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HUME'S *TREATISE* AND HOBBS'S *THE ELEMENTS OF LAW*

BY PAUL RUSSELL

"NO ENGLISH author in that age was more celebrated both at home and abroad, than Hobbes: In our time, he is much neglected . . ."

—David Hume

The central thesis of this paper is that the scope and structure of Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*¹ is modelled, or planned, after that of Hobbes's *The Elements of Law* and that in this respect there exists an important and unique relationship between these works. This relationship is of some importance for at least two reasons. First, it is indicative of the fundamental similarity between Hobbes's and Hume's project of the study of man. Second, and what is more important, by recognizing this relationship between Hume's and Hobbes's works we can come to appreciate the unity of the project of the *Treatise* itself. My discussion will proceed in three stages. In section I present the evidence for my central thesis. In the second section I shall consider why Hume does not, as one might expect, acknowledge this important debt to Hobbes in the Introduction to the *Treatise* or in the *Abstract*. Finally, in the third section I shall note a few points of some importance to the understanding of Hume's philosophy which this relationship between Hobbes's and Hume's work touches upon.

I. Hume begins the *Abstract* as follows: "This book [i.e. the *Treatise*] seems to be written upon the same plan with several other works that have had great vogue of late years in England." (p. 5) It would seem reasonable to assume that the works which Hume has in mind are those produced by the "late philosophers" whom he proceeds to name in the following paragraph: Locke, Shaftesbury, Mandeville, Hutcheson, and Butler.² This suggestion seems particularly plausible given the obvious influence which these authors had in shaping the central doctrines of

¹ References to *A Treatise of Human Nature* (T) are to the Selby-Bigge edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888). References to the *Enquiries* are to the Selby-Bigge edition; 3rd edition revised by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). References to *An Abstract of A Treatise of Human Nature* are to the edition of J.M. Keynes and P. Sraffa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938). References to Hobbes's works are to the *English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, edited by Sir William Molesworth, 11 vols., (London, 1839-45). Abbreviated as E.W.; thus E.W. I,20 refers to: English Works, volume one, page twenty. I will also refer to F. Tönnies' edition of *The Elements of Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927). (Abbreviated as *Elements*.)

² These are the same philosophers to whom Hume refers in the Introduction of the *Treatise* as putting "the science of man on a new footing" (*viz.* the experimental method).

Hume's philosophy. However, when one turns to the works of these authors it is immediately apparent that there is no obvious similarity between their various "plans" and the "plan" of the *Treatise*.

There is, nevertheless, on closer examination, one author whom Hume does not mention in this context whose works are, I suggest, the model for the plan of the *Treatise*. Few scholars, I think, would contest the claim that Hume was familiar with Hobbes's works and greatly influenced by them (although it must be said that some Hume scholars write as if this were not the case). A great deal of evidence internal to Hume's writings can be cited to prove this. Hume explicitly refers to the *Leviathan* at II,iii,1 (T,402). (See also the second *Enquiry* [189n and 296].) He refers to an argument of Hobbes's at I,iii,3 (T,80) which can be found in *Of Liberty and Necessity* (E.W. IV,276; see also E.W. I,115) and he uses the title of this treatise for the appropriate sections of the *Treatise* and first *Enquiry*.³ Somewhat more detailed evidence can also be found. For example, very early on in the *Treatise* Hume uses an example which he "borrows" from Hobbes (more often than not Hume's examples are "borrowed" in this way):

I have seen Paris; but shall I affirm I can form such an idea of that city, as will perfectly represent all its streets and houses in their real and just proportions? (T,3)

Compare this with Hobbes's example in *Human Nature* (i.e., the first part of *The Elements of Law*):

. . . a man that is present in a foreign city, seeth not only whole streets, but can also distinguish particular houses, and parts of houses; but departed thence, he cannot distinguish them so particularly in his mind as he did. . . . (E.W. IV,12-3; see also E.W. III,5)

Some of the most important of those observations which Hume uses in his account of the influence of experience upon the vivacity and association of our ideas can be found in Hobbes's discussion of sense, the imagination and the "train of imaginations".⁴ Many other passages can

³ Hume's discussion of liberty and necessity is widely recognized as being very much influenced by Hobbes. Ironically enough I have argued elsewhere that Hume's views on this subject, while certainly greatly influenced by Hobbes, are nevertheless significantly different. See my "On the Naturalism of Hume's 'Reconciling Project' ", *Mind*, 92 (1983), 593-600.

⁴ The importance of Hobbes's views in shaping Hume's account of the association of ideas and causation is not always recognized. See, for example, Norman Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume* (London, 1941). Nowhere is Hobbes's anticipation of central tenets of Hume's philosophy more evident than in his account of "experience", "experiments", "expectation", "conjecture", "signs", and "prudence". On this subject see R.W. Connon's D. Phil. thesis for Oxford University, 1976: "An Examination of Some Central Doctrines of Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* in Light of Other Hume Material which Bears upon the Interpretation of that Work". On this subject see also

be found which would serve to confirm Hume's close reading of Hobbes's works.⁵

Hobbes had written *The Elements of Law* by 1640 and this work was published in 1650 in the form of the treatises *Human Nature* and *De Corpore Politico*.⁶ These two treatises, with *Of Liberty and Necessity*, were eventually published together in the form of Hobbes's *Tripos*.⁷ The whole of *Human Nature* and the first of the two parts of *De Corpore Politico* together formed the first of the two parts of *The Elements of Law*. The first part of *The Elements of Law* was concerned with men as "persons natural" and the second was concerned with men as a "body politic". The first of the four parts of the *Leviathan*, entitled "Of Man", covers much the same ground as Part I of *The Elements of Law*. Most of the important features of the second part of the *Leviathan* are anticipated in the second part of *The Elements of Law*.⁸

At the beginning of the second part of *De Corpore Politico* Hobbes summarizes the scope and structure of his two treatises (i.e. *The Elements of Law*):

John Laird, *Hume's Philosophy of Human Nature* (London: Methuen, 1932), esp. Chps. 2 and 4.

⁵ There is also a large amount of evidence external to Hume's writings which can be cited in addition to the internal evidence mentioned above. In 1815, for example, Dugald Stewart noted that Hobbes's "*Treatise of Human Nature*" had "plainly been studied with the utmost care both by Locke and Hume". *The Collected Works of Dugald Stewart*, ed. by Sir. William Hamilton (Edinburgh, 1854), I, 83-84—my emphasis. Indeed it would be most surprising if Hobbes's writings were not "studied with the utmost care" by Hume, given that Hobbes was widely recognized as one of the greatest philosophers of the seventeenth-century. (Bayle, for example, begins his *Dictionary* article on Hobbes by describing him as "one of the greatest geniuses of the XVIIth century". *Selections from Bayle's Dictionary*, ed. by E.A. Beller and M. duP. Lee, Jr. (Princeton, 1952), 125-42.) Further, a variety of philosophers whom Hume read carefully—e.g. Locke, Shaftesbury, Pufendorf, Clarke, Hutcheson, and Butler—frequently refer, either explicitly or implicitly, to Hobbes's work.

⁶ *Human Nature* (London, 1650), second edition 1651, *De Corpore Politico* (London, 1650). Ferdinand Tönnies suggests that it was Seth Ward who was the "friend" who published *Elements* in the form of the two separate treatises in 1650 while Hobbes was in exile in Paris. Tönnies also notes that Hobbes's original manuscript of 1640 was one unified work and that its unity was concealed by the format of the two separate treatises. (Nevertheless it should be noted that three passages in *De Corpore Politico* explicitly refer to the connection between these two treatises and also that their connections would be quite obvious to anyone who was familiar with the *Leviathan*.) Further, Tönnies notes "that the text of the printed editions of the work (of which several appeared before the Molesworth edition. . .) has a great many errors and omissions. . .". For this reason Tönnies decided to publish "a new edition of the entire work, in its original form" based upon one of the original manuscripts of 1640.

⁷ Hobbes's *Tripos* (London, 1684).

⁸ Of course, this is not to deny that there are also some important differences between these two works. On this see, for example, F.S. McNeilly, *The Anatomy of Leviathan* (London, 1968).

That *Treatise of Human Nature*, which was formerly printed, hath been wholly spent in the consideration of the natural power, and the natural estate of man, namely, of his cognition and passions in the first eleven chapters, and how from thence proceed his actions; in the twelfth, how men know one another's minds: in the last, in what estate men's passions set them. In the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth chapters of the former Part of this Treatise (sc. *De Corpore Politico*) is showed, what estate they are directed unto by the dictates of reason, that is to say, what be the principal articles of the law of nature. And lastly, how a multitude of persons natural, are united by covenants into one person civil, or body politic. In this part therefore shall be considered, the nature of a body politic, and the laws thereof, otherwise called civil laws. (E.W. IV,125-6)

What is striking about this passage is not only that it contains the very title of Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*⁹ but that it would also serve as a reasonable outline of the salient features of that work. In my view this is no coincidence for this passage is describing the "plan" after which Hume's *Treatise* is modelled.¹⁰

The similarity between the plans of these two works can be illustrated diagrammatically.¹¹

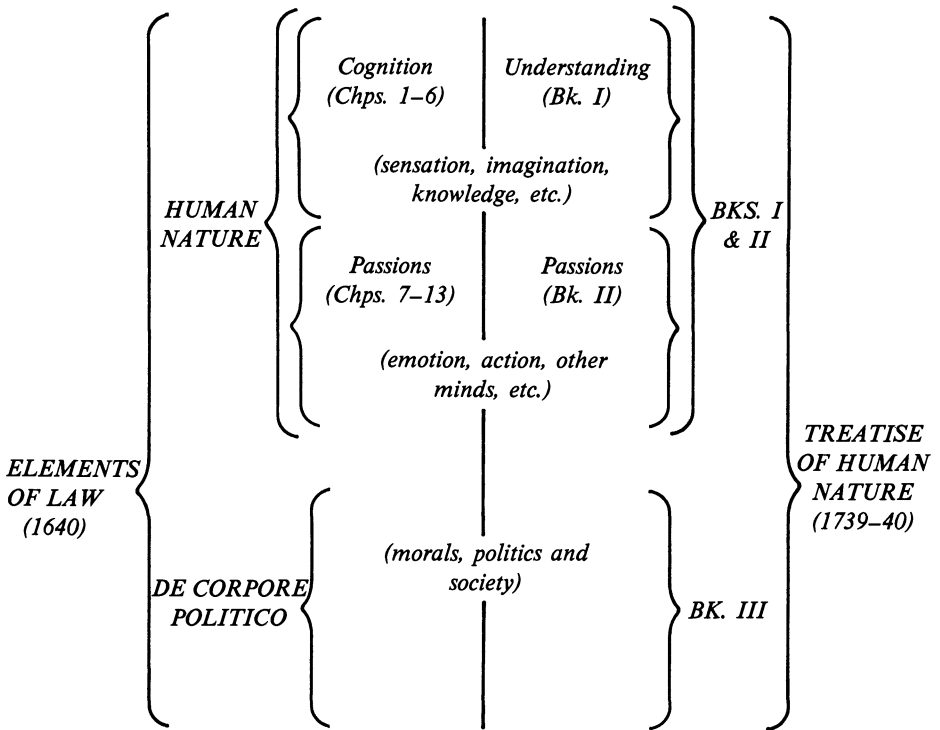
The diagram makes quite clear how the general scope and structure of these two works correspond to one another. We find that Hume's major concerns in Book I—i.e. sensation, imagination and knowledge (these being the parts of Book I that are largely preserved in the first *Enquiry*)—are Hobbes's major concern in the first part of *Human Nature*.¹² Similarly, Hume's discussion of the passions in Book II—i.e. his

⁹ To my knowledge D.D. Raphael is the only commentator who has noted the connection between the titles of Hobbes's and Hume's works. See his preface to *British Moralists 1650-1800* (Oxford, 1969), v.

¹⁰ It is, for two reasons, important to note that Hume would have been familiar with *Elements* in the format of the two treatises as published by Seth Ward rather than the original manuscript of 1640 which was not published until 1889. First, in the original manuscript of 1640 (i.e. Tönnies edition) the references to the "*Treatise of Human Nature*" do not appear. Second, the passage which I have quoted in the text above is one of the flawed passages to which Tönnies refers. For a more accurate version see *Elements*, 83.

¹¹ The parallels between *The Elements of Law* and Hume's *Treatise* which I here outline suggest that in scope and structure Books I and II correspond to *Human Nature* and that Book III corresponds to *De Corpore Politico*. In the "Advertisement to Books I and II" Hume states that "the subject of the understanding and passions make a complete chain of reasoning themselves" (T,xi). Hume published Books I and II separately (in two volumes in 1739) from Book III (published in 1740). This "natural division" in Hume's work follows that which separates *Human Nature* and *De Corpore Politico*.

¹² There is, of course, one very important respect in which Hume's "plan" diverges from that of Hobbes's. Unlike Hobbes (and Locke) Hume offers no lengthy account of language or "speech." However, this divergence can be accounted for. Hobbes argued that both man and "beast" form expectations on the basis of experience and, therefore, "prudence" cannot distinguish man from the animals. Unlike animals, however, man possesses language and is therefore capable of reasoning (i.e. "... the adding and subtracting, of the consequences of general names. . ."). Against this Hume held that "prudence" was a form of reasoning (i.e. probabilistic reasoning). Thus Hume asserts that



account of the different types of passion (how they arise from our primary impressions, how they give rise to action, how we know one another's mind, etc.)—generally corresponds with Hobbes's major concerns in the second part of *Human Nature*. Finally, that which concerns Hume in Book III of the *Treatise* is equally in line with Hobbes's major interests in *De Corpore Politico*. In that work Hobbes discusses in what state estate men's passions put them, what the principal laws of nature are, how "a multitude of persons natural" are united into "one person civil", and the nature of the body politic. Hume, of course, distinguishes between the natural and artificial virtues and vices and therefore offers a more complex account of the foundations of morals than Hobbes does. Nevertheless his discussion of the artificial virtues and vices (e.g., justice and injustice), which is in several respects quite Hobbesian, clearly accords with the

many of the actions of animals "proceed from a reasoning, that is not itself different, nor founded on different principles, from that which appears in human nature" (T,177). These considerations account for the fact that Hume diverges from Hobbes's plan as regards Hobbes' interest in language. For as probabilistic reasoning is Hume's greatest concern in the *Treatise* (cf. *Abstract*, 7-8) and language plays little or no role in his account of such reasoning no such study is required.

subject matter of *De Corpore Politico*. Thus Hume covers such topics as property, promises (i.e., “contracts”), the origin of government, the source of allegiance, the right of rebellion etc.—thereby following the general plan of Hobbes’s works.

It is true, of course, that these similarities in scope and structure do not by themselves prove that Hume consciously modeled the *Treatise* after the plan of Hobbes’s works. Accordingly, the determined skeptic may remain unconvinced. Nevertheless, it is, I think, clear that such a position is rendered most unreasonable in light of the fact that: (1) Hume was obviously familiar with Hobbes’s works; (2) Hume explicitly acknowledges that the plan of the *Treatise* is not unique; and (3) Hume’s work shares the relevant title with Hobbes’s work. It seems most implausible to suggest that these parallels between the plan of Hobbes’s *The Elements of Law* and Hume’s *Treatise* should be viewed simply as mere coincidence. The only further evidence, it seems, which would satisfy the demands of the determined skeptic would be explicit acknowledgment by Hume that the *Treatise* was modelled after Hobbes’s works. I shall show below that Hume had good reason for avoiding any such explicit acknowledgment of debt to Hobbes.

In short, the overall scope and structure of Hume’s *Treatise* is very similar to that found in Hobbes’s works. The *Treatise* follows the general “plan” of *The Elements of Law* and the first two parts of the *Leviathan* more closely than it does any work by those “late philosophers in England” whom Hume mentions in the *Abstract* and the Introduction to his *Treatise*. It would seem, therefore, that in this respect the *Treatise* has a unique relationship with Hobbes’s works. While the works of the “late philosophers”—and others, such as Bayle, Berkeley, Grotius, Malebranche, Newton, and Pufendorf—certainly had a profound influence on the content and central doctrines of the *Treatise* the broad plan of Hobbes’s works is nevertheless that which the *Treatise* follows most closely. It is not, therefore, entirely surprising that Hume “borrows” his title from Hobbes.

II. The above discussion raises two puzzling and related questions. First, how is it, given that Hobbes and Hume are two of the greatest philosophers in the British tradition, that these important and unique similarities between their works have been overlooked? Second, why is it that Hume does not explicitly acknowledge his debt to Hobbes in the context of the Introduction or the *Abstract*? I will begin by considering the first question. As the discussion develops it should become clear how it is related to the second issue.

There is, I think, no single answer which will explain why these striking structural similarities have been overlooked by so many scholars, but a variety of factors may account for this oddity. Some of these factors have to do with the development of the history of philosophy itself. I shall mention three such factors. First, philosophers, at least in the twentieth century, have tended to focus their attention primarily upon

Hobbes's *magnum opus*, *Leviathan*. While there are, as I have noted, similarities between the plan of the first two parts of the *Leviathan* and the plan of Hume's *Treatise* these similarities are certainly obscured by the larger scope of the *Leviathan* (viz. the lengthy discussion of religion in the third and fourth parts). Second, as I have already briefly noted above, discrepancies between the various editions of *The Elements of Law* may also have obscured the relationship between Hobbes's and Hume's works. Many scholars over the past half-century have referred to Tönnies' unified edition of *The Elements of Law* rather than to the separate editions of *Human Nature* and *De Corpore Politico*. Hume would have been familiar with *The Elements of Law* in the form of the two treatises and the similarities between his work and that of Hobbes's is more obvious if one looks to the separate editions rather than to that of Tönnies unified edition. Third, and perhaps the most important point in the context of recent scholarship, Norman Kemp Smith's much respected and very influential work *The Philosophy of David Hume* may, since its publication in 1941, have misled many scholars into underestimating the importance of Hobbes when studying the origins of Hume's thought. Despite the fact that the whole of the first of the four parts of his book is devoted to a study of "the origins of Hume's philosophy" Kemp Smith does not mention Hobbes once throughout the entire book.¹³

Nevertheless, a more fundamental explanation for the fact that scholars have failed to notice the origins of the plan of the *Treatise* must and can be found. It is, quite simply, that most scholars have been looking for these origins elsewhere. As there is no explicit acknowledgement by Hume to the effect that the plan of the *Treatise* is modelled after that of Hobbes's works there seems to be little reason to turn to these works. Given that Hume does acknowledge his debt to the "late philosophers"—among whom Hobbes is not mentioned—and that Hume had in the context of the Introduction and the *Abstract* a suitable opportunity to acknowledge any important debts to Hobbes, it is quite understandable why Hume scholars have tended, on the basis of this *prima facie* evidence, to bypass Hobbes's works. Clearly, however, we still need some explanation for why it was that Hume avoided any explicit acknowledgment of this debt to Hobbes.¹⁴

I believe that the most plausible explanation for Hume's decision to

¹³ This shortcoming in Kemp Smith's work is shared by Ernest Mossner's (otherwise excellent) biography *The Life of David Hume*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1980). Mossner gives us no information, one way or the other, about the influence of "Hobbism" upon the philosophical development of the young Hume. However, Kemp Smith's contemporary, John Laird, does provide us with some very useful information on this subject. See his *Hume's Philosophy of Human Nature*, *passim* and his *Hobbes* (London, 1934), esp. 268-69.

¹⁴ One commentator has quite recently pointed out that the omission of Hobbes's name from the list of "late philosophers" is, certainly on the face of it, rather puzzling. See Duncan Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics* (Cambridge, England, 1975), 8.

avoid any explicit acknowledgment of Hobbesian influence is that while he no doubt sought "literary fame" he had no desire for "controversy, notoriety, nor martyrdom."¹⁵ Any acknowledged link between the *Treatise* and Hobbes's philosophy would certainly have spelled trouble for Hume. Quentin Skinner has shown that in spite of his reputation Hobbes was widely read in the seventeenth century and that his influence was great. Skinner argues that many writers "who might have felt Hobbes worthy of citation as an authority" may well have refrained from citing him because they had to take into consideration "Hobbes's dangerous reputation."¹⁶ It was, Skinner suggests, "certainly regarded at the time as beyond dispute that amongst those prudent men who would 'scarce simper in favour or allowance' for Hobbes, there were many who were none the less 'Hobbists' for that." Peter Gay has also commented on Hobbes's reputation and intellectual influence at that time. Gay has said that Hobbes "was as notorious in his time as it is possible for a philosopher to be and still escape hanging."¹⁷ At that time, Gay suggests, Hobbes's work "was too great to be ignored but . . . [his] name was too disreputable to be praised."¹⁸ Hobbes's reputation is well summed up by Samuel Mintz:

Hobbes was the *bête noire* of his age. The principal objection to him, the one to which all other criticisms of him can ultimately be reduced, was that he was an atheist, the apostle of infidelity, the "bug-bear of the nation." His doctrines were cited by Parliament as a probable cause of the Great Fire of 1666. His books were banned and publicly burnt, and . . . [his ideas] were the object of more or less continuous hostile criticism from 1650 to 1700.¹⁹

Hobbes's influence certainly extended well into the eighteenth century and it was no doubt felt in the lively intellectual atmosphere of Edinburgh University during Hume's student days.²⁰

¹⁵ The phrase is Mossner's, 325.

¹⁶ Quentin Skinner, "The Context of Hobbes's Theory of Political Obligation," in M. Cranston and R.S. Peters, eds., *Hobbes and Rousseau* (Garden City, N.Y., 1972), 109-42. Also relevant here are W. von Leyden's remarks in his introduction to Locke's *Essays on the Law of Nature* (Oxford, 1954): "The reason why Locke appears elusive whenever he broaches a subject connected with the name of Hobbes are not far to seek. In cases where he agreed with Hobbes and borrowed his views . . . he could not have easily acknowledged his debt for fear of being decried as a Hobbist. In cases where he argued against him, the questions under discussion had won such a notoriety in connexion with the controversies around Hobbes that to mention his name would have been superfluous . . . anyone attempting to study the relation between Locke and Hobbes would have to view it in its proper historical setting, against the seventeenth-century battle against Hobbes." (37-38)

¹⁷ Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, The rise of modern paganism (New York, 1966), 314.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹⁹ Samuel Mintz, *The Hunting of Leviathan* (Cambridge, England, 1962), vii.

²⁰ Dugald Stewart notes that the "opposition to Hobbes" was "not confined to the controversialists of his own times." He continues: "The most eminent moralists and

The climate of intolerance to which Hobbes had been exposed had not sufficiently receded by the time Hume came to publish the *Treatise* to allow favorable references to Hobbes's philosophy to go by without incurring the wrath of influential sections of society. Many of the details of Hume's life can be cited in support of this claim.²¹ For example, Hume's lifelong caution about publishing his views on religion and the various controversies which his philosophical doctrines involved him in attest to the fact that "prudence" in these matters was required.²² Further, Hume's adversaries and critics in such controversies, most notably the Reverend William Wishart and James Beattie, were very quick to note similarities between Hume's *Treatise* and Hobbes's philosophy. Wishart was the probable author of a pamphlet written in 1745 opposing Hume's candidature for the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh University.²³ Wishart accused Hume of striking an even "bolder stroke" than Hobbes as regards some of his views on moral philosophy. The only other philosopher Wishart mentions in this pamphlet is Spinoza—thus associating Hume's philosophy with two infamous "atheists." In reply Hume mentions nearly a dozen philosophers, both ancient and modern, but not Hobbes or Spinoza. Twenty-four years later the same strategy was adopted by James Beattie in his *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth*. Gay has noted that Beattie believed that "he could demolish Hume by putting him in the company of such infidels as Hobbes and Spinoza".²⁴ In short, Hume's most acrimonious enemies, being incapable of refuting

politicians of the eighteenth century may be ranked in the number of his antagonists, and even at the present moment, scarcely does there appear a new publication on Ethics or Jurisprudence, where a refutation of Hobbism is not to be found." *The Collected Works of Dugald Stewart*, Vol. I, 79-80.

²¹ These details of Hume's life are well described by Mossner.

²² In *The Scottish Philosophy* (London, 1875), 111-13, James McCosh describes the difficulties generated for one Scottish philosopher by his "imprudence". In 1732 David Dudgeon published a work entitled "The Moral World". Apparently Dudgeon's philosophical views, which were influenced by Anthony Collins, offended the Presbytery. Dudgeon was charged with denying "all distinction and difference between moral good and evil"—a charge which a few years later was to be brought against Hume (and a charge which suggests the influence of Hobbes's philosophy and the reaction to it). Dudgeon's case eventually went to the Commission of the General Assembly who seem not to have taken any further action. McCosh states that Dudgeon's works "were published in a combined form in 1765, in a volume without a printer's name attached, showing that there was not as yet thorough freedom of thought in Scotland." (McCosh also notes that there are some interesting similarities between Dudgeon's and Hume's views and he conjectures that Hume may have known Dudgeon as both philosophers were from the Borders area in Scotland.) In any case, the example of David Dudgeon attests to the fact that prudence was required.

²³ Hume's reply to Wishart's pamphlet is contained in a *Letter from a Gentleman to his friend in Edinburgh* (1745), edited by E.C. Mossner and J.V. Price (Edinburgh, 1967). This letter, written to James Coumts, was published by Henry Home (later Lord Kames) without Hume's permission. The first half of the "letter" is simply a direct quotation of Wishart's "accusation."

²⁴ Gay, *op. cit.*, 402.

(or understanding) Hume's philosophy, were quite content to make do with painting it as Hobbist. As Hume's enemies were under no illusion that any implied connection of this sort would discredit Hume's philosophy it is little wonder that Hume chose not to mention Hobbes in his Introduction to the *Treatise*.²⁵

Hume's citation of Tacitus on the title page of the *Treatise* provides us with ample evidence that he did not believe that he lived in an age in which he could say in print exactly what he thought. "Rara temporum felicitas, ubi sentire, quae velis; & quae sentias, dicere licet." [Seldom are men blessed with times in which they may think what they like, and say what they think.]²⁶ This must have been a matter of some importance to Hume given that he obviously felt it necessary to draw the reader's attention to such considerations before they read his work. This gives us fair warning that we should not read his work entirely at face value. This is especially true when considering his references, or any absence of reference, to such an infamous figure as Hobbes.

In spite of these adverse circumstances Hume made plain his very high esteem for Hobbes and his philosophy in his *History of England*. In describing "manners and arts" in the age of the Commonwealth Hume mentions Hobbes's achievements along with those of Milton, Harvey, Clarendon, and a few others. This alone is, obviously, high praise. Hume's remarks are clearly guarded but his respect for Hobbes nevertheless comes through.

No English author in that age was more celebrated both abroad and at home, than Hobbes: In our time, he is much neglected: A lively instance, how precarious all reputations founded on reasoning and philosophy! . . . Hobbes' politics are fitted only to promote tyranny, and his ethics to encourage licentiousness. . . . In his own person he is represented to have been a man of virtue; a character no wise surprising, notwithstanding his liberatine system of ethics.²⁷

There can, I suggest, be little doubt that this philosopher, whom the middle-aged Hume recognized as one of the great minds of the Com-

²⁵ On the face of it Hume showed a lack of prudence in citing Mandeville in his Introduction to the *Treatise* given that Mandeville, like Hobbes, enjoyed an infamous reputation at this time. However, Hume no doubt thought that he would be immune from any criticism on this score given that his work had so much in common with Mandeville's moral sense opponents Shaftesbury and Hutcheson.

²⁶ This translation is taken from Mossner's edition of the *Treatise* (Harmondsworth, Middx.: Penguin Books, 1969), p. 32.

²⁷ Chapter LXII. Hume's remarks, not surprisingly, show some sign of being influenced by Bayle's *Dictionary* article on Hobbes. Like Hume Bayle speaks highly of Hobbes's personal character.

monwealth era and still of contemporary interest, was a major source of inspiration for the young Hume's project of *A Treatise of Human Nature*.²⁸

III. A great deal has been written in recent years about the historical context or "origins" of Hume's thought. On the whole Hobbes's name has not figured very prominently in these discussions.²⁹ Most references to Hobbes's influence upon Hume's thought have been somewhat cursory and inadequate. Consideration of the structural parallels between the *Treatise* and Hobbes's works should encourage commentators to look more carefully at the significance of Hobbes's philosophy for Hume's thought.³⁰ In particular it should have the salutary effect of encouraging us not to view Hume's "science of man" *too exclusively* in terms of the impact of either Hutcheson³¹ or Newton;³² for one major source of inspiration for Hume's project, Hobbes's philosophy of man, clearly pre-dates the work of both these thinkers. This relationship between the *Treatise* and Hobbes's work does, however, lend considerable support to Duncan Forbes' suggestion that the *Treatise* should be viewed in the context of the study of natural law in Scotland.³³ For equally obvious reasons it will be seen that this interpretation lends some support to David Fate Norton's thesis that the *Treatise* should be viewed, at least in part, as a response to the *crise morale* brought about by Hobbes's moral skepticism.³⁴ Granted that Forbes' and Norton's theses are well-

²⁸ Unfortunately I have been unable to find any reference to Hobbes in any of Hume's now published private papers (i.e. letters, memoranda, etc.).

²⁹ I have already noted that this is not true of John Laird's study of Hume's philosophy. Nor is it true of two recently published studies of Hume's work. Both Peter Jones, *Hume's Sentiments* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1982), and David Fate Norton, *David Hume* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), like Laird, examine carefully Hobbes's influence upon the development of Hume's thought.

³⁰ There are several specific areas of Hume's philosophy which I believe Hobbes's writings may shed a considerable amount of light on. For example, Hume's interest in and views on religion, the history and politics of the English Civil War, the physiological basis of psychological phenomena, and, as already noted, association and probabilistic reasoning are fertile areas for further investigation. (In fact, it could be argued that Hobbes's works reveal not only the "plan" of the project of the *Treatise* but also help to illuminate some of the fundamental *themes* which run throughout Hume's writings as a whole, philosophical, historical, and religious.)

³¹ See Kemp Smith, 12-20.

³² Nicholas Capaldi, for example, suggests that "an understanding of the exact nature of Newton's influence on Hume can serve as the key to understanding Hume's philosophy as a whole, and it can explain why Hume structures the *Treatise* as he does." *David Hume: The Newtonian Philosopher* (Boston, 1975), p. 49.

³³ Forbes has pointed out that at this time "natural jurisprudence played . . . an important role in morals, especially in Scotland, where the impression produced by Grotius and Pufendorf was especially remarkable." (p. 17). Obviously a great deal of the natural law debate was concerned, either implicitly or explicitly, with Hobbes's views. See, for example, Pufendorf's *Of the Law of Nature and of Nations* (Oxford, 1703).

³⁴ *David Hume*, Chap. I.

founded the similarities between the scope and structure of the *Treatise* and that of Hobbes's works should not strike anyone as fortuitous.

Both Hobbes and Hume held that moral and political philosophy, if they are to advance beyond mere rhetoric, must proceed upon a proper methodology. Consider the following three important methodological presuppositions which are common to the "science of man" as presented in the *Leviathan* and Hume's *Treatise*.

(1) Hobbes claims that "whosoever looketh into himself . . . he shall thereby read and know, what are the thoughts, and passions of all other men, upon the like occasions." (E.W. III,xi). Hume makes much the same point by noting that "the minds of all men are similar in their feelings and operations." (T,575)

(2) Moral and political philosophy must proceed upon the same methodology as that which is appropriate to the natural sciences. (As to the nature of that methodology, of course, they disagree.)³⁵

(3) Moral and political philosophy must begin with an examination of human thought and motivation.

These similarities further indicate the close connection between Hume's project and Hobbes's philosophy of man. Clearly they were attempts to construct a science of man on the basis of very similar presuppositions, however much their actual methodologies may have varied. The structural parallels between Hobbes's *The Elements of Law* and Hume's *Treatise* are indicative of this fundamental similarity. Viewed in this light (i.e. in light of Hobbes's project) we can better appreciate the unity of Hume's thought—that is, the unity of the project of the *Treatise* itself.³⁶

Accordingly we may conclude that Hume, having found the ruins of Hobbes's attempt to construct a science of man on the basis of a rationalist methodology, endeavored to salvage this enterprise by employing the experimental method of reasoning which had been so powerfully developed in the intervening century. So inspired he constructed the edifice

³⁵ The similarities between Hobbes's and Hume's remarks on the unscientific character of moral and political philosophy is quite striking. For Hobbes's views see E.W.I, chap. I, sec. 7 and 9; E.W. IV, chaps. I and XIII, sec. 3. For Hume's views see *Abstract*, 5-6: "Most of the philosophers of antiquity . . ." and *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. by J.Y.T. Greig, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), Vol. I, Letter no. 1, p. 13: "Every one, who is acquainted . . ." and p. 16: "I found that the moral philosophy transmitted to us . . ."

³⁶ Recently Louis Loeb has challenged Páll Árdal's suggestion (*Passion and Value in Hume's 'Treatise'* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966)) that there is an "intimate connection" between Books II and III of the *Treatise*. (See Loeb's "Hume's Moral Sentiments and the Structure of the *Treatise*", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, XV, no. 4 (1977), 395-403). Given the unity of the project of the *Treatise* it is, I think, clear that there exists an "intimate connection" between *all three* Books of the *Treatise*.

of the *Treatise* upon much the same plan as Hobbes's *The Elements of Law*.³⁷ Thus in some very important respects Hobbes's project emerges, phoenix-like, from the pages of the *Treatise*.³⁸

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³⁷ It should also be noted that some of the materials which he found in the ruins of Hobbes's system (viz. Hobbes's discussion of association, causal connection, etc.) became key blocks in his own.

³⁸ I am grateful to Duncan Forbes, Istvan Hont, Peter Jones, Bernard Williams and an anonymous referee of this journal for their very helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.