This chapter discusses Leo Strauss, who, according to Macpherson, along with others, \(^1\) driven a wedge between natural science and political philosophy of Hobbes, making the latter independent of the former. This provides an alternative foundation and thus rescues it from the problems internal to sciences. \(^2\) The traditional view of Hobbes argues that there is a logical and philosophical continuity from the theory of physics to the civil philosophy through the theory of psychology. Strauss rejects the traditional interpretation by pointing out the inconsistencies that are involved in it and advocates a discontinuity between Hobbes’s philosophical materialism and political theory.

---

\(^1\) G.C. Roberston (1886) and John Laird (1934) are the other interpreters of Hobbes who belong to this wedge between political philosophy and natural science.

\(^2\) Other interest of Strauss is to look at Hobbes as a ‘key to the understanding’ of the real character of modernity, and also as a founder of novel doctrines of ‘political hedonism’ and ‘political atheism’ which gave modernity its distinctive character. However, this aspect is not the main concern of the present discussion.
Strauss argues that Hobbes's political philosophy is independent of natural science in both method and material. The political philosophy of Hobbes, he claims, was mistakenly attributed, in method and material, to the natural science. According to this mistakenly attributed view, the method that Hobbes used was Galileo's 'resolutive-compositive' method and the material was provided by mechanistic psychology. However, criticizing this view Strauss argues that the political philosophy of Hobbes is actually based on self-observation for its method and moral psychology for its content. The moral psychology, in turn, is based on the fear of violent death.

To establish the independence of Hobbes's political philosophy from natural science, Strauss makes a distinction between 'form' or method and 'content' or material in Hobbes's political philosophy. Method is the approach based on which conclusions are drawn from the premises. It supports the content, like skeleton supports the flesh and mood of the human body. It helps and systematizes the material in a specific order so as to draw conclusions. Material is the content or the flesh and

Watkins explains three factors responsible for encouraging 'Hobbes scholars' to think that civil philosophy is independent of science. To quote Watkins, “Firstly, they have tended to look for some linear connection between his philosophy and the premises of his civil philosophy. Secondly, they have tended to identify Hobbes's 'philosophy' with his materialism. So that their question became; Does Hobbes's materialism entails the psychological premises of his civil philosophy? And to this the answer is surely NO. Third, they have tended to support that the third section of his philosophy came first and does not need the other two” (1965: 11).
blood of the theory. Material is that which is obvious in a given theory and method is the one, which is applied underlyingly. Strauss first proves the origin of material as pre-scientific rather than non-scientific. The material is pre-scientific in the sense that it was developed even before Hobbes was introduced to science. It is non-scientific because it developed independent of the scientific influence. This is substantiated by bringing a distinction between naturalistic and anthropological aspects. Naturalistic aspect is the one that is developed as a part or annex of natural science. And the understanding of human nature developed by self-observation and experience is regarded as anthropological aspect. According to him, the anthropological aspect, and not the naturalistic aspect, that is based on natural sciences, which forms the base for the Hobbesian political philosophy. Further, the origin of the material of Hobbes has its basis in tradition and not in natural science. He substantiates this claim by elucidating the early influences of Aristotelianism and Scholastic humanism on Hobbes before he turned to science, where the importance of self-observation is emphasized over the method of natural sciences. The principle of self-observation, which "is discovered by the efforts of self-knowledge and self-examination of every one" is the basis for the origin of the Hobbes's political philosophy. Strauss, thus, argues that self-observation is the method and the fear of death is the basis of the political obligation of Hobbes. This led him to argue that not only material but even the method that Hobbes adopted for his political philosophy was non-scientific.

---

4 However, the traditional material, according to Strauss, was given an entirely untraditional meaning in Hobbes's work". (1936:4)
Let us discuss the arguments of Strauss in detail, first by taking his rejection of traditional interpretation, and then by looking at his projection of self-observation as the method and fear of death as the basis of Hobbes's political philosophy.

**Method and Material:**

According to Strauss, Hobbes was the first philosopher to answer coherently and exhaustively the two principle questions of political philosophy, namely, what is man's right life and what is the right ordering of society. Right life for him is commodious living without the fear of death. It is the life which every man desires. Right order of society is the order that should be there to make the life of people commodious, which for Hobbes is the maintenance of peace and protecting the life of the people in society by the sovereign authority. Hobbes's attempt to answer these questions has made him significant not only to the study of political philosophy but also to the study of philosophy as such. Though Hobbes marks an epoch* in the history of political philosophy, in answering these questions in a way that is different from the classical times, his importance, with regard to his political philosophy, is not accordingly acknowledged. The reason for this lack of proper recognition, according to Strauss, is the understanding that 'his achievement in political philosophy is made possible by the application of a new method,' the method of Galileo, i.e., *resolutive-compositive* method. The application of this method seems to be the basis of

---

* According to the *resolutive-compositive* method, Strauss explained. I quote, "...the given political facts (the disputable justice or injustice of any political action, or the
Hobbes's important political contents like, priority of the individual to the state, the conception of individual as asocial, the state as Leviathan. It appears as if these political contents are 'determined by' and 'implied in' the scientific method. But. Strauss felt, if the scientific method was considered as the decisive factor then the significance of Hobbes's political obligation would subside to the second order importance. To quote Strauss:

It would seem that the characteristic contents of Hobbes's political philosophy – the absolute priority of the individual to the State, the conceptions of the individual as asocial ... and finally of the State itself as Leviathan – is determined by and as it were, implied in the method. As this method, however, was applied only subsequently, only in imitation of Galileo's founding of the new physics. Hobbes's achievement, from this point of view, however great it may be, is nevertheless of the second order. (1936:2)

Current conception of justice in general, or the state itself, which as the primary condition of justice is the political fact *par excellence* are analyzed, reduced to their elements (the 'individual will'), and then, concerso itinere, starting from those elements, the possibility of a 'collective will' is developed by a completely lucid deduction, and what was at first an 'irrational' whole is 'rationalized'" (1936:2).
The scientific method is of later addition to the political thinking of Hobbes and it is only an imitation of the Galileo's new physics. This scientific method has only secondary value in his philosophy. If it were given primary place then the very significance of Hobbes's political philosophy will remain unrecognized. Nevertheless, Strauss had no doubt that the assumptions of 'resolutive-compositive' method 'have become decisive for the development of the idea of the state', but he doubts whether this 'decisive question is unequivocally traced out in advance by the method'. This doubt remains worth considering because a method can lead us from the basic premises to the conclusion, but it cannot be the basis of the basic premise. As stated earlier, method is the approach one follows either to deduce or to generalize the conclusion of the material. It works as a basic underlying structure, which can be inferred from the underlying coherence of a theory. It takes us from the given premises to its implied conclusions. Nevertheless, it cannot become the content of a philosophy. Content is the material, which is readily given and after reading which one can infer the method employed. Hence, method cannot trace out the conclusion but it can only help the content to reach the conclusions systematically.

Hobbes's own works provide counter instances to the view that the method and material of his political philosophy is provided by natural sciences. The publication of De Cive, even before the publication of De Corpora and De Homine supports the conviction that political philosophy is independent of natural science. \(^6\) De Cive, the

\(^6\) Tom Sorell contends that though Hobbes's civil philosophy can be claimed to be a science, it cannot be claimed as on par with the natural sciences. He maintains that
third part of Hobbes's scheme of philosophy, which is about the 'body politic' was published in 1642. 'De Corpore', which is first in the scheme came into print in 1655 and is about 'the body' and 'De Homine' is about 'the man' and was published in 1658. 'Leviathan' (1651), which was produced after 'De Cive', is said to be the final systematic presentation of his moral and political views.

Regarding the immediate and concrete basis of the material, Strauss argues that the mechanistic psychology, deduces civil society from passions, which are produced by simple forces of motion called sensation. The mechanistic psychology follows rigorous determinism and argues that sensations, which are produced by the motions, determine all the actions of man. According to this mechanistic psychology, Hobbes "is not obliged to rest the scientific status of his civil philosophy on any content it shares with the natural sciences." Further, Sorell proclaims that Hobbes "need not trade as any overlap between a mechanistic physics and ethics, though he thinks such an overlap exists." Finally, Sorell asserts that civil philosophy is autonomous and independent of the natural sciences. (1996: 13)

Hobbes announces the reason for taking up the civil philosophy to publish first as to quote, "...that my Country some few yeares before civill Warres did rage, was boyling hot with questions concerning the rights of Dominion, and the obedience due from Subjects, the true forerunners of an approaching War: And was the cause which ... ripend. and pluckt from me this third part. Therefore it happens that what was last in order, is yet came forth first in time" (1983: 35-6).
the characteristic contents of Hobbes's political philosophy, such as denial of altruism as natural, positing of man's rapacious nature and the state of war as the natural condition of the state-of-nature and the obedience of reason to the passions are all determined by the scientific method. However, according to Strauss, the determinism of mechanistic psychology is not the necessary assumption for Hobbes, because his characteristic contents can also be maintained in the indeterminate assumptions. To quote Strauss:

Hobbes’s characteristic theories – the denial that ‘altruism’ is natural, the theses of man’s rapacious nature, of the war of every one against every one as the natural condition of mankind, of the essential impotence of reason – can also be maintained in the indeterminist assumptions. (1936: 3)

The important and necessary precedents of the civil society can be maintained without basing them on the scientific and deterministic assumptions of mechanistic psychology. Strauss maintains that the ‘pessimistic’ view of human nature in the state-of-nature was formed even before Hobbes was acquainted with the mechanistic psychology. Adoption of the pessimistic view of man as evil by nature which is the basis of the political philosophy of Hobbes, must have a non-scientific origin, which could be more immediate and concrete than science. The pessimistic view of man, to quote Strauss, “must therefore have an origin other than the method, and as a result his political philosophy must have a more immediate and concrete origin than the method.” (1936: 3) The search for the more concrete and immediate origin of the
political philosophy of Hobbes lead Strauss to look for the origin of the material in non-natural and anthropological assumptions. Now let us discuss Strauss's distinction between naturalistic and anthropological aspects of philosophy.

Naturalistic and Anthropological distinction:

Strauss makes a distinction between naturalistic and anthropological aspects in order to stress the point that the political philosophy of Hobbes is not 'a part or annexe of natural science', but is 'a fully independent branch of knowledge.' Strauss asserts that the anthropological aspect bears not only the method but also the material of Hobbes. This is substantiated by taking Hobbes's explanation of human nature as it 'underlies his political philosophy in two most certain postulates'. The two postulates of human reason are natural appetite and natural reason.

Postulates of Human reason:

_at Natural Appetite:

Strauss, while taking up the first postulate of human reason, i.e., 'natural appetite', argues that naturalistic or scientific explanation of human nature, which is mechanistic in conception, explains human appetite as 'having its roots in man's sensuousness, in his animal nature.' Man is exposed to varied impressions of objects, which produce desires and aversions 'like that of all other animals.' This human appetite is something that is not different from animal appetite, except by the only
fact that it has reason at its service”. It is on this reason man’s most predatory, cunning and dangerous nature is based. To quote Hobbes, man is:

...not like animals hungry only with the hunger of the moment, but also with future hunger, and thus he is the most predatory, the most cunning, the strongest and most dangerous animal.

(1936:9)

This conception of cunning and predatory nature is deduced by the mechanistic explanation of the theory of motion. This nature is derived from man’s appetite towards or away from the objects, which is produced by the impressions of the objects. These impressions are the simple forces of motion. In this way the conception of the predatory and cunning nature of man has mechanistic explanation as its method and general theory of motion as its matter. Strauss maintains that this view "which seems to be specifically Hobbesian" has been contradicted by Hobbes himself. The anthropological conception of natural appetite contradicts the naturalistic mechanical explanation. The anthropological view emphatically argues that "human appetite is infinite in itself and not as a result of the infinite number of external impressions," which we get from the outside objects. It is this infinite nature of the appetite, which distinguishes human appetite from the animal appetite. Animal appetite is based only on external impression and therefore it is finite. But man can desire spontaneously and infinitely. Strauss says:
...if this is the case, then human appetite is essentially distinguished from animal appetite in that the latter is nothing but reaction to external impressions, and, therefore, the animal desires only finite objects as such, while man spontaneously desires infinitely. (1936: 9)

The human appetite forms its clearest expression in the proposition that 'man desires power and ever greater power, spontaneously and continuously'. Strauss makes a distinction between rational and irrational striving after power in Hobbes's explanation of human appetite. He argues that 'only the un-permissible, irrational, lustful striving after power is infinite.' This irrational striving after power has its roots in the pleasure that man takes into consideration of his power, which is vanity. Vanity is man's natural striving to overpower other men and to get pleasure in making others recognise his superiority. The origin of man's natural appetite is in vanity but not in perception or sensation. This conception that man's irrational striving after power is rooted in vanity, is based not on any scientific theory, but 'on insight into human nature' the method of which is self-observation and material is self-knowledge. Thus, only the anthropological view of human appetite, not the mechanistic one, corresponds to the intentions of Hobbes.

b> **Natural reason:**

Coming to the second postulate of human reason, which is 'natural reason'. Strauss explains that naturalistic understanding of this postulate reduces it to the
principle of self-preservation. According to this postulate of life is the condition sine qua non for the satisfaction of any appetite and therefore 'it is the primary good.' Interestingly, Strauss points out, Hobbes preferred the negative expression of 'avoiding death' to the positive expression of 'preserving life.' The reason being that the preservation of life is affirmed by reason, whereas the fear of death is affirmed by passion. As reason by itself is powerless, passion for fear of death compels man for the preservation of life. The feeling and fear of death is direct and infinite. Further, death is not only the primary evil, but also the supreme evil of man's life. It negates not only the primary good but therewith negates all goods. Strauss advocates that, it is not the naturalistic explanation of natural reason as self-preservation, which is rational and which gives the uncertain knowledge of death as the sumnum malum that is the basis of Hobbes's conception of human nature. Rather, the anthropological explanation of natural reason as an emotional and certain form of aversion of death that is the basis of Hobbes's civil philosophy. The fear of death is based on mutual fear, that every man feels the other as a potential murderer. This fear of violent death is 'pre-rational' in its origin and rational in its effect. To quote Strauss:

3 However, John H. Blits who along with Strauss accepts that the fear of violent death is the most powerful force in human life which drives men towards establishment of civil society - argues that the fear is not the fear of other men, but 'a deeper more radical fear' - that is the "indeterminate fear of the unknown." It stems from the inherent limitation of man's natural cognition. (1989: 417-437)
Not the rational and therefore always uncertain knowledge that death is the greatest and supreme evil, but the fear of death, i.e., the emotional and inevitable, and therefore necessary and certain, aversion from death is the origin of law and the State. This fear is mutual fear, i.e., it is the fear each man has of every other man as his potential murderer. This fear of a violent death, pre-rational in its origin, but rational in its effect, and not the rational principle of self-preservation, is, according to Hobbes, the root of all right and therewith of all morality. (1936: 18)

This makes Hobbes deny the moral value of all virtues, which do not protect man against the danger of violent death. In other words, he rejects all virtues, which do not proceed from the fear of violent death.

There is a close connection existing between the two postulates of human nature. The view that human appetite is infinite in itself leads man to be a restless power monger and this in turn makes the state of 'war of every one against every one', which forces him to recognize fear of violent death as the primary and greatest evil. The two postulates of human nature form the basis for the origin of sovereignty in Hobbes. It is not the naturalistic explanation of 'morally indifferent striving after power' and 'morally indifferent striving after self-preservation that is the basis of his political philosophy.' Rather it is the moral and humanist antithesis of unjust vanity and just fear of violent death, which is the basis. To quote Strauss:
The moral and humanist antithesis of fundamentally unjust vanity and fundamentally just fear of violent death is the basis of Hobbes's political philosophy. (1936: 27-8)

The distinction that Strauss made between naturalistic and anthropological explanation of the postulates of human nature proves two important points. One. that Hobbes's political philosophy is not based on the mechanistic explanation of natural sciences. And. two. that it is essentially moral and humanistic, based itself on the 'vanity-fear antithesis'. The vanity-fear antithesis is the essential content of Hobbes. For. him vanity is the root of all evil. and fear is the origin of justice. virtue and ultimately civilization.

Strauss opined that Hobbes's anthropological humanist moral attitude of his political philosophy is more original than the naturalistic motivation. This. he tries to prove by showing that the most important aspects of moral motivation in Hobbes was established even before he turned his attention to the natural science. Strauss refers to Aubrey who remarked that Hobbes 'was 40 years old before he looked on Geometry: which happened accidentally.' (1936: 150) Hobbes's original thoughts were developed even before he turned towards natural science and to quote Strauss, it is not that 'he was asleep up to the age of forty. so that he needed the 'discovery' of Euclid to awaken

Watkins. while endorsing the view that 'the role played by vanity and fear in Hobbes's system is indeed important'. however. rejected the claim that it is the fundamental aspect in the philosophy of Hobbes. (1965:15)
To understand the development of the philosophical ideas Strauss looks at Hobbes's life before his introduction to science and explicates the influences of tradition on his philosophy.

Traditional influences on Hobbes:

Strauss traced back the basis of Hobbes's material to the tradition. The origin of the material of Hobbes's political philosophy had its basis in the descriptions, classifications, and explanations of the previous age. This took Strauss's investigation to the 'sparse remnants of his youthful philosophy', which influenced him before he turned towards natural science. The early influences on Hobbes are Scholastic humanism, Aristotelianism, and Aristocracy. Of these humanism was most decisive, because of which it is justifiable to call the 'first period of Hobbes's life (up to 1629) the humanist period.' (1936:31) Now let us proceed to the influence of Scholastic humanism on Hobbes.

Hobbes accepted Aristotle as the authority in his humanistic period. However, in the later periods Plato was regarded as the 'best of ancient philosophers.' While explaining the conception of State in Elements, Hobbes asserts that the aim of state is both peace and common benefit. This assertion, according to Strauss, runs similar to that of Aristotle's distinction between the reason of the genesis of the state (i.e., peace) and the reason of its being (i.e., common benefit). However, in the later presentations Hobbes leaves this distinction and attributes the necessity and possibility of the state to the tear of violent death.
Strauss compares the *Rhetoric* of Aristotle with the Hobbesian theories, and concludes that the central chapters of Hobbes's political anthropology, in their style and content owe to the *Rhetoric*.\(^{10}\) Emphasizing the influence of *Rhetoric* on Hobbes, Strauss states:

> It would be difficult to find another work whose influence on Hobbes's political philosophy can be compared with that of *Rhetoric*. (1936:35)

The use of *Rhetoric* is more in his later period, which made Strauss to infer that Hobbes while writing his later works studied Aristotle afresh and used it in his systematic expositions of later period. To quote Strauss:

> Since Hobbes in his later writings uses passages from the *Rhetoric*, of which he had made no use in earlier writings, it follows that when composing all his systematic expositions of anthropology (*Elements* 1640, *Leviathan* 1651 and *De Homine* 1655) he studied Aristotle's *Rhetoric* afresh each time. (1936:41)

---

\(^{10}\) Strauss had in his mind the 8\(^{th}\) and 9\(^{th}\) chapters of the first part of *Elements*: and 10\(^{th}\) chapter of *Leviathan* and 11\(^{th}\), 12\(^{th}\) and 13\(^{th}\) chapters of *De Homine*. which almost run parallel to the passages of the *Rhetoric*. 

---
For instance, Strauss points out. Hobbes's earliest treatment of the theory of passions was because of the influence of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. In other words, the 'use and appreciation of Rhetoric' can be traced in Hobbes's mature period. His interest in Aristotle, in the later period, shifted from physics and metaphysics to morals, politics and philosophy. Strauss interprets this shift as the replacement of theory by the primacy of practice. To quote Strauss:

Hobbes, even after natural science had become his favorite subject of investigation, acknowledged the precedence of practice over theory and of political philosophy over natural science. (1936:34)

This precedence of practice over theory shows the independence of political philosophy from natural science. A peculiar form of Hobbes's humanism is his interest in history. This is justified by the translation of *Thucydides*, which Strauss regards as the 'crown and end' of his humanist period. The translation of *Thucydides* made a significant impact on his political philosophy. Strauss points out that Hobbes's interest for history made him say that, 'the neglect of history is one of the most weighty reasons for the inadequacy and uselessness of Scholasticism.' (1936: 89) Though the scholasticism contributed, at least at the level of the origin of material, it was proved inadequate to provide answers to the philosophical problems put forth by Hobbes."

11 To add to this discussion, Lubienski held that, “Through the influence of experimental science, the old scholastic, rationalistic philosophy gave place to a
Hobbes turned from philosophy to history because he saw that the norms that philosophy establishes find no way in their application. Also because traditional philosophy, failed to provide material to political philosophy. According to Strauss, Hobbes argued that the "reason why history becomes, if not the theme of philosophy, at least most important material for philosophy seems to be that the philosophical interest is shifting from physics and metaphysics to morals and politic" (1936:90).

Another reason for turning from philosophy to history is the conviction that, reason is impotent, which adds to the enhanced interest in man. Impotency of reason here means the incapacity of reason to establish or justify norms. Hobbes after finding the alleged or real defect in traditional philosophy and a possibility of developing a theory of the application of the (traditional) norms' turned back again to philosophy. His formation of new political philosophy made 'history sinks back into its old philosophic-insignificance.' This shows that the predominantly modern aspect of the political philosophy of Hobbes is its 'principle of application.' Strauss asserts that the 'principle of application' conditions the form or the method of Hobbes and the moral attitude gives the peculiar substance to his philosophy. Rejection of the traditional norms led Hobbes to place morality on the basis of the passions, temperaments, intentions and motives of man and explain right order and best form of state on the basis of passions. In the words of Strauss, for Hobbes:

more empirical, critical way of thinking. Where as the first is based on dogmatic assertions, the new philosophy admitted nothing without proof and tried to gather direct data from the senses" (1930:177).
A thorough knowledge of the passions is the indispensable condition for the answering of the question as to the right ordering of social life, and particularly as to the best form of state. (1936:110)

Knowledge of passions is the necessary condition for understanding the best form of state. Hobbes's study of history, and especially the translation of *Thucydides* made him uphold 'hereditary absolute monarchy' as the best form of the state. The view that monarchy is the best form of state is based both on human experience and also on the study of passions. His attitude regarding monarchy did not change throughout his life. To quote Strauss, "Hobbes was from the outset a decided upholder of the monarchy and a decided opponent of democracy, and he kept to this opinion throughout his whole life." (1936:59) But Hobbes's conception of traditional monarchy has taken a modern shape. He in his earlier presentations argues that 'monarchy is the only natural, i.e., original form of authority, the only form, which corresponds to nature's original order.' But in his later presentations he maintained that the "paternal authority and consequently patrimonial monarchy, is ... origin of all or majority of states." (1936:60) He regarded monarchy and patrimonial kingdom as identical.
The influence of Aristocracy on Hobbes can be traced to his acquaintance with the aristocratic families. This acquaintance made him consider the aristocratic virtue as the highest virtue. Strauss quotes passages from the *Elements*, where Hobbes regards 'nobility as honorable.' and from *Levia* than where Hobbes states that to be descended from conspicuous parents is honorable'. These quotations substantiate that Hobbes always held fast to his esteem of the aristocracy.(1936:45) It is argued that the aristocratic virtues of honor and heroism (courage) were decisive in humanist phase of his life. i.e., before he thought of composing an independent and coherent study of political philosophy. However, in the course of his philosophical development departing farther from aristocracy he even sublimated and spiritualized it. According to Strauss:

In the course of his development Hobbes departed farther and farther from the recognition of aristocratic virtue. At the end of this process there is, however, not only the establishment of a peculiarly bourgeois morality, but at the same time aristocratic virtue itself becomes sublimated and spiritualized. (1936: 50)

However, the aristocratic virtues of tradition are given a different outlook in Hobbes. The theory of magnanimity, which is the well founded consciousness of one's

According to Strauss, Hobbes "after taking his degree, he was for twenty years without a break tutor, and then Secretary, to William Cavendish, later the Second Earl of Devonshire and on a friendly footing with Cavendish family."(1936:31)
own superiority. is considered by Hobbes to be the source of all virtue. Aristotle
discusses the theory of magnanimity in the traditional philosophy and this influenced
Hobbes. But the theory of Hobbes differs from Aristotle in the sense that the latter
regarded magnanimity to be an 'ornament of all virtues, among them is justice which
is already in existence.' For Hobbes magnanimity is the origin of justice among other
virtues. This change is characterized by the fact that virtue is not a state but an
intention. Hobbes's ideas passed through a transformation starting from the
application of aristocratic virtue in the beginning to a progressively more and more
decided criticism of aristocratic virtue. For earlier Hobbes, all virtues were based on
aristocratic virtues such as courage and honor. However, its status was reduced to war
and then to barbaric epoch of state-of-nature. To quote Strauss:

Aristocratic virtue, which originally embraced all virtue, is later
recognized as virtue only in war. Afterwards it becomes the
virtue of the barbaric epoch, in which 'rapine was a trade of
life': it is thus reduced to a virtue of the state of nature.

(1936:115)

In this way the influence of aristocracy on Hobbes was profound in earlier
writings and in due course of time it subsided and afterwards it was reduced and was
even criticized. This Strauss held, proves both the influence of Aristocracy of
tradition on Hobbes and also its difference with Hobbes's own conception of virtue.
In Hobbes's earliest presentations of political philosophy his conception of religion was 'relatively close to Anglican Episcopalianism'; it was close to 'Independetism' in his later writings. Strauss argues that Hobbes in his earlier writings accepted at least the natural knowledge of God if not the revealed knowledge. But in the later period he excluded both natural theology and revealed theology from philosophy. The religion should, at all times, serve the state and it is to be esteemed or despised according to the services or disservices rendered to the state. (1936: 74) He stated that religion should never come in conflict with the state and in fact it should be the one prescribed by the state. The golden mean between atheism and theism is to subordinate oneself to religion, which is prescribed by the state. In this way he posits an utilitarian value to religion.

The discussion so far proves the influence of tradition on the political philosophy of Hobbes. Aristotelianism, Humanism, Aristocracy of the tradition have influenced the thought of Hobbes in his early years. And this influence is displayed by Strauss, by analyzing the three principle formulation of the philosophy of Hobbes. i.e., Elements, Leviathan, and De Homine. Given the influence of tradition on Hobbes, let us account for those views in him which both implicitly and explicitly reject the tradition.

Strauss's answer to this is that 'traditional thesis and concepts take an entirely untraditional meaning in Hobbes's political philosophy.' In order to understand the true origin of the material of Hobbes, the influence of the 'classical as well as the Christian attitude' on his 'characteristic moral attitude', which determines his way of
thinking, should be properly grasped. The moral attitude, which underlies his political philosophy, is both pre-scientific and also at the same time specifically modern. It comes prior to the 'argument and presentation' of political philosophy. It also precedes his preoccupation with natural sciences. His political philosophy, thus, comes into being after the establishment of moral attitude as the basis. His philosophical development started even before the 'modern science was formed or established' and the 'classical and theological tradition was already shaken.' This led him to ask the decisive question about man's right life and of the right ordering of society. According to Strauss:

This moment was decisive for the whole age to come: in it the foundation was laid, on which the modern development of political philosophy is wholly based, and it is the point from which every attempt at a thorough understanding of modern thought must start. This foundation has never again been visible as it was then. (1936:5)

This was the moment in which Hobbes philosophized his thinking: it is both anti-traditional and pre-scientific in its nature and method. It is anti-traditional because, though it is influenced by tradition, it also criticizes the tradition, and the concepts are given entirely modern meaning. It is pre-scientific because it developed even before the modern science was formed or established.
In order to understand how much Hobbes owes to natural science, Strauss attempts to show how far Hobbes could depart from Aristotle without breaking with his substance and without following scientific method. This is shown by pointing out the changes that Hobbes made in Aristotle's ideas. Though Aristotelianism has its impact on Hobbes it also got modified in his hands. It is true that he believed in the authority of the tradition in his humanist period. He departs from this Aristotelian tradition with regard to the application of method and in considering reason as impotent. Tradition taught him what man ought to be and now he is attempting to discover 'what man is?' and what forces really determine him.' The vanity-fear antithesis, which has its roots in Aristotle's analysis of passion, is regarded as the force that determines man and his actions. Vanity is regarded as the force that makes men blind and fear of violent death is which makes men see. The emphasis on vanity-fear antithesis makes him go beyond the traditional horizon. These differences of Hobbes with Aristotle, Strauss says, cannot possibly be explained by the influence of natural science. Hobbes did not doubt the fundamental assumption of the tradition that 'political philosophy in general is possible and necessary', but 'cast the tradition, as a whole, aside.' His understanding of natural science made him investigate for a new political philosophy. This investigation made him designate Plato as the best of the ancient philosophers' as against his earlier conviction that Aristotle is the philosopher par excellence. The reason for this designation is that to quote Strauss. 'Plato is not only in fact, but also according to Hobbes's opinion, the originator of at least the demand for an exact and paradoxical political science.' Hobbes owes his vanity-tear antithesis, which originates from reason-passion antithesis to Platonic antithesis of
truth and appearance. However, Hobbes’s agreement with Plato is limited to Plato’s criticism of Aristotle. Further, Hobbes’s investigation for a purely rational political philosophy, which is based on the norm to be set up by reason, takes him much beyond Plato. Hobbes’s predominant interest in the applicability of the norm under all circumstances is the primary reason for his opposition to Plato, and his motive for turning to the scientific method. This made Strauss argue that the difference between Hobbes and tradition is in decisive points independent of the turn to mathematics and modern science. Now let us discuss the place of scientific method in Hobbes as illustrated by Strauss.

Discussion of the scientific method in Hobbes by Strauss:

It is true that one of the differences between Hobbes and the traditional philosophy is the adoption of modern sciences like Galilean and Euclidean methods. However, Strauss contends that “the difference between Hobbes and tradition is in decisive points independent of the turn to mathematics and modern science.” (1936: 135) Further, if we take the basis of the goal of political philosophy, in general, which is the necessity and the possibility of political philosophy - then it would be clear that the answer to this problem in Hobbes comes independent of the naturalistic and scientific explanations. What becomes prominent by the study of Geometry in Hobbes is not the idea of political science, with its possibility and necessity but the requirement of a necessary method for political philosophy. Hobbes knows that science and political philosophy are fundamentally different from each other in both method and material. And this knowledge is the basis of Strauss’s conviction that
Hobbes’s political philosophy is independent of natural science. (1936: 7) This conviction is based on Hobbes’s own pronouncement of distinction between political philosophy and natural sciences. The important aspects of this distinction, according to Hobbes, are:

1. The evidence in political philosophy is different from the evidence in natural science.

2. The contents and the concepts are not remote from the average man, as are the subject and concepts of mathematics, which form the basis of natural science.

3. Political philosophy is harder study than natural science.

4. Man with his passions and his self-seeking attitude is the particular subject of political philosophy. Whereas the subject matter of the natural science is the natural phenomenon.

These important distinctions, which Hobbes himself made, support Strauss’s view that political philosophy is independent of natural science. Strauss, further, argues that just as political philosophy has few limitations, in the same way science also has limitations. To quote Strauss, "...the fear of violent death, is the necessary condition not only of society but also science, just as life in common is hindered by passion, science is hindered by prejudice." (1936: 26)
The reason why political philosophy is not based on or is independent of natural science, for that matter any science, is that the first principles of political philosophy are provided by experience. Self-experience and self-knowledge, which is discovered by self-examination, provides the basis for political philosophy.

Strauss, further, maintains that the problem of the principle of applicability of Hobbes made him turn towards 'resolutive-compositive' method of Galileo. By using this method Hobbes first resolved the state into its component parts, i.e., man. and then by a lucid process of composition reconstituted the state. What attracted Hobbes in this method was its exact unconditional applicability to a given phenomenon. He wanted to achieve in politics what Galileo achieved in physics. However, the problem of applicability of the method is more for political philosophy than physics, because the natural body is the subject of physics, where as the subject matter of political philosophy is an artificial body, i.e., civil society. Strauss felt that the political philosophy could not be really accommodated within the scientific tradition, which rejected anthropomorphism. And therefore could 'contribute nothing to the understanding of things human, to the foundation of morals and politics.' Nevertheless, the application of the scientific method compressed the original political and moral insights and changed the concern of the political philosophy from the knowledge of civil society to the creation of the civil society.

The resolution and composition of the existing state presupposes that a better synthesis of the basic elements may produce a right order of the state. This presupposition turns the purpose of the political philosophy towards making it a
technique for the regulation of state from what the state ought to be. The use of "resolutive-compositive" method in this way shifts the purpose of political philosophy to a technique of the regulation of the state. This shift eliminates the primary and fundamental question of political philosophy – which is the aim of the state. The price of the introduction of the 'resolutive-compositive' method into political philosophy renounces the primary and the fundamental question of the subject concerned. This makes Strauss to doubt the value of the application of the 'resolutive-compositive' method, not only from the point of view of political philosophy, but also from the point of view of Hobbes's presuppositions.'

Strauss, further, contends that the adoption of 'resolutive-compositive' method should have prevented Hobbes from asking the question regarding the standard of political philosophy. Nevertheless, the very fact that Hobbes did not, in fact, neglect the question, but only compressed the original insights of political philosophy proves the insignificance of 'resolutive-compositive' method to his political philosophy. There is no change in the essential content starting from his first work to the last work. To quote Strauss:

.. there was no change in the essential content of the argument and aim of Hobbes' political philosophy, from the introduction
to his translation of *Thucydides* up to the latest work.

(1936:112)\(^\text{13}\)

The essential content is same throughout his life. But what has changed in his course of life is the method. Strauss states that originally Hobbes supports his essential content by history, later by the study of passions. What scientific method influenced in him is the method of reasoning and presentation.

In addition, in the process of proving the inadequacy of the 'resolutive-compositive' method, Strauss pointed out, that - according to this method the resolution of the state takes us back to the principles of human nature. These principles of human nature are 'limitless self-love' on the one hand, and the 'fear of violent death' on the other. If the application of the 'resolutive-compositive' method proves to be true then Hobbes should be able to deduce the origin of state from these two principles. But then, these two principles in themselves do not contain certain standard that is necessary to the question of the right state. The necessary standard is the characterization of the principle of human appetite and the principle of natural reason into the principle of right and wrong respectively. This standardization or characterization of good and bad or right and wrong order cannot be found in the

\(^{13}\) However, this has been taken by Watkins as a 'disheartening view' since the political content in *Thucydides* is 'meager'. This led him to ask 'who would care to read *Leviathan* if it consists of the meager political content presented in *Thucydides*. (1965: 15)
application of the ‘resolutive-compositive’ method in any part of the process of its application. To quote Strauss:

The justification of the standard, which is the fundamental part of the political philosophy, is hidden by the resolutive-compositive method and even made unrecognizable. (1936: 154)

Strauss points out this as the reason for the failure of the interpreters of Hobbes, for they could not notice the principle of natural reason or the fear of violent death as the basis of his political philosophy.

Strauss, further, explains Hobbes's turn towards natural science on the basis of his interest in 'self-knowledge of man as he really is', which characterized him even in his humanist period. This explains the motive for Hobbes, which prompted him in viewing both the humanist thought and the natural science to be the same. This motive, further, lead him to the principle of self-observation which is the 'self-knowledge of man as he is'. This self-observation, Strauss advocates, is the method of Hobbes's political philosophy. The inclusion of right and wrong in the principles of human nature cannot be traced by the scientific method. But they can be traced by the method of self-observation, which is the method that Hobbes uses throughout his political philosophy. The standardization or the characterization of right and wrong, which can not be thought off in the state of nature, which have their origin only in the civil society can never be understood in the light of the resolutive-compositive method.
Nevertheless, if the self-observation is taken as the method, it becomes obvious to any ‘rational inquirer’ that the characterization of right and wrong is there in the very essence of the civilized person from whom the principles of human nature have been deduced.

Strauss argues that self-observation is the method that Hobbes applied for his political philosophy. He stresses the importance of self-observation, which is based on self-knowledge, over ‘resolutive-compositive’ method, by stating:

Political philosophy is independent of natural science because its principles are not borrowed from natural sciences ... but are provided by experience, by the experience which every one has of himself, or, to put it more accurately, are discovered by the efforts of self-knowledge and the self-examination of every one.

(1936:7)

In the above quotation, Strauss is arguing not only for the independence of the method, but also of the contents of Hobbes’s political philosophy from the natural sciences. The principles of political philosophy were provided by experience and the method was self-observation. In other words, by self-observation one gets the knowledge of the principles of his own social existence. To quote Strauss:

Hobbes’s political philosophy is really, as its originator claims, based on a knowledge of man which is deepened and corroborated by the self-knowledge and self-examination of the
individual, and not on a general scientific theory... it is not derived from natural science but is founded on first-hand experience of human life. (1936: 29)

As the above quote suggests, the basis of Hobbes's political philosophy is knowledge of man, which is deepened and confirmed by self-knowledge and self-examination. This first-hand experience of his own life in particular and human life in general, lead him to base the political philosophy of self-observation. This basis saves Hobbes's political philosophy from becoming non-moral, because it stresses the significance of self-knowledge of man over the mechanical conception of psychology. A truly Hobbesian theory of state cannot be based on science, because it is based on experience of human life. And further, it can never, in spite of all the temptations of natural science, fall completely into the danger of going away from moral life and forget moral difference. The political philosophy of Hobbes, thus, for that very reason, has a moral basis. He is not derived from natural science but is founded on first-hand experience of human life.

To conclude, Strauss argues that the attempt to work out political philosophy as a part or annex of natural science by means of scientific method is constantly questioned in Hobbes's work, because he was aware of the fundamental differences between the two disciplines in method and material. Strauss's conviction that political philosophy is essentially independent of natural science is based on the awareness of this independent nature of political philosophy from science. He proved this from two different perspectives. One, by showing the textual evidences in Hobbes's own works.
which advocated a distinction between method and material, and anthropological and naturalistic aspects. Two, by expounding the historical influences, which are drawn from tradition such as Scholastic humanism and Aristocracy etc. In order to prove the independent nature of political philosophy, he first brought a distinction between anthropological and naturalistic aspects of Hobbes, and argued that, the basis of Hobbes's philosophy is not in the naturalistic explanation of man, which comes with the background of natural sciences. Rather the basis is rooted in anthropological aspect, which is discovered by the method of self-observation. The material was provided by the tradition through the influences of scholastic humanism and aristocracy, which shaped his political philosophy, even before he got introduced to science. Thus, according to Strauss, the method of Hobbes's political philosophy is self-observation and material is provided by the moral psychology. Strauss states that, the important aspect in Hobbes's system that can be claimed as the basis or foundation is self-observation. As scientific method has only secondary position, the disturbances in the scientific discipline do not surely affect his political philosophy.

The next chapter discusses the arguments of A.E. Taylor who attempted to find basis of the political philosophy of Hobbes as moral imperative, rather than scientific method.