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Thomas Hobbes: Individualism, Freedom, Sovereignty





**dia-noesis**

**A Journal of Philosophy**

τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι  
(Parmenides, Fr. B. 3 DK)

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# *Articles*







## A Note on Hobbes's Thucydides

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**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to examine Hobbes's translation of Thucydides in the post-renaissance philological context and show that it surpasses other existing texts in its syntactical and morphological adherence to the original Greek text. Through this examination, Thomas Hobbes's understudied Greek scholarship will shine in crystal clear clarity. Furthermore, it is proposed that the similarities between the two authors stem primarily from their shared viewpoint on political matters and human psychology, rather than from Thucydides having a decisive impact on Hobbes.

**Keywords:** Thucydides, Hobbes, state of nature, political matters, human psychology, history, political philosophy, human nature, civil war

The similarities between Thucydides' and Hobbes's thought are undeniable. In the 1980s, scholars became increasingly interested in intertextual similarities, but soon research expanded on issues of conceptual and philosophical convergence, especially those that define their descriptions of

life in the state of nature and the primary causes of conflict between individuals and struggle between rival groups and nations, their anthropology, the philosophy of morality, and other central theoretical arguments. George Klosko pointed out that the gloomy passage in *Leviathan* regarding the pre-political condition can be traced back to the text of Thucydides, whereas Clifford W. Brown argued that Hobbes's translation of Thucydides constitutes "an integral part of his offerings to the public on the nature of man and society".<sup>1</sup> The idea that Hobbes somehow reproduced or expanded upon the philosophy of the *History of the Peloponnesian War* in his political thought (or that it significantly shaped Hobbes's own understanding and perception of human nature) is appealing, and to some degree, compelling, even though clinging too much to "influences" and similarities derive from our privileged advantage of knowing the unfolding entirety of Hobbes's ideas – a privilege he obviously did not enjoy.

Still, what has been overlooked over time, is the significance of the philosopher's classical scholarship in its own right. His classical scholarship has been understandably overshadowed by his political philosophy. Despite the surge of interest in Hobbes in the past 75 years, his extensive translations of classical prose or verse have remained overlooked and understudied for three reasons – two major and one minor: first, because they had presumably little to add to a proper

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<sup>1</sup> George Klosko and Daryl Rice, "Thucydides' and Hobbes's State of Nature", *History of Political Thought*, 6, 1985, pp. 405-9; Clifford W. Brown, "Thucydides, Hobbes, and the Derivation of Anarchy", *History of Political Thought*, 8, 1987, pp. 33-62. For the discussion, see Gabriella Slomp, "Hobbes, Thucydides and the three greatest things", *History of Political Thought*, 11, 1990, pp. 565-86. One of the earliest studies Hobbes' Thucydides is that of Richard Schlatter, "Hobbes and Thucydides", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 6.3, 1945, pp. 350-362. See also, Clifford Orwin, "Stasis and Plague: Thucydides on the Dissolution of Society", *Journal of Politics*, 50, 1988, pp. 831-47; Robin Sowerby, "Thomas Hobbes's Translation of Thucydides", *Translation and Literature*, 7.2, 1998, pp. 147-69. Laurie M. Johnson, *Thucydides, Hobbes, and the Interpretation of Realism*, Northern Illinois University Press, 1993. More recent studies: Ioannis D. Evrigenis, "Hobbes's Thucydides", *Journal of Military Ethics*, 5, 2006, pp. 303-316; Chris Campbell, "The Rhetoric of Hobbes' Translation of Thucydides", *The Review of Politics*, 84.1, 2022, pp. 1-24.

understanding of his political treatises (it was something like a parergon), and secondly, because great literati and purist philologists, like John Dryden, Alexander Pope, and even Coleridge, dismissed his translations as poor if not vulgar.

It is undeniable that Hobbes's translation (and, of course, interpretation) of Thucydides lent support to his major premises and contentions in his political philosophy, both in *Leviathan* and other works: for instance, that by the law of nature the strong should rule the weak, that justice is meaningless in international relations or wherever there is no sovereign power. Furthermore, Thucydides' *History* could have provided an antidote to the moralizing overtones and "misconceptions" of classical political theory and historiography, such as those of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and Seneca. Hobbes, as is well known, was very critical of the intellectual authorities of classical antiquity, especially when it comes to their concept of civil liberty. Thucydides was an exception among ancient authors.

Hobbes, who was born in 1588, studied at Magdalen Hall at Oxford from 1603 to 1608 and became a well-versed classical scholar, immersed in Greek and Latin literature. Apart from Thucydides he produced the first English translation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, which was anonymously published in 1637. Additionally, when he was already well into his eighties, he translated the entire *Odyssey* and *Iliad* into English verse (published in 1676-1677).<sup>2</sup> Hobbes's translation of Homer is clear, vigorous, and fast paced, with iambic pentameter lines and a fixed rhyme scheme. But it is also quite careless about including whole sentences. Interestingly, Hobbes confessed that he translated Homer because at his mature age he "had nothing else to do". "Why publish it? Because I thought it might take off my Adversaries from shewing their folly upon my more serious Writings, and set them upon my Verses to

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<sup>2</sup> Hobbes, *Homer's Iliads in English by Tho. Hobbes of Malmesbury. To which may be added Homer's Odysseys Englished by the same Author*, London, 1676.

shew their wisdom”.<sup>3</sup> Hobbes’s playful “confession” was taken seriously, thereby providing an additional third reason for not taking his classical scholarship seriously. However, the truth is that Hobbes spent several years translating and composing the ancient texts and various records indicate that he regarded his work as anything but a frivolous entertainment. Published in 1629, his translation of Thucydides must have taken four years of hard work.<sup>4</sup>

The purpose of this brief paper is to examine Hobbes’s translation in the post-renaissance philological context and demonstrate that it far exceeded existing texts in syntactical and morphological faithfulness to the original Greek text. In this way, Thomas Hobbes’s Greek scholarship will shine in crystal clear clarity. At the same time, it aims to suggest that similarities between the two authors largely resulted from a comparable or even identical viewpoint on political matters and premises on human psychology, rather than from Thucydides having a decisively formative impact on Hobbes. Setting aside obvious similarities, it is much more consistent with Thucydidean philosophy to attribute common elements as those incorporated in Hobbes’s corpus to similar conditions of extreme vulnerability and political instability. This is consistent with Hobbes’s fundamental philosophical viewpoint, namely, that there is a transhistorical consistency in the manifestations of human behaviour. Under historical contingencies and social circumstances that bear strong affinities, people tend to think rationally or instinctively react in similar ways; this is a general and universal behavioral pattern. Hobbes integrated essential “Thucydidean concepts” into his political and ethical discourse as he lived in a similar atmosphere of political turmoil and civil conflict as Thucydides.

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Eric Nelson, ed. Thomas Hobbes: *Translations of Homer, The Iliad and the Odyssey*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. xv. Noticeably Nelson provided the first critical edition of Hobbes’ *Homer*.

<sup>4</sup> The title page is dated 1629, but Hobbes was able to send a copy to a friend on January 1st, 1628.

It is worth noting that there is a common and almost overpowering connection between Thucydides and Hobbes with political realism. One wonders, however, whether “political realism” could be traced back to Homer’s *Iliad* and especially the *Odyssey*, as well as in many other classical works, such as Herodotus or ancient Greek tragedy. There are definitely conceptual elements and various assumptions that would define the framework of an “early classical realism”, such as the timelessness of self-interest, the strike for self-preservation and aggressiveness, and the view of human nature as not inherently benevolent, which can be prominently traced back to the Homeric epics. Only recently scholars have finally been engaged in the overdue project of attempting to locate connections between Hobbes’s political theory and these translations of Homer’s great epics, a testament to Hobbes’s intellectual potency, even in the twilight of his long life.<sup>5</sup>

## I

### *Lost in translation: Composition and Sources*

Why did Thomas Hobbes, in his early career as a man of letters, undertake the arduous task of rendering a new translation of the *History of the Peloponnesian War*? The history of the translations may shed some light on the reasons of his undertaking.

Thucydides’ Latin translation was made available by the humanist and priest Lorenzo Valla about 1452, in the spirit of the Renaissance humanistic tradition of drawing upon Greek and Roman texts for guidance in contemporary politics. Thus Valla pointed out in his Preface that true histories are useful to the moderns as a means to emulate and stimulate the true spirit of virtue, citizenship and heroism. Valla must have used a Greek text that preserved various readings subsequently

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<sup>5</sup> See e.g., Andrea Catanzaro, *Politics through the Iliad and the Odyssey: Hobbes writes Homer*, Taylor & Francis: New York, 2019.

lost.<sup>6</sup> Valla's translation is thought to have been made from a now-lost manuscript, and his Latin wording is occasionally cited as an independent source of evidence for textual uncertainties. The *editio princeps* of Thucydides was printed by Aldus in 1502. In 1527 Bishop Seyssel of Marseilles (Claude de Seyssel), afterwards bishop of Marseilles and Archbishop of Turin, translated Thucydides in French (he was the first to put the *History* into a modern language), using Valla's inaccurate Latin version, which inevitably resulted in a much distorted and inaccurate French version (*L'Histoire de Thucydide Athenien, de la guerre, qui fut entre les Peloponnesiens et Athéniens* (Paris, 1527)). In his prologue, he stated that this is one of the translations he has done for the use of King Louis XII, who could obtain useful lessons suitable to a modern monarch. The famous printer Jodocus Badius was contracted to produce 1225 copies on paper and a few on vellum. Despite inaccuracies and infelicities in style, in the fifty years following this edition, Seyssel's (mis)translation was retranslated into several modern languages: Francesco di Soldo Strozzi published the *History* in Venice in 1545, which he dedicated to Cosimo de Medici; a Spanish translation was printed at Salamanca in 1564 by "el Secretario Diego Gracian";<sup>7</sup> a second French translation was published in 1600 by Louis Jaussaud,<sup>8</sup> who used the first Estienne edition of the revised Greek and Latin text (1564).<sup>9</sup>

At the time Hobbes embarked on translating Thucydides from the original Greek text, using the 1594 bilingual edition by Aemilius Portus (which contained the Latin alongside with

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<sup>6</sup> For Valla's text, see Marianne Pade, "Translating Thucydides: the metadiscourse of Italian humanist translators", *Renaissanceforum*, 11, 2016, pp. 2-6.

<sup>7</sup> *Historia de Thucydides: que trata de las guerras entre los Peloponesos y Athenienses; la qual allēde las grandes y notables hazañas por mar y por tierra, delos vnos y delos otros, y de sus aliados y cōfederados, esta llena de oraciones y razonamiētos prudentes y auisados a proposito de paz y de guerra ;traduzida de lengua griega en castellana ... por el secretario Diego Gracian* (En Salamanca, 1564).

<sup>8</sup> *Histoire de la guerre des Péloponnésiens et Athéniens* (Genève: Jacques Chouet, 1600).

<sup>9</sup> *Thucydidis, de bello Peloponnesiaco libri octo* (Geneva, 1564).

the Greek text) he was of course aware that an English version already existed. It was Thomas Nicolls' (a Cambridge scholar and then barrister), *The history writtome by Thucydides the Athenyan of the warre, whiche was betwene the Peloponesians and the Athenyans, translated oute of Frenche in to the Englysh language* (1550). Nicolls actually retranslated Seyssel's French text of the *History*, which in turn had been taken from the Latin translation of Valla. It was a long and winding road that inevitably resulted in an inadequate and distorted version of the Greek original. However, it cannot be dismissed on any grounds: it was a meticulous project, and it was a success. In the spirit of the age, it rendered the text in his mother tongue (often coining new words in lieu of English equivalents), disseminating knowledge about the ancients for modern emulation. It was a vehicle of classical thought that succeeded in conveying the spirit of Thucydides with an urgency and immediacy of its own. Whatever the inaccuracies in the English version of Nicolls, they were largely due to the literally corrupt translation of Seyssel that goes back to Valla's own inaccuracies. Nicolls, interestingly, belonged to the school of translators who emphasized the virtues of 'literal accuracy' (the school of the classical scholar and statesman Sir John Cheke, 1514-1557). That means, he tried to translate the text 'plainly and truly', in order to educate the young King.

Hobbes thus, in setting up on the project of translating Thucydides, stated in his Preface addressed "To the Readers" that a new English version was needed, one that should have been directly extracted from the revised Greek text of his own day, to replace the imperfect Greek text (of unknown origins) of Valla, plus the *History* needed maps and Hobbes's first edition supplied them.<sup>10</sup> But there was another significant

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<sup>10</sup> "... They followed the Latine of Laurentius Valla, which was not without some errours, and he a Greeke Copie, not so correct as now is extant. Out of French hee [Nicolls] was done into English, (for I neede not dissemble to haue seene him in English) in the time of Kind Edward the sixth; but so, as by multiplications of errour, *hee became at length traduced, rather than translated into our Language*. Hereupon I resolved to take him immediately from the Greeke, according to the Edition of Aemilius Porta; not refusing, or neglecting any version, Comment, or other helpe I could come by. Knowing that when with Diligence and Leasure I should haue



reason that dictated a new version: Nicolls' English, by the 1620s was profoundly outdated. Within less than a century the English language developed rapidly, so a large part of Hobbes' task was to make an accurate modernized translation to replace that of Nicolls, naturalizing the text, giving it a sense of life and vivacity.

Thus, all things considered, Hobbes's main objective was to translate the *History* in modernized English directly from the Greek with accuracy and exactness to replace the extant text of Nicolls. Suffice to say that the English language itself had developed rapidly between 1550 and 1625 that Nicolls' translation looked entirely obsolete.

Consider a few sentences from Thucydides' description of the Plague, which demonstrate Hobbes's superior understanding and correction of the Greek text.<sup>11</sup>

### The Plague<sup>12</sup>

#### 1.

Thomas Nicolls, *The hystory writtone by Thucidides the Athenyan of the warre, whiche was betwene the Peloponesians and the Athenyans, translated oute of Frenche into the Englysh language by Thomas Nicolls citezeine and goldesmyth of London* (London, 1550).

“And to them, that were infected with other sickenes, yt tourlned into this selfe same. And those, that were in full helth, founde thē soubdainly taken, without that, there was any cause preceding, that might be knowin. And furste they felte a great heate in the hedde, whereby their eyes became redde and

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done it, though some error might remaine, yet they would be errors but of one descent; of which neuerthesse I can discouer none, and hope they bee not many. After I had finished it, it lay long by mee, and other reasons taking place, my desire to communicate it ceased” (my emphasis).

<sup>11</sup> Some of those passages are to be found in Schlatter (1945), but passages in this article are drawn from the original sources.

<sup>12</sup> All passages are transcribed from the original sources via archive.org – and original linguistic elements are retained intact except letter ‘v’ was replaced with ‘u’, eg. ‘upon’ instead of ‘vpon’.

inflamed. And withinfourthe, their tongue and their throte, became all redde, & their breath became stinkyng and harshe. Whereupon, there ensued a continual neysinge, and therof their voice became hoerse. Anone after that, yt descended into the stomacke, whyche caused a greate coughe, that did righte sharpely payne them, and after that the matter came to the partes of the harte, it prouokedde them to a vomyte By meane whereof, wyth a payne yet more vehemente, they auoyded by the mouthe, stykinge and bitter humors. And wyth that, some dyd fall into a yeskyng, whereupon they came incontynently into a palsey, whyche passed from some fourthwyth, and with othere endured longer. And allthoughe, that, to touche and se them wythoute, and through the bodyes: they were not exceedinge hotte nor pale, but that their skynne was, as redde colour adusted, full of a lytle thynne blaynes: yet they feeled w<sup>t</sup>infourthe so maruailous a heate, that they might not indure, one onely clothe of linnen upon their fleshe, but they mst of necessitye be all bare ... But the woorste that was in this, was that men loste their harte, & hope incontynently, as they feeled themselves attain•lted. In suche sort, that many, for despaire, holding themselues for dead, habanldoned & forsoke thēself, & made no prouisyon nor resistance against the sickenes. And an other great euill was, that the malady was so cōtagious, that those, that went for to visit the sicke, were taken and infected, lyke as the shepe be, one after an other. By occasyon whereof, many dyed for lacke of succours, whereby it haplpened that many howses stode voyde, and they that went to se theym, dyed alalso. And specially the most honest & honorable people, whiche toke it for shame, not to go to se nor succour their parentes and their frendes. And loued better to putt and sett fourth themselfe to manifest danger, than to faile them at their necessitie”.

*Comments:* The text is 379 words long, is quite prolix, obscure, riddled with errors, and inaccurate compared to the Greek original, most likely due to Valla's use of an unknown Greek source as well as his mistranslation of the text into Latin.

## 2.

*Eight bookes of the Peloponnesian Warre written by Thucydides the sonne of Olorus. Interpreted with faith and diligence immediately out of the Greeke by Thomas Hobbes secretary to ye late Earle of Deuonshire* (London: Henry Seile, 1629).<sup>13</sup>

“If any man were sicke before, his disease turned to this; if not, yet suddenly, without any apparent cause preceding, and being in perfect health, they were taken first with an extreame ache in their heads, rednesse and inflammation of the eyes; and then inwardly, their throats and tongues, grew presently bloody, and their breath noysome, and unsavory. Upon this, followed a sneezing and hoarsenesse, and not long after, the paine, together with a mighty cough, came downe into the breast. And when once it was settled in the stomacke, it caused vomit, and with great torment came up all manner of bilious purgation that Physitians ever named. Most of them had also the Hickeyexe, which brought with it a strong convulsion, and in some ceased quickly, but in others was long before it gave over. Their bodies outwardly to the touch, were neither very hote nor pale, but reddish livid, and beflowred with little pimples and whelkes; but so burned inwardly, as not to endure any the lightest cloathes or linnen garment, to be upon them, nor any thing but meere nakednesse ... But the greatest misery of all was, the deiection of mind, in such as found themselves beginning to be sicke (for they grew presently desperate, and gave themselves over without making any resistance) as also their dying thus like sheepe, infected by mutuall visitation; for the greatest mortality proceeded that way. For if men forbore to visite them, for feare; then they dyed forlorne, whereby many Families became empty, for want of such as should take care of them. If they forbore not, then they died themselves, and principally the honestest men. For

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<sup>13</sup> I cite the impression of 1629, available online but without the map of Greece at [arghive.org](http://arghive.org)

out of shame, they would not spare themselves, but went in unto their friends”.

*Comments:* The text is 293 words long, compressed and densely translated as well as very faithful to the original Greek. Hobbes modernized the punctuation and spelling and substituted new words for Nicolls' obsolete ones. Where Nicolls elaborated on the text Hobbes rendered exact statements. His approach is much nearer to the simplicity and force of the original.

Nevertheless, if Hobbes might have considered Nicolls' translation out of date, and inaccurate too, Hobbes's *History* would have been considered out of date, albeit not inaccurate, a century later by the Rev. William Smith in his Preface of his translation of Thucydides:

“Mr. Hobbes, however sorry and mischievous a philosopher, was undoubtedly a very learned man. He hath shewn it beyond dispute in his translation of Thucydides ... [but] he cannot now be read with any competent degree of pleasure. He is faithful, but most servilely so, to the letter of his author. ... Too scrupulous an attachment to the letter of the original hath made the copy quite flat and heavy, the spirit is evaporated, the lofty and majestic air hath intirely disappeared. Too many low and vulgar expressions are used, which Thucydides ever studiously avoided. Such frequently occur in the midst of some grand circumstance, which they throw into a kind of burlesque, and may excite a reader's laughter. The English language hath gone through a great variation, hath been highly polished, since Mr. Hobbes wrote. Hence, tho' his terms be in general very intelligible, yet they have not that neatness, precision, and dignity, to which the polite and refined writers within the last century have habituated our ears”.

But let us have a look at Smith's own translation of the "Plague" passage:

3.

*William Smith, The History of the Peloponnesian War, translated from the Greek of Thucydides, in two volumes (London, 1753), pp. 163-4.*

"But those, who enjoy'd the most perfect health, were suddenly, without any apparent cause, seiz'd at first with head-achs extremely violent, with inflammations and fiery redness in the eyes. Within – the throat and tongue began instantly to be red as blood; the breath was drawn with difficulty and had a noisome smell. The symptoms that succeeded these were sneezing and hoarseness; and not long after, the malady descended to the breast, with a violent cough: But when once settled in the stomach, it excited vomitings, in which was thrown up all that matter physicians call discharges of bile, attended with excessive torture. A great part of the infected were subject to such violent hiccups without any discharge, as brought upon them a strong convulsion, to some but of a short, to others of a very long continuance. The body, to the outward touch was neither exceeding hot, nor of a pallid hue, but of reddish, livid, marked all over with little pustules and sores. Yet inwardly it was scorched with such excessive heat, that it could not bear the lightest covering or the finest linen upon it, but must be left quite naked.

...Yet the most affecting circumstances of this calamity were --- that dejection of mind, which constantly attended the first attack; for the mind sinking at once into despair, they the sooner gave themselves up without a struggle ---- and, that mutual tenderness in taking care of one another, which communicated the infection, and made them drop like sheep. This latter case caused the mortality to be so great. For if fear withheld them from going near one another, they died for want of help, so that many houses became quite desolate for

want of needful attendance: And, if they ventured, they were gone. This was most frequently the case of the kind and compassionate. Such persons were ashamed, out of a selfish concern for themselves, entirely to abandon their friends, when their menial servant, no longer able to endure the groans and lamentations of the dying, had been compelled to fly from such a weight of calamity”.

*Comments:* The text is 350 words long and is far from being an accurate translation of the Greek original. The language is clearly adapted to reflect the latest developments of the English language at the time.

For the reader's convenience, I have transcribed below the original in ancient Greek which is 270 words long:

[2.49.1] Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἔτος, ὥς ὠμολογεῖτο, ἐκ πάντων μάλιστα δὴ ἐκείνο ἄνοσον ἐς τὰς ἄλλας ἀσθενείας ἐτύγγανεν ὄν· εἰ δέ τις καὶ προύκαμνέ τι, ἐς τοῦτο πάντα ἀπεκρίθη. [2.49.2] τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀπ' οὐδεμιᾶς προφάσεως, ἀλλ' ἐξαίφνης ὑγιεῖς ὄντας πρῶτον μὲν τῆς κεφαλῆς θέρμαι ἰσχυραὶ καὶ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἐρυθρήματα καὶ φλόγῳσις ἐλάμβανε, καὶ τὰ ἐντός, ἥ τε φάρυγξ καὶ ἡ γλῶσσα, εὐθὺς αἱματώδη ἦν καὶ πνεῦμα ἄτοπον καὶ δυσῶδες ἠφίει· [2.49.3] ἔπειτα ἐξ αὐτῶν πταρμός καὶ βράγχος ἐπεγίγνετο, καὶ ἐν οὐ πολλῷ χρόνῳ κατέβαινεν ἐς τὰ στήθη ὁ πόνος μετὰ βηχὸς ἰσχυροῦ· καὶ ὁπότε ἐς τὴν καρδίαν στηρίξειεν, ἀνέστρεφέ τε αὐτὴν καὶ ἀποκαθάρσεις χολῆς πᾶσαι ὅσαι ὑπὸ ἰατρῶν ὠνομασμέναι εἰσὶν ἐπῆσαν, καὶ αὐταὶ μετὰ ταλαιπωρίας μεγάλης. [2.49.4] λύγξ τε τοῖς πλέοσιν ἐνέπιπτε κενή, σπασμὸν ἐνδιδοῦσα ἰσχυρόν, τοῖς μὲν μετὰ ταῦτα λωφήσαντα, τοῖς δὲ καὶ πολλῷ ὕστερον. [2.49.5] καὶ τὸ μὲν ἔξωθεν ἀπτομένῳ σῶμα οὐτ' ἄγαν θερμὸν ἦν οὔτε χλωρόν, ἀλλ' ὑπέρυθρον, πελιτνόν, φλυκταίναις μικραῖς καὶ ἔλκεσιν ἐξηνηθηκός· τὰ δὲ ἐντός οὕτως ἐκάετο ὥστε μήτε τῶν πάνυ λεπτῶν ἱματίων καὶ σινδόνων τὰς ἐπιβολὰς μηδ' ἄλλο τι ἢ γυμνοὶ ἀνέχεσθαι...

[2.51.4] δεινότατον δὲ παντὸς ἦν τοῦ κακοῦ ἢ τε ἀθυμία ὁπότε τις αἰσθοίτο κάμνων (πρὸς γὰρ τὸ ἀνέλπιστον εὐθὺς

τραπόμενοι τῇ γνώμῃ πολλῶ μᾶλλον προΐεντο σφᾶς αὐτοὺς καὶ οὐκ ἀντεῖχον), καὶ ὅτι ἕτερος ἀφ' ἑτέρου θεραπείας ἀναπιμπλάμενοι ὥσπερ τὰ πρόβατα ἔθνησκον· καὶ τὸν πλεῖστον φθόρον τοῦτο ἐνεποιεῖ. [2.51.5] εἴτε γὰρ μὴ θέλοιεν δεδιότες ἀλλήλοις προσιέναι, ἀπώλλυντο ἐρῆμοι, καὶ οἰκίαι πολλὰ ἐκενώθησαν ἀπορία τοῦ θεραπεύσοντος· εἴτε προσίοιεν, διεφθείροντο, καὶ μάλιστα οἱ ἀρετῆς τι μεταποιούμενοι· αἰσχύνῃ γὰρ ἡφείδουν σφῶν αὐτῶν ἐσιόντες παρὰ τοὺς φίλους, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰς ὀλοφύρσεις τῶν ἀπογιγνομένων τελευτῶντες καὶ οἱ οἰκεῖοι ἐξέκαμνον ὑπὸ τοῦ πολλοῦ κακοῦ νικώμενοι.

4.

Here is a modern 20<sup>th</sup>-century version, translated by Rex Warner, with an Introduction and Notes by M.I. Finley (Penguin Books, 1954).

“That year, as is generally admitted, was particularly free from all other kinds of illness, though those who did have any illness previously all caught the plague in the end. In other cases, however, there seemed to be no reason for the attacks. People in perfect health suddenly began to have burning feelings in the head; their eyes became red and inflamed; inside their mouths there was bleeding from the throat and tongue, and the breath became unnatural and unpleasant. The next symptoms were sneezing and hoarseness of voice, and before long the pain settled on the chest and was accompanied by coughing. Next the stomach was affected with stomach-aches and with vomiting of every kind of bile that has been given a name by the medical profession, all this being accompanied by great pain and difficulty. In most cases there were attacks of ineffectual retching, producing violent spasms; this sometimes ended with this stage of disease, but sometimes continued long afterwards. Externally the body was not very hot to the touch, nor was there any pallor: the skin was rather reddish and livid, breaking out into small pustules and ulcers. But inside there was a feeling of burning, so that people could

not bear the touch even of the lightest linen clothing, but wanted to be completely naked... The most terrible thing of all was the despair into which people fell when they realized that they had caught the plague; for they would immediately adopt an attitude of utter hopelessness, and, by giving in in this way, would lose their powers of resistance. Terrible, too, was the sight of people dying like sheep through having caught the disease as a result of nursing others. This indeed caused more deaths than anything else. For when people were afraid to visit the sick, then they died with no one to look after them; indeed, there were many houses in which all the inhabitants perished through lack any attention. When, on the other hand, they did visit the sick, they lost their own lives, and this was particularly true of those who made it a point of honour to act properly”.

*Comments:* The text is 359 words long, deviating heavily from the ancient Greek text, albeit enriched by later editions of the Greek text (August Immanuel Bekker, Thomas Arnold, Franciscus Göller and Ernest Frederic Poppo, Alfred Croiset, et al, and the Loeb edition translated by C.F. Smith in 1919); it is long-winded and paraphrased to make it more accessible for the native English reader.

### ***Remarks***

Hobbes meticulously translated directly from the Greek and included maps and an index. He also added concise summaries and interpretive marginal notes on political, moral, philosophical, and literary topics. He described his English version as “Interpreted with Faith and Diligence Immediately out of the Greeke”, as indeed he did. His translation is generally accurate and fluent; he rendered the Greek text (and even idioms) without disfiguring its meaning, not only as faithfully but as clearly as possible, even though occasionally he omitted phrases that seemed redundant to him, or the text was corrupt and posed insurmountable difficulties. Yet one needs to consider that changes in the grammatical structure are necessary (if not desirable), even by the standards of



modern translators for the sake of fluent reading. Overall, his opus is a landmark in the history of Thucydidean reception. As the late Professor Peter J. Rhodes observed: “A good translation was considered to be one which reflected the style of the original; and Hobbes did this in such matters as word arrangement (chiasmus and the like), forms of construction (such as ----- ἐνεκα rendered ‘for ----- sake’), and alliteration, while adding to features of the original ... to fit the Grand Style of his own time”.<sup>14</sup>

## II

### *Hobbes’s Thucydides, philosophical convergence, and appropriation*

In 1629, when Hobbes published his translation of Thucydides – notably, his first printed work – he reached the ripe age of his early forties. His admiration for Thucydides is unequivocally acknowledged in the Preface – laying bare the reasons for his high regard of the ancient historian:

The “use of history” (“To the Readers”, pp. 1 and 2)

“For the principall and proper worke of *History*, being to instruct, and enable men, by the knowledge of Actions *past*, to beare themselves prudently in the present, and prouidently towards the *Future*, there is not exant any other (meerely humane) that doth more fully, and naturally performe it, then this of my Author”.

“But *Thucydides* is one, who, though he neuer digresse to reade a Lecture, Morall or Politicall, upon his owne Text, nor enter into mens hearts, further then the actions themselves euidently guide him, is yet accounted the most Politique Historiographer that euer writ. The reason whereof I take to bee this: He filleth his Narrations with that choice of matter,

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<sup>14</sup> P.J. Rhodes, “Review Discussion: Hobbes’s Thucydides”, *Histos*, 10, 2016, p. xxxiv.

and ordereth them with that Judgement, and with such perspicuity and efficacy expresseth himselfe, that, as *Plutarch* saith, he maketh his *Auditor* a *Spectator* ... These Vertues of my Author did so take my affection, that they begat in me a desire to communicate him further; which was the first occasion that moued mee to translate him."

Thucydides' historical narrative skillfully blends factual presentation with eloquence.

"... Now for his writings, two...". Now for his writings, two things are to bee considered in them, *Truth*, and *Eloquution*. For in *Truth* consisteth the Soule, and in *Eloquution* the *Body* of History. The latter without the former, is but a picture of History; and the former without the latter, unapt to instruct" (fourth page of "Of the Life and History of Thucydides").

Thus, for Hobbes: (a) Thucydides is undoubtedly the leading "political historiographer" (i.e., because he was able to convincingly present conflict as an essential feature of political life, especially in the form of civil discord). (b) His narrative is expertly crafted, founded upon a judicious selection of material and arranged in a manner that renders him an impartial "observer" of human affairs. (c) History is the perennial instructor for humanity and Thucydides had provided one in the spirit of pragmatism and elocution (i.e., in Hobbesian terms: rhetoric). It is these literary and philosophical merits that engendered in Hobbes an admiration for Thucydides, that eventually led him to undertake the task of translating his work. (d) Thucydides developed a historiography that could broadly fit Hobbes's model of 'civil science'.

*In context*

Contextually, Hobbes's dislike of democracy, explicit in marginal notes of the first edition), highlights the political implications of his translation. Hobbes thought of Thucydides' "histories" as "hauing in them profitable instruction for Noblemen, and such as may come to haue the managing of great and waighty actions" (third page of Epistle Dedicatory). In "Of the Life and History of Thucydides" that preceded the text, Hobbes praised the rule of Pisistratus and of Pericles: "So that it seemeth that as he was of Regall descent, so he best approved of the Regall Government" (third page). Within the confines of a historicist reading, Hobbes's translation would seem a convenient vehicle to express his concerns over the British crisis concerning the perilous Thirty Years' War (1618-48) and the powers of the king, which were curtailed by the Petition of Right, passed by both Houses of Parliament in May 1628 and accepted by Charles I in June. Further, Hobbes seems to be echoing the growing scepticism of the Jacobean age in the field of morals and the intractability of moral disagreement. Individualism and self-interest were deemed the main driving forces behind human actions. Since the Reformation Europe was a scene of unrelentless savagery and civil unrest, wracked by religious wars and dynastic conflict. In England the debate between royalists and parliamentarians was intensified. Faced with extraordinary instability, coupled with the growing the sceptical temperament of the age, Hobbes deployed his philosophical armory by emphasizing the absolute priority of civil peace.

Francis Bacon thought of Thucydides *History* as the most perfect type of historical writing. In the second book of the *Advancement of Learning* Bacon states that the business of the historian is to describe events and allow the reader to draw one's own conclusions from them. Perhaps Hobbes turned to Thucydides at the suggestion of Francis Bacon. At the time Hobbes offered his services to him as his amanuensis and followed closely his steps in the scientific revolution of the age sharing his pro-royalist political concerns.

*Off context*

A puzzling question is whether Hobbes's Thucydides needs the analytic tools of contextualist historicism as a means to understanding and appreciating the significance of Thucydidean thought for his political philosophy. Without questioning that contextualism could be an auxiliary tool for an understanding of Hobbes's authorial intentions, his pioneering work on Thucydides could stand alone within the frame of intellectual transhistoricity, i.e., not necessarily bounded by any sort of "contexts" (as Thucydides himself would have wished to be read, as a *κτῆμα ἐς αἰῶνα*, an everlasting possession).

Basically, Hobbes utilized the principles of Thucydideanism in his study and translation of Thucydides, aligning himself intellectually with the ancient historian and drawing parallels between the context of their respective works. Through his extensive classical scholarship and proficiency in language, Hobbes produced a vigorous and clear translation. But was Thucydides integral to his political writings? Would he write the *Leviathan* if Thucydides never existed? Despite numerous inter-textual similarities, I see no reason why Hobbes wouldn't do that. Hobbes simply found a welcome ally from the classical past, and a most eminent one, to lend support to his anthropological pragmatism and political realism. What are the major premises that sustained Thucydidean realism? In a nutshell: History repeats itself as human character will always be the same; without rule (a sovereign and legal provisions) people will be aggressive, in constant conflict and in a permanent state of anarchy due to the lack of an overarching government; rational actors, even under a government, are still motivated by self-interest; human nature is unchanging, it is the common denominator in history, which helps the historian to compare events and construct patterns which are intelligible and useful: this is the science of history. One can argue that Hobbes either arrived at the same realistic view of the world under the influence of Thucydides or independently. However, a more persuasive argument is that Hobbes found validation for his political views in Thucydides.

**(a) *The state of nature***

A more compelling similarity in text and spirit is the classic description of human life in the state of nature:<sup>15</sup>

“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.” (*Leviathan*, 13.62).

[1.2.2] τῆς γὰρ ἐμπορίας οὐκ οὔσης, οὐδ’ ἐπιμειγνύντες ἀδελῶς ἀλλήλοις οὔτε κατὰ γῆν οὔτε διὰ θαλάσσης, νεμόμενοί τε τὰ αὐτῶν ἕκαστοι ὅσον ἀποζῆν καὶ περιουσίαν χρημάτων οὐκ ἔχοντες οὐδὲ γῆν φυτεύοντες, ἄδηλον ὃν ὁπότε τις ἐπελθὼν καὶ ἀτειχίστων ἅμα ὄντων ἄλλος ἀφαιρήσεται, τῆς τε καθ’ ἡμέραν ἀναγκαίου τροφῆς πανταχοῦ ἂν ἡγούμενοι ἐπικρατεῖν, οὐ χαλεπῶς ἀπανίσταντο, καὶ δι’ αὐτὸ οὔτε μεγέθει πόλεων ἴσχυον οὔτε τῇ ἄλλῃ παρασκευῇ.

**(b) *Human nature and the civil war in Corcyra***

Another instance of overlap is seen in the events at Corcyra, where during political chaos and internal strife, when the state and law disintegrate, humans revert to their innate aggressive behavior. In the margins at book 3 (p. 187) Hobbes wrote: “The people, upon the coming in of the *Athenians*, most cruelly put to death whomsoever they can of the contrary Faction”, and “Description of the behaviour of the people in the sedition”.

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<sup>15</sup> First indicated by G. Klosko and D. Rice.

“Amongst whom, some were slaine upon priuate hatred, and some by their debtors, for the money which they had lent them. All formes of death were then seene, and (as in such cases it usually falles out) whatsoeuer had happened at any time, happened also then, and more. For the Father slew his Sonne; men were dragged out of the Temples, and then slaine hard by; and some immured in the *Temple of Bacchus*, dyed within it. So cruell was this Sedition; and seemed so the more, because it was of these the first. For afterwards, all *Greece*, as a man may say, was in commotion; and quarrels arose euery where betweene the Patrons of the Commons, that sought to bring in the *Athenians*, and the *Few*, that desired to bring the Lacedaemonians. Now in time of peace, they could haue had no pretence, nor would haue beene so forward to call them in; but being Warre, and Confederates to bee had for eyther party, both to hurth their Enemies, and strengthen themselues, such as desired alteration, easily got them to come in. And many and heynous things happened in the Cities through this Sedition, which though they haue beene before, and shall be euer, *as long as human nature is the same* [emphasis added], yet they are more calme, and of different kinds, according to the seuerall coniunctures” (pp. 187-8).

[3.81.4] ἀπέθανον δέ τινες καὶ ἰδίας ἔχθρας ἔνεκα, καὶ ἄλλοι χρημάτων σφίσιν ὀφειλομένων ὑπὸ τῶν λαβόντων· [3.81.5] πᾶσά τε ἰδέα κατέστη θανάτου, καὶ οἷον φιλεῖ ἐν τῷ τοιούτῳ γίγνεσθαι, οὐδὲν ὅτι οὐ ξυνέβη καὶ ἔτι περαιτέρω. καὶ γὰρ πατήρ παῖδα ἀπέκτεινε καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἱερῶν ἀπεσπῶντο καὶ πρὸς αὐτοῖς ἐκτείνοντο, οἱ δέ τινες καὶ περιοικοδομηθέντες ἐν τοῦ Διονύσου τῷ ἱερῷ ἀπέθανον.

[3.82.1] Οὕτως ὡμὴ <ή> στάσις προὔχωρησε, καὶ ἔδοξε μᾶλλον, διότι ἐν τοῖς πρώτη ἐγένετο, ἐπεὶ ὕστερόν γε καὶ πᾶν ὡς εἰπεῖν τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἐκινήθη, διαφορῶν οὐσῶν ἑκασταχοῦ τοῖς τε τῶν δήμων προστάταις τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἐπάγεσθαι καὶ τοῖς ὀλίγοις τοὺς Λακεδαιμονίους. καὶ ἐν μὲν εἰρήνῃ οὐκ ἂν ἐχόντων πρόφασιν οὐδ’ ἐτοίμων παρακαλεῖν αὐτούς, πολεμουμένων δὲ καὶ ξυμμαχίας ἅμα ἑκατέροις τῇ τῶν ἐναντίων κακώσει καὶ σφίσιν αὐτοῖς ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ προσποιήσει ῥαδίως αἱ ἐπαγωγαὶ τοῖς νεωτερίζειν τι

βουλομένοις ἐπορίζοντο. [3.82.2] καὶ ἐπέπεσε πολλὰ καὶ χαλεπὰ κατὰ στάσιν ταῖς πόλεσι, γιγνόμενα μὲν καὶ αἰεὶ ἐσόμενα, ἕως ἂν ἡ αὐτὴ φύσις ἀνθρώπων ᾗ, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ ἡσυχαιότερα καὶ τοῖς εἶδεσι διηλλαγμένα, ὥς ἂν ἕκασται αἱ μεταβολαὶ τῶν ξυντυχιῶν ἐφιστῶνται.

In *Leviathan*, 19:92-94, Hobbes (“Of the Rights of Sovereignes by Institution”, emphasis added), where the a commonwealth is pronounced to be created by a “Covenant”, the philosopher states that the end of the state being “the peace and defence” of all citizens, any objection to the inconveniences of submission to the sovereign or the commonwealth can be juxtaposed to the perilous conditions of civil war and rebellion: in any form of government the worst calamities can be avoided, i.e. “in respect of the miseries, and horrible calamities, that accompany a Civill Warre; or that dissolute condition of masterless men, without subjection to Lawes, and a coercive Power to tye their hands from rapine, and revenge... *For all men are by nature provided of notable multiplying glasses (that is their Passions and Selfe-love), through which, every little payment appeareth a great grievance*” (emphasis added).

In conclusion, Thusydidean influences on Hobbes are profound and deeply rooted in his classical humanism and early education. It has been shown that his translation of the *History* is a landmark in the reception of the classics, and particularly in the direction of the diffusion of knowledge about Thucydides for the use of the moderns. The *Leviathan* and Hobbes’s mature political thought is unmistakably imbued with *Thucydidean spirit*. Yet, focusing too much on a contextualist reading of Hobbes’s Thucydides could be subsumed into anti-Thudycideanism in as long as it runs against Thucydides’ own transhistorical universalism. Here is why:

(a) Thucydides’ analysis of the underlying causes of the Peloponnesian war, his insights into the motivations of those in conflict, and his conclusions regarding the forces that stir popular sentiments and drive collective action, projected a universalistic model for understanding human motivation and explaining political behaviour that (arguably) still endures in

the modern world. In doing so, Thucydides avoided any metaphysical categories which are irrelevant to physical realities. (b) Hobbes, like Thucydides, intended to offer an enduring and transhistorical authoritative model for understanding human motivation and a materialist vision of the world within the parallel framework of “a science of politics”. (c) Their philosophical alignment can be easily explained within a decontextualized framework that focuses on the convergence of big ideas and central concepts rather than contextual factors — as David Armitage stated, by using a “telescope instead of a microscope” in intellectual pursuits.<sup>16</sup>

Such an understanding does not challenge the notion that Hobbes actively engaged in a conscious and meaningful conversation with Thucydides within the broad trajectory of ideas throughout history.



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<sup>16</sup> David Armitage, “What’s the big Idea? Intellectual History and the Longue Durée”, *History of European Ideas*, 38.4, 2012, pp. 493-507.



BRILL'S COMPANION TO  
GEORGE GROTE  
AND THE CLASSICAL  
TRADITION



*Edited by*  
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## The Byzantine cosmopolis beyond western liberalism

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**Abstract:** The present article reflects on Early Byzantine strands of political thought (more precisely, on viewpoints developed by Priscus of Panion and Procopius of Caesarea) in tandem with Anthony Kaldellis' depiction of Byzantium as a representative politeia. It explains how Priscus' and Procopius' insights concerning the Eastern Roman Empire as lawful polity could allow us to envisage a new cosmopolitan paradigm, grounded on 'bottom-up' institutions of political representation. This paradigm could respond to a series of limitations that characterise the present standards of international cooperation, upon which transnational projects, such as the European Union, are predicated. These standards rely much on Immanuel Kant's viewpoints on cosmopolitanism, but also on John Locke's theory of Social Contract, which constitutes a genealogical evolution of Hobbes' absolutist thought that I also intend to submit to scrutiny. In short, I set out to explain how this new cosmopolitan paradigm (based on this particular depiction of Byzantium as a 'representative' and 'lawful constitution') could respond to gaps identified in the liberal canon of international relations.

**Keywords:** Byzantium, liberalism, international relations, Hobbes, absolutism, Locke, government by consent, state of nature, Priscus of Pannion, Procopius of Caesarea, political representation, international political theory

## Introduction

According to William Bain and Terry Nardin, intellectual history provides an understanding of ‘how the International Relations canon was constructed and for what purposes,’<sup>1</sup> and ‘makes a contribution to the study of international relations in guiding us not only towards a better grasp of past debates but also towards a better reading of actions.’<sup>2</sup> It also ‘reveals paths abandoned as well as those taken,’<sup>3</sup> unveiling deeply rooted concepts in the history of international law.<sup>4</sup> For example, it could help us to uncover the hierarchical and racialised nature of the international order. In short, studies on intellectual history allow us to unpack key concepts that have led to the consolidation of certain power-structures in the present system of international order.<sup>5</sup> This article acknowledges these assumptions and reflects on the theoretical foundations of western liberalism, uncovering worldviews profoundly rooted in the system of the international status quo. The aim is to examine the political thought of influential liberal thinkers of the eighteenth century. More importantly, it will focus on John Locke, identifying a genealogical link between the latter with Hobbes’ absolutist insights. It acknowledges Bain’s and Nardin’s position that ‘non-canonical writings need to be recovered,’<sup>6</sup> so long as they bring us into contact with traditions and political discourses from which we could elicit perspectives of practical importance to contemporary debates. With this in mind I focus on the political thought of Priscus of Pannion and Procopius of Caesarea, two Early Byzantine political thinkers, who have been comparatively much less studied from a theoretical point of view and have been much less known to the historian of political ideas. Finally, Priscus’ and Procopius’ thought will be juxtaposed to Locke’s liberalism and Hobbes’ absolutism,

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<sup>1</sup> Bain W., and Nardin T. 2017: 213.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 217.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 221.

<sup>4</sup> Pitts J. 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Bain W., and Nardin T. 2017: 216; Skinner, Q. 1988; Pocock. J., G., A., 1989.

Bain and Nardin (following Quentin Skinner and John Pckock), emphasise the importance of placing texts in their socio-historical setting, so long as they reflect the social, political and cultural context of the particular society each author lived and wrote.<sup>7</sup> By recognising that theories are historical products we avoid anachronisms. Consequently, we yield more accurate interpretations.<sup>8</sup> In this respect the present study will consider viewpoints offered by the Byzantinist Anthony Kaldellis.<sup>9</sup> As opposed to common assumptions that have been settled into place, which associate Byzantium with absolutism and theocracy, in Kaldellis' thought the Byzantine Empire was a 'monarchical' but 'bottom-up republic';<sup>10</sup> the power of the *basileus* (the Emperor) was not absolute; he/she ruled by acknowledging popular demands and customs.<sup>11</sup> The

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 215. In other words, contextualism (or social philosophy) prompts us to examine philosophical ideas and political concepts by treating the socio-political environment from which they have emerged as an objective evaluative benchmark.

<sup>8</sup> Collingwood, R., G. 2013.

<sup>9</sup> It goes without question that references to Byzantium as an alternative to liberalism could incite reactions, since the Byzantine Empire in the western imagination is associated with servility. For western thinkers (such as Cyril Mango, Arnold Toynbee, *et al.*) the Byzantine state was nothing but a corrupt and violent autocracy, deserving no attention by those who are preoccupied with projects seeking to uproot the causes of interstate wars, as well as of oppression and political violence. Debates concerning the Byzantine state are long and cannot take place in such a limited (in terms of space and word count) study. Herein I focus on the contribution of Priscus and Procopius to contemporary debates, acknowledging also on Kaldellis's views. In regards to my stance on the denigration of Byzantium one could resort to one of my previous publications: Theodosiadis 2024, *Averil Cameron: Byzantine Matters, Book Review*.

<sup>10</sup> Kaldellis A. 2015: 3.

<sup>11</sup> The reason for selecting Kaldellis (rather Mango or Jenkins, for example) in order to highlight contextual elements (which our interpretation of Priscus and Procopius must acknowledge) has much to do with the former's awareness about the social and political context of Byzantium itself. Kaldellis has studied thoroughly the social and political culture of Byzantium and contended that most of the conclusions of the modern schools of thought (e.g. Mango and Toynbee) are products of anachronisms. They conflate pre-modern monarchical institutions with the feudal and absolute Western European monarchical governments of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, pre-modern socio-political

Byzantine state, in other words, had incorporated elements of political representation; the status of mandator was ascribed to the people; in contrast, the status of the head of the *politeia*, that is, of the *basileus* (or Emperor), was that of mandated principal.<sup>12</sup> Laws (as the second section of this chapter will explain) were not imposed arbitrarily. A law was a ratified custom the *populus* had accepted as its own creation. In this respect, law-making procedures involve public participation. Therefore, our attempts to interpret Priscus' and Procopius' analysis on the Byzantine state as an *ennomos politeia* ('lawful polity') will acknowledge Kaldellis' depiction of Byzantium a *political* society within which the *high authorities* (the *basileus*) and the *low authorities* (the *populus*) constantly interact with each other. Hobbes' thought, on the other hand, is deemed *pre-political*; his authoritarian paradigm (discussed in the next section), which excludes the *populus* from law-making procedures, corresponds to types of commonwealths emerging *before* men and women began to create societies whose body politic involves popular participation. Finally, Locke's political thought, which laid the philosophical foundations of contemporary liberalism, relies on *proto-political* modes of dealing with people. More precisely, Locke - contra Hobbes - supported 'limited government'; the prerogatives of a Sovereign, he assumed, must be restricted in such a way that his power will not be absolute and/or arbitrary. Limited government is a *condition* for a society to become *political*, allowing its members to participate in law-making procedures. Thus, the present study ends up to the following conclusion: a) if the International Relations canon was founded upon liberal principles, b) if the system of international law is rooted on liberal standards, and c) if the latter are *proto-political*, the

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environments in Eastern Europe during the Middle Ages, claims Kaldellis (2015), had espoused a significantly different approach for monarchy *per se*; a monarch was not necessarily a despot or an authoritarian king. By reflecting on Cicero, Kaldellis explained that pre-modern republicans believed that a *politeia* could be governed well by a mixed government, consisting of monarchical, aristocratic and democratic elements at the same time.

<sup>12</sup> Contogeorgis, 2013.

International relations canon and the system of international law themselves are *proto-political* as well.<sup>13</sup>

With this in mind, I proceed to the third section of this study, contending that Priscus' and Procopius' thought is key to chart an alternative international project for the future. I will support the establishment of a 'transnational lawful polity', of a global *political* entity (in different terms), within which nation-states could form political coalitions/alliances. I will explain how different nations could come together, forming a universal *ennomos politeia*, supervised by accountable organisations. Consider, for example, Adrian Pabst's view on Byzantium as the cornerstone of the Christian heritage of Europe. This heritage shapes approaches on ethics, justice, and common purpose that could lay the foundations for the transformation of the European Union from a 'centralised superstate' into a 'cosmopolis', into a commonwealth of 'voluntary association of nations.'<sup>14</sup> Advancing Pabst's theory, we could imagine the transformation of the EU itself into an 'archipelago' of western (and, simultaneously, of non-western) semi-autonomous nation-states. A transnational *ennomos politeia* could create environments within which the *political* institutions of different national bodies will enter 'into relations of mutual codependence' based on 'shared principles of justice ... expressed and manifested in the laws' that defend the common good.<sup>15</sup>

In order to examine the reasons transnational projects, inspired by Priscus' and Procopius' view of Byzantium as an *ennomos politeia* could avert interstate conflict more effectively than the present *proto-political* liberal system of international order, we will have to produce a solid critique on the latter. Such an analysis will consider the intellectual roots of western liberalism in Hobbes' absolutist thought, since liberalism itself constitutes a genealogical evolution of Hobbes' *pre-political* philosophy (as mentioned earlier).

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<sup>13</sup> More clear definitions of these terms (*political*, *proto-political* and *pre-political*) are given at the end of the second section of the present study.

<sup>14</sup> Pabst. 2013: 30.

<sup>15</sup> Kaldellis A. 2015: 66.

## 1. From absolutism to limited government: the genealogy of a concept

One of the main concerns of Hobbes' political thought has to do with the consequences of rapacity, the 'perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power [that] ceaseth onely in Death', the 'generall inclination of all mankind.'<sup>16</sup> As he explains in the *Leviathan*, in the *State of Nature*, where no organised commonwealth, no common power or other artificial political body exists in order to coerce and bind men and women together, directing them towards the common benefit, everyone strives to fulfil his/her (innate) 'restlesse desire'<sup>17</sup> for possession of power, riches, fame, prestige and honour<sup>18</sup>. In the *State of Nature* competition for property and power escalates into conflict, so long as there is no central government to impose justice, repressing aggression (even through the use of coercive mechanisms), ensuring that possession is acquired through peaceful means. Thus, in the *State of Nature*, where 'every man has a Right to every thing; even to one anothers body', the 'condition of Warre of every one against every one' becomes permanent<sup>19</sup>. This war cannot be brought to an end since rapacity (which prompts enmity and aggression) is (in Hobbes' thought) perpetual. Consequently, a violent death in the state of nature, the state of perfect *insecurity* where everyone is a potential enemy,<sup>20</sup> is highly probable. Individuals 'as soon as they arrive to understanding of this hateful condition, do desire (even nature itself compelling them) to be freed from this misery.'<sup>21</sup> They form alliances 'so that if we must have *war*, it will not be a war against all men nor without aid.'<sup>22</sup> In exchange for security they seek to relinquish certain liberties and transfer them to an absolute sovereign power, to a *de facto* ruler, who frees themselves from the insecurity of the state of nature, 'whereof they may be compelled both to

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<sup>16</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, XI.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, VIII, XI.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, XIV.

<sup>20</sup> Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, I, 14.

<sup>21</sup> Gaskin, J.C.A. 1994: pp.xi-xlii.

<sup>22</sup> Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, Chapter I, 14.

keep the peace amongst themselves.’<sup>23</sup> Thus, they form a *contract* between themselves and the State, according to which both parties perform what they have been agreed upon.<sup>24</sup> The *laws of nature*, which constitute ‘the dictates of natural reason’<sup>25</sup> and determine has to be done or not done in order to prolong life as much as possible, identifying, thus, the conditions ‘that must be observed in order to avoid the estate of war,’<sup>26</sup> are preserved only when the multitude appoints one man, or an assembly of men ‘to beare their Person; and every one owne, and acknowledge himselfe to be Author of whatsoever he that so beareth their Persons, shall Act, or Cause to be Acted, in those things which concerne the Common Peace and Safetie; and therein to submit their Will, and their Judgements, to his Judgment.’<sup>27</sup> All liberties are, therefore, passed to the unquestionable Sovereign, to the only ‘sword’ and soul of the Common-Wealth.<sup>28</sup> The Sovereign undertakes the task of decision making (or for approving decisions made by his officials) and, in return, is *obliged* to take all necessary measures in order to defend public and individual well-being.<sup>29</sup> And this is how the great Leviathan, the ‘*Mortall God*’ to whom ‘wee owe ... our peace and defense,’ is born,<sup>30</sup> ‘through a collective act through which people give up the right of governing themselves to realise a common end - their existential security.’<sup>31</sup> The power of the Sovereign is indisputable; to resist the Sovereign ‘in defense of another man, guilty or innocent, no man hath Liberty; because such Liberty, takes away from the Sovereign, the means of Protecting us.’<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, XIX, 6.

<sup>24</sup> Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, XV, 8; Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, II, 9; Hobbes, *Leviathan*, XIV.

<sup>25</sup> Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, XVIII, 1; Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, Chapter II, 1.

<sup>26</sup> Gaskin, J.C.A. 1994: p.xxxi.

<sup>27</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, XVII.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, XXI.

<sup>29</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, XXI.

<sup>30</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, XVII.

<sup>31</sup> Furedi F. 2013: 188.

<sup>32</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, XXI.



For Hobbes monarchy is the best type of Sovereignty; the passions of the multitude, of the ‘common people’, can result in more violence than the passions of one man, as he states in *De Corpore Politico*. ‘The greatest inconvenience that can happen to a commonwealth, is the aptitude to dissolve into civil war; and to this are monarchies much less subject than any other governments.’<sup>33</sup> The monarch transforms mutual fear of violent death into fear of *punishment* ‘defined or prescribed by law, as it is laid down in explicit words: *he who does this will suffer this*, or may be defined in practice, as when a penalty [...] is discretionary at first, and then defined by the punishment of the first offender.’<sup>34</sup> Fear is the only way for the Sovereign to provide security and win the conformity of his subjects; fear subjects everyone to the laws that envisage retribution as a consequence of disobedience in the philosophy of Hobbes; fear of punishment uproots revolutionary ideas from the popular mind, preventing conflicts and civil unrests; this constitutes the highest priority of the Sovereign.<sup>35</sup>

While in Hobbes’ theory the state of nature is identical with the state of war, in Locke’s thought the latter points to conditions where ‘force *without Right, upon Man’s Person*’, that is, force without a real purpose, is exercised by another man (or woman).<sup>36</sup> In the state of war persons are ‘subjected to the Political Power of another, without his own *Consent*.’<sup>37</sup> The state of nature, instead, is the ‘*State of Perfect freedom*’ for anyone to order his/her actions and to ‘dispose of [his/her] Possessions, and Persons as they think fit, within the Bounds of the Law of Nature, without asking Leave or depending upon the Will of any other Man.’<sup>38</sup> It is also the ‘*State of Equality*, wherein all the Power and Jurisdiction is reciprocal.’<sup>39</sup> While Hobbes’ state of nature provides multiple justifications for absolutism, for Locke’s one should look upon this state of perfect equality and freedom in order to highlight ‘the

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<sup>33</sup> Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, XXIV, 8.

<sup>34</sup> Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, XIII, 16.

<sup>35</sup> Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, XXVIII, 8.

<sup>36</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*. III, 19.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, VIII, 95.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, II, 4.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*.

obligation for mutual love amongst Men.’<sup>40</sup> This equality must be protected by preventing men and women from ‘rank[ing] promiscuously ... to all the same advantages of Nature’, securing the equal use of ‘the same faculties ... without Subordination and Subjection, unless the Lord and Master of them all, should by any manifest Declaration of his Will set one above another.’<sup>41</sup> There is, in other words, no justification for arbitrary or ‘Absolute Power’, which points takes away the right to freedom *in toto*.<sup>42</sup> ‘The Liberty of Man, in Society’, writes Locke, ‘is to be under no other Legislative Power, but that established, by consent, in the Common-wealth, nor under the Dominion of any Will.’<sup>43</sup> In the same fashion, for Montesquieu the State is the highest of all authorities; its power, however, must be always measured according to civil Constitutions and laws that prevent absolutism and arbitrary coercion. For Locke, every legislative act that suppresses public and private liberty violates the Social Contract; such acts must be encountered even through the use of physical force (popular rebellions and civil uprisings).<sup>44</sup> Thus, ‘it is for the people only to decide whether or when their government trustees have acted contrary to their trust, or their legislative has been changed, and for the people as a whole to act as umpire in any dispute between the governors and a part of their body.’<sup>45</sup>

But though the state of nature is the state of freedom, ‘yet it is *not a State of Licence*.’<sup>46</sup> ‘The *State of Nature* has a Law of Nature to govern it’, which obliges everyone to refrain using his/her own liberty in such a way that would harm others in the pursuit of personal felicity (ibid). According to this law (of nature), ‘which willeth the Peace and *Preservation of All Mankind*’ men and women must be restrained from hurting one another.<sup>47</sup> However, ‘in the State of Nature’ where there is no body with ‘the *Power to Execute* that Law, and thereby

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, III, 17.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, IV, 22.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, XIII.

<sup>45</sup> Laslett P. 1988: 109.

<sup>46</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, II, 6.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, II, 7.

preserve the innocent and restrain offenders.’<sup>48</sup> Thus, natural liberty leaves everyone exposed to the consequences of the vices of the misjudgments of others and, subsequently, to all forms of aggression. For this reason men and women should ‘enter into Society to make one People, one Body Politic under one Supreme Government’ aiming to preserve their lives and property mutually.<sup>49</sup> Through these passages we find Locke’s anti-Hobbesian position (concerning the state of nature as the state of perfect freedom and independence) suddenly overturned. Here Locke, for good or ill, seems to have accepted Hobbes’s pessimism in part, as he associates natural liberty with insecurity, which leaves everyone unprotected from harm and violence. We will see below that this constitutes a crucial point in Locke’s political philosophy.

According to Laslett, the primary focus of Locke’s ideal commonwealth is civil peace and security of property.<sup>50</sup> Property is alienable since competition for the same object, according to James Mill, ‘implies the desire of the power necessary to accomplish the object.’<sup>51</sup> This desire ‘of that power which is necessary to render the persons and properties of human beings subservient to our pleasures is a grand governing law of human nature [...] Power ... therefore, means security for the conformity between the will of one man and the acts of other men.’<sup>52</sup> The most advanced form of security exercised by the State (the Sovereign) is that of *prerogative*, which assumes ‘nothing, but the Peoples permitting their Rulers, to do several things of their own free choice, where the Law was silent, and sometimes too against the direct Letter of the Law, for publick good.’<sup>53</sup> Evidently, ‘Locke agreed with Hobbes that self-preservation was the most fundamental passion.’<sup>54</sup> Indeed, Locke appears closer ‘to adopting some of Hobbes’s claims and categories rather than refuting them, and

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, VII, 89.

<sup>50</sup> Laslett P. 1988: 102; see also, Israel, J.I. 2017: p.90.

<sup>51</sup> Mill, J. (2015). *An Essay on Government*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.17.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Locke J. *Second Treatise of Government*, XIV, 164.

<sup>54</sup> Fukuyama, F. 1992: 158.

we are reminded that in the early 1690s many people suspected Locke of leaning in a Hobbesian direction.’<sup>55</sup> Of course, Locke rejected absolutism arguing that ‘absolute monarchs could violate man’s right to self-preservation, as when a king arbitrarily stripped a subject of his possessions and life.’<sup>56</sup> In short, Lockean liberalism encompasses, on the one hand, the notion of liberty and consent while stressing the need for emergency measures (that limit liberty itself) to be implemented by governments once deemed necessary. Such measures, Mark Neocleous argues, could open the back door for the acceptance of all sorts of authoritarian laws, killing off once and for all the same liberty Locke’s theory championed (against despotism).<sup>57</sup>

But unlike Hobbes’s justification of absolute rule as a permanent refuge against the war of all against all, Locke’s authoritarian *prerogative* points to all *temporary* emergency measures, imposed by governments, *only* under exceptional circumstances. Notwithstanding Locke’s prerogative justifies the use of illiberal means, it is not arbitrary and/or tyrannical. It is exercised (always as a last resort) strictly within the framework of a constitutional order, which serves and protects the rule of law, ‘the legal embodiment of freedom.’<sup>58</sup> In brief, the rule of law determines how the coercive powers of a state can be used in given circumstances.<sup>59</sup> It prevents governments ‘from stultifying individual efforts by *ad hoc* action’ and preserves liberty of each individual to pursue his/her ‘personal ends and desires.’<sup>60</sup> In this respect, coercion (under the state of *prerogative*) ‘can be foreseen how it will be used’<sup>61</sup> and it must become fully evident that such emergency measures are clearly in the interest of people’s liberty and property. Its ultimate objective is a) the effective removal of threats posited by unlawful rebellions, which strive to violently overthrow a government that fully respects the rule of law, and b) the

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<sup>55</sup> Neocleous, M. 2008: 17.

<sup>56</sup> Fukuyama, F. 1992: 158.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p.12.

<sup>58</sup> Hayek F.A. 2007: 85.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 75; p.86, ff.1.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 76.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 87.

defense of personal safety and security from rampant aggression (large scale crime, terrorism, *etc.*).<sup>62</sup> A government that takes advantage of prerogative, acting contrary to the rule of law, that is, doing ‘what it thinks fit to do,’<sup>63</sup> is arbitrary and, therefore, illegitimate.

Since, however, in the Lockean (liberal) mind a) Hobbes’ fear of *perpetual war* (which springs from our innate tendencies toward rapacity and unlimited possession) is widely echoed, and b) *prerogative* is only a temporary measure (and, thereby, no permanent coercive Sovereign exists in order to repress moves that alienate someone’s life and property), what could safeguard human beings from destruction? Liberal trends, inspired by Locke’s theories, put emphasis on the idea of economic progress, the constant satisfaction of the insatiable human desire for possession through the unlimited production of goods (as property to be bought) and the constant increase of their availability in the capitalist market. For Hayek, eighteenth century economic liberals acclaimed ‘man’s "self-love," or even his "selfish interests,"' as the ultimate “"universal mover", and ... by these terms they were referring primarily to a moral attitude, which they thought to be widely prevalent.’<sup>64</sup> They considered the constant increase of production (in order to gratify these so-called ‘selfish’ desires) and the ‘supply of material comforts’, necessary means for the improvement of the general standards of living.<sup>65</sup> According to Mandeville, ‘[e]nvy, pride and ambition made human beings want more than they needed, but these “private vices” became “public

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<sup>62</sup> According to the Lockean viewpoint, acts that do not aim at overthrowing absolutist forces, which are deemed arbitrary, coercive, and, consequently, illegal, are not lawful. They undermine political regimes founded upon the consent of the majority, protecting privacy and liberty. Such rebellions ‘bring back again the state of War’, since they take away the decisive power of the Legislative, a decisive power appointed by the people under whose consent is obliged to act. (Locke J. *Second Treatise of Government*, XIX, 116.) While in Locke lawful rebellions target absolutist (illegitimate) governments, in Hobbes’ thought lawful dissent is allowed in exceptional circumstances, when (for example) governments undermine the self-preservation of the people (Furedi F. 2013: 193.)

<sup>63</sup> Hayek F.A. 2007: p.86, ff.1.

<sup>64</sup> Hayek, F.A. 1980: 13.

<sup>65</sup> Lasch, C. 1991: 52.

virtues” by stimulating industry and invention.’<sup>66</sup> Smith and Hume endorsed the principle that ‘a growing desire for material comforts, wrongly taken by republicans as a sign of decadence and impending social collapse’ could generate ‘new wealth’ and ‘a constantly rising level of productivity.’<sup>67</sup>

As we see, both models (the Hobbesean and the liberal Lockean model) share one common feature: the exclusion of the ‘common people’ from the decision-making. For the Lockean model all social relations must be put under the dictates of the market, whose tendency to generate wealth through the constant increase of the availability of consumable objects would (supposedly) generate stability and prosperity, emancipating mankind from all fears. In the next section I will juxtapose these models against the Byzantine concept of *ennomos politeia*, borrowing perspectives from Priscus’ and Procopius’ political thought.

## 2. The Byzantine *political* society (an *ennomos politeia*)

Priscus in 448/449 AD recounts his adventures accompanying Maximinus, the head of the Byzantine embassy, who was dispatched to the court of Attila the Hun in order to represent Emperor Theodosius II (r. 402-450). He narrates an encounter with Graikos (a Greek-speaking Roman/Byzantine expatriate), who had been captured in a raid but was released later on ‘[h]aving proven his valour in later battles against the Romans and the nation of the Akatiri and having, according to Scythian law, given his booty to his master.’<sup>68</sup> Graikos explains ‘why he had then chosen to remain among the Huns and launches into a tirade against Roman life.’<sup>69</sup> In the Roman *politeia*, Graikos claims, ‘[i]f the wrongdoer is rich, the result is that he does not pay the penalty for his crime, whereas if he is poor and does not know how to handle the matter, he suffers the prescribed punishment ... And this may be the most

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<sup>66</sup> Quoted by Lasch, C. 1991: p.53.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Priscus of Pannion. *History*, 11, 425-430.

<sup>69</sup> Kaldellis A. 2015: 64-5.

painful thing, to have to pay for justice.’<sup>70</sup> But for Priscus the Roman *politeia* is an *ennomos politeia* whose ‘laws apply to all, and even the Emperor obeys them. It is not a fact ... that the rich do violence to the poor with impunity, unless one escapes justice through escaping detection; and this is a recourse for the poor as well as for the rich. These offenders would go unpunished because of lack of evidence, something which happens not only amongst the Romans but amongst all peoples.’<sup>71</sup> Moreover, the founders of the Roman *politeia* were wise men and ordained for those ‘who came before the courts, that there should be persons to ensure that the one who obtained the judgement should receive his award and that the one adjusted guilty should not pay more than the judge decided.’<sup>72</sup> It is ‘[t]he authorities’ who ‘were ruining’ the *politeia* ‘by not taking the same thought for it as those of old.’<sup>73</sup> Priscus feels compelled to alert his readers about the importance of preserving conditions within which a lawful polity develops and sustains itself, highlighting the ‘misguided’ (in his view) decision of Graikos to opt out of the Byzantine (*ennomos*) *politeia*. ‘For your freedom’, Priscus argues, ‘you should give thanks to fortune rather than to your master. He led you out to war, where, through inexperience, you might have been killed by the enemy or, fleeing the battle, have been punished by your owner.’<sup>74</sup>

As Kaldellis explains, anything could have happened to Garikos ‘in captivity or in the battle where he earned his freedom. He got lucky.’<sup>75</sup> The lives of the so-called ‘barbarians,’ of the Huns, the Vandals, the Scythians and other nomadic tribes of northern Europe, who unlike ‘the Romans and the Persians ... live a savage life,’ according to Procopius of Caesarea,<sup>76</sup> are at the mercy of fortune, Priscus claims; nomadic societies are not instituted according to ‘established

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<sup>70</sup> Priscus of Pannion. *History*, 11, 444-452.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, 11, 490-494.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, 11, 455-7.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, 11, 508-510.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, 11, 504-507.

<sup>75</sup> Kaldellis A. 2015: 65.

<sup>76</sup> Procopius of Caesarea, *The Wars of Justinian*, III.

laws and customs to which all adhere,’<sup>77</sup> according to common rules of conduct founded upon shared principles of justice, which ensure that no penalty is meted out arbitrarily and, hence, no harm is done to men and women without prior evidence of engagement with acts that deprive the safety and wellbeing of others or the prosperity of the *politeia*. Seemingly Priscus’ argument concerning the *ennomos politeia* as the best antidote against the state of nature that characterises the life of the ‘barbarian’, converges with Hobbes’ views regarding life outside the state of society being ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.’<sup>78</sup> For both Priscus and Hobbes life in primitive societies is dominated by violence and aggression. For Priscus, it is also ruled ‘by the arbitrary whim of a despot’, which could be a metaphor for Attila.’<sup>79</sup> Here Priscus brings to our mind Locke’s assertions concerning inequality and despotism in the state of nature, where no organised body politic exists to impose the rule of law. As I explained in the previous section, organised commonwealths (in Locke’s mind) create institutions capable of limiting the powers of a government in such a way that the laws of nature are protected. Priscus’ assertion that ‘[a]mongst the Romans it was not right to betroth a woman to a man against her will’<sup>80</sup> convey the same message: the institutions of an *ennomos politeia* prohibit arbitrary coercion upon individuals. In the world of the Huns, where there is no ‘contract’ between the people and their rulers, no such institutions that could effectively limit the power of their rulers exist. However, the principal aim of the *ennomos politeia* is not simply to protect individuals from the perils of the state of nature, as was Hobbes’ and Locke’s ideal commonwealths, nor to restrict the power of governments in order to avoid political repression (which, in Locke’s mind, marks the beginning of the state of war). According to Kaldellis, the Byzantine *politeia* was not ‘constituted by government action or the imperial system’ alone.<sup>81</sup> In the

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<sup>77</sup> Kaldellis A. 2015: 66

<sup>78</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, XIII.

<sup>79</sup> Kaldellis A. 2015: 65.

<sup>80</sup> Priscus of Pannion. *History*, 15, 15-18.

<sup>81</sup> Kaldellis A. 2015: 66.



Byzantine *politeia*, a law before its ratification by imperial action exists in the society in the form of custom. Thus, laws are constituted by ‘the whole of society whose elements have entered into relations of mutual codependence according to shared principles of justice.’<sup>82</sup> In short, the *populus* participates in law-making procedures. The emperor Leo VI ‘calls the bearers of custom “the people,” “the majority,” or “the masses” (οἱ ἄνθρωποι, τὸ πλῆθος, ὁ ὄχλος).’<sup>83</sup> Thus, laws have ““their sole authority the will of the masses.””<sup>84</sup> The *basileus* simply ratifies a custom: ‘τοῦτο δὲ πολιτευέσθω ... καὶ πρὸ δόγματος νόμου πολιτευόμενον (“let that now be part of the politeia ... which was already part of the politeia before this legal ratification”).’<sup>85</sup> He/she formalises what the *populus* itself has already legitimised.

According to Leo VI, a custom is legally binding only if it bears the stamp of his official approval. ‘In other words, custom has a right to the lawgiver’s attention and consideration and poses a normative claim in the polity, but it is not legally binding unless it is formally made into a law by the proper authority, that is, the emperor.’<sup>86</sup> Leo praises the legislative work of Justinian and his attempts to ratify by law emerging customs. As Kaldellis further explains:

In one case, a current custom is explicitly called better than an old law and takes its place. In another it is noted that an awkward law had been rejected by “the will of the people” (τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἡ προαίρεσις) and so it had to go: its provisions were already not part of the politeia (οὐ πολιτευομένων) and therefore the emperor formally “ostracized them from the politeia.” It would seem, then, that what Leon calls “the will of the people” had already ensured that this law was not de facto part of the polity before the emperor’s

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid: 10-11.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 10.

intervention, regardless of the fact that it still had *de iure* validity. This raises the question of who really constituted and defined the polity. The polity seems to be constituted by both official and unofficial decisions taken respectively by the emperor and “the people.”<sup>87</sup>

From the above it follows that the relationship between the *basileus* and his/her subjects is characterised by constant interactions. But since these interactions revolve around issues related to the laws of the *politeia*, we could call this relationship ‘political’. Therefore, the Roman/Byzantine *ennomos politeia* is a *political* state and its government is ‘representative’. The latter implies that the laws of this *politeia* are not made by the people directly, through procedures of participation in public assemblies, as was the case of the Athenian *ecclesia*.<sup>88</sup> However, since the *basileus* ratifies what the *populus* (as a mandator)<sup>89</sup> has already (albeit informally) decided, we may assume that the ‘will’ of the latter finds expression through the *basileus* him/herself. Thus, the institution of *basileia* is a representative institution and, simultaneously, an institution of *ennomos epistasia* (‘lawful supervision’); the latter implies that the *basileus* is embodied with the knowledge of making popular customs part of the legal code of his/her state. As also Procopius of Caesarea put it, within an *ennomos politeia* (within a ‘lawful constitution’) the people and the *basileus* ‘observe right and justice in their dealings both with one another.’<sup>90</sup> Simply put, in the *ennomos politeia* the *high authorities* (of the *basileus* and his/her executives or, in our days, of a group of professional politicians) are in constant dialogue with the people. However, in Hobbes’ ideal commonwealth, the Sovereign imposes laws by relying exclusively on his own judgement<sup>91</sup>; multiple judgments

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> For more regarding the direct participation in politics see Hannah Arendt’s *Human Condition* (1998), her analysis on the ancient Greek *polis*, where laws are ratified by the people themselves in public assemblies.

<sup>89</sup> Contogeorgis, 2013.

<sup>90</sup> Procopius of Caesarea, *The Wars of Justinian*, III.

<sup>91</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, XIX.

(Hobbes believed) incite disagreements, which often create divisions and fractions, fueling civil conflicts in return.<sup>92</sup> But since absolutism is a characteristic of the state of nature (according to Priscus), where force (rather than dialogue) dominates, where the strongest assert ‘right by force’ (to use Kant’s terms),<sup>93</sup> seizing power and imposing dominion upon others even by means of extreme coercion, since (in other words) absolutism reproduces modes of living established *before* the age men and women begun to develop political societies (lawful polities), it follows that absolutist commonwealths are in principle *pre-political* commonwealths. Therefore, Hobbes ideal commonwealth, so long as it legitimises absolutism, is *pre-political* in the strictest sense of the term; it is a polity founded upon modes of thinking and dealing with people that belong to the same state Hobbes himself feared and abhorred.

Consider, again, the main objectives of an *ennomos politeia*: a) to limit the power of the *high authorities*, and b) to coordinate the latter with the *populus*. Locke’s ideal commonwealth (as it has been already made clear) focuses primarily on the former, which constitutes an indispensable *condition* for the latter; in fact, political representation is unimaginable in absolutist commonwealths, where the ‘common people’ are excluded from the political decision-

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<sup>92</sup> Hobbes developed this viewpoint in relation to interpretations of the Christian dogma, claiming that plurality of opinions and interpretations inevitably leads to conflict (Furedi F. 2013: 182.) Of course Hobbes ‘acknowledged the right to private belief and the right of people to judge the diktat of their sovereign as wrong. What he did not allow was the right to act on such beliefs’ (ibid, 192.) As he writes in the *Behemoth* (Dialogue 1), the ‘power of the mighty hath no foundation but in the opinion and belief of the people’. Here Hobbes makes references to high-ranking priests (the ‘mighty’), who capitalise on social fractions (created when different *opinions*, that is, when different interpretations of the Christian dogma, are adopted by large segments of the *people*), and mobilise them against the establishment. These fractions due to their intense disagreement concerning the ‘right interpretation’ often attack each other, leading to ‘the condition of Warre of every one against every one’ (Hobbes, *Leviathan*, XIV.) Hobbes’ *Behemoth* is a polemic against religious authorities, which he accused of inciting conflicts with devastating consequences.

<sup>93</sup> Kant, 1903: 114.

making. However, the rule of law alone does not guarantee representation; Locke's Sovereign acknowledges the 'consent of the people'<sup>94</sup> but he/she does not involve the *populus* itself in the law-making procedures. In contrast, Priscus' *ennomos politeia* is founded upon institutions that not simply restrict the power of the *high authorities* but also connect the latter with the *populus*. In this respect, Locke's ideal commonwealth is, strictly speaking, *proto-political*. We shall examine in the next section how this depiction of Byzantium as a representative *ennomos politeia* is a key to chart international projects that could improve peace prospects between nation-states today, moving beyond the contemporary liberal system of transnational cooperation, build upon *proto-political* institutional frameworks.

### 3. Towards a universal *ennomos politeia*

The civility of the *ennomos politeia* is restricted within the precise region upon which the *political* authorities of the same *politeia* can exercise sovereignty. In this respect, the relationship between two political bodies, irrespective of how well they adhere to the standards of *ennomos politeia*, remains *pre-political*. The relationship between two or more national (or regional) political bodies, in other words, resembles Hobbes' *state of war*, defined by rampant competition and aggression. As Kant put it, 'a state of peace among men who live side by side is not the natural state (*status naturalis*), which is rather to be described as a state of war: that is to say, although there is not perhaps always actual open hostility, yet there is a constant threatening that an outbreak may occur.'<sup>95</sup> In response, 'the state of peace must be *established*.'<sup>96</sup> In the Roman/Byzantine context, cities and regions in order to escape war had to create foundations upon which a common transregional *ennomos politeia* (the imperial Byzantine

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<sup>94</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, XIX, 212, 227.

<sup>95</sup> Kant I. 1903: 116-7.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 117.

*politeia*) would be structured.<sup>97</sup> This cosmopolitan *politeia* had to be supervised by a central structure (the *basileus*), whose unifying powers are not arbitrary.<sup>98</sup> Such a structure, according to historical evidence, created environments within which the different cities could collaborate peacefully with one another.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Peter Brown (1989) describes Early Byzantium as an ‘archipelago of cities’. The cities, in Contogeorgis’ (2013) view, were spaces of grassroots decision-making on issues affecting local communities. John the Lydian (fifth century) and Theophanes the Confessor (eighth century) consider Byzantium an agglomeration of regional political bodies of self-government. These bodies were, in a sense, separate *politeias* (states) that had joined forces, establishing a large political union/structure, supervised by a central government (by the *basileus*). The *high authorities* were, therefore, playing a crucial role in holding these semi-autonomous cities (these semi-independent *politeias*) together, forming a universal *ennomos politeia* (to use Procopius’ terms), extended around the shores of the east and central Mediterranean sea.

<sup>98</sup> This depiction of Byzantium as a confederate structure is also echoed in Niketas Choniates’ (thirteenth century) writings regarding the *basileus* as a leader of an alliance between different ‘cities’ rather than a ruler of a centralised territorial state that imposes total control upon regions. For more evidence consider the following works of Georges Contogeorgis: *To Ελληνικό Κοσμοσύστημα* (*The Hellenic Cosmosystem*; translation mine), Volume C (2020), Volume D (2020), and Volume E (2021). Of course, this does not imply that Byzantium was a perfect state of inner peace and unity. El-Cheikh, in her notable *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs* (2004), cites several examples of the inhuman treatment of the inhabitants in Eastern regions by the state. For El-Cheikh, the neglect and brutality the Eastern Byzantines experienced by the Byzantine army itself, constitutes one of the main factors that contributed to the destabilisation of the Empire, leaving Eastern regions vulnerable to Arabic onslaughts. However, there is no evidence suggesting that such types of inhumanity were conducted by law-abiding Emperors, who followed faithfully the principles of *ennomos politeia*. Furthermore, what interests us here is not whether or not all regions of Byzantium could always enjoy peace and protection but to what degree *most* of the subject-cities could cooperate peacefully and if this peace could be attributed to the way the Byzantine *politeia* (as a ‘lawful polity’) was structured. Thus, we are led to the following question: does Byzantium provide us a plausible account of peacemaking? The reasons Eastern regions were vulnerable to the arbitrariness of the Byzantine army will be addressed in another study.

<sup>99</sup> For more concerning the contribution of the Byzantine *ennomos politeia* to the creation of spaces within which cities could peacefully interact see the observations Georges Contogeorgis «*Η δημοκρατία και ο πόλεμος στον Θουκυδίδη*» (‘Democracy and war in Thucydides; my

For Priscus (as I explained earlier) the head of this transregional *ennomos politeia* had to be subject to laws and must not resort to arbitrary coercion.<sup>100</sup> Therefore, an ideal *basileus* must impose unity without relying on violence, which is a *pre-political* way to deal with people. Liberalism has successfully managed to create transnational unions (consider the European Union, for example). However, these institutions are not *political* in the proper sense of this term. More precisely, political theory and history of political thought, as I explained in the Introduction, allows us to shed light on ‘the International Relations canon’ and, more importantly, on the reasons it was constructed as well as on the purposes it serves.<sup>101</sup> Max Morgenthau believed that ‘[l]aw in general and, especially, international law is primarily a static social force. It defines a certain distribution of power and offers standards and processes to ascertain and maintain it in concrete situations.’<sup>102</sup> In contrast, ‘[d]omestic law, through a developed system of legislation, judicial decision, and law enforcement, allows for adaptations and sometimes even considerable changes within the general distribution of power. International law, in the absence of such a system making for lawful change, is ... not only primarily, but essentially, a static force. The invocation of international law, of “order under law,” of “ordinary legal processes” in support of a particular foreign policy, therefore, always indicates the ideological disguise of a policy of the status quo.’<sup>103</sup> We could, therefore, assert that the *proto-political* foundations of western liberalism are disguised in the international relations canon as well as in transnational unions (such as the EU itself). These foundations incorporate

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*translation*). In this work (which has not been translated into English yet), the author suggests that Byzantium satisfied a major demand expressed during the classical age, the unification of city-states as a remedy against *poleocentrism* (that is, against the tendency of city-states to pursue their own self-interested goals even by waging war against others). Hellenistic kingdoms (the same author claims) had very limited success in this endeavour.

<sup>100</sup> Priscus of Pannion, *History*, 11, 490-495.

<sup>101</sup> Bain W., and Nardin T. 2017: 213.

<sup>102</sup> Morgenthau M. 1948: 64.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

only the main prerequisites of a ‘lawful polity’. They can, in this respect, promote peace prospects by protecting societies and individuals from the threats of the (*pre-political*) state of nature. Nonetheless, their *proto-political* nature promotes minimal representation; to a great extent, societies are excluded from law-making procedures (which is left to the judgement of a few elected professional politicians and/or unelected lobby groups). Hence, *proto-political* societies are located only one step above the *pre-political* world of the state of nature. In contrast, a *political* society (that is, an *ennomos politeia*) employs mechanisms that could improve peace prospects by unleashing the potential of men and women to make good decisions. This requires from the same members of the *politeia* to express their ‘will’ *solely* through legal institutions that create milieus within which licentious behaviours are actively prevented. In addition, these institutions are supervised by a central authority led by individuals who exercise *ennomos epistasia* (‘lawful supervision’) (as was the case of the Byzantine *basileus*), who rely on their knowledge in order to assign popular demands to the legal system of the *politeia*. Thus, in the *ennomos politeia* the law and the *populus* are identical. More importantly, the *populus* is even further removed from the *pre-political* state of nature, the state of lawlessness and war. Let us examine, at this stage, how this *ennomos politeia* could extend itself beyond national borders, shifting the international system of status quo towards a *political* direction.

It goes without saying that liberalism has contributed to the pacification of the western world. The end of dictatorial regimes in Greece, Spain and Portugal, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communism in eastern Europe resulted in the expansion of liberalism and marked a welcoming departure from the *pre-political* savageness of authoritarianism (the horrific legacy of the Second World War). However, the pacification of the western world cannot be attributed to liberalism alone. The post-war generation, according to Hannah Arendt, ‘is the first generation to grow up under the shadow of the atom bomb. They inherited from their parents’ generation the experience of a massive intrusion

of criminal violence into politics: they learned in high school and in college about concentration and extermination camps, about genocide and torture, about the wholesale slaughter of civilians in war without which modern military operations are no longer possible even if restricted to "conventional" weapons.'<sup>104</sup> In other words, the trauma of war, the collective memory of mass destruction and suffering shaped a public consensus of aversion towards conditions of living we identify in the *pre-political* state of nature. Francis Fukuyama praised the free market system for enhancing 'political freedom around the globe';<sup>105</sup> free enterprise, he believed, has significantly reduced poverty, elevating the standards of living in the Western world.<sup>106</sup> As he explained, free markets 'have succeeded in producing unprecedented levels of material prosperity, both in industrially developed countries and in countries that had been ... impoverished', reducing conflict (especially among western nations).<sup>107</sup> Free trade has become a means of linking nations together 'peacefully and democratically.'<sup>108</sup>

The liberal system of international order, the free market enterprise and, finally, the memory of destruction and human suffering may have contributed to the pacification of the western world, but the present Russia-Ukraine conflict signalled the beginning of a new age of fear in Europe, marked by a fast accelerating war crisis. This crisis comes to justify Kant's arguments regarding the tendencies of nation-states to wage military attacks against each other, 'violently interfer[ing] with the[ir] constitution and administration,'<sup>109</sup> leading to mass destruction and annihilation, bringing 'about perpetual peace only in the great graveyard of the human race.'<sup>110</sup> But the dread of war, which has carried the fear of nuclear annihilation to new heights, does not come from Russia alone, whose government (according to the western standards) is

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<sup>104</sup> Arendt. 1969: 13-4.

<sup>105</sup> Fukuyama. 1992: xiv.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 190.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, xiii.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>109</sup> Kant. 1903: 112.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 115.



deemed illiberal and expansionist (*pre-political*, in my terms). The euro crisis of the past decade divided the European Union ‘between the core and the peripheral countries within the euro area ... between the euro members (and euro candidates such as Poland and the other «euro-plus countries») and the rest of the EU,’ and finally between EU member-states, candidate access countries and the «European non-west (including Russia, Ukraine and the wider Europe that extends to the greater Caucasus, parts of the Middle East and North Africa.’<sup>111</sup> These divisions, in my view, could be attributed to one of the main weaknesses of the *proto-political* standards of liberalism, upon which the EU itself is founded; its central powers can resort to financial coercion against peripheral states (such as Greece, Spain and Portugal) by imposing harsh restrictions. Peter Becker examines the role of Germany, as a hegemonic force within the European Union, during the euro crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic. The country, he argues, is trying to defend the status quo, and is only prepared to take action if this status quo (or even the existence of the EU itself) appears to be at risk.<sup>112</sup> Germany’s policies, claims Hans Maull, ‘were driven ultimately by the desire to protect European integration and keep the EU together at any cost, not by concerns about German banks or any ambitions for German hegemony.’<sup>113</sup> The criticism Germany has received concerning its tendency to dictate peripheral countries and the EU as a whole in the wake of the euro crisis has some validity.<sup>114</sup> Nonetheless, to see German policies ‘as a return to unilateral *Machtpolitik*,’ to doctrines advocating deployment of physical force and military expansionism, ‘with the aim to exercise German hegemony is misleading,’<sup>115</sup> since Germany’s foreign policy is anchored to the ‘civilian power paradigm,’ which expresses strong ‘willingness to subject its policies to the norms of international law and to integrate itself into [multilateral] supranational

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<sup>111</sup> Pabst, A. 2013: 46.

<sup>112</sup> Becker, P. 2022.

<sup>113</sup> Maull H, 2018: 462.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

institutions.’<sup>116</sup> As it has been already made clear, a *proto-political* environment is not identical with the ‘*State of Licence*’ (to use Locke’s terms again.)<sup>117</sup> Within such an environment arbitrary force, that is, uncontrolled coercion and physical violence, is deemed illegitimate. Thus, within the ‘civilian power paradigm’, within transnational environments that rely on *proto-political* means of cooperation, hegemonic blocks do not resort to military violence in order to implement their own self-interested aspirations. However, they can deploy other means (financial coercion) through which not simply the agreed rules are defended, but also their own prestige and rule over others. In the context of the euro crisis, the use of such means have resulted in the weakening of the EU, as Pabst argued, shifting the dynamic from the centripetal forces to centrifugal forces, cultivating mistrust in the civil society towards the union itself.<sup>118</sup>

This suggests that Europe must be structured upon a different model. Following Pabst’s ideas, I suggest a model of ‘reciprocal power by building a subsidiary polis that connects supranational institutions much more closely to regions, localities, communities and neighbourhoods.’<sup>119</sup> More precisely, we could think of the establishment of a European *res publica*, of a pan-European *ennomos politeia*, whose representatives would constantly be in direct contact with the ‘common people’ in regions and local communities. In line with Kaldellis’ view of the Byzantine *ennomos politeia* as a ‘bottom-up republican’ system of government, as a representative polity that involves popular involvement in law-making procedures, we could propose the creation of structures that will allow the citizens of this pan-European politeia to actively participate in local and regional political decisions. In other words, the ‘common people’ will be able to influence law-making procedures on local and national level.

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid, pp.461-2.

<sup>117</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, II, 6.

<sup>118</sup> Stubbs (2017) seems to agree with this assumption. As he explains, austerity politics provides us a clear example of how hegemonic forces in Europe attempted to discipline the periphery.

<sup>119</sup> Pabst, A. 2013: 47.

As Kant argued, in the state of peace '[t]he civil constitution of each state shall be republican'<sup>120</sup>, founded 'in accordance with the principle of the freedom of the members of society as human beings: secondly, in accordance with the principle of the dependence of all, as subjects, on a common legislation: and, thirdly, in accordance with the law of the equality of the members as citizens.'<sup>121</sup> Such a constitution, for Kant, arises from 'the pure source of the concept of right,'<sup>122</sup> and points to the liberal concept of 'limited government', to a *proto-political* view of freedom, indicating protection from arbitrary coercion. In contrast, a republican - in Kaldellis' sense of the term - constitution, that is, a *political* constitution, arises from the notion of participation; its reception of freedom does not exclusively point to independence, to the liberty of the individual against the arbitrariness of governments; a society is free only when its members become *owners of the state*. This could be effectively accomplished through procedures that seek to open up pathways for the citizens to partake in law-making procedures, considering themselves the true owners of the nation-state. At the same time, national representatives (elected leaders) would have the chance to engage with discussions concerning laws proposed or enacted in different nations by the citizens themselves. Under the guidance of a central authority, they might be able to arrive at a consensus on how such laws could constitute an integral aspect of the common European legal frameworks. This 'bottom-up' cosmopolis, so long as it eliminates *pre-political* forms of interdependence between nations, could offer a brighter future than the present centralised European state under the guise of modern federalism. More importantly, this 'European cosmopolis' could gradually expand itself, allowing non-European and non-western states to join. It will, therefore, replace the standards upon which the present system of international law has been instituted, establishing a brand new paradigm of international relations.

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<sup>120</sup> Kant, I. 1903: 120.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 120-1.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 122.

## Conclusion

The misunderstood (and relatively underexplored) world of Byzantium seems to be a true source of inspiration for us to develop radical ideas for a new paradigm of international relations. Priscus' and Procopius' perspectives are milestones for us to begin thinking about a new paradigm of international order. Of course, liberalism has contributed to the elimination of aggressive forms of competition between nations, creating environments within which states could come together in unison. However, as Bain and Nardin explained, 'many in the field of International Relations have found intellectual history easy to ignore.'<sup>123</sup> They ignore that '[i]ntellectual history makes a contribution to the study of international relations in guiding us not only towards a better grasp of past debates but also towards a better reading of actions, present as well as past, whose meaning is illuminated by the ideas, practices and traditions of the agents performing those actions.'<sup>124</sup> Considering this assumption, the present study examined the ideological/intellectual foundations of western liberalism, highlighting its *proto-political* nature, stressing the need to bring new ideas forward, seeking to improve peace prospects. Of course, the paradigm I have proposed (based on Priscus' and Procopius' depiction of Byzantium as an *ennomos politeia*) does not promise to end all wars. I contend that conflicts, caused by power-struggles, cultural differences and economic disparities, are recurring phenomena. In this respect Kant's assertion that a cosmopolitan right could lead to *perpetual peace*, which 'signifies the end of all hostilities,'<sup>125</sup> seems rather a utopian aspiration. A universal *ennomos politeia*, resembling the Byzantine paradigm, could address issues related to cultural differences and economic deprivation

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<sup>123</sup> Bain W., and Nardin T. 2017: 214. International intellectual history, then, contributes not only to our understanding of history; arguably, it also supports the theoretical enterprise by questioning, shaping and repositioning what is involved in thinking about international relations (ibid).

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 217.

<sup>125</sup> Kant, I. 1903: 107

more effectively than *proto-political* networks of transnational collaboration. This cosmopolis creates spaces capable of eliminating the conditions through which the nastiness of Hobbes' *perpetual war* manifests itself, without offering, on the other hand, guarantees for *perpetual peace*.

Second, the founding principles of such a cosmopolis do not have to rely on Priscus' and Procopius' perspectives exclusively; nor does the legacy of Byzantium alone make up the only source from which we could draw perspectives for improving international relations, beyond the *proto-political* infrastructures of the present system. One could, for example, consider the case of the Persian cosmopolis, of a decentralised commonwealth, founded upon supreme principles of justice, accommodated within a social environment of cultural diversity.<sup>126</sup> The Persian cosmopolis, such as the Byzantine world, buried under many layers of western prejudice, is often considered a violent Asian despotic kingdom. However, as Eaton explains, it was secular justice, rather than religion, the measure of proper governance what allowed Persianised states to flourish throughout central Asia. Finally, one of the main objectives of this new cosmopolitan paradigm (as I explained) is not just to improve existing alliances between nations (such as the European Union) against external threats, but to constantly expand, inviting non-western states to join forces. We could, therefore, broaden our perspectives, welcoming views (capable of contributing to the development of such a universal 'lawful polity') arising from non-western intellectual legacies.

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<sup>126</sup> In regards to this see Usman Hamid and Pasha Khan, *Introduction: Moving across the Persian Cosmopolis* (2017); Richard Eaton, *The Persian Cosmopolis (900–1900) and the Sanskrit Cosmopolis (400–1400)* (2018); *India in the Persianate Age: 1000-1765* (2019).

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## The cognitive grounds of Hobbes' Leviathan

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**Abstract:** Hobbes is inspired by the mechanistic materialism of his time but is not convinced by the validity of empirical knowledge. There is no truth outside language. His own scientific method produces true propositions through rigorous logical processing of both lingual and empirical material. Leviathan is a direct product of this method as applied to the field of politics.

**Keywords:** Leviathan, state of nature, scepticism, language, experience, science, Sovereign, law

*To the antiquity itself I think nothing  
due. If we will reverence the age, the  
present is the oldest.*

Thomas Hobbes

*The actions of men proceed from their opinions.*

Thomas Hobbes

*If men had the use of reason they  
pretend to, their commonwealths might*



*be secured, at least from perishing by  
internal diseases.*

Thomas Hobbes

*The limits of my language mean the  
limits of my world.*

Ludwig Wittgenstein

Thomas Hobbes is considered the founder and foremost representative of modern political philosophy. His political thought amounts to a paradigm shift. *Leviathan*, the work in which his political philosophy finds its fullest and most mature expression, has been called a masterpiece of political philosophy—possibly the only one in the English language.<sup>1</sup> Hobbes engages in dialogue with political writers of antiquity and the Middle Ages and breaks new ground in modern political philosophy. He poses the core question of politics alongside the question of man attempting to transform his scientific political solution to the former into redemption proper as regards the latter. Hobbes attempts the construction of a political universe. To this end, adopting much of the scientific mechanistic thinking of his time, he focuses on the elementary psychic and biological dynamics of man, portraying it as compatible with a restrictive conception of politics, which evolves around the concentration and use of power.<sup>2</sup>

His style is biting, arrogant and dogmatic. Poignant in his polemic, as in his struggle to express himself tersely and with

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Oakeshott, "Introduction to *Leviathan*", *Hobbes on Civil Association*, Liberty Fund, Indianapolis, 1975, 3.

<sup>2</sup> We could argue that Hobbes shrinks the domain of civilization in order to fit it into an equally shrink conception of politics. Researching connections between Hobbes and Machiavelli, Leo Strauss writes about the former: "[...] pedestrian hedonism, sobriety without sublimity and subtlety, protected or made possible by power politics [...]" (Leo Strauss, "What is Political Philosophy?", *An introduction to Political Philosophy*, ed. Halail Gildin, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1989, 50). Michael Oakeshott, on the other hand, discovers a noble magnanimous individualism in Hobbes' image of man.

precision, a gift cultivated through long and painstaking study and thought—Hobbes published his first book at the age of 44. Disputing the cognitive and moral-political skepticism of his time, he seeks solid answers. He rejects the classical Aristotelian tradition and any transcendental grounds. He seeks to be innovative and finds in the spirit of the New Science of Bacon and Galileo the tool he needs, taking it upon himself to further enhance it. The outcome is a sort of *sui generis* Euclidean political vision.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Leo Strauss, trying to determine the position of Hobbesian philosophy in the context of modernity, writes: "His philosophy as a whole may be said to be the classic example of the typically modern combination of political idealism with a materialistic and atheistic view of the whole (Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1953, 170). Leo Strauss places Hobbes together with Machiavelli in the first wave of modernity. The second wave is represented by Rousseau and the third wave by Marx and Nietzsche. According to Strauss, Hobbes systematizes and deepens Machiavelli's revolution. Hobbes, he notes critically, verges on hedonism and undermines the tradition of classical natural law (*ibid.*, 166-202). Oakeshott trisects western political philosophy into three traditions: "The first of these traditions is distinguished by the master-conceptions of Reason and Nature. It is coeval with our civilization [...] The master-conceptions of the second are will and artifice. It too springs from the soil of Greece. [...] The third tradition is of later birth, not appearing until the eighteenth century [...] Its master-concept is the Rational Will. [...] Plato's *Republic* might be chosen as the representative of the first tradition, and Hegel's *Philosophie des Rechts* of the third, so *Leviathan* is the head and crown of the second" (Michael Oakeshott, "Introduction to *Leviathan*", *Hobbes on Civil Association*, Liberty Fund, Indianapolis, 7-8). Oakeshott argues that in Hobbes the natural rights of man (those of survival and felicity) cannot be linked to moral obligation. The source of every moral obligation is the will and power of the sovereign. The view expressed here is that the political sovereign constitutes the moral universe of men. Politics creates morality (*ibid.*, 133-140). Howard Warrender also separates natural rights from moral obligations in Hobbesian theory drawing on the well-known distinction made in 14th chapter of *Leviathan*. But instead of the sovereign, he considers the source of moral obligation in hobbesian theory to be God who "speaks" through the moral law (Howard Warrender, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes. His Theory of Obligation*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000; and Howard Warrender, "A Reply to Mr Plamenatz", *Hobbes Studies*, ed. K. C. Brown ed., Basic Blackwell, Oxford, 1965, 89-100). Sheldon Wolin reads Hobbes in the context of visionary builders of commonwealths, his vision being

The driving force behind Hobbes' endeavor to formulate a diagnosis and treatment of the political and human problem comes down to three constituents. First, his revulsion for and reflection on the bloody religious and national conflicts in Europe and the English Civil War. Second, his critical acceptance of the materialistic, mechanistic spirit of the New Science of Bacon and Galileo. Third, his strong desire to attack generalized skepticism—cognitive, moral and political—which came about in great part as a result of the aforementioned conflicts and scientific achievements.<sup>4</sup> In his

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scientific. He attributes to Hobbes a legalistic spirit while pointing to his early innovative philosophical analysis of language and its crucial role in politics. He blames Hobbes for introducing individualism, which undermines the classical concept of political community (Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision. Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2004, 214-256). C. B. Macpherson, in his influential and controversial interpretation, attributes to Hobbes possessive individualism, an advanced and aggressive free market form of the downing capitalism with afflictive anthropological, political, social and economic consequences (C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism. Hobbes to Locke*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1962, 9-106).

<sup>4</sup> In more detail, the emphasis in the republican ideal was weekend during the transition from the 15th to the 16th century by the tragic social and religious conflicts leading to the questioning of every moral and political principle. This eventually developed into early modern skepticism, Montaigne being perhaps its best known representative. A key target of skepticism was Aristotle and his belief in the validity of sensory knowledge and the ability of formal reasoning to provide true knowledge of the world. In this context, the Machiavellian realistic view of history and politics took shape. At the turn of the 17th century, the opposition to Aristotle still existed alongside these crystallizations of political realism. It was then that the humanist and still young Hobbes translated Thucydides. Later, in Paris, he came into contact with Cartesian philosophy and the project of overcoming skepticism without returning to Aristotle. Hobbes was influenced and inspired by Descartes' attempt to transcend skepticism by stepping on the latter's radical method of doubt. Descartes relied on the certainty of the cogito and the innate idea of God (i.e., God's certain existence) as a guarantee against the deception of senses. Hobbes criticizes Descartes' solution. Innate ideas are not possible and the existence of God cannot be proven, as it is a logical hypothesis of the mind. Hobbes will look to mathematics for the weapon to attack skepticism (see Richard Tuck, *Hobbes*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1989, 1-27).

theory of knowledge, he introduces a new description of the function of reasoning, emphasizing the role played by language. His anthropology also brings something new with his famous description of the state of nature, where human beings as solitary individuals inevitably end up in conflict and misery, even though they own a natural unlimited right to self-preservation and felicity. In his political philosophy, Hobbes rejects any transcendental (religious or naturalistic) definition of politics, assigning it to the technical ingenuity of humans with secular—and rather self-evident—motives and goals. Hobbes criticizes and rejects the teleology and perfectionism of the classics: “There is no [...] *finis ultimus*, utmost aim, nor *summum bonum*, greatest good, as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers”.<sup>5</sup> He is on the verge of the naturalistic fallacy, describing the natural human existence materialistically and mechanistically and deriving from it the fundamental and humble right of survival.

Hobbes begins his analysis of human nature by adopting the basic doctrine of empiricism: “there is no conception in a man’s mind, which hath not at first, totally, or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense. The rest are derived from that original”.<sup>6</sup> The cause of sensation is something external “which presses the organ proper to each sense”.<sup>7</sup> Hobbes then refers to internal transmutations of sensory material. Here we find imagination and memory: “[The] decaying sense, when we would express the thing itself, I mean fancy itself, we call imagination, [...] but when we would express the decay, and signify that the sense is fading, old, and past, it is called memory”.<sup>8</sup> In the human mind there is nothing but

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan or the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil*, ed. Michael Oakeshott, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1946, ch. 11, p. 63. [Hereafter *Leviathan*, 11, 63].

<sup>6</sup> *Leviathan*, 1, 7.

<sup>7</sup> *Leviathan*, 1, 7. We can clearly see here Hobbes’s adoption of the fundamental principle of mechanistic materialism, according to which a material body acts upon another material body only by coming into physical contact with it and pushing it.

<sup>8</sup> *Leviathan*, 2, 10.

sensations, thoughts and successions of thoughts.<sup>9</sup> Deviating from the Aristotelian tradition as regards the reliability of sense, Hobbes adopts a skeptical stance stating that "[...] though at some certain distance, the real and very object seem invested with the fancy it begets in us; yet still the object is one thing, the image or fancy is another. So that sense, in all cases, is nothing else but original fancy".<sup>10</sup> There is no way for man to come to unmediated "objective" contact with the outside world. He remains imprisoned in the cave of the mind with nothing but the shadows of things presented to him by sense, memory and imagination. He is "by nature, the victim of solipsism".<sup>11</sup> This cognitive subjectivism is followed by volitional subjectivism. Hobbes writes: "[...] the inclinations of men are diverse [...] as we may see in those things we apprehend by sense, as by tasting, touching, smelling". And volitional subjectivism in turn gives way to moral subjectivism, which manifests itself in terms of hedonism.

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<sup>9</sup> *Leviathan*, 4, 17.

<sup>10</sup> *Leviathan*, 1, 8. At another point, Hobbes, recalling Descartes's anxious effort to find a cognitive foundation through the questioning of everything, writes:

In the teaching of Natural Philosophy, I cannot begin better [...] than from privation? that is, from feigning the world to be annihilated. But, if such annihilation of all things be supposed, it may perhaps be asked, what would remain for any man [...] There would remain to that man ideas of the world, and of such bodies as he had [...] seen with his eyes, or perceive by any other sense? that is to say, the memory and imagination of magnitudes, motions, sounds, colors, as well as of their order and parts. [...] Yet they will appear as if they were external [...] and these are the things to which he would give names, and subtract them from, and compound them with one another. [...] There can be nothing for him to think of but what is past. [...] Though all things be still remaining in the world, yet we compute nothing but our own phantasms" (Thomas Hobbes, "Of Place and Time", *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, vol. 1, ed. W. Molesworth, London, 1839, 91-92).

<sup>11</sup> Oakeshott, op. cit., 93.

Every man, for his own part, calleth that which pleaseth, and is delightful to himself, good; and that evil which displeaseth him: insomuch that while every man differeth from other in constitution, they differ also one from another concerning the common distinction of good and evil. Nor is there any such thing as agathon aplox, that is to say, simply good.<sup>12</sup>

The element of subjectivism has a decisively negative role in the state of nature. In It leads people to selfish one-sidedness and undermines communication between them. The same thing or situation is understood and evaluated differently and even contrastingly by each one, which intensifies competition and conflicts. Subjectivism feeds selfishness and especially the passion for glory.<sup>13</sup>

Reading further into Hobbes's analysis of knowledge and truth, we come across a fundamental separation. According to Hobbes, "there are of knowledge two kinds; whereof one is of fact: the other knowledge of the consequence of one affirmation to another".<sup>14</sup>

The first kind of knowledge has its source in repeated experiences and makes it possible to make predictions, however risky these may be. It is acquired through a processes of mechanistic, non-conscious induction. In most occasions Hobbes calls this knowledge "prudence" and argues that it is also found in animals. He writes: "[Prudence] is not attained by reasoning, but found as well in brute beasts as in

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, ed. Ferdinand Tönnies, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1928, part 1, ch. 7, par. 3 [Hereafter *Elements of Law*, 1, 7, 3].

<sup>13</sup> "So that in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel. First, competition; secondly, diffidence; thirdly, glory. The first, maketh men 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" (*Leviathan*, 13, 81-82).

<sup>14</sup> *Leviathan*, 9, 53. It is important that events also subsumes historical events.

man; and is but a memory of successions of events in times past, wherein the omission of every little circumstance altering the effect, frustrateth the expectation of the most prudent”.<sup>15</sup> At another point he writes about prudence: “Sometimes a man desires to know the event of an action and then he thinks of some like action past, and the events thereof one after another supposing like events will follow like actions”. And he concludes that “[...] such conjecture, through the difficulty of observing all circumstances” could “be very fallacious”.<sup>16</sup>

The second kind of knowledge or truth is found in the territory of language: “The first truths were arbitrarily made by those that first of all imposed names upon things, or received them from the imposition of others”.<sup>17</sup> We read in *Leviathan*:

There is a certain *philosophia prima*, on which all other philosophy ought to depend; and consisteth principally, in right limiting of the significations of such appellations, or names, as are of all others the most universal; which limitations serve to avoid ambiguity and equivocation in reasoning; and are commonly called definitions; such as are the definitions of body, time, place, matter, form, essence, subject, substance, accident, power, act, finite, infinite, quantity, quality, motion, action, passion, and divers others, necessary to the explaining of a man’s conceptions concerning the nature and generation of bodies. The explication, that is, the settling of the meaning, of which, and the like terms, is commonly in the Schools called *metaphysics* [...].<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Leviathan*, 45, 435-436.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, 15-16.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Hobbes, “Of Proposition”, *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, vol. 1, ed. W. Molesworth, London, 1839, 36.

<sup>18</sup> *Leviathan*, 46, 440. The *philosophia prima* according to Aristotle (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1003a21-22) studies Existence in its entirety, the ontological background of all that is as such (being qua being). It investigates the first causes and fundamental principles of existing beings (*ibid.*, 982b9-10). In Hobbes this research takes the form of “right

It is crucial that the fundamental semantic definitions to the maximum extend are beyond question. If not so, the subsequent process of reasoning based on them loses credibility, as its causal consequence alone is not enough. The process and nature of reasoning is described as follows by Hobbes:

When a man reasoneth, he does nothing else but conceive a sum total, from addition of parcels; or conceive a remainder, from subtraction of one sum from another; which, if it be done by words, is conceiving of the consequence of the names of all the parts, to the name of the whole; or from the names of the whole and one part, to the name of the other part. [...] These operations are not incident to numbers only, but to all manner of things that can be added together, and taken one out of another. [...] the logicians teach the same in consequences of words; adding together two names to make an affirmation, and two affirmations to make a syllogism; and many syllogisms to make a demonstration; and from the sum, or conclusion of a syllogism, they subtract one proposition to find the other. Writers of politics add together factions to find men's duties; [...] In sum, in what matter soever there is place for addition and subtraction, there also is place for reason; and where these have no place, there reason has nothing at all to do.<sup>19</sup>

Reasoning in Hobbes is a mental tool and not a substance that directly provides or reveals truths. It is a mathematical treatment of linguistic references which produces conclusions

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limiting of the significations of such appellations, or names, as are of all others the most universal". Ultimate reality is enclosed within the semantic dimension of language. Here we have no empirical verification procedure as an alternative to Aristotle's essentialism. We could say that we have a "scientific" metaphysics in place of "pre-scientific" metaphysics.

<sup>19</sup> *Leviathan*, 5, 25. Oakeshott writes: "For Hobbes, to think philosophically is to reason. Philosophy is reasoning" (op. cit., 17)



that are accepted as absolutely certain by convention.<sup>20</sup> The process of initial rigorous determinations, subsequent rigorous reasoning and reaching conclusions is called science:

[...] first in apt imposing of names; and secondly by getting a good and orderly method in proceeding from the elements, which are names, to assertions made by connexion of one of them to another; and so to syllogisms, which are the connexions of one assertion to another, till we come to a knowledge of all the consequences of names appertaining to the subject in hand; and that is it, men call Science.<sup>21</sup>

Hobbes attributes a similar process to philosophy: “Philosophy is defined to be the knowledge of effects acquired by true ratiocination, from knowledge first had of their causes and generation; And of such causes or generation as may be, from former knowledge of their effects or appearances”.<sup>22</sup> This scientific and philosophical knowledge is not empirical knowledge but formally sound logical production of propositions from verbal terms and propositions from other propositions. Hobbes does not accept empirical knowledge—even experimental knowledge—as true knowledge.<sup>23</sup> Real science is confined at the level of language and meanings. Truth is judged by the internal correctness of

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<sup>20</sup> However, he sometimes seems to forget the conventional character of the conclusions:” “[...] nothing is produced by reasoning aright, but general, eternal, and immutable truth” [...] nothing is produced by reasoning aright, but general, eternal, and immutable truth” (*Leviathan*, 45, 435).

<sup>21</sup> *Leviathan*, 5, 29.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Hobbes, “Of Sense and Animal Motion”, *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, vol. 1, ed. W. Molesworth, London, 1839, 387. In Hobbes’ time, philosophy and science had not yet been separated. For the confusion between science, philosophy and mathematics in Hobbes, see Wolin, op. cit. p. 224-225; Oakeshott, op. cit. 19.

<sup>23</sup> “Experience concludeth nothing universally. If the signs hit twenty times for once missing, a man may lay a wager of twenty to one of the event; but may not conclude it for a truth” (*Elements of Law*, 1, 4, 10). See Richard Tuck, *Hobbes*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1989, 49-50.

the logical connection of propositions and words.<sup>24</sup> The reasoning process possesses certainty when it has a demonstrable character, in accordance to the model of mathematical reasoning. Demonstrability is synonymous with the logical production of certain knowledge. Hobbes writes:

Of arts, some are demonstrable, others indemonstrable; and demonstrable are those the construction of the subject whereof is in the power of the artist himself, who, in his demonstration, does no more but deduce the consequences of his own operation. The reason whereof is this, that the science of every subject is derived from a precognition of the causes, generation, and construction of the same; and consequently where the causes are known, there is place for demonstration, but not where the causes are to seek for. Geometry therefore is demonstrable, for the lines and figures from which we reason are drawn and described by ourselves; and civil philosophy is demonstrable, because we make the commonwealth ourselves. But because of natural bodies we know not the construction, but seek it from the effects, there lies no demonstration of what the causes be we seek for, but only of what they may be.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Hobbes characteristically writes: "Truth is the same with a true Proposition" (Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive. English Version*, ed. Howard Warrender, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987, ch. 18, par. 4). [Hereafter *De Cive*, 18, 4].

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Hobbes, "Six Lessons to the Professors of the Mathematics", *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, vol. 7, ed. W. Molesworth, London, 1839, 183-184. A short time later, John Locke will include "demonstrative knowledge" in the category of certain knowledge, but in a subordinate position to "intuitive knowledge", as it is less clear and distinct. According to him, ideas are cognitively more solid entities than the words attached to them. Ideas, products of the senses, are in a closer and more direct relationship with "things" and represent them in a more reliable way. Locke partially accepts that sense is reliable and that ideas correspond to things (John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. Niddich, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1975, 4, 4, 4). According to him, ideas are cognitively more solid entities than words

Hobbes argues that science or art acquire their demonstrative character when their first principles can be established conventionally or arbitrarily by man himself (as a divine creation) by an act which makes them known and certain. In this sense, geometry and political philosophy are demonstrative, while physical science is not. Since natural

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attached to them. Ideas, products of the senses, are in a closer and more direct relationship with “things” and represent them in a more reliable way. Locke partially accepts that sense is reliable and that ideas correspond to things (*ibid.*, 4, 4, 4). The word represents the idea, that is, it represents the representative of the thing. The word stands in a more distant and indirect relation to things. According to Locke, words are often and easily misused resulting in error (John Locke, *Essay*, 3, 10, 1-34). He questions their role, in contrast to Hobbes’s tendency to base the entire cognitive process on them. In Locke, clarity and distinctness of ideas and relationships between them provide true, certain knowledge, as in Descartes. Locke speaks of “perfect clearness and distinctness” of intuitive knowledge (*ibid.*, 4, 2, 6). According to him, “Knowledge [...] seems to me to be nothing but the perception of the connexion and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our Ideas” (*ibid.*, 4, 1, 2). When “perfect clarity and distinctness” is not possible in the agreement or disagreement of two ideas, that is, when the mind cannot achieve the highest degree of knowledge, intuitive knowledge, it turns to the second choice of certain knowledge, i.e. demonstrative knowledge. Locke puts it this way:

When the Mind cannot so bring its Ideas together, as by their immediate Comparison, and as it were Juxta-position, or application one to another, to perceive their Agreement or Disagreement, it is fain, by the Intervention of other Ideas (one or more, as it happens) to discover the Agreement or Disagreement, which it searches; and this is that which we call Reasoning. [...] Certainty depends so wholly on this Intuition, that in the next degree of Knowledge, which I call Demonstrative, this intuition is necessary in all the Connexions of the intermediate Ideas, without which we cannot attain Knowledge and Certainty (*ibid.*, 4, 2, 1-2).

For both Locke and Hobbes then, reasoning is an important part of science and knowledge. In Locke, however, reasoning contains the element of intuition, which appears at every step of its course and supports it. Intuition is related to the criterion of clarity and distinctness. This criterion is both logical and empirical. The demonstrative potential of reasoning is not purely logical, as in Hobbes, who rejects experience as a criterion of true knowledge. Mathematical logic in Locke is important, it offers truth and certainty, but it has limits.

beings (whose ultimate causes are unknown or hypothetical) pre-exist natural science, the latter has no option but to comply and operate demonstratively on the basis of first principles, hypothetical and imposed by nature. Speaking of natural science elsewhere, Hobbes is more illuminating:

[Physics] is the finding out by the appearances or effects of nature, which we know by sense, some ways and means by which they may be, I do not say they are, generated. The principles, therefore, upon which the following discourse depends, are not such as we ourselves make and pronounce in general terms, as definitions; but such, as being placed in the things themselves by the Author of Nature, are by us observed in them; and we make use of them in single and particular, not universal propositions. Nor do they impose upon us any necessity of constituting theorems.<sup>26</sup>

In natural science, therefore, the validity of the demonstrative process is undermined from the outset. In geometry and political philosophy, however, the first principles are cognitively completely transparent, since they were constructed and established exclusively by the disciplines themselves. It was a human mind that formulated the axioms of demonstrative Euclidean geometry, and a human mind can also formulate transparent principles for building a state. Consequently, formally correct causal reasoning based on such principles can produce demonstrable conclusions. Experience, here, seems to have no involvement at all.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Thomas Hobbes, "Of Sense and Animal Motion", *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, vol. 1, ed. W. Molesworth, London, 1839, 388.

<sup>27</sup> This evokes in Locke's own attempt to show that moral propositions are demonstrable in the same way that mathematical propositions are. Locke relies on mixed modes them being non-empirical, constructed solely by the mind itself. We find something similar in Locke in his attempt to show the provable character of moral propositions according to the model of mathematical propositions. Locke relies on mixed modes which are non-empirical ideas and constructed exclusively by the mind

The most certain scientific knowledge of geometry and political philosophy is not innate but acquired: “[...] reason not, as sense and memory, born with us; nor gotten by experience only, as prudence is; but attained by industry”.<sup>28</sup>

This means that in the natural state people generally cannot develop reason, at least en masse. In the state of nature, because of the *bellum omnium contra omnes*, “there is [...] no arts; no letters; no society”.<sup>29</sup> In this worlike environment there is no education, positive laws or any agent enforcing natural law. Hobbes describes natural law as follows:

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 taketh away the means of preserving the same; and to omit that, by which he thinketh it may be best preserved.<sup>30</sup>

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itself (John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. Nidditch, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1975, 4, 3, 18).

<sup>28</sup> *Leviathan*, 5, 29.

<sup>29</sup> Deviating from the Aristotelian tradition of natural sociability, Hobbes writes: “Man is made fit for Society not by Nature, but by Education” (*De Cive*, 1, 2). Nevertheless, people in the natural state he describes have an empirical mechanistic logic (prudence) and language. This is an indication that there is some kind of relationship between them. There is a rudimentary natural “society” of unsociable people. Hobbes speaks of a stable family in the natural state (Richard Allen Chapman, “Leviathan Writ Small: Thomas Hobbes on the Family”. *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 69, No 1, 1975, 76-90). But also, exercise of power between people is, in the last analysis, a form of relationship between them.

<sup>30</sup> *Leviathan*, 14, 84: The first two and fundamental laws of nature are described as follows:

Every man, ought to endeavour 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, containeth 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. From this fundamental law of nature, by which men

Natural law is discovered by reason, which means it is scientific or philosophical knowledge. Therefore, it is difficult to know it and observe it in the state of nature, since people there generally do not develop themselves cognitively beyond prudence. Besides, natural law only obligates *in foro interno* and, thus, its observance depends on the will or ability of the people themselves. According to Hobbes, "The laws of nature [...] are not properly laws, but qualities that dispose men to peace and obedience".<sup>31</sup> The voluntarist Hobbes, introducing a kind of early legal positivism, grounds real law more in the will of the legislator than in its moral content. While natural laws have a broad moral dimension ("consist in equity justice, gratitude and other moral virtues"<sup>32</sup>), they do not obligate *in foro externo*, in other words they are not laws in the full sense of the term, unlike positive laws:

When a commonwealth is once settled, then are they actually laws, and not before; [...] for it is the sovereign power that obliges men to obey them. [...] Reciprocally also, the civil law is a part of the dictates of nature. For justice, that is to say, performance of covenant, and giving to every man his own, is a dictate of the law of nature [...] and

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are commanded to endeavour peace, is derived this second law; that a man be willing, when others are so too, as far-forth, as for peace, and defence 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. [...] 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. (*Leviathan*, 14, 83)

At another point Hobbes summarizes natural laws in the golden rule of ethics: "The laws of nature therefore need not any publishing, nor proclamation; as being contained in this one sentence, approved by all the world, Do not that to another, which thou thinkest unreasonable to be done by another to thyself" (*Leviathan*, 26, 177).

<sup>31</sup> *Leviathan*, 26, 174.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

therefore obedience to the civil law is part also of the law of nature.<sup>33</sup>

Observance of the natural law and consequently moral behavior is fulfilled through the observance of the positive law.<sup>34</sup> Humanity's non-observance of natural law in the state of nature paradoxically contradicts the usual association of the famous Hobbesian anthropological pessimism with the natural state. Indeed, in the state of nature the behavior of many people outwardly resembles the behavior of people who exhibit malice within lawful society. In general, people in a social environment are presented by Hobbes in an Augustinian manner as morally deficient (but without the Fall).<sup>35</sup> But such behavior in the natural state cannot be characterized as morally deficiency since people at that early stage are generally incapable of manifesting any kind of morality.<sup>36</sup> Human behavior in natural conditions results from the synergy of external material data with the psychobiological traits of human nature. It is only takes a small number of people to exhibit aggressive behavior (regardless of the cause) for that to be generalized by the need for others to respond accordingly based on their natural

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<sup>33</sup> *Leviathan*, 26, 174. In this key passage, the voluntarism and conventionalism prevalent in Hobbes's work is full revealed. Elsewhere he relates natural and positive laws as follows: "Natural are those which have been laws from all eternity; and are called not only natural, but also moral laws; consisting in the moral virtues, as justice, equity, and all habits of the mind that lead to peace, and charity; [...] Positive, are those which have not been from eternity; but have been made laws by the will of those who have had the sovereign power over others; and are either written, or made known to men, by some other argument of the will of their legislator" (*Leviathan*, 26, 186).

<sup>34</sup> "Civil law is to every subject, those rules, which the commonwealth hath commanded him, [...] for the distinction of right, and wrong; that is to say, of what is contrary, and what is not contrary to the rule" (*Leviathan*, 26, 173).

<sup>35</sup> For example, he says that men "naturally love liberty, and dominion over others" (*Leviathan*, 17, 109).

<sup>36</sup> On Hobbes's "anthropological pessimism" in relation to the natural state, see Michael Oakeshott, "Introduction to *Leviathan*", *Hobbes on Civil Association*, Liberty Fund, Indianapolis, 1975, 63-64; and Richard Tuck, op. cit., 55.

right to survival. L'enfer, c'est les autres. This behavior is generalized by the very dynamics of the system governing the state of nature. In the state of nature the machine of nature is defective. The equal power of people,<sup>37</sup> their natural right or freedom to satisfy their natural needs and to pursue survival by any means,<sup>38</sup> the scarcity of sought-after goods,<sup>39</sup> and subjectivism (cognitive, volitional, moral)<sup>40</sup> constitute, in combination with each other, an explosive mixture that leads to the condition of *homo homini lupus*. "Nature itself is the author of (man's) ruin".<sup>41</sup> This situation is summarized by

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<sup>37</sup> "Nature hath made men so equal, in the faculties of the body [...] From this equality of ability, ariseth 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, endeavour to destroy, or subdue one another" (*Leviathan*, 13, 80-81).

<sup>38</sup> "The right of nature, which writers commonly call *jus naturale*, 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 any thing, which in his own judgment, and reason, he shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto" (*Leviathan*, 14, 84). Elsewhere Hobbes is more specific: "[...] before the institution of commonwealth, every man had a right to every thing, and to do whatsoever he thought necessary to his own preservation; subduing, hurting, or killing any man in order thereunto" (*Leviathan*, 28, 203).

<sup>39</sup> "From this equality of ability, ariseth 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, endeavour to destroy, or subdue one another" (*Leviathan*, 13, 81).

<sup>40</sup> "All men in the State of nature have a desire, and will to hurt, but not proceeding from the same cause, neither equally to be condemn'd; for one man according to that naturall equality which is among us, permits as much to others, as he assumes to himself (which is an argument of a temperate man, and one that rightly values his power); another, supposing himselfe above others, a will have a License to doe what he lists, a and challenges Respect, and Honour, as due to him before others, (which is an Argument of a fiery spirit). This mans will to hurt ariseth from Vain glory, and the false esteeme he hath of his owne strength; the other 's, from the necessity of defending himselfe, his liberty, and his goods against this mans violence" (*De Cive*, 1, 4).

<sup>41</sup> Michael Oakeshott, op. cit., 38.



Hobbes in a famous passage, according to which man experiences “continual fear, and danger of violent death” and his life is in general “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short”.<sup>42</sup> If the necessary and sought-after goods were available in sufficient abundance, people’s behavior might have been different. Man in the state of nature is not so much bad in himself as trapped in problematic relationships with the environment and other people. In the context of these relationships he is objectively unable to survive or live without terror, misery and indignity. As Michael Oakeshott puts it: “the predicament for Hobbes is actually caused, not by an internal defect in human nature, but by something that becomes a defect when a man is among men”.<sup>43</sup> Man in natural condition is a victim, regardless of his outward behavior. His cognitive deficiency and the consequent absence of a moral dimension in his actions remove from him any moral responsibility for the sufferings in the state of nature and his own. Hobbes himself states that “because [men] receive not their education and use of reason from nature” we cannot say “that men are naturally evil”.<sup>44</sup>

According to Hobbes, “all men as soon as they arrive to the understanding of this hateful condition, doe desire (even nature it selfe compelling them) to be freed from this misery. But that this cannot be done except by compact”.<sup>45</sup> The state

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<sup>42</sup> *Leviathan*, 13, 82.

<sup>43</sup> Michael Oakeshott, “Introduction to *Leviathan*”, *Hobbes on Civil Association*, *ibid.*, 63-64.

<sup>44</sup> *De Cive*, Preface, 33. This comment by Hobbes should deter Rousseau, the most famous exponent of the “natural goodness” of man, from criticizing Hobbes for “[including] in savage man’s care for his self-preservation the need to satisfy a multitude of passions which are the product of society” (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Discours on the Origins of Inequality”, *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, vol. 3, transl. & eds Christopher Kelly & Allan Bloom, Dartmouth College Press, Hanover and London, 1992, 35).

<sup>45</sup> *De Cive*, Preface, p. 34. The analogy with Rousseau’s statement is interesting: “By leaving the state of nature, we force our fellows to leave it, too. No one can remain in it in spite of the others, and it would really be leaving it to want to remain when it is impossible to live there, for the first law of nature is the care of preserving oneself (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Emile or on Education”, *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*,

of nature is the basis of the scientific conception and description of Leviathan. Hobbes needs a critical mass of premises that can support his political edifice. The state of nature is a set of solid initial definitions on the conditions of human life that inevitably prevail outside society. On this basis, Hobbes will unfold the nexus of institutions and behaviors in *Leviathan* in a strictly logical manner. As we have said, Leviathan is meant to be a political solution to the human problem as a whole. This resolution is only possible because man has language. Language, according to Hobbes, stabilizes the fluid content of the mind and gives man the ability to meditate on himself, that is, to reflect.<sup>46</sup> The exit from the state of nature and the coming of Leviathan is a product of humanity's reflection. Thus the experience of the state of nature is linguistically formulated as "man's problem".

But here a methodological issue arises. According to Hobbes, as we have seen, certain knowledge presupposes "a priori" formation of initial lingual determinations of the type of Euclidean axiomatic assumptions. Hobbes states that state-building (like Euclidean geometry) can be accomplished on the basis of arbitrary initial assumptions set exclusively by the builder himself, since the work is his own in both cases. It does not require the mediation of experience, which is crucial in natural science and defines it. On this, Hobbes is not consistent. Commenting on his own construction of Leviathan, he states that he grounds "the civil right of sovereigns, and both the duty and liberty of subjects, upon the known natural inclinations of mankind, and upon the articles of the law of nature".<sup>47</sup>

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vol. 13, transl. & eds Christopher Kelly & Allan Bloom, Dartmouth College Press, Hanover and London, 2010, 342).

<sup>46</sup> "Language [...] makes introspection possible" (Michael Oakeshott, op. cit., 23).

<sup>47</sup> *Leviathan*, "A Review and Conclusion", 465-466. In *De Cive* he writes on this: "Concerning my Method, I thought it not sufficient to use a plain and evident style in what I had to deliver, except I took my beginning from the very matter of civill government, and then proceeded to its generation, and form, and the first beginning of justice; for every thing is best understood by its constitutive causes; for as in a watch, or some such small engine, the matter, figure, and motion of the wheels,

The natural inclinations of mankind is an empirical fact that determines the definitions to a certain extent. This reliance on empirical facts is a feature of natural science, as we have seen. Evaluating such references in Hobbes, Leo Strauss concludes that he ultimately regards political science an empirical science distinct from the more “pure” sciences of demonstration. Leo Strauss probably overemphasizes the role of experience in political science: “At any rate, Hobbes emphatically stated that political science may be based on, or consist of, ‘experience’ as distinguished from ‘demonstrations’”.<sup>48</sup> In fact, by describing the epistemological status of political science, Hobbes introduces a third category of science, which combines natural science with the pure sciences of certainty modeled on Euclidean geometry. In political science, the original definitions are affected by empirical data, but not to the decisive extent of the natural sciences. These empirical data are in turn subject to the free interpretative action of the political scientist. This position is closer to that of Sheldon Wolin. According to him, in relation to the “nature” of natural science “the ‘nature’ of politics [...] permitted a freer hand in imposing names and assigning meanings”.<sup>49</sup>

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cannot well be known, except it be taken in sunder, and viewed in parts; so t make a more curious search into the rights of States, and duties of Subjects, it is necessary, (I say not to take them in sunder, but yet that) they be so considered, as if they were dissolved, (i.e.) that we rightly understand what the quality of human nature is, in what matters it is, in what is not fit to make up a civill government, and how men must be agreed among themselves, that intend to grow up into a well-grounded State” (“The Preface”, 32).

<sup>48</sup> Leo Strauss, op. cit., 174 n.

<sup>49</sup> Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, ibid., 221.

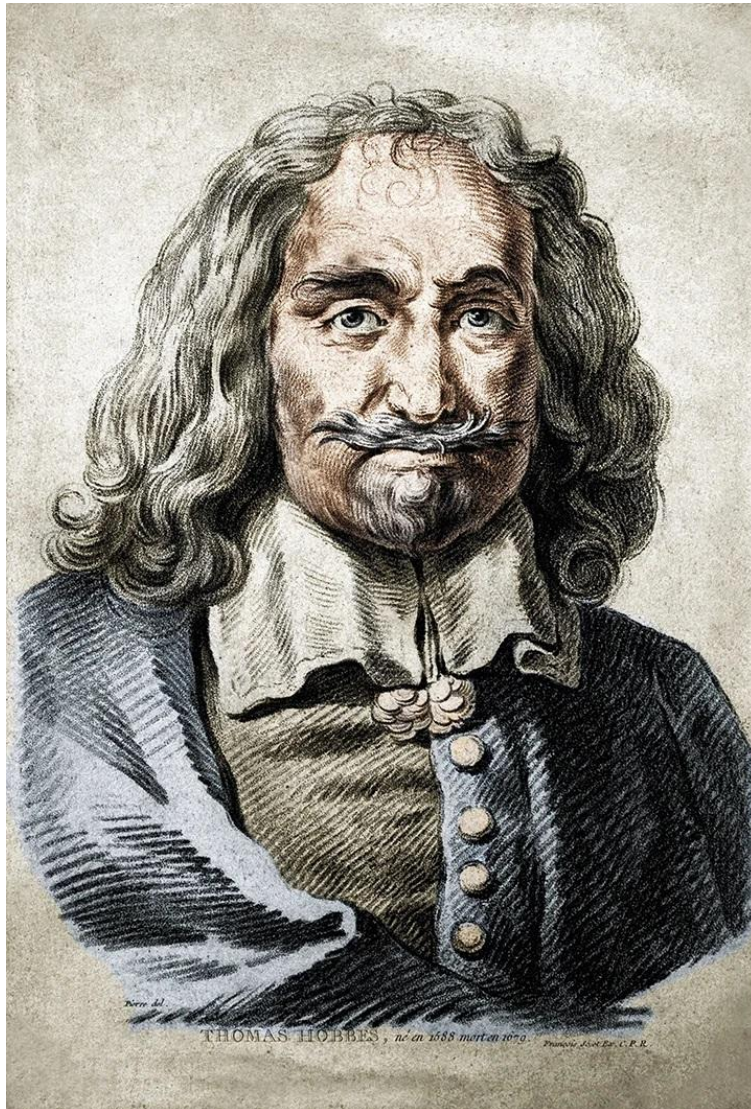
## Conclusion

Hobbesian political science tries to solve the problem of man's existence in the world: man, while he is not and cannot be social, cannot survive or be happy outside society. This paradoxical and tragic situation, which is revealed to us by experience, enters language. It is called "state of nature" or "natural condition". After articulating it lingually, Hobbes subjects it to a process of reasoning, using as guiding thread the basic principle of self-preservation. The solution is called Leviathan. Leviathan is an unprecedented society of unsociable people, which has the ability to preserve itself and secure its members' survival with the least cost in pleasure.

Hobbes himself succinctly describes the problem, its solution, and their logical relationship:

The final cause, end, or design of men, who naturally love liberty, and dominion over others, in the introduction of that restraint upon themselves, in which we see them live in commonwealths, is the foresight of their own preservation, and of a more contented life thereby; that is to say, of getting themselves out from that miserable condition of war, which is necessarily consequent, as hath been shown, to the natural passions of men, when there is no visible power to keep them in awe, and tie them by fear of punishment to the performance of their covenants, and observation of (the) laws of nature. [...] For the laws of nature, as *justice, equity, modesty, mercy* and in sum *doing to others as we would be done to*, of themselves, without the terror of some power, to cause them to be observed, are contrary to our natural passions, that carry tis to partiality, pride, revenge, and the like. And covenants, without the sword, are but words, and of no strength to secure a man at all. Therefore notwithstanding the laws of nature (which every one hath then kept, when he has the will to keep them, when he can do it safely) if there be no power

erected, or not great enough for our security; every man will, and may lawfully rely on his own strength and art, for caution against all other men.<sup>50</sup>



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<sup>50</sup> *Leviathan*, 17, 109.

## Hobbes' hedonism in front of classical hedonism and the free market way out

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**Abstract:** In this inquiry, it becomes evident that Hobbes' hedonism differs essentially from all the theoretical approaches of classical hedonism. The most important differentiation lies in the issue of rationality. Ancient Greek hedonism in all its manifestations cannot be separated from the rational function as a structural feature of the human existence. Any conception of bliss as pleasure presupposes the rational distinction and choice of pleasures. For Hobbes the free market is the equivalent of the natural condition, a space of insatiable fulfillment of one desire after another. Possessive individualism, greedy expansion over the others and continuous transition from one pleasure to another find their justification in this vast economic becoming. The state upholds its founding goal of self-preservation and the safety of its citizens, while the free market gives the prospect of achieving bliss as hedonistic vanity and domination over others.

**Keywords:** hedonism, political philosophy, philosophy of economics, rationalism, human nature, pleasure, moral philosophy.

### The real classic background of hedonism: Democritus

Classical hedonism was born at the same time as classical materialism, i.e. with the atomics and specifically with Democritus. In fact, the primary appearance of hedonism is also the most complete in relation to its later expressions, such as Epicurean or Cyrenaic hedonism. The superiority of the atomic hedonistic theory over later theories is assumed:

1) From its ontological foundation: According to Democritus, every physical inanimate or living natural entity consists of atoms, particles of matter and vacuum, it is a combination of different shape, number, size and quality of atoms. Every form or perception is the reception of the combinations of the void atoms<sup>1</sup>.

2) From its incorporation into a natural philosophy of motion and change: A whirling vortex set in motion an infinite number of unchanged atoms, and since then nature has been in a state of perpetual motion and change. Every movement is due to the causal change of one body from another. Nature is a continuous movement of the atoms-elements of matter in the vacuum under the rule of causality and necessity, the necessary interaction between the elements of matter<sup>2</sup>.

3) From a biological interpretation of the human condition: Man, in turn, is a union of different atoms, he is a composite body of atoms and vacuum, he is a microcosm in analogy to the macrocosm<sup>3</sup>. Every part of his body, every organ is made

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Democr. A. 1, A. 42, A. 47, A. 49, A. 58, A. 124, A. 165, B. 9, B.117, B. 125 DK.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Democr. A. 1, A. 38, A. 69, A. 83, B. 5 DK.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Democr. B. 34 DK: *καὶ ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ μικρῷ κόσμῳ ὄντι κατὰ τὸν Δημόκριτον*. "And to "man, who is a small world" according to Democritus". B. 34b: *ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ζῶιον οἷον μικρόν τινα κόσμον εἶναι φασιν ἄνδρες παλαιοὶ περὶ φύσιν ἱκανοί*. "But also, every living being seems to constitute a small world, claim the old wise men, skilled connoisseurs of nature". Cf. Arist. *Phys.* 252b.24: *εἰ δ' ἐν ζῳῳ τοῦτο δυνατόν γενέσθαι, τί κωλύει τὸ αὐτὸ συμβῆναι καὶ κατὰ τὸ πᾶν; εἰ γὰρ ἐν μικρῷ κόσμῳ γίγνεται, καὶ ἐν μεγάλῳ· καὶ εἰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, καὶ ἐν τῷ ἀπείρῳ*. "If this can happen in a living organism, what can stand in the way of this happening in the entire universe? If this happens in the microcosm, the

up of atoms of different composition and characteristics. Man is a completely material entity, which after death dissolves completely. However, the body-soul dualism continues to exist. The soul consists of higher quality atoms, which are similar to the atoms of fire<sup>4</sup> and move continuously, setting in motion the rest of the body as well as the biological processes<sup>5</sup>. The soul is the moving cause of the body<sup>6</sup>.

4) From the existence of a well-structured gnoseology, which touches the biological and natural view of man: Furthermore, the soul is the human part that determines the cognitive process. All the data of the external world are received by the sensory organs of the body and are transferred through the soul that runs through the body from end to end<sup>7</sup> to the brain, so that cognitive perception is produced<sup>8</sup>. The soul and the mind are identical<sup>9</sup>, as the more qualitatively constituted atoms of the soul allow the rational process<sup>10</sup>. There are two kinds of knowledge, the dark of the senses and the genuine of the rational soul. The soul as a rational mental tool bears the responsibility of the clearly interpretation of the reality<sup>11</sup>. Without the senses there could be no intake of data, but without the soul or the mind there could not even be a cognitive process. The rational potential of the soul is what separates man from other living beings.

5) From the formulation of an admirable functionality of moral consideration, which includes all the aforementioned areas: Therefore, the responsibility for any interpretation or performance of any action belongs to the rational soul and not to the irrational body. The body undergoes the decisions of the

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same can happen in the macrocosm; and if this happens in the world, the same happens in the infinite."

<sup>4</sup> Democr. A. 102 DK.

<sup>5</sup> Democr. A. 106 DK.

<sup>6</sup> Democr. A. 104 DK.

<sup>7</sup> Democr. A. 107 DK.

<sup>8</sup> Democr. A. 105 DK: *ταὐτὸν εἶναι λέγων τὸ νοεῖν τῷ αἰσθάνεσθαι καὶ ἀπὸ μιᾶς ταῦτα προέρχεσθαι δυνάμεως*. "And yet he says that mind and sensation are the same thing, and proceed from the same power".

<sup>9</sup> Democr. A. 106 DK καὶ Democr. A. 135 DK.

<sup>10</sup> Democr. A. 101 DK.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Democr. B. 159, B. 163, B. 165 DK.



soul and is an instrument of the theoretical or practical directions it sets. Man, like any other living being, seeks pleasure and avoids pain, has a tendency to equate good with pleasant and evil with unpleasant<sup>12</sup>. However, some pleasures, which at first offer satisfaction, may in the end cause maximum pain. The absolute identification of the good with the pleasant cannot be valid, insofar as there are a) long-term and short-term pleasures or b) qualitatively superior and inferior pleasures<sup>13</sup>. Also, c) the correct measure of satisfaction of each pleasure must be taken into account in all of this<sup>14</sup>. A pleasure that lacks or exceeds its proper measure can become harmful<sup>15</sup>.

There are transitory pleasures, while other pleasures are continuous. Long-term pleasures are clearly preferable to short-term ones. The pleasures of the soul or mind belong to the category of long-term pleasures, while those of the body belong to the short-term<sup>16</sup>. Hence, they are qualitatively superior to body ones. In addition, the pleasures of the soul affect the disposition of the atoms of the soul. The choice of harmful pleasures causes the atoms of the soul to move rapidly and disorderly and creates a disharmony, a disorder which is identified with unhappiness. On the contrary, the choice of the right pleasures brings harmony, symmetry and order to the movement of the atoms of the soul, a state defined as bliss<sup>17</sup>.

The choice of the correct measure between excess and lack leads to an analogous blissful state, which corresponds to the

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Democr. B. 4 DK: *τέρψις γὰρ καὶ ἀτερπία οὖρος [τῶν συμφόρων καὶ τῶν ἀσυμφόρων]*. "Pleasure and lack of pleasure are the limit for determining what is profitable and what is unprofitable".

<sup>13</sup> Democr. B. 207 DK, B. 189 DK, B. 235 DK.

<sup>14</sup> Democr. B. 70 DK: *παιδός, οὐκ ἀνδρὸς τὸ ἀμέτρως ἐπιθυμεῖν*. "Uncontrolled desire is a characteristic of a child, not a man".

<sup>15</sup> Democr. B. 3 DK: *ἡ γὰρ εὐογκία ἀσφαλέστερον τῆς μεγαλοκίης*. "Because applying the right measure has safer results than exceeding it".

<sup>16</sup> Democr. B. 37 DK: *ὁ τὰ ψυχῆς ἀγαθὰ αἰρεόμενος τὰ θειότερα αἰρέεται· ὁ δὲ τὰ σκίηνος τὰ ἀνθρωπῆϊα*, "One who chooses the goods of the soul chooses the most divine; on the contrary, one who chooses the goods of the body chooses the human"

<sup>17</sup> Democr. A. 167-168 DK. Cf. A. 169, B. 4, B. 215, B. 216. B.223 DK.

correct order of the atoms of the soul<sup>18</sup>. On the contrary, if we choose excess or lack of a pleasure, the measure is circumvented and we are led to a material and kinetic disharmony of the atoms of the soul, an asymmetry that is equivalent to unhappiness in the unfolding of human life<sup>19</sup>. There is a two-way relationship between choosing the right pleasures and the material well-being of the soul<sup>20</sup>. The more disorderly the atoms of the soul move, the more we are led to wrong choices, while the more symmetrically the atoms of the soul move, the more this implies a correct choice of pleasures and their intensity<sup>21</sup>. Conversely, moral choices determine the order of the movement of the soul, right choices lead to right order and therefore to bliss<sup>22</sup>, while wrong choices lead to disorder of the soul and therefore to unhappiness<sup>23</sup>.

Also, the orderliness of the soul is inextricably linked to rationality<sup>24</sup>, while the disorder to the dominance of irrational

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<sup>18</sup> Democr. B. 4 DK: *Δημόκριτος μὲν ἐν τῷ περὶ τέλους τὴν εὐθυμίαν, ἣν καὶ εὐεστώ προσηγόρευσεν*. "Defines bliss as the final goal, which he prescribed as the right state of the soul".

<sup>19</sup> Democr. B. 72 DK: *αἱ περὶ τι σφοδραὶ ὀρέξεις τυφλοῦσιν εἰς τᾶλλα τὴν ψυχὴν*. "Strong desires for one particular thing blind the soul to the rest".

<sup>20</sup> Democr. B. 40 DK: *οὔτε σώμασιν οὔτε χρήμασιν εὐδαιμονοῦσιν ἄνθρωποι, ἀλλ' ὀρθοσύνη καὶ πολυφροσύνη*. "People are not happy either with the pleasure of body or with the acquisition of money, but with rationality and prudence".

<sup>21</sup> Democr. B. 174 DK: *ὁ μὲν εὐθυμος εἰς ἔργα ἐπιφερόμενος δίκαια καὶ νόμιμα*. "The man governed by the harmony of the soul is led to righteous and lawful actions".

<sup>22</sup> Democr. B. 61 DK: *οἷσιν ὁ τρόπος ἐστὶν εὐτακτος, τοῦ τοιοῦ καὶ ὁ βίος συντέτακται*. "Whoever has an orderly character, he also has an orderly life (in analogy to his moral behavior)".

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Democr. A. 167 DK, B. 171 DK. Democr. B. 191 DK: *ἀνθρώποισι γὰρ εὐθυμὴ γίνεται μετρίότητι τέρψιος καὶ βίου συμμετρίας· τὰ δ' ἐλλείποντα καὶ ὑπερβάλλοντα μεταπίπτειν τε φιλεῖ καὶ μεγάλας κινήσεις ἐμποιεῖν τῇ ψυχῇ. αἱ δ' ἐκ μεγάλων διαστημάτων κινούμεναι τῶν ψυχῶν οὔτε εὐσταθέες εἰσὶν οὔτε εὐθυμοί*. "Bliss is created in men by measured pleasure and correspondingly measured life. Excess and lack, on the contrary, usually lead to the transition from the balance and create big movements in the soul. After all, souls that are characterized by movements of their atoms over long spaces are neither stable nor blissful".

<sup>24</sup> Democr. A. 135 DK: *περὶ δὲ τοῦ φρονεῖν ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον εἵρηκεν ὅτι γίνεται συμμέτρως ἐχούσης τῆς ψυχῆς κατὰ τὴν χρῆσιν*. "As far as

passions<sup>25</sup>. Soul and mind are identified, the right movement of the soul leads to the full development of rationality and the removal of irrationality. Hence, bliss is a state of rationality. Only a rational man<sup>26</sup> with a symmetrical soul can make the right choice of beneficial pleasures and diagnose the right measure between the harmful extremes of excess and lack. The ultimate benefit of pleasure can only be obtained by the wise, the fully rational man. The right moral choices presuppose the dominance of rationality, while conversely rationality is structured by the right moral choices that ensure well-being of the soul and therefore rational adequacy<sup>27</sup>.

6) From the political formulation of the atomic theory in terms of dominance and subjection in the context of an inescapable political symbiosis. This unbroken moral motif (choosing the right pleasures under the rule of rationality - creating symmetry and harmonious movement in the material soul - achieving bliss) is also carried over into the field of civil society. According to Democritus, as is also the case with Hobbes, man's transition from the pre-political condition to civil society is artificial and not natural. People are forced by the adversities of the natural environment and their individual existence to form civil societies. The necessity of eventual annihilation and human rationality are responsible for man's political turn. The political community is a small world in analogy to the human organism and the natural universe. The ideal political prospect is concord, where all political parties agree to the common rationality of the state. The condition where all parties participate in the common discourse of the political organization. Unfortunately, however, nature does not create all men equal in rational ability. There are wise men<sup>28</sup>, who establish within their souls harmonious symmetry and are governed by a right predilection regarding beneficial pleasures

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rationality is concerned, Democritus limited himself to the opinion that it is activated when the soul is in symmetry during the collision of atoms."

<sup>25</sup> Democr. B. 74 DK.

<sup>26</sup> Democr. B. 146 DK.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Democr. A. 1 DK.

<sup>28</sup> Democr. B. 197 DK.

that lead to bliss. On the opposite side are the unwise<sup>29</sup>, the irrational men, who are plagued by a generalized disorder in the movement of the atoms of their soul and are characterized by wrong irrational choices regarding the utility of pleasures and cling to unhappiness<sup>30</sup>.

Civil society is governed by relations of dominance and subordination. Rational men must govern, because they know human nature and the pleasures that benefit it, on the contrary, unwise are excluded from government, because, immersed in irrationality, they ignore the individual and public good, they are incapable of forming a common political mind, which draws a path to human bliss. Concord<sup>31</sup>, therefore, the formation of this collective rationality belongs to the wise, to those who, after establishing individual moral integrity, are capable of rationally guiding the soul of the state. The state has concord, when rationality prevails and imposes happiness.

We see, then, that the materialism of the atomic theory is reconciled with hedonism and rationalism in a philosophical plan to achieve human bliss on an individual and political level. It is worth mentioning that rationalism plays a dominant role in this moral-political process, so that it constitutes the main characteristic of classical hedonism.

### **Epicurean hedonism: bliss as ataraxia and absence of pain**

Epicurus' hedonism inherits almost entirely the characteristics of the moral scheme of Democritus for pleasure and rationality, but does not seem to fully understand its semantic value and systematic superiority. It accepts the theory of the material soul and its movement, as well as the qualitative separation of pleasures with the decisive intervention of rationality<sup>32</sup>, but it diverts the human ultimate goal (summum

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<sup>29</sup> Democr. B. 235, Cf. B. 54, 58, 98, 71, 73, 75, 76, 78, 79, 80, 113, 292 DK.

<sup>30</sup> Democr. B. 233 DK.

<sup>31</sup> Democr. B. 250 DK.

<sup>32</sup> Diog. Laert. 10. 132: *νήφων λογισμός*. "The tranquil rationality" - *τὸ μέγιστον ἀγαθὸν φρόνησις*. "The greatest good is rationality".

bonum) to the ataraxia of the soul<sup>33</sup> from the passions and the absence of pain<sup>34</sup> for the body<sup>35</sup>. The Epicureans understand hedonism in a more passive way than Democritus, they believe that the soul should be in a state of ataraxia, while Democritus says that it should move actively and harmoniously through right moral choices. This ataraxia, the withdrawal of the Epicureans, is best seen in the political field, where they choose the path of obscurity, of unimportance or of concealment<sup>36</sup>. Democritus, on the contrary, argues that the right movement of the soul of the wise, the man who has reached bliss, must be transmitted to other people in the form of political government.

### **Cyrenaic hedonism: the pleasure of the moment and rational self-control**

The Cyrenaics, on the other hand, in a decidedly more hedonistic view, prefer the present satisfaction of pleasure, ignoring the past (recollection) and the future (anticipation)<sup>37</sup>. In this perspective they exclude the distinction between short-term and long-term pleasures or higher quality pleasures. They consider that happiness is a continuous movement from one pleasure to another, without any criterion of correctness or usefulness of the pleasures. There can be no quantitative or qualitative gradation of pleasure, no pleasure is differentiated

<sup>33</sup> Diog. Laert. 10. 128: *τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀταραξίαν, ἐπεὶ τοῦτο τοῦ μακαρίως ζῆν ἐστὶ τέλος*. "The ataraxia of the soul, because this is the goal of the blissful life."

<sup>34</sup> Diog. Laert. 10. 136.

<sup>35</sup> Diog. Laert. 10. 131: *ἀλλὰ τὸ μήτε ἀλγεῖν κατὰ σῶμα μήτε ταράττεσθαι κατὰ ψυχὴν*. "The body not to be in pain and the soul not to be disturbed".

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Plout. *Moral.* 1129.E: *λάθε βιώσας*. "Live in obscurity".

<sup>37</sup> Diog. Laert. 2. 66 και 2. 89: *ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδὲ κατὰ μνήμην τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἢ προσδοκίαν ἡδονὴν φασιν ἀποτελεῖσθαι· ὅπερ ἤρεσκεν Ἐπικούρῳ*. "But neither with the recollection nor with the anticipation of goods do they say that pleasure is created, something that Epicurus liked". Cf. Hobbes T., *Elements of Law*, VIII.

in relation to the others<sup>38</sup>. What matters is the satisfaction of natural or mental pleasure<sup>39</sup>, which arises before us, and not planning for continued satisfaction of future pleasures. The sum of the episodes of pleasure versus the episodes of pain may define how blissful one's life is, but the overall valuation of bliss of the separate pleasures is indeed very difficult to achieve<sup>40</sup>. However, bliss resides more in each of the separate pleasures than in a universal state of pleasure<sup>41</sup>. The purpose of human action is the satisfaction of episodes of pleasure and not an ultimate blissful state. As in Democritus or Epicurus, pleasure is defined as a smooth, normal movement of the soul, while pain as a rough movement, without, however, in this case (of Cyrenaics) determining the material or non-material constitution of the soul. Therefore, pleasure equates to freedom of movement, while pain to its limitation<sup>42</sup>. There is no life without desire, without pain or without pleasure, because life is movement and therefore interwoven with pleasure and pain. To not feeling someone pleasure or pain is equivalent to a state of sleep or death<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Diog. Laert. 2. 87: *μη διαφέρειν τε ἡδονὴν ἡδονῆς, μηδὲ ἡδιόν τι εἶναι*. "They said that one pleasure does not differ from another, nor that something is more pleasant than another".

<sup>39</sup> Diog. Laert. 2. 90.

<sup>40</sup> Diog. Laert. 2. 90: *ὥς δυσκολώτατον αὐτοῖς φαίνεσθαι τὸν ἀθροισμὸν τῶν ἡδονῶν εὐδαιμονίαν ποιουσῶν*. "Thus, it appears to them that it is very difficult to assemble the pleasures that cause bliss".

<sup>41</sup> Diog. Laert. 2. 87: *δοκεῖ δ' αὐτοῖς καὶ τέλος εὐδαιμονίας διαφέρειν. τέλος μὲν γὰρ εἶναι τὴν κατὰ μέρος ἡδονήν, εὐδαιμονίαν δὲ τὸ ἐκ τῶν μερικῶν ἡδονῶν σύστημα, αἷς συναριθμοῦνται καὶ αἱ παρωχηκυῖαι καὶ αἱ μέλλουσαι*. "They think that end also differs from bliss; and that bliss is the system consisting of several pleasures, with which both past and future pleasures are numbered."

<sup>42</sup> Diog. Laert. 2. 86: *δύο πάθη ὑφίσταντο, πόνον καὶ ἡδονήν, τὴν μὲν λείαν κίνησιν, τὴν ἡδονήν, τὸν δὲ πόνον τραχεῖαν κίνησιν*. "They accepted two passions, pain and pleasure, pleasure as smooth movement and pain as rough movement".

<sup>43</sup> Diog. Laert. 2. 89: *ἐν κινήσει γὰρ εἶναι ἀμφοτέρω, μὴ οὐσίας τῆς ἀπονίας ἢ τῆς ἀηδονίας κινήσεως, ἐπεὶ ἡ ἀπονία οἶονεὶ καθεύδοντός ἐστι κατάστασις*. "Because both pleasure and pain are processes of motion, as the absence of pain and pleasure is not motion, since the absence of pain is like the state of a man who is asleep".

However, in this case too, the factor of rationality essentially determines things<sup>44</sup>. Any pleasure must not lead man away from rational self-control. Aristippus, the founder of the Cyrenaic school, enjoys the pleasure of the famous courtesan Laida, but is able to maintain his rational control or restraint over this powerful hedonistic passion<sup>45</sup>. He controls his pleasures and they do not control him, which is why he is a wise man in the "Socratic" sense of the term. This predominance of this 'Socratic' rationality over the unfettered desire is a structural parameter. Bliss cannot exist without pleasure either, because good is something pleasant, but neither without rationality, because without it man will become a slave to pleasure and lose his rational character<sup>46</sup>. Human happiness without the dominance of reason cannot exist, the wise man is blissful, precisely because through his rational superiority he decisively controls the pleasures and knows the right limit of their satisfaction in relation to human nature.

### **The Platonic version of hedonism: is rationality a tool for the realization of hedonism?**

There is one more very important reference to the ancient reception of hedonism. In Plato's *Gorgias*<sup>47</sup>, Socrates and Callicles make an interesting conversation on the subject of the right of the most powerful, where the subject of hedonism, but also greed<sup>48</sup>, is involved. Socrates notes that the blissful man is one who has as few needs as possible, one who has reached a

<sup>44</sup> Diog. Laert. 2. 91: *τὴν φρόνησιν ἀγαθὸν μὲν εἶναι λέγουσιν, οὐ δι' ἑαυτὴν δὲ αἰρετήν, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὰ ἐξ αὐτῆς περιγινόμενα*. "They claim that rationality is a good, but preferable not in itself, but for what follows from it".

<sup>45</sup> Diog. Laert. 2. 67, 2. 69 και 2. 75: *πρὸς οὖν τοὺς μεμφομένους αὐτῷ ἔφη, ἔχω Λαῖδα, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔχομαι· ἐπεὶ τὸ κρατεῖν καὶ μὴ ἡττᾶσθαι ἡδονῶν ἀριστον, οὐ τὸ μὴ χρῆσθαι*. "So to those who accused him he said: 'I have Laida, but I am not dominated by her; because it is excellent to dominate your pleasures and not be dominated by them, not to not have them'".

<sup>46</sup> Diog. Laert. 2. 91, 2. 98-99.

<sup>47</sup> Plat. *Gorg.* 481b-522e.

<sup>48</sup> Plat. *Gorg.* 483c: *τὸ πλεόν των ἄλλων ζητεῖν ἔχειν*. "The pursuit of having more than others".

satisfactory level of fulfillment and no longer needs to participate in the endless game of filling and emptying pleasures. At this point it shows the problem of every hedonist position, pleasure cannot be an ultimate goal, because pure and stable pleasure does not exist, at the moment of the fulfillment of pleasure it is followed by its deprivation, we eat and after a while we are hungry<sup>49</sup>. Hunger is deprivation or pain, while taking food is filling of that deprivation and limiting suffering. Saying that the ultimate goal is pleasure is like saying that happy is the one who itches and scratches, or the one who eats and then has a bowel movement<sup>50</sup>. Callicles replies that the life that Socrates prefers is similar to the state of stones or the dead, who have no need<sup>51</sup>. On the contrary, the ideal condition is the continuous filling and emptying with pleasure, the unstoppable transition from one pleasure to another without time or any other measure, just as the Danaids continuously fill a hollow pitcher with water<sup>52</sup>..

Callicles' hedonism seems to take the mind as the servant for the pursuit of pleasures<sup>53</sup>, although earlier in the discussion he has agreed with the Socratic position that wise men are more powerful than the unwise, showing that classical hedonism cannot to free himself in any case from the primacy of rationality, he cannot easily accept pleasure as a ultimate

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<sup>49</sup> Plat. *Gorg.* 497a.

<sup>50</sup> Plat. *Gorg.* 494c.

<sup>51</sup> Plat. *Gorg.* 492e: ΚΑΛ. *Οἱ λίθοι γὰρ ἂν οὕτω γε καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ εὐδαιμονέστατοι εἶεν.* "According to this view of course the stones and the dead would be perfectly blissful".

<sup>52</sup> Plat. *Gorg.* 494b-c.

<sup>53</sup> Plat. *Gorg.* 492a: Ἀλλὰ τοῦτ' ἐστὶν τὸ κατὰ φύσιν καλὸν καὶ δίκαιον, ὃ ἐγὼ σοι νῦν παρρησιαζόμενος λέγω, ὅτι δεῖ τὸν ὀρθῶς βιωσόμενον τὰς μὲν ἐπιθυμίας τὰς ἑαυτοῦ ἔαν ὡς μεγίστας εἶναι καὶ μὴ κολάζειν, ταύταις δὲ ὡς μεγίσταις οὖσαις ἱκανὸν εἶναι ὑπηρετεῖν δι' ἀνδρείαν καὶ φρόνησιν, καὶ ἀποπιμπλάναι ὧν ἂν ἀεὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία γίγνηται. "But in this consists the right which flows from nature, which I will now without any hesitation set forth to you: that it behooves him who is going to live rightly to let his desires be as great as possible and to set no limitations, and these, of course, as they are great, he should be able to serve them with the help of bravery and rationality and to satisfy what the desire commands every time".



goal without its rational control<sup>54</sup>. Also, the hedonism of Callicles makes unbridled greed an inseparable companion of pleasure. Pleasure has no value if it is not accompanied by greed, by the accumulation of more goods than the others. At this point, the issue of the property of material goods as a measure of human happiness also arises: the greedy accumulation of desirable goods and the consolidation of this situation under the auspices of power. The sovereign must have more property-goods than his subjects, his power validating this greedy distribution<sup>55</sup>. The Platonic version of hedonism undoubtedly gives it political extension in terms of dominance and subjection. Complete hedonism derives from the greedy predominance in the acquisition of material goods over other people. Hedonism, individualism, greed and property characterize this hedonistic position. The only problem that looms is that of rationalism, and even this extreme hedonism cannot overlook it. Rational people are more worthy and more powerful than the irrational people, but what exactly does that value consist of? Is rationality an instrument for the realization of pleasure or something more in relation to the determination of human happiness?

### **Thomas Hobbes: Bliss as endless hedonism and property**

We now enter the case of Thomas Hobbes and the hedonism he advocates. Hobbes agrees that by nature the good is identified with the pleasant, while evil with the unpleasant. Pleasure or pain is a measure of good and evil. In this respect it agrees with classical hedonism as a whole. He also considers that pleasure is an unhindered, free movement towards the

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<sup>54</sup> Plat. *Gorg.* 490a: *Εἷς φρονῶν μυρίων μὴ φρονούντων κρείττων ἐστὶν καὶ τοῦτον ἄρχειν δεῖ, τοὺς δ' ἄρχεσθαι.* "One rational man is more powerful than thousands of irrational ones and he deserves to rule, they to obey".

<sup>55</sup> Plat. *Gorg.* 484c: *ὥς τούτου ὄντος τοῦ δικαίου φύσει, καὶ βοῦς καὶ τᾶλλα κτήματα εἶναι πάντα τοῦ βελτιόνος τε καὶ κρείττονος τὰ τῶν χειρόνων τε καὶ ἡττόνων.* "Because this is the true essence of natural right, and the oxen and all the rest of the goods of the worst and the weakest should rightfully belong to the best and the most powerful".

natural good, so here he is in line with the positions of Epicurus or the Cyrenaics. It places human existence within a mechanistically structured natural world, where every movement has a moving cause, ignoring of course the primary moving cause of this causal chain (e.g. rational creator, first mover-immovable cause or God). The tendency towards pleasure is a necessary natural movement, dictated by the biological and material nature of living beings and not a moral choice<sup>56</sup>. In this sense, the desire for pleasure or the fear of suffering is the moving force behind every human activity<sup>57</sup>.

*Felicity*, for Hobbes, *is a continual progress of the desire from one object -which causes pleasure- to another, the attaining of the former being still but the way to the latter*<sup>58</sup>, a course that is interrupted only by death. There is a continuous movement from one pleasure to another, where this hedonistic condition is accompanied by the acquisition, by the property of the goods that cause pleasure<sup>59</sup>. As for its first part, the definition of bliss is similar to the Cyrenaic position that bliss is a continuous movement from one pleasure to another, there is no stability of happiness but a transition from one pleasure to another. On the contrary, for Epicurus, as we have seen, there is no constant movement, but a pursuit of *ataraxia*, a blissful stability with limited movement between necessary qualitatively higher pleasures. Hobbes in no way favors the limitation or absence of desire under the cloak of perpetual rational tranquility, but defines life as motion and therefore as continuous desire interwoven with the senses, not exempt from

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<sup>56</sup> Hobbes T., *Elements of Law*, VII.

<sup>57</sup> Hobbes T., *De Cive*, I.10: *whatsoever a man would, it therefore seems good to him because he wills it*. I.2: *whatsoever seemes Good, is pleasant, and pertains either to the senses, or the mind*. Cf. Abizadeh Ar., *Hobbes And The Two Faces Of Ethics*, Cambridge University Press, 2018, p. 146: (a) *all action is prompted by desire*, (b) *all desire is accompanied by pleasure*, and (c) *whenever we desire anything, we desire it only if we represent it as something pleasant to ourselves*.

<sup>58</sup> Hobbes, T., *Leviathan*, XI.

<sup>59</sup> Hobbes, T., *Leviathan*, VI: *Continual success in obtaining those things which a man from time to time desireth, that is to say, continual prospering, is that men call felicity*. Cf. Hobbes, T., *Leviathan*, XI.

the fear of the absence of pleasure - something that equates to pain and therefore dissatisfaction<sup>60</sup>.

Hobbes uses a quintessentially Cyrenaic way to define happiness, claiming that human life is a chain of moments of pleasure or displeasure. If the episodes of pleasure predominate, we can speak of happiness, while if the episodes of dissatisfaction predominate, of unhappiness<sup>61</sup>. Immediately afterwards Hobbes makes an Epicurean turn by claiming that the purpose of human desire is not a single and momentary pleasure, but rather the securing of satisfaction and future desires forever. While the Cyrenaics defined bliss as discrete episodes of pleasure, Hobbes says that there can be a future state of consolidation of pleasure. Bliss is something that can be achieved in a stable way and ensures the identification of the good with the pleasure forever<sup>62</sup>. This alludes to Epicurus but also to all classical thought (except the Cyrenaics), where happiness is something absolutely stable and can potentially be achieved for the entire duration of human life<sup>63</sup>. Every human action or mood is not only aimed at achieving a hedonistic moment, but at ensuring an overall blissful life<sup>64</sup>. But it should be noted that Hobbes rejects the concept of happiness as a *summum bonum*, as something to which all human activities should aim. This is nothing else but a utopia, a fallacy into which all previous tradition has fallen. Each pleasure or object of pleasure is also a separate goal. The basic human pursuit must be the constant maintenance of movement

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<sup>60</sup> Hobbes, T., *Leviathan*, VI: *For there is no such thing as perpetual tranquillity of mind, while we live here; because life itself is but motion, and can never be without desire, nor without fear, no more than without sense.*

<sup>61</sup> Hobbes T., *Elements of Law*, VII. 8: *Now when in the whole chain, the greater part is good, the whole is called good; and when the evil overweigheth, the whole is called evil.*

<sup>62</sup> Hobbes, T., *Leviathan*, XI: *object of mans desire, is not to enjoy once onely, and for one instant of time; but to assure for ever, the way of his future desire.*

<sup>63</sup> Hobbes T., *Elements of Law*, VII. 7: *FELICITY, therefore (by which we mean continual delight), consisteth not in having prospered, but in prospering.*

<sup>64</sup> Hobbes, T., *Leviathan*, IV, XI. Cf. Abizadeh Ar., *Hobbes And The Two Faces Of Ethics*, Cambridge University Press, 2018, p. 139-140.

from one pleasure to another, that is, from one goal to another<sup>65</sup>.

Moreover, what had already been accomplished with the Machiavellian intervention as a founding act of modernity, namely that happiness ceases to be an affair of the soul, acquires with Hobbes a permanent existence. Human bliss is not a proper state or disposition of the soul (as in Democritus or Epicurus, but also in Plato), but the acquisition of material goods with a greedy predominance over others, a justification of human subjectivity by emphatically imposing it on others. Bliss for Hobbes is not a single pleasure or cessation of movement from one pleasure to another, but the design and achievement of a state of continuous satisfaction of pleasures or pleasant goods, as an inalienable property of some human subject, as a conquest of the past and of the future of the biological continuity<sup>66</sup>. On the one hand, then, there is no summum bonum as eudemonic goal, but on the other hand, there is a provision for a future condition of happiness, of a continuous and uninterrupted pleasure.

It is true that in many passages Hobbes does not define what goods are pleasurable to people, he implies that pleasurable goods are as many as human subjective desires<sup>67</sup>. This probably happens, to demonstrate that in the natural state, where the objectivity of the law is absent, any opinion or desire is possible, as long as there is no criterion of truth. However, in the description of the natural condition the war of all against all arises because of human competition for the goods that cause pleasure, the people are many, while the pleasant goods are few. This observation leads to the conclusion that people claim specific hedonic acquisitions, to which the human nature of desire leads them. Otherwise, there would be no competition for specific, rare goods<sup>68</sup>.

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<sup>65</sup> Hobbes T., *Elements of Law*, VII. Cf. *Leviathan*, XI.

<sup>66</sup> Hobbes T., *Elements of Law*, VII. 7.

<sup>67</sup> Hobbes T., *Elements of Law*, VII. 3: *Every man, for his own part, calleth that which pleaseth, and is delightful to himself, GOOD; and that EVIL which displeaseth him: insomuch that while every man differeth from other in constitution, they differ also one from another concerning the common distinction of good and evil.*

<sup>68</sup> Hobbes T., *Leviathan*, XIII.

Additionally, in Hobbes's accounts the absence of external obstacles to the attainment of desire equates to freedom. In the natural condition there is absolute freedom, but also absolute annihilation or absolute fear of violent death, as the absolute freedom of one man collides with the absolute freedom of other people. Everyone has an absolute right to all goods, but everyone also has an absolute right to defend his self-preservation against others, even if it means exterminating them biologically. Absolute freedom to desire equals absolute annihilation, due to constant conflict and insecurity. Human rationality is activated at the crucial moment perceiving the first law of nature, which dictates the preservation of existence<sup>69</sup>. Man accepts an almost universal diminution of his freedom and thus of his desire in order to self-preservation through the agreed upon social contract. He surrenders all his freedom and at the same time all his desire for all things that bring pleasure to a sovereign, who ensures self-preservation and inner peace, but has the absolute power to determine what one should desire and where one should be moving. The limitation of freedom and desire gives the preservation of life within the civil society, while in the natural state absolute freedom and desire lead inexorably to death. This means that man gives up from short-term, intense but destructive pleasures in order to access a state of limited intensity but long-term pleasures. Just as Democritus or Epicurus prioritize long-term, future, beneficial pleasures over short-term, destructive ones.

It is also notable that Hobbes never elevates rationality or the pleasures of the mind to a state of bliss, of integration of man. Although he admits that there is pleasure of the mind as the knowledge of causes, which, when it becomes a permanent production of knowledge, surpasses in pleasure the brief pleasures of the flesh, he cannot prejudge the pleasure of rationality as the ultimate end of man<sup>70</sup>. The pleasure of the

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<sup>69</sup> Hobbes T., *Leviathan*, XIII, XIV.

<sup>70</sup> Hobbes T., *Leviathan*, VI: *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, exceedeth the short vehemence of any carnal pleasure.*

mind is a state, which is based on the anticipation of corporal pleasure because of the existing power that can bring about such a thing. The pleasure of the mind is based on the anticipation of the satisfaction of the desire through the evaluation of power. Human power having realized a condition of permanent satisfaction of pleasure hopes, expects that it will maintain permanent pleasure in the future as well<sup>71</sup>. Mental pleasure stems from the awareness of one's power to satisfy his desires in the future. So, the pleasure of the mind is a function of the human imagination, which contemplates through recollection and expectation the actual satisfaction of the desires. Therefore, it is not real pleasure, but a theoretical simulation of the actual pleasure. Especially, in the logical hypothesis of the natural condition of man, rationality is a servant of the pursuit of the desires, a powerful instrument for the satisfaction of pleasures<sup>72</sup>. Reason is an auxiliary means of increasing power and therefore happiness, since not only the acquisition but also the keeping of goods that cause pleasure constitutes power. Rationality assists in shaping the path from lesser to greater power, thus property, pleasure, freedom<sup>73</sup>. Rational tranquility or theoretical contemplation is not a

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<sup>71</sup> Hobbes T., *Thomas White's De Mundo Examined*, trans. H. W. Jones, London: Bradford University Press, 1976, 38.8: *Now if glory be such that it springs from assessing one's power on the basis of previous deeds, they bring about hope, because he who has done, seems to have the power to do again. Therefore such a self-assessment gives rise to diligence [industria], & frequent success, through a true and just assessment of power; moreover one success causes another, thanks to the new power secured with each success; and this continuous manner of successes, together with a reason for hope if they persist, is called felicity.* Cf. 38.6-8. Abizadeh Ar., *Hobbes And The Two Faces Of Ethics*, Cambridge University Press, 2018, p. 157-160.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Abizadeh Ar., *Hobbes And The Two Faces Of Ethics*, Cambridge University Press, 2018, p.160: *mental pleasures are parasitic on sensual pleasures.*

<sup>73</sup> Hobbes T., *Thomas White's De Mundo Examined*, trans. H. W. Jones, London: Bradford University Press, 1976, 38.6: *since not only acquiring, but also protecting one's gains, are a power, felicity will be the perpetual progress of appetite and hope from lesser to greater power.* "καθώς όχι μόνο η απόκτηση, αλλά και η προστασία των κερδών κάποιου, είναι δύναμη, η ευτυχία θα είναι η αέναη πρόοδος της επιθυμίας και της ελπίδας από μικρότερη σε μεγαλύτερη δύναμη".

characteristic of human nature, but a symptom of the peaceful living that political life ensures. Rationality is not a human end, but a means to the realization of the goal of continuous pleasure. It is a valuable tool for justifying unfettered desire and unfair greed while simultaneously dominating other people. For the classical hedonism, bliss is a state of the soul, accompanied by the supremacy of the rational element. Blissful can only be the wise man, the man who, according to the rational character of human nature, surpasses others in establishing an inner rational order. For Hobbes this is categorically rejected, the wise man is not happier than the unwise. The rule of rationality is not defined as human perfection, the goal is to create a state of continuous satisfaction of pleasures, and reason is only a useful instrument in justifying this enterprise<sup>74</sup>.

After the acceptance of the primary political contract, the subjectivity of each human part ceases and the objectivity of the state is imposed, true is whatever the sovereign agent defines as true. Unlimited freedom also ceases, in favor of the limited freedom allowed by political power. Human freedom extends as far as conventional law allows as a reflection of the will of the state. This applies not only to the criterion of truth or the limit of freedom, but also to the desires or the pleasures. Within the state not everyone has a right to all things, but only to those defined by the legal framework. Apart from the issue of private property - which also applies by the virtue of the political contract - which protects the pleasant goods belonging to one from the malicious desire of others, there is also the will of the sovereign. The sovereign can define the direction or the type of individual desires - except, of course, those that belong to the self-preservation - so that the cohesion of the civil society is not endangered. Pleasant is what the state defines or accepts as pleasant. Such a thing, of course, is completely unthinkable to the principles of ancient hedonism, where pleasure or desire is part of the individuality of everyone on the way to achieving bliss. For Hobbes the form of pleasure or happiness is defined by the state, one state can define, as it wants, the parameters

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<sup>74</sup> Hobbes T., *Leviathan*, VIII: *For the thoughts are to the desires as scouts and spies to range abroad and find the way to the things desired.*

of happiness of its subjects and another state in a completely different way.

### **The free market way out**

However, despite the absolute omnipotence of the state over its subjects, Hobbes believes that there must be conditions for the development of individual well-being. The sovereign must leave space for the creation of individual happiness as a product of the work of the subjects<sup>75</sup>. Essentially, through property and work, a margin of identification of happiness with individual desire must be opened, which was fact in the natural condition. Within the state, however, something like this is very difficult to activate, as it conflicts with the omnipotence of the sovereign representative and the desire of each different political party. To increase the freedom of a political party in all goods, means to shrink the freedom of the state, but also of the other political parties. The way out here is the realm of the free market, where everyone's property and desire can grow continuously in relation to their work, even at the transnational level, while the role of the state is limited to the level of observation and control of the economic activity. The free market is the equivalent of the natural condition, a space of insatiable fulfillment of one desire after another. Possessive individualism, greedy expansion over the others and continuous transition from one pleasure to another find their justification in this vast economic becoming. The state upholds its founding goal of self-preservation and the safety of its citizens, while the free market gives the prospect of achieving bliss as hedonistic vanity and domination over others. In the free market there are all the predicates of the natural condition except the fear of violent biological death: relentless competition, the identification of happiness with the possession-property of goods and continuous pleasure, the deification of greed, the identification of individual value with money and property, subjective delimitation-definition of pleasure, equality in front of the laws of the market. The

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<sup>75</sup> Hobbes T., *De Cive*, XIII. *Leviathan*, XIII.



political state secures its existence by diverting the voluptuousness of the people into economic competition<sup>76</sup>.

## Conclusions

From the above findings, it becomes evident that Hobbes' hedonism differs essentially from all the theoretical approaches of classical hedonism. 1) The most important differentiation lies in the issue of rationality. Ancient Greek hedonism in all its manifestations cannot be separated from the rational function as a structural feature of the human existence. Any conception of bliss as pleasure presupposes the rational distinction and choice of pleasures. Pleasures cannot uncritically direct human activity, such a thing constitutes obvious irrationality and a turn towards self-destruction. Even the Cyrenaics, who advocate a more extreme form of hedonism, cannot escape the rational parameter: one man must dominate through rationality to his desires and not be dominated by them. For Hobbes, on the contrary, rationality is a weapon of increase of pleasures<sup>77</sup> and not an agent of imposing the right measure. There is no blissful stability achieved by mastery of

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<sup>76</sup> Cf. Macpherson C. B., *The political theory of possessive individualism Hobbes to Locke*, Oxford University Press, 1962, p. 46-106. Macpherson C. B., (1983). "Hobbes' Political Economy", *Philosophical Forum*, 14 (3): 211-224. Gross R., "Political Economy from Hobbes to Hegel", *Cultural Hermeneutics*, 1976, 25-41. Springborg P., "Thomas Hobbes and the Political Economy of Peace", *Croatian Political Science Review*, Vol. 55, No. 4, 2018, pp. 9-35. Nielsen T. H., "The State, the Market and the Individual. Politics, Economy and the Idea of Man in the Works of Thomas Hobbes, Adam Smith and in Renaissance Humanism", *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (1986), pp. 283-302. Devine J., "The Positive Political Economy of Individualism and Collectivism: Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau", *Politics & Society*, 2008, Volume 28, Issue 2, 265-304. Vinnicombe Th. - Staveley R., (2002), "John Locke, Thomas Hobbes and the development of political economy", *International Journal of Social Economics*, Vol. 29 Iss 9 pp. 690 - 705.

<sup>77</sup> Hobbes T., *Leviathan*, VIII: *The passions that most of all cause the differences of wit are principally the more or less desire of power, of riches, of knowledge, and of honour. All which may be reduced to the first, that is, desire of power. For riches, knowledge and honour are but several sorts of power.*

the mind over the destructive passions, life is movement, pleasure, sensation to the fullest extent.

2) For ancient hedonism, bliss is a matter of the human soul, it is a right movement or order of the soul connected to the choice of the right pleasures. Hobbes rejects any such approach, bliss cannot be understood as a proper disposition of the soul, but as a continuous corporal pleasure and greedy, material expansion at the expense of others. The disconnection of human happiness with the psyche, which had already been accomplished with Machiavelli, finds its ultimate realization in the philosophical system of Hobbes.

3) For Hobbes, hedonism has political consequences, because it is inextricably linked to power, individual or collective. Power over others, i.e. political power, is a condition of happiness as a constant transition from one pleasure-giving good to another. An increase in power implies an increase in the conditions of bliss, while conversely a decrease in power implies a decrease in bliss. The terms freedom or pleasure are also closely related to the concept of bliss. Power pronounces freedom of movement toward the natural tendency to pleasure, while restriction of movement amounts to restriction of power and thus of bliss. On the contrary, the ancient Greek perception of hedonism disconnects power from bliss. Epicurus is indifferent to political life or the possession of power, considering them as elements responsible for the disorder of the soul and therefore human unhappiness, while the Cyrenaics emphasize that happiness is an individual matter, not connected with political supremacy over others in terms of pleasures or property. Only Democritus envisions a political continuation of hedonism under the rule of the wise, those who can rationally manage their pleasures and politically transform this possibility into a concord, a common mind of the state.

4) Also, Hobbes connects happiness with the possession of material goods (possessive individualism), he considers that the continuous acquisition of goods or their easy appropriation from others gives happiness. Happiness, whether for the individual or for the state, means a continuous increase of

property, a greedy course that is interrupted only by death<sup>78</sup>. Neither approach of the ancient Greek schools of hedonism regards the acquisition or property of goods as pleasure. Epicurus favors a rational hedonism under the necessary extension of friendship, the common property of minimal material or intellectual goods related to bliss, while the Cyrenaics see bliss as episodes of pleasure, where the one good that gives pleasure is unrelated to the previous one, nor is it an addition to it. There is no accumulation of pleasant goods, but momentary pleasure of them.

5) Furthermore, Hobbes's hedonism faces death with terror, as an act of ultimate unhappiness. Death or the fear of death as a suspension of vital movement constitutes the bottomless shore of bliss or freedom. Fear is defined as the anticipation of future pain, and the greatest pain is death. There is an inseparable relationship between fear, death and hedonism, as the constant fear of death or the death itself as constant pain is the opposite side of pleasure and consequently of bliss<sup>79</sup>. For classical hedonism the fear of death or the death itself are simply elements that disrupt the path to bliss on the grounds that they deconstruct the well-being of the soul. Death is simply the disintegration of the material nature of man, the disconnection of the atoms as elements of matter that make him up and therefore something essentially indifferent to us, since when we exist death does not exist, and vice versa. There is no terror before death, but reconciliation with the idea of death. Ancient hedonism does not fear death, but regards it as a natural course of things, which should have little effect on the path to the happiness into this material world.

6) Additionally, the free market perspective is missing from classical hedonism, there is no association of happiness with money, nor is individual worth valued through work. Money is not the purpose of human action, but a means to acquire only useful material or intellectual goods for a quality living. Even when Aristippus visits the tyrant Dionysius for the purpose of obtaining money, he does so not to increase his

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. Hobbes T., *Elements of Law*, VII. 7.

<sup>79</sup> Hobbes T., *Elements of Law*, VII. 2: *but in respect of the displeasure expected, FEAR*.

individual worth, but to multiply the means of obtaining happiness. Money is undeniably a means and that is why Dionysius needs Aristippus, a philosopher, to learn how to use it properly. On the other hand, Hobbes considers the human value as a consequence of money. The value of a person is the amount that would be spent at that particular moment in order to utilize his abilities. Possession of money and property define human value by the power accumulated by their possessor and are synonymous with bliss because they ensure a continuous perspective in the transition from one pleasure to another. In the field of the free market, where human competition is expressed, no blissful condition can be understood without money and property as the bases of power. In the eyes of Hobbes the tyrant Dionysius would already be blissful, as he would have unlimited money, property much greater than other people and constant satisfaction of pleasure. Hence the assistance of a philosopher in pointing out the true path of happiness would be entirely unnecessary.

7) The only real common ground between Hobbes and classical hedonism is the Platonic passage from Gorgias. There is a strong connection in Callicles' argumentation with Hobbes's view regarding the identification of happiness with the continuous satisfaction of pleasure and the possession of more goods than others. The satisfaction of pleasure must be continuous and characterized by absolute freedom of limits, then only one is close to bliss<sup>80</sup>. There is no intention or provision for a rational distinction of pleasures into beneficial and harmful, happiness equals limitless pleasure, immersion in the infinite sea of pleasure.

Also, the inseparable connection of happiness with greed, the possession-property of more goods in relation to others, is emphasized. In the Platonic passage, the relationship of property with happiness is continuously mentioned. Having,

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<sup>80</sup> Plat. *Gorg.* 492c: Ἀλλὰ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἣν φῆς σὺ διώκειν, ὧδ' ἔχει· τρυφή καὶ ἀκολασία καὶ ἐλευθερία, ἐὰν ἐπικουρίαν ἔχῃ, τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἀρετὴ τε καὶ εὐδαιμονία. "But the truth, Socrates, which you claim to pursue, in this triptych lies; lewdness, debauchery, and unlimited freedom, if one has the ability to realize them, these constitute virtue and bliss."

possessing goods in a superlative degree compared to others, partly defines the happy life. In fact, the blissful and at the same time stronger man must seize the goods of others with the unhindered right that his power ensures him<sup>81</sup>. Hobbes recognizes something like this as a characteristic of the powerful in the pre-social condition, it is easier to usurp the goods of others than to acquire one's own property from the beginning.

Also, there is an extension of insatiable pleasure and greed in the political field. Ultimately this kind of hedonism is political, as supremacy in terms of pleasure and material possessions is transformed by power into political supremacy. The truly blissful man cannot but be superior and ruler over others with his unnegotiable power. Gorgias' discussion is at bottom a purely political discussion, which aims to find the blissful life on an individual and civil level, but also to define those who should be in a position of dominance and submission. In the same motive Hobbes at no point in his work can separate his hedonism and theory of property from political sovereignty. All have as a common political denominator the right or obligation to property or pleasure. Political sovereignty and the role of the state follows as a consequence of regulating the insatiable human desire for pleasure and property.

A surprising similarity between the two views also exists in the matter of rationality or wisdom, which becomes the servant of pleasure and greed. Although Calicles vacillates between the positions that a) the blissful and therefore superior are the rational people<sup>82</sup> or b) the physically strong who can take away

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<sup>81</sup> Plat. *Gorg.* 488b: Ἀγειν βίαν τὸν κρείττω τὰ τῶν ἡττόνων καὶ ἄρχειν τὸν βελτίω τῶν χειρόνων καὶ πλέον ἔχειν τὸν ἀμείνω τοῦ φαυλοτέρου; "Let the most powerful take away by force the goods of the weakest and let the best rule over the worst and let the ablest have more goods than the least able"?

<sup>82</sup> Plat. *Gorg.* 488b: Οὐκ ἐρεῖς, τοὺς βελτίους καὶ κρείττους πότερον τοὺς φρονιμωτέρους λέγεις ἢ ἄλλους τινάς; "To the concepts better and superior do you give the interpretation rationally superior or do you mean something else? Cal.: Yes, in the name of Zeus, indeed I mean them, par excellence in fact."

the material goods of others by force<sup>83</sup> or c) those who insatiably satisfy their pleasures, in the end he emphasizes that rationality exerts an auxiliary action in creating the conditions for the exercise of power and the satisfaction of pleasure<sup>84</sup>. We could say that the mind is empirically adapted to the circumstances and used instrumentally, so as to advance the goal of the acting subject. Rationality is not the ultimate goal or natural integration of man, but an ability to adapt to circumstances to serve other purposes. The rational faculty is not a non-negotiable arbiter of right and wrong, beneficial and harmful in terms of the pleasures, but a lever for increasing the pleasure of power, an instrument for overcoming any natural or conventional limit. Hobbes fully supports this version of hedonism, relegating the human rational capacity to the service of achieving the passions and pleasures in a particular situation<sup>85</sup>. Although Hobbes vacillates or contradicts himself regarding the human rational capacity, when he anoints it responsible to the perception of the laws of nature and the political solution to the problem of mutual annihilation. Human civilization is the result of the human reason, which is able to carry out a rationally structured political planning capable of liberating man from the fear of

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<sup>83</sup> Plat. *Gorg.* 484c.

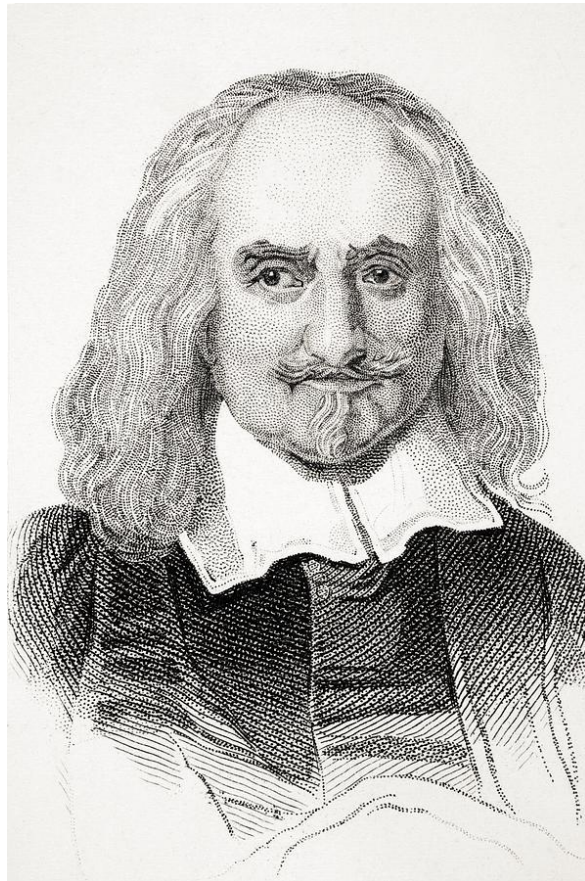
<sup>84</sup> Plat. *Gorg.* 492a.

<sup>85</sup> Hobbes T., *Leviathan*, VIII: *From desire ariseth the thought of some means we have seen produce the like of that which we aim at.* Cf. Blau Ad., "Reason, Deliberation, and the Passions", *The Oxford Handbook of Hobbes*, (Ed. by Martinic A. P. - Hoekstra K.) 2016, pp. 195-220. Rahe P., *Republics Ancient and Modern. Volume 2: New Modes & Orders in Early Modern Political Thought*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994, pp. 142-144. Warrender H., *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: His Theory of Obligation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957, p. 269. Hampton J., *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1986, p. 34-42. Oakeshott M., *Hobbes on Civil Association*, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund. 1975, p. 27, 94. James Susan, "Explaining the Passions: Passions, Desires, and the Explanation of Action," *The Soft Underbelly of Reason: The Passions in the Seventeenth Century*, (ed. Gaukroger St.) London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 17-33. Parsons T., *On Institutions and Social Evolution*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982, pp. 88, 96-98. Darwall St., *The British Moralists and the Internal "Ought": 1640-1740*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 57-79.

violent death. The creation of a blissful state of satisfaction of one pleasure after another cannot be realized without the predictive ability of human rationality. This is perhaps the most important problem of these two hedonistic approaches, the inability to completely get rid of rationality as a special characteristic of man.



# *Philosophical Notes on Hobbes*







*Compositum jus fasque, animi, sanctosque recessus.  
Mentis, & incoctum generoso pectus honesto.  
Hæc cedo, ut admoveam templis, & sacre libabo.*

From the Original Devouture House, P. 10. 11.

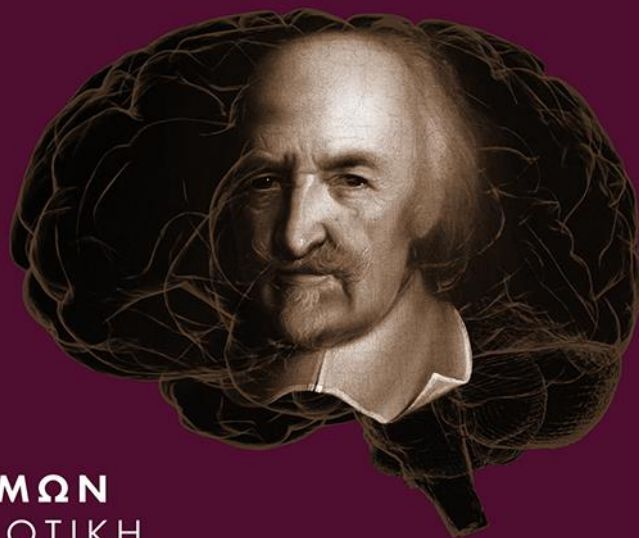
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THOMAS HOBBS

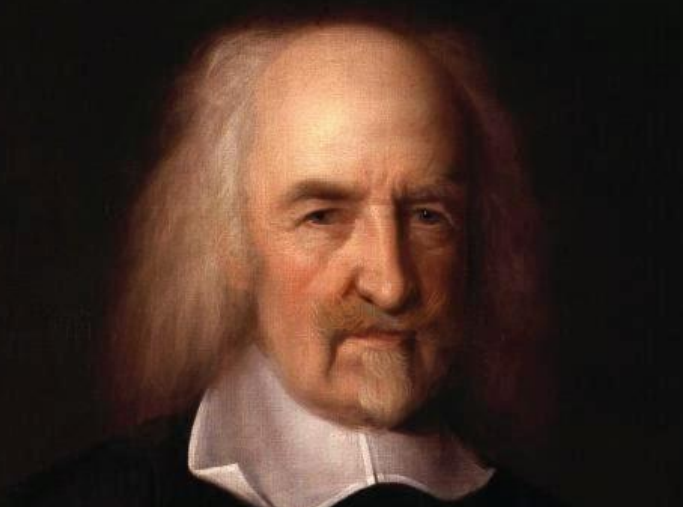
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ΚΑΙ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗΣ

ΕΙΣΑΓΩΓΗ, ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΗ:  
ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΣ Δ. ΜΑΚΡΥΠΟΥΛΙΑΣ



ΑΜΜΩΝ  
ΕΚΔΟΤΙΚΗ

THOMAS HOBBS

A portrait of Thomas Hobbes, an elderly man with long, wavy, light-colored hair and a small goatee. He is wearing a dark garment with a prominent white ruffled collar. The background is dark and indistinct.

# *Περί του πολίτη*

ΕΙΣΑΓΩΓΗ - ΜΕΛΕΤΗ:

Ο άνθρωπος-πολίτης  
στον φιλοσοφικό σχεδιασμό του Thomas Hobbes

ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΗ - ΣΧΟΛΙΑ:

Ηλίας Βαβούρας - Ευτυχία Φιριπή

ΠΡΟΛΟΓΟΣ:

Αρης Στυλιανού



Εκδόσεις ΖΗΤΡΟΣ

## International Anarchy Reconsidered: Hobbes and International Relations

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**Abstract:** Hobbes has been regarded as a core figure of IR theory by political theorists and international relations scholars. However, against delusive interpretations of his political philosophy, I will reexamine in this essay the notion of international anarchy and the place of it in the Hobbesian corpus, focusing mainly on chapter 13 of *Leviathan*. My point is that both the Realist and Rationalist schools overlook central features of Hobbesian political philosophy and draw a somehow misleading picture of what Hobbes truly said with regard to interstate relations and the state of nature.

**Keywords:** political realism, rationalist school, international relations, anarchy, state of nature, war, peace

### I. Introduction

The tradition of Political Realism has regarded three central figures from the history of political thought as its predecessors. Political Realists claim that the primogenitor

of their school has been Thucydides, while Machiavelli and Hobbes are the genuine continuators of it. In the case of Hobbes, his political doctrines and the famous realist concept of anarchy “often seem virtually synonymous in discussions of international relations”, as Michael Williams have rightly observed in his insightful paper<sup>1</sup>. In particular, realists such as E.H. Carr, Hans J. Morgenthau and Kenneth N. Waltz engaged on a regular basis with the Hobbesian political notions, while one of the most influential scholars in the history of international relations, Martin Wight, regarded Hobbes as a core figure of Political Realism<sup>2</sup>.

In the history of international thought, we can detect various traditions that engage with the concept of Hobbesian anarchy as an analytical tool in order to interpret the actions of states, foreign affairs and the international system. While the so-called Hobbesian tradition is already one of the most prominent theories of international politics, Cornelia Navari has rightly stated that Hobbes have been regarded as a theorist of international politics only after Pufendorf: “Whether the is a Hobbesian tradition in international relations is a moot point. Loose talk about states of nature does not constitute a tradition and the only theorist who attempted to develop Hobbes into a theory of international relations was Pufendorf in the later seventeenth century”<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Williams, “Hobbes and International Relations: A Reconsideration”, *International Organization*, Spring, 1996, Vol. 50, No. 2 (Spring, 1996), p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis: 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, London: Macmillan & CO. LTD, 1946, p. 153. Martin Wight, *International Theory – The Three Traditions*, USA: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1992, p. 31-32. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, USA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979, p. 103. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, USA: Columbia University Press, 1959, pp. 85, 166. Hans J. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs Power Politics*, Great Britain: Latimer House Limited, 1947, p. 151. Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, USA: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948, pp. 169, 391, 397.

<sup>3</sup> Cornelia Navari, “Hobbes and the Hobbesian Tradition in International Thought”, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, vol. 11, no. 3, 1982, p. 207.

There is a controversy, albeit a misleading one, among Realist and Rationalist schools which draw an insufficient picture of Hobbesian doctrines and underestimate central features of his political philosophy. To put it briefly, the former assumes that in Hobbes we find for the first time an utter illustration of the interstate relations as an anarchic condition, which gives rise to a permanent state of war between states devoid of any moral considerations, while the latter contradicts this assumption and supports a more nuanced picture of Hobbes that allows a space for interstate cooperation. However, both the Realist and the Rationalist schools are also divided with regard to Hobbesian anarchy. Firstly, “while classical realists and neorealists locate the source of “Hobbesian anarchy,” and the ensuing amorality, either in the nature of human beings or in the nature of the state, structural realists, such as Kenneth Waltz, identify the structure of the interstate system itself as the progenitor of the anarchical condition”<sup>4</sup>. Regarding the Rationalist approaches, whereas the English School has rightly detected the weaknesses of the Realist School, it engaged with the wrong analytical problems, namely the problem of why Hobbes didn’t formulate a notion of a global Leviathan. Furthermore, in the absence of a global Leviathan the Rational Choice theory has claimed that cooperation among states is possible only at a minimum level. Both versions of the Rationalist school provided a more nuanced picture of Hobbes. However, they lack explanatory clarity<sup>5</sup>. In order to find out what Hobbes truly said we must return ad fontes and especially in the scandalous chapter 13 of *Leviathan*.

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<sup>4</sup> Theodore Christov, “The invention of Hobbesian anarchy”, *Journal of International Political Theory*, 2017, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed analysis, see: Theodore Christon, *Before Anarchy: Hobbes and his Critics in Modern International Thought*, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 106-111.

## II. Hobbesian international anarchy

In chapter 13 of *Leviathan* Hobbes provided an insightful, albeit puzzling, description of the state of nature, which he portrayed as a permanent war of all against all (*Bellum omnium contra omnes*). Actually, Hobbes did assume that the state of nature is a state of war in the absence of a common power which would establish peace and prosperity: “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.”<sup>6</sup> In this condition men are fully equal, because they are capable of inflicting devastating injuries on one another, even the weakest on the most powerful. From this equality of ability arises the equality of hope and in turn the equality of fear: “and in the way to their end, (*which is principally their own conservation*, and sometimes their delectation only,) endeavour 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 labour, but also of his life, or liberty. And the invader again is in the like danger of another.”<sup>7</sup> As we can observe, human nature is miserable, nasty, fragmented, full of inconveniences and animosity, because men must rest upon their own powers for their preservation. So, in this condition human beings can neither flourish nor create civilization; all that they can hope for is survival. Realists tend to draw an analogue picture of interstate relations from this dark and depressing description at the individual level, assuming that in the absence of a global Leviathan states are in a perpetual war with one another. Instead, I argue that this

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapter 13.8. For *Leviathan* I use the text edited by J. C. A. Gaskin, Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. For *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic* I use the Cambridge edition: Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law, Natural & Politic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, chapter 13.3.

interpretation is sketchy and overlooks the big picture of the Hobbesian argument.

First of all, we must highlight that the state of nature is an ahistorical concept, something akin to a thought experiment, which we cannot empirically detect in the history of mankind. Although history cannot provide us with something similar to the state of nature, Hobbes urged us to look at the relations between states in order to find something similar: “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 neighbours; which is a posture of war.”<sup>8</sup> To be sure, Realists are not at all wrong in assuming that interstate relations are the carbon copy of the natural condition but, as we stated above, this picture is somewhat misleading and flawed. Hobbes elaborated on his thought, elucidating that interstate relations might be an analogous condition of the state of nature, namely full of hostility and suspicion, but must be regarded on a more evolved phase than sheer primitivism: “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”<sup>9</sup>. Therefore, international arena is not so brutish and miserable as the natural condition of men, since people have gathered together under a common power, the Sovereign, and as a result they have created civilization, they conduct with each other through industry, communicating their new ideas, thoughts and experiences. So is the case with all sovereign states.

On the contrary, industry is absent from the state of nature and along with it human flourishing is absent too: “Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of war, where every man is enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time, wherein men live without other security, than what

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, chapter 13.12.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, chapter 13.12.



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.”<sup>10</sup>

Chapter 13 is indeed an interesting and illuminating part of *Leviathan*, since it elucidates two interpretative problems of Hobbesian political philosophy. Firstly, it clarifies why there is no need of a global Leviathan, a theoretical problem the English School have engaged with, and, secondly, it accentuates that the sovereigns create a more civilized space among them than individual level. So, the state of nature among men differs from the state of nature among different sovereigns, since the absence of industry, production and trade from the former is what causes a miserable and nasty life; conversely, when political institutions are being created, we observe the upturn of trade between states and as a result the strengthening of their relations. Therefore, interstate cooperation is possible through commercial activity, which promote stability and international peace<sup>11</sup>.

How much important is the industry for the prosperity and safety not only of the subjects but also of the sovereigns, is equally shown in an earlier work of Hobbes, namely *The Elements of Law Natural and Politics*. There, Hobbes regarded the cultivation of commerce as a Law of Nature: “It is also a law of nature, that men allow commerce and traffic indifferently to one another. For he that alloweth that to one man, which he denieth to another, declareth his hatred to him, to whom he denieth; and to declare hatred is war. And upon

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, chapter 13.9.

<sup>11</sup> For a thoroughly analysis with regard to trade and international order, see Tom Sorrel, “Hobbes on Trade, Consumption and International Order”, *The Monist*, Vol. 89, No. 2, The Foundations of International Order (APRIL 2006), pp. 245-258

this title was grounded the great war between the Athenians and the Peloponnesians. For would the Athenians have condescended to suffer the Megareans, their neighbours, to traffic in their ports and markets, that war had not begun”<sup>12</sup>. Now, if we count that the Laws of Nature are types of behavior that promote peace and that the Law of Nations is indeed identical to the Law of Nature, as Hobbes makes it clear again in *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*<sup>13</sup>, we can suppose that whatever is applicable and binding on men in the natural condition or after the constitution of a commonwealth, it is also applicable and binding on states in the international arena. From now on, we will turn to the Law of Nature and the causes of war in order to find out whether Arendt’s assertion that “the Leviathan can indeed overcome all political limitations that go with the existence of other peoples and can envelop the whole earth in its tyranny”<sup>14</sup> is true or delusive.

As we mentioned before, Laws of Nature are types of behavior that promote peace. But what they dictate? Which is their primary end? Hobbes is extremely explicit on this matter: “And consequently it is a precept, or general rule of reason, that every man, ought to endeavour 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, containeth 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”<sup>15</sup>. In the following chapter of *Leviathan* Hobbes outlines more laws of nature, which are all eternal and indeed promote stability, sobriety and peacefulness; through these chapters Hobbes makes it clear that the fundamental Law of Nature dictates peace as the

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, chapter 16.12.

<sup>13</sup> “As for the law of nations, it is the same with the law of nature. For that which is the law of nature between man and man, before the constitution of commonwealth, is the law of nations between sovereign and sovereign, after.” Ibid, chapter 29.10.

<sup>14</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, UK: Penguin Classics, 2017, p. 359

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapter 14.4.

supreme goal of mankind, while war is not a Law but a right, precisely because there are circumstances in which men do not follow the percepts of Reason and Law and for someone in order to survive must resort to the advantages of war: “For he that should be modest, and tractable, and perform all he promises, in such time, and place, where no man else should do so, should but make himself a prey to others, and procure his own certain ruin, contrary to the ground of all laws of nature, which tend to nature’s preservation”<sup>16</sup>. This passage reminds the Machiavellian warning in *The Prince*<sup>17</sup>. Nevertheless, we must at this point be clear that the Machiavellian warning is one which is addressed solely to the abilities of the ruler, who must tame cosmic and malicious forces such as Fortuna in order to establish his dominion, while Hobbes’ Sovereign is not someone who must deal with external forces and the hatred of the people but his sovereignty originates from the contract between his subjects. Thus, Hobbes’s sovereign is not a natural person but an artificial one, we might say impersonal, in which the interests of his subjects merge.

Now, as we enter into the international sphere, it could be useful to point out that for Hobbes the international system is neither dominated by anarchy nor has a life of its own. Actually, it is slightly an anachronism to attribute Hobbes a structural anarchic theory, which has only emerged in the twentieth century. This goes against neorealist interpretations, such as Waltz’s, who “relies heavily on an analogy drawn from the work of economists to develop his argument that the international system possesses an independent structure that constrains the behaviour of states. States, he suggests, can be compared to firms operating in a situation of perfect

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, chapter 15.36.

<sup>17</sup> “For there is such a difference between how men live and how they ought to live that he who abandons what is done for what ought to be done learns his destruction rather than his preservation, because any man who under all conditions insists on making it his business to be good will surely be destroyed among so many who are not good.” Allan Gilbert, *Machiavelli – The Chief Works and Others*, vol. 1, USA: Duke University Press, 1989, p. 57.

competition”<sup>18</sup>. Nevertheless, Hobbes took pains to illustrate that the international system is not the carbon copy of the state of nature, as we have argued above. Anarchy as a natural condition which emerges in the absence of a sovereign cannot be redirected to the international arena, because it is not a condition coming from isolated individuals but from sovereigns, namely representatives who have the legitimate means of power and who are bound to the Law of Nations and the Laws of Nature, which are identical as we have seen. Although the international domain is overwhelmed by war and as a result states must first and foremost safeguard their interests, which are identical with the wellbeing of their subjects, this condition does not militate the misery and the hostility of the state of nature, because there is a normative background according to which sovereigns must conduct themselves. One core element of this normative background is the fifteenth law of nature, which dictates the safety of mediators: “It is also a law of nature, that all men that mediate peace, be allowed safe conduct. For the law that commandeth peace, as the end commandeth intercession, as the means; and to intercession the means is safe conduct”<sup>19</sup>. So, the mediators who are responsible for the promotion of peace must be insulated from the harms of war by the Law of Nature and through this passage Hobbes accentuates the importance of diplomacy as a means of civilized behavior in foreign affairs which safeguards and propels peace.

However, in order to secure peace sovereigns have to increase their army capabilities, build fortresses, and train spies so that they can defend themselves from a foreign invader. This disposition matches utterly with the first Law of Nature that dictates peace and the right of nature to resort to war when it is needed. Hence, *armed peace* is what Hobbes encourages the sovereigns to promote. With regard to the causes of war, Hobbes considers that there are three principal causes: “So that in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel. First, competition; secondly, diffidence;

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<sup>18</sup> Barry Buzan and Richard Little, *International Systems in World History*, USA: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 39.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapter 15.29.

thirdly, glory”<sup>20</sup>. The first cause refers to the acquisition of goods, the second to the protection of what we already have and the last one to the reputation that one aspires to have. So the first and the third cause are directly opposed to the Laws of Nature and as a result sovereigns must eschew conduct of war for the glory or the goods of others. As Hobbes notes in chapter 15, the ninth law of nature is against pride, while in chapter 29 Hobbes has included in the things that weaken or tend to the dissolution of the commonwealth the expansiveness of a state: “We may further add, the insatiable appetite, or βουλιμία, of enlarging dominion; with the incurable wounds thereby many times received from the enemy; and the wens, of ununited conquests, which are many times a burthen, and with less danger lost, than kept; as also the lethargy of ease, and consumption of riot and vain expense”<sup>21</sup>.

Thus, states must conduct only *defensive* wars in order to protect their interests and in few circumstances they are justified to resort to *offensive* wars only when there are totally sufficient reasons to fear the actions of another sovereign<sup>22</sup>. As Christov rightly noticed in his influential work *Before Anarchy*, “Offensive wars, by contrast, may not be justified even in the state of nature “for [in the case of] reparable injuries, if reparation be tendered, all invasion upon that title is iniquity.” Preemptive strikes against another group may, in few instances, receive justification only if no “sufficient caution be given to take away their fear,” or, in even fewer circumstances, when the group itself is on the verge of physical extinction. Against popular Realist readings of Hobbes, states interact in a significantly more constrained environment than the far less secure competition of natural groups, seeking to master the greatest number of servants”<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, *Leviathan*, chapter 13.6.

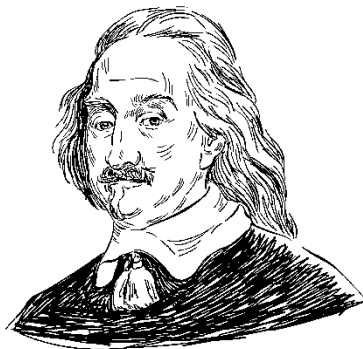
<sup>21</sup> Ibid, *Leviathan*, chapter 29.22.

<sup>22</sup> See also the insightful analysis of Delphine Thivet, “Thomas Hobbes: A Philosopher of War or Peace?”, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 16:4, pp. 701-721.

<sup>23</sup> Theodore Christon, *Before Anarchy: Hobbes and his Critics in Modern International Thought*, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 129.

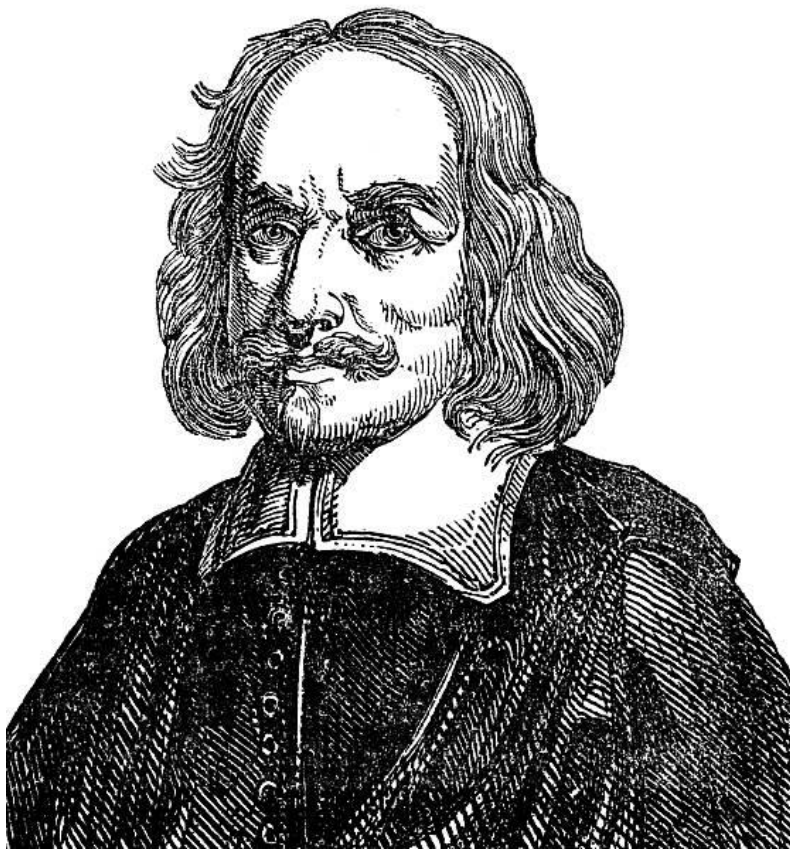
### III. Conclusion

Taking all these into consideration, we can confidently dismiss as delusive Arendt's claim that the Leviathan can envelop the whole earth on its tyranny, since we have observed that the realist concept of anarchy does not match with what Hobbes claims regarding international domain. We have seen that interstate relations are not so miserable as the state of nature, because trade, commerce and industry promote the interstate cooperation which is protected by the Law of Nature; we have seen also that Peace is the first and foremost purpose of the Law of Nature and, last but not least, we have ascertained that for Hobbes a war is justified only for defensive purposes and not out of thrust for glory, reputation and acquisition. As one great scholar of IR theory remarkably stated, "As, after three hundred years, we salute Thomas Hobbes of Magdalen Hall, I ask you to remember that, among his many other distinctions, he was a true philosopher of peace"<sup>24</sup>.



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<sup>24</sup> Hedley Bull, "Hobbes and the International Anarchy", *Social Research*, Winter 1981, Vol. 48, No. 4, Politics: The Work of Hans Morgenthau (WINTER 1981), p. 738.



## Alasdair Macintyre: A Critic Of Modernity

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**Abstract:** The article provides an account of some aspects of Alasdair MacIntyre's moral and political critique of liberal modernity. It reconstructs major concepts of his moral theory, i.e. his concept of the virtues, of a 'practice', of a 'narrative unity of a human life', of 'external' and 'internal' goods, and of a moral 'tradition'. It then gives an account of his project of a politics of local community. The article argues that MacIntyre's critique is a Thomist moral and political project, which understands the relation of the individual to the community in ways difficult to reconcile with the contemporary conception of the person, of individual rights and of the relation of the individual to the state.

**Keywords:** Alasdair MacIntyre, modernity, community, virtue, Thomism.



## 1. Alasdair MacIntyre: A Critic of Modernity

Alasdair MacIntyre's theory of the virtues, his book *After Virtue* (1981), and his influential work on many fields of philosophical theory are well known. His contribution to philosophy develops in political theory, ethics, metaphysics, and the history of philosophy. Alasdair MacIntyre has been an active intellectual figure since the 1950s. He is now considered a preeminent Thomist philosopher, although he started his intellectual journey as a Marxist political thinker. One of the distinctive ideas that runs through his work is his critique of liberalism, which is also a critique of the Enlightenment and of capitalism. It constitutes a political and moral criticism of contemporary liberal culture and a call for return to the ethics of virtue and community.

His work is mainly considered an Aristotelian criticism of modernity, containing strong Thomistic strands throughout his moral and political theory. MacIntyre's project is against liberal capitalism, both in its social and political institutions and its morality. His effort to reintroduce Thomist ethical and political concepts and alter social and political institutions is a part of that project. MacIntyre's critique of liberalism draws on an ideal of political community which resembles to the monastic communities of the Middle Ages. He calls for a return to the ethics and politics of the common good, as opposed to the liberal politics of rights. He understands ancient morality, which his ethical and political project seeks to restore, as superior to contemporary liberal morality. He believes that the project of restoration of traditional communities he introduces is the first step to retrieve such a morality.

MacIntyre's early political thought had been under the influence of Marxism. He became critical of Marxism in the 1960s and headed towards developing a Thomistic ethical theory from the 1980s onwards.

MacIntyre sees contemporary politics as based on Weberian rationality, which has been transformed to bureaucratic competence. In his view, modern democracies

are characterized by managerial effectiveness and are inimical to values. They pursue given goals, such as liberal neutrality, which has become another liberal value which is considered undisputable. They seek to maximize the power exercised over their citizens, who are not allowed to question that kind of relation between citizens and political authority.

For MacIntyre, morality and philosophy are socially derived. They are connected to particular societies and eras. His programme for ethics and politics is, nevertheless, Thomist in origin and spirit, containing, as he argues, Aristotelian elements. MacIntyre claims that he succeeds in reviving Thomist and Aristotelian elements in his ethical and political theory, in a new context, suitable for contemporary societies.

In this article, some of the elements of that effort are critically presented. The first section of the article sets the background of the argument of his moral critique. The following section reconstructs the main schemes presented in his book *After Virtue*, where MacIntyre re-introduces some Aristotelian concepts, seen from the perspective of his critique of liberalism. The last section describes his moral and political project of local communities, where practices and virtues may be restored, and makes some remarks on the viability of his project in modernity.

## **2. *After Virtue*: A Journey from Homeric Virtue to Liberalism and back to the Virtues**

In the beginning of his best-known work, *After Virtue*, MacIntyre famously describes an imaginary state of catastrophe where natural science has been destroyed, scientists are being persecuted and there are only fragments of the past situation. In order to restore science, the remaining scientists and educated people try to put together all the fragments of the past. Pieces of theories, book chapters, broken equipment, all are combined in an effort to restore science at its prior state. But that effort is necessarily inconsistent since all major parts of previous scientific

achievements have been lost. Therefore, all scientists are in a position of continuous disagreement since the remaining pieces of scientific theories are damaged and all major theories have been partially lost.<sup>1</sup>

MacIntyre draws a parallel of that imaginary situation with the contemporary state of affairs in modern societies. When it comes to morality, its state and language suffer the same disorder as natural science in the fictional example above.<sup>2</sup> Although liberalism boasts that it has the most sound moral reasoning, moral disagreement persists, and individuals are in a moral chaos as though no rationality exists. Moral theory and politics are in a state of constant disagreement and seem to have reached an impasse. Everyone seems able to produce a rational argument, therefore he believes he has the truth. There is no way to adjudicate between conflicting arguments. The reason for this, MacIntyre believes, is because the pieces of philosophical theory, and of moral and political argument, are detached from the social and moral background they had in preliberal societies. Without that background, morality and politics are necessarily fragmented and incoherent, and evolve into a state of conflict. But, as in the above example of the disaster in natural science, no one realises that situation, therefore he adheres to the rationality of his own argument.

MacIntyre states examples where the fact of endless and unresolvable disagreement happens not only in common moral matters but also in academic disputes over political issues, such as justice. Philosophers adhere to positions such as the theories of John Rawls and Robert Nozick, they can develop their own arguments, supporting the one justice theory or the other, but they cannot come to a conclusion as to which of the two theories is valid. For MacIntyre, that would require a shared agreement of what constitutes good for man, in other words a common conception of the good. Since a common conception of the good is absent in modernity, moral disagreement is bound to continue. Modernity understands morality as a concept based on the

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<sup>1</sup> MacIntyre, A., 2007: 1.

<sup>2</sup> MacIntyre, A., 2007: 256.

autonomy of the individual and on his/her free choice, therefore modern morality cannot be construed on the basis of agreement. Political and moral matters in modernity are the cause of continuous debate, where everyone is trying to convince everybody else. Everyone experiences inability to convince the other rationally, since all arguments claim rationality. The result is continuous strife and indignation. Since all arguments are supposed to be rational, all attempts to convince others, do not use rationality but emotions and manipulation. It appears that liberalism's obsession with rationality ends up with an irrational morality.

The way the individual chooses his moral stance is also irrational. Although liberalism contends that free moral choice is a main aspect of liberal morality, it cannot justify a meaningful moral paradigm based on individual choice that is not relativistic. Moral agents in modernity cannot justify their commitments. For MacIntyre, all moral stances in modernity are arbitrary, because there is not a set of underlying values which would necessarily support each moral position.<sup>3</sup> It is thus certain that everyone may change his moral commitments, according to his own interests. Since conditions in modernity change rapidly, agents may have variable and fluid interests, depending on the circumstances. The main concept in modernity is not the object of choice, and the values which underlie it, but the subject of choice, the moral agent, and his/her interests. There is no connection of moral choice to a conception of the good that would provide a coherent rational background of that choice.

For MacIntyre, a morality presupposes a sociology. Liberalism cannot admit that fact of moral theory and practice, because of its individualistic premises.<sup>4</sup> Liberal morality reveals what MacIntyre calls 'emotivism', i.e. 'the doctrine that all evaluative judgements are nothing but expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character'.<sup>5</sup> In liberal modernity, our values and beliefs can be nothing more

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<sup>3</sup> MacIntyre, A., 2007: 39.

<sup>4</sup> MacIntyre, A., 2007: 23-24.

<sup>5</sup> MacIntyre, A., 2007: 11-12.

than the outcome of our choosing what is best for us and what seems more rational for the chooser to follow, for his/her own purposes. After choosing their own moral stance, moral agents then try to convert others to their own views and beliefs. The strength of their own moral view is assessed by the number of people they can persuade.

What for MacIntyre is a predicament of contemporary morality, for liberalism is an ideal of an autonomous, free chooser, who rationally determines his/her ends and conceptions of the good. For modern morality, the individual is prior to his/her social milieu or roles, since the individual is considered prior to his/her ends. For MacIntyre, liberalism also neglects the historical dimension of moral choice. Although all values and ends are historical, a conception that captures the essence of human morality and action, liberalism contends that there are ahistorical values, such as the priority of the individual and rights.

### **3. 'Practices', 'Narrative Unity', 'Goods' and 'Tradition'**

MacIntyre contrasts the ethics of emotivism to his own project of an ethics of virtue and community. He describes his view of a rational morality as an Aristotelian ethics of the virtues. Virtue ethics evolve around a conception of the good, while liberal morality is an ethics of rights and individualism. The concept of the virtues can provide an account of what is the good for man. It can also give an account of what constitutes a human good in various circumstances. The virtues can therefore accommodate historicity within morality.

MacIntyre connects the concept of the virtues to what is the good for someone, according to his/her social role. Virtue ethics can, thus, provide a more adequate account of what is the good for man. It can also give a better account of what is the good for the social roles he occupies, compared to liberal ethics whose main concept is the individual and his ability for rational choice. Liberalism is individualistic and cannot

provide a framework for what is the good for the individual who functions within social roles.

Although virtues can give a historical account of what is the human good, there is a framework common to all eras, which provides three levels of the concept of the virtues. They are the levels of a 'practice', of the 'narrative unity of the human life' and of the 'moral tradition'. Each level is based on the level before it.

The concept of a 'practice' has a specific meaning, used by MacIntyre to denote a 'coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realised in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended'.<sup>6</sup> Participation in a practice means that the agent has to adhere to certain rules internal to that practice. Those rules claim objectivity, derived from the specific way that activity functions and reproduces itself over time.

Inside those practices there are certain kinds of goods attached. These goods are of two kinds. The first kind is what MacIntyre calls 'external' goods, such as prestige, status and money. They can be obtained not only by participating in that specific practice, but by lots of alternative ways. The other kind is 'internal' goods and refers to the goods which can be obtained only by engaging in that specific kind of practice.<sup>7</sup>

Most structured, organised human activities in modernity are not practices, in the sense that MacIntyre understands them, because they don't function according to the human good. The goods attached to most of the human practices in liberal modernity are 'external' goods. The politics of liberal modernity are characteristically such a practice. They do not

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<sup>6</sup> MacIntyre, A., 2007: 187.

<sup>7</sup> In his next book, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (1988), MacIntyre refers to 'internal' and 'external' goods as 'goods of excellence' and 'goods of effectiveness'. MacIntyre, A., 1988: 32.

promote the common good but mostly the goods of those prominent in that activity. In liberal politics, the goods that prevail are the external goods of money and power. In general, practices are either absent in modernity, or they are dominated by external goods. But the example of politics is indicative of the corrosion of practices in modernity, since politics should be the human activity mostly connected to the human good.

Only by participating in the specific kind of goods of a practice, are we able to understand and identify them in that practice. Its goods can be achieved only if, at first, one subordinates him/herself, while participating in that activity with other practitioners. At the beginning, one has to put him/herself under the authority of others, more experienced than him/her, for guidance, in learning the rules and skills necessary for that practice. In a practice, one competes with the other, as a necessary step in order for the goods of practices to develop and thrive. The rules that define the goods inherent in a practice may be changed by the community itself, in order to improve and strengthen the practice. But practices have a certain history, which is always respected, although parts of it may be altered. A practice cannot move forward in the future, if it does not build on the rules of the past. It can then develop new rules that become part of the tradition of that specific practice.

Since rules are inherent to practices, there is a need to find a way to adjudicate between conflicting practices. Every human life is a quest for the good and it also constitutes a narrative. Everyone is the main character in the narrative of his/her life, a fact that gives it a unity, the unity of a narrative quest. In the 'narrative unity of a human life', that quest for the good gives life its unity and meaning.

For MacIntyre, practices are important because virtues can be exercised only within practices. In order to achieve goods that are internal to practices, one needs the presence of the virtues. MacIntyre gives a definition of the virtues in terms of their interrelation with practices: 'A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and the exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to

practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods'.<sup>8</sup> The virtues of 'justice, courage and honesty' are necessary components of all practices with 'internal' goods. Virtues need the environment of a practice to exist. There can be no virtues without a common conception of what the good is and without common ends and rules practised in a shared social environment.

Practices are created and exercised only within a moral 'tradition'. A tradition is '...an historically extended, socially embedded argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition. Within a tradition the pursuit of goods extends through generations....Hence the individual's search for his or her good is generally and characteristically conducted within a context defined by those traditions of which the individual's life is a part...'.<sup>9</sup> Liberalism, Thomism, and the Scottish Enlightenment are such traditions, understood in the way MacIntyre introduces that meaning of the word. Individual lives can be lived only within traditions. Moral traditions are moral arguments extending over time. Modernity is itself a moral tradition, and it is because it lacks a common conception of the good, that it ends up denying the validity of all moral values. Morality in modernity leads to the Nietzschean rejection of all values.

Because of his allegiance to the virtues, MacIntyre's project is often understood as Aristotelian, an interpretation often enhanced by his reference to virtues as an alternative to the contemporary predicament of liberal morality. But as early as in his *After Virtue*, MacIntyre had stated his view that Aristotelian ethics are interrelated with the ancient polis and cannot be revived.<sup>10</sup> For MacIntyre, it is only the moral tradition of Thomism that can provide an alternative to liberalism.

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<sup>8</sup> MacIntyre, A., 2007: 191.

<sup>9</sup> MacIntyre, A., 2007: 222.

<sup>10</sup> MacIntyre, A., 2007: 159.



#### 4. Towards a politics of the virtues

For MacIntyre, contemporary liberal culture is inimical to the notion of commitment to a conception of the good essential for a full, meaningful life. Liberalism concentrates on the idea of rights and how individual rights, or rights of groups, can be protected. Citizens do not reflect on which is the best way of life for human beings, or what is the best kind of human society. They do not search for ways to develop their personality and their relationship to their political community. Citizens of contemporary democracies are inimical to the concept of virtue. They are not willing to consider how the virtues can provide them with a way to flourish, individually and collectively.

Liberalism believes that issues of moral personality and of the good life are solely issues of individual conduct and do not involve any relation of the individual to the community. For liberal morality, the community should not have any claims about conceptions of the good life and about the morality of the individual. Liberalism is devoted to neutrality, a value it promotes in the private and the public sphere. For MacIntyre, neutrality ends up being another conception of the good, which liberalism promotes as a neutral stance. In modernity, every individual has his/her own conception of the good, in which the state cannot interfere. Therefore, no one can adjudicate between rival versions of the good life. Liberal neutrality is the first step towards the consolidation of a conception of politics as managerial authority over citizens.

Liberal rationality is rationality stripped of its ends. For politics of local community, rationality is not opposed to conceptions of the good life. Rationality does not undermine, but supports conceptions of the good. Rationality can exist only within practices, which are always socially constituted. Practices can thrive only within communities. MacIntyre understands communities as the political form that can provide the necessary milieu for the revival of political activity and of morality. In those communities practices and

the virtues can be revived. They can provide an alternative social model to liberal capitalism.

MacIntyre understands the politics of liberal modernity as also being in grave disorder, following the predicament of contemporary morality. The liberal conception of self and society is one of separations between individual and community. The politics of practices and virtues, which are practised in small communities, are completely different from the politics of the modern state. The locality of that particular political form, and its special characteristics, may transform the nature of political activity and its known predicament in mass liberal democracies. It is 'a politics of self-defence for all those local societies that aspire to achieve some relatively self-sufficient and independent form of participatory practice-based community'.<sup>11</sup>

Contemporary democracies resemble more to oligarchies of money and power, where the powerful few rule over the rest of the citizens. That kind of politics is combined with a morality inimical to the flourishing of the virtues. The politics of local community may introduce a completely different relation of the citizen to political power. Through political activity, citizens are educated into political participation, while they also develop their moral character. In contemporary, conventional forms of politics, participants have to be adaptable, constantly changing their positions, while in the politics of local community, they will grow solid and coherent moral personalities, since one of the key virtues in local politics is integrity. As a result, citizens will also develop a completely different relation to their political representatives.<sup>12</sup>

After his critique of liberal morality in the early 1980s, when at the final pages of *After Virtue*, MacIntyre famously called for 'another St. Benedict', he has given various exemplifications of his view on community. In the Prologue to the third edition of his aforementioned major work, he describes the aspects of St. Benedict's life and work that MacIntyre himself was intrigued by. MacIntyre refers to 'a

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<sup>11</sup> MacIntyre, A., 1995: xxvi.

<sup>12</sup> MacIntyre, A., 1998: 249.

monastery of prayer, learning, and labor, in which, and around which communities could not only survive, but flourish in a period of social and cultural darkness'.<sup>13</sup> That kind of institution had 'unpredictable effects' in St. Benedict's time, and MacIntyre claims that our time is also waiting 'for new and unpredictable possibilities of renewal', in order to resist the dominant order of liberal modernity. In those communities, members can 'recognize that obedience to those standards that Aquinas identified as the precepts of the natural law is necessary, if they are to learn from and with each other what their individual and common goods are.... In such a society the authority of positive law, promulgated by whatever means the community adopts, will derive from its conformity to the precepts of natural law and from the acknowledgement of that conformity by plain persons'.<sup>14</sup>

It is doubtful whether such a conception of the citizen and his/her relation to the community is viable today, where the separation of the private from the public sphere is considered an essential feature of individualism in modernity. Values such as autonomy of the person and respect for individual rights in contemporary liberal societies understand individual flourishing as a personal project. The state is not allowed to interfere with a person's right to rationally choose his/her way of life. MacIntyre's vision of local participatory communities remains a small-scale, partial project within large-scale contemporary democracies. His project of a recovery of the virtues contains dubious notions, concerning the relation of the individual to the community.

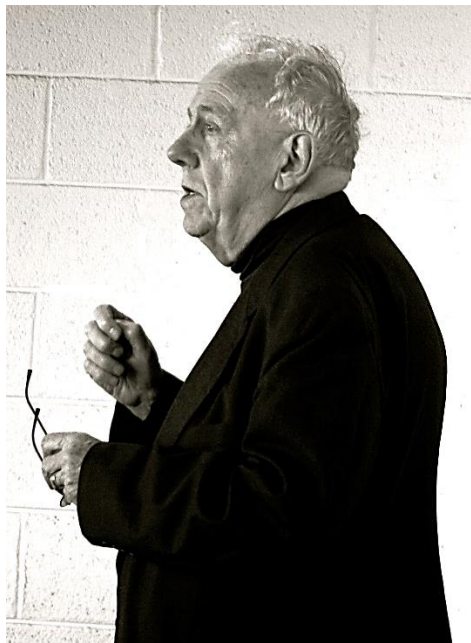
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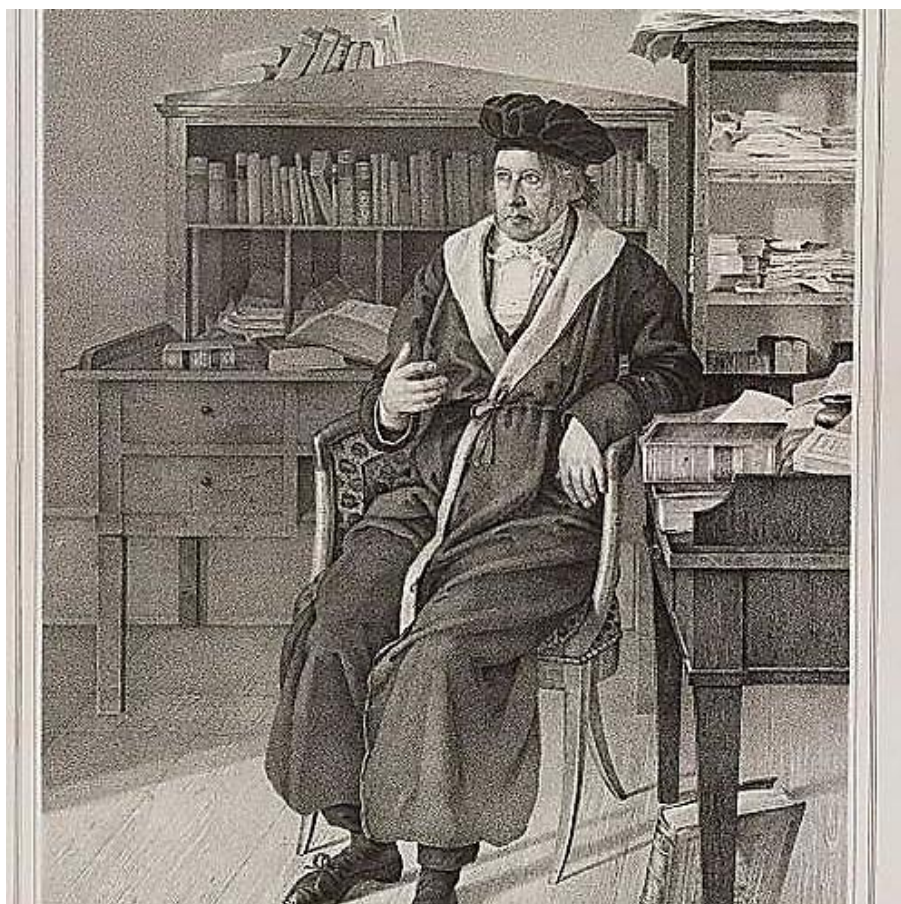
<sup>13</sup> MacIntyre, A., 2007: xvi.

<sup>14</sup> MacIntyre, A., 1998: 247.

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## The World Crises in Hegel's Dialectic Thinking & the Current Contradictions Confronted Europe

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**Abstract:** The research objective of this paper emanates from a reasonable anxiety regarding the direction of things in the present world scene. For that, the Hegelian notion of the world crises is necessary to be traced in order to comprehend better the course of world economy and the contradictions that the EU is confronted with today. The main interest is focused on: the shaped order of the world, the political actions and strategies that are implemented by the dominant forces of the planet, the prospects and objectives that emerged in the European Union. This way, the political theory of neo-liberalism is traced in order to compare the results of the political actions which facilitated the increasing tendencies of the globalization. Yet, the prospects and possible developments of the European Union are studied carefully, while the latter is found today in the direction and stage of its endeavors of political integration. This attempt is made more or less to strong unification of EU, because with one united Europe it is possible to liberate itself from the

tenet of neo-liberalism. It means, that EU could possibly line up one human, just and democratic alternative solution to the anarchist capitalism of the hegemonic forces of the West as well as to the authoritarian Asiatic capitalism. The research then, is to highlight the elements that compose the deepening for the real political unification of the European Union, without overseeing the obstacles that appear in that venture. Emphasis is given to the international economic system and to the neo-liberalist ideological doctrine which restricts the dynamic of the political integration.

**Keywords:** world crisis, dialectic, globalization, contradictions, positivism, hegemony, neo-liberalism, political integration of EU.

## 1. Introduction

The objective of this article, is to highlight the notions of Hegel's thinking about the world crises and find out how the current contradictions of Europe can be compared as well as how they can be possibly overcome. Those ideas were made at the rise of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but they still remain today of some importance for his attempt to that reconciliation between the particular and the general. He was the first one to raise the separation of the civil society and state, as the organizing rule of the modern world. The objective of the paper then, has three directions: 1) to analyze the Hegelian notions of the crises by emphasizing the real actors that play the significant role internationally. 2) To trace the course of the world economy in order to analyse the particular factors that had built the present world order, which was imposed after the collapse of the Eastern European countries. 3) To focus on the significance of the European countries' unification in the form of integration at the present time in order to see how it overcomes the crisis.

This examination is necessary because at the rise of the 21<sup>st</sup> century it appears that it is not abandoning us not only the threat of the war but the war itself. This constant conflict seems that it doesn't have an end even though the wall of hate, which had prescribed as the end of history, has been demolished, since the history itself interpreted as a constant

war collision. The conflicts that they were taking place for three and so decades, in Middle East, in Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon and in Syria are clear evidence. The world today is terrified and stands dazed front of the spectacle offered by the great democratic societies, where in the name of democracy and liberty they assault and exterminate others only for the safety and the expansion of their power.

The taking place conditions in the world scene that are reflected in the relations among countries today, those relations are in fact *relations of domination*. While they have past already three different systems in the international field, as the experts suggest, does not appear any improvement. The powerful force that leads the world today in the fourth world system as a supreme force is a well known fact and it is not other than the U.S.A. The unknown fact however, is that the years since 1989 to the present there has prevailed one new order in the world scene, which leads to an immorality due to the complete redemption of basic meanings and rules of the international law. The international Organizations which were established previously, as a necessity for the administration of the crises of the world and so avoid the various conflicts mainly at the century which the international balances were disturbed were not successful.

Thus, in that international system after 1989 in which the U.S.A undertook the hegemony of the planet, the formed relations were so as to lay their foundations upon the wrong terms. These terms are with one dimensional view only in the international firmament, where according to the desires of the powerful they impose and achieve the maintenance of the world balance. The ever known language is that which is based on the economic power, on the technological and armament's superiority in which there is no place for concepts of democracy or equity. The states remain as the elements of the international system by maintaining the objective of the maximization of the benefits of each one. But, when they are not on the top of the pyramid, they accept as much as their weakness allows them. That of course leads to



an unresolved constant crisis. Let's reflect back on history for now to see how crises were treated by Hegel.

## 2. Hegelian Notions of Crises

Hegel was the first philosopher, according to Habermas, who anticipated his own epoch as an age of modernity. Although this epoch is different from previous historical stages he raised it to a **crisis** due to that kind of difference. This difference is based on the fact that the modern age is a **stage of transition** to a new epoch.<sup>1</sup> He discovers the subjectivity as the basic principle of the modern times while the concept of reconciliatory force of one **reason** which cannot be produced from the subjectivity without rupture is elaborated. When Hegel examines the splitting that is caused by thought there is stressed the authoritarian side of self-consciousness.

So, the modern aspects of the positive reveal the principle of the subjectivity as a principle of domination. The positivism of rationality characterizes the impasse of the epoch and in that impasse the individual is either transformed to an object which is oppressed or transforms the nature to an object that oppresses it. In the authoritarian incarnations of the subjective *reason* he arrays against the reconciliatory force a subjectivity which appears with the name of life.<sup>2</sup> But, he could not really draw off the element of reconciliation, which is the resettlement of the broken totality from the self-consciousness of the known subject toward itself. In order to reach a reconciliation of the destructive modernity it presupposes one moral entity that is not yet grown up on the ground of the modern era but it is borrowed from other epochs.

The Hegelian notions of history, dialectic and revolution are based on his logic of the individuals, state and social change. First, he did not attribute much sense on the

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<sup>1</sup> Habermas J. *The Philosophical Reason of Modernity*, Publ. Alexandria, Athens, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 49.

intention of the individuals regarding their ability to demolish things as a result of a revolution or to reconstruct the society as a target of that change. For Hegel, the faceless forces that are interwoven with society regulate the destiny of the individuals. His great estimation was the nation state as the characteristic of the political philosophy. In the interpretation on history, he thought, that the nation rather than the individual or a group of individuals constituted the considerable unit and the objective of the philosophy of history, which through the dialectic is indicated the achievements of each nation as an element of the evolutionary civilization.<sup>3</sup> The spirit of nation that works within the minds of individuals but independent of their will and intentions he regarded as the real creator of arts and law of morality and religion. For that the history of civilization is a succession of national civilizations, where each nation contributes to the overall human achievement. In the nation state the inherent impulse of nation to create, acquires consciousness in itself which reaches to a rational expression.<sup>4</sup> The state then, is the mastermind and the purpose of the national development. It includes all the creations of the nation that have a moral and spiritual significance for the civilization.

So, in the political philosophy, two elements of primary importance existed for Hegel: the first is, the dialectic as a capable method to lead to new conclusions; and the second, the theory of nation state as an embodiment of the political philosophy. Both were inseparable for him, because the dialectical mind was the guarantee of the predominance of the nation state, so as to support his conclusions. He sees the social totality as divided into three categories or moments as he calls them: a) Family, b) civil society, and c) state. What exists in the first is the idea of collectivity. In the second all the private interests of the individuals who each persuades and he describes it as a morality that is lost in its limbs. While the third it is perceived as 'an ethical entity or

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<sup>3</sup> Sabine G. H. *The History of Political Theories*, Publ. Atlantis, Athens, pp. 674-675.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 675.

community where rules one basic characteristic which is the mutual sympathy or one general altruism'.<sup>5</sup>

The business deals of the market are described as a neutral field for the strategic persuasion of the private interests which thus build a system of dependency. The state then is conceived as the ethical part above all, which is the only rational and capable administrator with its civil servants to manage and regulate opposed private interests among citizens and classes of society. He foresees the strong mechanisms of the state as the necessary instruments not only of removing any obstacles to make the economic competition possible but to transform the particular to universal. The state for him should export this antagonism to the international level with other states, the power of which could be constituted from the full authority and control that one state has exercised domestically on its subjects.

In the modern time all men are free and by serving the state they can reach at an ideal integration of themselves. Due to the fact that the integration or unification takes place not by men's free will but by the state itself forcibly, the identities must be false. In that case, the search of a non viable identity, the need of a different from the positive unification which is fixed in the relations of power authority is confirmed through the experience of crisis. In that way Hegel was the first to indicate the modernity itself as a problem. But unfortunately Hegel could not resolve the problem of self-confirmation of modernity.

### 3. The E.U. & the International Contradictions

In the international edifice today, appears one new phenomenon which disturbs the world balances dramatically. That is one market without boards, the so-called **globalization**. This term refers to the international economy without boards which the economic nationalism has been

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<sup>5</sup> Skoulas G. *Introduction to Political Philosophy and Theory, Currents of Thought & Thinkers of Modernity*, Publications Gutenberg, Athens 2011, p. 325.

obliterated and the production has been globalized. The production has been expanded to the degree which the big corporations are transformed into non government entities where they are involved in one unique internal distribution of labor which covers many countries.<sup>6</sup>

On another view, the globalization meant markets where with the concept of the open borders for the free transport of capital and goods have been globalized, but the states remain to share the power authority with the multinational corporations. In such a system, however, the role of the state is very much restricted for intervention in order to plan the development and the function of the market. Thus, the political impact if it is not absent it is very weak. Economists suggest that the business corporations in that way operate in the rationale of the direct profit which doesn't go along with the long term development that a government of one state would have planned.<sup>7</sup>

The open borders for markets with no limits, was simply for the reduction of state's inspections upon them. That opening was institutionalized with regulations which were including a set of measures. These measures were taken in political level for the promotion of the globalization but did not benefit the many. Those measures are the basic policies of one new doctrine of political theory and practice, that of **new-liberalism** which is responsible for the current course the economy has taken internationally. It began the decade of 1980s in the United States of America, in England and in other places later, from the economic elites of those states. This way the economic power authority transfers from the level of state to the globalized field and from the public sector to the private one. Those elites of capital are the winning new masters of the world. It means that those who are benefited by such international situation are the few of this planet while the many, the environment and the labor is the great ill.

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<sup>6</sup> Fotopoulos P. *Globalization, Left and Democracy*, Athens, Pub. Hellenic Letters, 2002, p. 41.

<sup>7</sup> Passet R. *The New liberalist Deception*, Thessaloniki 2006, Pub. Epikentro, p. 141.

In such an international environment as the above, the European Union of the 27 member states is called to play a significant role, where it depends on its strength and dynamic the Union itself can influence and perhaps will transform it. But, the question that arises here is, does this strength or dynamic of the E.U. exist in the form of a content and objectives towards a different course other than that which it has been inscribed on the last international system? If yes then it might be happen.

But what is E.U. practically? Is it group of different countries that have an economic interest for organizing themselves, but they also tend to the political unification in order to come to play a role in the international scene? The notion of the European political integration consequently is related to the following: a) with the form and the degree of its unification and b) with the international environment by any form of evolution it happens to have. It is related thus with the mode that the international community is evolved, if it tends or not towards one integration, as with which form that integration is feasible since there doesn't exist one international government.

The creation of the European Union is regarded achievement of the aftermath era; it appears as a rational experiment for the development of conditions of peaceful co-existence and cohabitation of its people. It started in 1951 as a Community which evolved to the E.U. of 27 member-states today. It passed from the Community of six to the one of ten, to the Community of 12 and to the E.U. of 15, to the historical one of 25 and finally to the E.U. of 27 member-states of the European family while a number of countries remain as candidates to expect their accession today. The one agreement thus succeeds the other until 1992, where it is signed the agreement for the European Union, so with that agreement the EU itself could promote the balanced and the constant economic progress. The aims were: 1) to verify its identity in the international scene. 2) To encourage the protection of the rights of the citizens. 3) To maintain the communal vested right.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *The Political Dimension of European Union op. cit. pp. 117-166.*

#### 4. Theoretical Approaches of the Integration

a) As the theoreticians suggest to us, the first stage of the integration was clearly economic. That is, a stage of custom unification with a common foreign tariff that anticipated about one decade evolutionary process. The second stage had as an objective the larger unification with an enactment of one Common Agricultural Policy, the free removal of workers and capital, the harmonization of common policy and legislature for the health and security and a monetary unification with common currency and central bank. The course of the Union though, changed radically after the collapse of the eastern European countries.

This change is recorded with the reunion of Germany and the appearance of many regions and countries in the continent that expressed the desire to accession in the E.U. The beginning of the second stage is since the universality of the objectives and the content of the uniting process which were legislated and fortified. The objectives of the universal content were put with symbolic character the realization of which would lead to the integration of the uniting process.<sup>9</sup> In this stage of the venture is where that the euro-pessimism transforms to euro-optimism. It refers to the unification of a group of states that forms a large family of E.U. by taking the bar from the national-state in the aftermath age.

b) From one theoretical approach to the other as: functionalist, new-functionalist and federalist, anxious academics study the possible versions for the suitability which could these theories have in reality. That is, if with their implementation the approaches of the scientists as: Mitrany, Haas, etc. could lead to the complete unification and to an effective function of the Union or not.<sup>10</sup> The **functionalist approach** had adopted the aim for the world

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<sup>9</sup> Ioakimides P. K. *The State and the European Integration*, Publ. Themelio, Athens, 1994, p. 16.

<sup>10</sup> Ioakimides P. K. *The State and the European Integration: Seeking one New Aristotelian Approach in the Process of the Political Integration*, Publ. Themelio, Athens, 1994, pp. 19-30.

welfare, which through that it can be achieved the assurance of peace and the avoidance of war.

That is, with the maximization of the prosperity, the construction of the institutions is increasing in quantity that leads finally to the creation of an entity beyond the level of the nation state. With the **new-functionalist approach** it is the process which organized interest groups, elites and political parties participate in the unification. With such participation of individual citizens, groups and parties where the central institutions respond to the pressures and expectations it would lead to promote the process of unification in the form of a widening rationale of integration.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, the integration is defined as a “process through which the individuals who act politically in different national frameworks are convinced to shift their loyalty and political activities into one centre, the institutions of which could have authority upon the pre-existed nation states”.<sup>12</sup> This approach then, indicates the process which the political representatives of various countries carry their thoughts and hopes to one instrument beyond the member-states of the Union. The **federalist approach** tends to the formation of one federalist government which would co-ordinate the central with the peripheral authorities that act upon in various and specific sections of activity.<sup>13</sup>

In other words, the solution to various disputes and social conflicts is obtained only with the existence and presence of institution which could have adequate power authorities. However, it is impossible for the EU to become ever one large state as it was imagined by the federalist approach, equivalent to the nation-state. The E.U. cannot follow the model of one federalist state in a dimension of a continent as the U.S.A. or Canada. On the contrary, the Union shows the image of one new morpheme or an entity in which wouldn't

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid p.23.

<sup>12</sup> Haas E.B. *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social and Economic Forces 1950-1957*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1968, p. 84.

<sup>13</sup> Mackay R.W.G. *towards a United States of Europe*, Hutchinson, London 1969, p. 81.

be in effect the conventional constitutional counts as those which derive from the institutions of the nation state.

Therefore, it seems that there is not yet an independent legislative, functional executive body to which it could be accountable to the democratic elected representatives. Most of the authorities of the E.U. derive from the agreements of the member-states since the legislature of the Union in a great extent is based on the elaboration and embodiment of common suggestions and initiatives on the level of the executive power of those countries for the implementation of the common policy. While it is a political entity, without been identical to the nation state, the Union has managed to replace the member states in several grounds of government mainly after the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 by having significant legislative and executive functions. These attempts and developments of the union strengthen the necessity for the integration in a way to reach the **sphere of politics**, so as the E.U. to have the possibility to affect the international environment.

However, the ideological identity of that European family, as it has been manifested in the course of its evolution politically and economically in the late modernity after 1989, is interdependent with the new doctrine the so called **new-liberalism**. The image of the new-liberalism is simply the significant shrinkage of the public sector, by expanding at the same time the range of the private sector as a steady position and strategy of conservatism. The objective of this doctrine that appeared in the last two decades of the past century was the reinforcement of the power of the private capital to obliterate the necessary social inspection over the markets.

The basic policies which had been implemented from the leading countries to that doctrine were: a) the liberation of the markets of capital in confirming the possibility of tax-dodging so as to be eroded the base of tax exemption that is required for the financial support of the welfare state; b) The liberation of the markets of commodities and the privatization of the public firms and lastly the reduction of welfare state and the redistribution of the tax weight to benefit the groups with high income. The **globalization** of



that economy and the new liberal policies coincided with significant technological changes which marked the transfer of the market economy to the post-industrial phase. That tendency wiped out every obstacle which existed before in every nation state for the private capital to be moving free and be activated, organized and accumulated internationally.

The globalization consequently is an outcome of the political practices of new liberalism that creates great inequality between the capital and labor with a result of benefiting the few instead of the many. One such conception of the last decades of the twentieth century was the coupled of classical liberalism and the new conservative ideology. That is, with the complete liberation of the trade and the non-intervention state as a fold and conception that had prevailed in the classical liberalism from the one hand and with the aggressiveness against the welfare-state and the public sector on the other, is an assault to the collectivity. That is a tendency which has and raises the new conservative political practice.

## 5. Conclusion

If the EU developed an edifice that is constituted from different countries, languages and cultures by maintaining their particular characteristics and their self-sufficiency, it must start its political integration today. It should get rid of the **ideological doctrine of new liberalism** as the main contradiction, which has confronted E.U. It must cease to be prison to that ideology, because it does not lead to the social justice, progress and prosperity of its peoples. In order to do that change it requires a lot of work with active citizens who would have constant vigilance and supervision for that Europe of peoples as human beings.

The economically and politically united Europe, is indispensable in order to press the capitalism of the great and hegemonic powers, to be less authoritarian and unjust. Only the united Europe in both fields, economic and political, can overcome its crises and may play significant role

internationally. This united entity, not as an antagonistic pole to U.S.A., may lead the international system from the hegemonic model which is maintained today to the more just socially and more democratic direction politically.

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## The Byzantine icon as an expression of the composition of the “Beautiful” with the “Sublime”

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**Abstract:** In this article I attempt to discuss the encounter between Christian Theology and the philosophical branch of Aesthetics. As a basis I have the icons of the Byzantine tradition, which also express the ecclesiastical way of its culture. First of all, I refer to what is defined as the aesthetic interpretation of a work of art and then to how its process receives theological characteristics in the style and approach of Byzantine icons. Next, I present the main characteristics of the artistic-aesthetic categories of the “Beautiful” and the “Sublime” and I undertake the responsibility to show how they function in Byzantine icons, with the former mainly expressing beauty and the latter mainly the intensive direction towards the divine. I also attempt to present some of the conditions by which a Byzantine icon is created, so that it captures, in an artistically and aesthetically remarkable way, holiness and is interwoven with the devotional life of the Christian church. In this perspective, I emphasize that the Byzantine icon reveals: a) how Jesus Christ, as an expression of manhood, fully realizes the immanence of the Holy Trinity and b) how his example is realized as a feat and as an expression of “image of God” from the saints. As an example of the above, I bring the icon “The Vaiophoros” of the Stavronikita Monastery of Mount Athos, which is the work of Theophanes from Crete. I choose it to show how the main directions of the Byzantine style regarding the composition of the “Beautiful” with the “Sublime” also meet during the post-Byzantine period.

**Keywords:** Byzantine icon, aesthetic interpretation, Beautiful, Sublime, The Vaiophoros

## Introduction

In the following concise article, I move in two directions and I attempt a synthetic inclusion of them in a single theoretical model. Specifically, I will present some judgments about the theological and aesthetic approach of the Byzantine icon, under the conditions of an abstract generalization. At the outset, let us point out that in the perspective of the ecclesiastical life of Eastern Christianity, the icon is an artistic factor which reflects in a sensible way the process by which the created world becomes a carrier of the divine uncreated energies, of the manifestations of which it itself has come into being. In terms that specifically describe human creative action, we could say that the icon highlights the conscious course of its creator for a qualitative change of the physical information and for their reduction to an ontological level, which, although it goes beyond them, gives them meaning repeatedly.<sup>1</sup> Joining this transcendental perspective, each icon is not just a work of art, but above all, a creation full of the intention to expand human existential horizons and democratic communication with this world. At the same time –and this expresses a capital, if not the main, mission– its creator, without losing sight of the historical coordinates of development of the theological and ecclesiastical way of life and reflection, undertakes to detect and project the super-historical “openings” of spatiotemporal becoming. And this undertaking is not carried out so abstractly and theoretically, but mainly through the depiction of specific persons of the

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<sup>1</sup> See indicatively Kalokiris K., *Η ζωγραφία της Ορθοδοξίας* (*The painting of Orthodoxy*), P. Pournaras, 1972, pp. 202-216. Cf. Yiannaras Chr., *Η ελευθερία του ήθους* (*The freedom of morals*), Grigoris, 1979, pp. 300-344. We also need, however, to refer to L. Ouspensky’s great study, *La théologie de l’icône dans l’Eglise orthodoxe*, Cerf, 1980, where the icon is inscribed in the ecclesiological liturgy and in the aim to update the Gospel of the new times in the perspective of the Kingdom of Heaven, with the consequence of sanctifying the perspective of those who turn towards its viewing. Also, the above-mentioned scholar adds particular importance to connecting the icon with the Christocentric-theandric orientation of the Church both in the beginning and teleologically.

ecclesiastical historical “adventure”, who proved with their lives that they liberated themselves in a powerful ascetic way from their individual passions and evolved consciously and practically to receivers and exponents of the supernatural archetypes. And obviously in this perspective the top position is occupied by Jesus Christ, as the incarnate divine Word and as the theandric archetype of the above persons, the Virgin Mary and the angels. Therefore, under a synthetic view, the icons constitute the artistic depiction of the theological truths, of those experienced within the ecclesiastical-worshipping becoming.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. A general approach of the aesthetic interpretation

The theological dimension of the icons, however, is inextricably linked, precisely because they are artistic products, with the philosophical branch of Aesthetics. However, it is clearly an aesthetic evaluation of a special type, that is, one that reflects the realization of holiness by personal ascending degrees or the a priori possession of it when speaking about Jesus Christ. In spite of this theocentrically defined approach, Byzantine icons highlight a number of details of Aesthetics, and in fact without putting its philosophical foundationalism on the sidelines, and thus with theoretical legitimacy they can be classified in the categorical schemes that it itself defines as a general branch.<sup>3</sup> From this point of view, we will attempt to shed light on this inclusion, with some general remarks regarding the artistic-aesthetic categories of “Beautiful” and “Sublime”. But before proceeding to the identification of these characteristics in the icons, we consider it necessary to briefly present some general

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Evdokimov P., *Η Ορθοδοξία (Orthodoxy)*, trans. in Greek Agg. Mourtzopoulos, B. Rigopoulos, 1972, pp. 291-314. Also, Zanas T. (trans. in Greek), *Περί ύλης και τέχνης (On matter and art)*, (collective volume), Athina, 1971.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Evdokimov P., *Η τέχνη της εικόνας. Θεολογίας της ωραιότητας (The art of the icon. Theology of beauty)*, trans. in Greek K. Charalambidis, P. Pournaras, 1980. Mathew G., *Byzantine Aesthetics*, Murray, London 1963.

theoretical approaches regarding the aesthetic interpretation and the aesthetic categories, with the perspective of bringing to the fore certain transformations which exist in the Byzantine environment.

First of all, let us note that the essential theoretical approach and the evaluation of a work of art presuppose as their inviolable epistemological condition a coherent meta-path, which is inscribed in what is undertaken as an interpretation. By the term "aesthetic interpretation" we refer to the methodical process required for the aesthetically functioning subject to pass successively from the direct visual experience, from the cognitive acquisition and the in-depth experiential familiarization of a –literary, musical, architectural and, more broadly, artistic– creation. In other words, from the attempt for a conscious "translation" of it, so that behind the material with which its form is imprinted, its messages, its ideological substratum, so to speak, and its dialectical relationship with the physical, the historical, social and political reality. Finally, whether it emits the necessary messages to transform for the better the collective processes and the personal choices of each individual person. That is to say, to examine whether it also works meta-analytically in relation to what it declares. According to these –later–information, each authentic work of art is initially an object not immediately accessible, with the consequence that it is open to various explanations and evaluations. In other words, it can be perceived as a secret space, whose central thematic axis and its details have not been clarified to the proper extent, with the consequence that a highly idiosyncratic and strict approach is required in order to become, as far as possible, the property of the exegete. Thus, the exegete is called upon to study at an initial level in detail all of the above parameters of the artistic product under consideration and then to reconstruct it at the semantic, experiential and theoretical levels.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Papanoutsos E., *Αισθητική (Aesthetics)*, Athens 1969, pp. 375-413, where particular importance is given to the purification that occurs to man when he consciously and experientially participates in a work of art.



However, the preeminent interpretive parameter –and precisely the one that differentiates it from any other cultural product– in the process of approaching a work of art is aesthetics, without post-aesthetic reductions and extensions for a certain period of time. The term “aesthetics” in its so-called refined meaning indicates a special relationship of the human interiority with the world that surrounds it, a peculiar and at the same time open attitude, which the personal “ego” develops towards the objects it encounters or with which it is related. It refers to the movement that consciousness makes, to discover and bring to light a value of things, which is not put at the service of any situation and rather of utilitarian expedients. On the contrary, it is the value that is offered for its pure enjoyment and that transformatively. These limitations clearly state that, in order to place the human ego in an aesthetic attitude toward an object, it must control, suspend, or even abolish the gratification of its instinctive and animal appetites, as well as detach itself from the usual and necessary activities. In other words, to distance itself from the various coldly practical and calculative terms by which it is connected to the existing things and happenings in the surrounding space. These mean to deny the utilitarian perspective of satisfaction, through physical and social data, of any kind of unequivocal materialistic need and the preeminent realization of the aggressive instinct for dominance. It is a direction that excludes the criteria of instrumental activity, the selection of skillful strategy and the establishment of systems that reconstruct data and events based on the “logic” of limitless efficiency.<sup>5</sup> Moving aesthetically, interiority asks to be purified, to enjoy what is outside of everyday conventions, to contemplate with a different perspective the values of life within an atmosphere of claimed and experienced communicability. Therefore, the aesthetic interpretation of a work of art attempts to discover

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Papanoutsos E., *Αισθητική (Aesthetics)*, pp. 13-27, where both the historical and the systematic consideration of the subject can be found. This is a discussion that has been thoroughly processed by Kant based on the definitions he attributes to the “Beautiful”. Cf. Kant Im., *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, K. Kehrbach, Leipzig, pp. 44-90.



those characteristics which, with the pleasure they will offer, will move and purify the inner world of people, as long as they participate in their content. These are situations that are associated with those which will oppose any tendency to control or total intervention in things, precisely because they introduce a transcendental mentality against the pathologies brought about by a sterile and competitive secularization.<sup>6</sup>

## **2. The aesthetic categories and the terms of their emergence**

The aesthetic interpretation, both during its process and at the moment when - it gives the impression that - it is completed, is formulated in specific terms, which in the philosophical language are called "categories", the composition of which has plagued the relevant research since Plato. Under a general approach, aesthetic categories can be understood as the inclusive mental schemes with which thought, accompanied by intentionality –which includes the "turbulences" and expectations of emotions and experiences–, approaches the representational data of each work of art, in order to interpret it, to include it in a specific eidological scheme and to value it. Possibly –and according to a realist approach to the ontological determination of human interiority– they are in consciousness as mental and emotional subjects or as possibilities for their formation. In other words, they constitute in a way the epistemological equipment of the spirit or the forms through which it "invests" its relationship with the work of art under interpretation. However, this a priori possibility does not mean that determinants are imposed on the content of the work of art or that they determine its essence and accidents. And this limitation is due to the fact that each work of this kind as an objective creation exists before any approach to it –and this is where its intimate realism emerges– and,

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Marcuse H., "Remarks on a redefinition of culture", *Daidalos: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and science* 94:1, 1965, pp. 190-207.

therefore, this defines the conditions of its theoretical formulation and expressive representation. The work inherently contains its “what” and “how” and independently possesses its particular characters, which are unquestionably the results of the concrete intellectual activity of its creator - regardless of the scholar’s interpretive categories, which during the historical development have been proven that they vary. And here another dimension of realism emerges. The aesthetic interpretation does not function as a favoritism or as an nominalism, it does not possess self-sufficient categorical schemes for each particular case of reference, but it intervenes synthetically a posteriori, obviously not as an unwritten map. Therefore, its mission lies in discovering, as far as possible, the exact content of the work of art to which it refers –which, despite its partial similarities to others, is unique– and inscribing it in mental contours and highlighting it in the theoretical field through the categories. Thus, with the formation or application of the categories, the transition is made from the participation in the work of art to its scientific description.<sup>7</sup>

It becomes obvious from the above that in the process of aesthetic experience and interpretation, conceptual realism is applied, i.e. initially the identification –and conditional respect– of the properties and they meet in a work of art and then their mental reconstruction and their depiction with specific categorical schemes. Of course, the categories are formed with their particular inclusive content, since first of all the thinking subject has studied a series of works of art and has identified the common characteristics between them, provided, of course, that it has the –perhaps transcendental– possibilities to function aesthetically. In other words, human consciousness constructs the categories inductively, i.e. reducing abstractly from the comparison of individual creations to the formulation of general concepts. These

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Moutsopoulos E., *Αι Αισθητικές Κατηγορίες (The Aesthetic Categories)*, Athens 1970, where it is generally argued that the system of aesthetic categories is open to continuity, since the dialectical relationship with the work of art is subject to renewal or the very evolution of human culture leads to new techniques and, therefore, to new readings

concepts express and reflect the common substratum or the common way by which the creations become the mental and experiential property of the consciousness and, finally, theoretical formation of. It is understood here that, in order to do the above, the corresponding intentional movement of consciousness, its coordination with the special situation it is about to encounter, is also presupposed.<sup>8</sup>

This general discussion also has a scope of application in the Byzantine icon, but under the condition that it is an artistic creation with a specific purpose, which captures with its expressive means the Christian teaching. According to the Byzantine spirit, the Christian hagiographer should first participate in the principles of his faith and then proceed to the manifestation of his artistic talent. Or, else, he should activate the fact that he himself is a creation in the “image of God” and in the field of his construction activities he should gradually actualize the “likeness of God”. So in what is communicated here, the divine image inherent in the Christian artist constitutes his metaphysical realist infrastructure, which through the sensible icons also becomes inner worldly. From this point onwards, the intervention of the exegete is activated, who is also called upon to participate in the principles of the Christian faith, in order to construct in an objective manner the relevant aesthetic categories. We will come back in this topic at the last paragraph of our epilogue.

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<sup>8</sup> The above-mentioned situation of the encounter takes place mainly in the preeminent space of the icon, that is, in the worship of the ecclesiastical community, founded by Jesus Christ. Within the Church, man as a believer “claims”, apart from the rest, to meet those challenges that will broaden his horizons. And the icon provides the challenges for realizing this communication-enlargement. Cf L. Ouspensky, *La théologie de l'icône dans l'Eglise orthodoxe*, 15-58.

### 3. The aesthetic categories of “Beautiful” and “Sublime”

Traditionally, the pre-eminent aesthetic category is that of “Beautiful”. It expresses harmony and measure, balance and proportion, the fact that a situation is at the most crucial moment of its evolution or formation. The “Beautiful” causes a pleasant emotion, an internalization due to the fact that, expressing itself a situation in its almost complete normality and rhythmicity, it tends to give the authentic measure to human activities and prevent from choices that degrade and trivialize the phenomenon of life.

It is the category of the possible fine limits in terms of artistic purpose and its aesthetic depiction. We could argue that “Beautiful” reflects, in a pragmatic way, the moment when a situation or a person has reached that point where stability and permanence must prevail and there is no need for any development or reform. This delimiting characteristic does not mean that with the “Beautiful” a static version of life or an anti-historicism are proposed and established, but that the fascinating for its quality dimension that has been reached by a particular field of personal and historical becoming is captured. Despite the fact that it is not primarily a source for raising concerns about further spiritual penetrations, it offers a high level and purified indulgence.<sup>9</sup>

While the category of “Beautiful” places works of art primarily on the anthropological level, the category of “Sublime” moves the approaches to the metaphysical and the transcendent, not necessarily in a theological sense. It refers to situations and persons who possess –or reach– an infinite spiritual power, and in moral areas where the usual choice and action are overturned and transformed, with results in that the way of being takes on or reveals perspectives of greatness. In its presence the conventional measures of virtue are completely lifted and any definite urge for vulgar and expansive access to the outside world is overcome. The man who enjoys the “Sublime” or participates in its infinite depth becomes its face and is even led to a profound purification.

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<sup>9</sup> Moutsopoulos E., *Αι Αισθητικές Κατηγορίες (The Aesthetic Categories)*, pp. 18-25.

He clears his mind, his emotional states and his experiences and realizes the inexhaustible reductionism of human existence. He comes into contact with what it means to appreciate his existence and how he himself can center at every level of his activity the mystical or not at first sight explainable messages or the metaphysical conditions or even the archetypes of the natural and historical world.<sup>10</sup> So, from any point of view, the “Sublime” constitutes an accomplishment.

Synthesizing the above in the Christian context, we would mention that, when a Byzantine icon includes the categories of “Beautiful” and “Sublime”, it performs or highlights the ecstatically held mutual dialectical relationship of the human with the divine. The “Beautiful” is mainly associated with the external morphological characteristics, while the “Sublime” is mainly related with the internal order of consciousness and the feats depicted. This distinction certainly does not mean that there is a dualistic intersection between the form and the content in an icon.

These two factors of a work of art are mutually connected and one emerges through the other, but in any case they are also determined by the particular worldview adopted by its creator. In fact, in most details of an artistic composition, their overlap is pervasive. However, the parameter which is usually shown in a Byzantine icon is that the reductive

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<sup>10</sup> To Edm. Burke we owe the first systematic and autonomous reading of the aesthetic category of the “Sublime” (cf. *Philosophical Inquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and the beautiful*, London 1976). This scholar adds to the category of “Sublime” also psychological characteristics, mainly in the sense of a personal deficit on the part of man against it. For his part, Im. Kant, without denying the above reading, gives also an optimistic tone, clarifying that the “Sublime” reflects the inner overcoming of an obstacle by man. See Kant Im., *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, pp. 110-112. However, for the directions of our study here, we will agree with Papanoutsos’ position that the “Sublime” intensifies and prolongs our emotional life with the impression of the infinite size, the infinite power it gives us and with the admiration it inspires us (cf. *Aesthetics*, pp. 279-284). These are situations which, from the Byzantine approach, derive their cause from the manifestation of the divine providence, expressed in a tangible way in the person of Jesus Christ.

dimension of life towards the transcendent is mainly expressed by the “Sublime”, which is linked to an advanced degree with the thrilling in intensity and grandeur conditions of formation of the event described or with the internal dramatic “adventure” of the persons depicted. On the other hand, the “Beautiful” in every case, since it expresses the human measures in their highest position, it contributes to the fact that it cannot be cut off from the meaningful perspectives of the icon, which does not destroys but highlights the cosmic fields in their fullness. In both modes of presence, however, the dominant thing is the ecclesiastical spirit. Thus, we could argue that the category of “Beautiful” expresses mainly in current terms what “Sublime” constitutes as a present and prospective situation. That is, as a form the “Beautiful” captures what is connected with the eschatological “opening”, with a dynamocratic contemplation of the future century, that is, with what is included in the category of the “Sublime” as well as what puts forward in a regulative way the super-empirical and super-historical dimensions of worldly life. Transcendence is expressed by Jesus Christ as the divine Logos and worldliness by his incarnation. For their part, humans begin by assimilating embodiment and move on to participate in transcendence.

#### **4. “The Vaiophoros” as an example of presence of the categories of “Beautiful” and “Sublime”**

As a case study to prove all these we will take the Byzantine –or more accurately the post-Byzantine– icon named “The Vaiophoros”, which is located in the Holy Monastery of Stavronikita on Mount Athos and was created by Theophanis from Crete. This icon -belonging to the Christological or the Theandric cycle- presents one of the most important and inclusive scenes of the life of Jesus Christ and conveys in a concentrated and perceptible way the deeper meaning and prospective significance of the incarnate divine Logos’ march to Jerusalem during in its completeness in space -but not only in it. Christ, sitting in a white donkey,

a choice indicative of his humility –which is also expressed by the style of his face–, and blessing, heads towards Jerusalem, whose walls can be seen really close in the background. Small children spread clothes and vagia on the street. On the left a group of his disciples follows with Peter first, while on the right and outside the walls of Jerusalem a group of Jews is ready to welcome him in rather formal attitudes and a self-controlled style. On the slope of a prismatic painted mountain, a child is shown on a tree cutting branches with a pruner. In terms of material means, the colors are sacred and warm, red, green, yellow and strongly projected in the golden background with the golden yellow mountains and gray building. It should be noted that each group is framed by a part of the general landscape, whose outline, in terms of interactivity, follows the shape of the forms of the persons in the realized perspective of a mutual participation.

In terms of technique, this icon –although it was probably created in 1546– follows the standards of the Middle Byzantine era and is distinguished for the deep harmony and perfection in the creation of the forms, for the balanced performance of the style and for the sensitivity of the communications in terms of how the forms work together with the landscape. It should be noted that the figures are painted with intense colors, while there are also lines. Special attention has been paid in the fact that their features are delicate and processed with sensitivity. The pale gold-yellow proplasm spreads over extensive surfaces, sarcomas are absent and the faces are shaped with sharp white strokes, which create bright foci. The general impression given by the faces is freedom, which is based on strong contrasts, which, however, do not remove the more general theological and anthropological goals. Rhythmic dynamism moves the masses and debases matter. The harmonious balance of the work together with the internally realistic and in moderate linear terms rendering of the forms feed the coexistence of the “Sublime” and the “Beautiful”. In the perspective of their reciprocity, “Sublime” lends the semantic tones to “Beautiful”, while “Beautiful” gives the expressive tones to “Sublime”.

Form and content have been completely harmonized, so as to give the icon a harmonious mixture realized by stability and dynamism. Thus, the icon has the integrity of sobriety and pulsates with vitality and strength with the situation mainly reflecting the “Sublime” and with the latter mainly the “Beautiful”. Both categories are presented in a supreme degree in the person of Christ, who enters Jerusalem as the prince of peace, while he is also aware of the course which he follows with a deep conscience towards the voluntary passion. So, this particular peacemaking current moment is not only experienced as a present situation but also as the dramatic beginning for a climactic rise which will be completed at the end of times. The immanence of the divine economy as personal theandric property is thus present, with peace reflecting the “Beautiful” and with voluntary passion reflecting the “Sublime”.

We close with some remarks regarding the Christian-approached artistic-aesthetic categories. First of all, regarding the iconographer-hagiographer, the following questions will be raised: does he stand before normative categorical imperatives that he must follow? Does he move with the transcendent or with the empirical function of the artistic-aesthetic criterion? What possibility exists for his non-response to the categorical proper thing? Examining the third question, we would note that this possibility is conscious in Byzantine and post-Byzantine iconographers. This awareness ensures that they are not led to an automatic acceptance regarding their precise expression of the transcendent criterion, which in Christianity is associated with the “image of God”. Therefore, they also use the empirical criterion, which is connected to two factors: a) with the historical-sensible presence of the Logos of God and b) with their historical-sensible expression by those who have conquered holiness. These are two extremely realistic data, which, through their gradual maturation in the consciousness of the iconographer-hagiographer, meet the transcendent criterion and validate it. This encounter is called upon to identify whoever undertakes the responsibility to interpret the Byzantine icon and to attempt to participate in its messages,



in order to activate similar situations in their inner world. The icons exemplify the Eighth Day, with the consequence that the iconographer-hagiographer, as the case may be, must have composed or discovered within himself the aesthetic categories of the “Beautiful” and the “Sublime” and subsequently recorded them artistically, with the observer-interpreter working the other way around. We therefore believe that it would not be a theoretical misstep if we argued that the categories found in an image of the Byzantine tradition are at the same time artistic and aesthetic and in fact theandric.

### Epilogue

Evaluating the artistic-aesthetic atmosphere emitted by the Byzantine icon, we would argue that it is not limited to spirituality, but that it dynamocratically refers to the ontological depth of being and existence. And the reason for this characterization arises from the fact that the terms of its foundation are Christocentric-theandric, that is, they are drawn from the person and teaching of Jesus Christ and from those who participate in his mystical presence. The Byzantine iconographer-hagiographer therefore does not work autonomously with his subjective talent and inspirations, but is called upon to start from his penetration into divine reality and its archetypal projections. In other words, by keeping in mind the symbolic language of art, he highlights the transcendent reality in natural and human terms. Thus, even though in the Byzantine icon there are top artistic achievements and aesthetic categories, its content is governed by metaphysical realism in its immanent presence and in its conscious imitation by those people who conquer sainthood. And it must be noted that sanctity does not constitute a simple moral and intellectual achievement, but mainly represents the “likeness of God”, which constitutes the realization on the part of man of “image of God”, which represents the very fact of creation of man, the ontological foundation of his existence. It is actually necessary to

mention that according to the Byzantine Fathers of the Church, the artistic-aesthetic categories of “Beautiful” and “Sublime” are originally of divine content and express the mode of existence of the Holy Trinity. Therefore, what constitutes a self-founding situation for God, for man is defined, normatively and reductively, as a feat in progress. The above causes the interpretation of a Byzantine icon to be defined as a synthetic judgment, which includes the divine a priori and the human a posteriori, the paradigmatic and the initiatory respectively. Jesus Christ in the –at least post-Byzantine icon– “The Vaiophoros” realizes and infers ontological normativity, so to speak, in his person. This development obviously has nothing to do with Jesus Christ himself, but with how his teaching and his life are handled and received by people.

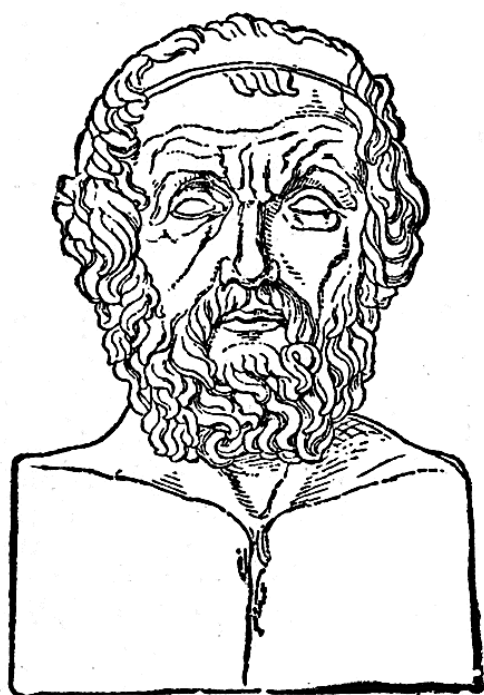
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## *Philosophical Notes*





## From the Orphic texts to the Homeric Epics and to the Dramatic Poetry: The appearance of the Reasonable Man

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**Abstract:** Logos is the most important requested thing, because this is the internal joint which unites beings and their evolution. We think of Logos as a gnosiological and not ontological factor. We are making mention of Logos as a real process and not as a simple manner, because we believe that human Logos could be known by the man of thought and action. Orphic texts rationalize the universe as a kind of movements and as a dynamic evolution. They can see inside the universal forces the very cause, manner and the purpose of proceeding and improvement, so far these forces are not naughtily thrown any more. Homer's epics offered an invaluable service to the Humane spiritual arsenal: They connected men with the macrocosm powers, Odysseus, Achilles are made of the same universal powers. These powers are the very God's content, twelve Gods evolve kosmos according to these universal powers in a humane manner. Human qualities which are attributed to the gods help men to imitate this anthropomorphic way of the gods in order human Logos slowly intervene to the universe world. All these interventions could be transferred through Logos inside human society, inside human organizations. Odysseus learns to use Logos through his contact with the human form of goddess Athena – who represents the Wisdom. So, he can justify his actions, he is able of categorizing his life, he manages to complete his Nostos, the very purpose of Him. In the 5<sup>th</sup> century a.d. Athens was the sum of people like the

Odysseus. The glory City of Athens was an aggregate of thinking people like a Kingdom of wisdom, which is projected in the poetical work of tragic poetry. The reasonable Subject of the Athenian Democracy came up through the Orphic texts and Homeric Epics (we should not forget that Peisistratus (an Athenian tyrant) introduced the Homeric Epics because he thought that these texts could cultivate Athenian adolescents). This reasonable Subject believed that he could transform the universal powers (which influence the earth movement) into ideal social forces, which are able to produce atomic and social happiness and *eydaimonia*. The bitter denial, which happened through Peloponnesian War, disappeared this kind of human individualism as a piece of universal power. So far cosmic forces separated into two parts: what I can think (idea) and what I could act (praxis). Humanity proceeded glorifying not the sense of what there really exists but glorifying the sense of what I am thinking that there really exists. Plato and Aristotle supported this appreciable process because they thought that idea and not what there really exist is the basis of Human *skepsis* and *praxis*.

**Keywords:** universe, mind, will, man, world, beings.

### Instead of Introduction

The Orphic texts introduce us to a fruitful reflection, when Man had begun to be interested and to observe the movements of the Sun, the Moon, the Planets and the other natural phenomena which attract his attention. We consider that the moment at which Man began the observation of the Celestial Bodies is extremely important because he determined the movement of the Subject versus the Object: the observation of Man in relation to the Celestial bodies was unquestionably accompanied by a value and ontological motion: Man came out of the Ontological c motion as such, he came out as a simple entity which moves like the Sun and the Moon irrelevantly but in a universal way, now endowed with the gift of Spiritual rationality, he defined Himself as the Ego against the Other universe. Now Man has emerged from the simple ontological dynamic cosmic motion of the celestial bodies, which symbolize the inner existence of infinite ontological forces, and with his weapon the Mind has proceeded to an important act of ontological selection: He thought that he should not participate in the infinite forces as an interior non-

existent as a person, but coming out of the ontological movement he thought that he should choose with his Mind as many forces as he needed to make for the Being the adversary Awe: The Mind now it is placed outside the Being as an experience but inside it as an observation, Man becomes I in relation to the Other Being, he subjectivizes himself in relation to the Objectification of the vast Being: Collecting through the Orphic wise observation all the cosmic forces that interest him (mainly of the movement of the Sun from where he lives, of the Night through which he will depart from the earth) Man organizes his spiritual and valuable Ego, his World, his movements, his Life. What the Orphics thought and believed about sky (οὐρανός) is typical: Specifically, the 4th Orphic Hymn states that the Orphics by saying Sky (οὐρανός) do not only mean what we today call Uranus, but within sky (Οὐρανός) they included the rest of the stellar world but and the Earth (Hasapis, p.50). A careful look reveals that in both the Odyssey Heaven and Earth are considered as One and inseparable piece, this is proved when Zeus and Athena in rhapsody a emphasize (a, 72) that they would never forget the "Divine Odysseus" and immediately they send the Messenger Hermes (the one who connects Heaven and Earth with information) to announce their decisions to Calypso so that Odysseus returns to Ithaca (a, 78). So we observe the transfer of the Orphic belief that Heaven is a common size that contains the Earth from a simple universally dynamic level to the level of Human action and evolution: Now the dynamics of the unified Heaven (Οὐρανός) are transferred to the Human Mind which in the form of the anthropocentric gods transfers the common forces of Heaven (Οὐρανός) and Earth to Odysseus and his Nostos. The cosmic forces are transformed into thoughts and actions, into a will and a course of return to what Man considers to be Good. Many years later Euripides in the tragedy of "Eleni", in the tragedy which is research on "Appearance and Being", on Ignorance and Knowledge, transforms the single power of Heaven completely into a spiritual power which is received by Man. As Knowledge or Ignorance. In this way the single ontological power of Heaven is fully transferred to Human spirituality and evaluation, of



course dominated by Knowledge and Ignorance, Appearance and Being. Characteristically, the tragedian at the second Part of his tragedy states that the Mother of the Gods poured out on Earth in search of her Persephone Daughter (the Poet refers to Demeter). The forces of the Universe through the anthropocentrism of Persephone and Pluto prove to be one, the upper world and the lower world form the earthly states (Persephone appears as Spring and disappears as Winter). Now the unified nature of our dimension is connected with the divine forces which in a universal way unite all the levels of our world, but it is also connected with the Human Mind which understands that the unified nature of our Universe, the single cosmic forces that affect us, must be spiritually and evaluatively classified as Appearance and Being, as Knowledge and Ignorance, as Beautiful and Ugly in order for the Reasonable Man to proceed to his Nostos. Indeed, in this particular tragedy, Menelaus learns the Truth that Helen went to Troy as an idol, on the contrary, the real Helen was always pure and immaculate in Egypt: Euripides transports the oneness of the Orphic Heaven through the appearing deities to the One. In the person of Eleni, Heaven is Beautiful through the dynamic movement of the gods and beings that make it up, Eleni inherits their powers and in a human way of spiritual and value movement offers the one and only conception of the Beautiful, transferring the power of Heaven to the entity of earth as Truth, Being also Knowledge.

### **From the Orphic Sun to the Human Mind**

The Sun holds a prominent place in the Orphic texts, this bright star is considered by the Orphics as a completely circular (περίδρομον ὄμμα) (Hasapis, p.66). The Sun in the Orphics shines on the stream (it moves and illuminates the road) as an ἀπειρέσιος ρόμβος (its infinite motion illuminates all the roads on which beings move) (Hasapis, p. 68). The naming of the Sun by the Orphics of course only accidentally could not be characterized. Through the adjectives attributed to the Sun, the Orphics point out the specific cosmic force of Light which

animates, guides and opens paths of the main οδός and purpose in beings, in Humans. The life-giving Solar forces as energy, path and οδός, are connected with Man as a spiritual Being who needs Light: as energy, life, orientation and Nostos.

Homer chooses Thrinakia, the island of the Sun, for a great development and moment. Needless to say, all the movement of the Odyssey takes place when Αυγή dawns, the life of Odysseus and his companions is in line with the movement of the Sun, he gradually becomes the driving force of human movement and energy. On the island of the Sun (μ, 291-294) it is explicitly stated that night falls and everyone should rest, the next works will be done during the day. But the Sun in the Odyssey acquires a separate human value force, the universal force of the Orphic Sun becomes a human force of inner enlightenment which connects the Human Mind with the corresponding moral act. Odysseus' command to his companions is explicit: they should not touch the animals of the Sun (μ, 300-1), Circe has predicted that this will bring their destruction. The sequel, however, is disappointing and sad because despite the oath given by the companions of the King of Ithaca, they were finally carried away by their hunger and devoured the sacred cows of the Sun God: we are interested in seeing the whole spiritual and valuable journey from the Orphic Sun to forces of obedience and punishment in Homer.

First, we discuss another framework of application and contact with the Sun: The Orphics observe this bright star which spreads life on earth and insightfully coexist with the forces that flow from it. But Homer passes to the next mental stage: the Sun exists in relation to Man as spirit and morality, the Solar Powers are no longer the object of observation but are internalized by Man as thoughts and actions: Odysseus's companions owe it to the Solar Powers to think of restraint and do it: the Sun gradually becomes a force of discernment, of separate thought, of higher action, all of which can bring Man into power so that as the Sun shines, so do Humans shine and stand out through their actions. It is certainly no coincidence that Odysseus arrived in Ithaca precisely because he respected the Sun, the forces which as separate in the Universe, enter Man and make him special: Man adopts as the

Man the forces of the Sun when he becomes separate with distinct thoughts and actions: as the Sun shines because of its luminous powers, similarly Man stands out because of his luminous thoughts and actions. In Sophocles' *Antigone* all this becomes even more tragic and experiential. Dance in the first *στάσιμον* (354-375) praises the spirit of Man for his ingenuity and creativity, considers that the articulate reason, the development of ideas and the formation of societies reserved a truly special place among beings. The very inventive and resourceful man managed to avoid the heavy and difficult weather conditions by building houses and making suitable clothes. He found medicines and ways to fight diseases and foretells what is going to happen. The Orphic Universe, which through Odysseus multiplicity and motion was controlled as Thought and Purpose, the forces of the universe to the King of Ithaca is presented as Thought and Desire of Return, this Universe places its forces on the tragic Man of Athens, on the city which has been called *Πρυτανεῖον Σοφίας*. The Athens of Philosophy, Law and Dialectic: now the Universe is closed as forces of remembrance and thought in the Human Mind: it is fermented in the human mind and transformed into ideas and values. Man, now sees the Universe not directly and experientially but indirectly from his Law as ideas and values, and creates arts sciences and ethics. Antigone wants to be a continuation of cosmic splendor by transforming cosmic and cosmic forces into higher acts of imitation and morality: Her proud response to Creon demonstrates all the adoption of higher cosmic forces in the first place, and their subsequent transformation into practical imitation of the cosmic forces, by a Man. It is mentioned (450-457): "Yes, I dared, because it was not Zeus at all, the one who commanded these things to me, nor the Goddess *Δίκη* that dwells with the Gods of the Underworld, set such laws, among men, nor and I imagined that your sermons have so much power that you, though mortal, can overcome the unwritten and inviolable laws of the Gods".

We observe that the Universe is bipolarly contained in the powers of Gods and in the thoughts and decisions of mortals. This evaluative transformation, a product of deep

philosophical enzyme, took place also through philosophy but mainly through the Poetry of the Epics. When Anaxagoras discussed the Mind, saying that if the bulls had a god he would have the form of a bull (Kostaras, 1995, p. 159) he was essentially discussing a great truth: The people channeled the universal forces of the Orphics in the first level into Divine forces, through Homeric Anthropomorphism they became accessible to Man. Antigone feels and is an experiential continuation of these forces which she tries worthily to represent as a thought, experience and act of return. Antigone presents the determination with which the Sun offers its Light every day, the will with which Heaven moves the universe and offers its powers to the Earth. We are essentially referring to an era in which Man felt and was a continuation of an ontological World and its corresponding continuity.

### **From Orpheus to Oedipus: The Genesis of the Human Subject**

Is the Man of tragedy, is Oedipus a synthesis of form and matter (according to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*) whose important components are the cosmic forces as delivered to the Orphic worldview? Is the Oedipus Man a formal attitude and production of all the cosmic forces analyzed as a course and purpose in the Orphic texts?

We could summarize the Orphic Universe in the following classes and series (*Χασάπης*, p. 50, etc.):

- 1) Heaven, Nature, World.
- 2) The beginning of the world.
- 3) The incorruptibility and eternity of the Universe.
- 4) The size of the world.
- 5) The nature of the World.
- 6) The creative forces of Nature.
- 7) The cosmopolitan power of the Universe.
- 8) Nature as a giver and conservator of life.

The definition of the Universe by the Orphics is indicative and completely figurative (*Χασάπης*, p.51): "Everything is you, because you build and produce everything." It is a very

important observation which perceives the universe as a boundary between Chaos beyond it and the set Order, after the emergence of the Universe as the beginning and order of everything. Now all beings live and will evolve within certain cosmic boundaries, the significance of this is enormous: Man will gradually associate with the neighboring forces of this Universe, indifferent to other chaotic forces outside this Universe.

The problem of the Sphinx, the Anthropological problem of the Sphinx, which of course was identified and answered by Oedipus, comes as a continuation of the above universal determination of the Orphics: in a universe of specific forces of heaven and earth man must also acquire specificity of form, and matter: When Oedipus says that Man walks in the morning on four legs, in the afternoon on two and in the evening on three, he clearly does not refer so simply to Man: all this in response is a symbolic reference to the fact that the ontological moment has come to define man as the continuation of the construction of a cosmic world, which is now what the Orphics defined it to be. Man, like the Orphic Universe, cannot be something indefinite, but must be defined and classified spiritually and valued as the Orphic Universe. The Orphic Ουρανός is called the «πρεσβυγένεθλος» that is, as the great Elder born of the All. The Orphics believed that the Universe happened at a certain time, this time passes to Man as Knowledge and Practice, Truth and experience. As the Universe is delimited within the pandemic Time as a great moment of time, similarly Sophocles in the face of Oedipus, in the turn of time, tries to give birth and to show the Subject and the limits of his Knowledge, tries to give birth to the Subject as Knowledge, practice, self-knowledge, course and transcendence. Oedipus in his own way is the one who creates the universal man of Knowledge and Value, he is the beginning of Man, the one who wants to see the Truth and not be blind in relation to the Truth. The Orphic Universe appears as forces of light, action and course, the Oedipus Universe transforms all these forces into forces of truth, vision of the real, Man as Universe, adopts as Ουρανός all those forces which will reserve Knowledge far from any scam.

So, Oedipus, in the exquisite tragedy of Sophocles "Oedipus the Tyrant" refers to the seer Teiresias (who is going to tell him the whole truth) saying to him (345-350) the following: "And I will not hide anything, with such rage that I have, from what goes through my mind. So, learn how I encourage you in this crime accomplice and accomplice as much as just that you did not kill with your own hands. And if you happened to see a woman, I would say that even this murder is your only work... ". Oedipus refers to the death of his father, Laius, whom of course he himself has caused and executed. The King of Thebes blames the seer Teiresias because shortly before the great revelation, he believes that the seer is responsible for what has happened badly. It is worth noting that in this way the transition from ignorance to knowledge is achieved. In relation to Man. Similarly, when the Orphics call Ουρανός indomitable, incorruptible and imperfect (Hasapis, p. 51) they try to discover as a force the one and permanent ontological force that moves the Celestial Universe.

This same force as Truth is transferred and creates the Human existential universe. As important as it is for the Orphics to build Heaven as the limit of ontological creativity, as a force I gave birth to and supervised everything, it is just as important for Sophocles to transfer the size of Ουρανός to the human universal self as Truth: Orphic celestialty is Sophocles' Truth, that which identifies Man with what exists and happens real and evolutionarily. The concept of the Orphic Sky as omniscient knowledge of each is transferred and builds the human Self as Truth, just as the Orphic Sky built the universe as omniscient and omnipotent forces.

Oedipus's voice is already heard as heavenly lightning, when they carry the light of the Whole into the Human World. The verses of Sophocles are indeed shocking: (pp.965-970): "well, well, what should I think o woman for the divine estia of goddess Pitho or for the birds they are screaming in the air, according to their words I was going to kill my own father."

Oedipus, as the representative of Man, discovers the Universe of the forces of Truth within him, just as the Orphics discovered the Universe of insight outside of them by observation and insight. It is this Orphic Universe which as

forces of truth and real observation for human life and continuity, is transferred from the tragic Oedipus into human Existence, and is transformed into a force of Knowledge and Truth. Exactly the same motivation moves the Orphics as well as Sophocles: man has to be led and must be determined by forces of evolution and progress outside of it (such is the Orphic universe of Heaven and the Sun) but also by forces of maturity and thorough course within him (such is the Sophocles cognitive universe of Oedipus).

The description of Nature by the Orphics is typical: Nature is fiery (Hasapis, p. 52), it is also omnipresent and serene, it generously shares its light and its life-giving powers. It is also night, energy and night, since Ουρανός transmits the powers of the Sun in another secret way and night. The Orphics seem to have discovered the cohesive web and bond of the whole Universe which is none other than the Light, the Light which begins and continues and ends every creative human endeavor.

But the Light is the central idea of the Sophocles drama of the tyrant Oedipus, the Light which has nothing to do with the eyes and the exteriors of the phenomena (the Orphic light becomes the inner illumination in the Sophocles system) but with reality as Knowledge of experiences and actions. The Orphic forces of the Universal Light are internalized in the Oedipus tyrant and transformed into forces of correct perception of the deeds which are responsible for the Human Self: the Light of the Orphic Universe enters dynamically into the Human terrestrial universe, the inner world and the universe. in the knowledge of deeds and self-knowledge, in a perception of who I am and where I come from and where I belong. It is transformed into Self-Light.

The Chorus in the aversion of its Word, conveys the Orphic appreciation to the Sun in the dialogue between Dance and Oedipus, in the tragedy of the tyrant Oedipus, the Sun is valued as a producer of forces of Knowledge, ideas, Truth and similar actions, is now valued as according to which Humans, having as their Guide their Mind, can discover the Truth and the Path of the corresponding Light. The passage is indicative: (660-666): "Not only the Sun, who is the first god of all gods.

"May God-fearing and without friends god Death make it worse for me to die if I have such a thought".

If the Orphic Sun is responsible for the living life of beings, the imaginary Sun of Truth (as projected from the Chorus to Oedipus the Tyrant) is the one who ensures the quality spiritual and valuable life of the Cities. The words of the blind man (outwardly but not inwardly Oedipus) are also characteristic when he learns the ineffable truth that he killed his Father and married his mother: Combined with the Orphic belief that Nature is the one who sustains the Universe and Man, in combination with the main cause of Homeric mourning (the disrespect of the suitors towards Penelope and the house of Odysseus) Oedipus through his heartbreaking words when he learns the truth of his deeds, determines the human values which determine the abstract Orphic nature: Man respects his parents, honors Woman, offers to his children. So, Oedipus states (1356-1361): "I would not become a murderer of my father, nor would mortals call me the husband of the one who gave birth to me." Now I am God-fearing, and a child of immune parents, and like the ones who gave birth to me, the unfortunate one. And if there is a worse evil than that, in Oedipus, that too has happened ". We are talking about the formation of Human Nature, which is based on the Orphic Belief that just as Nature is the genesis of universal forces, a bank from which Being draws forces and energies to shape the World and Man, so too should Man transfer this Nature. in a synthesis of specific spiritual and evaluative virtues which will give birth (give birth) to Human Nature. Zeus, the bearer of the Power of Law and Action, is already clear in the Odyssey when he tells us (α, 40-44): « When Aigisthos according to an illegal fate at a concrete time copulated with Agamemnon's wife Klytaimnistra this praxis killed him on the way back, knowing what a severe punishment awaits him ". The vast ontological nature is materialized in a set of positive virtues and deeds, which must continue the Reasonable Man. Justice, holiness, bravery, wisdom, give substance of action and a valuable form to the Orphic nature, Man understands that he is not a mere cosmic toy (ἄθρομα) but is obliged to structure his nature and



personality, as the nature of everything conveys the good of Heaven and Earth, the nature of the gods transmits the divine powers, similarly the prudent human nature will transfer to the earth and the city all those cosmic forces which through ideas and values will be sculpted as superior human thoughts and actions.

**The Ontological Series from the world of the Orphics to the Anthropocentrism of the Dramatic Subject: the example of the tragedy "Bacches" by Euripides**

Easterling-Knox (Easterling-Knox, 1994, p. 336) argues that the Purifications (Καθαρμοί) of Empedocles, who significantly influenced every subsequent production of literature, rely on Orphic texts and influences. The observation is important because it shows the extent to which the Orphic system, as a research and view of the World and Man, entered dynamically into the spiritual and cultural course of Hellenism. The great contribution of Orphism, which definitively and irrevocably influenced the Greek Word, is the Order which was introduced by them in relation to the Universe that spreads in the Mind and the aesthetic perception of the People. It seems that this Order defined the cosmic quantities, identified their noticeable differences and now paved the way for their correlation with social and human forces.

But Heaven, Nature and the Orphic world are everything. It is the sea, the Sun, the ether, the Earth. The Orphics preserve for the Human Subject a world of open cosmic boundaries which preserves for Man contact with divine supernatural and cosmic forces. It is a basic achievement for Man to never forget that the Orphic world inherited from humans is infinite, open and ontologically evolving. Odysseus is transported in multiple dimensions, where he acquires his universal multimodality, wandering and learning the open Orphic universe and not the closed urban environment that we experience today. It is characteristic that the King of Ithaca travels in the dimension of the Cyclops where Zeus is not worshiped, also in the dimension of the Φαίακες, where the ships travel alone, let us

not forget the dimension of Hades, where people are pure and shady forces. We observe that Homer's Man develops and moves in an open universe which does not limit the Human Subject to adopt all those cosmic forces which he will later transform into spiritual and moral values: because within this orphically expanded universe and cosmic environment Odysseus adopts temperance in Circe, self-restraint in the Sirens, self-knowledge in the Underworld: We observe that the Orphic open world offers to the Homeric newly built Subject of the Word all those virtues which will in the future form the basis of human civilization. In contrast to the theological environment of later religions which gradually limited man to a world created by God, to a world where all are divided into permissible and not, the Orphic world which is inherited is infinite and multifaceted.

Easterling-Knox (Easterling-Knox, 1994, p. 427) rightly discusses how Teiresias in Bacchus explains that the goddess Demeter is the Earth itself. This spirit of universal Orphic freedom is expressed, which conveys to Man open spiritual and value horizons. In this open Orphic cosmic world, Antigone could not be restrained by the state "bourgeois" orders of Creon, who essentially tried to limit the open cosmic horizons of Queen Antigone.

Again, in Euripides' Bacchae Dionysus is presented not just as the first inventor of wine, but Dionysus is presented as the wine itself. The identification of the Subject with the reference force is a clear Orphic inheritance: the universe is identified with its power, everything the auto-motorist (αυτοκινούμενον) can identify with its power. When man discovers Dionysus (self-knowledge) within him, he discovers all the ontological inwardness which moves him beyond their externalities and necessities. In this case Man feels that he is identified with the Dionysian intoxicating force of self-knowledge and practical transcendence, so that he identifies himself with the moving cosmic force, just as Dionysus identifies with wine (moving intoxicating cosmic force).

We observe that the free Orphic system inherited through Epics and Dramatic poetry a world free with cosmic forces which as cosmically unbound create the Reasonable Subject,

which has every possibility of unlimited spiritual and value movement. There remains a great orphic effect the free passage of everything whether we are talking about cosmic or human forces and energies. The Orphic ability of serial classification of the World, Man and the whole Universe, is responsible for the free wanderings of Odysseus who is the first Free Reason Subject who recognizes everything as an act and self-consciousness. He is also responsible for the ability of the tragic Subject not to be trapped in the Here but feeling the cosmic continuity to choose the free cosmic choices of tragic escape which liberate Man universally, as happened with Oedipus and Antigone.

### **Conclusion**

From Orphism to Dramatic Poetry, an intelligent ontological plan for the emergence of a type of Man unfolded, based on principles that have universal origins and as such are adapted and modified for the sake of thought and morality by the rational Subject. This finding deifies the rational ability of Man to determine not only socially but also more broadly universally, in a supernatural context. Awareness of Man's universal origins should motivate the rational Subject to broaden his spiritual horizons and align his life with specific spiritual and moral directions of inner and supernatural orientation.

Everything around us is forces and energies, of order and philosophical order which can upgrade Man as a whole and recipient of many ontological forces, which if realized will orient the thinking Subject in relation to the wider universe, society and the self. The Self of him, releasing a multitude of external and internal forces which will clearly give another thoroughness and teleology to the Reasonable Subject. The order of evolution of Man from Orphism to Dramatic Poetry, is a reason and cause for Man to remember, activate and act according to many forces which will return him to an ontological series forgotten, restoring the position of this Man in the wider Being.

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**The role of school leadership in relation to  
conflict management at school.  
A survey based upon five empirical  
researches**

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**Abstract:** The role of the manager is decisive in terms of the effective or non-effective management of conflicts, as through the techniques he chooses to use and many times through the leadership style he chooses to apply, he will influence the attitudes and perceptions of teachers towards disagreements and consequent conflicts.

**Keywords:** conflict management – school management – school leadership – administration – resolution strategies – school culture – empirical research

**Introduction**

**T**he school workplace is an environment in which differences between teachers inevitably arise, which in some cases can lead to conflicts (Msila, 2012). The causes that probably trigger such disagreements and subsequent conflicts, despite the variety of examples, seem to have in common the

lack of compatibility between the feelings or the perceptions of the employees in each school unit (Corvette, 2007).

The forms in which these conflicts manifest themselves are also varied, as well as the consequences they can bring to the overall functioning of the school unit, as they can strengthen the interest of teachers and mobilize them in terms of achieving common goals and visions or vice versa they can lead to the formation of a climate of denial and suspicion, which does not allow cooperation towards the realization of the common vision.

In any case, it seems that the role of the manager is decisive in terms of the effective or non-effective management of conflicts, as through the techniques he chooses to use and many times through the leadership style he chooses to apply, he will influence the attitudes and perceptions of teachers towards disagreements and consequent conflicts.

## **1. Description of Empirical Research**

### **Empirical Research by Olu Okotoni & Abosede Okotoni (2003)**

Okotoni O. & A. (2003), in their research examines conflict management in school administration in Secondary Education of Nigeria. The purpose of this research is to determine both the causes and effects of the conflicts in the School Administration. While he considers that a basic need is the peaceful atmosphere that favors learning. This specific study attempted to provide answers to the following research questions:

- Whether there is a relationship between conflicts and mistreatment of staff by management?
- Are managers properly trained in conflict management?
- What is the government's role in reducing the rate of conflict in the education sector?
- What strategies can managers use to manage conflict effectively?

- How can students participate in the administration of their schools to reduce the frequency of conflicts?

The methodology used was random sampling and secondary schools were selected in the three districts of Osun State. The sample was 304 people and consisted of school principals, teachers and staff members. Primary and secondary data were collected. Primary data were generated from questionnaires, interviews and observations, while secondary data were obtained from official sources.

The main findings of the present research strengthen the awareness of school members to the undeniable existence of conflicts and their understanding. Apparently, although conflicts occur regularly at school they are not a danger in themselves. The risk arises from their improper management.

In addition, through the research, the main causes of conflicts within the school system were identified as the partial implementation of the salary regime, the forced and compulsory retirement of employees, the incompetence of the Administration, the superior/inferior member syndrome, improper motivation of teachers, lack of discipline from both staff and students, personal conflict, role conflict and exuberance in relationships. Whereas, the lack of knowledge, the choice of wrong approach, the ignorance on the part of the students has led the issue of conflict management to a fire, where the use of dialogue is chosen as the most appropriate of the strategies that will normalize the situation.

### **Empirical Research by Salleh & Adulpakdee (2012)**

Salleh and Adulpakdee (2012), in their research, presented the perceptions of teachers and school managers about the causes of conflicts that arise in school units and what are the most effective methods for their management. Whereas, the purpose of the present study is to investigate the causes of conflicts and to determine how school principals manage conflicts occurring in selected Islamic private schools in Yala province. More specifically, the study attempts to answer the following research questions:



- What are the causes of conflicts in Islamic private schools in Yala province? and
- How do school principals manage conflicts that occur at school?

The methodology followed was random and focused sampling. The study sample was 313 respondents, consisting of 11 principals and 302 teachers working in Islamic private secondary schools in Yala Province, Thailand. The tools used were a survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview with the selected respondents. Quantitative data were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15.0 for Windows.

The main findings of this research showed the following:

- that each of the private Islamic schools in Yala Province, Thailand, inevitably faced conflict;
- the causes of conflicts were mainly caused by the existence of the four types of interpersonal relationships which are: a) between managers and teachers, b) between teachers, c) between teachers and students and d) between parents and teachers,
- the principal is the person who holds the most important role in resolving conflicts in schools.
- conflicts can appear in controlled or uncontrolled situations in schools and depending on the principal's management style which will be based on the knowledge, experiences, decisions, attitudes and characteristics of each school, they can be effectively dealt with,
- managers should learn more about conflict management so that their management is more effective;
- this study also recommended to the principals to improve relations between non-Muslim and Muslim teachers without prejudice and religious barriers and to clearly state the teachers' responsibilities for each task, finally
- the correct management of conflicts by the managers of each school unit will create a favorable workplace for all employees, where relationships, trust and respect will prevail. Having such work environments will result in boosting team spirit and increasing productivity.

### **Empirical Research by Msila (2012)**

In her research, Msila (2012), focuses on the School Administration and whether it is trained in conflict management. This study aims to understand the barriers associated with conflict and school leadership. In light of this, it explores the question: What are the conflict management needs of school principals? In detail, it attempts to investigate the following research questions:

- the skills that school principals should have for conflict management
- the way managers build appropriate strategies to deal with conflicts.
- how principals can introduce an effective school climate that fosters school growth, despite conflict.
- the creation of teams in schools that will be properly structured to effectively deal with conflicts.

The methodology used in the present study was through qualitative research – interviews with open and closed questions and the eight 8 participants were selected through purposive sampling. They were selected from four schools that were experiencing conflict problems and from four schools that were functioning without conflict problems. Each participant was interviewed twice during the study to ensure validity of the results. In addition, the researcher also applied the observation between the two interviews, studying the communication and cooperation of the teachers.

The key findings of this research showed that any conflict hinders school progress and that schools experiencing conflict will not prosper. In addition, all participants underlined that teaching and teachers' morale are negatively affected, while a holistic preparation of principals for conflict management is required. Finally, dynamic leadership lists the following skills: managing and dealing with one's own emotions, dealing with third party conflicts, the ability to enforce, negotiate and mediate.

### **Empirical Research by Riasi and Asadzadehb (2015)**

Riasi and Asadzadehb (2015), in their research, studied the relationship between the management of educational units and conflict management styles. The purpose of this research was to investigate the value of the five forms of conflict management of normalization, avoidance, cooperation, competition and compromise in school units.

This particular study attempted to answer the research question whether there is any relationship between school leadership and each of the five conflict management styles or not

The methodology used was that the total size of a society was included and it included forty-nine (49) teachers - principals of high schools located in the city of Birjand in eastern Iran. To collect the data, a questionnaire with 20 closed-ended questions was created and the results were processed using SPSS software.

The main findings of the present are that principals believe that conflict resolution, by directly discussing the issues with their teachers, is more effective. On the other hand, the conflict avoidance style is believed to be the least effective. While the smoothing style is the best means of managing conflict in the school environment, among the five styles. In addition, based on the above results, the following recommendations are made for managers:

- When there is conflict in an educational unit, principals should carefully examine the situation and then choose the appropriate conflict management style based on the specific situation.
- Principals must be good listeners, listen to their teachers and then manage the conflict so that both parties are happy with the end result.
- Principals should motivate (morally or financially) and reward their teachers, so that conflicts in the school environment are avoided.

- Teachers to respect the role of the school leader/principal in the organization, who has the right to resolve conflict and actively work with them to manage conflict.

### **Empirical Research by Shanka (2017)**

Shanka (2017), in his research tried to identify the main sources of conflicts between teachers and school leaders and to determine which strategies are used in the proper management and resolution of such conflicts. The purpose of this study was to investigate various strategies used to manage and resolve conflicts between teachers and school leaders

In this light, it explores the following research questions:

- what are the sources of conflict between teachers and school leaders?
- what conflict management strategies are followed? and
- what are the techniques for resolving school conflicts?

The methodology followed was simple random as well as purposive sampling and was conducted in public primary schools in Wolaita zone of Ethiopia. The sample includes 196 participants, of which 146 were teachers and 50 school principals. Questionnaire and interview were the main data collection tools distributed to both teachers and principals and included open and closed questions.

The main findings of the present research showed that the important causes of conflicts were 1) institutional (lack of or unfair allocation of school resources and poor infrastructure), 2) labor (work overload and dissatisfaction, lack of teaching skills, intolerance among teachers, lack of accountability and responsibility, poor implementation of educational policies, lack of staff training and lack of reward systems), and 3) leadership (poor implementation of regulations, poor communication, lack of leadership skills, lack of involvement in decision-making, inferiority-superiority syndromes, bias in allocation of positions and lack of clarity in education sector policies and guidelines).

Conflict management strategies should include leadership skills, following rules and regulations that embrace change as

well as having a clear distribution of participating teachers in decision-making and providing equal opportunities for training and understanding of roles. In addition, in the cases of resolving differences that arise in school units, techniques of discussion, punishment, coercion, compromise and avoidance should be included.

Finally, this study concluded that school leaders need to understand the sources of conflict and have a mechanism in place to allow staff to voice their concerns. Whereas, leaders should continuously build and develop leadership skills, be open to change, engage and provide their staff with development opportunities.

### **Composition of the individual investigations (points of convergence-divergence)**

In the above research, reference is made to both the causes and the strategies to resolve the conflicts that occur in school units. While the role of the leader / manager is decisive. Specifically:

Regarding the causes of conflicts in the school environment, Okotoni O. & A. (2003) and Shanka (2017) recognize as the most important causes the incompetence of the administration, the improper motivation of teachers by the school director, the conflict roles and exuberance that exist in relationships, intolerance among teachers, lack of accountability and responsibility, poor implementation of educational policies, lack of staff training, poor communication, lack of involvement in decision-making, inferiority and superiority syndromes and bias in the allocation of seats. While Salleh & Adulpakdee (2012) consider that the causes of conflicts are mainly caused by the existence of the four types of interpersonal relationships in the school environment which are the relationships: a) between principals and teachers, b) between teachers, c) between teachers and students and d) between parents and teachers.

Regarding the place of resolving school conflicts, Salleh & Adulpakdee (2012) suggest that the school leader's

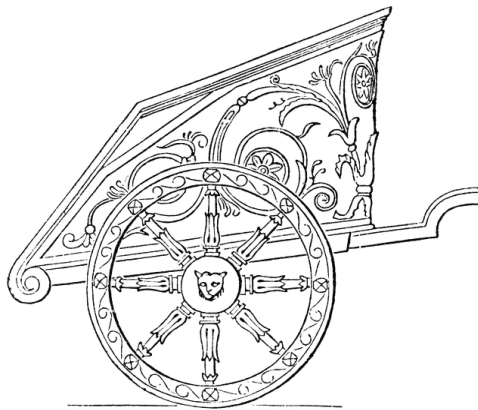
management style should be based on the knowledge, experiences, decisions, attitudes and characteristics of each school, so that conflict problems can be addressed with efficiency. Riasi & Asadzadeh (2015) from their research concluded that the conflict avoidance style is the least effective, while the smoothing style is the best means of managing conflicts in the school environment, among the five styles. Finally, Shanka (2017) concludes that in the cases of solving the differences created in school units, techniques of discussion, punishment, coercion, compromise and avoidance should be included.

We could also note, in terms of school conflict management strategies/policies, that all five (5) of the above researches mention Alleh & Adulpakdee (2012,) that the principal/leader is the person who holds the most important role for conflict resolution in schools and should have the following skills according to Msila (2012) and Shanka (2017): ability to manage and deal with own emotions, deal with third party conflicts, ability to enforce, negotiate and mediate as well as being open to change, engaging and providing their staff with development opportunities. While Riasi & Asadzadeh (2015) suggest that school principals/leaders should be good listeners, listen to their teachers and then manage the conflict so that both parties are happy with the final outcome.

We conclude after these, that according to Salleh & Adulpakdee (2012), the correct management of conflicts by the managers of each school unit will create a favorable workplace for all employees, where relationships, trust and respect will prevail. Having such work environments will result in boosting team spirit and increasing productivity.

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## The Buddhist Philosophy: A brief Study

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**Abstract:** The History is well-known to Lord Buddha as Gautama Buddha, Buddha Śākyamuni, Sidhārtha Gautama, and who was born in Lumbini in the Nepalese region of the near Indian border. He was the man of Asian thinkers and was a religious master of all time. His vast contributions to the field of Philosophy, metaphysics, and epistemology highlight Indian history and spiritual paths more and more. In ethics, He explains the threefold understandings of karmas mental, verbal, and physical. In metaphysics Buddha describes the criticism of souls and the real causes of rebirth. He says the ultimate stage of a liberated soul is called 'Nirvāṇa'. The stage of Nirvāṇa is a very well-known term in Buddhist Philosophy. Buddha explains the many stages of human life and which impressed him extremely. The present paper describes, in brief, the life history of Buddha, his moral teachings to mankind, and the wise expressions of Śrīla Prabhupāda on Buddhist Philosophy, etc.

**Keywords-** Gautama Buddha, Vedas, Prabhupada, Buddhist Philosophy, Buddhism.



## Introduction

Buddhism possesses Indian thoughts and the real qualities of life. Indian society has different Vedic thoughts. Indian society is dependent upon the Vedas. The Vedas are regarded as the ancient Indian literature in this World. The Vedas have also said the origin of the plants like Yoga, Sāmkhya, Nyāya, etc. The Upaniṣads are also known as the sprouts of those seeds. All the Upaniṣads reflect the real mystery of Brahman or the supreme soul which is the main aim of all creatures, and especially of human beings. Man has both good and bad habits but who wants to gain knowledge about the supreme soul or Brahman. He should abandon the bad habits and impurities of the mind, and then be able to achieve the place of that supreme power.

Gautama Buddha is known as the founder of Buddhism. He established Buddhism after getting Bodhi. He had taken birth in a kṣatriya family and achieved complete knowledge of the Upaniṣads. Although Gautama Buddha did not emphasize the Vedas and Upaniṣads still his teachings have not existed without the knowledge of Hindu Scriptures and thoughts also.<sup>1</sup>

Suddhodana was the father of Gautama Buddha, and His father tried to bind him in marriage life and also offered many luxuries. But on the other hand, Gautama accepted ascetic life at the age of twenty-nine years. But Buddha spent a life prolonged for forty-five years and above and traveled from one place to another for dispersing the knowledge of Buddhism.<sup>2</sup>

It is very interesting to say that Gautama Buddha has not established the Buddhist canon himself. That was established by the followers of Buddha. And Tripitaka was written at the end of the first council. The Tripitaka and its related texts mostly reflect on moral conduct. Gautama Buddha said about eight paths means aṣṭāṅgamarga to get relieved from sufferings of the human life. Buddhism targets the liberation of human life. Gautama Buddha supported five precepts pañcasila. These five principles of Gautama Buddha and these are described as follows:

1. The principle is to forgo slaughtering.
2. The principle to forgo kidnapping.
3. The principle is to forgo cheating.
4. The principle is to abandon intoxicants and gambling.
5. The principle is to forgo telling lies.

There are another three additional principles in Buddhism known like this.

1. The principle of abandonment of taking food at odd times.
2. The principle is to abandon amusement like dancing, singing, and other entertainment programs, and also abstain from beautification of anyone.
3. The principle is to give up the luxurious things for sleeping.<sup>3</sup>

### **Karma as per Buddhism**

Karma is normally meant for action or work. But Buddhism takes impermanent dharma in its place. It is given stress on effort and endeavor. Will is the real action of the man. According to the views of Gautama Buddha, the person should have a very pure will. Buddhism has given stress on the liberty of wantings, moral works, power, and good deeds. Buddha says we are the lord of our fortune. The present stage of the man who has made himself. The future action is the determination of present acts. Man is the builder of self-fortune, and character. The happiness and sorrow of beings are the only results of our past deeds. Karma is known as the connecting link of someone.<sup>4</sup>

Whatever the man performs through his own body, thoughts, and talking these are known as self acts and are not left him even after his death like a shadow. So action or karma of the man is said as a connecting link between the present life of a person to further birth.<sup>5</sup>

### **Transmigration as per the views of Buddha**

Our action leads to further birth and there is no transmigration of the permanent soul from the body of one person to another. The last conscious doings leave and another conscious act starts in a new organism, and that is known as rebirth. In rebirth, there is also transmigration of nature in the talks of Rhys Davids. And the ends of the conscious act in someone's life to the first conscious deeds in his further life. Moral consciousness links to the same services. Buddha says about the transmigration process by taking the example of a burning flame of a lamp. The lamp burns the whole night. But the light of the flame does not stand the same as the whole. There is a continuous change in the flame, there are no signs of flame but continuity in the various flames of the light. Like this, the last acts of a person reflect in his next life. Buddha says the transmigration process by taking another example like various changes in the milk. Milk modifies into curds and curds are changed into butter and butter is modified into melted butter. The same series exists but it looks changing.<sup>6</sup>

### **The existence of a wheel (Bhavacakra)**

Buddha explains that the person who knows origination is able to know dharma, and those who know dharma, can know dependent origination. The five things of earthly body or form like feeling, disposition, perception, and consciousness of one's mind creates their own causes and conditions. The mind-body unity is created by ailments, and ailment is created by desire. Desire is caused by the five senses of organs and the mind. These are caused by the body and mind. And they are created by consciousness. consciousness caused by dispositions. Dispositions are created by ignorance. Twelve links are linked in the chain of creation: ignorance, dispositions, consciousness, the unity of mind and body, six senses of organs, contact,

feeling, longing, wanting for much money, becoming, birth, old age, and death.

Ignorance is the main cause of suffering. It gives birth and death. It causes dispositions. Consciousness creates the further unity of mind and body. If consciousness does not enter the womb then the mind and body unit cannot exist in the womb. So the man gets relieved by driving away from this ignorance or avidyā. These twelve links are the cause of present, past, and future.<sup>7</sup>

### **The views of Śrīla Prabhupāda on Buddhism**

Śrīla Prabhupāda whose real name was Abhaya charan De had taken birth in Kolkata in the year 1896. His spiritual advisor was Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Sarasvatī Thākura. He was a renowned religious guru and was the founder of sixty-four Maṭhas. He accepted Prabhupāda as his disciple. He said Prabhupāda to spread the Vedic knowledge in the English language. After following him Prabhupāda wrote a book with commentary on Bhagavad-gītā. In the year 1947, He was entitled Bhaktivedānta from the society named Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava for his devotional attitudes and Philosophical knowledge. He established ISKCON, which means International Society for Krishna Consciousness, in 1966. He founded more than one hundred ashramas and spread Vedic knowledge through it in many countries of the World. Śrīla Prabhupāda left his mortal body on November 14, 1977. Prabhupāda has mentioned Buddhist Philosophy in his many lectures and books. In his Gītā, Prabhupāda said that Lord Buddha was the real incarnation of Lord Krishna.

Prabhupāda also describes the Bhāgavata and where it is mentioned that, At the beginning of the Kali era, Buddha who is the son of Anjana will be born in Kikata for destroying enemies of deities (Bhāgavata. 1.3.24).

Prabhupāda says about the life of Buddha that the Lord Buddha was seen in India roughly 2600 years ago in the Kṣatriya royal family and abandoned his luxurious life at a very young age, and on the other hand, He accepted a Yogic

life. He dedicated his whole life to meditation and to the moral development of all human beings. People of this Kali era followed the moral ideology of Lord Buddha not only in India but also all over the World.

The Philosophy of Lord Buddha is well-known as atheistic (nāstika). So there is no acceptance of God as supreme and the authority of the Veda. But Prabhupāda describes here that Lord Buddha is the incarnation of God. So, He is the only real propounder of the knowledge of all the Vedas. As per the Buddhist philosophy, there is the conclusion of I and you. Further Prabhupāda says there is no argument if there is individuality. So the dualism of individual soul and supreme soul should be admitted which is accepted by the Bhagavad Gītā. (Gītā.2.12).

Buddhism describes the transmigration Philosophy and there is seen rebirth and death. But they do not mention the process of birth and death. There is no clear description of the future birth of a person, and it is not sure that every person can take the human birth after his death.<sup>8</sup>

Prabhupāda takes a very beautiful point of Buddhist Philosophy. According to the Buddhists, there is no existence of the soul and God. But there are seen number of temples of Lord Buddha in the country like China, Japan, and Burma where they worship with candles to the God, in the same way as worshipping.<sup>9</sup>

### **Conclusion**

From the above discussions, it is concluded that the Buddhist Philosophy is the only Philosophy of human beings where the real feelings of human birth and death and the sorrows of human lives are clearly described by Lord Buddha. And as per the Holy Scriptures, Lord Buddha was not an ordinary man, He was the real incarnation of God. He had taken birth for the fulfillment of a certain mission. In Gītā, Lord Krishna also says that He will be born in this World when righteousness declines and unrighteousness increases.

Hence, Lord Buddha was the same incarnation of Lord Krishna and there is no doubt at all.

### Notes

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\* *For books:* Lloyd S. A., 2009: 289-294 or Lloyd S. A., *Morality in the Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes: Cases in the Law of Nature*, Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 289-294.

\* *For articles:* Ranson S., "Towards the learning society", *Education Management and Administration*, 20: 2, 1992, pp. 68-79.

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