Selected Excerpts from Hobbes "Leviathan "
Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679). Of Man, Being the First Part of Leviathan. The Harvard Classics. 1909–14.

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Chapter VI

Of the Interior Beginnings of Voluntary Motions, Commonly Called the Passions; and the Speeches by Which They Are Expressed

THERE be in animals two sorts of 'motions' peculiar to them: one called 'vital,' begun in generation, and continued without interruption through their whole life, such as are the 'course' of the 'blood,' the 'pulse,' the 'breathing,' the concoction, nutrition, excretion, etc., to which motions there needs no help of imagination*: [This idea corresponds to Aristotle's **Irrational**, **Nutritive** part of the soul]* the other is 'animal motion,' otherwise called 'voluntary motion,' as to 'go,' to 'speak,' to 'move' any of our limbs in such manner as is first fancied in our minds. That sense is motion in the organs and interior parts of man's body, caused by the action of the things we see, hear, etc.; and that fancy is but the relics of the same motion, remaining after sense, has been said in the first and second chapters. And, because 'going,' 'speaking,' and the like voluntary motions, depend always upon a precedent thought of 'whither,' 'which way,' and 'what,' it is evident that the imagination is the first internal beginning of all voluntary motion. … These small beginnings of motion within the body of man, before they appear in walking, speaking, striking, and other visible actions, are commonly called '**endeavor**.' 1

[Sections 2-5, Hobbes defines several dimensions of human nature/experience. I've bolded them to make them easier to spot]

This endeavor, when it is toward something which causes it, is called '**appetite**,' or '**desire**,' the latter being the general name and the other oftentimes restrained to signify the desire of food, namely 'hunger' and 'thirst.' And, when the endeavor is [away from] something, it is generally called '**aversion**.' These words, 'appetite' and 'aversion,' we have from the [Latin]; and they both of them signify the motions, one of approaching, the other of retiring. So also do the Greek words for the same... *[Hobbes drawing support for his interpretation of man's nature by showing that multiple ancient cultures had the same understanding. Hobbes is trying to establish his picture of mankind as THE truth.]* For Nature itself does often press upon men those truths which afterwards, when they look for somewhat beyond Nature, they stumble at. ... 2

That which men desire they are also said to '**love'**; and to '**hate'** those things for which they have aversion. So that desire and love are the same thing, save that by desire we always signify the absence of the object, by love most commonly the presence of the same. So also by aversion we signify the absence, and by hate, the presence of the object. 3

Of appetites and aversions, some are born with men, as appetite of food, appetite of excretion, and exoneration, which may also and more properly be called aversions from somewhat they feel in their bodies; and some other appetites, not many. The rest, which are appetites of particular things, proceed from experience and trial of their effects upon themselves or other men. For of things we know not at all, or believe not to be, we can have no further desire than to taste and try. But aversion we have for things not only which we know have hurt us, but also that we do not know whether they will hurt us or not. 4
[According to Hobbes, our positive desire for the unknown is very limited, but our fear of aversion of the unknown is unlimited]

Those things which we neither desire nor hate we are said to '**contemn**,' 'contempt' being nothing else but an immobility or contumacy of the heart in resisting the action of certain things, and proceeding from that the heart is already moved otherwise by other more potent objects, or from want of experience of them. 5

And, because the constitution of a man's body is in continual [change], it is impossible that all the same things should always cause in him the same appetites and aversion: much less can all men consent in the desire of almost any one and the same object. 6

[This paragraph very important: Hobbes claims there is no such thing as objective good or evil. No thing, in itself can be good or ill – people define good and evil according to their personal likes and dislikes. At best; people can agree to appoint an "expert" and then agree to abide by what the expert calls "good" and "evil" – but this is just a human decision.]

But whatever is the object of any man's appetite or desire, that is it which he for his part [calls] 'good'; and the object of his hate and aversion, 'evil'; and of his contempt 'vile' and 'inconsiderable.' For these words of **good**, **evil**, and **contemptible**, are ever used with relation to the person that [uses] them, there being nothing simply and absolutely so; nor any common rule of good and evil, to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves; but from the person of the man, where there is no commonwealth, or, in a commonwealth, from the person that [represents] it; or from an arbitrator or judge, whom men disagreeing shall by consent set up, and make his sentence the rule thereof. 7

The Latin tongue has two words whose significations approach to those of good and evil:… pulchrum and turpe... But in our tongue …pulchrum *[translates to]* 'fair,' 'beautiful,' 'handsome,' 'gallant,' 'honorable,' 'comely,' or 'amiable'; and for turpe, 'foul,' 'deformed,' 'ugly,' 'base,' 'nauseous,' and the like… So that of good there be three kinds: ***good in the promise***, that is pulchrum; ***good in effect***, as the end desired, which is called jucundum, 'delightful'; and ***good as the means*** which is called *[useful],* 'profitable'; and as

many of evil: for ‘evil’ in promise; evil in effect, and end is molestum, ‘unpleasant,’ ‘troublesome’; and evil in the means: ‘unprofitable,’ ‘hurtful.’ 8 ***[emphasis added]***

… ‘Pleasure,’ therefore, or ‘delight,’ is the appearance or sense of good; and ‘molestation,’ or ‘displeasure,’ the appearance or sense of evil. And consequently all appetite, desire, and love, is accompanied with some delight more or less; and all hatred and aversion with more or less displeasure and offence. 11

[The rest of the sections are offered below to fill out Hobbes’ picture of human nature.. The sections 12-34 below are particularly interesting and not very long. You may skip to the next section, Chapter 13 if you wish]

Of pleasures or delights some arise from the sense of an object present; and those may be called ‘pleasures of sense,’ the word ‘sensual,’ as it is used by those only that condemn them, having no place till there be laws. … Others arise from the expectation that proceeds from foresight of the end or consequence of things, whether those things in the sense please or displease. And these are ‘pleasures of the mind’ of him that *draws* those consequences, and are generally called ‘joy.’ In the like manner, displeasures are some in the sense, and called ‘pain’; others in the expectation of consequences, and are called ‘grief.’ 12

These simple passions called ‘appetite,’ ‘desire,’ ‘love,’ ‘aversion,’ ‘hate,’ ‘joy,’ and ‘grief,’ have their names for divers considerations diversified. As first, when they one succeed another, they are diversely called from the opinion men have of the likelihood of attaining what they desire. Secondly, from the object loved or hated. Thirdly, from the consideration of many of them together. Fourthly, from the alteration or succession itself. 13

For ‘appetite’ with an opinion of attaining is called ‘hope.’ 14
The same without such opinion, ‘despair.’ 15
‘Aversion’ with opinion of ‘hurt’ from the object ‘fear.’ 16
The same with hope of avoiding that hurt by resistance, ‘courage,’ 17
Sudden ‘courage,’ ‘anger.’ 18
Constant ‘hope,’ ‘confidence’ of ourselves. 19
Constant ‘despair,’ ‘diffidence’ of ourselves. 20
‘Anger’ for great hurt done to another, when we conceive the same to be done by injury, ‘indignation.’ 21
‘Desire’ of good to another, ‘benevolence,’ ‘good will,’ ‘charity.’ If to man generally, ‘good-nature.’ 22
… ‘Desire’ of office, or precedence, ‘ambition,’ a name used also in the worse sense, for the reason before mentioned. 24

…

‘Love’ of persons for society, ‘kindness.’ 29
‘Love’ of persons for pleasing the sense only, ‘natural lust.’ 30

‘Love’ of the same, acquired from rumination, that is imagination of pleasure past, ‘luxury.’ 31
‘Love’ of one singularly, with desire to be singularly beloved, ‘the passion of love.’ The same, with fear that the love is not mutual, ‘jealousy.’ 32
‘Desire,’ by doing hurt to another, to make him condemn some fact of his own, ‘revengefulness.’ 33

‘Desire’ to know why and how, ‘curiosity,’ such as is in no living creature but ‘man,’ so that man is distinguished not only by his reason but also by this singular passion from other ‘animals,’ in whom the appetite of food, and other pleasures of sense, by predominance take away the care of knowing causes, which is a lust of the mind, that by a perseverance of delight in the continual and indefatigable generation of knowledge exceeds the short vehemence of any carnal pleasure. 34

‘Fear’ of power invisible, feigned by the mind or imagined from tales publicly allowed, ‘religion,’ not allowed, ‘superstition.’ And when the power imagined is truly such as we imagine, ‘true religion.’ 35

‘Fear,’ without the apprehension of why or what, ‘panic terror,’ called so from the fables that make Pan the author of them, whereas in truth there is always in him that so fears, first some apprehension of the cause, though the rest run away by example, every one supposing his fellow to know why. And therefore this passion happens to none but in a throng or multitude of people. 36

‘Joy’ from apprehension of novelty ‘admiration,’ proper to man, because it excites the appetite of knowing the cause. 37

‘Joy,’ arising from imagination of man’s own power and ability is that exultation of the mind which is called ‘glorying,’ which, if grounded upon the experience of his own former actions, is the same as ‘confidence,’ but if grounded on the flattery of others or only supposed by himself for delight in the consequences of it, is called ‘vain-glory,’ which name is properly given, because a well-grounded ‘confidence’ *begets* attempt, whereas the supposing of power does not, and is therefore rightly called ‘vain.’ 38

‘Grief’ from opinion of want of power is called ‘dejection of mind.’ 39

The ‘vain-glory’ *consists* in the feigning or supposing of abilities in ourselves which we know are not is most incident to young men, and nourished by the histories or fictions of gallant persons, and is corrected oftentimes by age and employment. 40

‘Sudden glory’ is the passion which *makes* those ‘grimaces’ called ‘laughter’; and is caused either by some sudden act of their own that *pleases* them, or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves. And it is incident most to them that are conscious of the fewest abilities in themselves; who are forced to keep themselves in their own favor by observing the imperfections of other men. And therefore much laughter at the defects of others is a sign of pusillanimity. For a great

minds one of the proper works is to help and free others from scorn and compare themselves only with the most able. 41

On the contrary, 'sudden dejection' is the passion that *causes* 'weeping,' and is caused by such accidents as suddenly take away some vehement hope or some prop of their power; and they are most subject to it that rely principally on helps external, such as are women and children. Therefore some weep for the loss of friends, others for their unkindness, others for the sudden stop made to their thoughts of revenge by reconciliation. But in all cases, both laughter and weeping, are sudden motions, custom taking them both away. For no man laughs at old jests, or weeps for an old calamity. 42

'Grief' for the discovery of some defect of ability is 'shame,' or the passion that *discovers* itself in 'blushing,' and *consists* in the apprehension of something dishonorable; and in young men is a sign of the love of good reputation, and commendable: in old men it is a sign of the same; but, because it comes too late, not commendable. 43

The 'contempt' of good reputation is called 'impudence.' 44

'Grief' for the calamity of another is 'pity,' and *arises* from the imagination that the like calamity may befall himself; and therefore is called also 'compassion,' and in the phrase of this present time a 'fellow-feeling'; and therefore for calamity arriving from great wickedness the best men have the least pity; and for the same calamity those have least pity that think themselves least obnoxious to the same. 45

'Contempt,' or little sense of the calamity of others, is that which men call 'cruelty,' proceeding from security of their own fortune. For, that any man should take pleasure in other men's great harms without other end of his own, I do not conceive it possible. 46

'Grief' for the success of a competitor in wealth, honor, or other good, if it be joined with endeavor to enforce our own abilities to equal or exceed him, is called 'emulation'; but joined with endeavor to supplant or hinder a competitor, 'envy.' 47

When in the mind of man, appetites and aversions, hopes and fears, concerning one and the same thing, arise alternately, and divers good and evil consequences of the doing or omitting the thing propounded, come successively into our thoughts, so that sometimes we have an appetite to it, sometimes an aversion from it, sometimes hope to be able to do it, sometimes despair or fear to attempt it, the whole sum of desires, aversions, hopes, and fears, continued till the thing be either done or thought impossible, is that we call 'deliberation.' 48 *(Deciding between "good" and "bad" options; deciding between "bad" and "worse" options, etc…)*

…

In 'deliberation,' immediately adhering to the action, or to the omission thereof, is that we call the 'will'... 52

By this it is manifest that not only actions that have their beginning from covetousness, ambition, lust, or other appetites to the thing propounded, but also those that have their beginning from aversion, or fear of those consequences that follow the omission, are 'voluntary actions.' 53

…

The form of speech whereby men signify their opinion of the goodness of anything is 'praise'. That whereby they signify the power and greatness of anything is 'magnifying.' And that whereby they signify the opinion they have of a man's felicity is by the Greeks called [Greek] for which we have no name in our tongue. And thus much is sufficient for the present purpose, to have been said of the 'passions.' 58

Chapter XIII Of the Natural Condition of Mankind as Concerning Their Felicity and Misery

NATURE hath made men so equal in the faculties of the body and mind, as that, though there be found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body or of quicker mind than another, yet when all is reckoned together the difference between man and man is not so considerable as that one man can thereupon claim to himself any benefit to which another may not pretend as well as he. For, as to the strength of body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination or by confederacy with others that are in the same danger with himself. 1

And, as to the faculties of the mind, setting aside the arts grounded upon words and especially that skill of proceeding upon general and infallible rules called science, which very few have and but in few things, as being not a native faculty born with us, nor attained, as prudence, while we look after somewhat else, I find yet a greater equality amongst men than that of strength. For prudence is but experience, which equal time equally bestows on all men in those things they equally apply themselves unto. That which may perhaps make such equality incredible is but a vain conceit of one's own wisdom, which almost all men think they have in a greater degree than the vulgar, that is, than all men but themselves, and a few others whom by fame or for concurring with themselves they approve. For such is the nature of men that, howsoever they may acknowledge many others to be more witty or more eloquent or more learned, yet they will hardly believe there be many so wise as themselves, for they see their own wit at hand and other men's at a distance. But this *proves* rather that men are in that point equal than unequal. For there is not ordinarily a greater sign of the equal distribution of anything than that every man is contented with his share. 2

From this equality of ability *arises* equality of hope in the attaining of our ends. And therefore, if any two men desire the same thing which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and, in the way to their end, which is principally their own conservation and sometimes their delectation only, endeavor to destroy or subdue one another. And from hence it comes to pass that, where an invader hath no more to fear than another man's single power, if one plant, sow, build, or possess, a convenient seat others may probably be expected to come prepared with forces united to dispossess and deprive

him not only of the fruit of his labor but also of his life or liberty. And the invader again is in the like danger of another. 3

And from this diffidence of one another there is no way for any man to secure himself so reasonable as anticipation, that is, by force or wiles to master the persons of all men he can so long till he see no other power great enough to endanger him; and this is no more than his own conservation requires and is generally allowed. Also, because there be some that, taking pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, which they pursue farther than their security requires, if others, that otherwise would be glad to be at ease within the modest bounds, should not be invasion increase their power, they would not be able long time, by standing only on their defense, to subsist. And by consequence, such augmentation of dominion over men being necessary to a man's conservation, it ought to be allowed him. 4

Again, men have no pleasure, but on the contrary a great deal of grief, in keeping company where there is no power able to overawe them all. For every man *looks* that his companion should value him at the same rate he sets upon himself, and, upon all signs of contempt or undervaluing, naturally endeavors as far as he dares (which amongst them that have no common power to keep them in quiet, is far enough to make them destroy each other) to extort a greater value from his contemners by damage, and from others by the example. 5

So that in the nature of man we find three principal causes of quarrel. First, competition; secondly, diffidence; thirdly, glory. 6

The first *makes* man invade for gain; the second, for safety; and the third, for reputation. The first use violence, to make themselves masters of other men's persons, wives, children, and cattle; the second, to defend them; the third, for trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other sign of undervalue, either direct in their persons or by reflection in their kindred, their friends, their nation, their profession, or their name. 7

Hereby it is manifest that, during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war, and such a war as is of every man against every man. For 'war' *consists* not in battle only or the act of fighting, but in a tract of time wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known, and therefore the notion of 'time' is to be considered in the nature of war, as it is in the nature of weather. For as the nature of foul weather lies not in a shower or two of rain but in an inclination thereto of many days together, so the nature of war *consists* not in actual fighting but in the known disposition thereto during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is 'peace.' 8

Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time or war where every man is enemy to every man, the same is consequent to the time wherein men live without other security than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them withal. In such condition there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain, and consequently no culture of the earth, no navigation nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea, no commodious building, no instruments of moving and removing such things as require

much force, no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time, no arts, no letters, no society, and, which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. 9

It may seem strange to some man that has not well weighed these things that Nature should thus dissociate and render men apt to invade and destroy one another; and he may therefore, not trusting to this inference made from the passions, desire perhaps to have the same confirmed by experience. Let him therefore consider with himself, when taking a journey, he arms himself and seeks to go well accompanied; when going to sleep, he locks his doors; when even in his house, he locks his chests; and this when he knows there be laws and public officers armed to revenge all injuries shall be done him; what opinion he has of his fellow-subjects when he rides armed; of his fellow-citizens, when he locks his doors; and of his children and servants, when he locks his chests. Does he not there as much accuse mankind by his actions as I do by my words? But neither of us accuse man's nature in it. The desires and other passions of man are in themselves no sin. No more are the actions that proceed from those passions, till they know a law that forbids them; which, till laws be made, they cannot know, nor can any law be made till they have agreed upon the person that shall make it. 10

It may peradventure be thought there was never such a time nor condition of war as this; and I believe it was never generally so over all the world, but there are many places where they live so now. For the savage people in many places of America, except the government of small families the concord whereof *depends* on natural lust, have no government at all, and live at this day in that brutish manner as I said before. Howsoever, it may be perceived what manner of life there would be where there were no common power to fear, by the manner of life which men that have formerly lived under a peaceful government use to degenerate into, in a civil war. 11

But, though there had never been any time wherein particular men were in a condition of war one against another, yet in all times kings and persons of sovereign authority, because of their independency, are in continual jealousies and in the state and posture of gladiators, having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another, that is, their forts, garrisons, and guns, upon the frontiers of their kingdoms, and continual spies upon their neighbors: which is a posture of war. But because they uphold thereby the industry of their subjects, there does not follow from it that misery which accompanies the liberty of particular men. 12

To this war of every man against every man this also is consequent, that nothing can be unjust. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, have there no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law; where no law, no injustice. Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues. Justice and injustice are none of the faculties neither of the body nor mind. If they were, they might be in a man that were alone in the world, as well as his senses and passions. They are qualities that relate to men in society, not in solitude. It is consequent also to the same condition that there be no propriety, no dominion, no 'mine' and 'thine' distinct, but only that to be every man's that he can get, and for so long as he can keep it. And thus much for the ill condition which man by mere nature is actually

placed in, though with a possibility to come out of it, consisting partly in the passions, partly in his reason. 13

The passions that incline men to peace are fear of death, desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living, and a hope by their industry to obtain them. And reason suggests convenient articles of peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement. These articles are they which otherwise are called the Laws of Nature, whereof I shall speak more particularly in the two following chapters. 14

Chapter XIV Of the First and Second Natural Laws, and of Contracts

'THE RIGHT of Nature,' which writers commonly call jus natural, is the liberty each man hath to use his own power as he will himself for the preservation of his own nature, that is to say, of his own life; and consequently of doing anything which in his own judgment and reason he shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto. 1

By 'liberty' is understood, according to the proper signification of the word, the absence of external impediments; which impediments may oft take away part of a man's power to do what he would, but cannot hinder him from using the power left him according as his judgment and reason shall dictate to him. 2

A 'law of Nature,' lex naturalis, is a precept or general rule found out by reason by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life or takes away the means of preserving the same, and to omit that by which he thinks it may be best preserved. For, though they that speak of this subject use to confound jus and lex, 'right' and 'law,' yet they ought to be distinguished; because 'right' consists in liberty to do or to forbear, whereas 'law' determines and binds to one of them; so that law and right differ as much as obligation and liberty; which in one and the same matter are inconsistent. 3

And because the condition of man, as hath been declared in the precedent chapter, is a condition of war of every one against every one, in which case every one is governed by his own reason, and there is nothing he can make use of that may not be a help unto him in preserving his life against his enemies, it follows that in such a condition every man has a right to everything, even to one another's body. And therefore, as long as this natural right of every man to everything endures, there can be no security to any man, how strong or wise soever he be, of living out the time which Nature ordinarily allows men to live. And consequently it is a precept or general rule of reason 'that every man ought to endeavor peace as far as he has hope of obtaining it, and, when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek and use all helps and advantages of war.' The first branch of which rule contains the first and fundamental law of Nature, which is, 'to seek peace, and follow it.' The second, the sum of the right of Nature, which is, 'by all means we can, to defend ourselves.' 4

From this fundamental law of Nature, by which men are commanded to endeavor peace, is derived this second law, 'that a man be willing, when others are so too, as far-forth as for peace and defense of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things, and be contented with so much liberty against other men as he would allow other men

against himself.' For as long as every man holds this right of doing anything he likes, so long are all men in the condition of war. But if other men will not lay down their right as well as he, then there is no reason for any one to divest himself of his; for that were to expose himself to prey, which no man is bound to, rather than to dispose himself to peace. This is that law of the Gospel: 'whatsoever you require that others should do to you, that do ye to them.' And that law of all men, quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris. 5

To 'lay down' a man's 'right' to anything is to 'divest' himself of the 'liberty', of hindering another of the benefit of his own right to the same. For he that renounces or passes away his right gives not to any other man a right which he had not before, because there is nothing to which every man had not right by Nature; but only stands out of his way that he may enjoy his own original right without hindrance from him, not without hindrance from another. So that the effect which redounds to one man, by another man's defect of right, is but so much diminution of impediments to the use of his own right original. 6

Right is laid aside either by simply renouncing it, or by transferring it to another. By 'simply renouncing' when he cares not to whom the benefit thereof redounds. By 'transferring,' when he intends the benefit thereof to some certain person or persons. And, when a man hath in either manner abandoned or granted away his right, then is he said to be 'obliged' or 'bound' not to hinder those to whom such right is granted or abandoned from the benefit of it; and that he 'ought,' and it is his 'duty,' not to make void that voluntary act of his own; and that such hindrance is 'injustice' and 'injury' as being sine jure, the right being before renounced or transferred. So that 'injury' or 'injustice,' in the controversies of the world, is somewhat like to that which in the disputations of scholars is called 'absurdity.' For, as it is there called an absurdity to contradict what one maintained in the beginning, so in the world it is called injustice and injury voluntarily to undo that from the beginning he had voluntarily done. The way by which a man either simply renounces or transfers his right is a declaration or signification, by some voluntary and sufficient sign or signs, that he doth so renounce or transfer, or hath so renounced or transferred, the same, to him that accepts it. And these signs are either words only or actions only, or, as it happens most often, both words and actions. And the same are the 'bonds' by which men are bound and obliged: bonds that have their strength not from their own nature, for nothing is more easily broken than a man's word, but from fear of some evil consequence upon the rupture. 7

Whensoever a man transfers his right or renounces it, it is either in consideration of some right reciprocally transferred to himself, or for some other good he hopes for thereby. For it is a voluntary act; and of the voluntary acts of every man the object is some good 'to himself.' And therefore there be some rights which no man can be understood by any words or other signs to have abandoned or transferred. As first a man cannot lay down the right of resisting them that assault him by force to take away his life, because he cannot be understood to aim thereby at any good to himself. The same may be said of wounds, and chains, and imprisonment, both because there is no benefit consequent to such patience, as there is to the patience of suffering another to be wounded or imprisoned, as also because a man cannot tell when he sees men proceed against him by violence whether they intend his death or not. And lastly the motive and end for which this renouncing and transferring of

right is introduced is nothing else but the security of a man's person in his life and in the means of so preserving life as not to be weary of it. And therefore, if a man by words or other signs seem to despoil himself of the end for which those signs were intended, he is not to be understood as if he meant it or that it was his will, but that he was ignorant of how such words and actions were to be interpreted. 8

The mutual transferring of right is that which men call 'contract.' 9

Chapter XV Of Other Laws of Nature

FROM that law of Nature by which we are obliged to transfer to another such rights as, being retained, hinder the peace of mankind, there follows a third, which is this, 'that men perform their covenants made'; without which covenants are in vain, and but empty words: and the right of all men to all things remaining, we are still in the condition of war. 1

And in this law of Nature consists the fountain and original of 'justice.' For, where no covenant hath preceded, there hath no right been transferred, and every man has right to everything; and consequently, no action can be unjust. But when a covenant is made, then to break it is 'unjust'; and the definition of 'injustice' is no other than 'the not performance of covenant.' And whatsoever is not unjust is 'just.' 2

But because covenants of mutual trust, where there is a fear of not performance on either part, as hath been said in the former chapter, are invalid, though the original of justice be the making of covenants, yet injustice actually there can be none, till the cause of such fear be taken away, which, while men are in the natural condition of war, cannot be done. Therefore, before the names of just and unjust can have place, there must be some coercive power to compel men equally to the performance of their covenants, by the terror of some punishment greater than the benefit they expect by the breach of their covenant; and to make good that propriety which by mutual contract men acquire in recompense of the universal right they abandon; and such power there is none before the erection of a commonwealth. And this is also to be gathered out of the ordinary definition of justice in the schools; for they say that 'justice is the constant will of giving to every man his own.' And therefore where there is no 'own' there is no propriety, there is no injustice; and where there is no coercive power erected, that is, where there is no commonwealth, there is no propriety, all men having right to all things: therefore, where there is no commonwealth, there nothing is unjust. So that the nature of justice consists in keeping of valid covenants; but the validity of covenants begins not but with the constitution of a civil power sufficient to compel men to keep them; and then it is also that propriety begins. 3

…

These are the laws of Nature, dictating peace, for a means of the conservation of men in multitudes, and which only concern the doctrine of civil society. There be other things tending to the destruction of particular men, as drunkenness and all other parts of intemperance; which may therefore also be reckoned amongst those things which the law of Nature hath forbidden, but are not necessary to be mentioned, nor are pertinent enough to this place. 34

And though this may seem too subtle a deduction of the laws of Nature to be taken notice of by all men, whereof the most part are too busy in getting food and the rest too negligent to understand, yet, to leave all men inexcusable, they have been contracted into one easy sum, intelligible even to the meanest capacity; and that is, ‘Do not that to another which thou wouldst not have done to thyself’; which shows him that he has no more to do in learning the laws of Nature but when weighing the actions of other men with his own, they seem too heavy, to put them into the other part of the balance and his own into their place, that his own passions and self-love may add nothing to the weight; and then there is none of these laws of Nature that will not appear unto him very reasonable.