

剑桥政治思想史原著系列（影印本）

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

# 论公民

## *On the Citizen*

Hobbes

霍布斯

---

Edited by

RICHARD TUCK

---

and

---

MICHAEL

SILVERTHORNE

---

中国政法大学出版社

托马斯·霍布斯

THOMAS HOBBS

---

# 论公民

## *On the Citizen*

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY

RICHARD TUCK

*Harvard University and Jesus College, Cambridge*

MICHAEL SILVERTHORNE

*McGill University*

中国政法大学出版社

原书由剑桥大学出版社于 1998 年出版,此影印本的出版获得剑桥大学出版社财团(英国剑桥)的许可。

© *in the translation and editorial matter*  
*Cambridge University Press 1998*

*This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.*

# 剑桥政治思想史原著系列

## 丛书编辑

*Raymond Geuss*

剑桥大学哲学高级讲师

*Quentin Skinner*

剑桥大学近代史讲座教授

在政治理论领域，“剑桥政治思想史原著系列”作为主要的学生教科丛书，如今已牢固确立了其地位。本丛书旨在使学生能够获得从古希腊到 20 世纪初期西方政治思想史方面所有最为重要的原著。它囊括了所有著名的经典原著，但与此同时，它又扩展了传统的评价尺度，以便能够纳入范围广泛、不那么出名的作品。而在此之前，这些作品中有许多从未有过现代英文版本可资利用。只要可能，所选原著都会以完整而不删节的形式出版，其中的译作则是专门为本丛书的目的而安排。每一本书都有一个评论性的导言，加上历史年表、生平梗概、进一步阅读指南，以及必要的词汇表和原文注解。本丛书的最终目的是，为西方政治思想的整个发展脉络提供一个清晰的轮廓。

本丛书已出版著作的书目，请查阅书末。

# CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

*Series editors*

RAYMOND GEUSS

*Lecturer in Philosophy, University of Cambridge*

QUENTIN SKINNER

*Regius Professor of Modern History, University of Cambridge*

Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought is now firmly established as the major student textbook series in political theory. It aims to make available to students all the most important texts in the history of Western political thought, from ancient Greece to the early twentieth century. All the familiar classic texts will be included but the series seeks at the same time to enlarge the conventional canon by incorporating an extensive range of less well-known works, many of them never before available in a modern English edition. Wherever possible, texts are published in complete and unabridged form, and translations are specially commissioned for the series. Each volume contains a critical introduction together with chronologies, biographical sketches, a guide to further reading and any necessary glossaries and textual apparatus. When completed, the series will aim to offer an outline of the entire evolution of Western political thought.

*For a list of titles published in the series, please see end of book.*

## Acknowledgements

The principal labour of this edition was by Michael Silverthorne, who provided a completely new translation of the Latin text and the notes on key words. Richard Tuck is primarily responsible for the introduction, the sketch of Hobbes's life and the suggestions for further readings, though each editor has commented on the other's work. Many other people have helped in the construction of this edition; we should pay a tribute first to the late Professor Howard Warrender, whose edition of the Latin text for Oxford University Press is the basis of our translation, and who began the modern scholarly study of Hobbes's texts. Richard Fisher of Cambridge University Press, Quentin Skinner and Raymond Geuss have been a constant source of support to both of us. In addition, Michael Silverthorne would like to thank Leszek Wysocki for careful criticism of an earlier draft; Stephen Silverthorne and Marcia Morris for secretarial assistance; and the Social Sciences and Humanities research Council of Canada for financial support. Richard Tuck would like to thank Noel Malcolm, Maurice Goldsmith, Lucien Jaume, Ian Harris, John Dunn, Jim Tully, David Johnston and Istvan Hont for their helpful comments during many years of working on Hobbes. Richard Tuck and the publisher wish to apologise sincerely to Charles T. Wood, T. S. K. Scott-Craig, and Bernard Gert for attributing their rendition of *De Homine* to Richard Tuck in the first impression of this work, and thank them for their forbearance.

## Introduction

Although Hobbes is known to most readers today primarily as the author of *Leviathan*, his first claim to fame was as the author of this work, *De Cive* (*On the Citizen*). It had been known to a few intimates of Hobbes since 1641, but it was not known to a wider public until the famous Elzevir Company in Amsterdam picked it up and produced it in a generally available edition, which appeared in the bookshops in the early months of 1647, when its author was 59 and was about to begin working on *Leviathan*. It was entitled (in Latin) *Elementa Philosophica de Cive*, that is, 'Philosophical Elements of the Citizen' or, less literally but more felicitously, 'Philosophical Elements of Citizenship', by 'Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury'.

It was an immediate best-seller – Elzevir's had sold out of its stock by the summer, and rushed out a reprint.<sup>1</sup> And it remained until the nineteenth century the major Hobbesian text for many readers on the Continent, partly because an authoritative French translation by Hobbes's friend Samuel Sorbière appeared in 1649, whereas *Leviathan* was not translated into French until our own time, and partly because it was kept in print throughout the late

<sup>1</sup> He had already published two books under his own name: his translation of Thucydides (*Eight Bookes of the Peloponnesian Warre* London, 1629), and his poem on the Peak District, *Ad Nobilissimum Dominum Guilielmum Comitem Devoniae, &c. De Mirabilibus Pecci, Carmen* ([London, 1636?]). On the publishing history of the 1647 editions, see *De Cive: the Latin Version*, ed. Howard Warrender (Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 8–13 and 300–15.

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>2</sup> Hobbes himself never repudiated the book, despite having published *Leviathan* four years later, and he proudly reprinted it in his collected works (in Latin) in 1668, alongside a Latin translation of *Leviathan*.

Although it was so late in his life that Hobbes became known to the general public, he had been known to 'the choicer spirits' (as one of his friends put it)<sup>3</sup> for many years, and he had already printed (though one would hesitate to say published) *De Cive* five years earlier for circulation among them.<sup>4</sup> An English version of his ideas was also circulated widely in manuscript some years before that, which we know under the title of *Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*, while interesting anonymous works from his pen had been printed at various times from 1620 onwards – the most interesting, it now seems, being a discourse on the Roman historian Tacitus which appeared in that year (see below).

These works emerged from a life spent mixing with some of the most influential European politicians and writers. From 1608 until the outbreak of the Civil War Hobbes lived for much of the time in the household of the Cavendishes, earls of Devonshire, as a secretary to the successive heads of the family, tutor to its young men, and general adviser on all kinds of matters. His employers were among the richest men in England, with a corresponding political importance, and when they or their heirs travelled on the Continent they immediately had access to the highest ranks of European society. When Hobbes accompanied them to the English court or travelled abroad with them, as he often did, he too would often be introduced to the statesmen or authors whom his masters wanted to meet. Thus in the 1620s he was known to the duke of Buckingham, and was suggested by the Cavendishes to Sir Francis Bacon to act occasionally as his amanuensis; in the 1630s he made the acquaintance of the king's great minister Strafford, and of other politicians such as Edward Hyde, later Lord Clarendon. Abroad, in

<sup>2</sup> For the later editions, see *De Cive: the Latin Version*, pp. 66–7; the French translation of *Leviathan* is *Léviathan*, trans. and ed. François Tricaud (Editions Sirey, Paris, 1971).

<sup>3</sup> See the letter from Thomas de Martel in *De Cive: the Latin Version*, p. 300.

<sup>4</sup> This printing of 1642 is usually referred to, however inaccurately, as 'the first edition', and we follow this practice. Similarly we follow the usual practice of referring to the 1647 edition as 'the second edition'. For the details of the 1642 printing, see note 10 below.



Venice from 1614 to 1615 with the son of the earl, he encountered the leaders of the republic such as Paolo Sarpi, and continued to correspond with them on his master's behalf well into the next decade. On a voyage to France and Italy from 1634 to 1636 with the then earl (who was only 17), he dined with cardinals at Rome, met Galileo at Florence, and was introduced to the most advanced philosophers of Europe in Paris.

All this might seem very far removed from his origins in a provincial English town (Malmesbury in Wiltshire), the son of an obscure minor clergyman who had deserted his wife and children. Hobbes's education was paid for by his uncle, a tradesman in the town, who sent him to the town grammar school and then to a hall (the cheaper version of a college) at Oxford, where he graduated in 1608 at the age of 20. He was marked out as a young man by his remarkable linguistic skills: he was extremely fluent in Latin, Greek and French as well as English, and an accomplished prose stylist and versifier from an early age. These were the skills which the Renaissance education system valued above all others, principally because they could be put to public use in the service of princes or other great politicians, and Hobbes was nominated by the principal of his hall for just such a post in the Cavendish household soon after graduating; he became the tutor of Lord Cavendish's eldest son, and briefly joined him at Cambridge (where he incorporated a BA<sup>5</sup> at St John's College). He was only a couple of years older than his pupil, and quickly became more of a friend and secretary than tutor. From 1609 until 1640 he lived mostly with the Cavendish family at their houses in Derbyshire or London, though in 1640 he decided to flee into exile in France in order to escape the attack on the king's supporters.

His theoretical interests, when he took up his job and for some years to come, were largely in the humanities – in history, literature and the study and practice of rhetoric. It was this which led to his first publications; the very first (it is now quite convincingly established) was a group of three discourses in a collaborative volume of essays which appeared anonymously in 1620, entitled *Horae Subsecivae* ('Leisure Hours') (Hobbes's collaborator was probably his pupil and friend, Lord Cavendish's son William). The

<sup>5</sup> I.e. Hobbes was granted at Cambridge an equivalence for his Oxford BA.

most important of these discourses was a long commentary on the beginning of Tacitus' *Annals*, in which Hobbes revealed his deep knowledge of contemporary 'Tacitism', the literature of 'reason of state' which was popular across Europe in his generation.<sup>6</sup> In the mid-1630s he broadened his interests, to include what we would call science and the philosophy of science; but again, this was largely the result of his patrons' concerns. At this period he had come more into the service of the earl of Devonshire's cousin, the earl of Newcastle, who lived not far from the Devonshires' home. Newcastle, and his younger brother Sir Charles Cavendish, were extremely interested in modern optics and mathematics, largely because of their military applications: both brothers were prominent soldiers, and Newcastle became in effect the commander-in-chief of the royalist army during the Civil War. They corresponded with philosophers and mathematicians on the Continent, particularly those associated with the great intellectual entrepreneur Marin Mersenne, a friar who from his cell in the convent of the Minimes in Paris kept in touch with most of the leading philosophers of the day (above all with Descartes, whose work he constantly assisted and publicized). Deference to such prominent English aristocrats of this kind was so great that Hobbes was assured of a welcome in these circles when he arrived in 1634 bearing letters of introduction from them, though he seems not to have been very closely involved with these French philosophers until the 1640s.

Back in England in the late 1630s, he projected and drafted (more thoroughly than has usually been recognized) a large-scale work, in Latin, covering the whole area of traditional philosophy.<sup>7</sup> We may

<sup>6</sup> These discourses are now published separately from the rest of *Horae Subseivae* with full introduction by Noel B. Reynolds and Arlene W. Saxonhouse, *Thomas Hobbes: Three Discourses. A Critical Modern Edition of Newly Identified Work of the Young Hobbes* (University of Chicago Press, 1995). For a discussion of Tacitism, and the location of Hobbes in that broad context, see Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government 1572-1651* (Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>7</sup> What follows is largely a summary of an article of mine: Richard Tuck, 'Hobbes and Descartes', in *Perspectives on Thomas Hobbes*, ed. G. A. J. Rogers and Alan Ryan (Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 11-42. There is an additional piece of evidence, not noted there, that by 1641 *De Homine* had already taken much the same form it was to have in 1658. This is provided by a remark in *De Cive* v.4 (*De Cive: the Latin Version*), that what counts as the agreement of many people had been defined 'praecedente sectione'. Hobbes always used the term *sectio* to refer to the three divisions of his *Elementa Philosophiae*, and the passage referred to here is presumably what later became *De Homine* xv.4, though in the context

assume that he already had in mind the title *Elementa Philosophiae*, 'The Elements of Philosophy', under which it eventually appeared in 1668, and we know that he had divided it into three *sectiones*, as he termed them, each one a (shortish) book-length work. The first section was entitled *De Corpore* ('Matter'), and dealt with metaphysics and physics; the second was *De Homine* ('Man'), which discussed the principles of perception and the passions; while the third was *De Cive*. The work was advanced enough by the spring of 1640 for Hobbes to circulate an English summary of the last two sections among a wide circle of friends, under the title *Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*. At about the same time he also began to circulate copies of the Latin drafts: we know that Lord Herbert of Cheshire and Sir Charles Cavendish were sent copies of *De Corpore*, and Mersenne seems to have been sent a version of *De Homine* to pass on to Descartes.

One of the purposes of the *Elements of Law, Natural and Politic* was to provide material which could be used by English politicians in defence of the policies of Strafford, as part of the struggle against the king's opponents in England. The political complexion of the two Parliaments which met in 1640, and the purge of Strafford and his supporters, understandably alarmed Hobbes, and in November 1640 he left England by himself for the first time, and settled in

of a discussion of *Fictitio* which Hobbes is likely to have added after writing *Leviathan*. (All references to *De Homine* and *De Corpore* are to *Thomas Hobbes . . . Opera Philosophica quae Latine scripsit Omnia*, ed. William Molesworth (5 vols., London, 1839-45), unless otherwise noted.) In a recent article, Noel Malcolm has argued that even though something like *De Corpore* and *De Homine* may indeed have been drafted by 1641, the existing fragments of *De Corpore* date from 1642-3 and not (as has been commonly supposed) from 1640. His reason for saying this is that the earliest fragment of *De Corpore* contains a sentence which also appears in Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*, which was not published until the end of 1642 (Malcolm, 'A summary biography of Hobbes', in Tom Sorell, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 30). But the sentence, which is to be found on p. 449 of Hobbes's *Critique du 'De Mundo' de Thomas White*, ed. Jean Jacquot and Harold W. Jones (Vrin, Paris, 1973) in fact differs from the text in the published version of *Religio Medici* - see the critical edition by Vittoria Sanna (Cagliari, 1958), p. 42. *Religio Medici* was written in the 1630s and circulated widely in manuscript, with many variations between the existing copies (though none of them contains the variation found in the Hobbes fragment); as a young man, Browne had moved in the same Oxford circles as some of Hobbes's friends (Hobbes, *Correspondence*, ed. Noel Malcolm, Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 777). So Hobbes may perfectly well have known about *Religio Medici* before its publication.

relative poverty in Paris. Inspired by the political turmoil in England, he concentrated on finishing the third section of the *Elementa Philosophiae*, and by November 1641 he had a polished manuscript to present to his lord, the earl of Devonshire. Written on vellum, with a specially drawn title page bearing the title *Elementorum Philosophiae Sectio Tertia de Cive*, this manuscript was designed as an eye-catching and permanent record of Hobbes's ideas.<sup>8</sup> At the same time Hobbes arranged for 'a few examples' of the manuscript to be printed and distributed among his friends, so that they could comment on it; this seems to have been an extension of a system whereby Mersenne let visitors to his chamber consult a manuscript of the work, possibly the vellum copy itself.<sup>9</sup> The printed copies carry the date 1642 on their title pages.

There is no doubt that these copies were not put on sale at any bookseller: Hobbes himself said as much in the preface to the 1647 edition, and two of the recipients also remarked on the fact.<sup>10</sup> It should not be supposed that because the book was in print, it was significantly more widely known than the manuscript *Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*: more than ten copies of this manuscript still exist, which may be more than existing copies of the first edition of *De Cive*. If his remarks in the 1647 preface are to be believed,

<sup>8</sup> This was a life-long habit of Hobbes: *Elements of Law, Natural and Politic* was presented to its dedicatee, the earl of Newcastle, in a similar fashion, as was *Leviathan* itself, probably to the king – see my edition of *Leviathan* (2nd edn, Cambridge, 1996), p. lv.

<sup>9</sup> *De Cive: the Latin Version*, p. 300 (letter 2). The phrase 'a few examples' is from *Vitae Hobbianae Auctarium*, Hobbes, *Opera Latina*, p. xxxii. Mersenne also sent a copy of the printed text to Constantine Huygens in The Hague, requesting him to show it to his friends and colleagues (*ibid.*, p. 7). The printed copy has 1642 on its title page, and it was available to be sent to Huygens by May of that year (Hobbes, *Critique du 'De Mundo' de Thomas White*, p. 20). It is worth noting that in his own prose autobiography, Hobbes omitted the 1642 edition of *De Cive* completely (*Opera Latina*, I, p. xv), though he did mention it in his verse autobiography (*ibid.*, p. xc).

<sup>10</sup> '[T]here has appeared here, not indeed among the common sort, but among the choicer spirits a book *De Cive* by an anonymous author; . . . it contains many paradoxes about the state and Religion, and so is not available to everyone . . .': Thomas de Martel to Sorbière, 13 January 1643 (*De Cive: the Latin Version*, p. 300). 'I have seen the book *De Cive* . . . I do not think the book is for sale, but I will find out [*Librum de Cive vidi . . . Librum non puto venalem esse, sed inquiram*]' Hugo Grotius to Willem de Groot, 11 April 1643 (*Grotius, Epistolae quotquot reperiri potuerunt* (Amsterdam, 1687), pp. 951–2). The book also lacks any bookseller's imprint, telling the reader where it might be bought.

Hobbes saw the 1642 edition as a kind of draft, and intended to incorporate the comments of his friends into a final version: the long footnotes added in the 1647 edition represent the elucidations to which he was prompted by their remarks. Moreover, not only the title but a number of passages in the text of the 1642 work refer to the existence of other 'sections': for example, the work begins with the confident claim that

In the previous section the whole of human nature has been described, comprising the faculties of both body and mind; they may all be reduced to four kinds; which are, Physical force, Experience, Reason and Passion. We shall begin the present section with a consideration of the human condition, namely, what attitude men have towards each other, being gifted with these natural endowments.<sup>11</sup>

Hobbes clearly intended the work to be read by people who were aware of what he had argued in the manuscripts of *De Corpore* and *De Homine*.<sup>12</sup>

This was of course not possible for the wider audience of 1647, and indeed Elzevir's resisted using the old title on the ground that it would prejudice sales; Hobbes accordingly excised these references to the earlier sections, and proposed that the title should simply be, as it has in fact always been called, *De Cive*.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, he still believed in 1646 that he could have the other sections ready for printing by the end of the year,<sup>14</sup> and if he could have managed this the three sections would after all have appeared together – this is probably why Elzevir's in the end made a gesture towards the idea of a larger work by calling their version *Elementa Philosophica de Cive*. Elzevir's keen commercial instincts are, incidentally, evident in another feature of the 1647 edition, which much annoyed Hobbes. Hearing that Hobbes had recently been appointed reader in mathematics to the prince of Wales, then living at the exiled English court at St Germain, they promptly had a portrait of Hobbes engraved as a frontispiece with the inscription 'Director of Studies for His Highness the Prince of Wales'. As Hobbes recog-

<sup>11</sup> *De Cive* (1642) 1.1 in the first edition: see *De Cive: the Latin Version*, pp. 90–1. All passages from *De Cive* (*On the Citizen*) are quoted from the present translation.

<sup>12</sup> See also above note 7.

<sup>13</sup> *De Cive: the Latin Version*, p. 302.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

nized when he eventually received a copy of the book, this had the arresting implication that his ideas were officially accepted at the prince's court, so that when

they see his name prefixed to a political theory so abhorrent to the views of almost everyone, his enemies will grandly and even offensively make a boast of the fact that it now seems to demonstrate in advance what sort of right of Sovereignty he expects and is likely to claim for himself.<sup>15</sup>

Hobbes had edgy enough relations with the prince's court,<sup>16</sup> and he was clearly very angry at this piece of tactlessness.

In the end, it took Hobbes many more years before he could bring himself to hand the other sections to a printer. Not until 1655 did *De Corpore* appear, while *De Homine* had to wait until 1658; both were in the end published by the English publisher of *Leviathan* and not by Elzevir's. The three works finally appeared together under their original title *Elementa Philosophiae* in Hobbes's Latin works of 1668, published by Elzevir's principal Dutch competitor, Blaeu's. This long period of tinkering with the texts undoubtedly damaged them: *De Homine*, in particular, is a mere shadow of what might have been expected by a reader of the early manuscript, though even so it does not deserve the neglect which it has suffered at the hands of modern readers.<sup>17</sup>

To understand *De Cive* fully, therefore, it is necessary first to consider (albeit briefly) the ideas of the first two sections of the *Elementa Philosophiae*. Both the early drafts of *De Corpore* and its final version begin with a striking image: in the words of one of those drafts,

If we conceive the world annihilated except one man to whom there would remain ideas or images of all the things he had seen, or perceived by his other senses (that is) a memory and imagination of the *magnitudes, motions, sounds, colours* etc. and likewise of their *order* and *parts*: all which though in truth they would be only ideas and phantasms internally happening and

<sup>15</sup> Hobbes to Sorbière, 22 March 1647, translated in *De Cive: the Latin Version*, pp. 310–11. The Latin original is given at *Correspondence*, Malcolm, pp. 155–7.

<sup>16</sup> See my account of his eventual rupture with the prince in my edition of *Leviathan*, pp. xliii–xliv, lii–liii.

<sup>17</sup> Astonishingly, the first chapters have still not been translated – the only case of a major work by Hobbes which is not completely available in English.

falling to the imaginant himself, nevertheless they would appear as if they were external and *not depending upon the power or virtue of the mind* . . .<sup>18</sup>

This is an idea very similar to Descartes's celebrated 'hyperbolical doubt' about the existence of any material world corresponding to what we observe, and may have been influenced by it. Hobbes's essential thought, which governed all three sections of the *Elementa Philosophiae*, was that there is no way in which we can know anything specific about the external world. We cannot tell whether it contains objects possessing the properties which we think we detect in them, such as shape, size, colour and so on: for all we know, there is indeed *nothing at all* out there, and we are simply 'imagining' an external world of material objects.

An attack of this sort on most kinds of naive realism underpins all Hobbes's work. In the case of physics, he proposed that we should begin all scientific investigations from what we directly and indubitably apprehend, namely our own sense-impressions or internal 'phantasms'. The Cartesians believed the same, but they also believed that by themselves our sense-impressions could not be used as the basis for a true physics, precisely because they might have no correspondence to any real objects, but simply be some invention of our own. Instead, Descartes argued that there had to be an *a priori* proof of God's existence to vindicate the use of sense-impressions as a guide to the real world, for only if there was a benevolent God who would not deceive his creation could we have confidence in the general veracity of our senses. Hobbes deeply disliked this theistic argument, and insisted against Descartes that he had overlooked a vital feature of our sense-impressions. We have direct acquaintance not merely with shape, colour and so on, but also with *change* or *motion*: indeed, if our phantasms lacked this property, they could not be said to be sense-impressions. As Hobbes said in another striking passage,

If we should suppose a man to be made with clear eyes, and all the rest of his organs of sight well disposed, but endued with no other sense; and that he should look only upon one thing,

<sup>18</sup> This is from the early version of *De Corpore* discussed above, note 7. Hobbes, *Critique du 'De Mundo' de Thomas White*, p. 449. Translation by the editor (Richard Tuck).

which is always of the same colour and figure, without the least appearance of variety, he would seem to me, whatsoever others may say, to see, no more than I seem to myself to feel the bones of my own limbs by my organs of feeling; and yet these bones are always and on all sides touched by a most sensible membrane. I might perhaps say he were astonished, and looked upon it; but I should not say he saw it; it being almost all one for a man to be always sensible of one and the same thing, and not to be sensible at all of anything. (*De Corpore* xxv.5)<sup>19</sup>

Our sense-impressions or phantasms themselves therefore exhibit all the properties of what we might term a 'ballistical' system: they have spatial properties and they display change of shape or location, which are features of material objects causally interacting with each other. We cannot conceive of such interactions except in terms of general laws of motion, such as the proposition that nothing can move itself; our thoughts and sense-impressions are thus (on Hobbes's account) to be understood as material objects being moved in accordance with these fundamental laws. This is as far as a well-founded physics can go, however, since there are any number of possible explanations for the movement of a particular body (just as a billiard player can (in theory) make a red ball go in a certain direction and at a certain velocity irrespective of where the cue ball starts on the table). We can make conjectures about the actual physical constitution of the outside world, and we know that it will have to be amenable to ballistical explanations, but it is a mistake to insist upon any particular account of the material world as being true.

According to Descartes, one can observe one's own sense-impressions, like someone in a cinema watching a film, and this observer is the 'I' which cannot be reduced to the material objects in front of it. Moreover, he believed, it is self-evident that this 'I' is free, precisely because it stands aloof from its experiences and is not causally determined by them.<sup>20</sup> Hobbes strenuously denied this: for him, the train of phantasms is all there is, and there is no separate observer. He rejected this notion of self-awareness: 'although

<sup>19</sup> *English Works*, ed. William Molesworth (London, 1839), 1, p. 394.

<sup>20</sup> On this see for example, *Principles of Philosophy*, 1.39, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. and ed. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge, 1984), 1, pp. 205-6.



someone may think that he *was* thinking (for this thought is simply an act of remembering), it is quite impossible for him to think that he is thinking, or to know that he is knowing. For then an infinite chain of questions would arise: "How do you know that you know that you know . . .?"<sup>21</sup> And correspondingly, Hobbes always denied that human beings possessed in this sense a 'will' which was in principle 'free'.

On the other hand, one should not oversimplify the account of human action which he proposed as an alternative to Descartes's. The train of phantasms which constitutes our inner life can have any amount of self-reference, in which earlier phantasms are remembered *as phantasms*, as well as simply recalled; this is the subjective difference, after all, between dreaming and waking – the dream is recalled *as* a dream. Any account which we might want to give of the thought processes which led to a particular decision would be acceptable to Hobbes, as long as we did not suppose the existence somewhere of a disembodied and undetermined 'self'. In particular, it was not the case for Hobbes (as some of his critics asserted) that human beings are simply automata driven by a set of drives of which they are unaware.

He accepted that beneath human action and decision were fundamental motives or appetites, which could not be altered by deliberation. But it is important to recognize that the scope of these fundamental motives was actually, on Hobbes's account, rather small: most of what we conventionally regard as human motivation was, he believed, capable of intentional alteration. As he said in *De Corpore*,

little infants, at the beginning and as soon as they are born, have appetite to very few things, as also they avoid very few, by reason of their want of experience and memory; and therefore they have not so great a variety of animal motion as we see in those that are more grown. For it is not possible, without such knowledge as is derived from sense, that is, without experience and memory, to know what will prove pleasant or hurtful; only there is some place for conjecture from the looks or aspects of things . . . (xxv. 12)<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> This is from his *Objections to Descartes's Meditations, Philosophical Writings*, II, pp. 122–3.

<sup>22</sup> *English Works*, Molesworth, I, pp. 407–8.