Leviathan
THE INTRODUCTION

[1] Nature (the art whereby God hath made and governs 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 beginning whereof is in some principal part within, why may we not say that all automata (engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as doth a watch) have an artificial life? For what is the heart, but a spring; and the nerves, but so many strings; and the joints, but so many wheels, giving motion to the whole body, such as was intended by the artificer? Art goes yet further, imitating that rational and most excellent work of nature, man. For by art is created that great Leviathan called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE (in Latin Civitas), which is but an artificial man, though of greater stature and strength than the natural, for whose protection and defence it was intended; and in which the sovereignty is an artificial soul, as giving life and motion to the whole body; the magistrates and other officers of judicature and execution, artificial joints; reward and punishment (by which fastened to the seat of the sovereignty every joint and member is moved to perform his duty) are the nerves, that do the same in the body natural; the wealth and riches of all the particular members are the strength; salus populi (the people’s safety) its business; counsellors, by whom all things needful for it to know are suggested unto it, are the memory; equity and law, an artificial reason and will; concord, health; sedition, sickness; and civil war, death. Lastly, the pacts and covenants by which the parts of this body politic were

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1. As Hobbes notes (xxviii, 27), his title alludes to Job 41 (where Leviathan is a sea-monster, whose symbolic meaning is obscure). Leibniz found Hobbes’ work “monstrous even in what its title suggests.” (Letter to Jacob Thomasius, 23 September 1670). Hobbes himself hints (xvii, 13) that the title may be irreverent. Perhaps the problem is that Leviathan was often associated with the devil. Cf. Aquinas, The Literal Exposition on Job (ed. A. Damico & M. Yaffe, Scholars Press, 1989, p. 448) and especially, Jean Bodin, Colloquium of the Seven (ed. M. Kutz, Princeton, 1975, pp. 105, 107, 110, 118).
at first made, set together, and united, resemble that fiat, or the let us make
man, pronounced by God in the creation.

[2] To describe the nature of this artificial man, I will consider
First, the matter thereof, and the artificer, both which is man.
Secondly, how and by what covenants it is made; what are the
rights and just power or authority of a sovereign; and what it is
that preserveth and dissolveth it.
Thirdly, what is a Christian commonwealth.
Lastly, what is the kingdom of darkness.

[3] Concerning the first, there is a saying much usurped* of late, that
wisdom is acquired, not by reading of books, but of men. Consequently
whereunto, those persons that for the most part can give no other proof of
being wise take great delight to show what they think they have read in
men, by uncharitable censures of one another behind their backs.2 But
there is another saying not of late understood, by which they might learn
truly to read one another, if they would take the pains; and that is, nesc
teipse, read thy self, which was not meant, as it is now used, to counte
nance either the barbarous state of men in power towards their inferiors, or
to encourage men of low degree to a saucy behaviour towards their betters,
but to teach us that for the similitude of the thoughts and passions of one
man to the thoughts and passions of another, whosoever looketh into him-
self and considereth what he doth, when he does think, opine, reason, hope,
fear, &c, and upon what grounds, he shall thereby read and know, what are
the thoughts and passions of all other men upon the like occasions. I say the
similitude of passions, which are the same in all men, desire, fear, hope, &c,
not the similitude of the objects of the passions, which are the things desired,
feared, hoped, &c; for these the constitution individual and particular edu-
cation do so vary, and they are so easy to be kept from our knowledge, that
the characters of man’s heart, blotted and confounded as they are with
dissembling, lying, counterfeiting, and erroneous doctrines, are legible
only to him that searcheth hearts. And though by men’s actions we do
discover their design sometimes, yet to do it without comparing them with
our own, and distinguishing all circumstances by which the case may come
to be altered, is to decipher without a key, and be for the most part de-
ceived, by too much trust, or by too much diffidence,* as he that reads
is himself a good or evil man.

[4] But let one man read another by his actions never so perfectly, it
serves him only with his acquaintance, which are but few. He that is to
govern a whole nation must read in himself, not this or that particular man,
but mankind, which though it be hard to do, harder than to learn any
language or science, yet when I shall have set down my own reading or-
derly and perspicuously, the pains left another will be only to consider if he
also find not the same in himself. For this kind of doctrine admitteth no
other demonstration.

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2. Given Hobbes’ reputation as someone who holds a low view of human nature,
it is somewhat surprising to see him complain that others censure their fellow men
uncharitably. Cf. xi, 2.