

W. H. GREENLEAF
Swansea

A NOTE ON HOBBS
AND
THE BOOK OF JOB

I

Hobbes wrote in an age the thought of which was dominated by religious considerations. And although he undoubtedly had a firm faith in the basic truth of Christianity, he was not so much a deeply religious man as one who was very interested in and paid a great deal of attention to both the abstract issues of theology and hermeneutics and the concrete problems of church and state. As his works clearly show, he was certainly learned in the matter of biblical exegesis even though the views he used this skill to sustain were, given the prevailing attitudes of the day, often unorthodox or extreme¹. Nonetheless it is, in this perspective, rather odd that he was for so long seen in a quite different, merely naturalistic and materialist, context of interpretation². However, there has latterly been some fruitful reconsideration of his religious meaning and attempts have been made to stress his ideas

(1) For a recent opinion see D. H. J. WARNER 'Hobbes's Interpretation of the Doctrine of the Trinity', *Journal of Religious History*, v, 1968-9, pp. 299-313 esp. p. 307.

(2) For these different views see my 'Hobbes: the Problem of Interpretation' repr. in M. CRANSTON and R. PETERS (eds.) *Hobbes and Rousseau*. New York, 1972, ch. I.

as belonging, despite any appearance to the contrary, to the great tradition of Christian philosophy and theology³. It is with this background in mind that I wish to refer briefly to some minor and perhaps somewhat obvious, though in most cases little noticed, points concerning the significance to Hobbes of one particular part of the Bible, the book of Job⁴.

What I shall do here is, first, say something about the book and summarize its theme (as it appears to a reader unfortunately largely ignorant of the wealth of relevant postillation); and, secondly, indicate some specific references and general affinities that emerge between it and the political argument of Hobbes.

II

The general merits of the book of Job have long received substantial recognition. Herder observed its magnificent scope when he called it 'an epopee of mankind, a theodicy of God'⁵. And Carlyle's assessment of its status as a literary and ethical masterpiece must stand for many. He described it as

one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels... such a noble universality... reigns in it. A noble Book; all men's Book! It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending Problem, -

-
- (3) See esp. F. C. HOOD *The Divine Politics of Thomas Hobbes*, Oxford, 1964. Also the stimulating and very important papers: J. FREUND 'Le Dieu Mortel', in R. KOSELLECK and R. SCHNUR (eds.) *Hobbes-Forschungen*, Berlin, 1969, pp. 33-52; W. B. GLOVER 'God and Thomas Hobbes', repr. in K. BROWN (ed.) *Hobbes Studies*, Oxford, 1965, pp. 141-68, and his 'Human Nature and the State in Hobbes', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, iv, 1966, pp. 293-311.
- (4) The only study I can recall that specifically draws attention to this is FREUND, loc. cit., pp. 36, 39-40.
- (5) J. G. von HERDER *Vom Geist der Erbraischen Poesie*, i, 148 cited H. H. ROWLEY, 'The Book of Job and its Meaning', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, xli, 1958-9, p. 169 n. 1.

man's destiny, and God's ways with him here in this earth. And all in such free flowing outlines; grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity; in its epic melody, and repose of reconciliation... So *true* every-way... There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit⁶.

Not surprisingly, therefore, there is a large literature about it (though not one so enormous as that which has grown up around some other parts of the scriptures). A cursory search in the libraries to which I have recently had access—none of them in a major centre—revealed upwards of fifty or so commentaries and translations; and no doubt there are many more. Much of this secondary work is typical of the higher criticism, the exegesis being conducted in most elaborate and invariably tedious detail: these are, indeed, matters which have been the subject of varied, prolonged and abstruse scholarly controversy⁷. In contrast, however, relatively little attention seems to have been paid, especially in the recent literature, to the book's many political and cognate implications. Of course, there is a great deal of discussion about the central moral problem of the innocent sufferer⁸. But the wider omission is strange for two reasons. The first is that in the early modern period at least there was a close and recognized connexion between theological controversy on the one hand

(6) T. CARLYLE *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, 1840, in *The Works*, People's ed., London, 1871, xiii. 45.

(7) There is an elaborate survey of these debates in ROWLEY, art. cit. See also among recent reviews of different opinions R. E. HONE, ed., *The Voice out of the Whirlwind: the Book of Job*, San Francisco, 1960, A. GUILLAUME *Studies in the Book of Job*, Leiden, 1968, and P. S. SANDERS, ed., *Twentieth Century Interpretations of the Book of Job*, Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1968.

(8) See e. g. the many Christian and exotic arguments about this issue analyzed in H. H. ROWLEY *Submission in Suffering, and other Essays on Eastern Thought*, Cardiff, 1951; E. F. SUTCLIFFE *Providence and Suffering in the Old and New Testaments*, London, 1955; and J. PAULUS 'Le thème du Juste Souffrant dans la pensée grecque et hébraïque', *Revue de l'histoire des Religions*, cxii, 1940.

and political disputes, constitutional questions and matters of foreign policy on the other. This general point needs no emphasis and many examples spring readily to mind⁹. The other reason is that the book's symbolic or allegorical value for such political consideration seems very substantial and was, in fact, clearly recognized in Hobbes' day. For instance, in 1623 Robert Sanderson, later Bishop of Lincoln, preached a sermon on Job xxix. 14-17 which was largely concerned with the duties of rulers¹⁰. Again, Joseph Caryl, the nonconformist leader and commentator who produced a study of the book of Job in twelve quarto volumes, was clearly aware of the practical lessons his work might teach and he commends it to 'the Christian Reader' because the troubles of England—he is writing in 1643 just after the outbreak of civil war—seem to parallel at national level those of Job as an individual. And pursuing the analogy he looks toward a probable future restoration of prosperity to a strife-ridden land¹¹. Similarly he, like Sanderson, goes on to raise questions concerning 'Oeconomics', about 'the character of a discrete master and father', the role of the magistrate in the commonwealth, and so on¹².

However, despite the manifest richness of the text for such purposes as these, I have been unable to find any overall historical treatment of the book's moral and political purport as it has been seen from time to time in the development of late medieval and modern speculation on these matters. Yet, as will be seen, Hobbes seems to have had the story of Job in mind, perhaps very much so, when

-
- (9) For one apt and obvious instance see T. M. PARKER's 'Arminianism and Laudianism in Seventeenth-Century England', *Studies in Church History*, 1, 1964, pp. 20-34.
- (10) R. SANDERSON, *XXXV Sermons*, London, 1681, 'Ad Magistratum. The First Sermon', pp. 79-100 (first pagination). And see below p. 22
- (11) J. CARYL *An Exposition with Practicall Obseruations upon The three first Chapters of the Book of Job...*, London, 1647, sig. A2 recto.
- (12) e. g. *ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

establishing or expounding certain aspects of his thought in *Leviathan* and only a proper study of the kind mentioned would enable his use and understanding of the biblical epic to be placed in proper context and some assessment made of the meaning of the Hobbesian gloss and whether it was in any way novel. Even if I were competent to begin such a task this would not be the place to attempt it; and it would undoubtedly be very arduous. What follows is simply some sparse points which may be raised in connexion with Hobbes himself.

But first, the story.

Its outline is straightforward. There is a prologue in which Job is introduced and the scene set. He is an upright, prosperous and righteous man. Satan, however, doubts his steadfastness and suggests he is pious only because he is prosperous. As a result, God permits him to be tested in increasingly onerous, unpleasant and painful ways: in turn, his property, his children and his health are destroyed. He bears these appalling afflictions, continues to assert his innocence of any wickedness that might have warranted them and affirms that, as God is just, he would be relieved of the unmerited sufferings to which he is subject if he could only attract God's attention to his situation. In a theophanic climax, God speaks to him out of the whirlwind and asks how he can possibly hope to understand divine power and purpose. Job, abashed, realizes his sin has been one of pride and humbly and completely accepts God's will and authority. In the outcome, because he has indeed been innocent and has kept faith throughout his period of trial, he is restored to a state of wealth and happiness even more advantageous than that he enjoyed before his decline.

The main theme is thus that of righteous suffering—why, if God is just, someone whose life and conduct have been unblemished should undergo misfortune and torment while the wicked seem to prosper in this world. Thus Caryl: "The main and principal subject of this Book is contained... in one verse of the 34. Psalm. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him*

out of all' ¹³. This is indeed like Hobbes' own summary of the meaning of the book ¹⁴.

The question now is, How is this story related to Hobbes' political thought?

III

The first kind of connexion is both specific and random, and indicated by a miscellaneous series of points.

(a) One initial question is how far Hobbes was familiar with all the secondary literature about Job. He liked to boast he read little of other men's works but this must be exaggeration. And at the least he would come into contact with a good variety of material through the library at Chatsworth where he was responsible for ordering and accessioning the new books. But specific acknowledgements in his writings are rare. So far as I know, there is only one reference to the commentaries on Job and similar works and this occurs in the prefatory epistle to his *Of Liberty and Necessity* (written 1646, published 1654). This preface is a diatribe against scriptural commentators and priests and ministers of all kinds, their methods and motives, and, above all, the untoward effects they have on social peace. One consequence is

They find work for *printers*, &c. if the parties interested are troubled with the itch of popularity, and will suffer themselves to be scratched out of somewhat by way of contribution to the impression. Hence is the *stationer's* shop furnished, and thence the *minister's* study in the country, who having found out the humour of his auditory, consults with his stationer, on what books his money is best bestowed; who very gravely, it may be, will commend *Cole upon the Philippians* before the excellent, but borrowed, *Ca-*

(13) CARYL *op. cit.*, p. 6. Cf. E. PAGET *The Historie of the Bible*, London, 1628, p. 223, where it is said the principal object is 'To teach man patience to know the mercies of God, and to trust in them...'

(14) HOBBS *Leviathan*, London, 1651, repr. Menston, 1969, III. xxxiii, p. 202.

ryl upon Job. But as to any matter of conviction, we see every one acquiesces in his own sentiments...¹⁵.

The tone of all this is authentically Hobbesian but, alas, internal evidence and authority alike suggest that the matter is not from Hobbes' hand¹⁶. It indicates simply that Caryl's and similar commentaries were well-known; and that it is feasible at the least to assume that a man so learned as Hobbes would probably know something of them¹⁷.

(b) Then, as is well-known, the titles of two of Hobbes' major political works are taken from the book of Job. Behemoth and Leviathan are two monsters depicted therein by God when he asserts his incomprehensible and irresistible power; their strength is savage and terrible, and only he can impose his will on them and control them (xl. 15-24, xli. 1-34)¹⁸. Though to man they seem very fierce, God is incomparably greater and he asks, 'who then is able to stand before me?' (xli. 10). This choice of titles, while it is unlikely to have been accidental or a merely literary gesture, is, it is true, a somewhat surprising manifestation of poetic insight in so sober-minded a philosopher (even one who wrote verse and translated

(15) HOBBS *The English Works*, ed. MOLESWORTH, London, 1839-45, iv. 233-4.

(16) Cf. G. C. ROBERTSON *Hobbes*, London, 1886 repr. 1901, p. 163; also the remarks in *The English Works*, v. 25-6 presumably referring to the anonymous 'nimble writer' of this preface.

(17) Cf., too, his reference to St. Jerome on Job at *Leviathan*, III. xxxiii, p. 202. As to the general run of biblical commentaries he referred (*English Works*, iv. 327) only to Joseph Mede (or Mead), a staunchly anglican scholar who wrote many books on apocalyptic and mystical subjects. At the same time, Hobbes specifically expressed his admiration for and showed familiarity with the works of quite a number of protestant reformers, *ibid.*, v. 266, 298-9. There is also detailed reference to Bellarmine's works, *Leviathan*, III. xlii, pp. 269, 300-320 (where the analysis is in some detail), IV. xlii, pp. 346-51.

(18) These and subsequent biblical references are to the Authorized Version. Unless otherwise attributed they are to the book of Job.

classical epic)¹⁹. Hobbes' two books were seen as complementary (as the two monsters were displayed together in the book of Job) as joint indications of what they each portend: the existence of or need for a supreme and unchallengeable authority in the body politic akin to that of God in the world as whole (leviathan or state); and the awful consequences of, mainly religious, dissension spreading disorder throughout the land (behemoth or revolution)²⁰. Something of the sentiments and fears Hobbes was supposed to be expressing is embodied in the old legends that behemoth would destroy leviathan, that is, that unrest and sedition would disturb or completely undermine authority and stable order in the state²¹.

(c) Then there is the latin citation (from the Vulgate) at the head of the famous engraved title page of *Leviathan* on which that entity is symbolically depicted: 'Non est potestas Super Terram quae Comparetur ei Iob. 41.24'. The full passage (xli. 33-4)²² reads:

-
- (19) Cf. the remark in F. Tönnies' study of Hobbes (which I have used in the Spanish translation of the third edition) *Vida y Doctrina de Tomás Hobbes*, Madrid, 1932, p. 269.
- (20) *Ibid.*, p. 87. Similarly, in the 'Preface' to his edition of *Behemoth or the Long Parliament*, 1889, repr. London, 1969, p. xi, Tönnies refers to the book's 'relation of contrast to the better known *Leviathan*, as representing the idea of a lawful government'. But there is also some evidence that Hobbes later came to regard *Behemoth* as 'a foolish title', *ibid.*, p. ix; though why he thought this is not explained, and certainly it is the title used in the ms.
- (21) Cf. *The English Works*, v. 27; *Leviathan*, III. xxxvi, p. 232. On these stories see R. GRAVES and R. PATAI 'Some Hebrew Myths and Legends', *Encounter*, xx, 1963, Feb. pp. 3-18, March pp. 12-16, esp. Feb. p. 11.
- (22) The different verse numbers are due of course to variations in the chaptering of the Vulgate and the Authorized Version. I have not been able to determine which form of the Bible Hobbes commonly used. And, as there is no uniform accuracy of reference to any particular form, it seems possible, especially as *Leviathan* was written over a number of years, that Hobbes used several versions, made his own translations from the Vulgate or Septuagint, or simply quoted, perhaps inac-

Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear. He beholdeth all high *things*: he is a king over all the children of pride.

The significance of this text as a motto or epigraph to Hobbes' analysis of human nature in politics is apparent especially in the context of Professor Leo Strauss' stress, which is surely correct, on the moral significance, for Hobbes, of the 'vanity-fear antithesis'²³.

Further, the appropriateness of the actual figure in the engraving lies not only in the way in which it is constructed of smaller persons to give the sense of association²⁴, but also in the way in which it reflects the concept of representation which in *Leviathan*, for the first time, Hobbes deploys as a central part of his theory. As Tönnies pointed out, this constitutes an advance over the bases of civil society discerned in the earlier political tracts that Hobbes produced²⁵. Perhaps the key passages in Hobbes' exposition are these:

A Person is he, whose words or actions are considered, either as his own, or as representing the words or actions of another man, or of any other thing to whom they are attributed, whether Truly or by Fiction.

When they are considered as his owne, then is he called a *Naturall Person*: And when they are considered as representing the words and actions of an other, then is he a *Feigned* or *Artificiall person*.

The word Person is latine: instead whereof the Greeks have *πρόσωπον*, which signifies the *Face*, as *Persona* in latine signifies the *disguise*, or *outward appearance* of a man, counterfeited on the Stage...: And from the Stage, hath been translated to any Representer of speech and action...

curately, from memory; or maybe he cited from one of the earlier editions of the A. V. which vary from those later current.

(23) Leo STRAUSS *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, Oxford, 1936.

(24) See below pp. 24

(25) TÖNNIES, op. cit., pp. 269ff.

There are few things, that are incapable of being represented by Fiction...

A Multitude of men, are made *One Person*, when they are by one man, or one Person, Represented...For it is the *Unity* of the Representer, not the Unity of the Represented, that maketh the Person *One* ²⁶.

In the matured presentation of *Leviathan*, then, it is not the mere union of men under the laws of nature or some assembly or civic being that creates the state and its sovereignty but the '*Unity of the Representer*'. In the introduction to *Leviathan* Hobbes had described this unity in terms of a traditional microcosm-body politic correspondence.

...by Art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE, (in latine CIVITAS) which is but an Artificiall 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 Artificiall *Soul*, as giving life and motion to the whole body; The *Magistrates*, and other *Officers of Judicature and Execution*, artificiall *Joynts*; *Reward and Punishment*... are the *Nerves*...

And so on, with a final remark that the making of 'this Body Politique' is like the act of 'God in the Creation' ²⁷. This is the kind of similitude that could be paralleled many times in the political works of the early modern period, in particular those of royalists such as Edward Forset ²⁸. He had written, for instance, that

The Commonweale... is... set forth by sundry fit resemblances... but by none more properly than... the body of a man

(26) *Leviathan*, I. xvi, pp. 80-2, italics in original.

(27) *ibid.*, introduction, p. 1.

(28) On these correspondences and their political significance see my *Order, Empiricism and Politics: Two Traditions of English Political Thought, 1500-1700*, London, 1964, chs. II-V.

and had then pursued the analogy at great length²⁹.

It was quite natural, then, for the unity of Hobbes' sovereign representer to be shown in the corporeal form depicted in the engraved title page especially as this had the advantage of stressing, too, the other aspects of the leviathanic image.

(d) An obvious question is, How was the word 'leviathan' commonly used in early and mid-seventeenth century England?³⁰

(1) First of all, there are many instances from the fourteenth century onward of the word's being employed to refer to Satan as the greatest enemy of God³¹. Indeed, long before, Gregory the Great in his commentary on Job had equated leviathan with the devil³². The 'Bishop's Bible', 1585, explained in a note to Job xli. 8 that 'Leuiatha representeth Satan'³³. Another instance, contemporary to Hobbes, and related, too, to discussion of the meaning of Job's predicament, also serves to illustrate this usage. Joseph Caryl wrote, in the 1640s, that the leviathan referred to in the book represented Satan and his instruments; and he refers to 'the Devill, that great Leviathan: Vnder which name, he with all spirituall wickednesses, the opposers of Christ and of his Church are comprehended...'³⁴ Again, in Wilson's dictionary of Christianity, leviathan is 'figuratively' given the meaning of 'King of Babell, or Antichrist'³⁵.

(29) E. FORSET *A Comparative Discourse Of The Bodies Natvrall And Politique...*, London, 1606, 'To the Reader', sigs. π recto-verso.

(30) For what follows, in part, cf. *Oxford English Dictionary* sub 'Leviathan'.

(31) *ibid.*, §2.

(32) See the edition in *A Library of Fathers of the Roman Catholic Church*, Oxford, 1844-50, iii. 572.

(33) The Geneva Bible, 1560, in a note to Isalah xxvii.1 interprets a reference to leviathan as one to satan.

(34) CARYL, *op. cit.*, pp. 141, 374.

(35) T. WILSON *A Christian Dictionary*, 4th ed., London, 1630(?), sig. Ee 4. On the other hand, Calvin specifically denied 'yt by an allegory the diuill is spoken of here', *Sermons of Maister Iohn*

(ii) Secondly, the word was used to mean someone of vast and formidable power or enormous wealth³⁶. The earliest such use recorded dates, however, only from 1607. Thomas Dekker, the author and dramatist, in his tract *A Knight's Coniuring* writes of a supplication made by the usurer to the 'knight of the post': 'Of this last request, the lacquy of this great leuiathan promide he should be mais-ter...' ³⁷. Again, in a sermon delivered in the early 1630s, the Robert Sanderson already referred to, preaching of God's ultimate power in the world despite all the devices and deceits of man, said, 'So can the Lord deal, and often doth, with the great *Behemoths* and *Leviathans* of the world...' ³⁸ Nor did this meaning die out in the next two centuries ³⁹.

(iii) Thirdly, given the other two meanings it is not difficult to understand how in the seventeenth century the word 'leviathan' would, as it were by a natural transition, come to be used as an image of worldly power especially that of government⁴⁰. Thus, in a typical correspondence, Caryl says that 'as the Sun is a Prince among the lights of heaven, so Leviathan is a Prin-

Caluin, vpon the Booke of Iob, tr. A. GOLDING, London, 1584, p. 732.

- (36) It was usual, of course, for the figure of the whale or some other great beast to be taken as representing God's supreme and unchallengeable power. See e. g. R. HUMPHREYS *The Conflict of Iob*, London, 1607, pp. 210-15.
- (37) DEKKER, *A Knight's Coniuring Done in Earnest: Discovered in Iest*, 1607, ed. E. R. RIMBAULT, London, 1842, p. 60. At p. 47 'Bohomath' is referred to as 'the Prince of the Diuels'. Dekker's tract is a sequel to Thomas NASHE's *Pierce Pennilesse*, 1592.
- (38) Robert SANDERSON op. cit., 'Ad Populum: the Eighth Sermon', p. 310 (second pagination).
- (39) See the citations in OED, 'leviathan', §1c.
- (40) Professor FREUND loc. cit., p. 40 says this was the case, citing Carl SCHMITT *Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre des Thomas Hobbes*, Hamburg, 1938, chs. I-II, but I regret I have not been able to consult this work.

ce, a King among the fishes of the Sea' ⁴¹. Hobbes, however, is credited by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as the first to have applied the term to the state as such in his *Leviathan* of 1651 ⁴². There is a possibility (though it is, in my view, a very slight one indeed) that he used the term earlier than this. It appears that there may be still in existence a folio ms. bearing a dedication to the Earl of Newcastle, dated 9 May 1640, and entitled *Leviathan, principles of law and policy* ⁴³. But as this is the exact date of the 'Epistle Dedicatory' (written to that same nobleman) of Hobbes' *Elements of Law*, ⁴⁴ it seems reasonable to assume that the folio ms. is simply a copy of this 'little treatise' which circulated for some years in unprinted and unpublished form. It is in any case unclear whether or not the title of the ms., using the word 'leviathan', is a later addition. If it is the term may be no more than the conventional antonomastic description, common after 1651, of Hobbes as the author of a treatise concerning 'principles of law and policy' (which is a fair description of *The Elements*) ⁴⁵.

(iv) It is appropriate, too, in this context to refer to the cognate term 'dragon', the Hebrew word for which was often translated as 'whale' or 'sea-monster' as was 'leviathan'. Consider, for instance, a passage in the Revelation of St. John, 'And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon...' (Rev.

(41) J. CARYL *An Exposition with Practicall Observations Continued upon The Twenty-second [to] Twenty-sixth Chapters of the Book of Job* (London, 1655), p. 814.

(42) *OED*, 'leviathan', §3 where some later examples of the specifically political usage are also given.

(43) In *Notes and Queries* ccxviii, 1973, p. 181 Professor W. B. Todd of the University of Texas at Austin drew attention to a report in *The Bibliographer* vi, 1894, p. 154 referring to the sale of this ms. in 1861.

(44) HOBBS *Elements of Law*, ed. TÖNNIES, Cambridge, 1928, p. xviii.

(45) In the dedication, Hobbes says it is his intention to state an unassailable basis for 'principles' concerning 'law and policy', *ibid.*, pp. xvii-xviii.

xii. 3). The dragon here is manifestly Satan, 'that old serpent, called the Devil' (Rev. xii. 9; and cf. [i] above). But clearly the terms 'leviathan' and 'dragon' were used indifferently and with obvious reason (Ps. lxxiv. 13-14, Isa. xxvii. 1)⁴⁶. And in Job xli, which Hobbes cites, the detailed description of leviathan is cast in terms like those conventionally applied to the dragon. The point is that there is an association with political power. For example, in the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, 'Pharaoh, king of Egypt' is likened to a 'great dragon' (Ezek. xxix. 3)⁴⁷. Similarly in at least one place, a work published only a year before *Leviathan* itself, 'the great red dragon' is specifically linked with absolute, fierce and oppressive 'kingly power'⁴⁸. Again, there is another passage from the Apocalypse (Rev. xiii. 1-4) in which there is not only an association of the dragon, the beast from the sea, with 'power' and 'great authority' but as well what is most intriguing, a clear echo of Job. xli. 33 (24 in the Vulgate) which Hobbes uses as epigraph to *Leviathan*.

Perhaps brief mention should be made here, too, of another of the old animal legends this time concerning Rahab. This was a parallel concept to leviathan, a mythical sea monster. The name, in its hebrew root may mean 'the proud one'; and in time became associated with great

(46) CARYL, op. cit., p. 816 refers to the passage from Isaiah in discussing 'those enemies and persecutors of his people, who seem to be as strong and invincible as Leviathan...'

(47) Cf. WILSON *A Christian Dictionary*, *ibid.*, where sub 'leviathan' there is a dual reference to 'pharaoh' and 'dragon'; also *The Geneva Bible* where the note to the verses in the Psalm equates leviathan and pharaoh. On the ancient link between the description 'dragon' and a feared and unapproachable power, cf. GRAVES and PATAI art. cit., Feb. p. 10.

(48) G. WINSTANLEY *A New-year's Gift*, 1650, repr. in C. HILL, ed., *Winstanley: The Law of Freedom and other Writings*, Harmondsworth, 1973, p. 199. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 205, 211, 308-9. (And I cannot forbear to point out the fascinating coincidence that the place of publication of *Leviathan* in 1651 was 'at the Green Dragon in *St. Pauls Church-yard*!')

political power (that of Egypt)⁴⁹. It also symbolized the primordial chaos mastered by God in the beginning of time and thus may represent the state of disorder which precedes the establishment of law⁵⁰.

(v) Also there is an etymological overtone to the name 'leviathan' that may bear on Hobbes' use of it. Joseph Caryl drew attention to the description of the scales of leviathan as being so closely connected as to be impenetrable (xli. 7, 14-17) —much indeed as the scale-like appearance of the many manikins making up the royal figure in the title-page engraving— and pointed out that the word 'leviathan' is derived from the Hebrew '*Lavah*, i. e. joyned or associated. Hence *Leviathan*, i. e. society or fellowship...' ⁵¹ This is another dimension of meaning of the word of which Hobbes may have known and which has to be added to the usual understanding cast simply in terms of sovereign power. That is there; but a clear sense of social association is also implied.

(vi) Another interesting possibility is that the leviathan image may have arisen during the engagement controversy in which Hobbes was undoubtedly involved⁵². This debate arose after the execution of the king in 1649 over the question whether loyalty was due to the republi-

(49) See e. g. Ps. lxxxix. 10, Isa. li. 9-10; and *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1967, xii. 65.

(50) Cf. J. E. CIRLOT *A Dictionary of Symbols*, 2nd ed., London, 1971, p. 271.

(51) CARYL *An Exposition...upon The three first Chapters of the Book of Job...*, pp. 369, 378. WILSON, *ibid.*, says the leviathan or sea-dragon is so called because 'of the fast joyning together of his scales'. B. DAVIDSON *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, London, 1855, p. ccccxviii, gives, as the double meaning of the hebrew word (i) to be joined to, to adhere to, to join one's self to; and (ii) sea-monster. I owe this last reference to the kindness of Mr. J. B. Whitton of the Library, University College, Swansea.

(52) See the case made out by Q. SKINNER 'Conquest and Consent: Thomas Hobbes and the Engagement Controversy' in G. E. AYLMER, ed., *The Interregnum: the Quest for Settlement, 1646-1660*, London, 1972, ch. 3.

can government. In the course of these exchanges, Francis Rous, urging that citizens were indeed thus obliged, wrote that

...If any man do excel in power, it is now out of doubt that he received that power of God. Wherefore without all exception thou must...heartily obey him...⁵³.

Of course, such a man who excelled in power would be a 'leviathan' in the established and conventional sense (see [ii] above) and it would be natural to describe his government in the same way, especially if this was regarded (as by many it was) as a wicked form of rule (cf. [i] above). Joblike, everyone, it could be argued, had to accept the superior powers that be, for any other conduct would be to doubt God's wisdom and providence⁵⁴.

(e) Again, as Professor Freund has pointed out⁵⁵, there is an interesting similarity between the characteristics of the biblical monster and those of Hobbes' sovereign. Thus both are single entities that cannot be sundered (xli. 17, 23); neither makes supplications to or covenants with men (xli. 3-4); nor can they be dissolved (xli. 6); and each reigns by the terror of their power (xli. 14). Such parallels may, of course, be mere coincidence but one may suppose that the biblical passages might have, in Freund's words,

pousser au moins implicitement Hobbes à désigner l'Etat, tel qu'il conçoit, par l'image du Leviathan... Toutes ces indications peuvent être utilisées au moins à titre d'hypothèses pour l'éclaircissement du concept de Leviathan, tel que Hobbes l'entend. En tout cas, il ne semble pas l'avoir choisi arbitrairement ou pour de simples raisons d'une rhétorique facile⁵⁶

(53) F. Rous *The Lawfulness of Obeying the Present Government*, 1649, p. 7 cited *ibid.*, pp. 83-4.

(54) Cf. the passages cited from W. JENKINS' *Recantation*, 1651, *ib.*, p. 86.

(55) FREUND, *loc cit.*, pp. 39-40.

(56) *ibid.*

(f) Hobbes also cites the book of Job elsewhere, mainly in *Leviathan* itself, though the number of occasions is small. Perhaps the most interesting is in *Leviathan*, Part II, chapter xxxi, 'Of the Kingdome of God by Nature' in passages where Hobbes is arguing that the right of God's sovereignty is derived from his omnipotence, requiring obedience 'not... as of Gratitude for his benefits; but from his *Irresistible Power*'⁵⁷. Sovereign power may, he says, arise 'from Pact' given that 'all men by Nature had Right to All things', that each has therefore a claim to reign over all the rest, and that no one can obtain superiority by force. In these conditions, the creation of a sovereign authority by common consent is the only effective way to achieve the safety of everyone⁵⁸. This passage then continues in a way that not only echoes the meaning of the word 'leviathan' as then in common use, i. e. as a man of great power or wealth⁵⁹, but that also leads specifically to the theme of the book of Job which, as it is the place of origin of the term, suggests that the connexion may be more than fortuitous. Thus:

...whereas if there had been any man of Power Irresistible; there had been no reason, why he should not by that Power have ruled, and defended both himselfe, and them [i. e. everyone else], according to his own discretion. To those therefore whose Power is irresistible, the dominion of all men adhaereth naturally by their excellence of Power; and consequently it is from that Power, that the Kingdome over men, and the Right of afflicting men at his pleasure, belongeth Naturally to God Almighty; not as Creator, and Gracious; but as Omnipotent. And though Punishment be due for Sinne onely, because by that word is understood Affliction for Sinne; yet the Right of Afflicting, is not alwayes derived from mens Sinne, but from God's Power⁶⁰.

(57) *Leviathan*, II. xxxi, p. 187. (emphasis in original). The parallel passage in *Philosophical Rudiments* is at III. xv. 6, in *English Works*, ii. 207-8; and Hobbes similarly uses Job to make the same point about God's power in *Of Liberty and Necessity*, see *The English Works*, iv. 249; cf. *ibid.*, v. 116, 133-4.

(58) *Leviathan*, *ibid.*, p. 187.

(59) See above p. 22

(60) *Leviathan*, *ibid.*, pp. 187-8.

This leads Hobbes directly into a consideration of the question, Why good men may suffer adversity? How earnestly, he says, does Job

expostulate with God, for the many Afflictions he suffered, notwithstanding his Righteousnesse? This question in the case of *Job* is decided by God himselfe, not by arguments derived from *Job's* Sinne, but his own Power ⁶¹.

Elsewhere in *Leviathan* there is also a brief analysis of the book of Job undertaken along with similarly short sketches of other parts of the scriptures ⁶². The other references scattered throughout Hobbes' works are slight ⁶³.

IV

In addition to this series of points, another, possibly more significant, kind of reference is clear, for there is a most interesting general parallel or affinity between the story of the book of Job and some of the major themes of Hobbes' political thought.

As has been described above, the book tells the story of a man who is affected with pain and trouble, who cannot see why this should be so but who seeks, nevertheless, some understanding of his predicament and a way out of it. Because of his misfortunes, Job is spurned by everyone; even his friends suppose that because he is afflicted he must therefore have committed some iniquity of which these adversities were the punishment. He is in isolation, one whose condition, as described, might be that of the state of nature revealed in *Leviathan*. '...the people of the earth...wander in a wilderness where there is no way. They grope in the dark without light...' (xii. 24-5.

(61) *ib.*

(62) *ib.*, II. xxxiii, p. 202.

(63) In addition to those already cited or noted, *ib.*, III. xxxiv, p. 209; III. xxxviii, pp. 241, 242; IV. xli, p. 343; *The English Works*, v. 7, 144-5. And see below p. 30

Cf. xv. 20ff., xix. 7ff., xxvii). Is this the situation of Hobbes' logically primeval man? Job's life is certainly become solitary, nasty and brutal, and is all too likely to be short. Given this exigency, however, one crucial question arises: 'Whence then cometh wisdom? and where *is* the place of understanding?' (xxviii. 20). And it is only through man's absolute faith, through his spirit sinking in fear before the Lord, that comprehension will appear (xxviii. 28; xxxii. 8). Man cannot know God's nature but only recognize his existence and wonder at it and fear his almighty power, never attempting to challenge it in any way (xxxiii. 12-13, xxxvi-xxxix)⁶⁴. So, as Elihu said, if men 'obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge' (xxxvi. 12). It is then that Job is told to submit completely to God's infinite might and wisdom. He has challenged God's judgement and claimed to be righteous but he has none of God's majesty, none of his glory and beauty, none of his power (xl. 2, 8-10)⁶⁵. Job alone cannot look on 'every one *that* is proud, *and* bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place'. If he could do this—which is impossible—then, perhaps, his own strength could save him. (xl. 11-12, 14). But it cannot: he cannot—as can God—tame behemoth and leviathan:

Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord *which* thou lettest down...?

Will he make a covenant with thee? Wilt thou take him for a servant for ever? (xli. 1-4).

(64) This was certainly taken in the late seventeenth century to be one of the essential points of Hobbist doctrine. For instance, in 1961 William SHERLOCK wrote in his *The Case of Allegiance*, p. 15 that Hobbes 'makes power and nothing else to give right to dominion, and therefore asserts that God himself is the natural lord and governor of the World...because He is omnipotent', cited Q. SKINNER 'The Context of Hobbes's Theory of Political Obligation' in CRANSTON and PETERS op. cit., p. 121.

(65) Pope Gregory I in his exegesis urged a doctrine of no resistance; any such act could only be caused by pride, loc. cit., iii. 658.

Any man will be cast down at the mere sight of leviathan; so who, then, is able to stand before God himself? (xli. 9-10).

In sum, then, the broad theme of the biblical poem about Job is that the predicament of man is such that not even the best or innocent can escape the worst of misfortune. It teaches, thus, that suffering is not necessarily self-entailed, that it may therefore seem unavoidable or merely natural, part of the tragedy of man. Man 'is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward' (v. 7)⁶⁶. Specifically, too, even the righteous are proven sinfully to be proud of their virtue. Man must simply accept and suffer all the pains and evils that befall. But part of the mystery of suffering is that it may be educative: as Hobbes puts it, anxiety for the future time, disposeth men to inquire into the causes of things. Man may learn that these ills derive from the incomprehensible power of God and that the only possible relief from their occurrence is through the fear that his power inculcates⁶⁷. Then, once civil society is established, there is the practically more effective fear of the 'mortal God', his deputy. For it is to the commonwealth,

that great LEVIATHAN, or rather (to speak more reverently) [to] that *Mortall God*, to which wee owe, under the *Immortal God*, our peace and defence⁶⁸.

Or, again, in summary of his argument, Hobbes writes:

Hitherto I have set forth the nature of Man, (whose Pride and other Passions have compelled him to submit himselfe to Government;) together with the great power of his Governour, whom I compared to *Leviathan*, taking that comparison out of the two last

(66) See also xv. 14-16, xxv. 4-6 on the innate iniquity of man.

(67) Cf. *Leviathan*, I. xiv., p. 70.

(68) *ibid.*, II xvii, p. 87. On the civil sovereign as possessing the 'Greatest of humane Powers', *ibid.*, I. x, p. 41. CIRLOT, *op. cit.*, p. 186 says that leviathan was a symbol sometimes used as identical with the force which preserves and vitalizes the world.

verses of the one and fortieth of *Job*; where God having set forth the great power of *Leviathan*, calleth him King of the Proud. *There is nothing*, saith he, *on earth, to be compared with him. He is made so as not to be afraid. Hee seeth every high thing below him: and is King of all the children of pride* ⁶⁹.

The felicity that man seeks in this life ⁷⁰ is, like the happiness that ultimately comes to Job, only to be achieved through utter and complete obedience.

V

Presumably Hobbes expected his readers to know well the story of Job and its implications. Whether he saw it all as a merely convenient aid or allegory or as having specific argumentative authority to support his political thesis, is another matter hardly possible of exact determination. He said himself in one place that 'we cannot safely judge of men's intentions' ⁷¹. Yet it would hardly be surprising that Hobbes should find inspiration, if not political confirmation, in scripture. In the protestant context, one of the marks of the man of faith—which Hobbes surely was—is that he would discern in the Bible some illuminating suggestion about how he might better understand himself and his world. And this is, of course, in addition to, and separate from, any authority that bi-

(69) *Leviathan*, II. xxviii, pp. 166-7. The only other reference by name to the 'great LEVIATHAN' is in the introduction, p. 1. There is an interesting parallel that occurs twice earlier in the Book when of Job himself it is said 'that there is none like him in the earth' (i. 8, ii. 3). Presumably this is both to emphasize his subsequent fall into misfortune and to suggest that, like Leviathan, earthly power or fierceness is nothing in the sight of God.

(70) *Leviathan*, I. vi, p. 29.

(71) *Behemoth*, ed. cit., p. 72. Cf. *The Elements of Law*, ed. cit., p. 52 §8.

blical citation adds to rational argument⁷². Again, it is highly probable that the book of Job, like all the Hebrew 'Wisdom literature', was intended to be didactic: it contains a practical ethical lesson, and is not simply a poem or an abstract analysis of religious experience⁷³.

But, this kind of affinity apart, there is another, more particular, point that should be mentioned in this context. The doctrine of the book is, as already noted, that God's power is omniscient and unsearchable and that his ways are past finding out; further, that nothing in a man's conduct can affect this supreme power which is wielded over him. (v. 8-9, ix. 4-24, xii. 13ff., xxxiii. 13-14, xxxvi-xxxix). Yet man is free to choose what he does, as when Job walks the path of righteousness or refuses to accept his abased condition and rails against its unjustness -and as both God and Satan know when it is determined to put Job to the test (i. 8-12, ii. 1-6). And in this context, Hobbes' conception of God and how he may be known is clear. He was prepared to accept that natural reason may be able to demonstrate the existence of a first cause which may be called God. But nothing was thereby learned of this God's attributes and nature or whether he was the Christian God. This could only be discerned otherwise than by ratiocination, in fact by faith and revelation⁷⁴. The view Hobbes himself attained of God is very like that revealed in Job xl-xli, a being of awesome and invincible power⁷⁵.

Now such ideas as these are essentially those involved in theological nominalism which rested on three - or per-

(72) Cf. the discussion in D. H. KELSEY, 'Appeals to Scripture in Theology', *The Journal of Religion*, xlviii (1968), pp. 1-21, esp. pp. 2-3.

(73) 'Job' in *Encyc. Brit.*, 11th ed., x. 423; 'Wisdom Literature', *ibid.*, xxviii. 750-1; McCLINTOCK and STRONG *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, 1873 repr. New York, 1969, x. 1019-20.

(74) *Leviathan*, I. xi, xii, pp. 51-3; II. xxxi, p. 187.

(75) e. g. *ibid.*, II. xxxi, pp. 187, 190-1.

haps four - basic principles⁷⁶. First, acceptance of the absolute sovereignty of God; secondly his immediacy in the created world - which meant, for instance, that he could relate directly to the individual man as, perhaps, by speaking to him out of a whirlwind (xxxviii.1), thus bypassing the Church, sacraments and clergy; thirdly, the autonomy of man so that he had a major sphere of freedom and choice in his own immediate, natural, world, a sphere which tended to increase, though, of course, salvation could only come from God's grace granted after death and quite at the arbitrary decision of his will regardless of the balance of man's good and evil deeds. In truth, however, there was not to be expected a complete unanimity of viewpoint on these matters. There were two main schools of thought. The Ockhamist

stressed the unlimited nature of the divine omnipotence, even if he also carefully refrained from allowing this omnipotence any activity in the human world in order to make room for the creation of an autonomous sphere of human right.

However, the conservative Augustinian

would equally readily assert that all power belonged to God, although he would add that this could only mean that there was therefore none left for men... There was, then, a superficial similarity between Ockhamist and Augustinian in that they both claimed to accept the omnipotence of God - although whereas the Ockhamist permitted it virtually no play upon earth for practical purposes, the Augustinian insisted that it governed all human affairs, and recognized no effective distinction between heaven and earth⁷⁷.

(76) H. OBERMAN 'Some notes on the theology of nominalism', *Harvard Theological Review*, liii, 1960, pp. 47-76.

(77) M. J. WILKS 'The Early Oxford Wyclif: Papalist or Nominalist', *Studies in Church History*, v, 1969, p. 75. In these terms Hobbes was clearly an Ockhamist; the Augustinian view was the basis of papalist claims, *ibid.* and cf. WILKS' *Problem of Sovereignty in the Later Middle Ages*, Cambridge, 1963, pp. 151f., 295f.

There was an additional - fourth - basic point, that divine truths were knowable by faith alone; reason in theology would simply give a series of totally different answers⁷⁸. Nor were these themes merely abstract and academic; they were directly presented at popular level and therefore quite widespread⁷⁹. They were, too, the foundation of the Calvinist doctrines defended against criticisms from Arminians in a famous controversy which occurred when Hobbes was a young man and which considerably influenced his ideas in a number of ways⁸⁰.

Not only does this indicate the real background and intellectual basis of Hobbes' thought; it is an exact reflection of the situation of Hobbesian man. He is autonomous and free to choose; there is no check on his passions except their mutual balance (pride can be balanced by fear of violent death); God is omnipotent but does not normally act in this world. Therefore he needs to have a secular substitute, a mortal God, to act in his stead and to maintain order here. Clearly, then, when man was subject to no one other than himself life became a passionate struggle of all against all. But man has to be restrained, and so the state is a necessity⁸¹. Just as Job needs God to deliver him; so Hobbesian man needs leviathan.

(78) WILKS, art. cit., p. 81.

(79) See e. g. D. WERTZ 'The Theology of Nominalism in the English Morality Plays'. *Harvard Theological Review*, lxii, 1969, pp. 371-4.

(80) P. DOYLE 'The Contemporary Background of Hobbes' "State of Nature"', *Economica*, vii, 1927, pp. 336-55 but esp. pp. 352-4, a neglected but very important paper.

(81) Cf. the interesting remarks in RAMIRO DE MAEZTU *Authority, Liberty and Function*, London 1916, pp. 16-19, specifically referring to Hobbes' ideas as the ineluctable outcome of the humanist emancipation of man.