none of his confederates can be counted on, either while they operate as enemies against the current sovereign or once it has been brought down--even if, or perhaps especially if, he is one of those who commands the seditious confederacy and expects to command again in the next regime. Instead, it is far more likely that he will not survive to see what follows, and those who do survive will not thank him for his efforts, rendering all of his striving vain and all of his wisdom found wanting (L 27.16). Nothing ruins friendships like the competition for sovereign authority (DBT p. 42). And it is not easy for the ambitious man to resist ruinous feelings of "false glory" from an overestimation of himself, the flattery of others, and trusting too much in his friends and his reputation (EL 9.1). For when an ambitious man stumbles or is betrayed, he is usually finished. He cannot count on the assistance of even those who would otherwise remain loyal, for "men usually are content, Hobbes observes, "to be spectators of the misery of their friends" (EL 9.19)--after all, they have to look out for themselves. And ultimately, fighting on behalf of friends, including your family, is something Hobbes reduces to quarrelling over trifles (L 13.6-7).

In his listing and defining of the passions, on the subject of "weeping," Hobbes observes that its frequent cause is the loss of "props of power." Women and children are most subject to weeping, he indicates, because it is they who "rely principally on helps external" (L 6.43; Cf. dH 12.7). The reverse of that observation is that a man who depends upon friendships too much is like a woman or a child, and though Hobbes does not regard courage as a virtue, it remains an insult to call a man unmanly or feminine (cf. L 18.3, 21.16). When one weeps "for the loss of friends" (L 6.43) he weeps because it is a loss of his own power. A man will also weep upon

"the sudden stop made to their thoughts of revenge, by reconciliation" (L 6.43). That is, when a former friend has withdrawn his friendship, a man will so desire to bring him harm in return, that returning to his favor will make him miserable (dH 12.7). Friendships are so unreliable, that men would naturally rather take keep a former friend as an enemy, and even make him into a worse enemy, than restore their friendship.

Friendships affect an individually adversely in various ways. The criticism of dependency is part of a broader criticism of the way friendships may corrupt an individual's character. It is a mistake to suppose that Hobbes is not interested in shaping the character of the sovereign's subjects. In "familiar company," Hobbes observes, people tend to become both coarser and also more deceitful (L 8.10). To believe or trust or otherwise rely on any other person, to need their protection or their help, is always to honor them (L 10.22, 27). As honor is always relative, needing and seeking friends always involves an element of dishonoring oneself. Meanwhile, to find one's friendship sought out tends to breed vainglory in a man (cf. L 11.12). Everyone also tends to overvalue themselves, and they furthermore expect their friends to value them at the same rate--and if necessary they will find ways to "extort" that esteem from them (L 13.5). But people generally value other men very little (L 18.5), with few exceptions, most notably those likeminded men of great power and reputation (L 13.2), that is, those men whose friendship it would be particularly useful to procure.

The Hobbesian commonwealth is designed so that every subject should be dependent on the sovereign for his security and prosperity, which he has portrayed as a kind of indirect dependence on himself, through his theory of authorization. His political philosophy is designed to minimize the dependency of private individuals upon other private individuals, other "props of

power," not only for the sake of the sovereign power, but for their own sake as well. His argument therefore contains a criticism of the dependency of any man upon other men in particular, introducing an element of individualism designed to be consistent with the anti-individualist thrust of his theory, and well suited to his plan to change human nature in a manner that takes the tendencies of human nature into account in the process. "Association with others," teaches Hobbes, "does not increase reason for glorying in oneself," because in the end, "a man is worth as much as he can do without relying on anyone else" (dC 1.2).

V

Having considered conditions in the state of nature, and among ordinary subjects in a commonwealth in the abstract, it remains needful to address the dangers of friendships in the offices and among the officers of the commonwealth. It is a testament to the success of the Hobbesian project that Hobbes's assessment and criticism of friendships in politics now seems self-evident. It is perhaps too easy to forget how relatively novel and unusual it is, taking the whole of human history and the diversity of peoples into account, that we modern Westerners have established a political society where impartial justice and impersonal bureaucrats are expected, even if they cannot be taken for granted. Not only are the courts supposed to be neutral rather than respecters of persons, and not only are bureaucrats supposed to be faceless, but there is a constant call to render legislative and electoral processes less susceptible to influence from particular interests. The media too, even where it is a private enterprise, is routinely criticized for exhibiting bias and for being in the pocket of this or that political or economic interest. All of this is quite extraordinary, given human propensities and human history. Certainly, liberal democracy is no perfect realization of the Hobbesian project, and it is undeniably influenced by

lawful and unlawful relationships of favor and return to a significant extent. Nevertheless, in comparison with regimes of formal patronage relationships and informal yet pervasive corruption, whether present-day, pre-modern, ancient or primitive, Western or non-Western, Hobbes's recommendation to minimize the roles that friendships play and establish the supremacy of justice in matters political has been implemented to a remarkable degree.

With respect to the dangers of friendships in politics, I will consider first the sovereign's own friends, then the related subject of counsel, followed by concerns pertaining to the administration of justice, and finally to issues in international relations. Afterward, Hobbes's concerns with the various sorts of partial associations that form within a commonwealth will be addressed.

The several and varied issues surround the friendships of the sovereign. Whoever represents the artificial person that is the sovereign is also a natural person. And when an assembly governs, there are many natural persons involved in the representation of the sovereign. But all natural persons have a tendency to favor their friends and family (L 19.4). It is one of Hobbes's chief arguments in favor of monarchy that this danger is less when one man alone rules, because only then does the private good of the sovereign coincide with the public good. This is perhaps because the entire kingdom may be reckoned as the king's family (cf. L 17.2, 20.15). Also, his friendship has been directly bought by each and every subject, through the gift of theirs that established his power (cf. 18.4).¹² [12] Of course, it is a longstanding

¹² [12] This is no less true of the sovereign when it is an assembly, but it is more likely that a king, who has been raised to rule, will recognize it, whereas assemblies are more likely to neglect and abuse it (cf. B p. 187, on Cromwell's ascension)

concern that the sovereign will enrich his friends, or the friends of his favorites, and in politics the appearance or suspicion of such behavior can be just as damaging as its practice.¹³ [13] Hobbes does not pretend that monarchs will not enrich their favorites (cf. B p. 65), but this is no argument against monarchy, since it is also true of members of an assembly, who will likewise use their power to buy friends and benefit their families, and the problem is thereby compounded by their number as well as other factors (L 19.8; dC10.6). Still, it is important to Hobbes to establish that all titles of honor are gifts of the sovereign, indicating his friendship (L 10.52). This is necessary so that aristocrats, if there be any, know that their privileges are owed ultimately to the sovereign, and not simply to their good birth. A man of nobility who forgets that he is a friend of the sovereign and indebted to him is more likely to become his enemy. Likewise, all counselors, ministers, magistrates and offices owe their positions, ultimately to the sovereign (L 18.13). But it is also best, as far as it is possible, for the sovereign to establish open, impartial and impersonal rules for the allocation of offices and the conferral of awards, so that they are prizes subjects compete for and earn, rather than opportunities for the corruption that partialities invite. The sovereign should limit the number of his direct personal appointments as much as possible.¹⁴ [14] The sovereign's friends and the favorites of men in

12[13] As everybody knows, W toppled Saddam in order to line the pockets of Cheney's Halliburton buddies.

14 [14] Hobbes argues that all Christian sovereigns have the right to baptize, even when they are not ordained. But he further argues that they generally do not perform baptisms, being much too busy with the business of governing (L 42.72). The explanation offered is not a particularly persuasive one. Rather, it further supports the idea that the sovereign should avoid designating personal favorites by public signs. Christ himself, the king of kings, never baptized anyone, and as Hobbes observes, Popes and bishops rarely do.

authority in general are often guilty of the greatest crimes against the common good (L 30.35). They exploit their position and take advantage of the public, regarding themselves as immune from the law, and they also have a tendency to turn against their benefactors, having become filled with pride. Hobbes would remind those who revel in their position as the sovereign's favorite, even if they do not abuse their position, that it is not a particularly safe position to be in (cf. B p. 184). It is not always enviable to be so envied.

The public good is always undermined by bad counsel. Sometimes, bad counsel is the result of insufficient or mistaken information, and sometimes it is based on poor judgment. Oftentimes it follows from the corrupting influence of the private interests of the counselor. All counselors, even the sovereign's public ministers are "apt to look askint towards their private benefit" (L 25.16). But the counsel of private individuals or associations is generally always corrupt and deleterious to the public good. Counsel, properly so-called, should attend the benefit of the counseled (L 25.4). Good counsel follows when the counselor has no private interest contrary to the public good in the matter under consideration, and the best counsel is found under those rare circumstances when the counselor's private interest coincides with the public good (L 25.11; 30.25). As a result, Hobbes recommends heeding the express opinions of the public itself (L 30.27). If impartial opinion polls could be conducted, Hobbes would recommend them to the sovereign, not in all things pertaining to the safety of his subjects, to be sure, but in many things pertaining to their comfort.

14[15] Although in the English system, apart from a royal pardon, an assembly serves as the court of final appeal.

When interpreting Hobbes, the reader has to try to discern when Hobbes is speaking about what is in principle, in the abstract, according to right or reason, true, and what happens in practice, or will be the case in all likelihood, given experience and the tendencies of human beings. For the most part, Hobbes's political philosophy is well adapted to human realities, and where he hopes to change the way men live, he is well aware that it cannot be done easily or quickly. One of the most telling instances where he makes a concession to practice is where he laments, "sometimes (as men's manners are) justice cannot be had without money," making it necessary for a man whose private interests are to be heard and judged by an assembly to "hire" as many "friends" as he can from among its members (L 22.30). For those whose private interests compete with his, it must be assumed, will endeavor to purchase as many assemblymen as they can as well. Hobbes, who teaches that friendship should be removed from politics as much as possible, would deem the infiltration of electoral and legislative processes, by lobbyists and special interest groups, corporations and other private associations to be damaging, but also typical. Their bad counsel is made much worse where a sovereign assembly rules, however, let alone where sovereignty is divided and limited (cf. B p. 114-117), whereupon counselors will have an easier time purchasing the favor of many in ways contrary to the public good, and exploiting the ignorance of the rest (L 25.15-16). However, the corruption of assemblymen in this fashion is not, strictly speaking, unjust. It involves, in the end, no conflict between theory and practice, right and reality.

While justice must sometimes be bought, Hobbes specifically restricts the example above to matters debated in the assembly. He does not extend this concession to cases brought before a

judge.¹⁵ [15] Naturally, he does not want to encourage the purchasing of magistrates. A good judge, Hobbes indicates, practices equity and exhibits "contempt of unnecessary riches and preferments" (L 26.28), and is therefore difficult to corrupt. Perhaps behind his silence may be a recognition that those who pass judgments in courtrooms also need to be bought on occasion in order to ensure justice--which would involve assuming that magistrates are going to be corrupted as a matter of course, so a man should make his best effort to corrupt them in his own favor. Judges, like assemblymen, are undoubtedly bound to be expensive friends, but once secured, they are likely to make better friends. After all, an assemblyman is expected to make and break such friendships all the time, and does so publicly; a judge is not and cannot. Corrupt magistrates are a greater threat to the commonwealth than corrupt counselors or corrupt assemblymen, however, because in their case, the practice of their corruption directly violates the theory of right upon which Hobbes's theory is established. Whereas it is not, technically speaking, unjust to acquire the friendship of an assemblyman, it is unjust for a magistrate to befriend someone who appears before him. A corrupted judge who gives his friends special treatment directly misapplies and disobeys the laws which are his responsibility to uphold. A corrupted judge is himself a criminal (EL 29.6). He is doubly the enemy of the sovereign, for both his injustice and for betraying the friendship of the sovereign who appointed him. A judge that is influenced at all, not only through bribes or by making exceptions for friends, but even out of pity, Hobbes argues, hastens the dissolution of the commonwealth (dC 13.17; EL 28.6). Among the worst crimes of corrupt magistrates is that they invariably punish the innocent (L 26.24), which Hobbes abhors, as it represents a violation by the sovereign of the fourth, seventh and eleventh laws of nature all at once (L 28.22). When an innocent man is punished, the

sovereign has not only failed to make the proper return to that man for that gift through which he authorized the sovereign's power; he has made a return of the greatest evil a man can suffer for the greatest benefit a man may rightfully give. A prudent sovereign will not only find reliable magistrates to appoint, he will severely punish those who attempt to corrupt them in order to buy pardon and escape punishment (cf. L 27.38; cf. 27.13-18OL). Unfortunately, Hobbes knows, it is natural for men to forget that they approve of the sovereign's judgments and punishments as soon as they or someone close to them are going to be tried (dC 6.5).

A sovereign must be wary not only of the corrupting influences of friendships in his counselors, ministers and magistrates. He must also be wary of alliances on the international front--and not just alliances among his enemies, but also his own alliances. There is a state of nature among artificial persons in the international arena (L 13.12; dC 13.7), and therefore, as with the condition of mere nature among men, the distinction between a friend and an ally is nothing more than a word, backed up only by complex networks and fluctuating degrees of fear. There is no justice among nations, only the exchange of benefits and hostilities.¹⁶ [16] There

¹⁶ [16] In *Behemoth*, Hobbes illustrates the nature of the international situation well through the example of the war against the Dutch in the midst of the English revolution (B p. 169, 174-178). The Rump Parliament, in its first period of rule, sent envoys to the Netherlands offering friendship, which is to say, to secure recognition of their regime's newly established authority in England, and to assert the continuing dominion of the English over the seas. The ambitious Dutch figured that the English were at this time vulnerable, and decided it was time to challenge their dominion over the seas. The Dutch had been testing the English by fishing off their coast contrary to custom, and in other ways. So the "proffered friendship was scorned, and the[] ambassadors affronted" (B p. 174). The war would begin in earnest when the Dutch provoked the English navy by not lowering their flags in the presence of their ships. It was but a ploy, of course, to persuade the English to open fire first. Then the Dutch could appeal to the other nations of the world, saying that the English had started the war, in a vain attempt to rally other nations to their side. The younger character in the dialogue, "B," observes, "as to the gaining of friends and confederates thereby, I think it was in vain; seeing princes and states in such occasions look not much upon the justice of their neighbors, but upon their own concernment in the event" (B p. 176). The elder character, "A," indicates that England was entirely in the right to defend itself, the provocative behavior of the Dutch being equivalent to having fired first. But of course, on

are no grounds upon which to call any war unjust, even a war of preemption, since a war of preemption is merely a war of defense, only sooner. Also, a colony that has been set free of its mother country no longer owes anything more than what an adult owes his parents, "honor and friendship" (L 24.14), for what they are worth. No commonwealth should be expected to do more than secure and advance its national interest. No country benefits another without the expectation of return. But any nation which a commonwealth has befriended and protected is apt to betray it, or at the very least, forget its past friendship, as soon as it is in its interest to do so. And similarly, it should not be so surprising if a country which has allied with one nation against a common enemy should form a new union against it soon afterward, or if a once feared enemy, having suffered defeat or collapse, suddenly asks for or offers its friendship. Any league or union among sovereign nations is, on Hobbesian grounds, something just this side of being nothing at all. It is certainly something no sovereign power should recognize as having any rightful authority. Its resolutions should be heeded only insofar as it is in a country's interest to

Hobbes's own grounds, there is no question of right or justice in such affairs. "B" is right that princes ought not to be concerned with the justice of such things, while "A" expresses a salutary and patriotic perspective. When England called for the end of hostilities, and reiterated its offer of friendship, the Dutch ignored the idea of a league between their states, for the offer of friendship must have seemed like an admission of vulnerability. So the war continued, with the Dutch still trying to secure allies from among its neighbors. Naturally, in the end, the English won the war in spite of its domestic difficulties and retained dominion over the seas.

16[17] Hobbes only insists that families are in any way "natural" for the sake of lending support to his arguments in favor of monarchy and the traditional line of succession (EL 23.16). But his preference for it rests principally on the convenient way it helps to avert much disorder by preventing friends and favorites from disturbing the political order. It is not foolproof, to be sure, but so long as man is mortal no convention could be. But it is, Hobbes thinks, most reliable.

do so, or to the extent that fearful consequences for not following them become manifest, which is but a good part of taking care of its own interest.

VI

The twenty-second chapter of *Leviathan* offers a systematizing of systems, by which is meant any partial association within a commonwealth, any combination of men with shared interests or affairs. Some are political, such as a territorial government, a bureaucratic entity, or other public institution. Others are private, such as a corporation or sect. Among private associations, some have regular, formal structures and others do not. Some are lawful and others are not. But any system, private or public, may pose a threat to the security of the commonwealth. Any one of them can become acquisitive and ambitious to the point of becoming unjust, a cause of corruption and possibly sedition. Indeed, Hobbes looks upon all systems subordinate to the sovereign as potentially dangerous, since it is the nature of men to seek power after power, and men only combine for their mutual advantage, which in most cases works to the disadvantage of other particular men, and in not infrequently to the detriment of the common good. Indeed, the only reasons, according to Hobbes, that anyone ever bothers themselves with politics are first, for glory, which is always vain, or second, to secure advantages for themselves and their friends (dC 10.15). Needless to say, gradually weakening and diminishing subordinate systems, especially private systems, thereby rendering them harmless, is among Hobbes's principal long-term objectives. It could be accomplished by changing men's opinions and directing their appetites toward goods that may be more readily provided for them, so that men feel less of a need to collaborate with each other in order to get things accomplished and live more contentedly. Hobbes is not foolish enough to suggest

attempting the direct abolition of partial associations, or the revolutionary imposition of new appetites and behaviors.

The family, according to Hobbes's categorization, is but a sort of private system both regular (because it has a leader) and lawful (L 22.26).¹⁷ [17] Its members may certainly commit unlawful acts, but families are not in themselves unlawful, as some other associations are, such as secret societies (L 22.29), regarding which it must be assumed that they have as their fundamental purpose the domination or destruction of society, with the hope to profit thereby. There is no justice inside families, apart from what the law of the commonwealth establishes regarding them from the outside. It is entirely within the rights of the sovereign to determine the nature of a family, its forms, freedoms, privileges and so forth, since the sovereign has authority over all subordinate systems (dC 8.8; EL 23.4). Within a family, as a relationship within the domain of friendship rather than justice, no obedience is owed beyond what is due according to gratitude and honor (L 30.11), and perhaps also to the fear of consequences. There is no reason to expect familial relations to be more reliable than any other friendship. Scripture itself confirms this from the very beginning (cf. L 38.2-3). Every mother raises her children under the assumption that they will do what she desires of them (dC 9.3), which requires keeping them enfeebled (cf. EL 14.13). Needless to say, mothers always end up feeling betrayed to some extent, supposing their children do grow up. Nevertheless, family has acquired conventional importance, and people with "potent kindred," for instance, tend to believe they can act with greater impunity than others (L 27.15).

For Hobbes, a faction is any association of men, any "league of subjects" (L 22.29), with a particular political agenda of its own. All factions are self-interested too. There is no such thing as a party of the people (EL 27.4), although the leaders of powerful factions often excel at fooling ignorant subjects into thinking that they represent the people (cf. dC 12.12-13; EL 27.12-14; L 11.20, R&C.16). Political parties are but one kind of faction that Hobbes declares unlawful (L 22.32). The main problem with party government in a sovereign assembly is that it institutionalizes the continuing presence of contradictory voices within the sovereign, which properly being but one person artificial, should speak to the public with one voice. Even though disagreements among its members are inevitable, it needs to speak authoritatively and therefore unequivocally. Under an assembly split by parties the public is convinced of the legitimacy of the minority voices within it, and support for them tends to proceed from conscience to word to deed, whereupon it threatens to become criminal and seditious. Meanwhile that trend is encouraged by the minority faction through the promise of benefits in return for their increasing support. That a political system organized in such a fashion could sustain itself for long, Hobbes doubts. Factions within assemblies engender sedition and civil war, and "the bitterest wars" are those which arise from "different factions in the same country" (dC 1.5; cf. 10.12, 12.1; DBT pp. 48-49).

Unlawful factions, however, do not arise solely within the sovereign assembly. They develop no less outside of the formal institutions of government. Some of them are but "corporations of beggars, thieves and gypsies," whereas others make their chief business "the propagation of doctrines" that challenge the doctrines authorized by the sovereign, or the authority of the sovereign itself (L 22.27). The most dangerous unlawful factions form around men of great wealth or popularity, and democracies in particular breed them much too well (dC

10.7, 13.13). Hobbes is well aware that a popular leader, however traitorous, earns his popularity by acquiring "a reputation of love of a man's country" (L 10.6), as if one could be loyal to the commonwealth without being obedient to the sovereign. Popular men tend to presume that they will be able to escape punishment for their wrongdoings because of their great many friends (L 27.15, 27.13-18OL), which is equivalent to challenging the authority of the sovereign itself. The sovereign generally cannot buy off a popular leader, who will welcome benefits from the sovereign not only with ingratitude, but also as proof of the sovereign's fear and vulnerability (L 30.24). And a popular leader also convinces his followers that they too may disobey the law with impunity, as if their safety were his gift to give in exchange for their allegiance, which is a direct usurpation of the sovereign's authority (L 29.20; dH 14.8). It is up to the sovereign to teach people not to follow popular leaders (L 30.8), a goal that would receive assistance if the sovereign were popular himself (L 30.29). It is perhaps more reliable to encourage the popularity of men with relatively little ambition, such those who would divert men from politics rather than involve them in it.

Unlike factions led by the rich and the popular, conspiracies tend to be "irregular," in that they do not have a clear, public leader (L 22.28-29), or if they do he is certainly not the real leader. Hobbes adds that nobody may lawfully hire a private force for his own defense (L 22.31), that being a right transferred to the sovereign. A man who commands a legion of brownshirts has obvious designs. Posses too are forbidden (L 22.34). And although subjects are free to assemble wherever and whenever the law has not specifically forbidden it, any congregation of an "extraordinarily great" number of subjects, for any reason at all, should be reckoned unlawful (L 22.33). A claim to an absolute right to free speech and freedom of

assembly is itself seditious (cf. B p. 16). After all, nobody would propose it unless they had some seditious activity in mind.

VII

While it is commonly thought that men will form friendships based upon shared ideas, especially shared religious ideas, Hobbes takes the view that those friendships are no less instrumental than any other.¹⁸ [18] Every member of such an association expects some benefit to himself for his involvement and contributions, although they many not all desire the same good. Whereas many may genuinely desire above all rewards that are strictly intellectual or otherworldly, Hobbes recognizes that the association itself, under the guidance of its leadership, has as its principal the desire for power, whether political or economic or both. An organization based on scientific ideas is certainly going to be no less political than an organization based on religious ideas. The Royal Society, for instance, is in principle no less a potential danger than the Roman Catholic Church, from Hobbes's point of view. Men who reckon themselves wise, as even natural philosophers do (and it is in Hobbes's time that natural philosophers come to insist that they alone have worthwhile and secure knowledge), tend to question the rightful political

¹⁸ [18] Indeed, with "scarce two men agreeing what is to be called good, and what evil" (EL 5.14), their association is not in fact based on shared ideas, which they probably do not have and could not know if they did, but on the perceived advantages of their association, supposing their ideas to be shared well enough that a fruitful alliance may be erected upon their willingness to get along. (See Locke's *Letter Concerning Toleration*, and his claim that every man is unorthodox to every other.)

¹⁸[19] Tuck and Silverthorne translate the law that "forbids favor" in *De Cive* from the Latin as a law of "fairness" that enjoins men not to "discriminate" (dC 3.15). In not discriminating among men, one is like God, Hobbes argues, who does not discriminate between Gentiles and Jews, or between free men or slaves (dC 4.13). Of course, under the old law, God did discriminate between Jews and Gentiles. And after the new law, God still discriminates between repentant and unrepentant sinners.

authorities and deceive people as to the nature of their activities (L 27.16). They assert their own claim to rule, even if it is made indirectly, by claiming to know the objective nature of man and the world and his place in it, and what is more, by claiming the right to manipulate the nature of the world and man without the permission of the sovereign or the consent of other men, for the sake of satisfying their own curiosity perhaps, but also in return for the funds that their sponsors have generously paid them, or in expectation of some future glory. Every philosopher harbors a desire to be "a Master," Hobbes reveals, candidly (cf. dC 1.2).

Given the context of the events he and his contemporaries had experienced, it is understandable that Hobbes predominantly expresses concern over religious associations. What he says about them, however, may be generalized and applied to most associations of friends. Just as there is nothing special about a family, there is nothing special about a church. Even apostle and disciple are really just fancy words for friends (cf. L 41.6-7). His reflections on religion in general provide some of the clearest insights into his criticism of friendships, mostly as the natural religiosity of man (cf. L 11.17, 11.23, 12.19) provides frauds and conspirators with lots of material to work with. After all, faith is always, Hobbes argues, reducible to a belief in some man or men (L 7.5, 12.24, 40.6). False prophets, of whom there have been many, Hobbes observes, seek only "reputation with the people" to govern them for their private benefit" (L 43.1; cf. 36.8). Arguably speaking from experience, Hobbes observes that many have also interpreted Scriptures misleadingly for their own gain (L 43.24). Of "necromancy, conjuring, and witchcraft," Hobbes observes, they are "confederate knavery" (L 12.19; cf. 37.10-11). Superstitious confederacies are in the end only a particular kind of criminal activity when conducted on a small scale, with the possibility of becoming a rebellious faction as it wins many adherents (L 36.20, 39.5). All religion is political, though some religions are more overtly

political than others. As a non-Muslim is one who holds that Mohammed made up the Koran in his head (and is free to say it), Hobbes is able to state forthrightly that "Mahomet, to set up his new religion, pretended to have conferences with the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove" (L 12.20, also see n.14). Indeed, a religion instituted by a man with worldly wealth and ambition that makes conquest its principal means and domination its foremost objective should be the most transparent of all to someone who reasons as Hobbes does. It is at least more transparent than a religion the political aspirations of which are said to be not of this world--although an interpretation of such a religion that somehow manages to generate a claim to worldly authority for its leadership is going to seem just as transparent. Still, even a religion that boasts of miracles of healing rather than glorious conquest is subject to Hobbes's criticism. As science is suspect, as I have argued above, there is nothing apolitical about the promise of good health, cures for diseases, long life, or resurrection from the dead. Without having naming any specifics, it fairly easy to discern what is implied when Hobbes writes,

if we look upon the impostures wrought by confederacy, there is nothing how impossible soever to be done, that is impossible to be believed. For two men conspiring, one to seem lame, the other to cure him with a charm, will deceive many; but many conspiring, one to seem lame, another so to cure him, and all the rest to bear witness, will deceive many more. (L 37.12)

Hobbes directly confronts the two proven enemies of the English crown who use religion for political purposes, namely the Roman Church and its agents in the Universities, and also the Presbyterians. The Roman Church is, straightforwardly, a political enterprise that has as its agenda "setting up unlawful power over the lawful sovereigns of Christian peoples and riches" (L 47.17). It is "a confederacy of deceivers" seeking "dominion over men in this present world," by exploiting the ignorance of men (L 44.1). In his essay "A Discourse of Rome," Hobbes details how the ranks of the Church are thoroughly corrupt, especially due to quarrels among its

factions, its organization on the basis of relationships of favor, and its dependence on the wealth of great families or the friendship of princes (DR pp. 95-96). He warns Protestant Englishmen, should they find themselves in Rome, to be especially wary because they are in grave danger in that hostile place (DR pp. 99-101). The implication to be drawn is that Rome does not love its enemies. The Presbyterians, according to Hobbes, are "seducers" who were guilty of "pretending to have a right from God to govern every one his parish and their assembly the whole nation," this being the message they preached from their pulpits (B p. 2; cf. L 47.4). Their agitations were, Hobbes argues, in fact about nothing more than acquiring or securing worldly power and goods (B p. 63).

His criticisms of the Presbyterians and the Roman Church have continuing relevance, even though there is not at present any realistic fear that either Presbyters or the Pope are preparing for conquest. The sorts of trouble these two organizations caused for the legitimate authorities of Hobbes's day are not tied to any particular time or place, and their correlates are likely to be found anywhere and always. Even today, there are those who disseminate a peculiar interpretation of their religion in their places of worship and their schools, teaching that it is the duty of a believer to struggle against the great enemies of the faith in order to subdue the world until it submits to God (which is to say, his best students on earth), and that all the instruments of war, using both force and fraud, are justifiable and necessary toward realizing that prophesy. Hobbes's recommendation for dealing with them, I suspect, would be straightforward. There are also those who are loyal not to their own legitimate sovereign, but rather, their loyalties belong to an imaginary commonwealth, similar to the way Catholics preferred a foreign prince in Rome to their rightful king. They speak and act as if they were not subjects of their sovereign, but rather, of the universal regime of perfect peace and justice and equality that history would bring into

being if only their sovereign, whom they reckon deeply flawed and illegitimate, worked toward that righteous goal, rather than practicing violence and injustice for no reason other than to make the unequal even more unequal. If only they had a leader, unlike the present one (whom they reckon a usurper), who would unite with all the other leaders of the world, and each of them lay down his country's right to defend itself, then mutual aid would become a global reality, bringing about the commonwealth of all humankind for which they so yearn and to which they are dedicated. And just as the Roman Catholics dominated the Universities in order to teach seditious doctrines full of nonsense (cf. L 8.27, 11.18, 44.1. 44.3, 46.*passim*), through which they would gain control over the professions and thereby manipulate society as a whole to their advantage, turning it against its rightful sovereign, so too are the Universities today largely occupied by the devotees of that imaginary commonwealth, who are busy framing debates in terms that have neither reference in the world of sense nor any intelligible meaning (and unlike the Church before them, they now admit this and revel in it). From their schools of law and journalism and public policy and divinity and all the humanities and the social sciences, they spread their gospel. In response to them, Hobbes could begin by pointing out that "the future [is] but a fiction of the mind" (L 3.7). However, Hobbes's own long-term project is perhaps not so different from the goals of these dreamers. As I have indicated, Hobbes would surely have much criticism to offer to the present regime. But I suspect that the prudent and patient Hobbes would also recognize that the perpetual commonwealth envisioned by the latter-day Catholics is something that cannot be realized until the latter-day Presbyterians have been dealt with or converted to their universalistic creed.

It should come as no surprise at this point that friendship is nowhere to be found in the Hobbesian catalogue of virtues. No law of nature commands it, just as there is no virtue of giving listed at all either. Hobbes offers his reader no reflections extolling friendships among men of virtue, or explaining what makes a friendship work, or how to know if someone is a good friend, or how to be a good friend, or who one should befriend, or whose friendship one should avoid and how to best avoid it, or anything of the sort. This makes sense, not only because friendship is on balance more of a hindrance than a help in the maintenance of peace and security in civil society, even if it is necessary in order to institute a commonwealth, but also because all moral virtue, Hobbes argues, runs contrary to the natural passions of man (L 17.2). And the desire to have other men to do what you want them to do is fully consistent with the natural passions of man (cf. L 17.1). Partiality toward one's own in the competitive endeavor to gain an advantage over others is entirely natural to man. In contrast, sociability and working together with the entire community for the common good is not (cf. L 17.6-12). For the Hobbesian project to be a success, the natural passions must be overcome, or at least arrangements must be made to render their presence and effects minimal. For instance, if men cannot be made to practice equity, civil society can at least be arranged so that it is very rarely in the interest of any individual to act iniquitously by making an "acception of persons" (L 15.24), especially when that individual is acting in an official capacity. Equity in particular ♦ impartial judgment, ceasing to play favorites ♦ is so important to the Hobbesian project that he dedicates in effect three of the laws of nature to it--the eleventh (L 15.23; cf. dC 3.15),¹⁹ [19] where the virtue of

equity is specified, and also the seventeenth and the eighteenth, where the principle is the same and only the scenarios in which it is applied have changed (L 15.31-32; cf. 30.15; dC 3.19, 3.24).

It is worth recalling that Hobbes is not claiming that considerations of justice and equity leave no room for friendships. The liberty of subjects is such that they can form as many partial associations such as are not forbidden by the law, and likewise confer any benefit upon another, and hope for any service in return, or react to the failure to obtain a suitable return for one's benefits conferred, just as one pleases, so long as it is not done contrary to the law (L 21.6). Indeed, a philosophy could hardly pretend to teach what a Christian Commonwealth is if it did not leave room for charity. But that begs the question, what does Hobbes regard as charity? It is distinguished from love, generally speaking, which is simply the name that is given to the experience of any of the many internal physiological motions interpreted as a desire (L 6.3; EL 7.1). It is distinguished as well from the love of particular persons, which is a jealous passion, a species of need accurately described as "lust not condemned" (EL 9.15-16; cf. L 6.33). Equity is a part of charity, Hobbes indicates, for a man must love his enemy, his neighbor, and himself all the same, according to Scripture (dC 4.12; cf. L 30.13; EL 18.6, 18.8, 29.7). Charity is the desire for the good of another in particular (L 6.22). It is distinguished from pity, which is compassion aroused specifically by the misfortune of others (L 6.46; dH 12.10), although presumably pity may well inspire charity in some. Charity is good because it wins friends, as people will "adhere unto" the man who has the ability to assist them (EL 9.17; cf. 9.21).

In a Hobbesian regime, charity is made into a public concern, something best administered by the state (L 30.18). It is therefore better labeled a "kindness," using Hobbesian terminology (L 6.30), though it might otherwise be called welfare. Equity can be better ensured

that way, treating individuals according to pre-established and impersonal rules. And the sovereign can furthermore increase his subjects' direct dependence upon him, if not their gratitude toward him. When charity is left to individuals, it always tends toward injustice, as all "favor and friendship" tends to "break through" the laws (DBT p. 49). Essentially, Hobbes is asking men not to try to help other people so much, at least, not directly. It is better to have the state mediate between those who can help and those who need help. Accordingly, Hobbes modifies the rule of charity, rendering it as the negative rule that a man should not do unto others what he would not want done to himself, rather than the "divine" positive rule that he should do unto others what he would want for himself (L 15.35; dC 3.26; EL 17.9).²⁰ [20] Charity is thereby rendered less demanding as well as less likely to lead to the formation of relationships of benefit and return. It is a failing proposition to imagine basing political society on the positive formulation, benevolence being something one cannot reckon on (cf. dC 1.2). The civil law cannot require that a man should give alms (EL 29.5), but it can pass laws for the confiscation of some part of his property so that it may be redistributed. And men can more readily learn to leave each other alone. It becomes enough not to harm or hate anyone. The eighth law of nature commands men not to condemn (L 15.20; dC 3.12; EL 16.11). This does not come naturally to

20 [20] When Hobbes gives Scriptural support for his arguments from natural reason, he necessarily references the divine law of positive charity, but in order to confirm that it supports the negative natural law (cf. L 14.5; dC 4.23; EL 18.9), which it does sufficiently.

20[21] Tuck and Silverthorne render the corresponding law in *De Cive* as commanding that "everyone should be considerate of others," the Latin translated as considerate being *commodus* (dC 3.9). In *De Cive* Hobbes offers several passages from Scripture in order to support the law commanding sociability, overlooking the especially convenient passage from Acts that Marx would borrow in his "Critique of the Gotha Program," however.

men, who would readily express their hatred for others had they learned not to do so. But it is still a lesser command, to refrain from exhibiting harming and hating, than to exhibit love.

In the absence of friendships, however, there is a virtue that Hobbes does recommend in its place. The fifth law of nature commands "complaisance," meaning that "every man [should] strive to accommodate himself to the rest," which is the same as saying: be "sociable" (L 15.17; cf. 15.40; dC 3.9, 4.7; EL 16.8, 17.10, 17.15).²¹ [21] Now, as has been indicated above, this too is contrary to man's nature. It is something he must learn. And therefore it is something he must be taught. It should be made an official doctrine of the commonwealth, as it is the duty of the sovereign to educate all of his subjects as to the requirements of the laws of nature, and to arrange society in accordance with them in order to obtain his subjects' compliance with them. The fifth law, upon a cursory reading, seems relatively innocuous, apparently recommending only that men refrain from being difficult in their dealings with others. But upon closer inspection, there is something much more to it. In the middle of his explication of that law, Hobbes elaborates,

For as that stone which (by the asperity and irregularity of figure) takes more room from others than itself fills, and (for the hardness) cannot be easily made plain, and thereby hindreth the building, is by the builders cast away as unprofitable and troublesome, so also a man that (by asperity of nature) will strive to retain those things which to himself are superfluous and to others necessary, and (for the stubbornness of his passions) cannot be corrected, is to be left or cast out of society as cumbersome thereto. (L 15.17; cf. dC 3.9)²² [22]

²² [22] He later adds that it is among the fatal "diseases of the commonwealth" when the all the property in a commonwealth "is gathered together in too much abundance in one or a few private men" (L 29.19).

To put it bluntly, this is halfway to socialism, if not communism. Hobbes has already established that men possess no natural right to private property (L 13.13, 15.3), and he soon establishes that it is entirely up to the sovereign to determine what belongs to whom (L 18.10; EL 24.2), and how to distribute the goods of the commonwealth. He also recommends that goods should be held in common, whenever possible (L 15.25). Accordingly, for the sake of social peace and stability, Hobbes encourages the development of a universal friendliness or camaraderie that will bind the relatively equal, similar and pliable people together into a society wherein each member lives contentedly thanks to the beneficence of the state. To this end, the state will have to engage in the regulation and redistribution of property in no small way--eradicating any degree of inequality that allows some one person to enjoy some luxury while another has to struggle. Meanwhile, the sovereign must also find ways of dispensing with those "irregular" men who resist being "corrected."

IX

Although it will take time, Hobbes is confident regarding the possibility of reeducating human beings and making them behave differently by giving them new opinions and living conditions (cf. L 30.6, 14). Human nature as Hobbes finds it does not lend itself to the establishment of lasting peace. It will have to be refashioned if that objective is to be accomplished. But that objective can be accomplished only slowly. Experience and history teach that revolutionaries are fools. Hobbes is caught in the interesting predicament of being a philosopher who endeavors to change everything about human society, while teaching that one should not attempt to change their society (L 29.13). Perhaps it is more of a ploy than a predicament. Being no revolutionary, there is nothing out of the ordinary about his personal

hypocrisy, being a lifelong beneficiary of patronage who has made it his personal project to see patronage brought to an end. Prudence often requires hypocrisy.

Hobbes expects that a properly socialized humanity will be more rational and obedient (cf. L 3.3). The end goal is the everlasting constitution (L 30.5), the rebuilding of Babel (cf. L 4.2). It is a goal that he must know constitutes a rebellion against the kingdom of God , and Hobbes is happy to put Scripture to use for the sake bringing it about. Having examined Hobbes thought through an investigation into the role of friendships in it, it becomes particularly clear how his project intends the gradual yet certain undermining of not only great private wealth but also family and religion. It requires transforming the state into something impersonal, neutral and procedural, not to mention massive. It requires the supervision of all education by public authorities. It emphasizes and intends to provide sufficient comfortable and commodious living. It has to neutralize the political ambition of capable men, transforming popularity into harmless celebrity. And it intends ultimately to unite all the nations of the world. This legacy is Hobbes's gift to humanity. Its success would constitute his desired return.
