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The Hostile Family and the Purpose of the "Natural Kingdom" in Hobbes's Political Thought

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Abstract: In his political writings, Hobbes consistently distinguishes between "natural" and "artificial" commonwealths—those that arise from the family, and those created by mutual covenants. Although he insists that "both have the same right of government," closer examination of Hobbes's accounts of the family reveals that it is a radically deficient model for the state, and that Hobbes was engaged in a polemic against both republicans and absolutists who claimed that parental power was natural, prior to, and even a model for the power of civil sovereigns. For Hobbes, a state based on parental rule is dangerously unstable, exacerbating the mutual fears of parents and children. The "office of the sovereign representative" defuses this conflict, and within the commonwealth, the family is denaturalized and reconstituted as an educative institution whose purpose is to reinforce the artificial sovereign by schooling both parents and children in the miseries of personal rule.

Beginning with the *Elements of Law*, every iteration of Thomas Hobbes's political thought contains a distinction between what he variously calls a "natural kingdom," a "patrimonial kingdom," or a "commonwealth by acquisition," on the one hand, and an "artificial kingdom" or a "commonwealth by institution," on the other (EL 19.11; DC 5.12; L 27.15).[1] The first form is created

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[1]Abbreviations of Hobbes's works are as follows:
EL: *Elements of Law*, ed J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
DC: *De Cive*, ed. Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
L: *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994).
DH: *De Homine*, in *Man and Citizen*, ed. Bernard Gert (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991).

by means of "generation" or conquest, the latter by covenant. Immediately after drawing this distinction in each text, however, Hobbes denies its significance, writing in *Leviathan* that "the rights and consequences of both paternal and despotical dominion are the very same with those of a sovereign by institution, and for the same reasons," and in *De Cive* that, "a patrimonial kingdom… differs from a monarchy by design in origin and manner of formation… but when formed it has all the same properties, and both have the same right of government; they do not need to be discussed separately" (L 20.14; DC 9.10; EL 23.10). The only fundamental difference between the two types of kingdom is that each directs man's fear to different objects: "men who choose their sovereign do it for fear of one another, and not of him whom they institute; but in [a natural kingdom], they subject themselves to him whom they are afraid of" (L 20.2) But if these two kinds of kingdom really "do not need to be discussed separately," then we might wonder why Hobbes persists in doing so, in work after work, despite ample time in between publications to remove so unnecessary a distinction.

Relatively little scholarly attention has been paid to this distinction, which has typically been attributed in passing to Hobbes's desire to extend legitimacy to states founded on the basis of conquest as well as consent.[2] Hobbes does consistently legitimate obedience to existing sovereign power, however it came to be, but he is not simply indifferent to whether citizens *conceive* of their commonwealth as arising by acquisition or by institution. Although he is careful not to exacerbate civil conflict by delegitimating conquerors like Cromwell where they are already in power, his persistent distinction between "natural" and "artificial" kingdoms pits the two possibilities against each other, and draws our attention to the different interactions

[2]Examples of this claim can be found David Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 112–16; R. W. K. Hinton, "Husbands, Fathers and Conquerors," pt. 2, *Political Studies* 16, no. 1 (1968): 55–67; A. P. Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 157; Howard Warrender, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957); and Perez Zagorin, *Hobbes and the Law of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 60–62. For somewhat different suggestions about the purpose of the distinction, see Noel Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 446–48; Robert Kraynak, *History and Modernity in the Thought of Thomas Hobbes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 172–86; and Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, trans. Elsa Sinclair (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). Recently, the distinction has received more concentrated attention in Kinch Hoekstra's and Quentin Skinner's discussions of the way Hobbes may have used it to legitimate Cromwell's de facto authority during the Engagement controversy. See Kinch Hoekstra, "The *De Facto* Turn in Hobbes's Political Philosophy," in *"Leviathan" after 350 Years*, ed. Sorell and Foisneau (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 33–73; Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 287–307.

between fear and pride underlying each.[3] It raises the possibility that while both foundations may issue in "the same rights of government," they do not rest on equally stable passions, and for this reason are not, in Hobbes's estimation, equally effective ways of subduing "the children of pride" and establishing lasting domestic peace.[4]

The distinction between the natural and artificial kingdoms must be read in the light of the psychology that precedes it in each work.[5] As Julie Cooper has pointed out, "Hobbes is pessimistic about the likelihood of vanquishing pride solely through the sovereign's sword," so "lasting security" relies on forces within civil society that continue to condition the passions long after the original foundation of the commonwealth.[6] While the first men who established a civil sovereign to escape "that miserable condition of war" would have viscerally understood the dangers of pursuing their "natural" love of "liberty and dominion over others," subsequent generations reared in the commonwealth are prone to developing all of the same ambitions but none of the restraints provided by direct memory of the dangers of life before the commonwealth (L 17.1). Pride stubbornly resurfaces in each individual "for hardly anyone is so naturally stupid that he does not think it better to rule himself than to let others rule him," and it must be continually suppressed (DC 3.13). The danger of deriving political obligation from "natural" sources like conquest and generation is that these principles are a goad to the proud and ambitious, assuring would-be conquerors that if they only succeed in winning power, legitimacy will follow automatically in its wake. Hobbes's assurance that the obedience due to conquerors and fathers is the same as that due to sovereigns by institution follows from his natural law, but it does not assuage the

[3]Julie Cooper describes the need to simultaneously justify and discourage usurpation as a "competing imperative" in Hobbes's thought: "On the one hand, Hobbes would discredit, and discourage, glory-seeking rebellion. On the other hand, Hobbes concedes the legitimacy of a commonwealth by acquisition to remove any pretext for disobedience on the part of subjects (many of whom live in states founded upon violent conquest)" (Cooper, "Vainglory, Modesty, and Political Agency in the Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes," *Review of Politics* 72, no. 2 [2010]: 257n55).

[4]On Hobbes's radical vision for an "eternal" commonwealth, see Richard Tuck, "The Utopianism of Leviathan," in *"Leviathan" after 350 Years*, 125–38.

[5]I treat Hobbes's works interchangeably here because I can see no clear arc of development in his thought on the family. Following Strauss, I take the primary shift to be towards the increasing impersonality of the sovereign, culminating in the introduction of "office of the sovereign representative" in *Leviathan* (Strauss, *Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 62). The introduction of a representative office is significant because it provides a political solution to the instability of personal rule, but one that cannot be applied to the family, which remains its old, defective self. Another shift is Hobbes's somewhat closer identification of the child and the slave in *Leviathan* than in previous works, where he gives these statuses separate chapters, a shift which I discuss below.

[6]Cooper, "Vainglory, Modesty," 242.

passions that move men to violate the natural law in the first place, and Hobbes is never content to announce the natural law and presume that an orderly commonwealth will fall into place with it.

My contention here is that rather than accepting the family as a model for the state, Hobbes uses the family in his discussions of the "natural kingdom" to challenge the prevailing naturalism of early modern political thought. Because he rejects the natural lawyers' presumption of natural human sociability, his family is neither natural itself, nor a model for political stability. Hobbes reconstructs the prepolitical family from an unsociable psychology and the result is indistinguishable from slavery, demonstrating that "natural" authority—that of fathers and slave-masters—is a seriously defective model for and source of political organization because it stokes the insecurities and ambitions that drive men to conquest and usurpation. By examining how the "rights of government" can actually be executed within the family—that is, by applying Hobbes's psychology of pride and fear to the strictures of family life—we find that the relationship between fathers and children in nature is one of perpetual tension and potential violence that is only defused by the introduction of a distant and impersonal civil sovereign to relieve the father of the burden of ruling absolutely over his resentful children.[7]

After rejecting the family as a model or source for political obligation, Hobbes transforms it into one of the forces that suppress pride after the foundation of the commonwealth. He anticipates that some especially timid men will grasp the logic of Leviathan, but many men's "vain glory" makes them unwilling to resign themselves to submission. "In the state of nature, there is in all men a will to do harm," but this arises from two different causes: for the "aggressive" man, it comes from "vainglory and over-valuation of his own strength," while for the "modest" man, it derives from "the need to defend his property and liberty against the other" (DC 1.4). For those less susceptible to abstract deductions from a state of nature, the Hobbesian family within the commonwealth gives subjects the direct personal experience of patriarchal rule as children, demonstrating its failings to them firsthand, so that they learn to prefer their sovereign's impersonal, indirect, and representative rule to a regime that is nothing more than a magnification of their father's very personal and oppressive rule.

[7]The "impersonality" of the sovereign throughout this essay refers to Hobbes's formal definition of sovereignty as an office of interchangeable occupants. Hobbes pushes sovereign impersonality in *Leviathan* even further than Jean Bodin by describing the office as representing the wills of the people. A monarchical sovereign is no more personal than a sovereign assembly on this account, though both stand above the laws and may apply them partially. Hobbes does include impartiality among the sovereign's duties, though not among the father's (L 30.15–17). For an extended discussion of sovereign impersonality and indirect rule in the Hobbesian state, see Harvey Mansfield, "Hobbes and the Science of Indirect Government," *American Political Science Review* 65, no. 1 (1971): 97–110.

Richard Chapman has noted the odd absence of typical familial features from the Hobbesian family: "Kinship, love, affection, civil marriage, divorce, bastardy, have little to do with the state and consequently hardly exist in Hobbes's conception of the family."[8] This bareness is unique to Hobbes among natural-law thinkers, and it permits the family to recapitulate the logic of the state of nature. Most previous scholars have overlooked the intrafamilial tension in Hobbes and so have mistaken him for a kind of patriarchalist, while those who have noticed something amiss in the Hobbesian family have not shown what larger purpose the family's coldness plays in Hobbes's political theory. I argue here that Hobbes is not a patriarchalist, but that he seeks a conventional foundation for politics that directs subjects' fear away from their representative sovereign, who is their best protection against the cycle of oppression and rebellion that the patriarchal family represents, and against their fellow citizens, whose conquering ambitions are the real danger to them.

Since each of Hobbes's political works contains a version of this polemic against the prevailing natural-law view that the family arises organically in nature and is the original or model human society, I will first elaborate the naturalistic view in order to clarify the position against which Hobbes set his own thought. Then I will reconstruct Hobbes's account of the defects of familial government in nature, and the didactic purpose to which the family is put in civil society, where it schools the dangerous passions that incline men to attempt rebellion and conquest. The advantages of investing sovereignty in an impersonal and representative office are demonstrated by the shortcomings of an analogous office of paternal representative. It is indirect and impersonal sovereign authority and not any ruler conceived as bearing a personal relation of mastery or paternity to his subjects that assuages intrafamilial resentment and sustains long-term peace.

The Natural Family in Early Modern Political Thought

To appreciate the peculiarity of Hobbes's account of the family, we must consider it in the broader context of a tradition that relies on naturalistic accounts of political authority. This tradition either derives political authority from a "natural" source like the family, or models that authority on these relations. Such naturalistic arguments were ubiquitous in early modern political

[8]Richard Chapman, "*Leviathan* Writ Small: Thomas Hobbes on the Family," *American Political Science Review* 69, no. 1 (1975): 78. Although it is dangerous to explain Hobbes's thought in terms of his biography and I do not propose to do so here, one potentially useful datum is that Hobbes's own father abandoned the family and Hobbes was supported by his uncle, an experience which may have diminished his estimation of paternal authority. See John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. John Buchanan-Brown (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 418.

thought, grounding the theories of obligation espoused by partisans of every stripe: royalists and republicans, absolutists and constitutionalists. The naturalness of the family was one point on which even thinkers as disparate as Jean Bodin and Richard Hooker agreed. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century thought, the family was the natural association par excellence: it came into being spontaneously, prior to and potentially independent of any state, and its authority arose from the brute fact of procreation and the most self-evident necessities of survival, whereas political authority was, at best, derivative of paternal authority. The absolutist Bodin argued that the family is "the true image of a Citie, and… so also is the manner of the government of an house or familie, the true modell for the government of a Commonweale."[9] Though there could be many legitimate relationships of command and obedience, "of all these the right and power to command, is not by nature given to any beside the Father, who is the true Image of the great and Almightie God the Father of all things."[10] Hooker came to the opposite political conclusion from similar premises, arguing that, because "to fathers within their private families Nature hath given a supreme power," this natural power was antecedent to politics and required political rulers to obtain the consent of their subjects to govern them.[11]

In the Stuart context, assertions of the naturalness and primacy of the family led to the same set of divergent political conclusions. A patriarchalist argument took shape primarily in royalist writings that co-opted the natural authority of fathers for the political use of monarchs. Among the most prominent expositions of this view was James I's *True Law of Free Monarchy*, which asserted that "by the Law of Nature the King becomes a naturall Father to all his Lieges at his Coronation" and went on to analogize the duties of kings to those of fathers.[12] Robert Filmer famously went even further, breaking down the analogy between fathers and kings and identifying the state with the family simply. "All power on earth… is either derived or usurped from the fatherly power, there being no other original to be found of any power whatsoever.… The power which God himself exerciseth over mankind is by right of

[9]Jean Bodin, *The Six Books of the Commonwealth*, ed. Kenneth McRae (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 8.

[10]Bodin, *Six Books*, 20.

[11]Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1907), 1.10.5. There are too many instances of naturalistic accounts of the family in natural-law thought from this period to include here, and Bodin and Hooker are simply illustrative of the diverse conclusions to which naturalism led. Consider also Johannes Althusius, *Politica*, ed. Frederick Carney (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1995), 2.13–40; Hugo Grotius, *The Laws of War and Peace*, ed. Richard Tuck (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), 2.5; and Francisco Suarez, "On Laws and God the Lawgiver," in *Selections from Three Works of Francisco Suarez*, trans. Williams, Brown, and Waldron (London: H. Milford, 1944), 3.3.

[12]James I, *The True Law of Free Monarchy* (London, 1642), 4.

fatherhood."[13] Henry Parker replied to this royalist analogy not by denying the primacy of the family, but, like Hooker, by claiming that what is natural about the power of fathers cannot be transferred to a king. All familial obligation flows in one direction, from sons to fathers, but kings are by contrast obligated wholly to their subjects, "for its more due in policie, and more strictly to be chalenged, that the King should make happy the People, than the People make glorious the King."[14] Gordon Schochet has shown that the responses to Parker and the broader pamphlet war of the 1640s involved an effort by both sides to describe the family in a manner conducive to their own preferred image of the state, but neither side was willing to abandon the family as *the* image of the first and most natural human society.[15] The family was sacrosanct in its own right and so served as a model for the organization of the state and the nature of political power.

Hobbes's comparison of the natural and artificial kingdoms across his works denied the family this status, and in the context of this tradition, his account of the origin and purpose of the family constitutes an important break with the prevailing views of partisans on both sides of the English Civil War and with the understanding of the relations between the family and the state in the broader early modern discourse. In *De Cive*, Hobbes presents man's fundamental unsociability most straightforwardly, denying that any human fellowship is strictly natural. "Natural love" of others does not motivate us to seek human society, since "by nature, we are not looking for friends but for honor or advantage from them" (DC 1.2). All moral relations must consequently be derived from the memorable image of "men as if they had just emerged from the earth like mushrooms and grown up without any obligation to each other" (DC 8.1). Not only do grown men lack natural obligations, so do women and infants. Although Hobbes continues to call the family "natural" in keeping with the natural-law tradition, it is no longer a natural association in the sense in which that tradition had described it. It is not the spontaneous result of sexual complementarity or a sociable desire in men to pair off and procreate, but a conventional outcome of the same tense interplay between pride and fear, domination and subjection, that characterizes all relationships in Hobbes's state of nature.[16]

[13]Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Writings*, ed. Johann P. Somerville (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 284.

[14]Henry Parker, *Observations upon some of His Majesties late answers and expresses* (London, 1642), 18–19.

[15]Gordon Schochet, *The Authoritarian Family and Political Attitudes in 17th Century England* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1988), 99–114.

[16]Only *after* Hobbes do we find natural lawyers like Samuel Pufendorf and John Locke, both readers of Hobbes, advancing the argument that parental right is derived from consent rather than generation. See John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), II §74;

Because Hobbes devotes no more than a chapter and some scattered remarks in each of his works to the family, scholars have paid this aspect of his thought relatively little attention. Those who have addressed it have tended to class Hobbes among the patriarchalists of his time. Schochet has argued that Hobbes's depiction of the family demonstrates that he was never the radical individualist that contemporaries and later readers took him for, but rather conceived of both nature and the state in terms of patriarchal family units. Fathers acquire sovereignty over their families so rapidly in nature that "'every man' can certainly be understood as 'every father' without changing Hobbes's basic argument.... The elemental social unit for Hobbes was not the individual but the family."[17] Subsequent feminist scholars have also cast Hobbes as either a straightforward patriarchalist or a patriarchalist masquerading as an egalitarian.[18]

This reading runs up against several difficulties, however. To begin with, just as the individual is too weak to survive long before being absorbed into a family, the family in nature is similarly susceptible to immediate absorption into a kingdom (L 20.15). The political power of fathers is thus short-lived and the direct subjection of the individual to a sovereign who overrules his father is soon reestablished.[19] A more fundamental obstacle to classing Hobbes with the patriarchalists is that, in all his writings, paternal dominion is conventional and obtained by consent (L 20.4). Schochet notes this peculiarity, but dismisses its significance in his haste to conclude that Hobbes meant nothing by differentiating the artificial and natural origins of commonwealths.[20] But it is perhaps unwise to downplay Hobbes's insistence that all moral relations must be derived from the image of men as mushrooms. The association most implicated by this effort to root out natural obligation everywhere is that heretofore most natural of all institutions, the family.

Samuel Pufendorf, *The Whole Duty of Man According to the Law of Nature*, trans. David Saunders (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2003), 2.3.

[17]Schochet, *The Authoritarian Family*, 238–340.

[18]See Nancy Hirschmann, *Gender, Class, and Freedom in Modern Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 44–45; Susan Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 198–99; Carole Pateman, "'God Hath Ordained to Man a Helper': Hobbes, Patriarchy and Conjugal Right," *British Journal of Political Science* 19, no. 4 (1989): 445–63. Other efforts to assimilate Hobbes into patriarchalism can be found in Hinton, "Husbands, Fathers and Conquerors," 55–57; Preston King, *The Ideology of Order* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974), 184. By contrast, Chapman and Abbott are more skeptical that Hobbes's particular brand of patriarchalism could be assimilated into any existing tradition, and my argument here is much indebted to their suggestive doubts, discussed below. See Philip Abbott, "The Three Families of Thomas Hobbes," *Review of Politics* 43 (1981): 242–58; Chapman, "*Leviathan* Writ Small."

[19]Nathan Tarcov, *Locke's Education for Liberty* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1999), 40–41.

[20]Schochet, *The Authoritarian Family*, 230–31.

The Hobbesian Family in Nature

Hobbes's far-fetched suggestion that paternal power is not a natural right from generation but derives rather from children's consent to be ruled by their parents, by "either express or by other sufficient arguments declared," is the starting point for understanding Hobbes's strange account of the family (L 20.4). Against the naturalists who claimed that a father's right could be inferred from his generative role, Hobbes tries to show that nature does not convey *any* indisputable claim to rule, since even the spontaneous generation of children—seemingly the most natural of all such claims—results in divided sovereignty. Of the two possible natural sovereigns of a child, the mother plays the more direct (and directly traceable) generative role (DC 9.2; L 10.4–5).[21] The mere act of generation is further devalued by the natural law that permits killing, abandoning, and selling children, so that the office of a parent must hinge on the maintenance rather than the generation of a child (EL 23.8; DC 9.4). Nor does physical strength deliver a title to rule, since the state of nature is a state of equality, and our equality consists in the capacity to threaten another's life and to resent being ruled (DC 1.3, 3.13).

In their capacity to kill, women especially, but also children, aided by weapons, are nearly the equals of adult men. The apparently universal dominance of men over families is not therefore due to any natural superiority, "for there is not alwayes the difference of strength or prudence between the man and the woman, as that the right can be determined without War," but to calcified custom (L 20.4). Women are no *more* entitled to familial sovereignty than men on Hobbes's account, but neither are they less entitled. The point is simply that it is impossible to derive an indisputable title to rule from nature alone but, if the title is not indisputable, it will soon be disputed. Nature grants nothing, and all legitimate power must be based on convention.

Just as there is no natural right to rule on the part of parents, there is no natural duty to obey on the part of children, only the presumption of one by parents. Hobbes briefly raises the possibility that children may grow up to threaten their parents' power, but assures us that the implicit covenant that children make with their parents to obey in exchange for their preservation will avert this outcome, because promise keeping is required by the law of nature and "it cannot be supposed that anyone has given life to anyone that he may both acquire strength as he gets older and have the right to be an enemy" (DC 9.3). Schochet takes this assurance at face value, but Hobbes's account of the nature of childhood should leave us less sanguine.[22] In his

[21]Tarcov (*Locke's Education*, 36) characterizes this line of argument as "*ad hominem*, replying to those who argue for paternal dominion from generation by showing that such considerations would lead instead to maternal dominion." See also King, *Ideology of Order*, 204.

[22]Schochet, *The Authoritarian Family*, 241–42.

Preface to *De Cive*, Hobbes claims that children are "exempt from duties" because they lack reason, and moreover that the earliest signs of infants suggest their strong opposition to parental dominion rather than their acquiescence to it: "Nature prompts" children to "cry and get angry" and even to "beat their own parents" when they do not get "everything they want" (DC Preface). This is certainly not "express" consent, nor is it consent "by other sufficient arguments declared."

A further difficulty with holding children to a supposed covenant made when their parents chose to preserve them arises when we apply Hobbes's logic of contracts. With respect to covenants made in the state of nature, "he which performeth first, does but betray himself to his enemy" (DC 2.9; L 14.18). But what is a parent but the first performer in any covenant with a child, who cannot comprehend an obligation to obey for many years to come? After he states that children can only perform their ends of the familial contract much later, Hobbes denies the validity of contracts promising only future performance, apparently invalidating the child's contract (DC 2.6).

Alternately, we might infer consent from children's gratitude for their birth or nurture, but Hobbes rules this out as well. Children are not conceived for their own benefit, but are the incidental byproducts of their parents' "natural lust," so birth itself is no gift (L 13.11). Nurturing and education may be a "free-gift," undertaken "in hope to gain thereby friendship, or service from another," but the extent of an obligation arising from a gift is limited (L 14.12). It may be the case that, although it cannot strictly *obligate* it, a good upbringing can naturally *incline* a child towards obedience because "to have received benefits from one, whom we acknowledge for superior, inclines to love" (L 11.7). Such inclinations may suffice to bring about familial harmony for a brief period in the child's infancy, while the superiority of his parents is easier to acknowledge. But the difficulty with relying on this inclination appears immediately: children soon grow and discover both their greater equality with their parents and the enormity of the gift their parents have given them by caring for them. But Hobbes tells us that "to have received from one, to whom we think ourselves equal, greater benefits than there is hope to requite, disposeth to counterfeit love; but really secret hatred. … For benefits oblige, and obligation is thraldom; and unrequitable obligation perpetual thraldom; which is to one's equal, hateful" (L 11.7). If children's love for parents, based on gratitude for a gift, can so rapidly turn into resentment and hate, then early inclinations of affection are too volatile to be a source of long-term obligation.[23]

[23]Tarcov points out that even the "natural affection" (demoted to "natural inclination" in L 20.4) of parents is a species of "charity," which flows from the self-aggrandizing impulse to feel one's power over another. See the useful discussions of gratitude to parents in Abbott, "The Three Families," 246–47; Tarcov, *Locke's Education*, 35–40. In his discussion of Hobbesian international relations, Noel Malcolm suggests that gratitude for benefits received is specific to the "trust"

Since children cannot and do not appear to consent at the point when rule over them commences, they are in an important way identical to prisoners of war who are made into slaves, their obligation stemming ultimately not from the gift of their birth, as other natural-law thinkers argued, but instead from their rescue from death.[24] In *De Cive*, Hobbes says of the foster child that "he has been saved, and owes everything to the one who saved him by looking after him; he has a foster-child's debt as to a mother and a slave's debt as to a master" (DC 9.4). In *De Cive*, Hobbes divides slaves into two types: the unbound slave, who has expressly agreed to surrender his liberty to save his life, and the "workhouse slave," who never consents and whose labor is consequently extracted by force (DC 8.1–2). The situation of the workhouse slave complicates the simple liberty-for-life exchange by offering a third option of preserving enemies who never renounced their liberty, presumably for the labor that can be had from them or from the hope that they will eventually submit, despite the ongoing threat they pose to the master's life. "The obligation of a slave to a master does not arise simply because he spared his life, but because he does not keep him bound" and "no agreement exists except where there is trust in the party who makes the agreement; and a trust cannot be violated which is not given" (DC 8.2, 8.9). What sort of slave is a child? Because he does not initially submit to his masters and so cannot be trusted, the child's status parallels that of the workhouse slave: he is preserved by his parents under suspicion that he might kill them at first opportunity, and they are equally free to kill him at any time.[25]

established between sovereign and subject in the commonwealth by institution, but not by acquisition, which is to say, not in the family (Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes*, 447).

[24]Hobbes is most explicit about the indistinctness of childhood and servitude in *Leviathan*, where they are discussed in the same chapter, but in *De Cive* and *Elements of Law,* the parallels are already quite clear. For a fuller discussion of Hobbes's conflation of family with servitude, see Hinton, "Husbands, Fathers and Conquerors," and Pateman, "'God Hath Ordained a Helper,'" 455–58.

[25]This is particularly the case in *De Cive*, where there is no suggestion that children consent even tacitly to their parents, and the only contract parents are offered is thoroughly hypothetical: "If then [the mother] raises [the child], she is understood to be doing so on the condition that he shall not be her enemy" (DC 9.3). In effect, even the tacit consent of *Leviathan* is only such a hypothetical assurance, since the child cannot be expected to understand these "conditions" attached to his upbringing until later. A child, and especially one with a more "modest" than "aggressive" disposition, may consent to his parents at some time after his initial subjection, as Hobbes says the workhouse slave may also do. But the difficulty with Hobbes's contractual family is not that no child will ever submit, but that consent cannot be inferred in infancy and Hobbes's psychology of resentment indicates the imprudence of presuming the unproblematic submission of older children, contrary to his explicit assurances in L 20 that children are easily ruled. In *Behemoth*, for example, Hobbes describes adolescence as "that time wherein children are least governable," driving parents to send

One possible reason for Hobbes's reticence about the potential rebelliousness of children is that the family was a live model for the state in this period, particularly for royalists. If Hobbes had expressed open doubt that children were obligated by nature to their parents, he would be read—not without warrant—as licensing regicide.[26] As we have seen, Hobbes treads a fine line between criticizing the naturalistic conception of politics and condoning rebellion against existing states founded on it. Nevertheless, Pufendorf, who followed Hobbes closely but diverged from certain aspects of his depiction of natural man, made explicit the instability of Hobbesian covenants held together solely by fear of other men's power. Lacking conscience (which Hobbes, unlike Pufendorf, denied to natural men), Hobbesian rulers would exploit their subjects, while subjects "would always be seeking Opportunities to rebel." This hostility would be replicated within the family: "The same would be the Case of married Persons; upon any slight Quarrel, they would be suspicious lest one should make away the other by Poison or some such clandestine Way; and the whole Family would be liable to the like Danger."[27] Pufendorf lays bare the discrepancy between Hobbes's assurances of obedience to would-be parents and the logical implications of his psychology of fear.

If in fact "hardly anyone is so naturally stupid that he does not think it better to rule himself than to let others rule him," then the more a father imposes on his children against their will (which is directed at the acquisition of "everything," and thus must be radically curbed), the more he will be resented, for "anger… is nothing but the appetite or desire of overcoming present opposition" (EL 9.5). Worst of all for fathers, their rule is that much more oppressive for being personal and constantly at hand. Since "men who choose their sovereign do it for fear of one another, and not of him whom they institute," their sovereign is a savior, but in in the natural kingdom, "they subject themselves to him whom they are afraid of" (L 20.2). The father is the direct and sole object of his children's fear,

them to the university "to save themselves the trouble of governing them at home" (*The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. William Molesworth, vol. 4 [London: Bohn, 1840], 347).

[26]As the responses of royalists like Clarendon to *Leviathan* demonstrated, even what Hobbes did say was enough to raise suspicion. What Clarendon found most objectionable in Chap. 20 was the assertion that original paternal dominion relied on any kind of contract, since contract is revocable. To further claim that there are no natural grounds of obedience to this contract would be beyond the pale (Edward Hyde, *A brief view and survey of the dangerous and pernicious errors to church and state, in Mr. Hobbes's book, entitled Leviathan* [Oxford, 1676], 67).

[27]Pufendorf, *The Whole Duty of Man*, 1.4.9.

and, unlike the civil sovereign, his constant presence constantly reminds them of it.

Given how tenuous the assurance of obedience to parents in nature turns out to be, it is not entirely clear why parents should bother to preserve their children in the first place, rather than exposing them and avoiding both the expenditure of upbringing and the threat that they may pose when they grow older. It is not natural love that moves them to this, for "natural affection" in Hobbes only accounts for a preference for one's own children over those of strangers (L 19.22; DC 9.18). The "natural inclination of the sexes, one to another, and to their children" is too weak to ensure that either parent will actually care for the child, a notable contrast to the strong form that natural familial love takes in other early modern theorists like Locke and Bodin (L 20.4).[28]

Hobbes does not offer a rationalization of maintaining children in nature, largely because the decision appears to be irrational. Or, more precisely, it is based on the same vain calculation that propels men into conquest to enhance their personal security, to "seek allies, so that if we must have war, it will not be a war against all men nor without aid." But the conqueror's calculation is short-sighted, as Hobbes indicates by immediately offering an alternative to conquest—compact—that has the same effect "without violence" (DC 1.14). If the conqueror fails to see his advantage in such a compact, he must soon discover that the burdens of preserving hostile dependents may outweigh the benefits. Amassing children and servants is a form of self-aggrandizement, one which increases the sovereign's power, but at the price of his security, since he is forced to surround himself with subjects whom he subordinated in that "supreme stage of fearfulness" inspired by the prospect of imminent death rather than the foresighted calculation that the firmest peace in a war of all against all is achieved by a covenant with all, not with the temporarily strongest among them. This, of course, is precisely the distinction between natural and artificial commonwealths. Although Hobbes is careful to assure potential fathers and masters that a covenant made under duress is perfectly binding according to the laws of nature, everything in his psychology suggests that no one forced into this situation will stop resenting it and desiring escape.[29] Having rejected love and piety

[28]Locke's family is as conventional as Hobbes's, but is held together by the strong natural desire of parents to preserve their offspring (Locke, *Two Treatises*, I §97; II §§63, 67, 75, 170). Bodin, like Hobbes, proposes to extend the power to kill children to fathers, but assumes that the strength of parental affection will restrain its abuse, for "the real danger lies in the temptation of parents to be too partial" (Bodin, *Six Books*, 1.4).

[29]Jean Bethke Elshtain has said that "the existence of families does not succeed in taming the savage heart of Hobbesian man, in part because with the birth of each child, the state of nature, a seething within, is reproduced" (Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981], 110).

as grounds or buttresses for familial obligation, Hobbes substantially diminishes the fortifications holding families together against internal conflicts of wills.

Instead of dwelling on the potential hostility of children, Hobbes emphasizes the expansive powers parents wield over them: "They may alienate them… by selling or giving them in adoption or servitude to others; or may pawn them for hostages, kill them for rebellion, or sacrifice them for peace" (EL 23.8). Neither does Hobbes raise any explicit difficulty about the conflict between a father's right to kill his children if he should suspect them of disobedience and the potential obstacles to his ability to exercise that right. He proceeds as though the fear of death at paternal hands alone is enough to keep children in line. However, when Hobbes says that the right of the sovereign can never reach far enough to compel someone to submit voluntarily to his own death, this caveat extends to children, for "no one, whether subject or child of the family or slave, is prevented by the threat of being punished by his commonwealth or father or master, however severe he may be, from doing all he can and trying every move that is necessary to protect his life and health" (DC 9.9; L 21.11). Like condemned criminals, children find their right to self-preservation at odds with their fathers' unlimited rights to punish them. In the example Hobbes uses to illustrate this conflict—the criminal being led to the gallows—the solution is provided by the overwhelming force at the sovereign's disposal to impose his death sentences (L 24.29).[30] But in the closer and less heavily guarded quarters of the private home, where a man is outnumbered by his children and where there is no commonwealth behind him to enforce his judgments, the father may discover himself a much less effective executioner than the civil sovereign, and his power over his children that much less secure precisely because his subjects see that he cannot easily enforce his threats.[31] Here again, it is the personality of the familial sovereign that endangers him, because he is the particular object of his children's resentment, and they see that by killing him alone, they regain their entire liberty, whereas the assassination of a civil sovereign will only result in the substitution of a new man into his office.

[30]Thomas Schrock has suggested that these two rights—the right of the sovereign to punish by death and the right of the subject to resist death—are in principle irreconcilable. Whether or not that is theoretically the case, the conflict between them certainly poses a much greater *practical* problem if it should arise in the domestic context and pit a man against his children. See Thomas Schrock, "The Rights to Punish and Resist Punishment in Hobbes's *Leviathan*," *Western Political Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (1991): 853–90.

[31]Thus, as Abbott points out, "the threat of murder is much more likely within the household, both because of opportunity and motive, than from without at the hands of a marauding stranger" (Abbott, "The Three Families of Hobbes," 248).

None of this is to suggest that Hobbes denies the possibility that some natural families could be pleasant, or that parents may act against their calculated self-interest, trust their children, and rule them benevolently. Hobbes says that men in general do not act from "natural love" towards others but, just as they might be more submissive children, the "modest" men described in *De Cive* may well be benevolent parents. However, parental benevolence does not clearly relieve familial tension because it does not guarantee that children will respond in kind. Hobbes points out that voluntary benevolence in nature is foolish when everyone is motivated primarily by suspicion and fear; men will only take advantage of it by acting on their natural love of "liberty and dominion over others" (L 17.1). Very young children may perceive their own weakness and need relative to their parents and submit to their care, but Hobbes's psychology suggests that they will outgrow the self-perception of their weakness long before they outgrow their actual weakness. The tendency to overestimate our power manifests itself as early as we are capable of imagining the "fiction… of actions done by ourselves, which never were done," which is to say, as early as we are able to imagine (EL 9.1). Parents may attempt to forestall their children's resentment by indulging them, but in addition to the immediate dangers to which this exposes them by contributing to their children's delusions of power, an undisciplined upbringing may only intensify their children's impatience for dominion of their own. Since Hobbes grants fathers in nature absolute power over the lives and property of all their descendants for the duration of their lives, children impatient for independence are the last thing a paternal sovereign needs (L 20.8). The state of war is thus as capable of re-entering the household through paternal benevolence as through paternal harshness.

If we follow Hobbes's logic past his superficial assurances that children and subjects conquered in war are obliged to obey, it turns out that the gamble of preserving a child in order that he may grow up to be the father's ally in the war of all against all is much riskier than Hobbes explicitly allows. The natural family is unstable, and only questionably superior to solitude for both parents and children. But since solitude is unavailable, the family is very instructive to both parents and children about the dangers of personal rule. Hobbes anticipates that the resentment aroused by chafing under the will of his paternal master will show the child his need of the "artificial commonwealth" by making evident the benefits of erecting an impersonal ruler and being subject to his distant rule by means of civil laws rather than to the direct and persistent blows of his father's lash. At the other end, the Hobbesian father will discover that acquiring and ruling a patrimonial kingdom is no guarantee of personal security, and may even compound his danger. The new fears introduced by the experience of ruling subjects who are always poised to rebel demonstrate to him the futility of trying to attain security in nature by conquest. Where it is not immediately obvious that our real enemy is not simply the strongest individual around, but "each other," the family in nature demonstrates at least that the strongest individual

is not as strong as he or the subjects who grudgingly submitted to him had hoped.

The Hobbesian Family in the Commonwealth

Hobbes's political project has its basis in man's most fundamental passions, but these passions require education, and life in a family is the basis of this education: "I ground the civil right of sovereigns, and both the duty and liberty of subjects, upon the known natural inclinations of mankind, and upon the articles of the law of nature; of which no man, that pretends but reason enough to govern his private family, ought to be ignorant" (L, R&C.13). Man's natural fear of death only shows him the necessity of *submitting* to a conqueror, whereas to understand the superiority of *creating* a common power by means of voluntary covenants requires greater foresight and more sophisticated reason, and grasping this reason is the essential education of childhood. Indeed, the primary distinction between a child and an adult consists in the adult's foresight and ability to restrain immediate impulses: "An evil man is like a sturdy boy, or a man of a childish mind, and evil is simply want of reason at an age when it normally accrues to men by nature governed by discipline and experience of harm" (DC, Preface). Developing the specific form of reason that can grasp abstract duty, and in particular the duty to keep covenants, is the most basic aim of the Hobbesian education, and the means of its development is "discipline and experience of harm"—both of which the family within the commonwealth is well equipped to provide.[32]

Family life in the Hobbesian commonwealth is less harsh than in nature because its stakes are lower. Fathers "resign that absolute power" of life and death over their children to a civil sovereign, who is a more effective guarantor of it than they ever were (L 30.11). The original contract children supposedly made with their parents is now superseded by the contract that establishes the civil sovereign, so that where it previously existed by covenant, the family now exists solely by permission of the sovereign (L 22.26). Families are "united in one person representative" under fathers, whose position turns into a kind of administrative office, subordinate to civil sovereignty and tasked with carrying out certain educative functions which contribute to the maintenance of the state (L 22.26).

[32]More particularly, it is the duty to perform (and for all subsequent generations, to understand and affirm) the original covenant that forms the artificial commonwealth, since that is the only covenant made from hope for future goods rather than for relief from immediate fear, so it is the most difficult covenant to secure, since "if other men will not lay down their right as well as he, then there is no reason for any one to divest himself of his; for that were to expose himself to prey, which no man is bound to, rather than to dispose himself to peace" (L 14.5).

The father thus occupies a status analogous to that of the civil sovereign, an office of the paternal representative, so to speak, and so offers a course in comparative government for his children: by whom would they prefer to be ruled, him or their distant sovereign? Earlier scholars have argued that the Hobbesian family is a straightforward replica of the commonwealth—that it is a "Leviathan writ small" and that "the father acts as a placeholder for the sovereign"—but this is not quite the case.[33] The family is indeed a replica of the commonwealth by acquisition: "a great family, if it be not part of some commonwealth, is of itself, as to the rights of sovereignty, a little monarchy" (L 20.15; DC 9.10, 8.1). But the possibility of conceiving of a state as a commonwealth by institution and sovereignty as an impersonal and representative office opens a new political horizon with which fatherhood, because it must always be personal rule, cannot be identical. In any commonwealth large enough that subjects would not expect to know their civil sovereign personally, the father is not a placeholder but an alternative to the sovereign.

Despite the reduction in actual paternal power in the commonwealth, Hobbes insists that children must still be "taught that originally the father of every man was also his sovereign lord, with power over him of life and death" (L 30.11). Indeed, this is the *only* lesson that Hobbes expressly demands that parents teach their children, leaving them otherwise free to "institute their children as they themselves think fit" (L 21.6). The reason Hobbes prioritizes this lesson, which is after all an anachronism by the time it is delivered to those already living in commonwealths, is that it reliably inclines children to resent their fathers. The civil sovereign might hold actual power of life and death over them, but he is a distant, disinterested executioner who acts for the most part according to promulgated civil laws (L 30.15–17). The sovereign cannot see a child's every indiscretion, but the father is omnipresent in his children's lives, molding them according to what appears to his children to be his own arbitrary will (even when it is actually the sovereign's decrees, of which the children are ignorant) and doing so "by the rod" (DH 13.4). He performs all the difficult work of fitting them out for society, whereas the sovereign simply receives them into citizenship, fully formed in habits of obedience, when they reach the age of majority (DH 13.3).[34]

[33]Chapman, "*Leviathan* Writ Small"; Teresa Bejan, "Teaching the Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Education," *Oxford Review of Education* 36 (2010): 619.

[34]Fathers need not be savage with their children, and Hobbes recommends that they soften their delivery when compelling their children to perform "sour labour," which "always humanity requireth to be sweetened in the delivery, by encouragement, and in the tune and phrase of counsel, rather than in harsher language of command" (L 25.9). Nonetheless, Hobbes nowhere recommends laxity in discipline or excusing children from "sour labour."

Imagining their fathers originally invested with the power of life and death over them allows children to understand the dangers of personal rule and to be grateful that someone has since stripped their own fathers of it. And what do children have to thank for this reprieve but the generosity of the civil sovereign? The early education of children by their parents thus turns out to be a soft recapitulation of the conditions of nature, so that the experience of family life reproduces the logic of the commonwealth for every child. Hinton describes the arrangement as one in which "even in civil society, there was so much of nature in the relationships in the family that one could easily see (Hobbes was in effect saying) the true principles involved."[35] Family life rationalizes a preference for the civil sovereign's authority over the father's, and reinforces the primacy of the commonwealth over the family by teaching the child that he has more to fear from his parents than from the sovereign. Children come to appreciate the curbs that the sovereign's law places on what would otherwise have been their fathers' complete power over them, and to anticipate the day they are freed from their fathers to be subject only to a distant and largely noninterfering master. Chapman understates this point when he observes that "though Hobbes teaches that the power of the sovereign and the father is the same (at different times), the child possibly learns to be grateful for the rather more remote and abstract sovereign."[36] Even in the commonwealth, the lessons of the state of nature are an essential component of education.

As in nature, however, the question of parental motivation arises once more in the commonwealth. Now that children no longer appear as a means of increasing men's power and securing their protection, why should adults bother with them? Hobbes acknowledges that stripping fathers of substantive power in the commonwealth might discourage childbearing, and offers honor in its place: "For to relinquish such a right [to honor] was not necessary to the institution of sovereign power, nor would there be any reason why any man should desire to have children, or to take the care to nourish and instruct them, if they were afterwards to have no other benefit from them than from other men" (L 30.11). To determine whether this exchange of power for honor is profitable—or, more precisely, what sort of men might think it profitable—we must return to Hobbes's exposition of the significance of honor. Honor is "the acknowledgement of power," as Hobbes puts it succinctly in the *Elements of Law* (EL 8.5; L 10.16–35). Out of the expanded catalogue of honor's forms in *Leviathan*, the one most salient for children is obedience, but "no man obeys them, whom they think have no power to help, or hurt them" (L 10.20). Yet a father's power to help or hurt his children diminishes over time, so that it would seem that the scant honor due to parents by their adult children would hardly be worth the effort.

[35]Hinton, "Husbands, Fathers and Conquerors," 56.
[36]Chapman, "*Leviathan* Writ Small," 90.

However, one of the forms that power takes in Hobbes's writings is knowledge. Parents retain this form of power over their children so long as they continue to educate them, meriting honor in return: "To teach or persuade are honourable, because they be signs of knowledge" (EL 8.5; L 10.27–30).[37] Hobbes tries to resolve the problem of motivating parents while curtailing their discretionary authority over children not through any increase in parental authority, which would encroach on the sovereign's power, but by rewarding the civic equivalent of preservation in nature: education. Greater experience of the world is the only power that adults wield over children, and passing it on is the only means by which they may hope for honor from them. There is further incentive to educate well, since the better the education the parents bestow, the longer their power and honor will last. This configuration of parental motives harmonizes with Hobbes's political aims: education is the means by which children are made "fit for society," since they are certainly not born that way (DC 1.2). And it is an important rejoinder to the naturalistic tradition which Hobbes is opposing: it is the first instance when paternal authority, denaturalized and stripped of its robust coercive power for the sake of the security of the state, is converted into a pedagogical prerogative, so that parents gain and maintain a hold on their children exclusively by educating them.

Still, since honor does diminish with power, and even power as greater knowledge wanes as the child reaches adulthood, expending a great deal of energy on one's children in the hope of lasting honor from them is not a very reliable investment. This only becomes evident, however, through a rational calculation of the costs and benefits of childrearing, but it is not the most rational among men but rather the most proud who benefit the most from the educative function of family life. The "aggressive" men of *De Cive* who overestimate their strength, and who in *Leviathan* "take pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, which they pursue farther than their security requires," are the most important targets of this training (L 13.4). They pose the greatest threat to established commonwealths, since they are least able to appreciate the peace and stability afforded by a sovereign, and most inclined to believe themselves powerful enough to rule their own kingdoms rather than accept the status of a mere subject in another's. For such glory-seeking men, the mere hope of honor may well be sufficient motivation to beget a "little commonwealth" of infantile subjects, while the

[37]The education I am referring to throughout this discussion is basic upbringing, not the more advanced education in theological and philosophical doctrine with which Hobbes is elsewhere concerned. These educations are connected, but I cannot take up the latter here. For more detailed discussions of advanced education, see Bejan, "Teaching the Leviathan"; Richard Tuck, "Hobbes on Education," in *Philosophers on Education: New Historical Perspectives*, ed. Amelie Rorty (New York: Routledge, 1998), 147–55; Geoffrey Vaughan, *Behemoth Teaches Leviathan* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007).

experience of trying to govern smaller and more numerous versions of their truculent selves will be a lesson about the perpetual insecurity of the natural kingdom. Those who can grasp this logic abstractly might avoid the burdens of a family, as Hobbes himself did.

Conclusion

When scholars call Hobbes a patriarchalist or allege that the family is his primary unit of analysis, they presume not only the existence but the *effectiveness* of paternal rule in nature. But Hobbes's account of the mechanics of the family suggests a different and more precarious situation for fathers than traditional patriarchalism allowed. Ambitious men can come to power over such "little commonwealths," but administering the office of the paternal representative proves a more trying task. Although the Hobbesian father is introduced as an analogue to the civil sovereign, his effectual authority is hampered by the conditions by which he gained power. He cannot hope to benefit from the sovereign's impersonality and the security that arises from indirect rule. He is personal, and personally competing with any other man who can usurp his place by rendering greater benefits to his children. So long as he maintains control of these children, he is locked in a potentially deadly war of wills with them. His children, in turn, fear his power, but their fear breeds resentment at least as reliably as it induces outward submission, and their natural right and propensity to resist his attempts on their lives are as threatening to the father's security as his *ius vitae ac necis* is to theirs.

This standoff is constructed to be educative—it supports the commonwealth by giving obstreperous men, most of them governed by their passions, an education in contrary passions; the proud and strong are shown the wisdom of submission. In the family, they experience the consequences of their vainglory directly, and their instinctive fear and desire are trained up into rational hope that making and keeping mutual covenants with one's enemies to establish a common power is a more reliable means to peace than the irrational effort to subjugate all enemies to themselves, or to be subjugated by them.

That these peculiar origins of the family ultimately give way to a traditional outcome—a family subject to a father who is in turn subject to a civil sovereign—should not mislead us into seeing Hobbes's aim as anything but a complete reversal of naturalistic arguments that the family should be a mirror for the state. Starting from men as mushrooms with no moral obligations to others, Hobbes shows that because nature conveys no clear right to rule and no one naturally desires to be ruled, the family cannot arise by any means other than force, resulting in an unstable arrangement founded in fear and hatred of its master. Like many natural-law thinkers and their most extreme exponent, Robert Filmer, Hobbes asserts that there is no essential difference between a family and a state, or at least a certain kind of state.

Unlike Filmer, Hobbes uses this analogy to show how unstable a state modeled on the family is compared with impersonal, indirect, and representative government. The artificial kingdom is the political arrangement that is best suited to the unsociable nature of man, to man as a "mushroom," because it more reliably tames his pride.

Hobbes was quite willing to abolish other subpolitical associations apt to interfere with the sovereign. He likened corporations, the "many lesser commonwealths in the bowels of the greater," to "worms in the entrails of a natural man" (L 29.21).[38] Yet the family, though it too is a "lesser commonwealth," need not be simply abandoned because, as a miniature natural kingdom, it offers a useful education in the defects of natural kingdoms. The equivalence that Hobbes maintains between fathers and sovereigns is a didactic illusion—the tale told to children about their fathers' original power, which is designed to teach them the wisdom of submitting themselves to a civil sovereign by demanding that both sovereign and father demonstrate their respective powers so that it might become clear by contrast how much worse it is to be ruled by fathers than by sovereigns.

Hobbes is not dishonest when he insists that there is no need to dwell on the distinction between natural and artificial kingdoms, since the difference of foundation is indeed immaterial to the rights enjoyed by sovereigns. Only they will not necessarily have equal success in exercising these rights. He admits that most present commonwealths originated as natural kingdoms, but the history of such kingdoms, including especially the recent history of England, demonstrates that naturalistic conceptions of the state only beget endless wars and rebellions based on misguided claims to rule arising from natural relations of generation and conquest, and the only hope for peace is to suppress these "natural" ties which previous thinkers hoped to fortify. By failing to take Hobbes's insistence on this distinction seriously, scholars like Schochet not only underestimate Hobbes's individualism, but fail to see his aversion to paternal power.

Hobbes's radicalism lies not in his claim that the state is an artificial construction, but in his claim that the family is equally artificial, and an unstable and dangerous institution at that. But Hobbes's attack on the family goes deeper than demonstrating its shortcomings as a model for the state. If all human relations are founded on the same artificial principle, then they are also morally interchangeable. Against naturalists who saw the family as the basic and inviolable component of human society, Hobbes claims that once a state composed of more than one father is achieved—either by conquest or by institution—the family is no longer a necessary constitutive element,

[38]On Hobbes and associations, see Richard Boyd, *Uncivil Society* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004), chap. 1.

since there are properly no families unless they are instituted or affirmed by the sovereign.[39]

What is really natural about the "natural kingdom" is not that it arises organically or without violence, but that it is the form of government that Hobbesian man, propelled by pride and desire to dominate, most instinctively seeks to establish. Precisely because of this, it is the most unstable and dangerous regime, rather than the strongest and most lasting one, as the naturalistic tradition, and particularly the royalist exponents of that tradition, had asserted. The impulses it stokes are those of the state of nature, where unlimited crime is justifiable self-defense in the face of unlimited danger, and these are precisely the passions which Hobbes is most concerned to stifle by teaching men that it is better to surrender their natural liberty for the sake of security than to pursue security by subjugating others to themselves. Legitimating sitting usurpers is a temporary panacea, but the long-term goal is to suppress conquering desires in citizens by means of a new education that includes the experience of the denaturalized family and leads citizens to adopt a view of their state as the product of mutual covenants. All existing states may have begun as natural kingdoms, but it is not the state's origins that matter, but where our fears in it are finally directed, and the experience of a Hobbesian family life disabuses us of much of the loyalty and gratitude we may have been inclined to reserve for those closest to us, directing these passions instead to the distant civil sovereign. Thus every state, if it hopes to avert ceaseless internal turmoil, must eventually encourage its citizens to think of themselves as subjects of an artificial kingdom.

[39]This does not of course mean that there are states devoid of families, only that the family is no more essential to the Hobbesian state than the university or any other subgovernmental body. Chapman draws a similar but less drastic conclusion about the state's precedence in his observation that, for Hobbes, "it is not that the state is an extension of the family; it was Filmer, not Hobbes, who saw the state as the family writ large. Hobbes almost never finds the family in the state; the family is the model only in questions of intestate succession. In all other cases the state is the model for the family" ("*Leviathan* Writ Small," 78). On the contingency of the family within the state, see Tarcov, *Locke's Education*, 42.