FEAR, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE STATE
Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss, and the Revival of Hobbes in Weimar and National Socialist Germany

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> It is striking that one of the most consequential representatives of [the] abstract scientific orientation of the seventeenth century [Thomas Hobbes] became so personalistic. This is because as a juristic thinker he wanted to grasp the reality of societal life just as much as he, as a philosopher and a natural scientist, wanted to grasp the reality of nature. . . . [J]uristic thought in those days had not yet become so overpowered by the natural sciences that he, in the intensity of his scientific approach, should unsuspectingly have overlooked the specific reality of legal life.[1]
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> *Carl Schmitt,* Political Theology *(1922)*

> In the light of Hobbes's natural science, man and his works become a mere phantasmagoria. Through Hobbes's natural science, "the native hue" of his political science "is sicklied o'er with the pale cast" of something which is reminiscent of death but utterly lacks the majesty of death—of something which foreshadows the positivism of our day. It seems then that if we want to do justice to the life which vibrates in Hobbes's political teaching, we must understand that teaching by itself, and not in the light of his natural science. Can this be done?[2]
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> *Leo Strauss, "On the Basis of Hobbes's Political Philosophy" (1959)*

In the passages cited above, a master and a student assert the existence of a dissociation, if not a divorce, between that which is natural-scientific and that which is "personalistic," "human," "specifically real," "alive" within the

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philosophy of Thomas Hobbes. But the question with which the second quote concludes might lead the reader to assume that even after the lapse of the almost forty years that separates the statements, the master's proposition had yet to be fully demonstrated, and moreover, that the student recognizes the problematic nature of such an assertion, despite his obvious sympathies with it.

Carl Schmitt, in his Weimar writings as they pertain to Hobbes, particularly in *The Concept of the Political*, felt the need to emphasize this supposed distinction or opposition in work of the great seventeenth-century English political theorist. This project was subsequently taken up by Leo Strauss in *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* as a result of his intellectual exchange with Schmitt over "the concept of the political." As Hobbes remarked, "The Passion to be reckoned upon, is Fear" (I, 14, 99),[3] and both interpreters recognize something vital, substantive, and fundamentally human in Hobbes's grounding of the state in the fear of death—or as Strauss repeatedly emphasizes, the fear of *violent* death. On the eve of Weimar's collapse, they sought to retrieve this primal source of political order and free it from the elements that Hobbes himself had found necessary to employ to construct a state on this foundation—natural science and technology. Schmitt and Strauss saw in these latter elements the very cause of the breakdown—the "neutralization"—of that which they were intended to help build, the modern state. The particular sociopolitical situation of Weimar—violence exercised by private groups, a widespread perception of technology as a "runaway" phenomenon, and so on—rendered it a critical moment to reintroduce the issue of fear and the issue of science, and consequently to reformulate Hobbes and the intellectual foundation of the state.

But, I will suggest, the issues of fear, violence, technology, and the state could not be so easily distinguished within Hobbes's thought, and in light of the emergence of National Socialism, both Schmitt and Strauss felt compelled, in subsequent works such as *The Leviathan in The State Theory of Thomas Hobbes* and *Natural Right and History*, either to qualify significantly or abandon completely this approach to Hobbes—in retrospect, an approach with ominous implications.[4]

SCHMITT'S THE CONCEPT OF THE POLITICAL *(1932)*

In *Der Begriff des Politischen*,[5] Carl Schmitt sets forth his most famous thesis on the essence of politics: "The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy" (*CP*, 26). Yet despite the apparent novelty of this proposition, one

finds the shadow of Thomas Hobbes cast quite prominently over this famous treatise. As Hobbes himself had maintained, in humanity's natural condition, in the state of nature, "every man to every man, for want of a common power to keep them all in awe is an Enemy" (I, 15, 102).[6] Indeed, Schmitt's friend/enemy distinction is intended to serve a theoretical-political role analogous to Hobbes's state of nature.

If Hobbes predicated the modern state on the state of nature, Schmitt declares that "the concept of the state presupposes the concept of the political." And any inquiries made into the "essence" of the state that do not first take this foundation into consideration would be premature (*CP*, 19). Questions as to whether the state is "a machine or an organism, a person or an institution, a society or a community, an enterprise or a beehive"—questions in which Schmitt will eventually become quite interested, as we will see—must be provisionally set aside (*CP*, 19).

Schmitt thus conceives of his formulation of "the political" as an "Archimedean point" not unlike that which Hobbes sought to locate in the state of nature:

> Insofar as it is not derived from other criteria, the antithesis of friend and enemy corresponds to the relatively independent criteria of other antitheses: good and evil in the moral sphere, beautiful and ugly in the aesthetic sphere, and so on. In any event it is independent, not in the sense of a distinct new domain, but in that it can neither be based on any one antithesis or any combination of other antitheses, nor can it be traced to these. (*CP*, 26)

"The political" is irreducible to any other element. Indeed, Schmitt envisions the friend/enemy distinction as so fundamental and elementary that in the course of his argument he feels compelled at particular points to remark on the self-evidence of his thesis: "nothing can escape this logical conclusion of the political" (*CP*, 36). Schmitt even resorts to the most questionable of Hobbes's arguments to demonstrate the actual existence of the state of affairs he describes: like the state of nature, the political can be shown to exist based on the behavior of states in the arena of international affairs (*CP*, 28).

The heart of Schmitt's neo-Hobbesian project derives from their similar sociopolitical situations.[7] Schmitt observes that Hobbes formulated his political theory "in the terrible times of civil war" where

> all legitimate and normative illusions with which men like to deceive themselves regarding political realities in periods of untroubled security vanish. If within the state there are organized parties capable of according their members more protection than the state, then the latter becomes at best an annex of such parties, and the individual citizen knows whom he has to obey. (*CP*, 52)

This also happens to be an excellent description of Weimar Germany during its crisis years.[8] Schmitt sees in the context of Hobbes's thought a parallel with his own, and relatedly, a parallel in their projects. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes sought "to instill in man again 'the mutual relation between Protection and Obedience' " (*CP*, 52) and so forestall the strife and chaos that arises when armed autonomous groups confront each other. This is not far removed from Schmitt's own intentions. The exceptional situation of civil war reveals normally concealed political realities such as human behavior in a state of nature: "In it, states exist among themselves in a condition of continual danger, and their acting subjects are evil for precisely the same reasons as animals who are stirred by their drives (hunger, greediness, fear, jealousy)" (*CP*, 59). Therefore, argues Schmitt, all "genuine" political theories—those that have observed the normally concealed "political realities"—presuppose "man to be evil," meaning "dangerous and dynamic" (*CP*, 61).

Schmitt thus shares with Hobbes not only a similar historical context, but a similar outlook on humanity as well. What are the ramifications of this? This particular outlook on humanity offers the way out of the problems of the state of nature, civil war, or impending civil war. Regarding the "genuine" political philosophers who take the view that the human being is essentially dangerous, Schmitt writes, "their realism can frighten men in need of security" (*CP*, 65). This is precisely the point. Schmitt recognizes, as did Hobbes, that by frightening "men" one can best "instill" in them that principle—"the *cogito ergo sum* of the state"—*protego ergo obligo* (*CP*, 52). In other words, fear is the source of political order. Human beings once confronted with the prospect of their own dangerousness will be terrified into the arms of authority.

Thus, as Schmitt explains, "For Hobbes, truly a powerful and systematic political thinker, the pessimistic conception of man is the elementary presupposition of a specific system of political thought" (*CP*, 65). But, systematic does not mean, for Schmitt, scientific or technical. Technology has helped foster the liberal conception of man, which assumes that, with wealth and abundance, humanity's dangerousness can be ameliorated, and hence blinds humanity to the eternal reality of "the political" (*CP*, 61). Technology, according to Schmitt, has aided in the "neutralization" of the state and the European order of states, again concealing the nature of the "political."[9] Schmitt chides Eduard Spranger for taking "too technical" a perspective on human nature, for viewing it in light of "the tactical manipulation of instinctive drives" (*CP*, 59). Hobbes's insight, on the contrary, is neither "the product of a frightful and disquieting fantasy nor of a philosophy based on free competition by a bourgeois society in its first stage . . . but is the fundamental presupposition of a specific political philosophy" (*CP*, 65).

Schmitt's task then is to elaborate on Hobbes's view of humanity and revive the fear that is characteristic of man's natural condition in three ways: (1) by demonstrating the substantive affinity between his concept of the political and Hobbes's state of nature, (2) by making clear the ever-present possibility of a return to that situation in the form of civil war, and (3) by convincing individuals—partisans and nonpartisans alike—that only a state with a monopoly on decisions regarding what is "political" can guarantee peace and security. He must do all of this while avoiding the elements of natural science and technology often associated with Hobbes, which undermined this project to begin with.

The radical subjectivity characteristic of the political heightens the danger regarding Schmitt's concept of the political, and consequently intensifies the fear inspired by it. "Only the actual participants can correctly recognize, understand, and judge the concrete situation and settle the extreme case of conflict. Each participant is in a position to judge whether the adversary intends to negate his opponent's way of life and therefore must be repulsed or fought to preserve one's own form of existence" (*CP*, 27). The fact that in the absence of a centralized power there is no standard by which one can judge another as an enemy, or be so judged by them, clearly implies that one must always be ready to be attacked or, more reasonably, compels one to be the first to strike. This is obviously a revival of the Hobbesian scenario of "the condition of meer Nature" where all "are judges of the justnesse of their own fears" (I, 14, 96). In this light Pasquale Pasquino observes that it is exactly "the absence or epistemological impossibility of defining an objective criterion of what constitutes a threat to the individual's self preservation which transforms the natural right into the origin of the potential war of all against all."[10] Schmitt drops the natural right and reemphasizes the potential war. Hence this radical subjectivity is the source of the danger in Schmitt's "political," and according to Pasquino, "the essential reason why the Hobbesian state of nature is one of total uncertainty and lack of freedom."[11] This potentiality for war and the uncertainty which arises from this radical subjectivity intensify fear because they insure the constancy of the danger. In fact, the threat of danger is always present, even when the actual danger is not. As Hobbes remarks, the essence of the war which is the state of nature "consisteth not in actuall fighting; but in the known disposition thereto" (I, 13, 88-9). Accordingly, Schmitt maintains that "to the enemy concept belongs the ever present *possibility* of combat" (*CP*, 32, emphasis added).

The continued existence of this kind of subjectivity within society implies the preservation of the state of war and the fear that it engenders. As Hobbes makes explicit, it is a "diseased" commonwealth that tolerates the doctrine, "*That every private man is Judge of Good and Evil actions*" (I, 29, 223); and

worse, one which allows persons to resort to violence to defend such judgments, "For those men that are so remissely governed, that they dare take up Armes, to defend, or introduce an Opinion, are still in Warre" (I, 18). Schmitt saw in the pluralist theories of the early twentieth century a justification for just such behavior (*CP*, 52), and like Hobbes, evaluated the outcome as state vulnerability both domestically and with regard to foreign powers as well:

> The intensification of internal antagonisms has the effect of weakening the common identity vis-à-vis another state. If domestic conflicts among political parties have become the sole political difference, the most extreme degree of internal political tension is thereby reached; i.e., the domestic, not the foreign friend-and-enemy groupings are decisive for armed conflict. The ever present possibility of conflict must always be kept in mind. If one wants to speak of politics in the context of the primacy of internal politics, then this conflict no longer refers to war between organized nations but to civil war. (*CP*, 32)

Hobbes adamantly maintains that the existence of violent factions, whether constituted by familial ties, religious affiliation, or economic status, is "contrary to the peace and safety of the people, a taking of the Sword out of the hand of the Sovereign" (II, 22, 164). And it is precisely these kinds of armed antagonisms that had reemerged in late Weimar: trade unions versus company goons, communist mobs versus fascist gangs, political party versus political party, and so on.[12] Each had declared the right to evaluate self-protection in one's own way, and to act accordingly. Each had claimed the right to judge the political (*CP*, 37).

Schmitt wants desperately to demonstrate that this situation implies the likelihood of combustion into civil war and Hobbes's state of nature. He must revive the fear that led to the termination of the state of nature to prevent the reversion back to it. If groups other than the state have power, particularly such as that over declaring war, or worse if they do not possess such a power themselves but can prevent the state from exercising that power, the state disappears:

> It would be an indication that these counterforces had not reached the decisive point in the political if they turned out to be not sufficiently powerful to prevent a war contrary to their interests or principles. Should the counterforces be strong enough to hinder a war desired by the state that was contrary to their interests or principles but not sufficiently capable themselves of deciding about war, then a unified political entity would no longer exist. (*CP*, 39)

Schmitt's implicit reading of Hobbes, therefore, is that a return to the state of nature is an ever present possibility for a society. This reading is generally

countered by those who see Hobbes's state of nature as either a mere rhetorical device or an anthropological supposition about a very distant past. But as Pasquino persuasively argues, the state of nature is not nearly so distant from present reality as all that. Hobbes viewed the state of nature not as a factually historical past, but rather as a politically possible present; he viewed the state of nature as "a hypothetical crumbling of the state" and society "as if it were dissolved."[13] Hobbes conceived of this condition as one of "terror, that is to say a condition in which no individual is certain of his/her borders or even his physical identity, that is his life"; and he was "anxious to show that the state of nature actually exists."[14] The state of nature as it exists in relationship to the present is Hobbes's utmost concern, according to Pasquino: "It can happen at any time and must always be avoided. It is the face of the threat that political order must ward off."[15]

This buttressing of Schmitt's reading of Hobbes more clearly demonstrates his own project. Schmitt seeks to make real the terror of what is and what might be so as to strengthen the existing order. The citizens of Weimar must reaffirm the pact that delivers human beings out of the state of nature and into civil society by transferring their illegitimately exercised subjectivity regarding friend and enemy back to the sovereign state. "To the state as an essentially political entity belongs the *jus belli*, i.e., the real possibility of deciding in a concrete situation upon the enemy and the ability to fight him with the power emanating from the entity" (*CP*, 45). The state, and the state alone, decides on internal enemies (*CP*, 46), and external ones as well (*CP*, 28-9). Regarding internal enemies, Schmitt seeks to reverse the pluralist view of the state as merely one interest group among many others in society or even as a servant thereof (*CP*, 44). The state must stand above society as a quasi-objective entity, rather than help precipitate civil war by existing as one subjectivity among others. Regarding external enemies, just as Hobbes had Catholics in mind when he warned against allegiance to extra-national powers, Schmitt surely thinks of the communists when he writes that one should not "love and support the enemies of one's own people" (*CP*, 29). Moscow should come before Berlin no more than Rome before London or Paris. Only one's own state can ask one to surrender one's life for it (*CP*, 46), and Schmitt mocks liberal individualism for not being able to command this from citizens (*CP*, 71). But here he parts company with Hobbes, who is the most famous exponent of this kind of right—the right *not* to lay down one's life in response to a political command. It is here that we should turn to Strauss's critique and radicalization of Schmitt's project, because it is on this point and the issues surrounding it that Strauss's essay pivots. However, some preliminary issues need to be addressed first.

In his recent work, Richard Wolin identifies Schmitt as the archetypal Weimar exponent of "political existentialism": the obsession with the "brute facticity," "brute primacy" of human existence and an accompanying aestheticization of conflict, violence, and death as ends in themselves.[16] What should be clear from my presentation thus far is that Schmitt seeks to make the threat of conflict—of war—felt and feared not as an end in itself, as Wolin and other critics suggest, but rather so as to make war's outbreak all the more unlikely domestically, and its prosecution more easily facilitated abroad. That Schmitt aestheticized violent conflict to generate the fear necessary to prevent disorder is not contestable—that he did so for its own sake is.[17] This serves as a more adequate explanation of Schmitt's intentions rather than a mere justification of them, because as we will see, Schmitt must be held accountable for aestheticizing violent conflict in the Weimar context, whatever his intentions. In *Political Romanticism*, Schmitt declared that for romantics, "the state is a work of art."[18] A question that must be asked is how much Schmitt himself aestheticized matters of state.

The issue of the aestheticization of violence is, however, inherently related to a subject only implicit in *The Concept of the Political*, but which becomes explicit in Schmitt's later work on Hobbes: the question of myth. In the wake of the emergence of National Socialism, several notable German scholars attempted to understand the return or persistence of myth in what is supposedly the age of reason. In their respective analyses of myth, Max Horkheimer and T. W. Adorno, Ernst Cassirer and Hans Blumenberg focus, in one way or another, on the element of fear.[19] Myth is a human response to the fear inspired by "the absolutism of nature," to use Blumenberg's formulation. Rather than confront the amorphous, unpredictable, and incomprehensibly variable appearance of nature as a whole, humanity prefers to fixate on specific entities with more clearly discernible traits as surrogates, and subsequently ritualize them into myths. To this extent, both Hobbes's and Schmitt's theories function as myths. According to the German theorists of myth, humanity exchanges the fear of the unordered and chaotic for the fear of something more certain and identifiable. Such is the very exchange that Hobbes offers: subjects give up their epistemological uncertainty regarding the totality of human nature—their fear of everything and everyone at every moment—for the more tolerable knowledge that it is only the state that is to be feared, and then only under certain conditions. Indeed, Hobbes names his state after the mythic biblical monster, the Leviathan. The extent to which Schmitt's revival and reformulation of the Hobbesian exchange in *The Concept of the Political* succumbs to the element of myth and the question concerning the potential ramifications of this are subjects that will be taken up in later sections of this essay.

STRAUSS'S COMMENTARY ON THE CONCEPT OF THE POLITICAL *(1932)*

The young Leo Strauss recognizes Schmitt's project as I have described it and its relationship to that of Hobbes; he confirms the necessity of such a project based on "the present situation" of Weimar; he criticizes the project on the basis of Schmitt's own assumptions and aims; and finally, he refashions, redirects, and radicalizes the project itself.[20]

Strauss realizes that Schmitt's inquiry into "the order of human things," into "the political," is necessarily an examination of the foundation of the state (*CCP*, 81), for the state was founded with "the fundamental and extreme status of man" in mind (*CCP*, 88). Indeed, as Strauss recognizes explicitly, "the political, which Schmitt brings out as fundamental, is 'the state of nature.' . . . Schmitt restores Hobbes's conception of the state of nature to a place of honor" (*CCP*, 87-8). Just as "inspiring fear" is a primary characteristic of Hobbes's state of nature, the same can be said of Schmitt's political, according to Strauss's interpretation (*CCP*, 95). As Strauss observed regarding Hobbes in a work published only a few years earlier in 1930:

> Fear is not only alarm and flight, but also distrust, suspicion, caution, care lest one fear. Now it is not death in itself that can be avoided, but only death by violence, which is the greatest of possible evils. For life itself can be of such misery that death comes to be ranked with the good. In the final instance what is of primary concern is ensuring the continuance of life in the sense of ensuring defense against other men. Concern with self-protection is the fundamental consideration, the one most fully in accord with the human situation. . . . The fear of death, the fear of death by violence, is [for Hobbes] the source of all right, the primary basis of natural right.[21]

Strauss thus acknowledges as justified Schmitt's revival of the image of the state of nature and the notion of fear that must accompany it. The "present situation" in "the age of neutralizations and depoliticizing" calls for such a revival, according to Strauss, echoing another of Schmitt's works (*CCP*, 82). The prevailing pluralist and liberal theories of society and "culture," which view these entities as "autonomous"—that is, as legitimately separate from the state—have neutralized the political (*CCP*, 86). Because such theories view culture as something natural in the sense that human beings develop it more or less spontaneously, they overlook that there is something that exists prior to culture. "This conception makes us forget that 'culture' always presupposes something which is cultivated: culture is always cultivation of nature" (*CCP*, 86). Strauss makes explicit that nature in this sense also entails human nature and hence the state of nature:

> Since we understand by "culture" above all the culture of *human* nature, the presupposition of culture is, above all, human nature, and since man is by nature an *animal sociale*, the human nature underlying culture is the natural living together of men, i.e., the mode in which man—prior to culture—behaves towards other men. The term for the natural living together thus understood is the *status naturalis*. One may therefore say, the foundation of culture is the *status naturalis*. (*CCP*, 87)

The cultivation of the state of nature is, as we know according to Hobbes and Schmitt, the state, not society initially. The state, by establishing order, makes possible the existence of society. Therefore, Strauss more firmly grounds the Schmittian thesis against the proponents of the theory of "autonomous" culture and society, namely, liberals and pluralists. The latter overlook the fact that the state of nature and the state itself exist prior to culture commonly understood as it exists within society. Consequently, behavior that weakens the state increases the risk of reviving the state of nature. The status naturalis, and human nature as it exists within it—the political—do not go away simply because, according to Schmitt, liberalism has ignored it or even "negated" it. As Strauss reiterates Schmitt, liberalism merely "conceals" the political:

> Liberalism has not killed the political, but merely killed understanding of the political, and sincerity regarding the political. To clear the obfuscation of reality which liberalism has caused, the political must be brought out and shown to be completely undeniable. Liberalism is responsible for having covered over the political, and the political must once again be brought to light, if the question of the state is to be put in full seriousness. (*CCP*, 82-3)[22]

Strauss and Schmitt agree that liberalism has put the state into crisis by "obfuscating" the political, and that the specter of the state of nature must be made apparent—with all the fear that accompanies it—and that "a different system" must be made the basis of the state "that does not negate the political, but brings the political into full recognition" (*CCP*, 83). However it is on the question of how to found this "different system" that the student challenges the master. The figure of Hobbes again proves central to the disagreement.

On the issue of how one cultivates nature—how the state is founded or how culture is developed—Strauss identifies two ways of proceeding. The first "means culture develops the natural disposition; it is careful cultivation of nature—whether of the soil or of the human mind; in this it obeys the indications that nature itself gives" (*CCP*, 86). Strauss identifies the second kind of cultivation with Bacon: "culture is not so much faithful cultivation of nature as a harsh and cunning fight against nature" (*CCP*, 87). This second, "specifically modern conception of nature," can also be located in Hobbes according to Strauss, a conception that associates culture with "a disciplining of human will, as the *opposite* of the *status naturalis*" (*CCP*, 87). The

implication for politics is that the authoritarian suppression of nature—especially human nature—is easier, more "natural," and ultimately more stable than the disciplining and educating entailed by popular self-rule. The latter is actually the "harsh and cunning fight against nature," and the former—straightforward authoritarian rule—while ostensibly "harsh," is actually more in accord with nature.

According to Strauss, Hobbes not only held the "natural" pessimistic view of humanity as "dangerous" and "dynamic," that Schmitt earlier identifies, but simultaneously he held the more problematic and unnatural view of humanity as educable, prudent, and capable of self-control for the sake of rational self-interest. This latter view fuels the "autonomy" theory of society, and gives it the justification for demanding some degree of the subjectivity addressed in the previous section. Moreover, it provides society with the justification for holding leverage against the state. Citizens must be allowed to rule themselves in some sense, and society must be allowed to remain free of the state to some degree. The first view of cultivating human nature put forth by Strauss would, in line with the empirical reality of the state of nature, deem humanity as "morally depraved" and simply and unequivocally in "need of being ruled" (*CCP*, 97). It would hence rule out any "autonomy" or "subjectivity" for individuals, society, or culture, which instead must be kept under the tight control of the state. Strauss faults Schmitt, following Hobbes, for not being truly and exclusively pessimistic, for not identifying this more extreme dangerousness of humanity, and for not advocating singularly and explicitly a more direct mode to govern it. And as Strauss subtly asserts in much of his early writings, this severe mode of rule, contrary to conventional wisdom, is actually less, rather than more, dependent on technology.

In his book on Spinoza, Strauss explained how the "disciplining of human will," the less pessimistic cultivation of human nature prescribed by Hobbes, necessarily requires the domination of nature in general: "Physics," which Strauss identifies explicitly with technology,

> is concerned with man's happiness, anthropology [which he identifies likewise with "political philosophy"] with man's misery. The greatest misfortune is death by violence; happiness consists in the limitless increase of power over men and over things. Fear of violent death, and the pursuit of domination over things—it is basically these two determinants of willing which Hobbes accepts as justified.[23]

Instead of adopting the first kind of cultivation previously described which "obeys the indications that nature itself gives" (which observes human beings in the state of nature, recognizes them as incapable of ruling themselves, and governs them accordingly), Hobbes opts for the other kind of cultivation,

which eventually distracts human beings from their own nature by the conquest of outer nature—by providing for their potential happiness with the promise of a commodious life. The direct domination of humanity, suggested by "anthropology," is more natural than the direct domination of external nature, for the latter, relying more explicitly on physics, is actually "the harsh and cunning fight against nature" described above. According to Strauss, Hobbes chooses physics over anthropology, and hence ultimately technology over political philosophy. Technology is employed by Hobbes to neutralize precisely those characteristics that make man dangerous, that create the likelihood of violent death, and emphasizes that characteristic that makes man capable of improvement, namely, reason:

> Reason, the provident outlook on the future, thus justifies the striving after power, possessions, gain, wealth, since these provide the means to gratify the underlying desire for pleasures of the senses. Reason does not justify, but indeed refutes, all striving after reputation, honor, fame: in a word and that word used in the sense applied by Hobbes, vanity. . . . The legitimate striving after pleasure is sublated into striving after power. What is condemned is the striving after reputation. Philosophy (or more accurately physics as distinct from anthropology) is to be understood as arising from the striving after power *scientia propter potentiam.* Its aim is cultivation, the cultivation of nature. What nature offers to man without supplementary activity on the part of man is sufficient for no more than a life of penury. So that life may become more comfortable, human exertion is required, and the regulation of unregulated nature. . . . The purpose pursued by science is conquest over nature.[24]

Reason, science, and technology tame man by reducing vanity, physical needs, and religion. Yet it is precisely the continued existence of this subjective reason pursued toward private ends within civil society that will undermine Hobbes's state. Strauss focuses on the contradiction within Schmitt that we observed at the close of the last section. Schmitt maintains that the nature of "the political" allows that the state, of which Hobbes is the founder, "may 'demand . . . from those belonging to a nation readiness to die,' and the legitimacy of this demand is at least qualified by Hobbes: the man in the battle-ranks who deserts by reason of fear for his life acts 'only' dishonorably, but not unjustly" (*CCP*, 88). And it is precisely the reservation of such a right—subjectively determined by an individual's reason—regarding how and when and in what capacity one's life can be employed, which becomes a powerful weapon against the state.

The normative consequences of Hobbes's grant of subjectivity (however narrow) to individuals for the question of what is right retains no real force, according to Strauss. Subjective freedom is maintained "at the price of the meaning of human life, for . . . when man abandons the task of raising the question regarding what is right, and when man abandons this question, he

abandons his humanity" (*CP*, 101). Schmitt, to the extent that he models himself on Hobbes, betrays the fact that he is "under the spell" of the liberalism he criticizes. He defines his political as beyond objective normative standards—by defining it as if it were neutral (*CP*, 103). Schmitt's depiction of the political is hence reduced to a subjective interpretation characteristic of "the individualistic-liberal society" he wishes to replace (*CP*, 102). According to Strauss, Schmitt's project, as it stands, is hence "provisional" for it is "forced to make use of liberal elements" (*CP*, 83). Schmitt's critique "is detained on the plane created by liberalism. . . . [H]is critique of liberalism takes place within the horizon of liberalism" (*CP*, 104-5).[25]

Strauss is familiar with Schmitt's attempt to separate the substantive Hobbes from the mechanistic Hobbes (*CCP*, 97, 103). Strauss is in full accord with this project to the extent that the substantive Hobbes recognized what characterizes man's fundamental condition and the element with which to manage it—fear. But one must further distance this from the other Hobbes who undermines his own insight by setting in motion the forces that will neutralize his system. Schmitt, in his failure to emphasize the radical dangerousness of man rather than what amounts to mere "liberal" dangerousness, is susceptible to the subjectivity and the tendency toward neutrality and technology that characterize the latter Hobbes. "A radical critique of liberalism," according to Strauss, "is therefore possible only on the basis of an adequate understanding of Hobbes" (*CCP*, 105). This understanding is crucial if "the decisive battle between 'the spirit of technology,' the 'mass faith of an antireligious, this-worldly activism' and the opposite spirit and faith, which, it seems, does not yet have a name," is to be won (*CCP*, 104). Hobbes negated the political; Schmitt affirms it (*CCP*, 90). According to Strauss, he opens the possibility of starting the project over again. This "urgent task" (*CCP*, 105), initiated by Schmitt, is taken up by Strauss in his own project on Hobbes. In the Germany of 1933, Strauss exalts the possibility that " 'the order of human things' may arise afresh" (*CCP*, 101).

STRAUSS'S UNDERTAKING OF THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF HOBBES *(1933)*

Based on the quality of Strauss's commentary on *The Concept of the Political*, as well as a draft of the beginning of his work on Hobbes, Schmitt obtained for Strauss a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship to continue this endeavor in France and England in 1933. Apparently, what was written at this

point were the first five chapters of what was eventually published as *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* in England in 1936.[26] In these sections, we find the most explicit and detailed attempt of the Weimar project of Schmitt and Strauss regarding Hobbes.[27]

Strauss declares that "the particular object of the present study" is to demonstrate that "the real basis of [Hobbes's] political philosophy is not modern science" (*PPH*, ix). Strauss cites with approval G. C. Robertson's observation that Hobbes's political insights were made long before he became "a mechanical philosopher" (*PPH*, ix) and wishes to apprehend Hobbes's thoughts on "men and manners" before they were "distorted" by the influence of modern science (*PPH*, ix). Through Strauss's project, "we are enabled to perceive that [Hobbes's] original conception of human life was present in his mind before he was acquainted with modern science, and thus to establish the fact that that conception is independent of modern science" (*PPH*, xi). Certainly, Hobbes developed his "method" in the fashion of Descartes and Galileo, but the significance of his thought does not lie in this similarity. "The universal importance of Hobbes's political philosophy cannot but remain unrecognized so long as, in accordance with Hobbes's own statements, the method is considered to be the decisive feature of his politics. Now it is obvious that the method is not its only and even its most important characteristic" (*PPH*, 2). Reminiscent of his commentary on Schmitt, Strauss maintains that the most important characteristic of Hobbes's thought is its substance, its insight into humanity, the insight related to the fact that "man is by nature evil," "rapacious" (*PPH*, 3). According to Strauss, Hobbes founds his theory of the state at the root, not on science and technology, but on the fear generated by this insight. "His contention that the State originates only in mutual fear and can only so originate has thus moral, not merely technical significance" (*PPH*, 23). It is Spinoza who completely technifies politics, not Hobbes (*PPH*, 28). For Strauss (as for Schmitt), there is something vital to be grasped beyond Hobbes's method.

In his commentary on Schmitt's work, Strauss chastised his senior for not distinguishing between that kind of pessimism that views humanity as prudent animals, dangerous yet educable, on one hand, and that kind that views it as dangerous, period, on the other, in need of nothing other than "being ruled." Here Strauss emphasizes that man's reason, rather than making him educable and improvable, as even the former more moderate kind of pessimism argues, rather, makes him even more dangerous and in even more dire need of being ruled:

> The specific difference between man and all other animals *is* reason. Thus man is much less at the mercy of momentary sense-impressions, he can envisage the future much better

> than can animals; for this very reason he is not like animals hungry only with the hunger of the moment, but also with future hunger, and thus he is the most predatory, the most cunning, the strongest, and the most dangerous animal. (*PPH*, 9)

Strauss notes the tension in Hobbes between this "vitalistic" conception of human appetites and the "mechanistic" one (*PPH*, 9), which Strauss characterized in his commentary on Schmitt as the specifically liberal conception. The latter posits human appetite "as a result of the infinite number of external impressions" made from without the body, and hence manageable, controllable. Control the stimuli and you control the desires. Science and technology are of course indispensable for this kind of control. The former theory of appetites, on the other hand, posits "that human appetite is infinite in itself," and hence unquenchable and volatile (*PPH*, 9). "The mechanistic [techno-liberal] conception is based on the mechanistic explanation of perception and therewith on the general theory of motion; on the other hand, the apparently vitalistic [truly pessimistic] conception is based not on any general scientific theory, but on insight into human nature" (*PPH*, 9). The latter theory, which Strauss earlier identified as anthropology, recognizes the difference between animal and man: "the animal desires only finite objects as such, while man spontaneously desires infinitely" (*PPH*, 9). Strauss asserts, despite the contradiction, "there can be no doubt that only this latter view of human appetite corresponds to the intention of Hobbes's political philosophy" (*PPH*, 9). Hence, "the war of everyone against everyone arises of necessity from man's very nature" (*PPH*, 12). Infinite appetites generate infinite conflicts.[28]

It is precisely "the fear each man has of every other man as his potential murderer" that serves as "the origin of law and the State" (*PPH*, 17). Strauss focuses more dramatically on this fear of death than any other author.[29] He explains the precise reason Hobbes chose to base his theory on the negative expression "avoiding death" over the positive one "preserving life": "because we feel death and not life; because we fear death immediately and directly, while we desire life only because rational reflection tells us that it is the condition of our happiness; because we fear death infinitely more than we desire life" (*PPH*, 16).

To make the fear with which he is concerned more intense, Strauss makes the source of that fear more extreme than it appears in Hobbes himself, or even in Schmitt. It is not merely fear of death that is at the base of Hobbesian politics and hence the politics of the modern state, but fear of *violent* death. Because man, unlike the animals, is not content with limited satisfactions, but desires limitless ones as well, such as recognition, he inflicts the worst damage, the worst pain. It is well worth quoting Strauss at length here: Because man craves recognition, he can be offended, slighted,

> and to be slighted is the greatest *animi molestia*, and from the feeling of being slighted arises the greatest will to injure. The one slighted longs for revenge. In order to avenge himself he attacks the other, indifferent whether he loses his life in so doing. Unconcerned as to the preservation of his own life, he desires, however, above all that the other should remain alive; for "revenge aimeth not at the death, but at the captivity and subjection of an enemy . . . revenge aimeth at triumph, which over the dead is not". The struggle which thus breaks out, in which, according to the opinion of both opponents, the object is not killing but the subjection of the other, of necessity becomes serious, because it is a struggle between bodies, a real struggle. From the beginning of the conflict the two opponents have, without realizing and foreseeing it, completely left the imaginary world. At some point in the conflict, actual injury, or more accurately physical pain, arouses a fear for life. Fear moderates anger, puts the sense of being slighted into the background, and transforms the desire for revenge into hatred. The aim of the hater is no longer triumph over the enemy, but his death. The struggle for pre-eminence, about "trifles", has become a life-and-death struggle. In this way natural man happens unforeseen upon the danger of death. . . . Only for a moment can he free himself from the danger of death by killing his enemy, for since every man is his enemy, after the killing of his first enemy he is "again in the like danger of another", indeed of all others. The killing of the enemy is thus the least far-sighted consequence of the withdrawal from death. (*PPH*, 20-1)[30]

With his thoroughly existential reading of Hobbes's state of nature, Strauss demonstrates how the subjective desires of men lead to their struggle with other men with the deliberate aim of inflicting pain on them. However, in the heat of battle the opponents become focused no longer on the trigger, the external cause of the original altercation, but rather on life and death. Schmitt described how realms such as economics and religion become so intense as to no longer concern themselves with economic or religious issues as they become political but rather with the destruction of a decided enemy: "the negation of the other." The prospect of this negation, the fear it inspires, is sufficient to compel man to abandon the subjective trifles that serve as sources of conflict and potential harbingers of violence, pain, and death. The religious impulses, which Hobbes regarded in his day as nothing more than expressions of pride, the class identity that was seen in much the same way by Schmitt, must no longer inspire feelings of "slight." According to Strauss, the fear of violent death serves as an antidote to the realm of pride as most broadly interpreted by Hobbes:

> Pride, far from being the origin of the just attitude, is rather the only origin of the unjust attitude. . . . Not pride, and still less obedience, but fear of violent death, is according to [Hobbes] the origin of the just intention. What man does from fear of death, in the consciousness of the weakness of other men, when he *honestly* confesses to himself and to others his weakness and his fear of death, *unconcerned* about his honour, this alone is fundamentally just. (*PPH*, 25)

Fear of violent death defeats the frivolous but dangerous subjective attitudes that characterize the state of nature and the epoch of religious wars for Hobbes, and potentially, the era of malignant pluralism for Schmitt and Strauss. In a passage reminiscent of Schmitt's that described how in civil war "men" recognize that "all legitimate and normative illusions" with which they like to "deceive themselves" in periods of peace "vanish," Strauss asserts how that which is the product of civil war, death, dissolves such illusions that in the end can only be viewed as the product of vanity: "Because man by nature lives in the dream of the happiness of triumph, of glittering, imposing, apparent good, he requires a no less imposing power to awaken him from his dream: this imposing power is the imperious majesty of death. . . . The ideal condition for self knowledge is, therefore, unforeseen mortal danger" (*PPH*, 19).[31]

Thus, argues Strauss, Hobbes's politics is based not on science, but on substance, fundamental human substance. Any relationship between the two must recognize the substance as the antecedent of the science, not vice versa. Only the fear of violent death conquers the subjective vanity that ignites strife, and only it subdues the prejudice that interferes with science:

> Hobbes identifies conscience with the fear of death; only through knowledge of mortal danger, knowledge which is at the same time a retreat from death can man be radically liberated from natural vanity, from the natural absorption in the world of his imagination. If this is the case, the fear of death, the fear of violent death, is the necessary condition not only of society but also of science. Just as life in common is hindered by passion, science is hindered by prejudice. (*PPH*, 26)

Fear, the state of nature, and the state itself all exist prior to science, which must lie within the realm of culture and society. Therefore a truly Hobbesian theory of the state cannot be based on science; science is possible only after the state has already been established. Science can even be more or less discarded when one understands these priorities. Because Hobbes's political philosophy is based on the fear of violent death,

> because it is based on experience of human life, it can never, in spite of all the temptations of natural science, fall completely into the danger of abstraction from moral life and forget moral difference. Hobbes's political philosophy has thus for that very reason a moral basis, because it is not derived from natural science but is founded on first-hand experience of human life. (*PPH*, 29)

It can never completely fall into such danger when it can be retrieved by the likes of Schmitt and Strauss. For they, particularly Strauss, have articulated what is prior to science in Hobbes's thought. Strauss has successfully carried

out Schmitt's project and his own correction of it by getting "beyond the horizon of liberalism" by supposedly adequately understanding Hobbes. Strauss isolates Hobbes's thought from the forces of neutralization that will undermine it. Once one adequately understands the basis of politics as fear of violent death, a fear based *not* on a somewhat dangerous, yet improvable and educable human nature, but simply on an infinitely dangerous human nature, one no longer has any need for science. Once one corrects the mistakes of Hobbes's liberal successors, who take up the task of trying to have citizens rule themselves by providing them with the products of the conquest of nature and allay their fears by showing them the orderliness of nature, one can set up a state more in accord with the natural condition of humanity, more in accord with "the political." The logical outcome of Strauss's turning of Schmitt's view of man to one which views him simply in need of "being ruled," is a theory of state that consistently instills in citizens the fear of the "human situation" by constantly reminding them of its proximity. If this is to be achieved without technology, without the apparatus of physical domination, something else must hold sway. The myth of the state—the Leviathan, the sea monster after which Hobbes named his greatest work on the state—must invoke uniformly and in a controlled manner the terror that each citizen felt individually and overwhelmingly in the state of nature. Myth is the element which can maintain the state's separation from society while simultaneously keeping it in check. Thus, for the state to keep from integrating too extensively within society and hence weakening itself, myth must hold sway.[32]

Despite the mythic title of *Leviathan*, Hobbes was to emphasize myth more heavily in his later writings. In his commentary on Hobbes's *Behemoth*, Stephen Holmes describes how Hobbes came to realize that "the ultimate source of political authority is not coercion of the body, but captivation of the mind."[33] It is to this issue in Hobbes that Strauss's work points and to which Schmitt himself turns in his later work on Hobbes, although, as we will see, his attitude toward the project as a whole has become significantly less sanguine.[34]

SCHMITT'S THE LEVIATHAN IN THE STATE THEORY OF THOMAS HOBBES: MEANING AND FAILURE OF A POLITICAL SYMBOL *(1938)*

Much happened in both Schmitt's personal life and German politics between 1933 and 1938, the publication date of Schmitt's book on Hobbes's

Leviathan.[35] Schmitt, enticed by the promise of prestigious positions, joined the National Socialist Party not long after it came to power. Following several years in which Schmitt held judicial posts and wrote treatises for the regime, his unorthodox National Socialism, his past connection with political Catholicism, and his previous public denunciations of the party eventually ran him afoul of the SS, and he retired into private life after 1936.[36]

Schmitt had not taken up the Weimar-Hobbesian project he shared with Strauss since 1933. Perhaps he thought he had found a solution in the political choice he made in May of that year. But after the events of the ensuing years, he returned to Hobbes and his *Leviathan,* which Schmitt declared was the "earthly" and "mortal" god that must time and time again bring man out of the "*chaos*" of the "natural condition" (*L*, 22). This statement highlights the themes of Schmitt's treatise that are new to the project: myth and its mortality. In the *Leviathan* book, we still find Schmitt defending Hobbes against those who would interpret him "superficially" as strictly a "rationalist, mechanist, sensualist, individualist" (*L*, 22). Schmitt is more forthright in admitting, however, that these elements, particularly the mechanistic, are present (*L*, 30), but that they do not constitute Hobbes's theory as a whole. Schmitt emphasizes that for Hobbes there are three Leviathans: the mythical monster, the representative person, and the machine (*L*, 30). Schmitt's thesis is that Leviathan as mythical monster, or even as representative person—images that can sufficiently keep men in awe—historically become superseded by Leviathan the machine—which is viewed as a mere tool to be used by various groups of citizens (*L*, 54). In other words, Schmitt admits that the Weimar attempt to divorce the "mechanistic" from the "vital" in Hobbes has been historically impossible. What accounts for this change of mind?[37]

The neutralization of Hobbes's state—its transformation into mere machine—begins, with good reason, as a response to the wars of religion, but led inevitably to "the neutralization of every truth" (*L*, 64). Not only religious, but metaphysical, juristic, and political considerations eventually come to mean nothing to the "clean" and "exact" workings of the state mechanisms (*L*, 62-3). Liberals and communists both agree that the state is a machine, an apparatus which the most "varied political constellations can utilize as a technically neutral instrument" (*L*, 62-3). In hindsight, writes Schmitt, reversing his argument in *The Concept of the Political*, the state can be viewed as "the first product of the age of technology" (*L*, 53).

The fault does not lie fully with Hobbes, according to Schmitt, for he expected his state to continue to inspire awe as a myth that stood above society, maintaining peace through the fear it engendered, and expected it to function as smoothly as a finely tuned machine. Schmitt elaborates on an insight by Strauss noted earlier, that Spinoza perpetrates the radical techniciz-

ing of Hobbesian politics. Resorting to an anti-Semitism not present in his Weimar writings, Schmitt here blames "the Jew" Spinoza for accelerating the neutralizing process of turning the Leviathan from a myth into a machine.[38] Hobbes, the religious insider (nominally Christian Englishman), formulated the state/civil society relationship in the following *stable* manner:

public peace and sovereign power
insures
individual freedom.

Spinoza, the religious outsider (a Jew), changes the priorities so as to make the relationship fundamentally *unstable*:

individual freedom
insured by
public peace and sovereign power.

Thus the dangerous subjectivity that was the concern of Schmitt in his reformulation of Hobbes in *The Concept of the Political* is historically given a place of primacy over the state, which was founded precisely to keep it in check. As Reinhart Koselleck, himself a student of Schmitt, explains it, the slightest trace of subjectivity that Hobbes granted to his citizens as compensation for giving up the "Natural Right" of the state of nature, later takes its revenge on the state itself:

> The State created a new order, but then—in genuinely historic fashion—fell prey to that order. As evident in Hobbes, the moral inner space that had been excised from the State and reserved for man as a human being meant (even rudimentarily) a source of unrest. . . . The authority of conscience remained an unconquered remnant of the state of nature, protruding into the formally perfected State.[39]

As the subjectivities proliferated and gained in power, they demanded of the state objectivity—objectivity toward its own existence—the logical result of which is the complete neutrality of the state. According to Schmitt, Kant is guilty of finally sapping the state of any substantive content of its own, of disentangling the "organism" from the "mechanism"; simultaneously, Schelling and the Romantics disentangle "art" from "mechanics," but in Hobbes these elements were all together, and hence the Leviathan state, in this awesome totality, was potentially mythical (*L*, 61). After Kant, the reigning image for jurisprudence is no longer a personal judge pronouncing decisions, but a mechanism dispensing rules: "The *legislator humanus* becomes a *machina legislatoria*" (*L*, 100).

Because the government has no moral content, neither do the laws it thereby produces: "For the technically represented neutrality it is decisive that the laws of the state become independent from every substantive content, from religious or legal truth and propriety, and should be valid only as a result of the positive determinations of the state's decision in the form of commands" (*L*, 67).[40] A state that is purely mechanical and has no value content whatsoever other than efficiency has no boundary, not even the Hobbesian one of the protection of individual life. "Such a state can be tolerant or intolerant but neutral nonetheless. It has its truth, and justice in its technical perfection. . . . The state machine either functions or does not function" (*L*, 68-9). Ironically, it is the state's granting both a subjective realm and the right to resist the state in the protection of one's life that comes to endanger the lives of citizens, according to Schmitt. Had the state recognized, as Schmitt and Strauss wished, that man simply needed to be ruled and that to grant him any subjective determination of self-preservation was dangerous to order, peace, and life, it could have held for itself the moral content of protecting the lives of its citizens. As the subjective entities of civil society demanded more objectivity from the state, they drained it of even this content. If any of these subjective entities, "autonomous" (*L*, 68) as they are from the state, should in their guaranteed subjective freedom of conscience choose not to recognize the boundary of the state in the safety of the people, and also seize the neutralized, efficient, but weakened state, the results would be horrific. It would be the state of nature where all are not equal in their ability to kill and be killed. It would be an entity with the subjectivity of the state of nature, and the objective efficiency of the sovereign state. As Schmitt so masterfully described the predicament of late Weimar in Hobbesian terms in *The Concept of the Political*, he has here perhaps set forth just such a Hobbesian depiction of National Socialism.

The aspect of myth in Hobbes's Leviathan could have kept the elements of society from becoming autonomous and from making demands against the state; according to Schmitt, it could have ruled not through the apparatuses of technical efficiency, but rather by "captivating minds." Now it is reduced to the failure that Schmitt's title suggests. As Pasquino observes, Hobbes's state always was in a rather precarious position vis-à-vis its subjects: "Behind the absolute character of the Hobbesian sovereign one begins to discover its fragility . . . its dependence on those who depend upon it."[41] The frontispiece that presently adorns Schmitt's *Der Leviathan* bears this out: it features a beached whale, harpooned and subdued by the fishermen who surround it. It is a far cry from the frontispiece of Hobbes's English edition of his work, which featured the giant sovereign, made up of an infinite number of people,

arising over the horizon—presumably from the sea—with sword and staff in hand. The former is the fate of this great Leviathan, according to Schmitt. How could Schmitt envision the state to be dead at the very moment he lived under the most powerful state—the totalitarian state *par excellence*—in history? In his Weimar writings (which the Nazis apparently did not consult before soliciting his services), Schmitt notes that a state that is integrated into every facet of society is hardly a state at all. For a state to be a state, for Schmitt, it must stand over and above society, governing it—no doubt firmly and vigilantly—as a separate entity.[42] And even in Hobbesian terms, the National Socialist state is no sovereign state but a pervertedly powerful form of the state of nature, where no one is sure if he is friend or enemy to his fellow citizen or to the regime.

However, Schmitt is not simply the historically legitimated prophet of doom he implicitly presents himself to be in *Der Leviathan*. Rather, he is also a contributor to the state of affairs he criticizes under National Socialism. In his Weimar writings, Schmitt had warned against the takeover of the state by nonneutral forces who would "seize" the apparatus of "state will-formation" for themselves, "without themselves ceasing to be social and non-state entities."[43] He even described such an appropriation of the state in terms of the dethroning of the Leviathan: "When the 'mortal god' falls from his throne and the realm of objective reason and civil society becomes 'a great gang of thieves,' then the parties slaughter the powerful Leviathan and slice pieces from the flesh of his body."[44] Schmitt had promoted the *Reichspräsident* as the "neutral" force to keep the social elements at bay—a neutral force only with regard to the competing parties, but not neutral toward its own power. Yet as Schmitt's Weimar theoretical adversary Hans Kelsen so presciently asked at the time: what is to prevent the supposedly neutral entity from being a participant in the social conflict Schmitt describes?[45] Schmitt had no answer in Weimar and he still has no answer under National Socialism in *Der Leviathan*.

Thus the stance of Hobbesian neutrality that Schmitt maintained throughout the 1920s and 1930s turns out to be somewhat misleading. An important difference between the state of nature and the friend/enemy distinction is that in the former, despite some occasional references by Hobbes to families or professions, there are no friends, and hence no antagonistic groupings. The abstract individualism of Hobbes's "war of all against all" points up his ultimate agnosticism regarding the respective combatants in the English Civil War: *Leviathan* was written, for the most part, in support of the king, but was easily converted by Hobbes into a justification for Cromwell.[46] Schmitt had much stronger preferences regarding the participants in Weimar's near civil war. It did matter to him, for instance, that the Social Democrats not gain

victory, let alone the Communists. Groups who would be the enemies of these groups would necessarily be, according to Schmitt's "concept of the political," better friends of the state. Should these friends gain control of the state, it would be appropriate for them to suppress the enemies of that state. This is in fact what the National Socialists did, albeit in a manner more ruthless than Schmitt could have imagined. To this effect, Schmitt's theory encouraged as much as it forewarned against the seizure of the Leviathan state by radically subjective social forces.

Moreover, the potentially lethal results of such a seizure are compounded by Schmitt's theoretical tampering with the Hobbesian formula of *protego ergo obligo*. Had Hobbes originally formulated the state in the way in which Schmitt and Strauss wished in 1933—by not granting to the individual the subjective right of self-protection, even for the sake of better insuring that individual's life—the logic of the Leviathan would have broken down. It is only the retention of some of that subjectivity regarding self-preservation that rules completely in the state of nature that encourages "Hobbesian man" to make a compact and submit to the state. Schmitt was correct to recognize in *Der Leviathan* that the state was, in a way, ultimately the product of the age of technology; it was an *instrument*, a tool. It served as a means to something else, namely security and stability, preservation and peace.[47] The state itself could not, without most unfortunate results, be what he and Strauss wanted, namely the embodiment of these things, and not the means thereto. Such a formulation is as dangerous as it is incoherent. The state could not be expected to absorb all of the right to self-preservation from the state of nature, and still at the same time guarantee it. The radical subjectivity, the dangerous right to judge, accruing to the state as it does in Schmitt's and Strauss's interpretation of Hobbes, only increases that subjectivity's volatility exponentially. If Schmitt, and particularly Strauss, had only deigned to consult that "liberal," John Locke, as they engaged in their intellectual playing-with-matches in 1933, they might have paused to question, as did Locke:

> I desire to know what kind of Government that is, and how much better it is than the State of Nature, where one Man commanding a multitude, has Liberty to be Judge in his own Case, and may do to all his Subjects whatever he pleases, without the least liberty to anyone to question or controle those who Execute his Pleasure? And in whatsoever he doth, whether led by Reason, Mistake or Passion, must be submitted to? Much better it is in the State of Nature wherein Men are not bound to submit to the unjust will of another.[48]

In Locke's reformulation of Hobbes, it is absolute rule, not the state of nature, which is the actual state of "Warre." The state of nature where each individual has an equal chance of remaining alive must surely be better than

a situation where one has completely given over one's right to and capacity for self-protection to an inordinately stronger force that offers no guarantee, no insurance of protecting one's life. Schmitt surely must have come to understand that Weimar, for all of his criticisms of it, was certainly better than National Socialism; there, whatever the social disturbances and economic fluctuations, Schmitt's academic controversies did not cause him to fear for his life.[49]

If, in *Der Leviathan*, Schmitt perhaps implicitly recognizes his earlier mistake in attempting to reformulate the Hobbesian protection/obedience relationship in so dangerous a fashion, he apparently does not recognize the mistake in his earlier calling for the rule of myth instead of the rule of *technik* in the art of statecraft. Like Martin Heidegger, but for different reasons, Schmitt must have originally seen in National Socialism a myth that could serve as an alternative and antidote to the age of technology. Schmitt must have viewed myth as an element of the Hobbesian project that had faded but could be revived to supplant the presently predominant element, technology, which threatened to bring down the whole structure. And like Heidegger, Schmitt must have realized somewhat late that in modernity, myth can be revived only very carefully, particularly in relationship to technology. As we now know, and as Walter Benjamin had already observed in his masterpiece of 1936, "The Artwork in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," in National Socialism, myth and technology were fatefully bound:

> The logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life. The violation of the masses, whom Fascism, with its *Führer* cult, forces to its knees, has its counterpart in the violence of an apparatus which is pressed into the production of ritual values. . . . All efforts to render politics aesthetic culminate in one thing: war. . . . "*Fiat ars—pereat mundus*," says Fascism, and . . . expects war to supply the artistic gratification of a sense perception that has been changed by technology. . . . Mankind['s] self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order.[50]

In 1933, how did Strauss and Schmitt expect to revive that primal substance, that link to myth, the fear of violent death? Did they not realize, as did Benjamin, that "an apparatus" would be needed to change "sense perception" by "technology," and "press into production" such "ritual values"?[51]

In one of the two quotes that opened this study, Strauss disparages the concept of "phantasmagoria" to which the world is reduced under a certain interpretation of Hobbes. But if phantasmagoria can be described, according to Susan Buck-Morss, as "an appearance of reality that tricks the senses through technical manipulation," as a "technoaesthetics" that serves as "a means of social control," this is precisely what Hobbes had in mind for his

Leviathan.[52] The Leviathan is intended as a phantasmagoria; the technology and the myth are for Hobbes intrinsically linked from the start. Schmitt and Strauss might have paid better attention to the opening lines of Hobbes's Introduction to *Leviathan*, where he describes how humans can manufacture a political machine, the state, in the way that God created a natural machine, the human being.[53] And it is this technical construction that necessarily underlies the Leviathan preferred by Schmitt and Strauss: the "Mortall God," which "hath the use of so much Power and Strength conferred on him, that by terror thereof, he is enabled to conforme the wills of them all, to Peace at home, and mutuall ayd against their enemies abroad" (II, 17, 120-1).[54]

In Hobbes, and consequently in modernity, the result of this entwinement of myth and technology is the tragic fact that the former can serve to intensify rather than diminish the threat posed by the latter. Perhaps an attempt to exalt myth over science and technology beyond Hobbes's original balance between the two spheres paradoxically leads only to a greater predominance of the latter within the former as a result of their intrinsic link. The way to disengage the mutual relationship of myth and technology, or in the more familiar phrasing of Horkheimer and Adorno, myth and enlightenment, would perhaps be through the threshold of reason and not that of myth.[55] This would, of course, necessitate the abandonment of fear as a contributing element to politics. As Benjamin points out so well, the potential result of the opposite strategy, of subordinating rationality to myth, is war. At what better site could fear, pain, violence, aesthetics, and technology gather?[56]

We observed that in *The Concept of the Political*, Schmitt found it necessary to aestheticize—to elevate to mythic proportions—conflict to generate the salutary fear that could restore order to society. But such aestheticization, such myth making, on the contrary, contributed to the generation of far-from-salutary fear and the intensification of disorder. Rather than, in Hobbes's words, insuring "Peace at home," and simply fostering "mutuall ayd" against external enemies, the aestheticization and elevation of conflict to the status of myth inspired a war, ghastly in manner and scale, on Germany's own citizens, and in unprecedented global terms on other nations. Schmitt's student, Franz Neumann, in fact describes the National Socialist state, not as the Leviathan, but rather as its opposite, the Behemoth: "a non-state, a situation of lawlessness, disorder and anarchy."[57]

Thus Schmitt and Strauss's Weimar attempt to supplant liberalism through a reinterpretation of Hobbes is a catastrophic failure in two ways. First, they tamper with one Hobbesian formula—the protection-obedience relationship—that had already been improved by the liberalism that succeeded Hobbes. Second, they experiment with another Hobbesian formula—the myth-technology relationship—to which post-Hobbesian liberalism continues to

be oblivious. In both cases they render the reformulation more dangerous than the original, supposedly unstable proposition, and the historical reality with which it corresponds was undeniably disastrous.

In his commentary on Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political*, Strauss expressed the need to "disregard the question whether it is possible to speak of any conception of culture [and nature] except the modern one" (*CCP*, 87). He obviously felt that the modern conception of these entities, which led to the crisis of the state required a modern solution. Strauss later remarked that his writings in the dwindling days of Weimar were "based on the premise, sanctioned by powerful prejudice, that a return to pre-modern philosophy is impossible."[58] That changed, however, with the publication of the full text of *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* in 1936, and especially *Natural Right and History* in 1953. Modern philosophical-political expressions, particularly as reflected in Hobbes, are in these later works cast in a particularly unfavorable comparison with the classical tradition. In light of ensuing events, perhaps Strauss was—to use a word that has figured prominently in this study—frightened into this stance by the implications of the earlier project he shared with Carl Schmitt. In his "second sailing," he would no longer so explicitly voice modern solutions to modern political problems. In the United States, Strauss kept his political inclinations hidden behind a religion in which he did not believe, an ostensible veneration of things ancient, and a doctrine of esoteric writing.[59]

Walter Benjamin, unlike Strauss, did not have sufficient influence to guarantee his exit from Germany and the continent, and thus one of Fascism's most brilliant critics became one of its millions of victims in 1940.[60]

After the war, Carl Schmitt attempted to justify his collaboration with National Socialism by appealing to the Hobbesian standard of "obedience for protection": He merely offered allegiance to a new regime, which he assumed would in turn protect him.[61] It is almost fitting then that this Hobbesian who sought to theorize into oblivion the protection component of the "protection-obedience" formula, came rather close several times during the Third Reich to paying with his life for making that unforgivable political choice.[62] Instead Schmitt lived well into his nineties, claiming until the end that he was simply misconstrued.[63]

CONCLUSION

In their Weimar works on Hobbes, Schmitt and Strauss attempt to preserve, strengthen, and even redefine the state by reviving the source of its

development, the fear of violent death. To not recreate the conditions that brought about the crisis of the state to begin with, Schmitt and Strauss attempt to refound the state solely on this "vital," and inevitably "mythic," element of fear, divorcing it from the "neutralizing" elements of science and technology. By viewing man as an incorrigibly dangerous being, Schmitt, and especially Strauss, hoped to eradicate the justification for a subjective autonomous realm cultivated by science and technology and governed by the right of self-protection, which might grow to rival the power of the state and threaten to bring about the chaos of the state of nature. But there was a flaw, a fateful flaw, in this project. A revival of the myths necessary to instill this fear for the sake of creating or strengthening authority gives no real guarantee of actually allaying that fear: it does not abolish the state of nature, but perpetuates it. It may not diminish the role of technology in modern politics, but rather serves to expand that role many times. This project was, as such astute and learned men should have known, not the elimination, but rather, potentially, the very *institutionalization* and *manufacture* of chaos.

NOTES

1. Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on The Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 34.

2. Leo Strauss, "On the Basis of Hobbes's Political Philosophy," in *What Is Political Philosophy? and Other Studies* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1959), 178-9.

3. All references to Hobbes are from *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Book, chapter, and page citations appear in parentheses within the text.

4. This study differs from that of both Strauss disciple Heinrich Meier, *Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss und "Der Begriff des Politischen"* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Buchhandlung, 1988) and Strauss critic John Gunnell, "Strauss before Straussianism: The Weimar Conversation," *Review of Politics* (Winter 1990), in that my interest is primarily with Schmitt as participant and with Hobbes as subject of this "conversation."

5. *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1976). References are to this edition, cited as *CP* within the text. Schmitt's thesis was originally put forth in an article of the same title in 1927.

6. The language of *friend* and *enemy* is quite prevalent in *Leviathan*, for instance: "when either [a group of people] have no common *enemy*, or he that by one part is held for an *enemy*, is by another part held for a *friend*, they must needs by the difference of their interests dissolve, and fall again into a war among themselves" (II, 17, 119, emphasis added).

7. Stephen Holmes objects to attempts at softening Schmitt's political theory that present it as Hobbesian rather than as reactionary. See "Carl Schmitt: The Debility of Liberalism," *The Anatomy of Antiliberalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 41. Examples of such scholarship are, in German, Helmut Rumpf's *Carl Schmitt und Thomas Hobbes: Ideelle Beziehungen und aktuelle Bedeutung mit einer Abhandlung über: Die Frühschriften Carl Schmitts* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1972), and in English, David J. Levy, "The Relevance

of Carl Schmitt," *The World and I* (March 1987). Although this strategy is indeed questionable, there is little doubt that Hobbes had a profound effect on Schmitt's thought. Emphasizing this influence does not make Schmitt's thought any less extreme but, as this essay will show, does highlight Schmitt's major theoretical-political objectives. A reliable account of the relationship can be found in Herfried Münkler, "Carl Schmitt und Thomas Hobbes," *Neue Politische Literatur* 29 (1984).

8. See Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity*, trans. Richard Deveson (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992).

9. This theme is developed more fully by Schmitt in "The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations" (1929), trans. Matthias Konzett and John P. McCormick, *Telos* 96 (Summer 1993). I do not concern myself specifically with this essay here, because it does not deal directly with the figure of Thomas Hobbes. However, it is important to point out that this essay has been misinterpreted as an endorsement of modern technology in many studies of Schmitt. Both Richard Wolin and Jerry Z. Muller misread the essay in this way, apparently under the influence of Jeffrey Herf's faulty *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). None of these authors make note of Schmitt's criticisms of technology in his early works such as *Theodor Däublers "Nordlicht": Drei Studien über die Elemente, den Geist und die Akualität des Werkes* (Munich: Müller, 1916), or *Römischer Katholizismus und politische Form* (Hellerau: Jakob Hegner, 1923). For a criticism of Herf, see my "Introduction to Schmitt's 'The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations,' " *Telos* 96 (Summer 1993). As the present study demonstrates, a critical stance toward technology is maintained by Schmitt throughout his Weimar writings and even beyond. See Wolin, "Carl Schmitt, Political Existentialism and the Total State," in *The Terms of Cultural Criticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), and "Carl Schmitt, The Conservative Revolutionary: Habitus and The Aesthetics of Horror," *Political Theory* 20, no. 3 (August 1992); as well as Muller, "Carl Schmitt, Hans Freyer and the Radical Conservative Critique of Liberal Democracy in the Weimar Republic," *History of Political Thought* 12, no. 4 (Winter 1991). A more accurate account of Schmitt's attitude toward technology can be found in G. L. Ulmen, *Politische Mehrwert: Eine Studie über Max Weber und Carl Schmitt* (Weinheim: VCH Acta Humaniora, 1991).

10. Pasquale Pasquino, "Hobbes: Natural Right, Absolutism, and Political Obligation" (*Approches Cognitives Du Social* of the Centre-National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, no. 90158, September 1990), 9.

11. Ibid.

12. See Eve Rosenhaft, "Working-Class Life and Working-Class Politics: Communists, Nazis, and the State Battle for the Streets of Berlin 1928-1932," in *Social Change and Political Development in Weimar Germany*, eds. Richard Bessel and E. J. Feuchtwanger (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1981), 207-40, for a compelling account of this state of affairs.

13. Pasquale Pasquino, "Hobbes on the Natural Condition of Mankind" (part 1 of the English manuscript of "Thomas Hobbes: la rationalité de L'obéissance à la loi, *La pensée politique*," Spring 1994), 3. Setting aside the view that the state of nature is a mere intellectual enterprise, Pasquino prefers to employ the term *subtraction* to describe it rather than *abstraction,* because the state of nature is for Hobbes a stripping away from the empirical world rather than the product of imagination.

14. Ibid. There is of course the famous passage where Hobbes asserts how close the "natural condition" really is to contemporary reality by reminding his readers that they arm themselves when traveling, bolt their doors at night, and lock their chests even when at home (I, 13, 89).

15. Ibid., 6.

16. Richard Wolin, *The Terms of Cultural Criticism*, 87; "Carl Schmitt, The Conservative Revolutionary," 443.

17. George Schwab declares, "Nowhere in [Schmitt's] writings can one detect a desire on his part to perpetuate crises as a means of escaping the tediousness of everyday bourgeois existence" (*The Challenge of The Exception* [New York: Greenwood Reprint, 1989], 55).

18. *Political Romanticism*, trans. Guy Oakes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 125.

19. See Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944), trans. John Cummings (New York: Continuum, 1989); Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1946); *Symbol, Myth and Culture: Essays and Lectures, 1935-1945*, ed. Donald Philip Verene (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979); and Blumenberg, *Work On Myth*, trans. Robert Wallace (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989). See also, "Myth in Contemporary Life," a special issue of *Social Research* 52, no. 2 (Summer 1985), particularly the contributions of Sheldon Wolin, David Apter, Gianni Vattimo, and Umberto Eco.

20. Leo Strauss's "Anmerkungen zu Carl Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*" was originally published in *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 67, no. 6, 732-49. An English translation, "Comments on Carl Schmitt's *Begriff des Politischen,"* by E. M. Sinclair appears in the English edition of *The Concept of the Political* cited above. I will cite Strauss's essay as *CCP* in the body of the text.

21. Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, trans. E. M. Sinclair (New York: Schocken, 1965), 92.

22. Several years later, in 1939, Walter Benjamin observed that one of the effects of technology—which Schmitt and Strauss in these works associate explicitly with liberalism—is to render a person "no longer capable of telling his proven friend from his mortal enemy" ("On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt [New York: Schocken, 1968], 168). Whether Benjamin, who was quite familiar with Schmitt's work, is here explicitly alluding to the political is not clear.

23. Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, 88.

24. Ibid., 89-92.

25. Strauss's assessment that Schmitt's project remains "within the horizon of liberalism" is sometimes exaggerated in an attempt to defend Schmitt's Weimar work from charges of latent Nazism. Yet just because Schmitt's work is not latently Nazi, does not mean that it is not authoritarian or antiliberal. Strauss's comments can be seen to emphasize the point that Schmitt's theoretical shortcomings in his attack on liberalism are not for lack of trying; the intent and the attempt are quite apparent. As Chantal Mouffe more reasonably explains, "it is incorrect to assert, as some do, that Schmitt's thinking was imbued with Nazism before his turnabout of 1933 and his espousal of Hitler's movement. There is, however, no doubt that it was his deep hostility to liberalism which made possible, or which did not prevent, his joining the Nazis" (Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* [London: Verso, 1993], 121). Strauss is, of course, correct in observing that Schmitt is caught in the thrall of the liberalism he is criticizing. As Richard Wolin points out, Schmitt's emphasis on self-preservation in *The Concept of the Political* leaves him susceptible to some of the same charges leveled against liberalism itself: "In Schmitt's political theory we trade the 'good life' for 'mere life' " (*The Terms of Cultural Criticism*, 99).

26. See Meier, *Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss und "Der Begriff des Politischen,"* 134-5, 137-9. Despite the fact that Schmitt joined the National Socialist Party in May of 1933, as late as July of that year, Strauss was still seeking a correspondence with Schmitt about the prospect of aiding in the compilation of a critical edition of Hobbes's work (Meier, *Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss und "Der Begriff des Politischen,"* 17, n. 11). See also Paul Edward Gottfried, *Carl Schmitt: Politics and Theory* (New York: Greenwood, 1990).

27. Citations are from the 1952, University of Chicago Press edition, titled in full, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Genesis*, abbreviated as *PPH* in the text.

28. Strauss's interpretation is characteristically in opposition to that of the "Cambridge School" of the history of political thought. Cambridge Hobbes scholar Richard Tuck asserts that "Men, on Hobbes's account, do not want to harm other men for the sake of harming them; they wish for power over them it is true, but power only to secure their own preservation. The common idea that Hobbes was in some sense 'pessimistic' about human nature is wide of the mark, for his natural men . . . were in principle stand-offish towards one another rather than inherently belligerent" (*Hobbes* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989], 55). Tuck ignores the fact that Hobbes explicitly states that some persons "take *pleasure*" in exercising power over others "*farther* than their security requires" (1, 13, 88). Witness the precedent to this conflict between the "Straussian" and "Cambridge" interpretations of a political theorist: compare Strauss's overly sinister interpretation of Machiavelli's politics in *Thoughts on Machiavelli* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958) with Quentin Skinner's unnecessarily tepid one in *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978, 2 vols.). Surely the temperaments of the greatest figures of Western political thought can be said to fall somewhere between the sadistic nihilism and the genteel detachment that these two schools consistently attempt to impose on them in their respective interpretations.

29. In 1958, when Reinhart Koselleck discusses the role of fear in Hobbes's political thought, it is Strauss's work that he cites. See *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), 24.

30. Jürgen Habermas observes with a certain degree of accuracy that "above all it is the aesthetics of violence that fascinates [Schmitt]" (*The New Conservatism* [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988], 137). As we can see, any fascination on Schmitt's part with violence is rather mild in comparison with that of the young Strauss on Hobbes.

31. Strauss here exemplifies more fully than Schmitt the "political existentialism" that Wolin identifies as characteristic of Weimar intellectuals: "the devaluation of all traditional values meant that *human existence, in its brute facticity*, became a value in and of itself—the only value that remained, as it were. . . . By emphasizing the brute primacy of human existence, denuded of all supporting value structures, there seems to be only one certainty left in life: the inevitability of death. . . . [the] existential culmination of life itself" (*The Terms of Cultural Criticism*, 86-7). Obviously embarrassed by these rather extreme sentiments expressed in his youthful writings—particularly in light of historical events—Strauss later criticized this fascination with the "abyss" that dominated Weimar intellectual debates: "The controversy can easily degenerate into a race in which he wins who offers the smallest security and the greatest terror. It would not be difficult to guess who would be the winner. But just as an assertion does not become true because it is shown to be comforting, so it does not become true because it is shown to be terrifying" (quoted in the so-called Autobiographical Preface, which was added to the English edition of *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, 11). Strauss is not so forthright, however, in admitting that he himself took part in a theoretical project that sought to offer "the smallest security and the greatest terror."

32. It is interesting that the two historians of modern myth who do deal with Hobbes at all, Cassirer and Blumenberg (cited above), focus solely on the myth of the state of nature and not that of the Leviathan.

33. Stephen Holmes, "Introduction," in Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), xi.

34. Of course, Schmitt was already no stranger to the issue of myth. In the last chapter of his 1923 book on representative government, after having undressed the paragon of Western rational politics, the European parliament, Schmitt speaks ambiguously about the politics of "myth": see

"Irrationalist Theories of the Direct Use of Force" in *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, trans. Ellen Kennedy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988).

35. *Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre des Thomas Hobbes: Sinn and Fehlschlag eines politischen Symbols* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsaostalt, 1938). I will cite the most recent edition (Köln: Klett-Cotta, 1982) as *L*. The English renderings are from the translation of the work by George Schwab forthcoming from Greenwood Press.

36. For more detailed accounts of Schmitt's involvement with National Socialism, see Schwab, *The Challenge of The Exception*, and Joseph Bendersky, *Carl Schmitt: Theorist for the Reich* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

37. Strauss too gave up the attempt to divorce the "human" from the "scientific" Hobbes in his later treatment of the philosopher in *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953); in fact, Strauss comes to portray Hobbes as the *bearer* of the latter formally profane element, "The man who was the first to draw the consequences for natural right from this momentous change [the emergence of modern science, of nonteleological natural science] was Thomas Hobbes. . . . To Hobbes we must turn if we desire to understand the specific character of modern natural right" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 166, also 170-4.

38. In his treatment of Schmitt's *Leviathan*, Holmes focuses more extensively on the virulent anti-Semitism expressed in the book, particularly Schmitt's professed disgust at Hobbes's choice of mythic symbol: a monster from the *Jewish* tradition (*The Anatomy of Antiliberalism*, 50-3). Whether Schmitt was an anti-Semite before joining the party—a claim made by John Herz, and more forcefully, Richard Wolin—is more controversial: see Herz, "Looking at Carl Schmitt from the Vantage Point of the 1990s," *Interpretation* 19, no. 3 (Spring 1992); Wolin, *The Terms of Cultural Criticism*. A recent German article that makes such an argument is Raphael Gross, "Carl Schmitts 'Nomos' und die 'Juden,' " *Merkur* 47, no. 5 (May 1993). In the introduction to his forthcoming translation of Schmitt's *Leviathan* book, George Schwab argues that the anti-Semitism that Schmitt expressed under National Socialism was purely opportunistic.

39. Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*, 38-9.

40. Again Koselleck sheds light on this relationship between mechanistic command and empty law:

> Reason thus creates a neutral zone of State "technology" in which there is no law but the prince's will. In such a State only the formal legality of the laws is rational, not their content; therefore the formal commandment of political morality to obey the laws regardless of their content is reasonable. The State is not only a mortal God; it becomes an automaton, the great machine, and the laws are the levers moved by the sovereign's absolute will, in order to keep the state machinery running. (Ibid., 33)

41. Pasquale Pasquino, "Hobbes on the Legal Condition in the Commonwealth" (part 2 of the English manuscript of "Thomas Hobbes: la rationalité de L'obéissance à la loi"), 13.

42. Note Schmitt's distinction between a "total *quantitative* state" and a "total *qualitative* state" in "Weiterentwicklung des totalen Staats in Deutschland" (January 1933), in *Positionen und Begriffe im Kampf mit Weimar—Genf—Versailles: 1923-1939* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1940). This distinction is overlooked in many new left accounts of Schmitt. In addition to Wolin, *The Terms of Cultural Criticism*, see John Keane, "Dictatorship and the Decline of Parliament: Carl Schmitt's Theory of Political Sovereignty" in *Democracy and Civil Society* (London: Verso, 1988). A post-Marxist treatment of Schmitt, which does in fact demonstrate more sensitivity to the distinction between the quantitative and qualitative total state is Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 204, 237, 239.

43. *Der Hüter der Verfassung* (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1931), 73.

44. "Staatsethik und pluralistisher Staat" (1930), in *Positionen und Begriffe*, 28-9.

45. Hans Kelsen, "Wer soll der Huter der Verfassung sein?" *Die Justiz* 6 (1930/31), 1917-8.

46. See Hobbes, "A Review, and Conclusion," in *Leviathan*, as well as Quentin Skinner, "Conquest and Consent: Thomas Hobbes and the Engagement Controversy," in *The Interregnum*, ed. G. E. Aylmer (London: Macmillan, 1972), on the dating of the book.

47. As Perry Anderson rightly observes regarding both Schmitt's and Michael Oakeshott's views of Hobbes: "It would be difficult to think of a more incongruous authority for any 'non-instrumental' . . . understanding of the state. The pact of civil association between individuals in *Leviathan* is supremely an 'instrument' to secure common ends—the aims of security and prosperity, 'mutual peace' and 'commodious living' " ("The Intransigent Right at the End of the Century," *London Review of Books*, 9/24/92, 7, emphasis added).

48. *The Second Treatise on Government*, 2, § 13, 19-27.

49. On the subject of Schmitt's precarious position in the Reich after his fall from favor with the regime, see Bendersky, *Carl Schmitt: Theorist for the Reich*, 263-4; Schwab, *The Challenge of the Exception*, 142.

50. "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit," originally published in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 5, no. 1, 1936. Translated by Harry Zohn as "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, 241.

51. In her recent article on Benjamin's "Artwork" essay, Susan Buck-Morss recounts how in 1932 Hitler rehearsed his facial expressions in front of a mirror under the supervision of an opera singer. Buck-Morss compares photographs of Hitler's subsequent speeches with psychopictorial studies of faces expressing different emotional states. What she finds, surprisingly, is that Hitler's expressions correspond, not to representations of aggression, anger, or rage, but rather to depictions of fear and pain ("Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered," *October* 62 [Fall 1992], 39-40). Thus the fear of violent death that Schmitt and Strauss wished to revive, divorced from the influence of technology, was already being communicated technically and mechanically through loudspeakers, newsreels, motion pictures, photographs, and radios. Such a divorce was already unlikely.

52. Ibid., 22-3.

53. Hobbes writes:

> Nature (the Art whereby God hath made and governes the World) is by the *Art* of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an Artificial Animal. For seeing life is but a motion of Limbs, the begining whereof is in some principall part within; why may we not say, that all Automata (Engines that move themselves by springs and wheeles as doth a watch) have an artificial life? . . . *Art* goes yet further, imitating that Rationall and most excellent worke of Nature, *Man*. For by Art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMON-WEALTH, or STATE, (in Latine *CIVITAS*), which is but an Artificiall Man. ("The Introduction," 9)

54. According to Buck-Morss, phantasmagoria have "the effect of anaesthetizing the organism, not through numbing, but through flooding the senses. These simulated sensoria alter consciousness, much like a drug, but they do so through sensory distraction rather than chemical alteration, and—most significantly—their effects are experienced collectively rather than individually" (ibid.). We must not forget that Hobbes intended his automaton, his man-monster-machine to be a "*visible* Power to keep *them* in awe" (2, 17, 117, emphasis added)—in other words, a sense-induced distraction of the masses.

55. See particularly the first two essays of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, "The Concept of Enlightenment," and "Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment." Although Blumenberg recognizes the intrinsic relationship between myth and enlightenment rationality in *Work on Myth*, Cassirer, a renowned Kantian, insists on their distinction. However, Cassirer comes very close to acknowledging the "dialectic of enlightenment" when he remarks on the "strategic," "technical," and "artificial" quality of myth in relationship to modern technology and politics—what he calls "the technique of political myth" (*Symbol, Myth and Culture*, 235-7).

56. As we have seen, Benjamin claimed that, "All efforts to render politics aesthetic culminate in one thing: war." And as Michael Geyer reminds us, in terms that recall Benjamin and Schmitt, war was indeed the essence of National Socialism:

> The direction of the Third Reich was toward war. War was essential to regain the "autonomy of the political" and to recenter the stage by giving politics at least the appearance of purposeful and unified action which it otherwise lacks. In the counterrevolutionary Third Reich, war, victorious war, was meant to achieve more than that. War not only happened to be Hitler's main and ultimate goal in the creation of a new German society, it also made the Third Reich an "exceptional state." War permits the "autonomy of the political" to reach its extreme in the age of imperialism. In an "exceptional state" war is neither simply the predatory instinct of special interests, nor the manifestation of atavistic sentiments. Rather, war is fought to create and recreate and society *and* a state which "habitually lives on war." "War recenters state and society in combat, domination, and direct exploitation" ("The State in National Socialist Germany," in *Statemaking and Social Movements: Essays in History and Theory*, eds. Charles Bright and Susan Harding [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984], 198).

I have questioned whether or not Schmitt intentionally advocated war in the manner that both Benjamin and Geyer describe it. I have argued against Wolin that, in 1933, Schmitt sought to overcome the state of nature, the friend/enemy distinction, in domestic politics so that the state could take part in these in the realm where, according to Schmitt, they could never be overcome, the realm of international relations. Thus, for Schmitt, war had to be suppressed at home to prepare for it abroad. National Socialism defies Schmitt's own "concept of the political" by as vigorously making war at home as on foreign soil—by maintaining, in Geyer's words, "an escalating system of domestic terror and violence abroad" ("The Stigma of Violence: Nationalism and War in Twentieth Century Germany," *German Studies Review* [Winter 1992], 97). Nevertheless, the fear that Schmitt sought to inspire through the aestheticization of conflict regarding the political, contributed to the aesthetization of war that would not only manifest itself externally, but internally as well. Wolin is right to invoke Benjamin against Schmitt at the conclusion of "Carl Schmitt, the Conservative Revolutionary," but not because Schmitt endorsed "violence for violence's sake" (443), but rather because Schmitt did not understand, as Benjamin did, what Buck-Morss calls "the modern constellation of aesthetics, politics, and war" ("Aesthetics and Anaesthetics," 9). What purpose does it serve—except perhaps some aesthetic one—to demonize Schmitt without correctly understanding him? That Schmitt deserves to be taken to task in an informed manner for both his misconceived undermining of Weimar liberalism and his subsequent political affiliation should be clear from the exposition of this article.

57. *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933-1944* (New York: Harper & Row, 1944), xii.

58. "Autobiographical Preface," *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, 30.

59. In a review of Heinrich Meier's book on Schmitt and Strauss, Paul Gottfried describes how Strauss's followers attempt to artificially separate Strauss's Weimar views from those of

Schmitt (*Telos* 96 [Summer 1993]). Yet certain admirers of Strauss reveal more than others on this point and even leave open the question of how much—if at all—Strauss changed his mind after emigrating. As Volker Reinecke and Jonathan Uhlaner remark: "Leaving Europe behind, Strauss began to rearrange his attitude toward philosophy. He abandoned none of the positions with which he had worked for over a decade, but transformed their coordination" ("The Problem of Leo Strauss: Religion, Philosophy and Politics," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 16, no. 1 [1992], 196). There is of course the assessment of young Strauss's political predilections that Hannah Arendt conveyed to her biographer: see Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982). The most thorough account of Strauss's thought as a whole is Shadia Drury's *The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss* (New York: St. Martin, 1988).

60. On Benjamin's aborted attempt to escape the Nazis and his subsequent suicide, see Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt Institute* (New York: Free Press, 1977), 162-3.

61. Bendersky, *Carl Schmitt: Theorist for the Reich*, 204.

62. Ibid., 230-42.

63. In his later years, Schmitt would seemingly deny, yet actually affirm, his self-understanding as a modern Hobbes: a controversial theorist, denounced in his own time, but influential for centuries to come. As G. L. Ulmen recounts:

> Some years before his death, Schmitt wrote to me that "I am no Hobbes, but, like Hobbes, I am a 'sole retriever of an ancient prudence.' " He was referring to his characterization of Hobbes in his 1938 book where he lauded his prototype as "the real teacher of a great political experience; alone, like every pioneer; misunderstood, like one whose political ideas are unrealized among his own people; unrewarded, like one who opens a door which another can go through; and yet, in the undying community of great men who know their times, 'a sole retriever of an ancient prudence.' Over the centuries we call to him: *Non jam frustra doces*, Thomas Hobbes!" ("Anthropological Theology/Theological Anthropology," *Telos* 93 (Fall 1992), 73, (n. 14)

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