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## PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF THOMAS HOBBS

Hobbes formulates his task as a description of the artificial man, the great Leviathan, also called *civitas*. In this respect he considers: (1) “*Matter* thereof, and the *Artificer*” (2) “*How*, and by what *Covenants* it is made”; (3) “what is a *Christian Common-wealth*”; (4) “what is the *Kingdom of Darkness*”.<sup>1</sup> To solve the first problem, says Hobbes, the maker of the artificial man, the natural one, should read in himself. Moreover, who is “to govern a whole Nation, must read in himself, not this, or that particular man, but Man-kind”. The philosopher adds that “this kind of doctrine admitteth no other demonstration”.<sup>2</sup>

However, the proper text of *Leviathan* begins with the sensory perception. “(...) there is no conception in a mans mind, which hath not at first, totally, (or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of Sense.”<sup>3</sup> Sensory perceptions are reactions of sensory organs to external pressures: the motion of

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<sup>1</sup> *Leviathan*, “Introduction”, p. 10 [EW3, x]. *Leviathan* is quoted after: *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1991. For all Hobbes’ works, we indicate the part, the chapter, and if needed the paragraph. The location in Molesworth’s edition (*The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, ed. William Molesworth, John Bohn, London 1839–45) is given in square brackets, the Arabic number indicating the volume.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit., “Introduction”, p. 11 [EW3, xii].

<sup>3</sup> *Leviathan*, I.1., p. [EW3, 1]. We are not considering the foundational problems of the Hobbes’ system which is commonly classified as “materialism”. It was already noticed (e.g. by Mary Whiton Calkins *The Persistent Problems of Philosophy: An Introduction to Metaphysics Through the Study of Modern Systems*, Macmillan, New York 1907, p. 64–69), that his theory of space, and consequently of bodies – is “idealistic” or even “phenomenalistic”. Hobbes based his concept of body on the concept of extension which in turn is related to ideal, not real, space. See our *Od materii Świata do materii Państwa. Z filozofii Tomasza Hobbesa* [The Stuff of the Universe and the Matter of the State: Essays on Hobbes] Universitas, Cracow 2000, Ch. III.5. A recent paper on extension in Hobbes: Robert Pasnau “Mind and Extension (Descartes, Hobbes, More)”, (in:) Henrik Lagerlund (ed.) *Forming The Mind: Essays on the Internal Senses and the Mind/Body Problem from Avicenna to the Medical Enlightenment*, Springer, Dordrecht 2007, p. 285–289.

external matter is first *impressed*, and then *expressed* as the motions inside our bodies.<sup>4</sup> Man, like other animals displays two types of motion: lifelong vegetative (as we can guess it is initiated in the embryonic stage), and deliberate, starting with fancies, that is diminishing traces of sensory perceptions. A man is a body in dual motion, one received from the mother's body, the second starting from imperceptible movements caused by external pressures. Consciously, or not, we are causing movements in our environment, and our deliberate actions are sums of our "Desires, Aversions, Hopes and Fears",<sup>5</sup> thus some internal movements. The process of summing up is called deliberation, and the sum itself, namely the act of volition "*is the last Appetite in Deliberating.*"<sup>6</sup> And so we are 'determined':

(...) A FREE-MAN, is he that, in those things, which by his strength and wit he is able to do, is not hindered to doe what he has a will to. But when the words *Free*, and *Liberty* are applied to any thing but *Bodies*, they are abused; for that which is not subject to Motion is not to subject to Impediment (...).<sup>7</sup>

Further:

*Liberty*, and *Necessity* are consistent; as in the water that hath not only *liberty*, but a *necessity* of descending by the Channel; so likewise in the Actions which men voluntarily doe: which, because they proceed their will, proceed from *liberty*; and yet because every act of mans will, and every desire, and inclination proceedeth from some cause, and that from another cause, in a continuall chaine (whose first link is in the hand of God the first of all causes), they proceed from *necessity*.<sup>8</sup>

It is difficult to comment upon this succinct phrase not being involved in the centuries-old argument over free will, in which the quoted passage figures prominently.<sup>9</sup> Thus we only raise two points. Firstly, "that series of thoughts which is called *deliberation*"<sup>10</sup> occurs in other animals, too. Hobbes would probably agree that humans are distinguished not by the character of determination of their acts but by the illusion of free will, which in turn

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<sup>4</sup> *Leviathan*, I.1., p. 13–14 [EW3, 1–2].

<sup>5</sup> Op. cit., I.6., p. 44 [EW3, 47].

<sup>6</sup> Op. cit., I.6., p. 45 [EW3, 49], also *De Corpore*, IV.25.13. [EW1, 409].

<sup>7</sup> Op. cit., II.21., p. 146 [EW3, 196–197].

<sup>8</sup> Loc. cit. [EW3, 197–198]; this is determinism classified as "ontological".

<sup>9</sup> E.g. Joseph Rickaby, *Free Will and Four English Philosophers (Hobbes, Locke, Hume and Mill)*, Burns & Oates, London 1906.

<sup>10</sup> *De Corpore*, IV.25.13. [EW1, 408].

stems from being a spectator of deliberations terminating in decisions. The spectator must be completely passive,<sup>11</sup> as any attempt to change “the last appetite in deliberating” would itself mean some internal movement thus being included into the combination of movements resulting in action. That by the way resembles contemporary arguments over the mind-body relation.

Secondly, the Malmesburian is routinely labeled as “compatibilist”, namely an adherent of compatibility between free will and universally binding natural laws.<sup>12</sup> Whereas Hobbes wholly embeds volition the universal causal net, which in turn alters the meaning of ‘compatibility’. He also lists free will as one of “absurdities” or “words were without meaning” like round quadrangle, accidents of bread in cheese (maliciously alluding to Transubstantiation) and a free subject.<sup>13</sup> The issue is not resolved by identifying two oppositions and two respective notions of (in)determination of actions: (a) universal determination vs. universal indetermination; (b) external (in)determination vs. internal (in)determination. It is clear that in the first sense (a) all actions are subject to universal determination. In the sense (b) all animal actions are internally determined. As there is no causal border between the outside and inside matter, then internal determination is merely a conditionally delimited part of the universal causal net.

So we have summarised Hobbesian determinism which is complemented by selfishness,<sup>14</sup> already noticeable in children.<sup>15</sup> Hobbesian selfishness is

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<sup>11</sup> In a different context, it has been remarked upon by Leszek Kołakowski who wrote that in the framework of mechanistic determinism action is not influenced by self-knowledge – see his “Determinizm i odpowiedzialność” [Determinism and Responsibility], (in:) Janina Kotarbińska & al. (ed.) *Fragmety filozoficzne. Seria druga*, PWN, Warsaw 1959, p. 38.

<sup>12</sup> See e.g. John Martin Fischer “Compatibilism”, (in:) idem & al., *Four Views on Free Will*, Blackwell, Oxford 2007, p. 44–84; Ishtiyaque Haji “Compatibilist Views of Freedom and Responsibility”, (in:) Robert Kane (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2002, p. 202–227.

<sup>13</sup> *Leviathan*, I.5, p. 34 [EW3, 32–33].

<sup>14</sup> Some claim that Hobbes did not hold the universal validity of egoism *sensu strito*, e.g. that all men were solely motivated by selfishness; see Bernard Gert “Hobbes’s Psychology”, (in:) Tom Sorell (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996, p. 166–167. Gert tries to prove that in a peculiar manner, pointing a passage in *Leviathan* (I.6.) where Hobbes listed names and definitions of non-selfish traits. We do not deny that ‘selfishness’ should be carefully defined, especially if philosophers seemingly defending universal selfishness are concerned. The same is valid for other abused terms taken from common ethical discourse.

<sup>15</sup> “Unlesse you give Children everything they aske for, they are peevish, and cry, I, and strike their Parents sometimes, and all this they have from nature.”; *De Cive*, “The Authors Preface to the Reader”, p. 33 [EW2, xvi]. *De Cive* is quoted after the Clarendon edition: *De Cive: The English Version*, ed. Howard Warrender, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1983.

a process parallel to the mechanical determination. It is a continual passage from one desire to another. Achieving one item leads to appetite for the next one.<sup>16</sup> However, such a comparison between physical and ethical determinism neglects the constant desire of “power after power”<sup>17</sup> in the course of acquiring more and more goods which are defined according to the individual.<sup>18</sup> The Hobbesian ethics was justly classified as *possessive individualism*.<sup>19</sup>

The merger of selfishness and imagination should give rise to unselfish behaviour. E.g. compassion arises from one’s imagining that something like may befall himself. John Aubrey reported:

He was very charitable (...) One time, I remember, goeing in the Strand, a poor and infirme old man craved his almes. He, beholding him with eies of pittie and compassion, putt his hand in his pocket, and gave him 6d. Sayd a divine (...) that stood by – ‘Would you have donne this, if it had not been Christ’s command?’ – ‘Yea,’ sayd he. – ‘Why?’ – quoth the other. – ‘Because,’ sayd he, ‘I was in paine to consider the miserable condition of the old man; and now my almes, giving him some reliefe, doth also ease me.’<sup>20</sup>

And Hobbes himself:

*Griefe*, for the Calamity of another is PITY; and ariseth from the imagination that the like calamity may befall himselfe (...).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> “Felicity is a continuall progresse of the desire from one object to another; the attaining of the former, being still but the way to the later. The cause whereof is, That the 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.” – *Leviathan*, I.11., p. 70 [EW3, 85].

<sup>17</sup> “So that in the first place, I put for a generall inclination of all mankind, a perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power, that ceaseth only in Death.” Loc. cit.

<sup>18</sup> “But whatsoever is the object of any mans Appetite or Desire; that is it, which he for his part calleth *Good*; And the object of his Hate, and Aversion, *Evill*; And of his Contempt, *Vile* and *Inconsiderable*. For these words (...) are ever used with relation to the person that useth them: There being nothing simply and absolutely so; nor any common Rule of Good and Evill, to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves (...)”, *Leviathan*, I.6., p. 39 [EW3, 41].

<sup>19</sup> Crawford Brough Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1962. The name is accurate, however, Macpherson, a convinced Socialist, has identified *possessive individualism* with the main current of English political doctrine linked by a claim that people are sole proprietors of their capacities, which in turn are exchanged (*possessive market*), without any further obligations to the society as a whole (*The Political Theory...*, p. 3). On the one hand, Hobbes has a place in the development towards 19<sup>th</sup>-century liberalism, on the other, Hobbesian contract is *not* a free-market deal. Macpherson himself admits that the whole Hobbesian doctrine was not needed by the English possessing class, they “had come to terms with the more ambiguous, and more agreeable, doctrine of Locke” (*The Political Theory...*, p. 106).

<sup>20</sup> *Aubrey’s Brief Lives*, vol. 1., ed. Andrew Clark, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1898, p. 352.

<sup>21</sup> *Leviathan*, I.6., p. 43–44 [EW3, 47].

In a similar way, so by the lack of a potential self-reference of a calamity, he explains cruelty. Thus he does not recognise a possibility of unselfish wrongdoing – malice:

*Contempt*, or little sense of the calamity of others, is that which men call CRUELTY; proceeding from Security of their own fortune. For, that any man should take pleasure in other mens great harmes, without other end of his own, I do not conceive it possible.<sup>22</sup>

Such an explanation by a deficiency of imagination is obviously unsatisfactory (not only because a cruel phantasm could be pleasurable), however it says something about the Malmesburian.

The link between determinism and selfishness is interesting, all the more so as determinism comes in *Leviathan* first, then we have an interluding analysis of religion (Ch. XII) which is considered as specifically human form of the fear of the future. Human felicity depends on knowledge “of the Beginning of things”<sup>23</sup> – things past and future. This is the seed of religion present “but in Man onely.”<sup>24</sup> Other animals enjoy supplying their everyday needs. In the case of humans, the curiosity about causes leads from the absence of visible agents to fancying invisible ones.

Only in Ch. XIII we have the (in)famous Hobbesian inference<sup>25</sup> – justification of social contract and bowing to the sovereign due to universal selfishness, and the claim that “Naturall Condition of Mankind, as concerning their Felicity, and Misery”<sup>26</sup> is war of every man against every man:

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 Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man, against every man. For WARRE consisteth not in Battell onely, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the Will to contend by Battell is sufficiently known (...).<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>23</sup> *Leviathan*, I.12., p. 75 [EW3, 94], the analysis of religion starts already at the end of I.11.

<sup>24</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>25</sup> Of course, a ‘inference’ *sensu largo*.

<sup>26</sup> The title of Ch. 13.

<sup>27</sup> *Leviathan*, I.13., p. 88 [EW3, 112–113], also *De Cive*, I.1.2–12.

Here, the question of human liberty resurfaces, namely how liberty is at all possible after transferring own rights to the sovereign. In other words, how to reconcile liberty of subjects with sovereign rights?<sup>28</sup>

Hobbes presents the condition of men who entered the contract just after the above-quoted statement liberty in general. It is other well known passage about “Artificiall Man, which we call a Common-wealth” and “Artificiall Chains, called *Civill Lawes*”.<sup>29</sup> The artificial chains are fragile, being protected rather by the imagined perils of breaking them, nonetheless, only the chains enable us to speak about the freedom of the subject. Similarly, the freedom of man as a natural being is possible only in the context of natural laws. So the freedom of a social man is possible only when the laws are silent.<sup>30</sup> As we already know, human freedom consists of performing an act without external limitations of any kind.

Hobbesian physics of passions is an internal portrait of man, the external image being taken from the careful survey of the state of nature. An actual reconciliation of both is to be achieved by a comparison of two kinds of motive tendency (*conatus, endeavour*): mechanical and biological. A kind of declarative and taxonomic reconciliation indeed takes place at the beginning of *Leviathan*. The table of branches of science (I.9.), simply has ethics in the compartment of physics. “Tendency” should not be taken literally, as in both cases Hobbes means not a potentiality but an actual, however minimal, motion.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> The question can be formulated as the following trilemma: (1) “the monarch alone of all the inhabitants of the realm is in any sense free”; (2) “the monarch is more free than his subjects”; (3) “monarch and subjects are equally free” – Rickaby, *Free Will...*, op. cit., p. 44. We agree with Rickaby, that the last statement (3) is what Hobbes meant. Rickaby adds that there is no use arguing the point, giving an appropriate example: “If anyone is pleased to say that a Russian goes to Siberia because he likes to go wherever the Tsar may send him, we can afford to let that whimsical thinker enjoy his own humour without contradiction”. (Loc. cit.)

<sup>29</sup> *Leviathan*, II.21, p. 147 [EW3, 198].

<sup>30</sup> Op. cit., II.21, p. 152–153 [EW3, 206].

<sup>31</sup> “(...) I define ENDEAVOUR to be motion made in less space and time than can be given (...) motion made through the length of a point, and in an instant or a point of time. (...) by a point is not to be understood that which has no quantity, or which cannot by any means be divided; for there is no such thing in nature; but that, whose quantity is not at all considered, that is, neither quantity nor any part is computed in demonstration; so that a point is not to be taken for an indivisible, but for an undivided thing; as also an instant is to be taken for an undivided, and not for an indivisible time. In like manner, endeavour is to be conceived as motion; but so as that neither the quantity of time in which, not of the line in which it is made, may in demonstration be at all brought into comparison with the quantity of that time, or of that line of which it is a part.” – *De Corpore*, III.15.2. [EW1, 206].

Endeavour is understood as mechanical (M) or biological (B):

$conatus_M$	$\supset$	$conatus_B$
pertaining to all bodies		pertaining to animate bodies
motive tendency of undivided parts of matter in general		motive tendency of indivisible parts of living matter

Thus  $conatus_M$  denotes small movements occurring in all matter. The category of  $conatus_B$  is distinguished according to the fact that some bodies, the animate ones, can reflect other things: “Of all the phenomena or appearances which are near us, the most admirable is apparition itself, *το φαίνεσται*; namely, that some natural bodies have in themselves the patterns almost of all things, and others none at all.”<sup>32</sup> The reflections are then remembered, and not as passive imprints but as durable movements in sensory organs. Biological  $conatus$  appears as a distinctive form of memory reaction. The concept of memory as durable excitement was clearly much ahead of Hobbes’ time.<sup>33</sup>

$Conatus_B$  at once characterises living beings, and separates them. Therefore it serves as a dynamic principle of individuation. Due to its fundamental role in emergence of perceptions it is the basis of phantasms and desires, too. According to what we said about Hobbesian determinism, we could set up a scheme analogous to the scheme of endeavours, including physical (mechanical), animal, and human determination.

$determinism_M$	$\supset$	$determinism_A$	$\supset$	$determinism_H$
all bodies		animal bodies		human bodies
Universal causal network bifurcating from the Prime Mover		chain of desires		chain of desires subject to the principle of maximisation of power

On the basis of both Hobbes’ texts,<sup>34</sup> and similar accounts of contempo-

<sup>32</sup> Op. cit., IV.25.1. [EW1, 389].

<sup>33</sup> Op. cit., IV.25.5. [EW1, 393–4]. Importance of this statement has been acknowledged eg. by Gert – “Hobbes’s Psychology”, op. cit., p. 157–8. He writes “Many of Hobbes’s philosophical views about psychology appear quite up-to-date”. Hobbes made another pioneering remark, namely equating reasoning with calculation (*De Corpore*, I.1.2. [EW1, 3]), thereby predating Leibniz and mathematical logic. Of course, he was not able to say more, so Father Bocheński rightly describes his remark as “rather *jeu d’esprit* of a dilettante than a theory of mathematical logic”, mixed with poor “mathematicism” (*A History of Formal Logic*, tr. I. Thomas, Chelsea Publ. Co., New York, 1970, §38.04.).

<sup>34</sup> Especially interesting is the passage from the Hobbes-Bramhall dispute where Hobbes points to the cleverness of animals: “For bees and spiders, if my Lord Bishop had had so little to do as to be a spectator of their actions, he would have confessed not only election but also art, prudence, and policy in them very near equal to that of mankind. Of bees, Aristotle says their life is civil.” – *Of Liberty and Necessity*, (in:) *Hobbes and Bramhall on Liberty and Necessity*, ed. Vere Chappell, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1999, p. 19 [EW4, 244–245].

rary philosophers and naturalists, we could argue whether there is any strict limit between determinism<sub>A</sub> and determinism<sub>H</sub>, however, it is another topic. We only emphasise that any attempt to form a subclass of determinism<sub>H</sub>, namely determinism<sub>S</sub> (social) would be at best conditional due to the weakness of social contract. The M, A, and H-series of determination are extended infinitely by nature. Determination of type S, or self-perpetuating sovereign,<sup>35</sup> is impossible in the long run.

Hobbes knows no permanently socialised human being, only natural men displaying temporarily limited or directed movements. The universal war continually starts in human body and can be silenced only for a short time.<sup>36</sup> We know this not only because Leviathan is mortal – while there is life there is internal movement as we are constantly exposed to external pressures. In fact social determination is precluded by the natural<sup>37</sup> one acting like noise, despite the philosopher's claim that natural determination somehow gives rise to the social. The only way to set up the eternal peace would be to transform humans into plants or to throw them into vacuum.

And this is both the glory and the poverty of the Hobbesian physical anthropology.

## Summary

The construction of Hobbesian anthropology is sketched with emphasis on these points of his philosophy which seem inconclusive. We focus on: determinism, the notion of conatus/endeavour (which in turn splits into a purely mechanic kind, and a biological one), and on the duality of an-

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<sup>35</sup> *Self-perpetuating sovereign*, another Macpherson's term – *The Political Theory...*, op. cit., p. 90–95.

<sup>36</sup> “Yet the most sudden, and rough bustling in of a new Truth that can be, does never breake the Peace, but only sometimes awake the Warre. For those men that are so remissely governed, that they dare take up Armes, to defend, or introduce an Opinion, are still in Warre; and their condition not Peace, but only a Cessation of Armes for feare of one another (...)", *Leviathan*, II.18., p. 125 [EW3, 164–165]. The remark concerning the dormant war is placed inside a clear recommendation to subject science and education to the sovereign – or to introduce and to willingly accept political correctness: “For Doctrine repugnant to Peace can no more be True, than Peace and Concord can be against the Law of Nature.” (*Leviathan*, II.18., p. 125 [EW3, 164]).

<sup>37</sup> The adjective “natural” is ambiguous. It can denote something “inborn”, as well as something “calculated”. The latter sense occurs in the case of some twenty rules called “laws of nature” in *Leviathan* I.14.–15. and in *De Cive* I.2–3. “Therefore the *Law of Nature*, that I may define it, is the Dictate of right Reason, conversant about those things which are either to be done, or omitted for the constant preservation of Life, and Members as much as it lyes.” – *De Cive*, I.2.1., p. 52 [EW2, 16].

thropological description in Hobbes. In fact, the philosopher attempted to portray human beings both from inside and from outside. The “inside” view equals to a physics of passions which are in turn rooted in biological conatus (*De Corpore*, Ch. IV.25.), the “outside” view is the grim landscape of the state of nature and then the famous “deduction” of the need of absolute power (*Leviathan*, Ch. XII). In fact there is no other man than the natural born egoist, as the Hobbesian citizen is simply a tamed beast.