Hobbes's Doctrine of Necessity

2.1   Hobbes's Doctrine of Necessity and Existence

Thomas Hobbes flipped over the theory of natural law that had prevailed in Europe until the early seventeenth century by means of his 'doctrine of necessity'. Utilizing natural rights, Hobbes's novelty delivered a powerful theory whose meaning derived from his instrumental use of the principles of necessity.[1] This and the next chapters describe the main features of that doctrine and its impact on Hobbes's political philosophy, particularly in *Leviathan*.[2]

The political language of 'necessity', or in the words of its most radical exponent, 'the Doctrine of Necessity', presupposes the philosophical method of determinism. By the mid-seventeenth century, the doctrine was common among the promoters of civil religion and the new science

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[1]   Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore: Elementorum philosophiae sectio prima*, Introduction by Karl Schuhmann (ed.), with the collaboration of Martine Pécharman (Paris: Vrin, 1999); Thomas Hobbes, *The Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance Clearly Stated and Debated between Dr. Bramhall, Bishop of Derry, and Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury* (London: Andrew Crook, 1656) p. 14. Anne Arbor, Text Creation Partnership, 2011, http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A44010.0001.001

[2]   An analysis of *De Cive*'s text shows that Hobbes held the doctrine of necessity already in that book, although he had not yet employed it with the same radical intent for absolute sovereignty that he would later display in *Leviathan*. Among dozens of examples in *De Cive*, see: 'For each man is drawn to desire that which is Good for him and to Avoid what is bad for him, and most of all the greatest of natural evils, which is death; this happens by a real necessity of nature as powerful as that by which a stone falls downward' 1.7, p. 27; 'Thus the practice of *natural law* is necessary for the preservation of peace, and *security* is necessary for the practice of natural law' 5.3, p. 70; 'Thus the security of individuals, and consequently the common peace, *necessarily* require that the *right* of using the *sword* to punish be transferred to some man or some assembly' 6.6, p. 78; 'It is necessary to the essence of a law that two things be known to the citizens: first what man or council has sovereign power, i.e. the right of making laws; second, what the law itself says' 14.11, p. 159; 'It is logically necessary consequence of what has been said that a commonwealth [*civitas*] and a church [*ecclesia*] of the same *Christian* men are exactly the same thing under two names, and that for two reasons' 17.21, p. 221. Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive. The Latin Version*, entitled in the first Edition, *Elementorum Philosophiae Sectio Tertia De Cive*, and in later editions *Elementa Philosophica de Cive*, Howard Warrender ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

to explain rationally the foundation and causes of (political) things in the world. 'Necessity' was linked to faith in that the design or constitution of the world was conceived to have been decreed by God. Furthermore, the will of a human being was regarded as necessitated as opposed to free. As a moral and philosophical principle, 'necessity' emphasizes the (physical) body and downplays the spirit. Politically, what is necessary is by definition expedient. These terms are in fact synonymous to the extent that justice is implied in neither. In a system of natural law such as that of Hobbes, who attributes to each individual 'a Right to everything', natural rights are literally emptied of meaning. Instead, when one acts or appropriates things by necessity, this is always done justly.[3] In the state of nature, the importance of justice is thus confined to situations of necessity. Some years ago, Noel Malcolm termed the former description of 'a right to everything' an account of external rights, which presupposed 'a sort of moral vacuum', and the latter, about necessities of the internal standard, which is right (or just) because it is conducive to self-preservation.[4] This chapter argues that Malcolm's internal/external distinction that is a characteristic of Hobbes responds to his adoption of necessitarianism as a philosophical method. That which is necessary constitutes the internal structure of normative events and things, while Hobbes represents the contingent with an idea of what is external to the constitutions of things and thus free and unnecessary.

At the outset 'the doctrine of necessity' could be any of the following in a theological mindset: a call for duty, an abandonment of supererogatory acts or a command to leave anything that is not necessary behind (Luke

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[3] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* in 3 volumes, with an *Editorial Introduction* by Noel Malcolm (ed.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2012), ch. 14, 198; 'Nature Has Given a Right to All Things', Thomas Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne (eds.), with an Introduction by Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) ch. I, n. 10; see the helpful discussion in Dieter Hüning, 'Von der Tugend der Gerechtigkeit zum Begriff der Rechtsordnung: Zur rechtsphilosophischen Bedeutung des *suum cuique tribuere* bei Hobbes und Kant' in Dieter Hüning and Burkhard Tuschling (eds.) *Recht, Staat und Völkerrecht bei Immanuel Kant. Marburger Tagung zu Kants Metaphysischen Anfangsgründen der Rechtslehre* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1998). Hüning, however, does not touch on the principle of necessity, nor on 'Leviathan's disempowerment' that Locke carried out. About Hobbes's justice mostly in the commonwealth, see Tom Sorell, 'Hobbes and the Morality beyond Justice' 82 *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* (2001).

[4] Noel Malcolm, 'Hobbes and Spinoza', in J. H. Burns and Mark Goldie (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 537; S. A. Lloyd terms the state of nature 'the state of universal unlimited private judgment' S. A. Lloyd, *Morality in the Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes. Cases in the Law of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 19.

10.42). For this reason, as a philosophical method 'necessity' seems to have operated as a valuable political staple in England around the time of the Civil Wars, balancing, in the name of science, the free will of 'crypto Popish Arminianism' against that of the 'elect Brethren' of Rebellious Puritanism.[5]

'Necessity' appears as a ubiquitous key element in the contemporary theological, political, metaphysical, scientific and, with the revival of scepticism, moral discourse.[6] In extreme cases, such as in Hobbes's determinism, what seemed to be contingent was also necessary. Everything thus was necessary, voluntary actions included, since every single instance of existence was established by 'the decree of God' – that is, by necessity.[7] The problem of contingency was thus transformed into ignorance about the necessary causes, and therefore acted as a boost to scientists' endeavours.[8] Hobbes reasoned that there was always a necessary cause in any particular action. A necessary cause is at play, for example, if we are caught in a rain shower while walking outside: we had a necessary cause for going out and there was also a necessary cause for it to rain at that moment. We simply do not know the necessary causes of contingency, but they exist. 'There is no such thing as freedom from necessity', Hobbes stated. The necessary cause of a voluntary action was the will, thus voluntary actions were 'necessitated', by which he meant that they were effected by a necessary

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[5] Nicholas D. Jackson does not state this explicitly. However, I have gained this insight by reading his book. Nicholas D. Jackson, *Hobbes, Bramhall and the Politics of Liberty and Necessity: A Quarrel of the Civil Wars and Interregnum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[6] Galileo's epistemological method of drawing things out from the learner also employs it: 'but as for *the true-that is, the necessary; that which cannot be possibly otherwise* – every man of ordinary intelligence either knows it by himself, or it is impossible for him to ever know it.' Galileo quoted in J. W. N. Watkins, *Hobbes's System of Ideas. A Study in the Political Significance of Philosophical Theories* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1965), p. 62 (emphasis by Watkins). On Galileo and Hobbes, see also, Daniel Garber, 'Natural Philosophy in Seventeenth-Century Context', in A. P. Martinich and Kinch Hoekstra (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[7] Thomas Hobbes, 'Treatise on Liberty and Necessity', in *Hobbes and Bramhall on Liberty and Necessity*, ed. Vere C. Chappell (Cambridge University Press 1999), p. 36. Jean Bernhardt speaks of a 'providentialisme nécessitaire de Hobbes' that captures well that idea, in Thomas Hobbes, *Court traité des premiers principes. La naissance de Thomas Hobbes à la pensée moderne*, texte, traduction et commentaire par Jean Bernhardt (Paris : PUF, 1988), p. 153.

[8] For instance referring to suppositions about the future: 'Quando autem propositio vocatur contingens, "contingens" ibi significat idem quod "ignorata", idemque est dicere, "Talis propositio est contingens", ac si quis diceret, "Utrum vera sit, an falsa, nescio"'. Thomas Hobbes, *Critique du De mundo de Thomas White*, Jean Jacquot and Harold Whitmore Jones (eds.) (Paris: Vrin, 1973), p. 391.

cause. The necessary cause 'necessitated' the voluntary action.[9] Hobbes's understanding of freedom in his dispute with Bramhall was novel within his own work and is the solution he would retain in *Leviathan* and later.[10]

Over the course of the past century or so scholars have reflected upon Hobbes's accomplishment of the mechanization of scholastic political thought for the sake of civil authoritarian peace.[11] What were his intended political and theological purposes – whether royalism and episcopacy, independency and commonwealth or merely eirenic peace and security – remains a matter of debate.[12] It is clear, however, that an emphasis on the philosophy of 'necessity' leads to the *de facto* tendencies in government. Kinch Hoekstra uses nothing short of Hobbes's entire political works as an example, arguing that when the sovereign exists *de jure* and has *de facto* power, subjects' submission to sovereignty is necessary. Moreover, the requirement of *de jure* power may appear spontaneously: it is present

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[9] 'as the will itself, and each propension of a man during his deliberation, is as much necessitated and depends on a sufficient cause as anything else whatsoever'. Hobbes, 'Treatise on Liberty and Necessity', p. 21; p. 28. See also, Thomas, Hobbes, *Elements of philosophy the first section, Concerning Body* (London, Andrew Crook, 1656) Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership, 2011, http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A43987.0001.001, p. 95. This is what Locke called 'the religion of Hobbes and Spinosa by resolving all, even the thoughts and will of men, into an irresistible fatal necessity.' Locke, 'Remarks upon Some of Mr. Norris's Books', p. 254. On Spinoza on this same question setting down to ignorance the general belief of contingent truths, see Jonathan Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1984), p. 121.

[10] Noel Malcolm, 'Editorial Introduction', in Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, vol. I, p. 17. See also my discussion in Chapter 3.2.5 of Quentin Skinner's work on Hobbes and rhetoric.

[11] Frithiof Brandt, *Thomas Hobbes' Mechanical Conception of Nature*, Vaughan Maxwell and Annie I. Fausboll (trans.) (Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaard, and London: Librairie Hachette, 1928); Michael Oakeshott, 'Introduction to *Leviathan*' (Oxford: Basil-Blackwell, 1946); Jakob Hans Joseph Schneider, *Thomas Hobbes und die Spätscholastik* (Bonn: Philosophische Fakultät der Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Bonn, 1986); Carl Schmitt, *Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre des Thomas Hobbes. Sinn und Fehlschlag eines politischen Symbols* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1995); Collins, *The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes*; Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*; Jackson, *Hobbes, Bramhall and the Politics of Liberty and Necessity*; Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*; Jeffrey R. Collins, 'Malcolm's Leviathan: Hobbes's "Thing"' 12 *Modern Intellectual History* (2015).

[12] For the second, see Collins, *The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes*, and Jackson, *Hobbes, Bramhall and the Politics of Liberty and Necessity*; the first by Noel Malcolm, is more an argument about the contingent moment, stating that between the late 1640s an early 1650s the situation demanded ceding some power to the Presbyterians in order to get support from the Scots. The idea would have been to revoke it as soon as it was possible, since in fact it was void to give away the powers of sovereignty, in Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, p. 24. On the 'eirenic' position see Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, p. 179. Goldsmith considered him simply ambiguous, M. M. Goldsmith 'Hobbes's Ambiguous Politics' 11 *History of Political Thought* (1990).

when the people have consented to it, or *in fact* must necessarily consent to it due to circumstances such as that the *de facto* sovereign is keeping peace and order, and covering basic necessities.[13] It seems therefore that all other political choices are rendered meaningless if the rule of necessity is taken to its logical conclusion.[14] The greater the insistence on necessity, the more intense the *de facto* theory would result and vice versa.

Hobbes has been acclaimed for his radical reconstruction of the philosophy of natural law.[15] My argument in the following chapters is that it was due to his employment of the doctrine of necessity that Hobbes was able to reinvent the tradition of natural law. Several of his key political concepts – including 'natural rights', 'Common-wealth' and the 'Christian commonwealth' – draw meaning from his multifaceted understanding and intense application of the doctrine of necessity. Furthermore, his employment of a philosophy of necessity culminated in the wholesale adoption of the metaphysics of necessity in his masterpiece of political philosophy, *Leviathan*. I suggest that Hobbes was inspired, either directly or indirectly, by the Aristotelian and Neoplatonist Arabic philosopher, jurist and physician Avicenna (Ibn-Sīnā) (circa 970–1037) and his metaphysics of existence and necessity. I also contend that Hobbes appropriated it to the extent that it was useful for his project of separation of philosophy and theology and developed it further as he dovetailed it with mechanistic philosophy. The following chapters show that through the concentration on physical body that the philosophy of existence implies, natural necessities rather than natural rights acquire the *real* central meaning and foundation of Hobbes's political philosophy.

The interest shown by both Thomas Hobbes and Robert Boyle in the work of the groundbreaking French mechanistic philosophers of necessity and contingency, René Descartes (1596–1650) and Pierre Gassendi

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[13] See Kinch Hoekstra, 'The de facto Turn in Hobbes's Political Philosophy', in Tom Sorell and Luc Foisneau (eds.), *Leviathan after 350 Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 61. See also, Edwin Curley, 'Introduction' to Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, with selected variants from the Latin Edition of 1668 (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 1994), p. xxxiv.

[14] Adopting the analysis of liberty, but reaching the same conclusion, Philip Pettit, 'Liberty and Leviathan' 4 *Politics, Philosophy and Economics* (2005), p. 148.

[15] Malcolm 'Hobbes and Spinoza'; Quentin Skinner, 'Thomas Hobbes's Antiliberal Theory of Liberty', in B. Yack (ed.), *Liberalism without Illusions: Essays on Liberal Theory and the Political Vision of Judith N. Shklar* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Ian Hunter, 'Natural Law as Political Philosophy', in Desmond M. Clarke and Catherine Wilson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 480.

(1592–1655), has been extensively researched.[16] Within that scholarship of the history of science, Margaret Osler has studied the indebtedness of French philosophers of nature to the Middle Ages voluntarist discourse on the absolute power of God, in particular that of William of Ockham (1285–1347), and of the version put forward by Duns Scotus that balanced absolute power against ordained power. Osler viewed Gassendi's aim as being 'to baptize' Epicurean atomism, and that of Descartes as being to root the laws of nature in a divine source.[17]

In the fourteenth century, ideas about the absolute and thus unpredictable will of God weakened confidence in the ability to arrive at demonstrated truth in natural philosophy and theology and thus propagated general doubt, which was, however, fruitful in terms of stimulating scientific inquiry.[18] Nevertheless, the entire debate on the power of God has a complex history that started in the thirteenth century with both theologians and lawyers deeply involved in it and touching on core themes of theology, ecclesiology and moral philosophy.[19] In their search for a

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[16] Jean Jacquot and Harold Whitmore Jones, 'Introduction' to Thomas Hobbes, *Critique du De mundo*; J. E. McGuire, 'Boyle's Conception of Nature' 33 *Journal of the History of Ideas* (1972); Margaret J. Osler, *Divine Will and Mechanical Philosophy: Gassendi and Descartes on Contingency and Necessity in the Created World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Michael Hunter and Edward B. Davis, 'The Making of Robert Boyle's "Free Enquiry into the Vulgarly Receiv'd Notion of Nature" (1686), 1 *Early Science and Medicine*, (1996); Michael Ben-Chaim, *Experimental Philosophy and the Birth of Empirical Science: Boyle, Locke and Newton*, (London: Routledge, 2016).

[17] Osler, *Divine Will and Mechanical Philosophy*.

[18] Luca Bianchi, *Il vescovo e i filosofi. La condanna parigina del 1277 e l'evoluzione dell' aristotelismo scolastico* (Bergame: Pierluigi Lubrina, 1990), p. 86; Edward Grant, 'Science and Theology in the Middle Ages', in David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers (eds.), *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

[19] Ludwig Buisson, *Potestas und Caritas. Die Päpstliche Gewalt im Spätmittelalter* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1958); Mary Anne Pernoud, 'Innovation in William of Ockham's References to the "Potentia Dei"', XLV *Antonianum* (1970); Mary Anne Pernoud, 'The Theory of the Potentia Dei According to Aquinas, Scotus and Ockham,' XVVII *Antonianum* (1972); John Marrone, 'The Absolute and the Ordained Powers of the Pope. An Unedited Text of Henry of Ghent,' 36 *Mediaeval Studies* (1974); Eugenio Randi, *Il sovrano e l'orologiaio: due immagini di Dio nel dibattito sulla "potentia absoluta" fra XIII e XIV secolo* (Firenza: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1987); William J Courtenay, *Capacity and Volition: A History of the Distinction of Absolute and Ordained Power* (Bergamo: Pierluigi Lubrina, 1990); Pasquale Porro, 'Henry of Ghent on Ordained and Absolute Power', in Guy Guldentops and Carlos G. Steel (eds.), *Henry of Ghent and the Transformation of Scholastic Thought. Studies in Memory of Jos Decorte* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003); Theo Kobusch, 'Analogie im Reich der Freiheit? Ein Skandal der Spätscholastischen Philosophie und die kritische Antwort der Neuzeit,' in Jan A. Aertsen and Martin Pickavé (eds.), *"Herbst Des Mittelalters"? Fragen Zur Bewertung Des 14. Und 15. Jahrhunderts*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004).

firm foundation for the new knowledge, the seventeenth-century natural philosophers borrowed liberally from that rich source of texts.

2.1.1 A Yearning for Necessity

The project of the 'patrons of necessity', as Bishop Bramhall mockingly labelled them, was epistemological and metaphysical and, of course, political.[20] In the spring of 1645, Thomas Hobbes and John Bramhall had a philosophical discussion on human freedom at the invitation of the Marquess of Newcastle. Since they were all in exile due to the English troubles, the debate took place at the Marquess's lodgings in Paris. A pair of excellent texts followed from it, starting with one by Bramhall (finished before the end of the summer of 1645), and a response by Hobbes, which were intended to remain private. After Bramhall's rejoinder and partly due to a misunderstanding about the publication, a further series of publications ensued that, to put it mildly, abandoned the courteous tone of the first texts and the academic style of the first encounter.[21] Nicholas D. Jackson interprets the debate, through a strongly contextualist lens, as almost a Parisian skirmish in the war taking place in England, between an Arminian royalist (Bramhall) and an almost Puritan rebel (Hobbes).[22] But if we observed the different planes and philosophical schools in which the contents of Bramhall's 'Discourse' and Hobbes's treatise *Of Liberty and Necessity* were situated, the scientific momentum of the debate cannot be denied.[23] Hobbes's discourse was about natural philosophy, epistemology and metaphysics, and in his 'antipodean way' also about theology, while Bramhall's discussion of freedom and necessity focused on humanist moral theology and philosophy.[24] Bramhall's position may

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[20] 'Bramhall's discourse of liberty and necessity' in *Hobbes and Bramhall on Liberty and Necessity*, p.1.

[21] Hobbes, *The Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance*', p. 59; Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, ch. 5.

[22] Jackson, *Hobbes, Bramhall and the Politics of Liberty and Necessity*, p. 99.

[23] On the many other aspects of disagreement, in particular political, between Bramhall and Hobbes, see Jon Perkins commentary of Bramhall's 'Castigations of Mr. Hobbes (1657)' in Jon Parkin, *Taming the Leviathan. The Reception of the Political and Religious Ideas of Thomas Hobbes in England, 1640–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[24] In a letter to his friend Edmund Waller Hobbes relates his pleasant conversations in France with the third Earl of Devonshire (to whom Hobbes dedicated *De Cive*), in which the latter liked to tease him with questions about his paradoxical doctrines, in order to corner him on an absurdity. Instead of succeeding, Devonshire, 'at last finds I am of the antipodes to the schools'. Hobbes quoted in Jackson, *Hobbes, Bramhall and the Politics of Liberty and Necessity*, p. 90.

be summarized in the sentence, 'God leaves many things indifferent'.[25] In Hobbes's first response to Bishop Bramhall, the treatise *Of Liberty and Necessity*, the philosopher noted that he had drawn his doctrine of necessity 'from the nature of the things themselves', but due to its speculative and complex character, he chose not to explain what he meant by that.[26]

The moral question Bramhall and Hobbes discussed was directly linked to the problem of knowledge per se: how to reach or understand nature and what about its moral demands? Arguably, the important variations in the moral philosophy of the times, which become more radical as political strife intensified, were variations on an attempt to understand the divine plan for human beings with the scant help provided by sceptic natural reason. Was that divine plan still hidden in nature? As described by J. Sears McGee, the spiritualism of the Puritans in the early seventeenth century had threatened to make that style of religion concerned with natural law irrelevant to real life, while an excessively Calvinist emphasis on justification and predestination had brought about an alarming moral decay.[27] But, could a (wo)man be saved without having led a good life? According to Margaret Sampson, this was the question that troubled many devout citizens in England during that period.[28] Later in the century, the conclusion of an attentive and practical John Locke was clear enough:

> I cannot see of what use the Doctrine of Election and Perseverance is unless it be to lead men into presumption and neglect of their dutys being once perswaded that they are in a state of grace, which is a state they are told they can not fall from.[29]

Hobbes's complex programme of moral philosophy and natural law ends with the hypothesis, tested against the empirical effects of civil war, that nature, and thus God, demands the establishment of a sovereign with supreme legislative authority.[30] The fact that, in Hobbes's view, necessity

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[25] 'Bramhall's Discourse of Liberty and Necessity', p. 12.

[26] 'For there is hardly any one action, how casual soever it seem, to the causing whereof concur not whatsoever is in rerum natura [in the nature of things], which because it is a great paradox and depends on many antecedent speculations I do not press in this place.' Hobbes, 'Treatise on Liberty and Necessity', p. 33.

[27] J. Sears McGee, *The Godly Man in Stuart England. Anglicans, Puritans, and the Two Tables, 1620–1670* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976).

[28] Sampson, 'Laxity and Liberty', p. 101.

[29] Locke, around May 1695, quoted from his commonplace book in John C. Higgins-Biddle, 'Introduction' to John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. xviii.

[30] Hobbes's own view on the causes of the Civil Wars appears in Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth or the Long Parliament*, Ferdinand Tönnies (ed.) with an Introduction by Stephen Holmes (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990).

was the guiding principle of Creation made this choice less repulsive. In Robert Boyle's epistemological project, 'nature' would ultimately fall apart as an epistemological category around the 1660s, weakening greatly the entire project of necessity.[31]

Debate about the influences in Hobbes's natural philosophy is far from concluded. Since Frithiof Brandt's groundbreaking *Thomas Hobbes' Mechanical Conception of Nature* (1928) recent work continues the tradition by analysing Hobbes in relation to mechanical philosophers.[32] Gianni Paganini has emphasized Gassendi's influence on Hobbes's philosophy as well as, more generally, humanist inspiration, as discussed below.[33] Daniel Garber's recent study on the context of Hobbes's natural philosophy is also worth highlighting. Together with a comparison with Galileo, which underlines various similarities between a number of philosophers of that era, Garber restates the thesis as to the striking similarity between the natural philosophy of Descartes and that of Hobbes. Significantly, Garber notes that while Descartes views God as the foundation of the first law of nature, this foundation is conspicuously absent in Hobbes. The centrality of the principle of necessity in Hobbes's philosophy of nature is implied, though not fully articulated, in Garber's subsequent analysis, which shows how closely Spinoza follows Hobbes. By way of illustration, I will quote from one of Spinoza's passages, also quoted by Garber, that revolves around law, its possible voluntarism and the 'necessity of nature' implied in the constitution of a thing, also taken to be a law:

> The word law, taken without qualification, means, that according to which each individual, or all or some members of the same species, act in one and the same certain and determinate manner. This depends either on a necessity of nature or on a decision of men. A law which depends on a necessity of nature is one which follows necessarily from the very nature or definition of a thing.[34]

The remainder of this chapter and the next chapter trace the centrality of the principle of necessity in Hobbes's work to two particular influences:

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[31] See Section 2.2 and chapter 7.

[32] See Brandt, *Thomas Hobbes' Mechanical Conception of Nature*, and bibliography in note 11.

[33] Gianni Paganini, 'Early Modern Epicureanism: Gassendi and Hobbes in dialogue on Psychology, Ethics, and Politics', in Phillip Mitsis (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Epicureanism Ancient and Modern*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[34] Baruch Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, quoted by Garber, 'Natural Philosophy in Seventeenth-Century Context', p. 124. On how necessitarianism informs Spinoza's ethics see, Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*, pp. 111–124; Michael Lebuffe, 'Necessity and the Commands of Reason in the *Ethics*', in Matthew J. Kisner and Andrew Youpa (eds.), *Essays on Spinoza's Ethical Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2014).

necessitarian tendencies both in French theology and Arabic philosophy. Remarkably, the language of necessity and of necessitarianism in the nature of the things that Hobbes employed in *Of Liberty and Necessity* took for granted the innovative nature of late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Parisian theology and philosophy. The following paragraphs briefly describe a branch of voluntarism of the thirteenth-century Parisian theologians and Avicenna's necessitarianism and highlight its similarities with Hobbes's.

2.1.2   Neoplatonist Necessary Existence of Avicenna

Ideas of necessary existence appear in the work of those Parisian theologians that sought to liberate civil and commercial life from religious rigorism and interference, while promoting a sort of theologians' rule.[35] In the past century Etienne Gilson, Jean Paulus and José Gómez Caffarena – joined in recent decades by Jos Decorte and, in particular, by Pasquale Porro and Jules Janssens – have attributed these ideas to the influence of the Arabic philosopher Avicenna.[36] Janssens writes, in his study of the very influential Gallican theologian Henry of Ghent (1217–1293), that much research is needed to ascertain how the authors of the Latin West received Avicenna's idea of necessity.[37] Aquinas, who was also inspired by Avicenna's understanding of necessity and whose writings benefit from it on occasion, is a case in point.[38] Nevertheless, Aquinas's theological

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[35] Henry of Ghent acted as a leader of sorts of the secular theologians. About Henry as promoter of both secular life and of the role of the theologians, see the important works by Marialucrezia Leone, *Filosofia e teologia della* vita activa. *La sfera dell'agire pratico in Enrico di Gand*, (Bari: Edizioni di Pagina, 2014) and Anna Arezzo, *Lumen Medium. Enrico di Gand el il dibattito sullo statuto scientifico della teologia* (Bari : Edizioni di Pagina, 2014).

[36] Gilson, 'Avicenne et le point de départ de Duns Scot'; Paulus, *Henri de Gand*; Paulus, 'A propos de la théorie de la connaissance d'Henri de Gand'; José Gomez Caffarena, *Ser participado y ser subsistente en la metafísica de Enrique de Gante*, (Romae: Apud aedes Universitatis Gregorianae, 1958); Jos Decorte, 'Avicenna's Ontology of Relation: A Source of Inspiration to Henry of Ghent', in Jules Janssens and Daniel de Smet (eds.), *Avicenna and His Heritage* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002); Janssens, 'Elements of Avicennian Metaphysics in the *Summa*', p. 41; Janssens, 'Some Elements of Avicennian Influence on Henry of Ghent's Psychology'; Pasquale Porro, 'Universaux et *esse essentiae*: Avicenne, Henri de Gand et le "troisiéme Reich"', 38–39 *Presses universitaires de Caen*, (2002). Fascicle titled *Le réalisme des universaux*.

[37] Janssens, 'Elements of Avicennian Metaphysics in the *Summa*'.

[38] See Stephen L. Brock, 'Causality and Necessity in Thomas Aquinas', in Constantino Esposito and Pasquale Porro (eds.), 2 *Quaestio* (2002) 217–240; Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* (2019) Textum Leoninum Romae 1888–1907, edited by Roberto Busa SJ; digitalised by Enrique Alarcón www.corpusthomisticum.org/sth0000.html

project in the *Summa theologiae* concerns the promotion of interaction between spirit and body and the integration of worldly and divine activities. His reasoning begins with the goodness (divinity) of the created world. Furthermore, much of the *Summa* revaluates positively secular activities and also points to people's dangerous tendency to become attached to them, as noted before.[39] After the appearance of evil, that attachment to the world may cause people to deviate from the first commandment: 'You shall not have other gods before me' (Exodus 20:3). Hence, in metaphysics, epistemology and practical morality Aquinas might be described as seeking to transcend the dualism of Neoplatonism. In other words, he employed Neoplatonist elements instrumentally but did not become a Neoplatonist.[40]

To Henry of Ghent's overwhelming influence as a theologian in Paris and beyond, one may add the fact that he is remembered by historians of natural law as the first author ever to devise the concept of a subjective natural right – a type of property right over one's body – similar to the way in which the concept was to be understood later in modernity, in particular by Hobbes and Locke, as is analysed in the last chapter 12.[41] Henry's very sophisticated metaphysics can be summarized in his theory as to things having three ways of being: (a) as pure essences, (b) in existence and (c) in the human mind. Henry viewed the pure essences as a sort of participation in a formal order in the divine mind and the essences in existence as the effect of God's will. In an ingenious stroke of the pen, he accordingly combined a rationalist and a voluntarist vision of God – in effect analogous to God's ordained and absolute power – that came close to sketching a dual conception of the world.[42] The doctrine of duality of essences as

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[39] The right use of material goods depends on a good will. *Summa theologiae*, I pars, q. 48, a. 6. co.

[40] On Aquinas's Neoplatonic influences, see, W. J. Hankey, *God in Himself. Aquinas' Doctrine of God as Expounded in the Summa Theologiae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Pasquale Porro, *Thomas Aquinas. A Historical and Philosophical Profile*, Joseph G. Trabbic and Roger W. Nutt trans. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016).

[41] Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights*, p. 78; Virpi Mäkinen, *Property Rights in the Late Medieval Discussion on Franciscan Poverty* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001); Pasquale Porro, 'Individual Rights and Common Good: Henry of Ghent and the Scholastic Origins of Human Rights', in Andrea A. Robiglio and Hans Christian Günther, (eds.), *The European Image of God and Man: A Contribution to the Debate on Human Rights*, (Leiden, Boston: Brill 2010).

[42] 'Ad cuius intellectum sciendum secundum superius determinata, quod in Deo res quae ipse est, est ipsum esse eius, et non simpliciter esse, sed est quoddam necesse esse. A cuius simplicitate deficit omnis creatura, scilicet quia ipsa res quae ipsa est, non est eius esse, sed habet ab alio esse tam essentiae quam existentiae, ut supra declaratum est saepius, a quo non habet necesse esse ipsius existentiae, eo quod ex se est possibile esse, per indifferentiam

pure essences (*esse essentia*) and existing in the real world (*esse existentia*) was, as Henry also noted, originally Avicenna's.[43] The *esse essentia/esse existentia* division produced by Avicenna offered an explanation of both the universal and the particular thing.[44]

Pasquale Porro explains that Henri of Ghent is *the* Latin master that understood Avicenna in his own right in relation to the issue of the universal. First, there is the individual thing, the reality of the thing in existence. Then there is the universal, which Avicenna held to be a common definition in the mind. Lastly, there is nature, which is the essence of humanity expressed in a particular human being.[45] Thus, Avicenna writes '[t]he reality of such a thing exists either in concrete things, or in the soul, or absolutely, being common to both'.[46] In this 'being common to both' laid the secret of a novel conception of something akin to a universal. Neither Platonic exemplars nor Aristotelian universals, Avicenna's

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se habens ad esse et non esse. Propter quod, sicut essentia divina dicit aliquid quod est necesse esse, sic essentia creaturae dicit aliquid cui ab alio contingit esse.' R. Macken and L. Hödl (eds.), *Henrici de Gandavo*, *Summa* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1991), art. 32, q. 5, p. 79; Porro, 'Henry of Ghent on Ordained and Absolute Power'.

[43] 'Et est hic distinguendum de esse, secundum quod distinguit Avicenna in fine V Metaphysicae suae, quod quoddam est esse rei quod *habet essentialiter* de se, quod appellatur *esse* essentiae, quoddam vero quod recipit ab *alio*, quod appellatur *esse* actualis existentiae. Primum esse habet essentia creaturae essentialiter, sed tamen participative, in quantum habet formale exemplar in Deo. (…) Secundum esse non habet creatura ex sua essentia sed a Deo, in quantum est effectus voluntatis divinae iuxta exemplar eius in mente divina.' R. Macken (ed.), *Henrici de Gandavo, Opera Omnia*, V, *Quodlibet* I, *quaestio* 9, p. 53. Although, according to Janssens, work needs to be done in the research of Avicennean influences in Henry, he states that '[I]t is clear that for Henry Avicenna's essence-existence distinction is of capital importance and expressed a solid metaphysical insight', Jules Janssens, 'Henry of Ghent and Avicenna', in Gordon Anthony Wilson, (ed.), *A Companion to Henry of Ghent* (Leiden Boston, Brill, 2011), p. 69; Paulus, *Henri de Gand*, p. 26; Paulus, 'A propos de la théorie de la connaissance d'Henri de Gand', p. 493. With yet another approach Bianchi also noted a double conception of God in Henry's thought, 'the God of the philosophers', with an immutable will, and 'the God of the Christians' with sovereign freedom shown in the act of creation. Bianchi, *Il vescovo e i filosofi*, p. 65.

[44] Avicenna had a thorough Ḥanafi upbringing and practiced some time as a jurist according to the teachings of that school, see Dimitri Gutas, 'Avicenna's "MaDdhab" with an Appendix on the Question of his Date of Birth' 5–6 *Quaderni di studi Arabi* (1987–1988).

[45] Porro, 'Universaux et *esse essentiae*'; see the similarity in Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II. 11, § 9, p. 151.

[46] Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of 'The Healing'. A parallel English-Arabic text, translated, introduced, and annotated by* Michael E. Marmura, (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2005) Book 1, ch. 5, 24.29. A commentary of this question in Jon McGinnis, *Avicenna* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 33 and Daniel D. De Haan, 'Avicenna's *Healing* and the Metaphysics of Truth' 56 *Journal of the History of Philosophy* (2018).

division between *esse essentia* and *esse existentia* gave a certain consistency like a more robust entity to the general names:

> The fact that the animal existing in the individual is a certain animal does not prevent animal inasmuch as it is animal … from existing in it. [This is] because, if this individual is a certain animal, then a certain animal exists. Hence, animal [in as much as it is animal] which is part of a certain animal exists.[47]

Robert Wisnovsky describes thus Avicenna as a synthesizer. When he made distinct but co-implied 'thing' (essence) and 'existent', he was carrying out a compromise between different positions in the speculative theology (*kalām*) of his time (in turn also influenced by Greek philosophy), encompassing Ashʿarites and Māturidītes' position that 'a thing is an existent', and Muʿtazilites and al-Fārābī's that 'a thing is a thing before it comes into being'.[48] In Avicenna's thought, the worlds of 'being' (*esse*) and 'existence' (*existentia*) are separated and distinct but connected and concomitant.[49] In the physical world what exists is everything, the real and true being.[50] In the metaphysical reality what exists is the means of understanding the essences.[51]

In the work of the voluntarist Henry of Ghent, the doctrine between the division of *esse essentia* and that of *esse existentia* seems to explain what he took to be a cosmological order composed of related essences (of natures) underlying the reality of what we see in the world – a 'necessary' order in effect that the empirical world tends to mirror.[52] Hence for sceptic natural lawyers 'necessity' determines much of the validity of natural law. *Something X ought to be X-1*, because it is in *the nature of the thing* – that is to say that it is so in the underlying order of essences, and accordingly necessary.

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[47] Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of "The Healing"*, 153.29; McGinnis, *Avicenna*, p. 33; De Haan, 'Avicenna's *Healing*'; comparing Henry and Avicenna on this see, Porro, 'Universaux et *esse essentiae*'.

[48] Robert Wisnovsky, *Avicennas's Metaphysics in Context*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2003) 149; 153, and generally, Chapter 7.

[49] Amos Bertolacci, 'The Distinction of Essence and Existence in Avicenna's Metaphysics: The Text and Its Context', in Felicitas Opwis and David C. Reisman (eds.), *Islamic Philosophy, Science, Culture, and Religion: Studies in Honor of Dimitri Gutas*, (Leiden: Brill, 2012), p. 271.

[50] Marmura 'Avicenna on Primary Concepts in the *Metaphysics* of his *al-Shifā'*.

[51] Ghassan Finianos, *De l'existence à la nécessaire existence chez Avicenne*, (Bordeuax: Presses Universitaires de Bourdeaux, 2007), p. 40.

[52] 'Ordo autem iste, quia naturalis est et a natura rei, et non rationis ab opera intellectus aut voluntatis – aliter enim talis relatio rationis esset, ut patet ex iam dictis –, ideo necessario procedit ex naturali dependentia unius naturae ad alteram, qua mutuo sese exspectant ut in ipsis fundetur relatio.' R. Macken ed., *Henrici de Gandavo*, vol. XIII, *Quodlibet* IX, q.1, p. 15.

2.2   Necessitarian Metaphysics and (Human) Body in Avicenna and Hobbes

Key similarities can be seen between Avicenna and Hobbes in respect of the important method of necessity. In Hobbes's work, these culminated in *Leviathan*. The extreme deterministic stance of both philosophers thwarts further thinking on and the development of a theory of moral freedom, and indeed of a foundational political theory of freedom.[53] In Avicenna's thought, 'necessary' and 'good' appear to be linked – for Avicenna, God is no longer the 'Prime Mover' but rather the 'Necessary Existent'.[54] Jack Macintosh has recently written about the currency of this idea in seventeenth-century thinkers.[55] Furthermore, at the beginning of the fifth chapter of the first book of his *Metaphysics*, Avicenna describes 'the necessary' as primary knowledge, almost like innate ideas, that enables further knowledge: 'We say: the ideas of "the existent", "the thing" and "the necessary" are impressed in the soul in a primary way, this impression not requiring better known things to bring it about.' As to which is prior – 'the possible', 'the impossible' or 'the necessary' – Avicenna wrote:

> Nonetheless, of these three, the one with the highest claim to be first conceived is the necessary. This is because the necessary points to the assuredness of existence, existence being better known than non-existence because existence is known in itself while, non-existence is, in some manner or another, known through existence.[56]

Avicenna's argument was that 'whatever exists (other than God) was necessitated by another'.[57] As Michael E. Marmura explains, Avicenna viewed

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[53] We will return to this point about Avicenna in Chapter 9.

[54] On the change from Aristotelian 'Prime Mover' to Avicennan 'Necessary Existent', see, Dimitri Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian tradition. Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works* (Leiden, New York, Copenhagen: Brill, 1988) p. 261; also, Miguel Cruz Hernández, 'El concepto de metafísica de Avicena', in Jules Janssens and Daniel De Smet (eds.), *Avicenna and His Heritage* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002); on the object of metaphysic for Avicenna see, Ghassan Finianos, *Les Grandes Divisions de l'Être "Mawjūd" selon Ibn Sīnā* (Fribourg: Editions Univesitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1975), p. 18.

[55] Jack MacIntosh, 'Theological and Scientific Applications of the Notion of Necessity in the Mediaeval and Early Modern Periods', in Max Cresswell, Edwin Mares and Adriane Rini (eds.), *Logical Modalities from Aristotle to Carnap. The Story of Necessity* (Cambridge University Press 2016), p. 160.

[56] I am quoting here from Michael E. Marmura's translation of the chapter and also following his detailed explanation, in Marmura 'Avicenna on Primary Concepts in the *Metaphysics* of his *al-Shifāʾ*', p. 222; p. 234.

[57] Noted by Marmura 'Avicenna on Primary Concepts in the Metaphysics of his *al-Shifāʾ*', p. 234. Both for Avicenna and Henry 'necessary' and 'good' appeared to be linked.

existence as a reality, a 'brute fact' from which his reasoning commenced. 'Why is this thing here?' he asked, the answer being that it is the cause that necessitates the thing, as in a cause-effect situation that goes backwards (the cause of the apple tree is the apple), and it must be outside its own nature.[58] Daniel D. De Haan has recently referred to this as 'Avicenna's existential necessitarian metaphysics'.[59] The similarity with this and Hobbes's reasoning is evident; when in frustration about Bishop Bramhall's and his disparate discourses Hobbes writes: 'And where he saith, that it is ridiculous to say, the object of the sight is the cause of seeing, he showeth so clearly that he understandeth nothing at all of Natural Philosophy, that I am sorry I had the ill fortune to be engaged with him in a dispute of this kind.'[60]

The subject matter of metaphysics is for Avicenna 'the existent' that is necessitated.[61] Thus it produced a sort of ultrarealist ontology that gives precedence in knowledge to what exists in the real world.[62] More importantly, it produces determinism in so far as the effect necessarily follows from the efficient cause, and, as argued by Catarina Belo, arises from the fact that Avicenna is using logic to argue a metaphysical point. If something exists, it is necessitated. If it is not necessitated, then it does not exist – otherwise, the principle of non-contradiction would be violated.[63]

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[58] Marmura 'Avicenna on Primary Concepts in the *Metaphysics* of his *al-Shifāʾ*', p. 234; on possible issues of mistranslation of the word 'thingness' for 'causality' see, Wisnovsky, *Avicennas's Metaphysics in Context*, p. 161. See the opposite description in Elisabeth Anscombe's explanation of the principle of modern causality and necessity: 'The concept of necessity, as it is connected with causation, can be explained as follows: a cause C is a necessitating cause of an effect E when (I mean: on the occasions when) if C occurs it is certain to cause E unless something prevents it.' G.E.M. Anscombe, G. E. M. 'Causality and Determination' in *The Collected Philosophical Papers of G. E. M. Anscombe. Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind vol. 2*, (London: Basil Blackwell Publisher, 1981), p. 144.

[59] 'In Avicenna's *existential necessitarian* metaphysics, this entails that since every being is either necessary existence through another or necessary existence in itself, so also is every being either true through another or true in itself.' De Haan, 'Avicenna's *Healing* and the Metaphysics of Truth', p. 40. (emphasis De Haan).

[60] Hobbes, *The questions concerning liberty, necessity, and chance'*, p. 59; Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, ch. 5.

[61] Amos Bertolacci, 'The Doctrine of Material and Formal Causality in the 'Ilāhiyyāt' of Avicenna's 'Kitāb al-Šifā'' 2 *Quaestio* (2002).

[62] The expression of 'ultrarealism', for Avicenna in Marmura 'Avicenna on Primary Concepts in the *Metaphysics* of his *al-Shifāʾ*', and for Henry in Gomez Caffarena, *Ser participado y ser subsistente en la metafísica de Enrique de Gante*. With characteristic conciseness in opening up a complex matter, when Hobbes denied causality to the foreknowledge of God, he declared, in an ultrarealistic style, that 'knowledge depends on the existence of the things known, and not they on it' Hobbes, 'Treatise on Liberty and Necessity', p. 20.

[63] Holding that Avicenna had a deterministic agenda, in Catarina Belo, *Chance and Determinism in Avicenna and Averroes* (Leiden, Boston: Brill 2007). In his review of Belo's

An example from Hobbes's first response to Bramhall helps highlight again the similarity with Avicenna's determinist metaphysics of existence and necessity:

> That which I say necessitates and determinates every action, that his Lordship may no longer doubt of my meaning, is the sum of all those things which, being now existent, conduce and concur to the production of that action hereafter, whereof if any one thing now were wanting, the effect could not be produced. This concourse of causes, whereof every one is determined to be such as it is by a like concourse of former causes, may well be called (in respect they were all set and ordered by the eternal cause of all things, God Almighty) the decree of God.[64]

Gianni Paganini has also described Hobbes's redesign of metaphysics as being concerned only with what exists. Paganini thinks that by rejecting a 'presumed "separate" existence of essences', Hobbes was getting rid of the matter with which 'the scholastics conjured up the existence of a "spiritual" kingdom'.[65] It is only logical that metaphysics and political philosophy would emerge very differently if the theology of 'pure essences' – its spiritual half – were to be put aside, and only a philosophy about the 'essences in existence' were considered. But Hobbes had a theological project of his own. His seventeenth-century conception of a 'decree and plan of God' that established the events that take place in the world may be as well compared with Henry of Ghent's metaphysical order of the 'nature of the thing'. In lieu of the latter's conception of a rational order of creation that the existing creation mirrors, Hobbes lays down a decree and

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book Jules Janssens acknowledges that Avicenna 'defends a strict determinism regarding efficient causality, insofar as an effect necessarily results from its efficient cause'; but he also points to unresolved tensions in his thought, such as 'the identification in God between thinking and creating versus His absolute freedom' and 'the being necessary of the contingent beings by their cause versus their maintaining their possibility in themselves'. Jules Janssens, 'Book Review: Catarina Belo', *Chance and Determinism in Avicenna and Averroes*, 19 *Journal of Islamic Studies* (2008), p. 101. More recently Ozgur Koca gives a radical turn to scholarship arguing that Avicenna's necessitarianism must not be deterministic, since in Avicenna, God's creation is not mechanistic, and by distinguishing between metaphysical and physical causation. Ozgur Koca, 'Revisiting the Concepts of Necessity and Freedom in Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) (c. 980–1037)' 59 *Sophia* (2020).

[64] Hobbes, 'Treatise on *Liberty and Necessity*', p. 20.

[65] Gianni Paganini, 'Hobbes's Critique of the Doctrine of Essences and Its Sources', in Patricia Springborg (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 337; Paganini is pointing to how in *Critique du de Mundo* Hobbes derided the whole project of metaphysics (what goes after physics or beyond physics) and its proponents 'as if the limits of nature could be transgressed by its doctrine.' Hobbes, *Critique du de Mundo de Thomas White*, p. 170 (my translation).

plan from which follows his deterministic confluence of necessary causes. It seems therefore that Hobbes endows thereby with religious or theological content his philosophical enterprise.[66]

   In his chronology of the writing of *Leviathan*, Noel Malcolm shows that in 1642–1643 Hobbes was engaged in the refutation of Thomas White's Catholic natural philosophy and metaphysics, and in 1645 with *Of Liberty and Necessity*.[67] But the work that most occupied him, at least from 1642 onwards, was *De Corpore*, his treatise on physics, metaphysics and logic. Hobbes was grappling with its argument during the 1640s, and busy teaching mathematics to Prince Charles in France. Then he fell seriously ill in 1647, and in fact he wrote *Leviathan* between 1649 and 1651, in the middle of the production of *De Corpore*, which was finally published in 1655.[68] In a similar manner to the situation in respect of his natural philosophy and his politics, Hobbes's source of inspiration in relation to metaphysics is still the subject of scholarly debate. His contemporary and friend, the poet Abraham Cowley pointed to his inspiration in Aristotelian, Roman and Arabic philosophy. In his poem 'To Mr. Hobbes', Cowley explains that the fields ploughed by the ancients, the 'Stagirite', the 'Roman Eagle' and 'Mecha itself' no longer offered (philosophical) nourishment. What was required by the times was to 'break up tombs with sacrilegious hands' and search for 'treasures buried'.[69] A possible interpretation of Cowley's poem is that instead of a complete new beginning, what was at issue was the pillaging of tradition.[70] Paganini argues in favour of Lorenzo Valla's critical philology that ultimately rendered the word 'essence' superfluous, since

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[66] According to Catarina Belo Avicenna had also defined the 'Decree' of God to explain 'the determination' of the necessary causes and reasons leading to the order of what exists: 'Determination (*qadar*) is the existence of causes (*'illa*) and reasons (*sabab*) and their harmonization in accordance with their arrangement and order, leading to the effects and caused beings. These are what is necessitated by the Decree (*qaḍā'*) and what follows from it. There is no [ultimate] reason for the action of the Creator because His action is due to His essence and not due to a motive (*dā'in*) that would incite Him to [do] something.' From Yahya Michot trans. Ibn Sīnā *Lettre au vizir ab Sa'd*, quoted in Belo, *Chance and Determinism in Avicenna and Averroes*, p. 114, and generally ch. 3.

[67] Se on Hobbes and White Tuck's rich interpretation about Hobbes's 'revolutionary utopia' Richard Tuck, 'The Civil Religion of Thomas Hobbes', in Nicholas Phillipson and Quentin Skinner (eds.), *Political Discourse in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[68] Malcolm, 'Editorial Introduction', pp. 4–13.

[69] Abraham Cowley, 'To Mr. Hobbes', in G. Molesworth, ed., *Thomae Hobbes Malmesburiensis Opera Philosophica, quae Latine scripsit, omnia*. v. I (Londini, Joannem Bohn, 1839), iv.

[70] See also on Cowley, the Arabic philosophers and Hobbes, Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 87.

essences did not have a separate existence, and were one with existence.[71] As I have shown above, ideas about 'essences in existence' and 'essences separated from existence' appeared in medieval Parisian theology and some of them had been extracted from the work of Avicenna. Hence the novelty of Hobbes (or the humanists before him) appears to be in how they selected and combined these 'essences'. Hobbes certainly merged 'thing' and 'body' into one. In the Appendix to the *Latin Leviathan*, for instance, he wrote: 'By "body" I now understand that thing of which it can truly be said that it really exists in itself, and also has some magnitude.'[72] At any rate, the resemblance between Hobbes's metaphysics of necessity and existence and Henry of Ghent's and Avicenna's metaphysics is striking. While I am not arguing that this resemblance is complete, I contend that Hobbes's metaphysics of necessity and existence is similar to Avicenna's novel contribution in the way in which his reasoning starts with the fact of existence, and that the principle of causal necessity utilized by both is strikingly similar.

I would like to suggest that since the dualist Avicenna dealt separately and in the first place with the things existing in the material world, his philosophy of existence was useful to a committed physicalist like Hobbes- in the expression of Robert Pasnau. That is, someone for whom nothing is 'nonphysical'.[73] There is a certain development concomitant to Hobbes's choice of metaphysics of existence, his physicalism and the secularist and absolutist project. Avicenna's dualism offered the new philosophers of nature studying the physical body a strictly physicalist metaphysics.[74] On this point it is worth quoting Avicenna at length on metaphysics:

> Thus, in its own right, this science should be prior to all the [other] sciences; but from our point of view, it is posterior to all of them … As for the name of this science, it is [metaphysics,] "that which is after nature". By "nature" is not meant the power which is a principle of motion and

[71] Paganini, 'Hobbes's Critique of the Doctrine of Essences and Its Sources', p. 344; p. 351. Lorenzo Valla was an Italian humanist (1406–1457).

[72] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, vol. 3, p. 1184 (translation by Noel Malcolm); similarly Skinner writes that Hobbes's lifetime ambition was to create 'a system of philosophy grounded on the assumption that there is nothing real except bodies in motion.' Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, p. 208.

[73] Robert Pasnau, 'Mind and Extension (Descartes, Hobbes, More)', in Henrik Lagerlund (ed.), *Forming the Mind. Studies in the History of Philosophy of Mind*, vol. 5 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), p. 286.

[74] See Nicola Polloni, 'Gundissalinus and Avicenna: Some Remarks on an Intricate Philosophical Connection' 28 *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* (2017), p. 525.

rest, but the totality of the things that come about through corporeal mat-
ter – [including the latter] power and accidents. For it has been said that
"nature" is said of the natural body that has the nature, the natural body
being the sensed body [along] with what belongs to it by way of properties
and accidents. The meaning of "[that which] is after nature" [involves] a
posteriority relative to us. For when we first observe existence and get to
know its states, we observe this natural existence. As for that which this
science, if considered in itself, deserves to be name, [this] is to speak of it
as the science of what is "prior to nature," because the matters investigated
in this science are, in [terms of] essence and generality, prior to nature.[75]

Thus, Avicenna viewed nature as all the bodies that exist and metaphys-
ics meant 'after physics', *according to human beings' point of view*, that
is starting with what exists. For Avicenna, we humans observe first the
existence of body, and from that observation, we may deduce the general
principles of things and nature. Despite his Aristotelianism, Avicenna's
metaphysics was unrelated to the Aristotelian and scholastic idea of 'tran-
scending' nature that Hobbes derided.[76] The latter found this point suffi-
ciently relevant to political philosophy as to define it properly in *Leviathan*
and to *distinguish* 'a certain *Philosophia prima* on which all other philoso-
phy ought to depend', from the 'Books of supernaturall philosophy' of the
scholastics. As Amos Bertolacci has noted, Avicenna's metaphysics also
sought to prove, in a secondary way, 'the Necessary Existent' (the Superior
Being) that 'has no cause'. But it is important to emphasize that Avicenna
viewed the subject matter of metaphysics as primary 'existence', and not a
divine necessary existent.[77]

Dag Nikolaus Hasse has described Avicenna's dualist epistemology,
involving epistemology in two steps – rational abstraction from the physi-
cal thing that is in front of me as primary learning, followed by retrieving
the understanding of the same thing as emanation from the supralunar
separate intellect – as a useful antidote to scepticism. Avicenna was an opti-
mist about the capacity of human reason to grasp things in that first step of
observing existence unproblematically.[78] In fact, Avicenna regarded the
first 'benefit' of his metaphysics of existence as being, in his own words,

[75] Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of "The Healing"*, 16.32–17.1.
[76] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. 46, p. 1076; Paganini, 'Hobbes's Critique of the Doctrine of Essences
and Its Sources', p. 344.
[77] Bertolacci, 'The Doctrine of Material and Formal Causality in the 'Ilāhiyyāt' of Avicenna's
'Kitāb al-Šifā''; Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of "The Healing"*, Book. I, ch. 6.
[78] See Dag Nikolaus Hasse, 'Avicenna's Epistemological Optimism' in Peter Adamson ed.
Interpreting Avicenna (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 109–119.

'to bestow certainty on the particular sciences'.[79] To remain within the bounds of Christianity, one needed only to dispose of the second step, and hence of Neoplatonic dualism, which involved, in Avicenna's work, a separate intellect that was not God, but a supralunar giver of forms. The physicalist and the spiritualist aspects are thus set apart.

No attempt will be undertaken here of tracing the textual connections or sources from Avicenna to Hobbes. My purpose is rather to use the ideas of both philosophers to depict the capacity of 'necessity' to establish a metaphysical category that may inform religious, moral and political theory to a greater extent than has hitherto been regarded as possible in scholarly discourse. Since whatever exists is necessary in one way or another, and necessity is moreover self-evident, 'necessity' gives a sufficient metaphysical foundation to existence.

In its most pure forms, however, the paradox of the project of necessity is that philosophers *were doing* theology. Theirs was a theology marked by the non-involvement of God in the activities of the current world – a secularist theology if you will. The world that had emanated from God in Avicenna's Neoplatonism tends towards perfection with the goal of reaching the supralunar intelligent beings.[80] In its Christian version, Hobbes's 'decree of God' has also a similar metaphysical function but with more profound consequences.[81] God produces or creates the world, and continuing on a sort of autopilot, through 'necessity', things existing in the world follow God's plan. And unless there are special revelations – which are hardly to be expected – human beings remain within the limits of natural reason in control of what happens *on this side of the line*. Hobbes's project against free will might well have been concerned primarily with preventing 'ecclesiastical promotion' (i.e. intervention).[82] However, it is well buttressed by self-contained philosophical ideas about necessity that blur the spiritual aspect of free moral and political human decisions in the exposition of political philosophy, underlying, nevertheless a robust theological framework.

[79] Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of 'The Healing'*, 14.20.
[80] Robert Wisnovsky, 'Final and Efficient Causality in Avicenna's Cosmology and Theology' 2 *Quaestio* 2002; see also De Haan, 'Scientific knowledge is causal knowledge of necessary truths, and within Avicenna's metaphysics of truth, the epistemologically necessary truths of science simply conform to the metaphysically necessary truth of things, which are themselves causally dependent upon the divine First Truth that is necessary existence in itself.' De Haan, 'Avicenna's *Healing* and the Metaphysics of Truth', p. 28.
[81] A somehow similar connection is made by Alan Cromartie between Bacon's (and Hobbes's) theory of 'motion' with the theory of God 'the designer' of order, Alan Cromartie, 'The God of Thomas Hobbes', 51 *The Historical Journal* (2008), p. 863.
[82] Hobbes, *The Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance*, p. 2.

2.2.1 *Hobbes's Early Necessitarianism*

Hobbes's knowledge of necessitarianism was not acquired during his long sojourns in France in the 1630s and 1640s.[83] His *Short Tract of First Principles* from around 1632–1633 evidences that, as Karl Schuhmann also noted.[84] Ferdinand Tönnies described the tract as 'an intermediate stage' between Hobbes's scholasticism acquired during his early training in Oxford and his later knowledge of mechanics and mathematics.[85] The tract in question deals with the philosophy of nature and mainly with optics. Significantly, Hobbes also experimented with the devising of moral concepts on the basis of strictly physical concepts in this tract. This was done by (ambiguously) prescinding from a spiritual soul in the explanation of understanding and by pushing Aristotle's concepts in that direction. After a strictly physical explanation of the role of motion in understanding and sensing, Hobbes adds that 'Good is to every thing, that which hath active power to attract it locally'. He then notes that this definition agrees with the way in which Aristotle defined 'Good to be that, to which all things are moved'. Hobbes remarks that that 'hath been metaphorically taken, but is properly true'. Finally, he describes '*Malum* to every thing is that which hath active power to repel it' and 'Badness' as 'the power of *Malum*'.[86]

By the end of the tract, one understands that Hobbes's view is that good and evil may primarily be explained through a physical motion of attraction and repulsion – he upheld a version of that understanding of moral good and evil all the way up to *Leviathan*.[87] Hobbes's is not an altogether arbitrary explanation. It is important to make this clear, in order to reject the thesis that Hobbes was an extreme nominalist, for his explanation of good and evil is backed by a deep insight into the philosophical significance of real bodily attraction or repulsion. However, what he says about

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[83] He had been already in a long trip to the continent, though. About the dates of the sojourns, see Richard Tuck, 'Principal Events in Hobbes's Life', in Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Richard Tuck ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p. lviii.

[84] Karl Schuhmann's analysis of concordances of concepts and expressions in *The Short Tract* with Hobbes's other works, mainly the *Treatise of Liberty and Necessity*, *De Corpore* and *Elements of Law* confirms the intuition about Hobbes's authorship, despite the scholarly debate, which is discussed also by Schuhmann. Karl Schuhmann, 'Le "Short Tract", première ouvre philosophique de Hobbes', in 8 *Hobbes Studies* (1995).

[85] Ferdinand Tönnies, 'Editor's Preface', in Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law: To Which Are Subjoined Selected Extracts from Unprinted Mss. of Thomas Hobbes*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), p. xiii.

[86] Hobbes, 'Appendix I: A Short Tract on First Principles', in Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, p. 166.

[87] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Malcolm (ed.), ch. 6, p. 82.

good and evil is metaphysically and ontologically reductionist as to what being a human being entails. One may at least say that a human being is more than a body. Although Hobbes gave some explanation of reality, his definition of good and evil is an insufficient explanation of reality.

With regard to the doctrine of necessity, Hobbes illuminates it in *The Short Tract* as follows in principles 12 and 13 in Section I:

'12. Necessary is that which cannot be otherwise.
 13. A necessary cause is that which cannot but produce the effect.'

And conclusions 11 to 14 of Section I state as follows:

'11. A Sufficient Cause is a Necessary Cause.
 12. Every effect produced hath had a Necessary Cause.
 13. Every effect to be produced shall be produced by a Necessary Cause.
 14. Necessity hath no degrees.'[88]

In summary, Hobbes's elaboration states that any cause that is sufficient to produce an effect necessarily produces that effect. Therefore, it is contradictory to speak of a 'free agent' that has all that it needs in order to work but may or may not work.[89] Both in his *The Mechanisation of Aristotle* and in a previous article Cees Leijenhorst considers that the Jesuit Benito Pereira (1535–1610) is a plausible source for Hobbes in relation to these 'conclusions' on a necessary cause.[90] Pereira had noted that Ockham had sought to prove a statement by Avicenna while (Ockham) not mentioning Avicenna by name.[91] Leijenhorst, however, acknowledges that the reason for Hobbes's use of this unconditional necessity 'remains obscure' and that there is little evidence of its origin. More recently, Kara Richardson

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[88] Hobbes, 'Appendix I: A Short Tract on First Principles', p. 152; p. 155.
[89] Hobbes, 'Appendix I: A Short Tract on First Principles', p. 167.
[90] Ceest Leijenhorst, *The Mechanisation of Aristotelianism. The Late Aristotelian Setting of Thomas Hobbes' Natural Philosophy* (Leiden, Brill, 2002); Ceest Leijenhorst, 'Hobbes's Theory of Causality and Its Aristotelian Background' in 79 *The Monist*. Causality Before Hume (1996), p. 444.
[91] Ockham argues his Quodlibet I, q. 17 from the other extreme that without free will there cannot be 'casus' or 'fortuna', since for natural agents everything that happens, happens by necessity. *Quodlibeta septem una cum tractatu De sacramento altaris venerabilis inceptoris fratris Guilhelmi de Ockam anglici sacre theologie magistri de ordine fratrum minorum* (Strasbourg : Georg Husner, 1491). On Pereira see, Constance Blackwell, 'Aristotle's Perplexity Becomes Descartes's Doubt: *Metaphysics* 3, 1 and Methodical Doubt in Benito Pereira and René Descartes', in José R. Maia Neto, Gianni Paganini and John Christian Laursen (eds.), *Skepticism in the Modern Age: Building on the Work of Richard Popkin* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009).

has suggested that Avicenna might have been one of the main sources of seventeenth-century rationalism on account of his necessitarianism.[92] At any rate, Hobbes's notion of a 'necessary cause' appeared in similar terms in Avicenna's *The Metaphysics of 'The Healing'*:

> Hence with the existence of the cause, the existence of every effect is necessary; and the existence of its cause necessitates the existence of the effect.[93]

The evidence present in this text from the 1630s allows one to emphasize Hobbes's early and uncompromising position on necessitarianism. This leads to inquiry as to whether his political writings are dependent on historical events. I argue below that Hobbes gains methodological proficiency in the sequence of his political writings, until in *Leviathan* other methods are discarded in favour of this method of necessary causality. The threat of civil war – in the form of empirical proof of danger – and other political events might have influenced the sense of urgency with which he adopted the principle of necessity in his political writings.[94] A philosopher of necessity investigates how the needs of human nature relate to moral and political life. The outcome of such investigation will be a precisely defined branch of natural law founded on necessity and survival – not unlike Hobbes' project in *De Cive* and the first three sections of *Leviathan*. This looks like a more complex version of 'the older picture of Hobbes' in the words of Peter Munz.[95] The older picture indicates that Hobbes studied the natural principles of survival that lie within human beings – that is the 'strict nature' – and put them at the disposal of atheists. Nevertheless, what the evidence suggests is that he wanted mostly to reach believers by combining his philosophy of necessitarianism with the argument of divine decree.

2.2.2 Hobbes's Metaphysics of Bodies and Its Implication to Morality

The perspective of Avicennian necessity of existence described above gives new insights about Hobbes's interest in the existence of bodies

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[92] For instance in Kara Richardson, 'Avicenna and the Principle of Sufficient Reason' 67 *The Review of Metaphysics* (2014).

[93] Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of 'The Healing'*, 127.34.

[94] A more complex set of motivations transpire from Noel Malcolm's chronology, which indicates that *Leviathan* was written after the Civil War. Malcolm, 'Editorial Introduction'.

[95] And Munz continued, which 'is so much more *interesting*'. Peter Munz was undermining the 'taming' of Hobbes by Howard Warrender. Munz is quoted in Watkins, *Hobbes's System of Ideas*, p. 98

and in the conception of political society that derives from it. That interest has been neglected by an important group of scholars that concentrated on his nominalism and hence individualism.[96] Of this group, I will consider in particular Yves Charles Zarka's *La decision métaphysique de Hobbes.* To be sure, Zarka's work is helpful in navigating Hobbes's attempt to unite natural philosophy and the science of politics. But the French philosopher argues that in opposition to Aristotle's metaphysics, Hobbes's foundation of politics was a 'metaphysics of separation' between knowledge and being and that he regarded truth as residing not in things but in thinking.[97]

Zarka comes to this conclusion in interpreting Hobbes's supposition as to the 'annihilation of the world'. The first line of Chapter 7 of *De Corpore* affirms that natural philosophy begins first with 'privation', by which Hobbes means, among other things, a scenario in which the universe is removed. Next, Hobbes invites us to imagine that the world is annihilated and only a thinking individual remains.[98] He would retain only a few ideas (*phantasmata*) of the bodies that had disappeared and consideration of how the things he remembered had a being without the thinking individual's mind, which would produce a conception of 'imaginary space'. That individual would obtain a conception of time by remembering how the things moved from one space to another. Zarka notes that the fundamental aspect of Hobbes's supposition of the *annihilatio mundi* is that nothing changes in our representation of the world whether it exists or not.[99] This interpretation is persuasive. However, pushing it a little bit further, it seems to me that Hobbes is eminently concerned with the physical existence of the world – i.e. with *body* and how bodies operate – both in his exposition of natural philosophy (in *De Corpore*) and in

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[96] Yves Charles Zarka, *La decision métaphysique de Hobbes. Conditions de la politique*, (Paris: Vrin, 1999); interesting in this regard is David Gauthier's emphasis on individualism and his argument that the laws of nature are 'maxims for the preservation of the individual' …'The basic consideration is always the preservation of the individual'. David Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan: The Moral and Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979) p. 90.

[97] Zarka, *La decision métaphysique de Hobbes*, p. 54.

[98] 'Doctrinae naturalis exordium, optime (ut supra ostensum est) a privatione, id est, a ficta universi sublatione, capiemus. Supposita autem tali rerum annihilatione, quaeret fortasse aliquis, quid reliquum esset, de quo homo aliquis (quem ab hoc universo rerum interitu unicum excipimus) philosophari, vel omnino ratiocinari, vel cui rei nomen aliquod ratiocinandi causa imponere posset.' Thomae Hobbes, *Elementorum Philosophiae. Sectio Prima De corpore, in Opera Philosophica*, Gulielmi Molesworth (ed.) (Londini: Joannem Bohn, 1839), vol I, p. 81.

[99] Zarka, *La decision métaphysique de Hobbes*, p. 54.

political philosophy (in *Leviathan*). Hobbes's metaphysics is a *metaphysics of existence* that he exposed as a *metaphysics of body*.[100] In sum, it is a metaphysics of what is physical, in which bodies are the agent and patient of movement.[101] This is evidently a metaphysics that is important, but reduced in scope as compared to the Aristotelian metaphysics of ultimate causes. For, notes Hobbes, philosophy must not be subjected to theology, 'since when I say theology' he wrote:

> I say that the Church regulates', that is to say, establishes dogmas, whereas philosophy is about right reasoning.[102]

Hobbes viewed spiritual matters as a question of belief, not of reasoning. And one must add, he was making an interesting point in that regard. But the confusion started when he employed the framework of a Neoplatonist metaphysics, with a sharp division between the spirit and the real thing; between the human soul and the human body.[103] In that type of Neoplatonist dualism what is spiritual is outside the realm of nature. Hence in this reading, morality as a branch of spirituality is not the outcome of right reasoning; instead, not unlike Revelation, it must be taught.[104] And then, in parallel to that there are the natural laws of the human bodies. Hobbes was particularly adamant that a human being can reason about these natural laws of the human bodies.

Another famous thought experiment – Avicenna's floating man from the first book, *The Soul*, from *The Cure* – provides an unexpected

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[100] Supporting this argument see Noel Malcolm's discussion of the Italian Renaissance Aristotelians and their scholarship about their 'physicise metaphysics' and their similarities in this and other aspects with Hobbes. Malcolm, *Thomas Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology*, p. 69.

[101] 'Ego vero pro ente, et esse dicam ubique *corpus* & *actum*. 2. Cum ergo actus omnis, praeter ipsam corporeitatem, concipi possit generari sive produci, & rursus perire, ut quando videmus *esse album* id quod videramus antè *esse nigrum*, et sentimus *esse frigidum* quod ante senseramus *esse calidum*; concipi autem non possit quomodo talis generatio & corruptio actuum fieri possit, nisi à *corpore aliquo* & in *corpore aliquo*, solent omnes corpus illud à quo producitur vel destruitur aliquis actus, apellare *agens*, illud verò in quo producitur, *patiens*'. Hobbes, *Critique du De mundo de Thomas White*, p. 314.

[102] Hobbes, *Critique du De mundo de Thomas White*, p. 433.

[103] See for this also, G. Verbecke, 'Le "De Anima" d'Avicenne. Une conception spiritualiste de l'homme: Introduction sur la doctrine psychologique d'Avicenne', in *Avicenna Latinus Liber de Anima seu Sextus de Naturalibus IV-V*, Édition critique de la traduction latine médiévale par S. van Riet (Louvain, Leiden: Éditions Orientalistes, E. J. Brill, 1968).

[104] Avicenna expressed this type of morality 'through teaching' most strikingly in Book V, Chapter 1 of *Avicenna Latinus Liber de Anima seu Sextus de Naturalibus IV-V*, Édition critique de la traduction latine médiévale par S. van Riet (Louvain, Leiden: Éditions Orientalistes, E. J. Brill, 1968)

background against which to interpret Hobbes's *annihilatio mundi*.[105] Avicenna invites us to imagine that one of us has been created as an adult. The sight of that individual is veiled, and she or he cannot see things in the external world. The person in question is in a state akin to floating, but without feeling the air, as in a void, and with the limbs stretched out so that they do not come into contact with each other. The world exists but for some reason it is not tangible for the floating individual, who cannot see it or feel it in any way. Avicenna's question again concerns existence: can this floating individual assert the existence of her or himself? The answer is that without a doubt she or he can do so. Avicenna's conclusion is that the reader is now aware of 'the existence of the soul as something that is not the body – not in fact *any* body'.[106] What he had asked in 'The Soul' is that we annihilate all (past and present) perception of body in order to grasp the existence of the soul. My suggestion is that once that had been done, the next step was for Hobbes, in a study entitled 'Concerning Body', to propose annihilating the present perception of the body (in terms of space, time, number etc.) in order to ascertain how we think about the body, albeit that it is not present or no longer in existence. Avicenna analyses the soul through existence by means of his thought experiment, and Hobbes followed this by analysing the body.[107]

Zarka traces the key pieces of Hobbes's metaphysics, including his focus on existence, his necessitarianism and the principle of 'necessity', but consistently refers them to Ockham's nominalism and Hobbes's own original work.[108] He thinks that the 'legal-political structure' that Hobbes designs for the human world does not correspond to a previous 'ontology' and that he describes a human being as 'separated from a world

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[105] Ibn Sīnā 'Selections on Psychology from The Cure, "The Soul", in Jon McGinnis and David C. Reisman, *Classical Arabic Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources* (Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing House, 2007), p. 179.

[106] Ibn Sīnā, 'Selections on Psychology from The Cure, "The Soul', p. 179; see Robert Wisnovsky rejecting that Descartes's 'cogito' is related to the floating man despite a superficial similarity, Robert Wisnovsky, 'Avicenna and the Avicennian Tradition', in Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) p. 103; Verbecke, 'Le "De Anima" d'Avicenne. Une conception spiritualiste de l'homme', p. 36.

[107] It is probably accurate to say that the different proposal of John Locke again shows the evolution of thinking. In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* he supposes a sort of floating man, who is placed by God in that state. His goal is to ascertain the idea of space, and whether it is the same with body. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II. 13.§21, p. 175.

[108] Zarka, *La decision métaphysique de Hobbes*, p. 200; p. 211.

of things'.[109] Without claiming that there are no other valid approaches to this point of Hobbes's political philosophy, I have attempted to show that Hobbes theorized about a human being whose body is *immersed in things*, rather than separated from them. The next chapter will accordingly interpret *Leviathan* by reference to the principle of necessity. The implication of this novel approach is that Hobbes was able to found politics on a philosophy of nature, contrary to what Leo Strauss argued.[110] In response to Strauss's rich discussion of Hobbes I accept that the latter retained the public spirit of traditional political philosophy and that he was a materialist.[111] However, Hobbes was not only a materialist, as we will see below, but rather an expert on the sectionalization of social and political explanations of life. He was able to do this at the cost of reducing metaphysics to a metaphysics of existence devoted only to what is corporeal in human beings. Moreover, as a consequence of this approach, the aspect of human physical necessities assumes a central position in his political philosophy. This metaphysics of 'body' and of 'what exists' is successful thanks first to Hobbes's clever use of the principle of causal necessity, which functions as an anchor for thinking, and second by degrading all meaningful natural rights to natural necessities. The reason I have chosen *Leviathan* for particular attention is that in that text Hobbes was able to, or decided to, double down on his chosen approach by dispensing altogether with other foundational philosophies and principles in order to concentrate on necessity.

[109] Zarka, *La decision métaphysique de Hobbes*, p. 366 (my translation).
[110] Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, pp. 173–209.
[111] Strauss, *Natural Right and History*.