



Thomas Hobbes: Magnanimity, Felicity, and Justice*

Andrew J. Corsa

Visiting Assistant Professor, Kutztown University
315 Old Main
Kutztown University
Kutztown PA 19530
E-mail: AndrewCorsa@gmail.com

Abstract

Thomas Hobbes's concept of magnanimity, a descendant of Aristotle's "greatness of soul," plays a key role in Hobbes's theory with respect to felicity and the virtue of justice. In his *Critique du 'De Mundo'*, Hobbes implies that only genuinely magnanimous people can achieve the greatest felicity in their lives. A life of felicity is a life of pleasure, where the only pleasure that counts is the well grounded glory experienced by those who are magnanimous. Hobbes suggests that felicity involves the successful pursuit of desires, a pursuit at which the magnanimous are particularly adept. Additionally, Hobbes implies that those who possess the virtue of justice must also possess magnanimity; it is the just person's "Nobleness or Gallantnesse of courage, (rarely found)." Leo Strauss and Dorothea Krook suggest that this cannot be Hobbes's "final word" on justice, because, they say, Hobbes considers magnanimity a type of pride, which he derogates and cannot consistently associate with virtue. I argue that magnanimity, associated with well-grounded glory, is not a type of pride; only vain glory is.

Keywords

Magnanimity; Justice; Happiness; Glory

* * *

While Hobbes's concept of magnanimity is historically linked to Aristotle's "greatness-of-soul" or *megalopsuchia*, Hobbes's approach is unique. I argue that the passion of magnanimity plays a key role in Hobbes's theory with

* I am indebted to many insightful conversations with José A. Benardete. I am also indebted to the exceptional feedback of Charles Richard Booher, Eric Schliesser, and my anonymous referee. I would also like to thank the organizers and participants of the Upstate New York Early Workshop on Early Modern Philosophy, where I presented an early draft.

respect to felicity and the virtue of justice. According to Hobbes, only a genuinely magnanimous person could achieve the greatest degree of felicity, or happiness, possible during life. Further, Hobbes suggests that those who are entirely just, who fully possess the virtue of justice, must be magnanimous as well.

I begin by describing and discussing Hobbes's notion of magnanimity. Focusing on Hobbes's definitions of "magnanimity," "glory," and "contempt," I argue that magnanimous people have two key features: (1) they have an accurate understanding of their own great power to achieve their ends, and they take joy in this, and (2) they consistently desire and pursue those means that are most helpful for achieving their ends.

I focus on the importance of magnanimity with respect to justice and felicity. Previous scholars have dramatically underestimated or misunderstood its significance to Hobbes's philosophy. M. M. Goldsmith argues, for instance, that the pattern of life of magnanimous people is, by its nature, less pleasurable than others,¹ and he implies that there might be other routes to felicity (happiness). In contrast, I argue that, according to Hobbes, only a genuinely magnanimous person experiences the kind and quantity of pleasure necessary for great felicity. For Hobbes, if a person is to become the happiest he can be, he must also become magnanimous.

José A. Benardete, who offers the best and most comprehensive discussion of Hobbes's notion of magnanimity to date, falls short of acknowledging the role that magnanimity plays in Hobbes's theory for those who are truly just and virtuous.² Benardete is correct that magnanimous people would naturally condemn small, petty injustices (like pickpocketing), but I further argue that magnanimity drives those who are *truly* just and virtuous to condemn *all* injustices. I suggest that only a magnanimous person could be fully just and virtuous.

Leo Strauss and Dorothea Krook acknowledge that Hobbes sometimes seems to treat the passion of magnanimity as if it were the origin of the virtue of justice.³ Both authors suggest that we ought not ultimately attribute

¹ M. M. Goldsmith, *Hobbes's Science of Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 79–83.

² José A. Benardete, *Greatness of Soul in Hume, Aristotle, and Hobbes*, (manuscript, 2011). (His completed book is now forthcoming: José A. Benardete, *Greatness of Soul: In Hume, Aristotle and Hobbes, as Shadowed by Milton's Satan* (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, forthcoming [2013]).

³ Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes, Its Basis and Its Genesis*, Trans. Elsa M. Sinclair (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 51, 54, 24–25; Dorothea Krook, *Three Traditions of Moral Thought* (Cambridge: University Press, 1959), 129–130.

this view to Hobbes, because, they say, Hobbes considers magnanimity a type of pride,⁴ which he attacks, and thus cannot consistently associate with virtue.⁵ In contrast, I maintain that magnanimity is not a type of pride, and that Hobbes can wholeheartedly, and without issue, embrace magnanimity as the source of, and necessary condition for, the virtue of justice.

I. Magnanimity

Before considering the relations between magnanimity and felicity, I examine them individually. In *The Elements of Law: Natural and Politic*, Hobbes provides the following definition for “magnanimity”: “Magnanimity is no more than glory, of which I have spoken in the first section; but glory well grounded upon certain experience of power sufficient to attain his end in open manner.”⁶

In order properly to understand this definition, we turn to his definition of “glory” in *The Elements of Law*:

Glory, or internal gloriation or triumph of the mind, is that passion which proceedeth from the imagination or conception of our own power, above the power of him that contendeth with us ... This imagination of our power and worth, may be an assured and certain experience of our own actions, and then is that glorying just and well grounded ... Farther, the fiction (which also is imagination) of actions done by ourselves, which never were done, is glorying; but because it begetteth no appetite nor endeavor to any further attempt, it is merely vain and unprofitable ... And this is called VAIN GLORY.⁷

Here, as in *Leviathan*,⁸ Hobbes distinguishes well-grounded glory from vain glory. Both kinds of glory arise when a person imagines his own power. But each kind of glory matches up to a different kind of imagination.

According to Hobbes, imagination is called “compounded” when a person “imagines himself a Hercules, or an Alexander,”⁹ or imagines himself “to be like unto some other man whose acts he admireth.”¹⁰ Vain glory, which is

⁴ Krook, *Three Traditions*, 130. Strauss, *The Political Philosophy*, 51 and 25.

⁵ Krook, *Three Traditions*, 130–131. Strauss, *The Political Philosophy*, 55 and 25.

⁶ Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law: Natural & Politic*, ed. Ferdinand Tönnies (Cambridge: University Press, 1928), I.9.20, 35–36.

⁷ Hobbes, *The Elements of Law* I.9.1, 28.

⁸ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Revised Student Edition, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), I.6, 26–27.

⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.2, 5–6.

¹⁰ Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, I.9.1, 28.

likewise based on fiction, is associated with compounded imagination, and vainglorious people have an inaccurate representation of their own power.

In contrast, for Hobbes, imagination can also be “simple” and express something as it actually is, as “imagination and memory, are but one thing.”¹¹ Simple imagination does not involve fiction, and a person’s glory is well grounded provided that his conception of his power is accurate. His simple imagination of his power is “an assured and certain experience of [his] own actions.”¹²

Magnanimity is nothing more than well grounded glory; the magnanimous person has an accurate representation of his own power, and he takes joy in it. His well-grounded glory proceeds from an imagination of power “above the power of him that contendeth with us.”¹³ Since the magnanimous person’s conception of his power is accurate, the magnanimous person is genuinely more powerful than his competitors.

Hobbes’s notion of magnanimity has its historical origins in Aristotle’s “greatness-of-soul,” or *megalopsuchia*, described in the *Nicomachean Ethics*,¹⁴ and later called “*magnanimitas*” by Aquinas and translated as “magnanimity.”¹⁵ Aristotle, too, emphasizes that the magnanimous person has an accurate representation of his substantial power; he “thinks himself, and is, worthy of great things.”¹⁶ Both Aristotle and Hobbes similarly contrast the magnanimous person both with “conceited” or “vainglorious” men who think themselves more worthy or powerful than they actually are, and with people who judge themselves overly weak.¹⁷

¹¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.2, 5.

¹² Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, I.9.1, 28.

¹³ Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, I.9.1, 28.

¹⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Trans. Christopher Rowe, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), IV.3, 148–151.

¹⁵ S. Thomas Aquinas, *St Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologicae, Volume 42, Courage*, trans. Anthony Ross O.P. and P. G. Walsh (London: Blackfriars in conjunction with McGraw-Hill Book Company and Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1966), II-II, Q. 129, pp. 96–126.

¹⁶ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, IV.3, 1123b2–3, 148.

¹⁷ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, IV.3, 1123b5–b10, 148. Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, I.9.1–2, 28–29. Hobbes writes that those who judge themselves worse than they are experience “vain fear” (I.9.2, 29), while Aristotle claims they are “small-souled” or “pusillanimous” (b9–10). While Hobbes also contrasts magnanimity with pusillanimity (Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.6, 26), he treats pusillanimity differently from Aristotle, as a passion belonging to vainglorious individuals who believe themselves to be *more* powerful than they are. Hobbes is clear about this in *The Elements of Law* (I.9.20, 36); my discussion of laughter, below, implies that it also holds in *Leviathan*. For more on the relation between Hobbes’s and Aristotle’s accounts, and on the relation between pusillanimity and magnanimity: Benardete, *Greatness of Soul*, (manuscript).

Scholars note that Aristotle's discussion of "greatness-of-soul" belongs to the same philosophical tradition as more recent discussions of self-respect and self-esteem.¹⁸ Hobbes's discussion of magnanimity belongs to this tradition as well. His notion of magnanimity seems particularly similar to the warranted self-esteem popularized by recent psychologists such as Martin Seligman, who focus on the value of cultivating esteem that is grounded in achievements and merit, rather than false praise.¹⁹

In *Leviathan*, although Hobbes offers a very different definition of magnanimity, to which I return momentarily, he is nonetheless clear that anyone who is magnanimous experiences well grounded glory, or warranted self-esteem. Consider, for example, *Leviathan's* discussion of laughter:

Sudden Glory, is the passion which maketh those *Grimaces* called LAUGHTER; and is caused either by some sudden act of their own, that pleaseth them; or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves. And it is incident most to them, that are conscious of the fewest abilities in themselves; who are forced to keep themselves in their own favour, by observing the imperfections of other men. And therefore much Laughter at the defects of others, is a signe of Pusillanimity. For of great minds, one of the proper works is, to help and free others from scorn; and compare themselves onely with the most able.²⁰

As Benardete acknowledges, this passage picks up on the distinction between well-grounded glory and vain glory, which Hobbes had drawn moments before.²¹ Those who experience well-grounded glory laugh "by some sudden act of their own, that pleaseth them," while those who experience vain glory laugh "by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another." The passage implies that pusillanimous, small-minded individuals experience vain glory and deformed laughter, while great-minded, magnanimous people don't. Magnanimous people – those who have great minds and help free others from scorn – only experience well grounded glory and good laughter.²²

¹⁸ For example: Robin S. Dillon, "Introduction," in *Dignity, Character, and Self-Respect*, ed. Robin S. Dillon (New York: Routledge, 1995).

¹⁹ Martin E.P. Seligman, "Positive Psychology," in *The Science of Optimism and Hope: Research Essays in Honor of Martin E.P. Seligman*, ed. Jane E. Gillham (Radnor, PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2000), particularly p. 422.

²⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.6, 27.

²¹ Benardete, *Greatness of Soul*, (manuscript). Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.6, 27.

²² In *The Elements of Law*, Hobbes is even clearer that "bad" laughter is a sign of both pusillanimity and vain glory (Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, I.9.20, 36).

Still, *Leviathan* expands on the notion of magnanimity with its new definition: “Contempt of little helps, and hindrances.”²³ To understand what this means, we consider Hobbes’s definition of “contempt”:

Those things which we neither Desire, nor Hate, we are said to *Contemne*: CONTEMPT being nothing else but an immobility, or contumacy of the heart ... that ... is already moved otherwise by other more potent objects.²⁴

By definition, if a person contemns something, he neither desires nor hates it; he is neutral toward it. So the magnanimous person who contemns little helps and hindrances neither desires nor hates them. He neither desires nor hates anything that does little significantly to help or hinder his goals.²⁵ Hobbes is clear that a person cannot perform a voluntary act that doesn’t proceed from his desires.²⁶ Acting voluntarily, a person can only ever pursue something if he desires it. So, a magnanimous person never voluntarily pursues anything that will help him only a little in comparison to other things. He consistently pursues the best means to his ends.

Hobbes recognizes that his two definitions of “magnanimity” fit together. He implies that an individual must have “glory well-grounded upon certain experience of power”²⁷ in order to consistently experience “[c]ontempt of little helps, and hindrances.”²⁸ Only individuals who have an accurate representation of their own power consistently condemn little helps and hindrances. If a person has too high an opinion of his own power, he will desire and pursue goals that he can’t possibly achieve, or he will retreat from trouble, not actually competent to proceed.²⁹ Likewise, if a person has too low an opinion of his power, he will be utterly cowed, and fail to pursue goals that are within his reach.³⁰ Instead, he will desire and pursue lesser things. Only a magnanimous person – who has an accurate representation of his

²³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.6, 26.

²⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.6, 24.

²⁵ My discussion of contempt is indebted to Benardete’s fairly different account of the notion: Benardete, *Greatness of Soul*, (manuscript).

²⁶ Bernard Gert acknowledges this; for Hobbes, a voluntary act proceeds from the will, and the will is nothing more than a desire. Bernard Gert, “Hobbes and Psychological Egoism,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 28 (1967): 507. In his discussion, Gert cites: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.6, 28.

²⁷ Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, I.9.20, 35–36.

²⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.6, 26. When unnoted, all italicizations in quotations are original.

²⁹ See the lengthy discussion of empty glory in the third section of this paper and the quotations, there, from Hobbes’s *Critique du ‘De Mundo.’* Also: Hobbes, *Leviathan* I.11, 49.

³⁰ Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, I.9.2, 29.

own power – consistently and reliably contemns little helps and hindrances, and consistently desires and pursues the best means to his ends.³¹

Given the strong role that pleasure plays in Hobbes's theory of human motivation,³² there is further reason to think that an individual who takes joy, a type of pleasure,³³ in his own power and ability is more likely to effectively pursue his goals than an individual who doesn't. So, too, I imagine he would be less likely to become distracted by trifles, or to give up because of minor obstacles; he will condemn little helps and hindrances.

It is valuable to consider further Hobbes's contention that magnanimous, great-minded individuals “help and free others from scorn; and compare themselves onely with the most able.”³⁴ First, seeing that magnanimous individuals neither condemn, nor voluntarily pursue, little helps and hindrances, to “free others from scorn” must be neither. Freeing others from scorn must contribute substantially to their goals. That this is the case will be better understood later, in our discussion of justice and the role it plays in relation to magnanimity and felicity.³⁵ Second, Hobbes suggests that magnanimous people only compare themselves with those who are “most able.” The magnanimous person not only has an accurate sense of his own power above his competitors, he also belongs to and judges himself against a small minority, those who are “most able.” That is, he compares himself against other individuals who easily perform tasks that the majority of

³¹ David Hume makes a similar point about his own admittedly very different conception of the magnanimous man. In his *Treatise on Human Nature*, Hume equates “steady and well-establish'd pride and self-esteem” with that which “we call *heroic virtue*, and admire under the character of greatness and elevation of mind” (T 3.3.2.13; SBN 599). Hume writes: “Nothing is more useful to us in the conduct of life, than a due degree of pride, which makes us sensible of our own merit, and gives us a confidence and assurance in all our projects and enterprizes. Whatever capacity any one may be endow'd with, 'tis entirely useless to him, if he be not acquainted with it, and form not designs suitable to it” (T 3.3.2.8; SBN 596-7). (David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (abbreviated *T*), ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), with page references to the second Selby-Bigge edition, as revised by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

³² For example, Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, I.7.2, 22. Also see the excellent discussions by S. V. Kitanov and F.S. McNeilly: S.V. Kitanov, “Happiness in a Mechanistic Universe: Thomas Hobbes on the Nature and Attainability of Happiness,” *Hobbes Studies* 24 (2011): 117-136; F.S. McNeilly, “Egoism in Hobbes,” *The Philosophical Quarterly* 16.64 (1966): 193-206. A lengthier discussion of the role of pleasure in motivation is out of the scope of this current paper.

³³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.6, 25.

³⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.6, 27.

³⁵ Also see Footnote 114, for a rough sketch of another argument, concerning “freeing others from scorn.”

people consider great.³⁶ The magnanimous person is powerful, not only in comparison to “him that contendeth with us,”³⁷ but also in comparison to the great majority of people.

II. Felicity

Before considering the connections between magnanimity and felicity, I examine felicity on its own. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes defines the term “felicity” twice, in two different chapters:

Continuall successe in obtaining those things which a man from time to time desireth, that is to say, continuall prospering, is that men call FELICITY; I mean the Felicity of this life.³⁸

Felicity is a continuall progresse of the desire, from one object to another; the attaining of the former, being still but the way to the later. The cause whereof is, That the object of mans desire, is not to enjoy once onely, and for one instant of time; but to assure for ever, the way of his future desire.³⁹

In his *Critique du 'De Mundo' De Thomas White*, Hobbes writes that “Felicity consists in the progress of the appetite from a good thing acquired to another good thing yet to be acquired.”⁴⁰ Recognizing that, for Hobbes, something is only good for a person if the person desires it,⁴¹ this definition amounts to Hobbes’s claim in *Leviathan* that felicity is “[c]ontinuall successe in obtaining those things which a man from time to time desireth.”⁴²

³⁶ Hobbes writes that, for someone who suffers from pusillanimity, which is the contrary of magnanimity, “that seems great to him, which other men think a trifle” (Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.8, 33). Benardete, too, treats pusillanimity as the contrary of magnanimity (Benardete, *Greatness of Soul*, [manuscript]).

³⁷ Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, I.9.1, 28.

³⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.6, 29.

³⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.11, 47.

⁴⁰ “*Consistit ergo foelicitas in progressu appetitûs à bono acquisito ad aliud bonum acquirendum*” (Thomas Hobbes, *Critique Du 'De Mundo' De Thomas White*, Introduction, Texte Critique Et Notes Par Jean Jacquot et Harold Whitmore Jones (Paris: Librairie Philosophique de J. Vrin, 1973), XXXVIII.6, 416.) Thomas Hobbes, *Thomas White's 'De Mundo' Examined*, trans. Harold Whitmore Jones (London: Bradford University Press, 1976), XXXVIII.6, 464–465. While my translations of *Critique Du 'De Mundo'* were heavily influenced by those of Jones, they differ from his translations in numerous important respects. For several notes on my translations, and how they differ from Jones, please see my website: <http://www.writers-thoughts.com/TranslationAddendum.html>.

⁴¹ For example, Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.6, 23–24.

⁴² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.6, 29. Note that Hobbes’s wording, in *Critique Du 'De Mundo'*, is similar to that of his Latin *Leviathan*. In *Leviathan*, he defines felicity as: “*Felicitas progressus*

Individuals achieve felicity when they continually and successfully achieve what they desire or, in other words, continually obtain what is good (without losing what they already have.)⁴³

According to Hobbes, everyone pursues a life of felicity. Immediately after defining “felicity” in *Leviathan*, Hobbes writes that, “The voluntary actions, and inclinations of all men, tend, not onely to the procuring, but also the assuring of a contented life; and differ onely in the way.”⁴⁴ Every person possesses desires and wants to satisfy them and achieve contentment. Everyone desires felicity – the continual success in obtaining what is desired.⁴⁵

In *The Elements of Law*, Hobbes again implies that felicity is a common good. He compares a person’s life to a race, and says that this race has “no other goal, nor other garland, but being foremost.”⁴⁶ Keeping with this analogy, Hobbes claims that: “Continually to out-go the next before, is felicity.”⁴⁷ Everyone wants to be a constant winner; each and every person desires felicity.

Similarly, Hobbes implies that felicity is a common good when, in Chapter 11 of *Leviathan*, he moves directly from a discussion of felicity to a discussion of power, writing: “I put for a generall inclination of all mankind, a perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power, that ceaseth onely in Death.”⁴⁸ According to Hobbes, everyone desires power because everyone desires felicity, and felicity and power are strongly linked.

Hobbes is clear about this in his *Critique du ‘De Mundo’*, writing:

And so in order to gain felicity, the hope of acquiring should be joined with the hope of conserving, and as a consequence felicity consists in the progress of

perpetuus est ab una cupiditate ad alteram” (Thomas Hobbes, *Opera Philosophica Quae Latine Scripsit Omnia...* [Londini: Apud Joannem Bohn, 1841; Aalen: Scientia Verlag 2nd print, 1966], I.11, 77.) In other words, *felicitas*/felicity is the *progressus*/progress of the desire from one object to another. In *Critique du ‘De Mundo’*, he similarly writes that *foelicitas*/felicity consists *in-progressu*/in-the-progress of the appetite from a good thing acquired to another yet to be acquired.

⁴³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.11, 47. Hobbes, *Critique Du ‘De Mundo’*, XXXVIII.6, 416.

⁴⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.11, 47.

⁴⁵ Donald Rutherford arrives at a similar conclusion about the common desire for felicity without appealing to passages from *The Elements* or *Critique Du ‘De Mundo’*: Donald Rutherford, “In Pursuit of Happiness: Hobbes’s New Science of Ethics,” *Philosophical Topics* 31.1&2 (2003): 381–383.

⁴⁶ Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, I.9.21, 36. For more on the relation between the notion of being “foremost” and Hobbes’s discussions of felicity, see my discussion of the relation between power and felicity in section III.

⁴⁷ Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, I.9.21, 37.

⁴⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.11, 47.

acquiring such that newly acquired things seem to conduce to holding fast the old. And since not only to acquire, but to also to hold fast to things produced are both powers, felicity is the progress of the appetite and hope from a lesser power to a greater power.⁴⁹

A few sentences later, Hobbes similarly writes: “Felicity is the pleasure perceived in the continual and peaceful progress of the appetite from one power to another.”⁵⁰ In both passages, Hobbes identifies felicity with either the progress of the appetite from one power to another, or the pleasure perceived in such a progress.

According to Hobbes, “the POWER of a Man ... is his present means, to obtain some future apparent Good.”⁵¹ Further, Hobbes suggests that every good we achieve, or desire we satisfy, is a means to our future ends. What we achieve one day can be used as a tool to achieve what we want in the next. Hobbes writes: “One success is the cause of another, because of the new power paired with every success.”⁵² Each good we attain is a means to acquire future goods, and the attaining of a former desire is “but the way to the latter.”⁵³ Given Hobbes’s definition of “power,” this means that each good we attain and desire we satisfy is a power. Felicity – the pursuit of good and desire satisfaction – either is, or is closely tied to, the pursuit of power. And just as Hobbes maintains that every person desires a progress of the appetite from power to power, so everyone also desires felicity, a progress of the appetite from one desire to the next.

Not only is felicity a common good, but it is also that which we pursue in all of our actions. As already acknowledged, Hobbes suggests that the “voluntary actions” of all men tend to “the assuring of a contented life”⁵⁴ of felicity. This squares with Hobbes’s assertion that “of all Voluntary Acts, the

⁴⁹ “*Oportet itaque ad foelicitatem, coniunctam esse cum spe acquirendi spem conservandi; & per consequens foelicitatem consistere in progressu tali acquirendi, ut nova acquisita conducere videantur ad tuenda vetera. Et quoniam non modò acquirere, sed parta tueri potentiae sunt, erit foelicitas progressus appetitùs & spei à potentia minore ad maiorem perpetuus*” (Hobbes, *Critique Du ‘De Mundo’*, XXXVIII.6, 416). Jones, *Thomas White’s*, XXXVIII.6, 465.

⁵⁰ “*Foelicitas, iucunditas percepta ex continuato & placido progressu appetitionis à potentia ad potentiam ulteriorem*” (Hobbes, *Critique Du ‘De Mundo’*, XXXVIII.6, 416). Jones, *Thomas White’s*, XXXVIII.6, 465.

⁵¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.10, 41.

⁵² “*Unus autem successus causa est alterius, propter novam potentiam omni successu comparatam*” (Hobbes, *Critique Du ‘De Mundo’*, XXXVIII.7, 417). Jones, *Thomas White’s*, XXXVIII.7, 466.

⁵³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.11, 47.

⁵⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.11, 47.

Object is to every man his own Good.”⁵⁵ After all, in *Critique Du ‘De Mundo’*, Hobbes claims that the pursuit of felicity is the pursuit of good.⁵⁶ All of our voluntary actions aim for the good, what we desire, and we cannot help but strive for felicity.

In *De homine*, Hobbes suggests that we cannot achieve, in our lives, the “greatest good, or as it is called, felicity and the final end.”⁵⁷ But Hobbes does not claim that we cannot experience *some substantial degree* of felicity during our lives; nor does he say that we do not desire great happiness or pursue it. In fact, Hobbes explicitly acknowledges that we *can*, in fact, experience “[f]elicity of this life.”⁵⁸

Hobbes argues against what some previous philosophers have said about felicity, claiming “there is no such *Finis ultimus*, (ultimate ayme), nor *Summum Bonum*, (greatest Good), as is spoken of in the Books of old Morall Philosophers.”⁵⁹ Hobbes denies that felicity of this life is “perpetuall Tranquility of mind,”⁶⁰ in which we cease to desire or fear anything.⁶¹ But Hobbes nonetheless maintains that we can still experience “[f]elicity of this life.” The felicity which we all strongly desire, and tend to in all our actions, consists in a “restless desire of Power after power”⁶² and a continual success in achieving what we want.⁶³

As Phillip Mitsis acknowledges, Hobbes’s objections to the “old Morall Philosophers” resemble earlier objections to philosophers like Epicurus, who maintained that happiness is *ataraxia*, or tranquility.⁶⁴ The Cyrenaics also argued that it is human nature to relentlessly pursue desire after desire,

⁵⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.15, 75.

⁵⁶ Hobbes, *Critique Du ‘De Mundo’*, XXXVIII.6, 416

⁵⁷ Thomas Hobbes, “On Man,” in *Man and Citizen (De Homine and De Cive)*, trans. Charles T. Wood, T. S. K. Scott-Craig, and Bernard Gert (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998), 11.15, 53. In Latin: “*Summum bonum, sive ut vocatur, felicitas et finis ultimus, in praesente vita reperiri non potest*” (Thomas Hobbes, “*De Homine*,” in *Opera Philosophica Quae Latine Scripsit Omnia... Vol. II.*, ed. Gulielmi Molesworth (London: Apud Joannem Bohn, 1839), 11.15, 103.)

⁵⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.6, 29. Hobbes, *Critique Du ‘De Mundo’*, XVIII.4, 416. Jones, *Thomas White’s*, XVIII.4, 463.

⁵⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.11, 47.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, I.6, 29.

⁶¹ “There would be nothing to long for, nothing to desire” (Hobbes, “On Man,” 11.15, 53; Hobbes, *De Homine*, 11.15, 103). Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.6, 29.

⁶² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.6, 29.

⁶³ For a related argument, see Rutherford, “In Pursuit,” 380–381.

⁶⁴ Phillip Mitsis, *Epicurus’ Ethical Theory: The Pleasures of Invulnerability*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 51–52.

and they claimed that Epicurus' happiness was "the state of a corpse."⁶⁵ Hobbes similarly suggests that if we attained the "final end" favored by "old Morall Philosophers" we would no longer have feelings or desires, "and not to feel is not to live."⁶⁶ Hobbes means to reject one particular conception of felicity/happiness, still granting that individuals can experience felicity in life.

III. Felicity and Magnanimity⁶⁷

I argue that, according to Hobbes, only a genuinely magnanimous person can ever be truly happy in life, and experience the kind of great pleasure necessary for the greatest felicity.

Hobbes suggests that to experience the greatest felicity is also to experience the greatest pleasure: "Moreover, it cannot be denied that felicity consists in this, that life is led with pleasure, i.e., with the greatest pleasure; that cannot be denied."⁶⁸ But, for Hobbes, the pleasure necessary for felicity is not the pleasure of the senses. He writes:

⁶⁵ Clement of Alexandria, *Straomateis: Books One To Three*, Trans. John Ferguson (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991), II.21, 244.

⁶⁶ Hobbes, "On Man," 11.15, 53-54; Hobbes, "*De Homine*," 11.15, 103.

⁶⁷ This section is heavily influenced by Chapter 3 of Gabriella Slomp's book, *Thomas Hobbes and the Political Philosophy of Glory*. Slomp doesn't clearly acknowledge the role that the joy of magnanimity (well-grounded glory) plays in the lives of those who experience the greatest felicity. Nonetheless, she acknowledges that, in *Critique du 'De Mundo'*, "Hobbes treats happiness and glorying as virtually interchangeable concepts" (44), and she further recognizes that only true (well grounded) glory gives grounds for happiness (35). (Gabriella Slomp, *Thomas Hobbes and the Political Philosophy of Glory* [New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000]. Likewise, S. V. Kitanov acknowledges that, in the *Critique*, Hobbes understands felicity as a mental pleasure, which involves a truthful awareness of one's accomplishments (Kitanov, "Happiness in a Mechanistic," 124-125), but he, too, does not clearly relate this to Hobbes's magnanimity.

⁶⁸ "*Quòd autem foelicitas consistat in eo ut vita cum voluptate, id est iucunditate maxima traducatur, id negandum non est*" (Hobbes, *Critique Du 'De Mundo'*, XXXVIII.8, 418). Jones, *Thomas White's*, XXXVIII.8, 467. In *The Elements of Law*, Hobbes writes that "[P]leasure . . . which is also called desire, are divers names for divers considerations of the same thing" (Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, I.7.2, 22, emphasis added). In *Leviathan*, Hobbes defines "good" as "whatsoever is the object of any man's . . . Desire" and he defines "pleasure" as "the apparance or sense of Good" (Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.6, 24-25). There should be no fundamental difference between a life of great pleasure and a life of continually satisfied desires. While Hobbes emphasizes pleasure in the *Critique's* discussion of felicity and only refers to desires in *Leviathan's* discussion, his shift in emphasis merely highlights "divers considerations of the same thing."

How could the enjoyment of felicity be had by any of those things that are common between brute animals and ourselves? It remains therefore that felicity does not consist in the pleasure of the senses.⁶⁹

Rather, the pleasure necessary for felicity has to be a pleasure of the *mind*. But which kind of pleasure of the mind is necessary for felicity? In *Critique du 'De Mundo'*, Hobbes claims that every pleasure of the mind arises when a person correctly recognizes (or falsely imagines) himself to have power and excellence:

And indeed if every pain of the mind is located in the recollection or in the fiction of one's own powerlessness, it is necessary that every pleasure of the mind consists in the recollection, or at least in the false imagination of one's own power or excellence.⁷⁰

Hobbes acknowledges that, as a result, every pleasure of the mind is glory:

And so joy, or the delight of the mind, is nothing other than a certain triumph of mind, or an internal glory, or gloriation about his own power and excellence with respect to another with whom he compares himself.⁷¹

Since a pleasure of the mind is necessary for felicity, and since every pleasure of the mind is glory, we can ask: What type of glory is necessary for felicity? Hobbes suggests that every glory is either well grounded or empty, and that empty glory is not conducive to felicity. In *Critique du 'De Mundo'*, Hobbes addresses two different kinds of empty glory and claims that neither leads to felicity.⁷²

First, Hobbes discusses the person who believes himself to be better than he actually is because he has deceived himself with fictions. Hobbes claims

⁶⁹ "*Quomodo potest fruitio earum rerum ulla pro foelicitate haberi, quae brutis animalibus communes sunt nobiscum? Relinquitur ergo foelicitatem consistere non in fruitione sensibili*" (Hobbes, *Critique Du 'De Mundo'*, XXXVIII.8, 418). Jones, *Thomas White's*, XXXVIII.8, 468. Hobbes elaborates that the satisfaction of the senses "please no more they are required by the necessity of nature"; "*nec placere ampliùs quàm ut à necessitate naturae requiruntur?*" (Hobbes, *Critique Du 'De Mundo'*, XXXVIII.8, 418).

⁷⁰ "*Et si quidem omnis dolor animi in recordatione, vel fictione propriae impotentiae collocatus sit, necesse est ut omnis animi iucunditas consistat in recordatione, vel saltem ficta imaginatione propriae potentiae, sive excellentia*" (Hobbes, *Critique Du 'De Mundo'*, XXXVIII.7, 417). Jones, *Thomas White's*, XXXVIII.7, 466.

⁷¹ "*Est itaque gaudium, sive delectatio animi nihil aliud quàm triumphus quidam animi, seu interna gloria, vel gloriatio eius de potentia & excellentia propria respectu alterius qui cum se comparat*" (Hobbes, *Critique Du 'De Mundo'*, XXXVIII.7, 417). Jones, *Thomas White's*, XXXVIII.7, 466.

⁷² Kitanov also recognizes that, according to Hobbes, "A self-image based on fiction or developed through the flattery of others . . . leads eventually to unhappiness" (Kitanov, "Happiness in a Mechanistic Universe," 125).

that this person's mental pleasure is immediate and empty. This person won't be hopeful about the future, and his pleasure will in no way be conducive to felicity.

But if he estimates his power by means of his own fiction (for anyone is able to attribute to himself, through imaginary fiction, any of the actions contrived by the poets), no hope for a successful future rises thereupon, but instead a delight present and empty, because of which it is also called empty glory, and is not conducive to felicity in any way.⁷³

Second, Hobbes discusses the person who believes himself to be better than he actually is because he listens to flatterers. Hobbes claims that this person's glory is also empty. This person might try to take actions to satisfy his grand desires, but he won't be up to the challenges, and he won't experience felicity.

Or if anyone estimates his power, not by the knowledge of facts, but from the testimonies of flatterers, his glory is also empty; nevertheless it rouses him to exploits to be carried out, but without felicity, since his power does not square with the things begun.⁷⁴

People who experience empty glory will either fail to hope for the future, or they will pursue goals at which they have too small a chance of success. Even if individuals, deceived by fictions, might have grand hopes for the future and act on them, like Don Quixote who tilted at windmills,⁷⁵ they would still fail to achieve their goals because they don't have the power they imagine. Empty glory is not conducive to felicity – the successful pursuit of desires.

Since some kind of glory is necessary for felicity, and since the glory necessary for felicity cannot be empty – cannot be poorly grounded – the glory necessary for felicity must be well-grounded glory. Hobbes suggests this when he claims that well-grounded glory is conducive to continued success in life, and that felicity consists in this kind of success:

⁷³ *Quòd si quis potentiam suam aestimet ex fictione propria (potest enim quilibet attribuere sibi per fictionem phantasticam actiones quaslibet fictas à poetis) spes nulla futuri successus inde oritur, sed delectatio praesens & inanis, propter quam vocatur quoque inanis gloria, neque ad foelicitatem ullatenus conducit* (Hobbes, *Critique Du 'De Mundo'*, XXXVIII.7, 417). Jones, *Thomas White's*, XXXVIII.7, 466.

⁷⁴ *Vel si quis potentiam suam aestimat non ex factorum conscientia, sed ex testimoniis adulatorum, ea quoque inanis gloria est; excitat tamen ad res gerendas, sed infoeliciter, quia potentia incoeptis non respondet* (Hobbes, *Critique Du 'De Mundo'*, XXXVIII.7, 417). Jones, *Thomas White's*, XXXVIII.7, 466-467.

⁷⁵ Miguel De Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote of La Mancha*, Trans. Walter Starkie (New York: Signet Classic, 1979).

Now if such glory arises from an estimation of power based on prior deeds, they make hope, since a person who did that, seems to have the power to do so again. Hence a self-estimation like this gives rise to diligence and often, through an estimation of power that is true and just, with success. Moreover one success is the cause of another, on account of new power joined with every success; and felicity is said to consist in successes continued in this way along with reasons to hope if they persist.⁷⁶

Thus, the pleasure of well-grounded glory is the only pleasure necessary for and conducive to felicity. Since the greatest felicity requires the greatest pleasure, only a person who experiences the greatest well-grounded glory can experience the greatest felicity.

Remember that, by definition, magnanimity is nothing more than well grounded glory.⁷⁷ Thus, only magnanimous people experience the greatest well-grounded glory, and only magnanimous people can experience the greatest felicity. Only genuinely magnanimous people can ever be truly happy. If we acknowledge that felicity is similar to contemporary conceptions of warranted self-esteem, we might say that, for Hobbes, proper self-esteem is essential to happiness.

I have suggested that magnanimity is necessary for the greatest possible felicity, insofar as anyone who experiences the greatest felicity will, without fail, experience the pleasure of magnanimity as well. I further argue that magnanimity is, for very different reasons, also *causally* necessary for the greatest felicity in life.

In section I, I argued that only magnanimous people consistently pursue the best means to their ends, while those who have an inaccurate representation of their power will occasionally pursue things that are either too hard or too trifling. This should be even clearer now, in light of the recent discussion of empty glory. So, there is reason to think that any individual would satisfy his desires more successfully and continuously if he were magnanimous than if he weren't. Given the relation between felicity and desire satisfaction, only magnanimous people could achieve the greatest possible felicity.

⁷⁶ *Iam si gloria talis oriatur ex aestimatione potentiae per facta priora, faciunt spem, propterea quòd is qui fecit, videtur habere potestatem rursus faciendi. Ideòque tali suiipsius aestimatione erigitur industria, & plerumque cum successu, propter potentiae aestimationem veram et iustam; unus autem successus causa est alterius, propter novam potentiam omni successu comparatam; atque hoc modò continuati successus unà cum causis sperandi si | perseverant, foelictas dicitur* (Hobbes, *Critique Due 'De Mundo'*, XXXVIII.7, 417). In the final sentence, I have stayed particularly close to Jones' translation: Jones, *Thomas White's*, XXXVIII.7, 466.

⁷⁷ Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, I.9.20, 35-36.

Imagine an individual who has great power, but who has an inaccurate understanding of that power. If he is vainglorious and has an inflated sense of himself,⁷⁸ he is likely sometimes to pursue goals that are beyond his ability, and thus fail to satisfy his desires and fall short of the greatest felicity possible for him. If he suffers from vain fear and undervalues himself, he is likely not to pursue the best means to his ends, especially if they are challenging, and he will fail to satisfy his desires as well as he could. To achieve the greatest felicity possible during life, it isn't sufficient to be powerful; an individual must also have an accurate understanding of his own power. David Hume makes a similar point rather eloquently: "Whatever capacity any one may be endow'd with, 'tis entirely useless to him, if he be not acquainted with it, and form not designs suitable to it."⁷⁹ I contend that Hobbes holds this view, as well.

A person must be magnanimous – must have both great power *and* an accurate representation of that power – to achieve the greatest possible success (and felicity). The magnanimous person's power is greater than that of his competitors and of the majority of men, so he is likely to satisfy his desires better than they, and achieve greater felicity. For Hobbes, in the race of life to "[c]ontinually . . . out-go the next before, is felicity"⁸⁰ and magnanimity is "[t]o break through with ease."⁸¹

No doubt, Hobbes does not insist that magnanimity is causally *sufficient* for felicity. A magnanimous person might fail to experience the greatest felicity if he fails to achieve some of his central desires. It is easy to imagine a magnanimous person – strong and capable – who, despite his best efforts, is nonetheless thwarted by his competitors. Hobbes is clear that this is possible; he routinely acknowledges, for instance, that even the weakest man can kill the strongest.⁸² Likewise, it is possible to imagine a magnanimous person experiencing bad luck – like being struck by lightning. Still, only a magnanimous person has the power and self-knowledge necessary for, and experiences the kind of great pleasure necessarily coincident with, the greatest possible felicity in life.

An objector to Hobbes might claim that some pleasures of the mind don't consist in imagining one's own power. Goldsmith, for instance, explicitly

⁷⁸ According to Hobbes's definitions of glory and vain glory (Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, I.9.1, 28), an individual needn't necessarily be weak to be vainglorious. He need only have an inappropriately overinflated sense of his own power, which is often based on flattery or fiction.

⁷⁹ Hume, *A Treatise of Human*, T 3.3.2.8; SBN 596-7. See Footnote 31.

⁸⁰ Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, I.9.21, 36.

⁸¹ Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, 37.

⁸² For example, Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.13, 60.

contrasts the magnanimous person with the curious person, for whom the acquisition of knowledge is the greatest pleasure.⁸³ One might think, perhaps, that a curious person might achieve the greatest felicity and pleasure in life without being magnanimous or taking pleasure in his power. In fact, Goldsmith implies that the pattern of life of a curious individual is, by its nature, more pleasurable than that of a magnanimous person.

Yet even Goldsmith acknowledges that, for Hobbes, knowledge is a kind of power.⁸⁴ Hobbes implies that, even when we take pleasure in knowledge, we actually take pleasure in an acknowledgment of our own power. We take pleasure in magnanimity. Hobbes's definitions of "curiosity" and "admiration," in *The Elements of Law*, are consistent with his assertion that *every* pleasure of the mind consists in the recognition/imagination of one's own power.⁸⁵ Hobbes writes:

Whatsoever therefore happeneth new to a man, giveth him hope and matter of knowing somewhat he knew not before. And this hope and expectation of future knowledge from anything that happeneth new and strange, is that passion which we commonly call ADMIRATION; and the same considered as appetite, is called CURISOITY, which is appetite of knowledge.⁸⁶

We admire and enjoy reading, say, Shakespeare, not because Shakespeare is brilliant, but because of the knowledge and power he has to offer us. Curiosity and admiration concern the knowledge (i.e., power) we have to gain. Hobbes can consistently claim that all intellectual pleasure concerns the acquisition and recognition of power; just as we take pleasure in money-*qua*-power, we take pleasure in knowledge-*qua*-power.⁸⁷ In fact, the pleasure of the curious man is the joy of magnanimity.

IV. Magnanimity and Justice

Both Strauss and Krook acknowledge that, at times, Hobbes seems to suggest that magnanimity is the origin of all virtue, including justice.⁸⁸

⁸³ Goldsmith, *Hobbes's Science*, 82.

⁸⁴ Goldsmith, *Hobbes's Science*, 69. Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, I.8.4, 26. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.8, 35.

⁸⁵ Hobbes, *Critique Du 'De Mundo'*, XXXVIII.7, 417.

⁸⁶ Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, I.9.18, 34-35.

⁸⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.8, 35.

⁸⁸ Krook, *Three Traditions*, 129-130. Strauss, *The Political Philosophy*, 54, 24-25. When I argue that magnanimity is the origin of justice, I do not mean to imply that, by understanding magnanimity, we will understand what it is to be just. For that, we would need to appeal

Yet both authors suggest we should not treat this as Hobbes's "final word"⁸⁹ on the subject of virtue, because, they say, Hobbes considers magnanimity a type of pride,⁹⁰ which he frequently attacks, and cannot consistently associate with virtue.⁹¹ Nonetheless, in light of the discussions above, we might wonder if Strauss and Krook are wrong to dismiss the value of magnanimity.

I contend that, for Hobbes, magnanimity is the origin of justice in a motivational sense. Strauss and Krook are correct to suggest that the "Nobleness or Gallantnesse of courage," cited in Hobbes's description of the just person, is nothing more than magnanimity:⁹²

The names of Just, and Injust, when they are attributed to Men ... signifie Conformity, or Inconformity of Manners, to Reason ... *That which gives to humane Actions the relish of Justice, is a certain Nobleness or Gallantnesse of courage, (rarely found,) by which a man scorns to be beholding to the contentment of his life, to fraud, or breach of promise. This Justice of the Manners, is that which is meant, where Justice is called a Vertue; and Injustice a Vice.*⁹³

As Strauss points out, Hobbes seems, on occasion, to use "magnanimity" and "courage" synonymously.⁹⁴ Additionally, courage and magnanimity both "proceed from the conscience of Power."⁹⁵ Finally, Hobbes defines courageous qualities like valor and fortitude in terms of magnanimity: "*Magnanimity, in danger of Death, or Wounds, VALOUR, FORTITUDE.*"⁹⁶

This lends credibility to the idea that magnanimity is the "Nobleness or Gallantnesse of courage" to which Hobbes refers. Additionally, nobleness and magnanimity have similar relations to injustice. The person who possesses nobleness "scorns to be beholding ... to fraud or breach of promise."⁹⁷ Similarly, Hobbes writes that the magnanimous person has "contempt of unjust, or dishonest helps."⁹⁸ And while "galantnesse" is drawn in contrast to fraud or breach of promise, Hobbes suggests that magnanimity

to Hobbes's discussions of the laws of nature, etc. Rather, magnanimity is the origin of justice in a *motivational* sense.

⁸⁹ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy*, 25.

⁹⁰ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy*, 51 and 25. Krook, *Three Traditions*, 130.

⁹¹ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy*, 55 and 25. Krook, *Three Traditions*, 130-131.

⁹² Strauss, *The Political Philosophy*, 54 and 24-25. Krook, *Three Traditions*, 129-130.

⁹³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.15, 74 (emphasis added).

⁹⁴ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy*, 53. Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, I.19.2, 78.

⁹⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.10, 44.

⁹⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.6, 26.

⁹⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.15, 74.

⁹⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.8, 34-35. Strauss, *The Political Philosophy*, 54.

stands in contrast to “Craft, Shifting, [and] neglect of Equity,”⁹⁹ which are dishonorable and signs of pusillanimity, or smallness of soul.¹⁰⁰ Gallant and magnanimous attitudes for injustice are similar, filled with scorn and contempt.

The best proof of connection between justice and magnanimity, neglected by Strauss, comes from a passage in Hobbes’s *Behemoth*, which criticizes members of parliament:

C. If craft be wisdom, they were wise enough. But *wise*, as I define it, is he that knows how to bring his business to pass (without the assistance of knavery and ignoble shifts) by the sole strength of his good contrivance. A fool may win from a better gamester, by the advantage of false dice.
D. According to your definition, there be few wise men now-a-days. Such wisdom is a kind of gallantry, that few men are brought up to, and most think folly.¹⁰¹

The wise man seems to be the just man as discussed in *Leviathan*. Hobbes refers to the wise man’s rare gallantry, which seems to be equivalent to the just man’s “Gallantnesse of courage, (rarely found,).”¹⁰² Given Hobbes’s use of the phrase “knavery and ignoble shifts,” it seems that the wise man, like the just man, scorns injustice. A few paragraphs later, Hobbes notes that the “rules of *just* and unjust”¹⁰³ are known by only a few wise men.

This passage from *Behemoth* employs much of the same language Hobbes uses when he describes magnanimity in *Leviathan*:

To Prudence, if you adde the use of unjust, or dishonest means, such as usually are prompted by men by Feare, or Want; you have that Crooked Wisdome, which is called CRAFT; which is a signe of Pusillanimity. For Magnanimity is contempt of unjust, or dishonest helps. And that which the Latines call *Versutia*, (translated into English, *Shifting*,) ... is but a shorter sighted Craft.¹⁰⁴

Just as, in *Behemoth*, Hobbes contrasts the wise, just man with false wisdom, craft, and ignoble shifts, in *Leviathan*, Hobbes contrasts magnanimity with the same. In *Behemoth*, Hobbes writes that: “if craft be wisdom, they were wise enough.” In *Leviathan*, he writes of the “Crooked Wisdome, which is called CRAFT.” In *Behemoth*, Hobbes claims that the wise, just man

⁹⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.10, 44.

¹⁰⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.8, 34–35.

¹⁰¹ Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth, or The Long Parliament*, Ed. Ferdinand Tonnies (London: Frank Cass & Co, 1969), 38.

¹⁰² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.15, 74. The comma is original.

¹⁰³ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 39.

¹⁰⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.8, 34–35.

doesn't resort to ignoble shifts. In *Leviathan*, the magnanimous person doesn't resort to dishonest helps or shifting. The passages closely relate pusillanimity to foolishness, and magnanimity to justice and wisdom.

Benardete is correct to recognize that magnanimous people, who contemn little helps and hindrances, would naturally scorn little, petty injustices.¹⁰⁵ But I go a step farther: the passion of magnanimity drives truly just individuals to scorn *all* injustices, and to treat all injustice as nothing more than a little help.

V. Magnanimity is Not Pride

Strauss and Krook ultimately reject the connection between magnanimity and virtue because they identify magnanimity as a kind of pride which Hobbes attacks. As Strauss suggests, even *Leviathan's* title expresses Hobbes distaste for pride, which thus cannot be the origin of virtue.¹⁰⁶ Krook puts the point more strongly: "The virtue of Hobbes's Gallant Man, in short, is seen to derive, by the nicest paradox, from the ancient Satanic sin of pride."¹⁰⁷

I argue that Hobbes identifies pride with vain glory, not with magnanimity. Along these lines, Hobbes writes: "The Passion, whose violence, or continuance maketh Madesse, is ... great *vaine-Glory*, which is commonly called *Pride*, and *self-conceipt*."¹⁰⁸

To understand properly Hobbes's conception of the motivations individuals have for keeping valid contracts, it is vital to recognize that only vain glory, and not magnanimity, is pride. Consider Hobbes's claim:

The force of Words, being (as I have formerly noted) too weak to hold men to the performance of their Covenants; there are in mans nature, but two imaginable helps to strengthen it. And those are either a Feare of the consequence of breaking their word; or a Glory, or Pride in appearing not to need to breake it. This latter is a Generosity too rarely found to be presumed on.¹⁰⁹

Strauss and Krook take this passage as their primary evidence that, for Hobbes, magnanimity is a type of pride.¹¹⁰ They take Hobbes to suggest that

¹⁰⁵ Benardete, *Greatness of Soul*, (manuscript).

¹⁰⁶ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy*, 55.

¹⁰⁷ Krook, *Three Traditions*, 130.

¹⁰⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.8, 35.

¹⁰⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I.14, 70.

¹¹⁰ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy*, 24-25, 50-51. Krook, *Three Traditions*, 128-130.

individuals only ever perform their contracts out of either fear or pride. But this cannot be what Hobbes means. Hobbes writes that those who possess the virtue of justice do not maintain their contracts out of fear.¹¹¹ He claims that only unjust men “doth righteousness for fear of punishment,”¹¹² and he implies that just people could, in fact, keep their contracts because they value promises, rather than because they fear punishment.¹¹³ Likewise, given that Hobbes extols the virtue of justice and derogates pride, we should not interpret Hobbes to commit just people to pride, either. There must be a third option.

The passage quoted above does not identify magnanimity with a type of pride. Rather, it suggests that individuals might keep their covenants for any one of three numerically-distinct options: (1) fear, (2) magnanimity (well-grounded glory), or (3) pride (vain glory). Just people, who do not keep their contracts out of fear or vain glory, must keep them out of magnanimity.¹¹⁴

Thus, magnanimity is linked not only to felicity, but to justice as well. This means that felicity and justice are linked too, which seems fitting in light of Hobbes’s claim that justice is the best means to achieve one’s goals in life.¹¹⁵ Acknowledging the similarity between magnanimity and

¹¹¹ For an excellent discussion of the psychology of Hobbes’s just man, which discusses this point: Martin Harvey, “A Defense of Hobbes’s ‘Just Man,’” *Hobbes Studies* XV (2002): 68–86.

¹¹² Thomas Hobbes, “The Citizen,” in *Man and Citizen (De Homine and De Cive)*, ed. Bernard Gert (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998), 3.5, 139 and 4.21, 162. In Latin: “*iusta facit propter poenam legi adiunctam*” (Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive: The Latin Version*, ed. H. Warrender (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 3.5, 110).

¹¹³ Hobbes, “The Citizen,” 14.2 footnote, 273. Hobbes, *De Cive*, 14.2, 207. Hobbes draws a contrast between performing “*propter promissionem*” and performing “*metu poenae*.”

¹¹⁴ Here is a sketch of another argument for the connection between magnanimity and justice: For Hobbes, magnanimous people always pursue the best means to their greatest ends. For every person, one of the greatest ends is self-preservation. The virtue of justice is the best means to self-preservation. Thus, magnanimous people always pursue the virtue of justice. To the extent that a person is unjust, he fails to pursue virtue, and fails in magnanimity. Likewise, we can see why magnanimous people would aim to free others from scorn, insofar as this, too, would be greatly conducive to self-preservation. Expanding on these arguments is outside the scope of this paper.

¹¹⁵ For example, Hobbes writes: “Even in this life the good fare better than the bad, and there is no art of coming before others in riches or honors (or if anything in this life is more pleasant than these) better than honesty/uprightness.” In Latin: “*Melius etiam in hac vita bonis ess, quam malis, nullamque esse artem praevieniendi ad divitas vel honores, vel si quid aliud in hac vita his iucundius sit, potiore probitate*” (Hobbes, *Critique du ‘De Mundo’*, XXXVIII.2, 413). Jones, *Thomas White’s*, XXXVIII.2, 460–461.

warranted self-esteem, we might also say that, for Hobbes, good self-esteem is vital both to happiness and to living virtuously.

The best evidence that Hobbes does not consider magnanimity a type of pride comes from the connection he draws between magnanimity and felicity. If we took Hobbes to suggest that magnanimity is a type of pride, we would commit him to an almost absurd series of beliefs. He would have needed to argue, in his earlier *Critique du 'De Mundo'*, that the pride he would later condemn in *Leviathan* is necessary for anyone to attain great felicity.

Hobbes is not alone among philosophers in contrasting pride with magnanimity, and aligning pride with vain glory. Aquinas defends magnanimity's status as a virtue, and argues that it is not the contrary of humility,¹¹⁶ as we might think of pride. Rather, magnanimity is *opposed* to vain glory,¹¹⁷ a sin and "a vice that springs from pride,"¹¹⁸ which is "mother of all vices."¹¹⁹

Hobbes grants that a magnanimous person's weaker opponents might *call* him "prideful,"¹²⁰ but they would be wrong. Their accusation is born out of their "displeasure" with him – and, I imagine, jealousy. After all, their magnanimous opponent is likely to defeat them and achieve felicity/happiness. And he might be genuinely just, as well.

¹¹⁶ Aquinas, *Summa Theologicae*, II-II, Q. 129, Art. 3, ad, 4, pp. 107-109.

¹¹⁷ Aquinas, *Summa Theologicae*, Q. 132, Art. 2, p. 149.

¹¹⁸ Aquinas, *Summa Theologicae*, Q. Art. 4, p. 157.

¹¹⁹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologicae*, 156: "*mater omnium vitiorum*" (my translation).

¹²⁰ Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, I.9.1, 28.