

The Notion of good in Hobbes' system

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Generally, the topic of Hobbes's ethics that has received little attention is the "good"¹, probably because the critical viewpoint has almost always been from politics and social philosophy; their focus is the justification of rules, obligation, the relationship between natural law and civil law and so on. This paper intends to consider different approaches to the theme of "good" given in the complete works of Hobbes, and not just the politically focused works, to explain the apparent contradictions.

I

Tracing Hobbes from *Short Tract* to *Behemoth*, including *Elements of Law*, *De Cive*, *Leviathan*, *Liberty, Necessity and Chance*, *De Homine*, it is possible to notice a triple focus of the notion of good and its contrary: evil. The first of these correlates is Hobbes' mechanism; the second, his psychology and the third, his doctrines of ethics and politics.

First, I shall attend to *Short Tract on First Principles*, which offers a wholly mechanistic view of good. In Section 3, Concl. 7 and 8, it reads:

"Good is to every thing that which hath active power to attract it locally. Whatsoever is Good is desirable; and whatsoever is desirable is Good; and whatsoever is actually desired, supposed actual sense or actual understanding; but actual sense and understanding are local motions of the Animal Spirits".²

¹ On making this assertion it is not intended to ignore the analysis of the theme made by scholars such as Mc Neilly (*The Anatomy of Leviathan*); Peters (*Hobbes*) for whom the analysis of good constitutes a link between Hobbes psychology and his own ethics; neither can we impair the importance assigned by Bertman in his article "Hobbes on Good", *The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*, reprinted in Preston King's *Hobbes Papers*, published in Spanish in a corrected and expanded edition under the title "El bien natural y el bien artificial en Hobbes", *Estudios Filosóficos*. However, there are also scholars such as Minogue, who considers Hobbes seems to have taken little interest in the study of moral virtues, of good and evil, on account of the fact that his interest would lie mainly on the rules of human behaviour as is clearly stated in his article "Hobbes and the Just Man", *Modern Studies in Philosophy*.

² *Short Tract on First Principles*, Sect.3, Concl.7, Appendix I, published by F. Tönnies together with *The Element of Law*, 2nd ed., Barnes & Noble, New York, 1969/1st ed., London, 1889.

It is somewhat surprising to find this reference to good as an active power that moves locally. Consider this text:

“because that which is desired is Bonum, therefore *Bonum is the Agent* [...] Every *Bonum* therefore hath power to move” (Id).

By this mechanistic exposition of good, Hobbes explains every movement brings about the movement to the near or further away from the object; in the case of good, this is accomplished because of its power of attraction. Hobbes ends Concl. 7 with an Aristotelian reference but by which he stresses his own strict mechanism:

“This definition agrees well with Aristotle, who defines Good to be that to which all things are moved; which hath been metaphorically taken, but is properly true; as if we draw the object to us, whereas the object rather draws us to it by local motion.”

This text is clear: what in an Aristotelian context is metaphorically interpreted must be literally accepted in Hobbes' consideration. Further *Short Tract* leaves no room for an interpretation like that of Robertson (*Hobbes*, 1901) or of Strauss (*The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 1936) to whom moral philosophy and the political theory of Hobbes are separated from a mechanistic materialism. This interpretation is completely invalidated by the discovery made by Tönnies, in 1889, of the manuscript known as *Short Tract*, whose chronological placement is between 1630-1636; that is, it was written after *Thucydides* and before *The Elements of Law*, the first version of Hobbes' political philosophy³.

In the text of *Short Tract*, Hobbes draws two corollaries:

- A) a.1 Evil (*Malum*) is all that which has an active power to repel.
a.2 Therefore, Goodness is the power of Good (*Bonum*) and Badness is the power of Evil (*Malum*)
- B) b.1 That which is beautiful/noble/perfect (*Pulchrum*) is an offspring of Good⁴. All that which is *Bonum* is *Pulchrum*, and all that is *Pulchrum* is *Bonum*. However, we call it *Bonum* in so much as it attracts and *Pulchrum* in so much as it pleases. *Bonum* is an object of Desire or Appetite, whilst *Pulchrum* is an object of Love.

³ Cf. Watkins, *Hobbes' System of Ideas*, Hutchinson & Co., London, 2nd ed., 1973, p.12-17.

⁴ In *Short Tract*, Hobbes makes use only of Latin terms without giving their equivalent in English. Further on, in the *Leviathan*, he states that the Latin terms *pulchrum* and *turpe* have no exact translation in the English language; thus the following terms have been used for *pulchrum*: fair, in some cases; in others, beautiful, handsome, gallant, honourable, amiable; for *turpe*: foul, deformed, ugly, base, nauseous. Cf. E. W. III, p.41, Ed. Molesworth, London, 2nd ed., 1966, Scientia Verlag.

- b.2 All that which is uncomely/infamous/vile (*Turpe*) is an offspring of Evil. Following the mechanistic approach, in conclusion 8, Hobbes explains the cause and effect relationship between Good and Desire. It reads:

“The object is the Efficient cause, or Agent, of desire...Appetite therefore is the Effect of the Agent, and because the Agent is desired as Good, Desire shall be the effect of Good”⁵.

For Hobbes, however, good produces no effects except through the power of goodness yet it is an attractive power. The effect of that attractive power is a movement towards the agent with a passive power or capacity of the subject and it is appetite.

Thus, and leaving aside many other questions about good and evil, Hobbes provides his first treatment of the subject.

It is worth noticing that very few references to the texts of the *Short Tract* are made when scholars analyse the theme of good; yet, according to the relevant observation of Watkins, the *Short Tract* is a preliminary condensed treatment of Hobbes' cosmology, psychology and ethics. Furthermore, apart from few exceptions, the ideas embodied in this manuscript were left essentially unaltered in his later political and philosophical works⁶.

It is worthwhile considering Hobbes' second approach to the theme in terms of psychology. Remaining aside from the debate about interpreting the Hobbesian theory as psychological egoism or as egocentric philosophy⁷, nevertheless there is no denying the fact that Hobbes' has a hedonistic vision of man. Closely bound to that conception of man, the focus on good appears in the treatise of *Human Nature* (first part of *The Elements of Law*), and also in some texts of *De Cive* and of *De Homine*.

First, I quote these crucial texts of *Human Nature*:

“Every man, for his own part, calleth that which *pleaseth*, and is delightful to himself, *good*; and that *evil* which *displeaseth* him.”

⁵ *Short Tract*, Sect.3, Concl.8

⁶ Cf. Watkins, *Op. Cit.*, p.23

⁷ Some scholars who specialize in Hobbes have no misgivings about the use of the term egoism straightaway (Mc Neilly, *The Anatomy of Leviathan*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1968, chap. V, even though the term is used basically with reference to *De Corpore* and *Elements*); others, however, think it more accurate to refer to the egocentric principle (Watkins, *Hobbes' System of Ideas*, p. 75-80). Cfr. K. R. Minogue, “Hobbes and the just man”, *Modern Studies in Philosophy*, 1972; B. Gert, “Hobbes, Mechanism and Egoism”, *Philosophical Quarterly*, 1965.

“And as we call good and evil the things that please and displease; so call we *goodness* and *badness*, the *qualities* or powers whereby they do it”⁸.

As a fundamental element in relation to good, *pleasure* now appears. This notion has been absent from the mechanistic approach of the *Short Tract* which rather concentrates on the mechanical power which attracts or removes the object or agent identified as *Bonum*. I shall show that it is likewise absent from the ethico-political approach.

In *Human Nature* we read:

“As all conceptions we have immediately by the *sense*, are, *delight*, or *pain*, or *appetite*, or *fear*; so are all the *imaginations* after sense”.

“As *appetite* is the beginning of *animal motion* towards something that pleaseth us; so is the attaining thereof, the *end* of that motion...When we attain that end, the delight we have thereby is called the *fruition*: so that *bonum* and *finis* are different names, but for different considerations of the same thing [...] Those things which please us, as the way or means to a further end we call *profitable*; and the *fruition* of them, *use*; and those things that profit not *vain*”⁹.

The terms “delight” and “fruition” suggest Hobbes’ hedonism. It might be wondered how hedonism relates to egoism. Hobbes provides us with the answer by distinguishing between two types of pleasure: the sensuous or corporal pleasure and the mental (*delight of the mind*), called *joy*.

To point out what is politically important for hedonism Hobbes states:

“...the *greatest* part whereof, is that by which we are invited to give continuance to our *species*; and the *next*, by which a man is invited to meat, for the preservation of his *individual person*”¹⁰.

Clearly, the centre of Hobbesian political hedonism is self-preservation; in this text, that proposition appears in its opening lines, with a universality referring to the continuity of the species; however, the latter part undoubtedly makes explicit the preservation of the individual person.

In a difference with *Human Nature*, the *De Cive* has the psychological and the ethico-political approach merge. Only the texts referring to the psychological approach, however, will be considered here:

⁸ E. W. IV, p.32

⁹ E. W. IV, p. 32-33

¹⁰ E. W. IV, p.34

"Now whatsoever seems good, is pleasant, and relates either to the senses, or to the mind"¹¹.

"Such is the nature of man that every one calls that *good* which he desires, and *evil* which he eschews...For we all measure *good* and *evil* by the pleasure or pain we either feel at present, or expect hereafter"¹².

From these texts, the new element of judgement is the measure of good and evil which lies in pain or pleasure, present or future.

Further, the following is found in *De Homine*:

"Omnibus rebus, quae appetuntur, quatenus appetuntur, nomen commune est *bonum*; et rebus omnibus, quas fugimus, malum [...] Bona erant ab initio omnia quae creavit Deus. Quare? Quia ipsi opera sua omnia placuere [...] Bonum ergo relative dicitur ad personam, ad locum, et ad tempus. Huic, hic, nunc, placet; illi, illic, tunc, displicet: et sic de circumstantiis caeteris"¹³.

Once again, pleasure is presented as a measure of good. However, the same consideration brings forth a characteristic common to all three approaches, which has hitherto deliberately not been mentioned in the chosen texts, namely, the relativism of good. This subject will be dealt with later.

But now, in *De Homine*, we note Hobbesian egocentricity, as Watkins and Minogue call it. Consider:

"Bonorum autem primum est sua cuique conservatio [...] Contra vero, malorum omnium primum mors"¹⁴.

Lastly, I shall analyse the third approach to the theme of good as a correlate of Hobbes' ethico-political doctrine. This is fundamentally centred upon *Leviathan*, although some important references also are made in *De Cive* and *Behemoth*. My analysis begins with an essential text from *Leviathan VI*:

"But whatsoever is the object of any man's appetite or desire, that is it which he for his part calleth *good*: and the object of his hate and aversion *evil*; and of his contempt, *vile* and *inconsiderable*. For these words of good, evil, and contemptible, are ever used with relation to the person that useth them: there being nothing simply and

¹¹ E. W. II, p.5

¹² E. W. II, p.196

¹³ O. L. II, p.96-97

¹⁴ O. L. II, p.98

absolutely so; nor any common rule of good and evil, to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves; but from the person of the man, where there is no commonwealth; or, in a commonwealth, from the person that representeth it”¹⁵.

The first thing to be pointed out is the identification of good with the object of any appetite or desire in man; and, second, with respect to evil, the object of aversion. Both the notion of pleasure linked to Hobbes’ hedonism and egoism and also the mechanical attraction presented in *Short Tract* have disappear. The whole weight of the argument is laid on the lack in the nature of objects themselves to be called either intrinsically good or bad. Therefore, there is no objective and universal rule; “good” and “evil” are terms always in relation to the person who uses them. In this statement, Hobbes’ characteristic relativism and subjectivity of good is clearly expressed.

Now, the person who stands conditionally to good and evil cannot have the same relation to action in and before society, where a Civil State is functioning. Using Hobbesian terminology, it may be said that the rule for good and evil which governs the *condition of nature* is not the same as that which rules the *civil state*.

Further, in chapter XV of *Leviathan*, Hobbes states:

“And therefor so long as a man is in the condition of mere nature, which is a condition of war, private appetite is the measure of good and evil”¹⁶.

In the second part of *Leviathan, (Of Commonwealth)*, he repeats and enlarges the point:

“That every private man is judge of good and evil actions. This is true in the condition of mere nature, where there are no civil laws...But otherwise, it is manifest, that the measure of good and evil actions, is the civil law; and the judge the legislator, who is always representative of the commonwealth”¹⁷.

Hobbes’ insistence is that only in the condition of nature does each man become a judge and measure of good and evil; this is, however, false and subversive in the civil state where one has contracted to be bound by the Sovereign’s will or civil laws. Only law can here become the measure. The *De Cive* reads:

“But one and the first which disposeth to sedition, is this, that the knowledge of good and evil belongs to each single man. In the state of nature indeed, where every man

¹⁵ E. W. III, p. 41

¹⁶ E. W. III, p.146

¹⁷ E. W. III, p. 310-311

lives by equal right, and has not by any mutual pacts submitted to the command of others, we have granted this to be true...But in the civil state it is false. For it was shown that the civil laws were the rules of *good* and *evil*, *just* and *unjust*, *honest* and *dishonest*; that therefore what the legislator commands, must be held for *good* and what he forbids for *evil*"¹⁸.

In *Behemoth* the force of the civil state as a paradigm of good is more strongly stressed. Hobbes says:

"All actions and habits are to be esteemed good or evil by their causes and usefulness in reference to the commonwealth"¹⁹.

The relativism and subjectivity of good and evil is a natural and ordinary element in the Hobbesian system. This is already strongly suggested in the 'mechanistic' approach of his psychology:

"because that which is desirable or good to one, may not be so to another, and so what attracts one, may not attract another"²⁰.

"insomuch that while every man differeth from another in constitution, they differ also from one another concerning the common distinction of good and evil. *Nor is there any such thing as absolute goodness* considered without relation: for even the goodness which we apprehend in God Almighty, is his goodness to us"²¹.

The following is found in *De Homine*:

"simpliciter bonum dici non potest, cum quicquid bonum est, bonum sit aliquibus vel alicui"²².

This same characteristic is repeated in the ethico-political approach: recall the text of *Leviathan* VI. Hobbes confirms this in chapter XV by saying:

"*good* and *evil* are names that signify our appetites and aversions; which in different tempers, customs and doctrines of men, are different...Nay, the same man, in divers times, differs from himself; and one time praiseth, that is, calleth good, what another

¹⁸ E. W. II, p.150

¹⁹ E. W. VI, p.220

²⁰ *Short Tract*, Sect.3, Concl.7

²¹ E. W. IV, p.32

²² O. L. II, p.96

er time he dispraiseth, and calleth evil: from whence arise disputes, controversies, and at last war"²³.

From this passage it is clear Hobbes' state of nature, inevitably involves dispute or war, but this cannot be accepted in the civil state, where the sovereign or artificial reason is the determiner of good and evil. It is the absence of this character of the sovereign that Hobbes criticises in Aristotelian ethics:

"Aristotle, and other heathen philosophers, define good and evil, by the appetite of men; and well enough, as long as we consider them governed every one by his own law; for in the condition of men that have no other law but their own appetites, there can be no general rule of good and evil actions. But in commonwealth this measure is false, not the appetite of private men, but the laws, which is will and appetite of the state, is the measure...And this private measure of good, is a doctrine, not only vain, but also pernicious to the public state"²⁴.

A point must here be made about Hobbes' misunderstanding of the proper scope of Aristotle's view. Aristotle had defined good as that for which all yearn. However, this universal craving was not the basis of the nature of good, nor did it constitute good as such; to Aristotle it was not its formal reason but rather its work and consequence within a rationally functional natural structure. Hobbes interprets Aristotelian thinking from his own philosophical conception.

Classical and Medieval traditions had asserted that things are good insofar as they are, which means that Being is the ultimate basis of good. In scholastic terms Good is a transcendental element of Being. However, Hobbes does not accept that Platonic metaphysical doctrinal tradition which he considers absurd and vain as he expressly states against Bramhall, bishop of Derry. In *The Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity and Chance* it is possible to read:

"There hath been in the Schools derived from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, an old proverb rather than an axiom: *ens, bonum, et verum convertuntur*. From hence the Bishop (Bramhall) hath taken this notion of a metaphysical goodness and his doctrine that whatsoever hath a being is good...But if all things were absolutely good, we should be all pleased with their being, which we are not, when the actions that depend upon their being are hurtful to us. And therefore, to speak properly, nothing is good or evil but in regard of the action that proceedeth from it, and also of the person to whom it doth good or hurt...And so his *metaphysical goodness* is but an idle term...And as for natural goodness and evilness, that also is but the goodness and evilness of

²³ E. W. III, p.146

²⁴ E. W. III, p. 681

actions...It is the law from whence proceeds the difference between the moral and the natural goodness; so that it is well enough said by him (Bishop Bramhall), that 'moral goodness is the conformity of an action with right reason'; and better said than meant; for this *right reason*, which is the law, is no otherwise certainly right than by our making it so by our approbation of it and voluntary subjection to it"²⁵.

This lengthy but useful passage strongly suggests that there is no absolute metaphysical, good *simpliciter* – whatever the terminology chosen – but only relative and individual goods; further, there is nothing that constitutes good in itself even in the representation of transcendental Good. For Hobbes, all goodness in itself and evil proceed from the relation between the thing and a certain appetitive man, in a certain condition for satisfying his desire. Since there is no ontological basis for good, its determination depends entirely on human will. In Hobbes, it is to be noted, will is not a rational appetite having a formal object, but simply the last appetite or aversion in deliberation; the impulse which immediately moves one to act or not to act²⁶. Therefore, psychologically, will is simply passion and good is merely an individual or private good. Yet, it is within man's power to institute a criterion of morality which is artificially objective, an artificial reason which imposes direction to man's natural passional inclinations by changing his conditions of existence. This is the "right reason" which appears at the end of the text and is identified with the civil law. Moreover, it is that law which establishes the difference between "natural good" and "moral good". These are two kinds of good for Hobbes because, just as it is absurd for him to talk about metaphysical good, so it is absurd to accept any sort of *Supreme Good, Summum Bonum*. Thus, in *Human Nature* he says:

"But for an *utmost end*, in which the ancient philosophers have placed *felicity*, and disputed much concerning the way thereto, there is no such thing in this world, nor way to it, more than to Utopia: for while we live, we have desires, and desire presupposeth a further end"²⁷.

Similarly the same view occurs in *De Homine*:

"Summum bonum, sive ut vocatur, felicitas et finis ultimus, in praesente vita reperiri non potest. Nam si finis sit ultimus, nihil desideratur, nihil appetitur...Bonorum

²⁵ E. W. V, p.192-193

²⁶ Cf. E. W. III, p.38: "But if instead of a rational appetite, we shall say an appetite resulting from a precedent deliberation, then the definition is the same that I have given here. Will therefore is the last appetite in deliberating".

²⁷ E. W. IV, p.33

autem maxime est, ad fines semper ultiores minime impedita progressio...Nam vita motus est perpetuus"²⁸.

This view however is most clearly and fully expressed in *Leviathan*:

"...the felicity of this life. consisteth not in the repose of a mind satisfied. For there is no such *finis ultimus*, utmost aim, nor *summum bonum* greatest good, as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers. Nor can a man any more live, whose desires are at end, than he whose senses and imagination are at a stand. Felicity is a continual progress of the desire, from one object to another: the attaining of the former, being still but the way to the latter. The cause whereof is, that the object of man's desire, is not to enjoy once only, and for one instant of time; but to assure for ever, the way of his future desire"²⁹.

In conclusion, these last texts reveal the fundamental principles of Hobbes' system: i.e., his *mechanistic materialism* which reduces all, even life itself and happiness, to a perpetual and progressive movement that humans maintain within a sensitive order; this is the *egocentricity* which seeks to satisfy man's continuous desires; it is his *hedonism* as he identifies the object of his desires with joy, not only momentary but permanent.

II

Finishing the above exegetical part, I offer a wider interpretative scheme, which allows a better understanding of lines of thought otherwise apparently contradictory within Hobbes' system. Probably, the first question one asks is whether it is apt to talk about morality in Hobbes. This leads to consider the Hobbes' concept of nature. It is manifest that for him the concept of nature presupposes the absolute negation of teleology by negating formal and final forms; this is expressly done by Hobbes in *De Corpore*³⁰ where nature is reduced to matter and efficient causality mechanically considered³¹. Movement in nature points no further than to itself, it only means preservation of the continuance of the moved objects. The normative value of '*physis*' in Aristotle's teleological character disappears from the Hobbesian system. This lack of purpose in nature taken as a

²⁸ O. L. II, p.103

²⁹ E. W. III, p.63

³⁰ E. W. I, p.131-132: "The writers of metaphysics reckon up two other causes besides the *efficient* and *material*, namely, the *ESSENCE*, which some call the *formal cause*, and the *END* or *final cause*; both which are nevertheless efficient causes".

³¹ See previous paper: "Naturaleza y Ética en Hobbes y Tomás de Aquino", *Sapientia*, Vol XLIII, N° 167-168, Bs. As., 1988, p.123-138

system grounded in functional values leads Hobbes to interpret as not fundamentally natural all that which entails an orientation or guiding intention. Without a perfect goal, the only criterion for the establishment of an order is the effectiveness of that same order for someone's desire; all order is necessarily artificial insofar as it is compared to a materialist ontology that lacks a sense of perfect or ideal finality. The naturalness of human desire is tangential to a reductionist physics.

Human nature itself is reduced by Hobbes to a sum of faculties and powers that do not express an essence but rather a set of forces. There is no norm. One has only a living system in perpetual movement. Hobbes therefore could not interpret man's actions as a means to a natural end. Thus, human nature identifies and reduces itself to morally neutral natural passions. If human nature is not an expression of a metaphysical substantial form, there is no nature common to all men, and one is to move in the stipulated direction of Hobbes' nominalism; therefore, there cannot exist a normative order for good and evil prior to man's will. Now then, it is obvious that we cannot speak of natural morality in Hobbes.

It might be objected, following the Taylor-Warrender thesis, or even less forced interpretations such as that of McNeilly that the laws of nature establish a certain order and create a certain obligation, which would contradict the nature's moral neutrality. But, the so-called *law of nature* has as its immediate foundation reason in its functions of calculation and foresight³², which is artificially arising only in civil society rather than via the natural passions and inclinations which it exploits but opposes³³. The laws or theorems of nature are the result of an estimation by reason about the civil condition of actions. Considering reason to be an instrument of passions, it can be said that it calculates the consequences, useful and harmful, of our natural behaviour from the most valuable desire: self-preservation. It is interesting to note Watkins' sharp observation refuting Warrender, that in the condition of nature, self-preservation is neither an "objective value" nor is it "ethical". Taking two men, in state of nature, A's self-preservation does not imply his desire for B's preservation; he

³² Cf. E. W. II, p.16: "Therefore the law of nature, that I may define it, is the dictate of right reason, about those things which are either to be done or omitted for the constant preservation of life and members as much as in us lies". Cf. E. W. III, p.116-117: "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".

³³ Cf. E. W. III, p.153-154: "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 us to partiality, pride, revenge, and the like".

might even consider B's destruction as a good for himself; likewise B with reference to A³⁴. Thus, natural laws are in fact artificial laws, made by man to ensure the most efficient and safe means for the satisfaction of his interests.

Cruz Prados correctly interprets Hobbes' term "natural" to refer to the laws of nature; it does not have the same criterion nor the same meaning when it applies to nature in general. "To say that law belongs to nature means that what is natural -impulse without order- is subjected by it to a rule. This regulation is the work of reason, which only offers the capacity to control or dominate. The rationalisation of nature is therefore, an extrinsic rationalisation which doesn't find in nature its foundation, but only the material on which to work"³⁵.

These laws of nature are not laws in a proper sense. They estimate our greatest interest and are only followed by the personal benefit derived from them. They are mere conditional precepts: their fulfilment depending only on my putative interest³⁶ in maintaining the state.

The subjectivity of Hobbes' concept of the condition of nature, linked with Hobbes' nominalism and ethical scepticism, demands the construction of an artificial order, where civil laws are established based on an original agreement. By the authority who holds the sovereign power, they are transformed into the measure of all actions establishing what is good or evil, just or unjust, in a con-

³⁴ Watkins, Op. Cit., p.113

³⁵ Cruz Prados, *La sociedad como artificio- El pensamiento político de Hobbes*, EUNSA, Pamplona, 1986, p.137

³⁶ Cf. E. W. III, p.147: "These dictates of reason, men used to call by name of laws, but improperly: for they are but conclusions, or theorems concerning what conduceth to the conservation and defence of themselves; whereas law properly, is the word of him, that by right hath command over others".

Cf. E. W. III, p.145: "The laws of nature oblige in *foro interno*; that is to say, they bind to a desire they should take place; but in *foro externo*, that in to the putting them in act, not always"

³⁷ Cf. Watkins, Op. Cit., p. 110-111

Cf. E. W. IV, p.225: "In the state of nature, where every man is his own judge, and differeth from others concerning the names and appellations of things, and from those differences arise quarrels, and breach of peace, it was necessary there should be a common measure of all things that might fall in controversy; as for example: of what is to be called right, what good, what virtue, what much, what little, what *meum* and *tuum*. For in these things private judgments may differ, and beget controversy. This common measure, some say is right reason, with which I should consent, if there were any such things to be found or known in *rerum natura*. But commonly they that call for right reason to decide any controversy, do mean their own. But this is certain, seeing right reason is not existent, the reason of some man, or men, must supply the place thereof, and that man, or men is he or they, that have the sovereign power, as hath been already proved, and consequently the civil laws are to all subjects the measure of their actions, whereby to determine, whether they be right or wrong, profitable or unprofitable, virtuous or vicious".

dition compelling with coercive force promise keeping; this in order to guarantee self-preservation³⁷.

Thus, morality becomes an artificial order, and both ethics and politics are transformed into what is tantamount to “a priori” demonstrative sciences because they study an artificial order whose principles are established by man himself³⁸.

³⁸ Cf. O. L. II, p.94: “Praeterea politica et ethica, id est scientia *justi et injusti, aequi et iniqui*, demonstrari a priori potest; propterea quod principia, quibus *justum et aequum* et contra; *injustum et iniquum*, quid sint, cognoscitur, id est, justitiae causas, nimirum leges et pacta, ipsi fecimus. Nam ante pacta et leges conditas, nulla neque justitia neque injustitia, neque boni, neque mali publici natura erat inter homines, magis inter bestias”.

It is worth mentioning that Hobbes does not keep to the traditional concept of *a priori* demonstration. A few paragraphs before the quoted text such proof is referred to thus: “Itaque earum tantum rerum scientia per demonstrationem illam a priori hominibus concessa est, quarum generatio dependet *ab ipsorum hominum arbitrio*”. And this notion is also applied to the geometry in so far as “generationesque figurarum ex nostro dependeant arbitrio...Itaque ad hanc rem, quod figuras nos ipsi creamus, contingit geometriam haberi et esse demonstrabilem”. (O. L. II, p.92-93) See article “Naturaleza y Ética en Hobbes y Tomás de Aquino”, *Sapientia*, Vol XLIII, N° 167-168, p.137.