To Live or Not to Live: a Comparison between Nietzsche’s Teaching of “Will to Power” and Hobbes’s Concept of “Desire of Power”

by

Xinzhi Zhao

Department of Political Science
Duke University

Date: _________________________

Approved:

___________________________
Michael A. Gillespie, Supervisor

___________________________
Ruth W. Grant

___________________________
Thomas A. Spragens

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Political Science in the Graduate School of Duke University

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Both Nietzsche and Hobbes understand human life as the continuous acquisition of power and maintain that such pursuit of power leads to competition and conflicts. Given the seeming similarities in their understandings of the consequences of pursuit of power, why does Nietzsche refuse Hobbes’s solution – the modern state - to these consequences?

To answer the question, I compare the two thinkers’ understandings of pursuit of power and of the types of human life driven by such pursuit. I first argue that Hobbes's concept of desire of power represents a particular interpretation of human life, so it can be seen as a specific expression of will to power in Nietzsche’s philosophy. Then I compare the Hobbesian desire of power to other expressions of will to power illustrated in Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, especially slave morality and master morality. I find that the Hobbesian desire of power is an expression of will to power similar to, but weaker than, the Nietzschean slaves’ will to power, for although Hobbesian individuals and Nietzschean slaves share similar psychological conditions and psychological mechanism, the goals of their pursuit of power differ. The Hobbesian desire of power merely aims at preservation and well-being of individual physical life, whereas Nietzschean slaves, out of reßsentiment, will to justify the superiority of their mode of existence, and their will has given birth to a value system. Because of its smaller goal, Nietzsche despises the Hobbesian desire of power, and sees that after self-preservation is made an equal right of all individuals and receives protection from the state power, the equality of right and its
public guarantor, the modern state, will hinder the future expressions of human will to power greater than both slave morality and master morality. These future greater expressions of will to power would require enormous destruction and exploitation but are still desirable for Nietzsche, for they will enable humankind to reach unprecedented levels of greatness. Nietzsche opposes the modern state because it eliminates the possibilities of fulfilling such greatness.

I conclude that although the political implications of his teaching of will to power are terrible, Nietzsche’s importance for students in political theory remains; for the teaching of will to power, which replaces being with becoming, shakes the metaphysical foundation of almost all preceding interpretations of human life, as well as the conceptions of politics that correspond to these interpretations. Thus political thinkers after Nietzsche are facing a tremendous challenge: developing conceptions of politics that can on one hand affirm the greater possibilities of human life revealed and released by Nietzsche’s philosophy, while on the other acknowledge the security of individuals and the peace of society, the primary goals of politics that find systematic expression in Hobbes’s political thought.
Acknowledgments

In his seminar “Nietzsche’s Political Philosophy” in fall 2015, Professor Michael Gillespie asked the class: “Do any of you feel indebted?” He posed this question to illustrate Nietzsche’s point that there is no absolute autonomous self. After one and half year, when finishing this thesis, his question echoes once more in my mind: I do feel greatly indebted to many people and events that have made this thesis what it is now.

My debt of gratitude goes first to my thesis advisor, Professor Michael Gillespie, who introduced Nietzsche’s texts to me in the aforementioned seminar and thereby enabled me to begin one of the most exciting intellectual journeys of my life. Without his detailed advice, this thesis would not have come into being. I am also deeply grateful to the other two committee members, Professors Ruth Grant and Thomas Spragens, not only for their helpful comments on my thesis, but also for their guidance throughout my MA studies at Duke. I feel so lucky to have participated in seminars of all of the three professors. I have learned tremendously from them.

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1. Introduction

Friedrich Nietzsche did not hold Thomas Hobbes in very high esteem. Case in point, in addition to sarcastically judging Hobbes to be a philosopher of very low rank in Beyond Good and Evil, 1 Nietzsche frequently condemns the modern State, 2 the very entity that Hobbes devises to resolve the difficulties which emerge from the universal, endless “desire of power.” Closer consideration however reveals that Nietzsche’s and Hobbes’s thought actually bear striking resemblance in their understandings of life as continuous acquisition of power. Nietzsche’s remark in Thus Spoke Zarathustra that “Where I found the living, there I found will to power; and even in the will of those who serve I found the will to be master,” 3 recalls Hobbes’s insight in Leviathan, that “I put for a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death.” 4 Indeed, in his early work, “David Straus, the Confessor and the Writer,” Nietzsche praises Hobbes for making possible, through his “native courage,” “intrepid mind,” and “grand love of truth,” a “moral code for life out of the bellum omnium contra omnes.” 5 Likewise, the mature Nietzsche’s emphasis on the “competition,” “exploitation,” and “war” which exist among individuals, communities and states easily

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recalls Hobbes’s depiction of the state of nature in *Leviathan*. Given the seeming similarities in their understandings of the consequences of pursuit of power, why does Nietzsche refuse Hobbes’s solution – the modern state – to these consequences?

On the other hand, it is common to see among “many of Nietzsche’s more casual readers” that his teaching of “will to power” is understood as a doctrine that preaches domination over other persons as “the ultimate end” of “a human willing.” Thus “will to power,” if understood as such, would find its highest fulfillment in the “endeavor to destroy or subdue one another” of “the prideful” in Hobbes’s political writing, who “[take] pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest.” Moreover, in Nietzsche studies, although few scholars would treat “will to power” in Nietzsche as synonymous with “desire of power” in Hobbes, confusions between Hobbes’s state of

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8 *Leviathan*, XIII, [4], 75.

9 In “Nietzsche and Hobbes,” one of the very few studies that focus on a direct comparison of the two thinkers, Paul Patton distinguishes the meanings of “power” in Nietzsche and Hobbes: “Nietzsche offers an active conception of power in terms of which bodies are not defined by what they lack but by what they are capable of doing, whereas Hobbes offers a reactive conception of power defined with reference to what a body lacks or what threatens its survival.” Yet he does not further explore the political implications of the two conceptions of power; instead, he turns to the differences between the two thinkers in understanding “the feeling power.” According to Patton, both Nietzsche and Hobbes think that human beings tend to maximize their feeling of power, but for Hobbes, such feeling is obtained through others’ recognition, whereas “the sovereign individuals” in Nietzsche’s philosophy achieve their feeling of power in being capable of fulfilling their own promises. Thus Patton thinks that Nietzsche offers a “novel” basis for political community – human beings, once they all evolve into sovereign individuals, could associate peacefully with each other on the basis of their pride of honoring their own words. Cf. Paul Patton, “Nietzsche and Hobbes,” *International Studies in Philosophy*, 33, no. 3 (2001), 106, 110-15.

By doing so, it seems that Patton trivializes the differences between Nietzsche and Hobbes, as if they differ from each other only in that Nietzsche believes that human beings can evolve into sovereign individuals while Hobbes does not. In fact, however, Nietzsche does not regard the sovereign individual as the peak of human evolution, nor does he thinks that the maximization of feeling of power is the ultimate aim of human pursuit. The ultimate aim is enhancement of the will to power, and such enhancement is not a
nature and Nietzsche’s genealogical narrative of the prehistory of human beings when the “blond beasts” prevail over the “slaves” do exist. Therefore, it seems that both Nietzsche’s texts and scholars’ interpretations of these texts suggest an ambiguous relation between Nietzsche’s “will to power” and his vision of interpersonal relations and Hobbes’s “desire of power” and the natural condition among individual human beings. In what sense do they resemble one another, and in what sense do they differ?

Moreover, whether human beings can evolve into sovereign individuals and other types of life higher than sovereign individuals is not only a matter of belief; the different visions of the two thinkers on this issues are rooted in their overall understandings of human life.

For example, in his recent study of individuality in Nietzsche, Jeffrey Church splits “will to power” into a “first-order” will to certain aims and a “second-order desire” to acquire “power” or abilities to fulfill the aims. Church also understands Nietzsche’s genealogy of morals as a Hegelian dialectic process. When discussing “the primitive state of humanity” in Nietzsche’s genealogy, Church equals men’s “natural desires” to “biological needs,” and understands that state as a “natural, barbaric state” in which “we fight tenaciously to preserve ourselves and our offspring.”

As we will see in 2.1, the way in which will to power is understood by Church, that the desire for an end and the desire for the means to attain the end are clearly distinguished, corresponds to Hobbes’s conception of power. Also, Church’s interpretation of the end of human will to power in humankind’s prehistory in Nietzsche’s Genealogy – the biological needs of self-preservation - shows close affinity with the goal of the desire of power of individuals in Hobbes’s natural condition. See Jeffrey Church, Infinite Autonomy: The Divided Individual in the Political Thought of G.W.F. Hegel and Friedrich Nietzsche (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 119-22.

Church claims that his understanding of will to power is based on John Richardson’s interpretation in Nietzsche’s System. But closer examination of Nietzsche’s System shows that Richardson’s interpretation is quite different from Church’s. Indeed, there is a two-order “telic schema” in Richardson’s interpretation of will to power. However, the first-order end is not understood by Richardson as an object that a drive, or a will to power, seeks to acquire; instead, it is “a preexisting pattern of effort” that characterizes each different drive or will to power. Also, the drive or will to power here is not an individual subject, but a kind of activity, or acting, that becomes distinguishable from other kinds of acting through its distinctive pattern of effort or action. Accordingly, power, the second-order end that a drive or a will to power wills, is not a secondary object that serves as means to achieve a more important object, but is “a movement of growth or enhancement” or even “pass[ing] beyond” of the first-order end, i.e. the existing acting pattern of a drive.

Thereby, the two-order “telic schema” catches the general inherent tendency, or to use Richardson’s word, “essence,” of every drive or will to power in the world: every kind of acting, each as a will to power, wills to enhance and overcome itself. This telic schema complements Wolfgang Müller-Lauter’s interpretation of will to power as “the single quality” of all organizations in the world, which will be briefly noted in 3.1, by enriching the substantive content of this single quality. It is nonetheless different from our common telic thinking that distinguishes end from means and subject from object. In his misreading of Richardson, Church still understands will to power within the common telic thinking, but as Richardson points out, “natural conception of power, as an end achieved by means of these lesser ends, misses the major novelties of Nietzsche’s notion.” Cf. John Richardson, Nietzsche’s System, 22-28.
This paper intends to clarify how exactly Nietzsche’s teaching of “will to power” relates to Hobbes’s concept of “desire of power,” and how Nietzsche’s difference from Hobbes in this aspect reflects his unique understanding of human life and leads to his hostility to the modern state. Rather than directly deals with “will to power” in its metaphysical abstraction, this paper compares “will to power” and “desire of power” mainly on the level of expressions of will to power, i.e. specific modes of human life driven by the pursuit of power, which are articulated in the philosophy of each of the two thinkers. Nevertheless, in the conclusion, I recognize that the divergence between the two thinkers in understanding human life has its metaphysical roots in their different answers to the question of what the world “is.”

More specifically, this paper argues that seen within Nietzsche’s philosophy, the Hobbesian desire of power is only a weak expression of will to power. Furthermore, it argues that comparing this weak expressions of will to power of Hobbesian individuals to stronger expressions of will to power in Nietzsche’s philosophy can throw light on, if not what Nietzsche proposes, at least what he does not propose in his perception of future humanity, as well as elucidate why Nietzsche’s philosophy is fundamentally incompatible with liberalism and its conception of modern state. It subsequently argues that the Hobbesian desire of power differs from the Nietzschean will to power because they imply different understandings of life and different possibilities of human life: for Nietzsche, to live under the protection and rule of the sovereign state – to which, according to Hobbes,
all human beings should consent – is not much different from an “organizational death.”

Here is how my argument will proceed. First, I elucidate the nature of Hobbes’s concept of “desire of power” and the characters of individuals driven by the desire of power in Hobbes’s political writings. Second, I use these characters to compare the “desire of power” of Hobbesian individuals to the expressions of “will to power” of “slaves” and “masters” in Nietzsche’s philosophy. The comparison will show that although Hobbesian individuals are similar to Nietzschean slaves in their psychological conditions and psychological mechanism, their desire of power is weaker than the slaves’ will to power: the desire of power of Hobbesian individuals aims at preservation and prosperity of physical life, whereas the will to power of slaves, by aiming to affirm the value of their lives relative to the value of the masters’, gives birth to a new morality. Third, I will discuss expressions of will to power greater or nobler than slave morality present in Nietzsche’s mature works, compare them with the Hobbesian desire of power, and explore the implications that the comparison has on how we should understand Nietzsche’s critique of modern politics.

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11 Thanks to Professor Michael Gillespie for offering the term “organizational death.”

2.1 The Nature of “Desire of Power” and Characters of the Hobbesian Individuals

At the beginning of chapter 10 of *Leviathan*, Hobbes defines “[t]he power of a man” as “his present means to obtain some future apparent good.”¹ This definition suggests the following three questions be answered were we to understand why “perpetual, restless desire of power after power” is “a general inclination of all mankind” for Hobbes.²

First, what does “future apparent good” mean for Hobbesian individuals? Hobbes explains:

For there is no such *Finis ultimus* (utmost aim) nor *Summum Bonum* (greatest good) as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers. Nor can a man any more live, whose desires are at an end, than he whose senses and imaginations are at a stand. Felicity is a continual progress of the desire, from one object to another, the attaining of the former being still but the way to the latter. The cause whereof is that the object of man’s desire is not to enjoy once only, and for one instant of time, but to assure forever the way of his future desire. And therefore the voluntary actions and inclinations of all men tend, not only to the procuring, but also the assuring of a contented life…³

For Hobbes, contemplation in one’s ultimate self-sufficiency or “perfect happiness” from “vision of the divine essence,” as found in Aristotle’s and Aquinas’s works, respectively, is simply an impossibility; what actually and necessarily takes place in all human affairs is continuous desiring and looking for future goods, which characterize all individuals according to Hobbes.

The fact and necessity of a continuing desire of future good can be derived from

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¹ *Leviathan*, X, [1], 50.
² Ibid., XI, [2], 58.
³ Ibid., XI, [1], 57.
Hobbes’s theory of human sense and passions. According to Hobbes, “sense is motion in the organs and interior parts of man’s body, caused by the action of the things we see, hear, &c.” Yet, although caused by the motions of external objects toward the body, which continues “inwards to the brain and heart,” sense is not these inward motions themselves, but the “resistance, or counter-pressure, or endeavour of the heart to deliver itself.” In other words, sense is the internal, outward motions initiated by “heart.” Such motions come forth endlessly as external objects continuously act toward the body, and as the imagination caused by the present endeavor of the heart interacts with imaginations left by previous endeavors.

All these motions are named “voluntary motions” or “passions” by Hobbes, and distinguished from the other kind of motions peculiar to animals, called “vital motions.” Vital motion refers to the pure physical process of metabolism of a living body, which happens automatically, i.e. “needs no help of imagination.” In other words, vital motions do not involve endeavors of heart. Notwithstanding their difference from vital motions, however, voluntary motions, or passions, are closely related to the effects that the actions of external objects have on the vital motion of the body. If the action of an external object is felt to enhance vital motion, the endeavor of the heart will move toward the object and such passion is called “appetite or desire”; otherwise, the endeavor will move away from the object and the passion is called “aversion.” In this sense, though human passions can

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4 Ibid., VI, [1], 27.
5 Ibid., I [4], 6.
6 Ibid., VI, [1], 27.
be extremely complex and capricious, they nevertheless are anchored to the solid biological foundation of vital motion in Hobbes’s theory. Consequently, human desires, as “corroboration of vital motion,” no matter how complex, are ultimately point toward objects that are felt to be beneficial to the physical preservation and well-functioning of life. This also means that as long as one’s physical life persists, the “restless desire” of future goods and power to obtain them will be both necessary and factual.

Here follows the second question. According to Hobbes’s definition of power and desire, desire of power is the voluntary motion that moves toward the external objects seen as present means of attaining future goods. But how can an external object be identified to have the power to bring about goods in the future and thus arouse one’s desires at the present?

The answer could be found in chapter 8 of The Elements of Law:

Conception of the future is but a supposition of the same, proceeding from remembrance of what is Past; and we so far conceive that anything will be hereafter, as we know there is something at the present that hath power to produce it. And that anything hath power now to produce another thing hereafter, we cannot conceive, but by remembrance that it hath produced the like heretofore. Wherefore all conception of future, is conception of power able to produce something; whosoever therefore expecteth pleasure to come, must conceive withal some power in himself by which the same may be attained.

According to Hobbes, we infer what will be good for us by recalling what has been good for us; we recognize something to be the proper means for a future good by reflecting on whether similar things have generated similar goods in our past experience. Hobbes calls

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7 Ibid., VI, [10], 29.
this faculty to acquire “a presumption of the future...from the experience of time past” prudence, and sees it a natural faculty shared by all human beings and even some animals.\(^9\) With prudence we are able to project our lives into the future by reflecting on what has enhanced our vital motions in the past and acting at the present according to our memory. Hence prudence makes continuous desire of power possible.

Therefore, in desiring of power, our past, present and future are connected: we never exclusively live at the present but live between the past and the future, accumulating experience, searching memories, comparing the current situation to the past, predicting the future, and calculating the benefits and harms of all external objects that we are seeing, have seen, and might see to the maintenance of our vital motion. In this sense, the present is only the moment in which human beings mobilize memories to anticipate and mold the future.

So far, it is clear that the persistent vital motion of one’s physical life necessitates continuous desire of power and that the faculty of prudence enables one to identify effective forms of powers. Yet the substantive content of power is not explicit. According to Hobbes’s theory of passions, the intensity and orientations of passions differ from person to person, even from one time to another for the same person, due to the differences and changes in “constitution of the body” as well as “customs and education.”\(^{10}\) However, despite the great diversity of passions from person to person and from time to time, in both *The Elements of Law* and *Leviathan*, Hobbes lists and categorizes

\(^9\) Ibid., VI, [4], 41. *Leviathan*, III, [9-10], 14.
\(^{10}\) *Leviathan*, VIII, [6], 28; VIII [14], 40-41.
a few certain goods that are generally acknowledged as power among people, such as “extraordinary strength,” “eloquence,” “riches” and “reputation.” Hence the final question arises: why a list of commonly desired forms of power can be formulated among individuals of diverse passions? Hobbes’s definition of power in *The Elements of Law* gives us a hint:

> And because the power of one man resisteth and hindereth the effects of the power of another: power is simply no more, but the excess of the power of one above that of another. For equal powers opposed, destroy one another; and such their opposition is called contention.\(^\text{12}\)

In this sense, one’s power is always measured against others’. Therefore, if one’s power is to be effective, i.e. able to confront, resist and “destroy” others, it has to be the surplus of power that one possesses in comparison to others’. Combined with another definition that power is one’s “present means to obtain some future apparent good,” we can infer that for Hobbes, in one’s path toward future goods, every other individual stands as a potential obstacle. Consequently, attainment of one’s future goods, no matter how eccentric, requires persistent preclusion of others’ possible hindrance. To make such preclusion possible, one has to keep accumulating goods, which are generally thought valuable and thus seen as effective forms of power.

Therefore, power is one’s superiority to others in possession of some commonly acknowledged goods; this superiority functions as a deterrent, making others dare not to interfere one’s pursuit of goods. It is by being able to keep others’ hands off one’s future goods that all forms of power function as the “present means” for future goods.

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\(^{12}\) *The Elements of Law*, VIII, [4], 48.
However, power does not have a single, visible, universal unit of measurement, but finds its expressions only in various concrete goods. Partly because of the lack of objective measurement, it is impossible for individuals to measure the power possessed by one another by objective, scientific ways, as how physicists ascertain the amount of energy contained in an object. As a result, one can never be certain of the exact amount of power one has compared to others, but only learn one’s relative power to others’ through others’ acknowledgment. In other words, whether one’s possession of commonly acknowledged goods is superior to others cannot be evaluated by oneself, but depends on others’ opinion, recognition and evaluation. For example, sciences, which are praised by Hobbes as the only “infallible” intellectual faculty that can yield to “certain” truth, are nevertheless regarded by him as “small power, because not eminent, and therefore, not acknowledged in any man.” This indicates that one’s power is not identical to one’s actual possession of faculties and external goods, but one's superiority in possession in eyes of others; for it is not being truly superior, but only being seen as superior, that deters others from interfering one’s pursuit of future goods.

Thus Hobbes says, “…as in other things, so in men, not the seller, but the buyer determines the price….yet their true value is no more than it is esteemed by others.” However, one’s power in others’ eyes can never be known for certain, for according to Hobbes’s theory of sense perception, what individuals actually feel is only their own

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13 Ibid., VIII [5], 48.
14 *Leviathan*, V [21-22], 26-27.
15 Ibid., X [14], 51.
16 Ibid., X [16], 51.
senses caused by stimulation from the external world to their bodies, not the real qualities of the external world. Thus an individual can learn others’ evaluation of his or her power only through others’ external expressions, including language and gesture, but all such expressions can be deceitful, not faithfully reflecting others’ true evaluation of that individual.\textsuperscript{17} Nor can one make reliable predication of others’ present and future opinions of one’s power based on one’s previous experience of how one is seen in the eyes of others, for knowledge derived from experience is ultimately uncertain.\textsuperscript{18} As a result, as long as one knows that it is ultimately unable to know how powerful s/he is in eyes of others, one will have to continuously accumulate as much power, which s/he knows might be generally acknowledged, such as wealth and social status, as possible, and thus strives to give others the most powerful impression that one is possible to leave. Therefore, it is the ultimate uncertainty of others’ evaluation of one’s power, in addition to the aforementioned necessity to continue vital motion of human body, that leads to the universal, relentless desire of power after power among all individuals.

Based on the discussion above, we come to a conclusion about the nature of Hobbesian desire of power: it is a desire of preventing other individuals’ hindrance to one’s attainment of any future goods. This desire becomes relentless in the condition where every individual can be such hindrance whereas no one can ascertain whether each of others will or will not be. Accordingly, individuals driven by desire of such a nature will have three notable characters:

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., VI [56], 34.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., V [22], 27.
(1) They always concern about others’ opinions about themselves, and persistently seek acknowledgment and recognition of their superiority from others.

(2) They never exclusively enjoy living in the present, but continuously look back to their past, searching their memories of previous interactions with other individuals, and calculating effective ways to prevent harm from others and win others’ recognition. Hence they act in accordance to the lessons they draw from past experience, with a hope that these lessons will always be effective in the future.

(3) All the anxieties about others’ opinions, eagerness to win others’ recognition, and calculation between the past and the future are ultimately caused by the aim of the desire of power, as a form of voluntary motions, of an individual: to maintain the vital motions, i.e. to preserve the individual’s physical life and to enable him/her to live into the future.

For Hobbes, such individual does not exist in isolation, but always lives among other individuals of the same kind. The nature and characters of desire of power throw light upon the prospect of the universe where Hobbesian individuals cluster: the universe seems to be composed of multiple atom-like individuals that all conduct two-layer motions, the voluntary and the vital. The voluntary motions are much more diverse among these atoms, but nevertheless serve and are constrained by the vital motions that are almost identical among all atoms. Each of the atoms also carries memories of its previous motions and certain power that can be used to sustain motions. It directs its voluntary motions in accordance to its past experience, and wins or loses power when colliding with other moving atoms. Since the motions of each atom are possible obstacles
to others’, every atom moves in the direction where greater power can be accumulated, in
order to deter other atoms from collision with it; or intentionally hits against others in
hope of wrestling power from them and increasing one’s own. However, since the power
carried by each atom-like individual cannot be ascertained but depends on how much
power it seems to carry in eyes of other individuals, and due to the closeness of the private
sense-perception of each individual and the misleading quality of language, an atom-like
individual can never know others’ evaluation of its power and their true intentions. Therefore, even if having crushed some other atoms in collision, each atom still cannot
ascertain whether it has accumulated enough power that can preclude other’s hindrance
once and for all. Hence struggle for power among these atom-like individuals never ceases.

Therefore, we do not need to wait until the chapter 13 of Leviathan to see what “the
natural condition of mankind” is like: “the bellum omnium contra omnes” has already been
contained in the concept of “desire of power.”

2.2 The Origin of “Desire of Power” and the Problem of Pride or Vain Glory

Yet we can find more specific enumeration of causes of the natural condition in
chapter 13 of Leviathan: “first, competition; secondly, diffidence; thirdly, glory.” The last
cause is defined by Hobbes as a passion of “joy arising from imagination of a man’s own
power and ability.” Since one’s power, as shown in 2.1, is always measured against
others’ and relies on others’ recognition, glory, or the desire for joy in imaging the

19 Ibid., XIII, [6], 76.
20 Ibid., VI, [39], 31.
abundance of power, tends to “[make] men invade...for reputation,” driving them to “[take] pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, which they pursue farther than their security requires.”21 In taking pleasure in overpowering others, the glory-seeking individual ignores and denies the natural equality among human beings in term of the fragility of being killed by others, which means that no one can accumulate sufficient power to guarantee a permanent security for him/herself. According to Hobbes, this natural equality is proved by his theory of human faculties and supported by experience in history, so the pursuit of glory, because not well grounded in experience, is usually vain-glory;22 and “the breach of this precept” that “every man acknowledge other for his equal by nature” is called pride.23

The passion of pride or vain glory is given more weight in the generation of the natural state in The Elements of Law and De Cive,24 two political works of Hobbes prior to Leviathan. At the beginning of De Cive, Hobbes draws from experience that “every voluntary encounter is either of mutual need,” i.e. advantages that one can take for oneself from cooperating with others, or of glory, “which is reputation and honour among their companions.” And even philosophers are not immune from desire of glory: “at their gatherings everyone lectures everyone else, in fact everyone wants to be thought a Master; otherwise, not only do they fail, like other men, to love their companions, they actively

21 Ibid., XIII, [4], [7], 75-76.
22 Elements of Law, IX, [1], 50-51. Leviathan, VI, [39], 31.
23 Leviathan, XV, [21], 96-97.
pursue their resentments against them.” Here glory seems to be of different origin from the desire to obtain actual, material advantages for preserving life, and, compared to the desire for material advantages, a more powerful cause of the “general, restless desire of power” and war of all against all.

In The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis, Leo Strauss starts from this point, arguing that the Hobbesian glory is a degeneration of the classical aristocratic virtue, which is no longer guided by the insight of objective order of justice as the traditional theory of natural law declines, and thus corrupts into an insatiable ambition of endless conquest. According to Strauss, Hobbes’s political philosophy aims to tame this irrational pride by the fear of violent death, a passion that had been associated with common people while despised by the aristocracy. Thus Strauss concludes that Hobbes’s political philosophy is developed along with a wrestle between the aristocratic virtue and the virtue of common people, and finally grounded on the control of pride by fear and moralization of the passion of fear.

Strauss’s interpretation reminds readers of Nietzsche’s distinction between master morality and slave morality, which will be discussed in the next chapter. He seems to indicate that similar dichotomy also exists in Hobbes’s works as the antithesis between the irrational pride and the fear of violent death that leads to rational perceptions of the natural condition among human beings.

But is pride really the antithesis to one’s desire for self-preservation and fear of violent death, as what it seems to be in *De Cive* or Strauss’s interpretation? Certainly, Hobbes is fully aware that when driven by pride, what people seek sometimes has nothing to do with their self-preservation. However, in *Elements of Law*, and most obviously in *Leviathan*, Hobbes attempts to incorporate pride into his general theory of passions, which is based on the distinction between voluntary motions and vital motions and sets the ultimate goal of the former as “corroboration” of the latter: pride drives people to seek reputation; reputation is “a sort of power”; hence pride is a desire of power; since the desire of power is a voluntary motion, the ultimate aim of pride would still point to the preservation and well-functioning of one’s physical life. Therefore, by treating pride as one of the voluntary motions, Hobbes implies that individuals driven by pride are still pursuing objects that what they feel or “seemth to be corroboration of vital motion.”

If in actual practice, their pursuit goes against the goal of self-preservation, it is because these prideful people mistake what is actually beneficial for their self-preservation, not because they do not desire self-preservation at all. With regard to individuals who continuously make such mistakes, Hobbes calls them mad men, and categorizes their “great vain-glory, which is commonly called *pride* or *self-conceit*” as “madness.” In this sense, Hobbes tries to tame the prideful not only by appealing to the their fear of violent death, as Strauss claims, but also by theorizing their motives within a general theoretical

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27 *Leviathan*, VIII, [15], 41.
28 Ibid., VI, [10], 29.
29 Ibid., VIII, [18], 41.
framework of human passions in which self-preservation is set as the ultimate goal of all passions, and by excluding those who cannot be fitted into the framework from normal human beings, or more precisely, from the typical Hobbesian individuals.

On the other hand, in *Leviathan*, Hobbes no longer attributes the desire for reputation only to a few prideful people. Although Hobbes still uses “pride” or “vain-glory” to designate all kinds of desire for reputation, his focus seems to shift from the pride as an idiosyncrasy of a certain class – a corrupted “aristocratic virtue,” to use Strauss’s words – to a general desire among all human beings for others’ recognition and for domination over others. Such universal desire for recognition and domination is not a product of personal eccentricity, but originate in a general security dilemma where everyone’s power to preserve his/her life depends on others’ recognition, whereas others’ true evaluation of one’s power can never be known for certain. In such a dilemma, desire for recognition and dominance does not run against the fear of violent death. Instead, since violent death at hands of others can only be avoided by accumulating power to deter others from interfering one’s pursuit of goods, and since the effectiveness of power relies on others’ recognition, it is the fear of violent death, expressed as fear of others and desire to deter others, that triggers insatiable desires for others’ recognition.

In other words, in the security dilemma of the natural condition, even an individual is not driven by the pride of those mad men, s/he would still seek for others’ recognition so as to ascertain the amount of power s/he possesses in eyes of others. Since others’ real intention can never be known for certain, such desire for recognition would be as infinite as the irrational passion of pride, but out of the rational concern of self-
preservation. Hence in *Leviathan*, there is no fundamental dichotomy between aristocratic virtues and virtues of the common people, but only one common psychological inclination among all Hobbesian individuals: longing for reputation and others’ recognition, desire of material interests, and fear of death can simultaneously characterize a Hobbesian individual, and all these passions can be boiled down to the desire of power, which ultimately aims at preservation of one’s physical life.

But this is only Hobbes’s own interpretation of humanity. From Nietzsche’s perspective, we can always ask: Who is the Hobbesian individual? Who is driven by such desire of power? “[W]hat does such a claim tell us about the man who makes it?”

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30 *Beyond Good and Evil*, “Natural History of Morals,” [187], 99.
3. Hobbesian Desire of Power in Nietzsche’s Genealogy

3.1 Hobbesian Desire of Power as an Expression of Will to Power

Hobbes claims that his study of man is the most scientific one compared to all moral philosophers prior to him, and thus offers the most certain truth of the general human nature hitherto.¹ According to Nietzsche, however, there is no definite, unchangeable nature for all human beings. Indeed, for Nietzsche, man, like every other organism in the world, “is” will to power. But the will to power only refers to “the single quality” of all particular organizations as such in the world. Such quality indicates that all organizations are “the plurality of forces”, or wills to power, “in conflict with each other”: wills to power cooperate with each other and constitute organizations only in conditions of “mutual opposition to” other organizations; and therefore all organizations are not stable but always in flux. Moreover, the cooperating and opposing between organizations neither function in accordance to a unitary mechanism nor are directed by a determinate principle.² Therefore, in eyes of Nietzsche, human beings do not will and act in a unitary mode. Thus it is naïve “to say: ‘Man ought to be such and such!’ Reality shows us an enchanting wealth of types, the abundance of a lavish play and change of forms.”³

² Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, “Nietzsche’s Teaching of Will to Power,” in Nietzsche: Critical Assessments (Vol. II), ed. Daniel W. Conway with Peter S. Groff (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), 207, 209-10. This paper agrees to Müller-Lauter’s interpretation of will to power, yet is aware that the differences between “quality” and “nature” should be further clarified.
³ Twilight of the Idols, “Morality as Anti-Nature,” [6], 491.
In this sense, although Hobbes’s concept of “desire of power” is not itself an “ought to” for all human beings, by treating “heart,” “passions” and “wills” as solid entities, formulating a unitary mechanism for the inner motions of all human beings, and asserting human nature is “such and such,” what Hobbes thinks human beings actually are is still a particular interpretation of human life, and thus Hobbesian “desire of power” only one of many expressions of will to power.

In _The Genealogy of Morals_, Nietzsche questions and examines the value of all moral values that are or have been prevalent in Europe by tracing their historical origins, revealing that they are all valuation of life and expressions of “the essence of life, its will to power.” Hence Nietzsche’s _Genealogy_ can be seen as a collection of various expressions of will to power and an illustration of lineages among them. In Nietzsche’s collection, can we find an illustration of Hobbesian desire of power?

Since Hobbes formulates his interpretation of human nature and the universal desire of power in the absence of political authority, a probable illustration of Hobbesian desire of power in Nietzsche’s _Genealogy_ may be first sought in the first essay of _Genealogy_, where the establishment of state has not been fully taken into account.

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4 The moral implication of Hobbesian desire of power is later articulated in his theory of natural right and natural law.

5 Nietzsche’s teaching of will to power certainly embraces much more interpretations of “humanity” from different perspectives than Hobbes’s study of human nature. However, is the former categorically different from the latter? In other words, is the teaching of will to power still a particular interpretation of life, though a much more inclusive one that involves as many perspectives that have appeared in history as possible than other interpretations that are not self-conscious of their perspectival nature? Answering this question requires a closer examination of what “will to power” is, which exceeds the main concern of this paper.

6 Friedrich Nietzsche: _On the Genealogy of Morals_, 2nd essay, [12], [18], in _On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo_, 77-78, 87.
3.2 Comparing Hobbesian Individuals and the “Slaves” in Nietzsche’s Philosophy

3.2.1 Similar Psychological Conditions: Fear, Suspicion, Vain Glory

In the first essay, unlike Hobbes, who claims that the notions of good, bad and evil become fixed and commonly recognized only after the establishment of a political authority,\(^7\) Nietzsche shows that the distinctions between good and bad and between good and evil emerge prior to the birth of state. More precisely, the distinctions of valuation originate not in any fixed political institutions, but in the very root of life when two kinds of men encounter each other.

One kind of men are “masters,” the “noble,” or “blond beasts,” who act instinctively out of their “powerful physicality” and “overflowing health,” whose instincts are always naturally well-organized to one direction, who continuously seek to express their strength and triumph over what is outside them, and who spontaneously feel that they are happy and affirm all their own characters as “good.” These strong masters are contrasted by “slaves,” the weak, impotent men who are dominated by the masters. The repressed instincts of slaves seek to express themselves against the external oppression. However, because they are too weak to free themselves from the masters’ dominance physically, slaves can only contrive, out of their repressed instincts, “farseeing, subterranean, slowly advancing, and premediated” spiritual revenge against masters. Slaves revenge spiritually by first identifying all the masters’ characters to be “evil” and then maintaining all that is not evil, i.e. what they consider to be of themselves, to be

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\(^7\) *Leviathan*, VI, [7], 28-29.
“good.”

On the contrary, the “good” of masters, which is the evil of slaves, is much more primordial, for its affirmation does not require an antithesis to be firmly set up in advance. It is only in willing of declaring how happy and triumphant they are that masters, inspired by the “pathos of distance” between themselves and the slaves, name what is in contradiction to their own images, i.e. the weak, “low, low-minded, common and plebian,” which are valued as good by slaves, as bad.8

The idea of master morality (distinguishing between good and bad) vis-à-vis slave morality (distinguishing between good and evil) is the most basic distinction in Nietzsche’s “typology of morals.”9 It first appears in Human, All Too Human, receives its name in Beyond Good and Evil,10 and is given the fullest and most in-depth discussion in Genealogy. Since valuation, according to Nietzsche, is the expression of the will to power distinctively human as well as the most fundamental activity of human life,11 and since morality has been the most powerful or even the only form of valuation hitherto, the “typology of morals” is also a typology of life. It classifies the physiological conditions and corresponding psychological inclinations that make a human life a master or a slave and that yield the respective morality.

The psychological differences between the life of a master and the life of a slave

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8 On the Genealogy of Morals, 1st essay, [2], [7], [8], [10], [11], 26, 33, 35, 37-41.
9 Beyond Good and Evil, “Natural History of Morals,” [186], 97.
11 Cf. Catherine Zuckert, “Nietzsche on the Origin & Development of the Distinctively Human,” Polity, 16:1 (1983): 55. Zuckert points out that one of the differences between Nietzsche’s genealogy and Hegel’s dialectics is that valuation is “both temporally and logically prior” to reason.
manifest primarily in their attitudes toward others and all that is outside of themselves. Masters, driven by their excess of power, are “necessarily active” toward their outside: they have “a thirst for enemies and resistances and triumphs,” which is a craving for a true equal, in other words, a real other and for becoming stronger in competition with the equal other; they embrace an outside full of unknown dangers and new adventures; for any stable, comfortable environment and those who are inferior to them, they have only contempt.

While masters actively search for danger and real enemy and despise a stable environment, slaves always feel that they are involuntarily put into a dangerous world and constantly threatened by a hostile outside. Hence fear and suspicion mark slaves’ psychological reactions to their surroundings:

> Here every other man, whether he be noble or base, counts as inimical, ruthless, cruel, cunning, ready to take advantage... Signs of goodness, benevolence, sympathy are received fearfully as a trick, a prelude with a dreadful termination, a means of confusing and outwitting, in short as refined wickedness.

Such fear and suspicion are inevitable psychological reflections of slaves’ impotence to engage in every reality that is different from themselves. Also due to this impotence, slaves are not able to valuate of their lives and deeds by themselves, but always seek their values in others’ opinions: “the common man was only what he was considered: not at all used to positing values himself, he also attached no other value to himself than his masters attached to him.” The slaves’ lack of spontaneity and their dependence on

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12 On the Genealogy of Morals, 1st essay, [10], 38.
13 Ibid., 1st essay, [13], 45.
15 Human, All Too Human, [45], 37.
others’ opinions in self-valuation, according to Nietzsche, resonate in “vanity” that characterizes modern human beings in a democratic age: “the vain person is delighted by every good opinion he hears of himself…just as every bad opinion of him pains him: for he submits to both, he feels subjected to them in accordance with that oldest instinct of submission that breaks out in him.”

Here we can see the parallel in psychological conditions between Nietzschean slaves and Hobbesian individuals: Both of them live in constant fear, suspicion and anxiety toward others and the world outside themselves; both of them are uncertain of their own power or value, and thereby search for its affirmation only from others’ recognitions.

3.2.2 Similar Psychological Mechanism: Pursuing Future Goods by Reflecting on Past Experience

However, in spite of the similarities in psychological conditions, Nietzschean slaves and Hobbesian individuals seem to be besieged in different environments. The slaves are actually humiliated and insulted by the masters. When masters establish their rule over slaves, the slaves can never expect a successful revolt through physical force. On the contrary, in Hobbes’s natural condition, no one has absolute superiority in power to others and thus there is no natural master. In this condition, what do Hobbesian individuals fear?

Hobbes understands that actual domination does exist among human beings and

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16 *Beyond Good and Evil, “What is Noble,”* [261], p. 209.
is naturally acquired by force, but he believes that the domination by force can neither lead to stable rulership nor be transformed to a right to dominate (dominion) unless by consent from the enslaved.\footnote{17} He grounds this belief that domination by force is unstable and not identical to dominion on a new, egalitarian narrative of human nature. This egalitarian narrative assigns the following features to the natural conditions of human life: in the universal struggle for existence, there are only differences, but no categorical inequality or natural hierarchy that cannot be remedied or changed in “physical and mental faculties” among individuals;\footnote{18} every individual has strong desire to foresee his or her life in the future, but has to rely on past experience to predict the future, which cannot yield certain knowledge;\footnote{19} everyone’s sense-perception is completely private, and thus no one can ever ascertain others’ true feelings and thought.\footnote{20} These settings of human nature combine to create a general condition to which all individuals are equally subject: no matter how powerful one is, in one’s foresight into the future, one cannot make accurate comparison between one’s own power and others’. Therefore, compared to the unlimited uncertainties of future power contrast between individuals, the present interpersonal difference in natural faculties become meaningless in terms of grounding a political hierarchy. This is because there are always probabilities that the weak at the present time may become stronger in the future. As a result, the temporary superiority in power can never guarantee a permanent security for the strong, nor can it be a solid ground for any

\footnote{17 The Elements of Law, XXII, 126-29. On the Citizen, VIII, 102-04. Leviathan, XX, 127-31.}
\footnote{18 Leviathan, XIII, [1-2], 74-75.}
\footnote{19 Ibid., XI, [24-25], 62; XII, [2, 4-5], 63-64; V, [21-22], 26-27.}
\footnote{20 Ibid., I, [4], 6; IV, [24], 21-22.}
lasting and stable domination or political hierarchy.

Therefore, for Hobbes, it is great uncertainties derived from the impossibility, not the possibility, of a permanent rule by the strong, that arouse universal fear and suspicion in all individuals. Such mutual fear and suspicion drive all individuals to pursue power endlessly, with a common aim to reduce the uncertainties of their lives in the future. But on the other hand, although such pursuit of power is a rational and inevitable reaction to uncertainties, it is doomed to be futile, for the uncertainties come from individuals’ projections of the power contrast between one another in the future; while the future power contrast, according to Hobbes’s egalitarian account of human faculties, can never be fixed once and for all.

If that is the case, however, how do Hobbesian individuals become conscious of these uncertainties, consider them to be fearful, and try to take measures to avoid them, so that these uncertainties can actually trigger the universal desire of power among human beings, as Hobbes claims they will in his theory? Among the individuals in Hobbes’s writings, it is possible for those who are temporarily stronger than others to be blind to the natural equality among human beings and to consider their temporary superiority in power to be permanent rather than uncertain. Similarly, the strong among the readers of Hobbes would regard his account of human equality as an arbitrary fabrication, not as the best description of the actual human condition. Therefore, the question at the beginning of this paragraph can be formulated in another way: how does Hobbes make the strong acknowledge the uncertainties of their power and fear such uncertainties as much as the weak?
The uncertainties of future power contrast between individuals will arouse one’s fear only on the premise that one does perceive every other as obstacle to one’s pursuit of power and future goods; for otherwise, even knowing that there are such uncertainties, one may still not see any relevance that the future power contrast between one another has to the preservation of one’s life: without caring the future uncertainties, one would be like Rousseau’s natural man, wandering in the forest, free of any concerns about others.

In fact, this crucial premise that individuals are obstacles to each other in their pursuit of future goods, as noted in chapter 2, is implicitly included by Hobbes in the definition of power. He does not make theoretical argument about the validity of this premise; instead, he reminds his readers of a particular aspect of their daily experience, that they guard their personal safety and property against their compatriots, servants and children, in order to convince his readers by real-life experience that people actually feel fear and are suspicious even of the closest others. 21 He interprets such mutual fear and suspicion as products of “anticipation of future evil,” and ascribes the evil to probable hindrance of one’s pursuit of good by others. 22 Thus, by referring to the experience of mutual fear and suspicion and of anxieties of an uncertain future, and by attributing this experience not only to his contemporaries but also to human beings in general, Hobbes attempts to convince both individuals in his theory and his readers in reality that they do (1) care about their lives and well-beings in the future but are uncertain about their power to maintain their lives and well-beings, (2) perceive others as obstacles in their pursuit of

22 On the Citizen, I [note 2 In men’s mutual fear], 25.
future goods, and that as a consequence of (1) and (2), they (3) fear the uncertainties of future power contrast between themselves and others, and (4) desire power after power so as to reduce the uncertainties of the future.

In this sense, while actual confrontations happen between masters and slaves in Nietzsche’s description of the prehistory of human beings, the environment in which Hobbesian individuals find themselves, i.e. the natural condition, is largely an imagined space. Such space is created by all individuals when they project their future based on the experience of mutual fear and suspicion, and consequently recognize that all their seeming superiorities in power at the present are only temporary and always vulnerable to future uncertainties.

However, is this experience of mutual fear and suspicion, which is a key link in the chain of imagination that produces the natural condition, really common to all human beings? Is this particular aspect of human experience able to convince all human beings, the strong as well as the weak, that Hobbes’s egalitarian account of human nature is true? Will they all believe that when equally facing future uncertainties, it is necessary to continuously acquire commonly acknowledged goods, in other words, power, as a present means to deter others from hindering one’s pursuit of future goods?

For Nietzsche, the answers would certainly be no. Unlike Hobbesian indiviudals, the Nietzschean masters do not suffer from “universal distrust of one another,” which is grounded on Hobbes’s account of human equality. 23 Instead, they always make

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23 Ibid., Preface, [11], 11.
distinctions among human beings: 24 they respect and compete with those they consider to be equals while despising and enslaving those weaker than themselves. 25 More importantly, not only do masters have little experience of “universal distrust,” but also they do not think and act by prudence at all. Nietzschean masters do not project their future on the basis of their previous experience, nor do they seek to dominate others from a rational calculation to reduce future uncertainties. Instead, they instinctively seek to dominate, without any intermediate calculation of utilities. Like “a burning eruption,” 26 the dominating instinct within masters always pierces into the future and never reflects. It is so vigorous that it not only controls, without intentional efforts, all other instincts within themselves, makes them their functions, and organizes them into a well-ordered whole which serves a single purpose, but also overflows into what is outside themselves. Therefore, masters always seek to dominate all that are “formless and nomad” by casting them into a concrete form under their rule:

One does not reckon with such natures; they come like fate, without reason, consideration, or pretext...Their work is an instinctive creation and imposition of forms; they are the most involuntary, unconscious artists there are – whenever they appear something new soon arises, a ruling structure that lives, in which parts and functions are delimited and coordinated, in which nothing whatever finds a place that has not first been assigned a “meaning” in relation to the whole. 27

In short, it is an inherent “active force,” or will to power, that drives masters to rule. 28 Pursuing domination is a direct expression of their will to power, and it cannot be

26 Ibid., 1st essay, [2], 26.
27 Ibid., 2nd essay, [17], 86-87.
28 Ibid., 2nd essay, [18], 87.
reduced to reasons other than this pursuing or willing. Those commonly seen as reasons of pursuing domination, such as utilities, benefits, meanings, and values of the domination, are actually assigned by masters only after their domination is established.\textsuperscript{29}

At the first glance, the masters’ will of dominating without further reasons may be confused with “endeavor to destroy or subdue one another” for “delectation only,” or, desire of conquest for “taking pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest” in Hobbes’s depiction of the men of pride.\textsuperscript{30} However, in Hobbes’s concept of desire of power, delectation or pleasure, though seemingly irrational, still constitutes a reason or an aim for the prideful to pursue power; whereas Nietzschean masters do not intentionally pursue domination for pleasure. Happiness is not an intentional goal for masters, which needs to be first willed and then achieved, but a necessary concomitant of their acting, which does not need to be sought for but naturally comes when they express their will to power in action.\textsuperscript{31} In short, masters dominate themselves and others as their dominating instincts, their nature, or their vibrant will to power require, not because of any pre-setting goals concerning utilities or pleasure.

In contrast, as the second character of the Hobbesian individuals summarized in 2.1 shows, Hobbesian individuals, including the prideful men, always see utilities, benefits or pleasure in overpowering others based on their past experience of what was useful, beneficial or pleasant, and set these goods as the goals of their pursuit. Then they

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 2\textsuperscript{nd} essay, [12, 13], 77, 79-80.
\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Leviathan}, XIII, [3, 4], 75.
\textsuperscript{31} \textit{On the Genealogy of Morals}, 1\textsuperscript{st} essay, [10], 38.
search in their memories about what were commonly recognized as power, such as wealth or fame, and about the effective ways by which such power was acquired in previous situations. After that, they pursue power as means to achieve utilities, benefits or pleasure in accordance with lessons they draw from past experience.

In brief, the pursuit of power by Hobbesian individuals is not straightforward or immediate, but always requires a goal, or, a future good, and means to the goal, which are deliberated and set up by reflecting on previous experience. As noted earlier, Hobbes not only conceives the individuals in his theory as people who project themselves into the future on the basis of past experience, but also himself resorts to the particular experience of mutual fear and precaution to convince readers of his theory of the natural condition.

More specifically, he uses such experience as a proof of his antagonistic understanding of interpersonal relations and egalitarian account of human nature, and as a key link in the chain of imagination that leads to the conclusion that uncertainties of power contrast between individuals are unbearable for all human beings, and that, as a result, all of them take measures to minimize future uncertainties.

Why is reflecting on past experience so important for Hobbesian individuals? When criticizing causal reasoning, Nietzsche explains why people need to find a cause for their current feeling from memories of their past experience and plan their future according to the causal explanation:

Most of our general feelings – every kind of inhibition, pressure, tension, and explosion in the play and counterplay of our organs, and particularly the state of nervous sympathicus – excite our causal instinct: we want to have a reason for feeling this way or that – for feeling bad or for feeling good.

The psychological explanation of this. To derive something unknown from
something familiar relieves, comforts, and satisfies, besides giving a feeling of power. With the unknown, one is confronted with danger, discomfort, and care; the first instinct is to abolish these painful states...

The causal instinct is thus conditional upon, and excited by, the feeling of fear. The “why?” shall...not give the cause for its own sake so much as for a particular kind of cause – a cause that is comforting, liberating, and relieving. That it is something already familiar, experienced, and inscribed in the memory...that is the first consequence of this need.32

Nietzsche’s description of the emergence of causal instinct from “the play and counterplay” of various drives is similar to the Hobbes’s account of production of desire as a result of interactions among different passions. And Nietzsche’s psychological explanation of causal instinct, as a desire to reduce new occasions to something familiar so as to ease the fear and anxiety of uncertainty in the future, exactly corresponds to the psychological mechanism that motivates Hobbesian individuals. In such psychological mechanism, Hobbesian individuals is motivated not only to pursue power to reduce uncertainties of future power contrast between one another, but also to pursue the particular kinds of power that have been commonly experienced as useful, beneficial or pleasant.

However, as shown above, the psychological mechanism that is regarded by Hobbes as applicable to all human beings, is only valid to certain kind of men under particular historical circumstances for Nietzsche. In Genealogy, although the ability of memorizing is fully developed only after the establishment of institutional punishment and the birth of bad conscience,33 the need of not forgetting and of constructing causality

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33 Nietzsche’s observation on development of the ability of not forgetting, when applied to interpreting the psychological mechanism of Hobbesian individuals, seems to converge with Rousseau’s critique on Hobbes that his account of human nature is anachronistic and ahistorical because Hobbes assigned characters that are social products to “savage men” in the natural condition. Cf. Rousseau, Discourse on Inequality, part one,
between past and future originates in the psychology of slaves, who are too weak to bear future uncertainties and to act immediately on every new occasions. Because of their weakness, they have to learn “how not to forget, how to wait,” rely on the past, and become prudent, i.e. explaining what is happening and will happen as the effects caused by what has happened.\textsuperscript{34}

Therefore, when viewing through Nietzsche’s dichotomy between slave morality and master morality, we may say that by theorizing the pursuit of power for obtaining future goods according to past experience, making it a part of universal human nature, and inviting readers to recall certain experience to confirm his theory of human nature, Hobbes transforms the way of the weak to perceive their surroundings and desire future goods into a universal psychological mechanism of all human beings. By doing so, he asks the strong, both among individuals in his theory and among his readers in reality, to reflect on their conditions on the basis of the psychological mechanism of the weak. Thus Hobbes reduces the strong to a status that is equal to the weak.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{34} On the Genealogy of Morals, 1st essay, [10, 13], 39, 45.
\textsuperscript{35} Since my argument here may be seen as an endorsement to Leo Strauss’s interpretation of Hobbes, which I have criticized in chapter 2, I hope to further clarify how my interpretation of Hobbes through Nietzsche differs from Strauss’s.

If I understand correctly, what Strauss argues is that Hobbes’s political philosophy is a project of taming the passion of pride, a corrupted but still aristocratic passions, by the plebian passion of fear of death. On the contrary, I argue that there is no fundamental dichotomy between aristocratic and plebian passions in Hobbes’s theory of human nature. Both the psychological conditions of Hobbesian individuals and their psychological mechanism associated with these conditions are similar to what we find in Nietzsche’s psychological analysis of “slaves.” Ever vain-glory or the desire for recognition in Hobbes’s theory, as shown in 2.2, is not fundamentally contrary to fear, for it can be a part of the same psychological conditions which are also marked by fear, suspicion and anxiety, and the emergence of vain-glory can be explained by the same mechanism that also explains the emergence of fear, suspicion and anxiety. Thus vain-glory in Hobbesian individuals shares the character of slaves’ psychology.

Therefore, I do not reject Strauss’s conclusion that Hobbes’s political theory aims to replace the
3.2.3 Different Goals: Preserving Physical Life vis-à-vis Creating Values

When contrasted to strong, healthy and intuitive masters in Nietzsche’s philosophy, Hobbesian individuals show affinities to the antithesis of the masters, i.e. the slaves. They have similar psychological conditions, which can be explained through similar psychological mechanism. Both of them fear uncertainties from the world outside themselves, although for Nietzschean slaves the uncertainties come from the arbitrary rule of masters while for Hobbesian individuals the uncertainties are derived from the indeterminable power contrast between one another in one’s imagination of his or her life in the future. Hence in hope of minimizing uncertainties and reducing new occasions to what have been experienced, both Nietzschean slaves and Hobbesian individuals rely on past experience when perceiving their surroundings and desiring future goods.

But can we thereby conclude that the desire of power of Hobbesian individuals is precisely the expression of the will to power of Nietzschean slaves? To answer this question, we need to turn to a dimension that has not been fully discussed so far in this comparison: the goals of Hobbesian individuals’ desire of power and of Nietzschean slaves’ will to power. In other words, what is the thing that Hobbesian individuals find useful, beneficial or pleasant and strive to obtain by endless pursuit of power? Is it the same as what slaves in Nietzsche’s philosophy will?

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aristocratic view of politics with a more egalitarian one. But unlike Strauss, I do not think that Hobbes accomplishes this replacement only by making the natural condition a battlefield between aristocratic and plebian passions and declaring the victory of the latter. Instead, I argue that Hobbes negates the ways of perceiving and willing of the strong by assimilating them to those of the weak, i.e. by theorizing the psychological conditions and mechanism of the weak in a universal, scientific form, and thus persuading the strong that they are actually perceiving their surroundings and desiring power in the same way as the weak.
In *Genealogy*, Nietzsche notes that the “happiness” of the slaves “appears as essentially narcotic, drug, rest, peace, ‘sabbath,’ slacking of tension and relaxing of limbs, in short *passively*.” So it seems that what slaves will is to be free from oppression and constant fear under masters’ rule, and to live in peace and certainty. But in the same section, Nietzsche highlights another drive in slaves that is more intensive and fierce than fear and even able to “[become] creative and [give] birth to values” - *ressentiment*. *Ressentiment* seems to be a compound of resentment of one’s impotence to act, hatred of being oppressed and against the strong and potent oppressors, and envy of the strong and their excessive power to dominate. Different from fear, a comparatively passive drive which mainly motivates the weak to avoid being oppressed, *ressentiment* drives slaves to actively seek revenge against their masters and everything they imagined that has caused their impotence. As noted above, the slaves’ impotence forbids them to conduct immediate, physical revenge, so their revenge cannot but take a spiritual form: they negate their masters and every reality that reminds them of their impotence by identifying their characters with evil, and then name what is not evil as good and identify themselves with the good.

Therefore, what slaves will is not only to preserve their lives from uncertainties and dangers, but also, or even more, to affirm their lives while demoting the values of others’ lives so as to make their lives good and superior to others’. That is to say, they not only will to be free from physical oppression from masters, but also to deny the bad value

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36 *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 1st essay, [10], 38.
that their lives are assigned to in masters’ morality, and furthermore, to reverse masters’
distinction between bad and good to their own dichotomy of good vis-à-vis evil. As
Nietzsche describes it:

While every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says No to what is “outside,” what is “different,” what is “not itself”; and this No is its creative deed. This inversion of the value-posing eye – this need to direct one’s view outward instead of back to oneself – is of the essence of ressentiment: in order to exist, slave morality always first needs a hostile external world; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all – its action is fundamentally reaction.37

If we compare this text on slave morality to the text on slaves’ happiness quoted earlier, we can infer that fear and ressentiment may even drive the weak to opposite directions respectively: fear turns the weak away from the dangers, uncertainties and oppressions; whereas ressentiment, which contains the will of slaves to reverse the bad value judgment imposed on their lives, keeps them in this “hostile external world,” so that they can always have targets to revenge and revolt against. The weak, although being passive by themselves, actively will revenge when they are oppressed by the strong, for it is only by revenge that they have chance to elevate the value of their lives above the value of the lives of masters. Therefore, although revenge may involve danger and thus be at odds with preservation of physical life, slaves still will it, and by revenge they ultimately strive to do what the strong are naturally capable of, i.e. to affirm life, making it valuable and meaningful.

Nevertheless, due to inherent impotence of slaves, any “slave revolt in morality,” even though it succeeds, can only produce a feeling of being powerful, not true power.

37 Ibid., 37.
Moreover, slaves’ affirmation of life can never be spontaneous creation, but reaction against and negation of the value system that has already been created by masters. Thus Nietzsche despises slaves for their dishonesty about their actual life conditions and “feigned superiority,” and concludes: “[t]he will of the weak to represent some form of superiority…where can it not be discovered, this will to power of the weakest!”

However, despite his contempt, Nietzsche acknowledges the significance of slaves’ revenge driven by ressentiment in giving birth to characters that make human beings “superior to other beasts” and more powerful in self-control:

In the second essay of Genealogy, Nietzsche questions the origin of the modern autonomous “sovereign individual,” who has “the right to make promises,” sees achieving of this right as a sign of having sovereign power over oneself, and is proud of being the master of oneself by being responsible for one’s own promises. Nietzsche implies that “the proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of responsibility” comes into being in contrast to guilt and bad conscience of falling to keep promises. Therefore, in order to understand the breeding of “an animal with the right to make promises,” he traces the genealogy of guilt and bad conscience.

To be able to make promises is to be capable of distinguishing “I will” and “the actual discharge of the will, its act,” and of fulfilling the shift from the former to the latter, a “shift from the I-will to the anticipated I-can.” Such a shift requires people to be able

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38 Ibid., 3rd essay, [15], 126.
39 Ibid., 3rd essay, [14], 123.
40 Ibid., 1st essay, [7, 16], 33, 52.
41 Ibid., 2nd essay, [1, 2], 57, 59-60.
42 Ibid., 2nd essay, [1], 58. Also cf. Hannah Arendt, “Nietzsche’s Repudiation of the Will,” in Nietzsche: Critical
to remember their wills and to identify the causal relations between certain wills and certain acts. Hence making promising is only possible after memory and prudence, i.e. the abilities of not forgetting and of causal reasoning among past events, present means, and future consequences, have been developed among human beings.

According to Nietzsche, memory and prudence are produced by punishment, for it is only through the pain imposed by punishment that human beings, who used to be “slaves of momentary affect and desire,” experience the need to adjust their behavior in accordance to commands of the punisher so as to avoid suffering from punishment. This corresponds to Nietzsche’s observation we note when discussing the psychological mechanism of slaves, that it is the slaves that first learn not to forget and become prudent, for they are the ones being punished in the relation between masters and slaves. However, after the oldest states are established by master races, personal punishments are replaced with systematic punishment and omnipresent regulation of the state. Consequently, all human beings are “enclosed with the walls of society and of peace” erected and guarded by the state. Under the punishment and regulation of the “oppressive and remorseless machine,” all human beings are forced to assume the psychological mechanism that originally belongs to slaves, i.e. “being reduced to thinking, inferring, reckoning, coordinating cause and effect.”

More specifically, under the rule of state, the “form-giving and ravishing” will to

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Assessments (Vol. II), 11.
43 Ibid., 2nd essay, [3], 61.
44 Ibid., 2nd essay, [3, 15], 61, 83.
45 Ibid., 2nd essay, [16, 17], 84, 86.
power that has driven the strong to conquer the weak and establish states, is prohibited to be vented towards outside as much as it used to, and thus “turn[s] inward.” Nietzsche calls this process “internalization of man,” in which the state forces the excessive will to power to change its function from dominating the world outside oneself to imposing control over oneself. Through this internalization, people driven by the will to power begin to feel guilty of their driving force, or more precisely, of its primordial expressions as aggressive, animal instincts. Hence the self splits, and human beings turn “backward against” their animal selves. Under the frame of state, this guilt or bad conscience is expressed in form of the “indebtedness” of “the present generation” to “its ancestors.” The indebtedness becomes increasingly deeper as the state grows more powerful, and finally the earliest ancestors “transfigured into a god” worshiped by the whole tribe formed under the rule of the state.

In Nietzsche’s narrative, it is by “moralizing” this internalization, putting the indebtedness to extreme, and eternally removing the hope of paying off the indebtedness that the ressentiment of slaves shows its creativity and assumes its world-historical role in breeding agents with self-control. This reactive creation is made by priests, who suffer from inability to digest their experience and to affirm life directly, like other slaves, but have a stronger will to power. Their will to power is expressed as “a ressentiment without equal,” which is so strong that it opposes not only the dominance of masters, but also

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46 Ibid., 2nd essay, [16], 84-85.
47 Ibid., 2nd essay, [19], 89.
48 Ibid., 3rd essay, [13], 120.
what drives masters to dominate, i.e. the will of life to conquer, dominate, exploit and organize, which finds its most primordial expression in the aggressive, animal instincts of masters. Thus Nietzsche describes priests' *ressentiment* as “an insatiable instinct and power-will that wants to become master not over something in life but over life itself, over its most profound, powerful, and basic conditions.” Here the will to power seems to oppose itself, but what actually happens is a contention between different expressions of the will to power: the *ressentiment* seeks to overcome natural instincts so as to justify the life that resents.49

Driven by *ressentiment*, priests unconsciously invent notions of “subject” behind deeds and of cause behind effects, in order to lead people to believe that they are the only cause of their actions and are free to choose how they behave and who they are. In the perspective of priests, the strong ought to be accountable for their conquest of and dominance over others, and guilty of not being harmless, obedient, humble and gregarious, which is identified to be “good” by the weak.50 With regard to the weak, who suffer from inability to integrate their inner drives to act on the reality and thus naturally prostrate themselves to priests who can offer an explanation for this suffering as well as “means of affects” to ease the pain, priests claim that themselves alone ought to be blamed for their suffering.51 By such preaching, priests intend to alter the direction of will to power, both the aggressive instincts and *ressentiment*, from outward to inward, which ends

49 Ibid., 3rd essay, [11, 13], 117-18, 120.
50 Ibid., 1st essay, [13], 45.
51 Ibid., 3rd essay, [15], 127-28.
in condemnation of all earthly desires.

Nietzsche names such preaching as “ascetic ideal,” and implies that the ideal become prevalent after the establishment of states, for it justifies the general inhibition of natural instincts by the state. Through the ascetic ideal of Christianity, the split of self and “internalization” of human beings are put to extreme: all animal instincts and earthly desires are condemned as evil; in contrast to these evils, a single God, who can be reached only after one leaves this world, is set up as the sole source of good and being. Thus the Christian ascetic model also exaggerates people’s indebtedness to their gods transfigured from their ancestors: a person “apprehends in ‘God’ the ultimate antithesis of his own ineluctable animal instincts; he reinterprets these animal instincts themselves as a form of guilt before God.” Finally, as Christian priests make God sacrifice himself out of love of human beings, the indebtedness to and guilt before God become eternally unredeemable, to the point that human beings perceive their animal existence in this world as a sin before God, minimize the value of their present existence in honor of God, and ardently search for “other mode of existence” closer to God.52

Driven by such throbbing bad conscience and great contempt of animal instincts, human beings develop the ability to control their instincts in service of more valuable goals in their eyes. Therefore, it is the Christian ascetic ideal, a creation of ressentiment, a descendant of slave morality, that finally gives birth to “sovereign individual” who achieves mastery of his own desires and right to make promise. Moreover, according to

52 Ibid., 2nd essay, [22], 92-93; 3rd essay, [11], 117.
Nietzsche, it is “Christian morality itself, the concept of truthfulness taken more and more strictly” that “translated and sublimated” the will to worshiping the specific Christian God into the will to seeking truth itself and the belief in the absolute value of truth. Such pursuit of truth finally overcomes the “Christianity as a dogma” and becomes the driving force of the development of modern science.\textsuperscript{53}

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the creations of slaves’ revenge – slave morality and its descendants, the ascetic ideal and “Christianity as a morality” – are not done by slaves in general, but only by those who have the strongest will to power, expressed as ressentiment, among slaves, i.e. the priests. Also, slave morality is created in reaction to master morality, and become widely accepted only through interacting with masters’ creation, the states.

However, despite these limits, the ascetic ideal is still a creation, and offers a meaning for the sufferings of human beings. According to Nietzsche, the meaning that the ascetic ideal offers, that human beings suffer for ascendance closer to God or for pursuit of truth, is the only meaning that human lives have been assigned so far. By fabricating the dichotomies between mind and body and between “the true world” and “the apparent one,”\textsuperscript{54} and by seeing the body and “the apparent world” in “the perspective of guilt,” the ascetic ideal slanders life in this earthly world, which is actually, in Nietzsche’s word, the only world, and produces “more inward, more poisonous, more life-destructive suffering.” But nevertheless—

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 3\textsuperscript{rd} essay, [27], 160-61. Here Nietzsche quoted Gay Science [357].

\textsuperscript{54} Twilight of the Idols, “How the ‘True World’ Finally Became a Fable,” 486.
man was saved thereby, he possessed a meaning, he was henceforth no longer like a leaf in the wind, a plaything of nonsense – the “sense-less” – he could now will something; no matter at first to what end, why, with what he willed: the will itself was saved.55

In this sense, the ultimate goal of the will to power of slaves, in its strongest expression, is to interpret the life of the weak to be superior to the life of the strong, to identify the suffering of the weak to the suffering of all human beings, and to assign such suffering a meaning. In pursuing this goal, priests create a value system, by which human beings are able to will something more valuable than who they are, and thereby able to understand and endure their previous and present sufferings as necessary means to the more valuable. Thus this value system enables human beings to organize their desires to the single direction their will points to, and to project themselves into the future so as to achieve their goal.

Does the desire of power of Hobbesian individuals aim at the same thing? As noted in 2.1, the goal of the desire of power has already been assigned by Hobbes in his definitions of power and of desire as a passion: power is what is identified as useful for acquisition of “future apparent good;” the good is which passions, or voluntary motions, move toward; while the thing that passions move toward, is what is perceived as an enhancement of vital motions. Therefore, as shown in the third character of Hobbesian individuals, their desire of power ultimately aims at the preservation and well-functioning of physical life. In this sense, the desire of Hobbesian individuals never fundamentally transcends who they already are in biological sense: their desire of power

55 On the Genealogy of Morals, 3rd essay, [28], 162.
simply drives them to prolong the fact that they are biologically alive into the future, and at best, to make this fact more pleasant – in Hobbes’s word, to achieve “commodious living.”

Hence what Hobbesian individuals find useful, beneficial or pleasant are always centered around the needs and interests of their physical existence. Accordingly, *ressentiment*, which drives slaves to revenge and thus can be at odds with physical existence, is not as prominent in Hobbesian individuals as in Nietzschean slaves. It is true that Hobbesian individuals, who always seek recognition of their power from others, may resent when their search is frustrated. Yet even among those who “endeavour to destroy or subdue one another” for “delectation only,” have *ressentiment* as intense as Nietzschean slaves if their endeavor suffers a setback, and thus are explicitly identified by Hobbes as the prideful or the vain-glorious, the superiority they seek to establish over others still always assumes the form of possession of specific goods in greater number or amount. As power always manifest itself in particular goods, being superior in power for Hobbesian individuals, even for the prideful ones, is simply equal to possessing more wealth, more reputation, and/or more friends, etc., all of which ultimately serve the preservation and well-functioning of one’s physical life against the potential threat from others. Consequently, such superiority in possession of certain goods neither distinguishes

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56 *Leviathan*, XIII, [14], 78. Other similar expressions that Hobbes uses to refer to goals other than “bare preservation” or “survival” are: “commodity of living” (*The Elements of Law*, XXVIII, [3, 4], 173), “a happy life,” “to live as pleasantly as the human condition allows” (*On the Citizen*, XIII, [4], 143-44), and “all other contentments of life” (*Leviathan*, XXX, [1], 219).

57 *Leviathan*, XIII, [3], 75.

different modes of life nor elevate the overall value of one mode of life over others, as ressentiment drives the Nietzschean slaves to seek for; instead, it represents the only mode of life among all Hobbesian individuals: life for preservation and commodious living.

Therefore, not only the will to power of Nietzschean masters, expressed as “overflowing health,” naturally well-organized instincts and spontaneous creation, never enters into the ken of Hobbes when he constructs his theory of human nature; but also the will to power of Nietzschean slaves, expressed as ressentiment, although has been taken into account by Hobbes as a part of human nature, does not contradict the fear of death and desire for living as fundamentally in Hobbes’s philosophy as it does in Nietzsche’s.

It is true that Nietzsche claims that the creation of ressentiment, “the ascetic ideal is an artifice for the preservation of life,” but this “preservation” refers to protection of the life of a certain “type of man” through justification of the superior value of their mode of existence to others, not to preservation of the physical life of an individual. In contrast to Nietzsche, by constructing a universal, scientific theory of human nature, in which all passions are anchored to the biological foundation of the vital motions of individuals, Hobbes makes his understanding of human nature, that all human passions are ultimately oriented to the preservation and prosperity of their individual physical lives, a fact discovered by a scientific study of human nature. Hobbes thereby eliminates the possibility for ressentiment or pride, as one of passions, to actually create a value system that despises all earthly desires and praises another mode of existence. For Hobbes, all

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59 On the Genealogy of Morals, 3rd essay, [13], 120.
human beings, including the prideful ones, actually desire self-preservation and commodious living; if pride motivates people to seek something more than these goals, these people must have illusions. According to Hobbes, such illusions should be corrected, and his “scientific” theory of human nature is a way of correction.

In this sense, Hobbes’s conception of desire of power represents an egalitarian understanding of human nature: for all human beings, their desire of power can be ultimately boiled down to the desire for self-preservation and commodious living, and there is also no categorical inequality in their abilities to achieve these goals. Accordingly, Hobbes does not condemn modes of life different from his understanding as evils, as what slaves do to masters in Nietzsche’s philosophy, but simply as the untrue. For Hobbes, fearing death and desiring for preserving the physical life are natural necessities for all human beings. Based on these natural necessities, people further desire for accumulating more goods (power) as means to maintain present living condition and guarantee more comfortable life in the future. It is simply impossible for these natural desires to be “spiritualized and sublimated” and end in creating a value system that may devalue the current mode of existence of human beings and project them into a more valuable mode of life, as what we find in the priests in Nietzsche’s philosophy. Therefore, not only spontaneous creation out of naturally well-organized instincts, but also reactionary creation out of ressentiment is excluded from Hobbes’s political theory.

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However, this does not mean that Hobbesian individuals do not create at all. In Hobbes’s account, driven by fear of death and desire for living, individuals cannot endure the natural condition, in which all of them, when projecting themselves into the future, are equally unable to ascertain the future power contrast between one another and thus suffer from infinite uncertainties of their preservation. Thereby, in order to terminate the natural condition and enjoy secure and commodious life, Hobbes transforms self-preservation, the natural necessity of the individuals in his works, into a universal normative requirement, i.e. the equal natural right of self-preservation among all human beings. He then directs Hobbesian individuals to create a sovereign and state institutions to protect the most basic and inalienable part of their natural right against the threat from one another.

In his mature works, Nietzsche shows great contempt for the desire of self-preservation formulated in the form of right and strong detestation of modern state which is conceived as the public guarantor of equal human rights for all citizens. He does not believe that self-preservation and commodious life are and ought to be all that human beings desire: “the truth was not hit by him who shot at it with the word of the ‘will to existence’…what is in existence, how could that still want existence?...There is much that life esteems more highly than life itself; but out of the esteeming itself speaks the will to power.”61 As we see in the discussion above, in Nietzsche’s account, even the expression of slaves’ will to power is greater than mere self-preservation. Nor does he think that the

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psychological mechanism of prudence and calculation in the frame of causality, which is shared by both Hobbesian individuals and Nietzschean slaves, can produce the greatest expression of will to power. On this point, Nietzsche seems to believe that abolishment of the constraint of causality will give birth to a type of human beings more powerful than the “sovereign individuals” whose power are limited to the right to make promise: “That nobody is held responsible any longer, that the mode of being may not be traced back to a causa prima, that the world does not form a unity either as a sensorium or as ‘spirit’ – that alone is the great liberation; with this alone is the innocence of becoming restored.”

Therefore, in Nietzsche’s eyes, Hobbes’s solution to the universal desire of power – making self-preservation a universal natural right and establishing states as the public guarantor of equal access to the right – confines the will to power of all human beings to a low level, and thus deprives the possibilities for the strongest among human beings to cultivate greater expression of will to power and fulfill “nobler” modes of living. We will further explore the political implications of Nietzsche’s understanding of will to power in the next chapter.

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In chapter 3, we find that when viewing through Nietzsche’s dichotomy between slave morality and master morality, although Hobbesian individuals, driven by endless desire of power, share similar psychological conditions and mechanism with Nietzschean slaves, the goal of their desire of power is different from what the slaves ultimately will. While Hobbesian individuals desire a permanent guarantee of self-preservation and commodious living, Nietzschean slaves will to diminish the overall value of masters’ lives and justify the superior value of their own mode of existence. Moreover, the slaves’ will to power, in its strongest expressions in priests, overcomes the desire of preservation of individual life and creates a value system that can organize the desires of multiple individuals toward one common direction and integrate their power to fulfill a goal more valuable than their current, individual existence. Hence the desire of power of Hobbesian individuals can be seen as an expression of will to power weaker than the slaves’.

Furthermore, in contrast to Hobbes, who constructs an account of human nature that claims to be scientific and universally applicable so as to show that what all human beings actually will can be boiled down to self-preservation and commodious living, Nietzsche thinks that the will to power of human beings neither have been nor should be limited to the desire of self-preservation. In *Genealogy*, he illustrates greater expressions of will to power than desire of self-preservation in history and categorizes them into slave morality and master morality; while his entire philosophy is an aspiration and a
preparation for future even greater expressions of will to power than all that have ever been.

Therefore, the basic difference between Hobbes and Nietzsche lies in their disparate understandings of the possibilities of human life. Hobbes thinks that human beings can make progress mainly in what they can possess but not who they will become, whereas Nietzsche believes humanity involves infinite possibilities. I think this difference yields rich implications for understanding Nietzsche’s hostility to modern politics. Yet before further delving into these implications, it should be noted that for Nietzsche, the future greater expression of will to power that he ardently aspires to is not to be equally achieved by every individual.

Nietzsche always makes distinctions among human beings: in addition to the dichotomy between slaves and masters, there are “failures from the start,” “born failure,” “the superfluous,” “small people” on one side,1 “the happy, well-constituted, powerful in soul and body” on the other.2 It is only on the latter that Nietzsche pins his hope of the emergence of “a new nobility,” “the philosophers of the future,”3 who are hard enough to be capable of unprecedentedly great expressions of will to power, and thus of “a new greatness of man, of a new untrodden way of his enhancement.”4 When yearning for such great expression of will to power, Nietzsche is not encouraging everyone to fulfill

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2 *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 3rd essay, [14], 124.
4 *Beyond Good and Evil*, “We Scholars,” [212], 137.
“positive freedom of individuals,” which can be achieved through one’s own effort under the condition of respecting others’ equal rights in a liberal democratic society. This is because Nietzsche’s grand task presupposes more than individual effort and does not refrain from, but even necessarily require, violation of the basic human rights of common people: “For every high world one must be born; or to speak more clearly, one must be cultivated for it...Many generations must have labored to prepare the origin of the philosopher.” And because these higher beings “alone are our warranty for the future,” “[t]heir right to exist, the privilege of the full-toned bell over the false and cracked, is a thousand times greater.” Therefore, Nietzsche’s perception of interpersonal and political relation is, as Bruce Detwiler points out, “aristocratic,” and thus he is hostile to all modern political ideas and institutions that are grounded on egalitarian accounts of human nature.

Yet what exactly are the future greater expressions of will to power, which Nietzsche aspires and believes only an aristocratic few is capable of? Why does Nietzsche think that they are fundamentally incompatible with equal rights of every individual?

Nietzsche’s anti-egalitarian attitude may be epitomized by the statement that “[e]qual to the equal, unequal to the unequal’ – that would be the true slogan of justice; and also its corollary: ‘Never make equal what is unequal.’” Such a statement also recalls Thrasyvachus’s slogan that “justice is nothing but the advantage of the stronger.” Yet


\[6\] *Beyond Good and Evil*, “We Scholars,” [213], 140.

\[7\] *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 3rd essay, [14], 125.

\[8\] *Twilight of the Idols*, “Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,” [48], 553.
Nietzsche does not endorse Thrasymachus or Callicles, and the Athens in the age of Socrates are not the prototype of the “blond beasts” or masters in his philosophy. Instead, Nietzsche criticizes the mode of life of Thrasymachus and Callicles:

In the age of Socrates, among men of fatigued instincts, among the conservatives of ancient Athens who let themselves go – “toward happiness,” as they said; toward pleasure, as they acted – and who all the while still mouthed the ancient pompous words to which their lives no longer gave them any right, irony may have been required for greatness of soul…

Therefore, the future greater expression of will to power is not a will “toward pleasure,” and the future nobility “shall not wish to enjoy.” The wish to enjoy pleasure is the product of “fatigue instincts,” by which no dominate instinct can integrate other drives toward one direction so that goals greater than enjoyment of one’s physical existence can be fulfilled. As a result, one is left in “a threatening anarchy among the instincts,” subject to every momentary desire. Enjoying pleasure is thereby more closer to the goal of Hobbesian desire of power – self-preservation and commodious living. Hence the major divergence between Hobbes and Thrasymachus lies not in their interpretations of the goal of human desires, but in their understandings of who is able to fulfill the goal: Thrasymachus thinks only the strong are capable of always satisfying their desires for pleasure; whereas Hobbes claims, on the basis of his “scientific” and egalitarian account of human nature, that there is no categorical inequality among people in their abilities to preserve their lives.

On the other hand, however, Nietzsche does not negate the desire of pleasure in

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9 *Beyond Good and Evil*, “We Scholars,” [212], 138.
11 *Beyond Good and Evil*, “What is Noble,” [258], 202.
ways by which he believes Plato’s Socrates and Christian priests do: fabricating the
dichotomy between the “true world” and the “apparent one,”\textsuperscript{12} denying things and
desires in the apparent realm as untrue (by philosophers) or sinful (by priests), and
orienting human’s will toward beings in the ideal “true world” that for Nietzsche does not
exist at all. As noted above, according to Nietzsche, the ascetic ideal that is grounded on
the negation of earthly desires, though having preserved for human beings their abilities
of willing to become greater than who they already are, ultimately “block[s] up” the origin
of the human will to power.\textsuperscript{13} This is because that there is only one world, the desires that
human beings concretely feel are parts of it, and it is only from these desires that greater
expressions of will to power can be developed. Therefore, instead of negating desires of
self-preservation, pleasure and commodious living as untrue or sinful, Nietzsche regards
them as too small and contemptable. What he calls for, is to organize these smaller desires
by a dominate will for, and in the direction of, a greater goal.

How great is the goal? For Nietzsche, it is not limited to the level of individuals,
but bears the future of humankind. It is to create new values, which could end the two-
thousand-year reign of the ascetic ideal over Europeans’ understanding of the meaning of
life,\textsuperscript{14} and to offer humanity, which so far has only had fragmentary expressions in “a
thousand goals” esteemed by “a thousand people,” a new direction that can make it a
whole.\textsuperscript{15} Thus Nietzsche describes this creation of new values as “to impress your hand

\textsuperscript{12} Twilight of the Idols, “How the ‘True World’ Finally Became a Fable,” 485.
\textsuperscript{13} On the Genealogy of Morals, 3\textsuperscript{rd} essay, [11], 117.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 2\textsuperscript{nd} essay, [25], 96; 3\textsuperscript{rd} essay, [28], 162.
\textsuperscript{15} Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 1\textsuperscript{st} part, “On the Thousand and One Goals,” 172.
on millennia as on wax” and “to write on the will of millennia as on bronze – harder than bronze, nobler than bronze.”  

On the other hand, since Nietzsche claims that “[t]he magnitude of an ‘advance’ can even be measured by the mass of things that had to be sacrificed to it,” the greatness of this goal can also be measured by the weight of the obstacles that it has to overcome. Such obstacles include, for example, the things that Nietzsche ascribes to be produced by and intertwined with the ascetic ideal and the belief in God. They encompass but are not limited to: the thinking pattern that distinguishes “a doer” from “doing” or subject from deeds, beliefs “in will as the cause...in the ego, in the ego as being, in the ego as substance,” and all concepts of “things” as indivisible beings and all grammar that links these concepts, which Nietzsche thinks to be the linguistic projection of humans’ “faith in the ego-substance upon all things.” This list encompasses most of the tools and patterns that human beings have been accustomed to use in thinking so far. It is through these tools and patterns that we understand ourselves, communicate with others, and build all our social and political institutions. Therefore, the creation of new values that can replace the ascetic ideal and fill the giant vacuum left by the “death of God” will require, if not complete destruction of these tools and patterns and the institutions built on them, at least a re-assignment of their meanings, values and functions, which necessitates a completely new interpretation of the overall human conditions. This is a project of formidable scale:

17 On the Genealogy of Morals, 2nd essay, [12], 78.
it requires enormous destruction and tremendous creation; it is “to tie the knot and
costRAINT that forces the will of millennia upon new tracks.”19

To reach this great goal, smaller desires must be organized and integrated to form
an immense power. How is such organization and integration possible? According to
Nietzsche, individuals who will to create new values should first be able to organize their
various minor drives within themselves by and under this dominate will to the point that
other drives can obey and serve the will to create,20 otherwise “he who cannot obey
himself is commanded.”21 Nietzsche does not enunciate the specific way to accomplish
this organizing, but certainly it is not by intentional suppression of one's minor desires,
for in such case, one is driven by bad conscience derived from an ascetic ideal to suppress
and negate these desires. In fact, that the needs of suppressing and negating certain
desires come into consciousness is itself a sign of unsuccessful organization and
symptomizes impotence of organizing. Nor is the organizing accomplished through
reflection, calculation and prudence, which, as noted above, are ways that Hobbesian
individuals and Nietzschean slaves develop to pursue power; for reflection, calculation
and prudence all rely on a false understanding of causality and require assimilation of the
present and the future into a tailored past, which indicates one's indigestion of both the
events that one has encountered and that one is coming across. On the other hand,
Nietzsche is not calling on modern individuals to return to the prehistorical conditions

19 Beyond Good and Evil, “Natural History of Morals,” [203], 117.
20 The differences among instincts, drives, passions, desires and wills are vague in Nietzsche's philosophy. I
will not make clear distinctions among them in this paper, but maintain that they are all wills to power, or
more precisely, expressions of will to power, in the psychological and physiological realm.
and become “blond beasts” again: although when compared to the reactivity of slaves, Nietzsche appreciate the blond beasts’ naturally well-organized instincts that enable them to spontaneously act on reality, he nevertheless maintains that these natural instincts ought to be “spiritualized and sublimated.”

It is not completely clear what Nietzsche means by “spiritualization of passion,” but this process certainly does not require abandonment of powers that human beings have developed through history and with which humankind have surpassed other beasts, such as the right to make promise. Instead, it is necessary for one to actively integrate all the powers that humankind has acquired over themselves and over the entire nature, and to create new, greater powers on the basis of overcoming all the previous ones, as Nietzsche’s “return to nature…is really not a going back but an ascent.” More precisely, the “spiritualization of passion” will liberate all drives and wills that have been repressed, negated and distorted by the ascetic ideal and incorporate them into gods-like instincts, which are achieved through long-time heroic “laboriousness” and finally become “easy, necessary, free” again. With these instincts, the desires for self-preservation and commodious living will, without entering into one’s consciousness, naturally become subject to the will to create. One with such gods-like instincts is capable of always acting on reality and continuously creating with “light feet.”

22 *Twilight of the Idols*, “Morality as Anti-Nature,” [1], 487.
23 Ibid., “Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,” [48], 552.
24 Ibid., “The Four Great Errors,” [3], 494. About the comparison between the laborious, sublime hero who still fights with the savage beasts in himself and thus is on his way of spiritualization and the beautiful gods with light feet, who has accomplish the spiritualization, also cf. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 2nd part, “On Those Who Are Sublime,” 228-31.
However, this organizing of drives, although is centered in and conducted through individuals, is not a private project. This is because drives are not caused by an absolutely autonomous self in Nietzsche’s philosophy. For him, the autonomous self that has “free will” is only a hollow concept that slaves fabricate to conceal their inherent weakness. By fabricating the concepts of autonomous self and free will, the slaves make their “being thus-and-thus” seem to be a result of free choice and their weakness a self-achieved “merit.” Comparatively, Hobbes’s account of passions as a series of endeavors initiated by “the heart” in reaction to external stimuli, may have closer affinity with Nietzsche’s understanding of wills in that Hobbes does not presume a “self” as substantive as the one in “the Christian-Cartesian view” that Nietzsche criticizes. However, while Nietzsche has jumped out of the dichotomy between the material and the spiritual (or, body and mind) and is “the sternest opponent of all materialism,” Hobbes’s account of passions does not break through this dichotomy but simply stands on the side of body and the material; it is also completely a-historical compared to Nietzsche’s teaching of will to power.

Different from both “the Christian-Cartesian view” and Hobbes, Nietzsche thinks that it is impossible to isolate drives within individuals from the whole world and from the entire human history, both of which are continuums of opposition and cooperation of drives. He declares that “[o]ne cannot erase from the soul of a human being what his

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26 I borrow the term “the Christian-Cartesian view of the self” from Jeffrey Church, cf. his Infinite Autonomy, p. 116.
27 On the Genealogy of Morals, 3rd essay, [16], 129.
ancestors liked most to do and did most constantly,” and in *Genealogy* he discovers that the ideal of modern mankind – the “sovereign individual” – is the fruit borne by the entire human history full of punishments, sufferings and revenges, and that “[t]he proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of responsibility” is the twin of the bad conscience derived from the ascetic ideal, a descendant of slave morality and a creation of ressentiment. Also, Nietzsche maintains that the whole terrible history that gives birth to the “sovereign individual” is still present in modern human beings; if they are not fully conscious of the presence of the history and affirm its necessity but imagine it as a rational, peaceful process, human beings would never be able to overcome themselves once more, liberate themselves from the ascetic ideal, and become even greater than the “sovereign individuals.” Therefore, to fully organize one’s drives, it is necessary for one to acknowledge that s/he is made by the entire history and to affirm all that has been, as they all contribute to one’s becoming of who s/he is and will be. Hence the will to power of the creator of new values is expressed as “to create and carry together into One what in man is fragment and riddle and dreadful accident…to work on the future and to redeem with their creation all that has been. To redeem what is past in man and to recreate all ‘it was’ until the will says, ‘Thus I willed it! Thus I shall will it’.” When reaching this point, “[s]uch a spirit who has become free stands amid the cosmos with a joyous and trusting

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28 *Beyond Good and Evil*, “What is Noble,” [264], 213.
29 Nietzsche thinks that “the good” among modern human beings made “blue-eyed” lies about history in order to make it fit their “good taste” and despise their inability to “endure a single truth ‘about man’.” cf. *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 3rd essay, [19], 137-38.
fatalism...he does not negate any more.”

Further elucidation of the meanings of affirmation and redemption of the past would require a close examination of Nietzsche’s teaching of “the eternal recurrence,” which goes far beyond the scope of this paper. Here I will only focus on whether actively willing and no longer negating all “it was” would yield any political consequences and what these consequences are. In *Infinite Autonomy*, Jeffrey Church interprets the affirmation and redemption as “a series of actions” by the creator. Such actions “affirms the past history of himself and his community while at once rendering coherent their shared history as part of a successful narrative leading to the present and into the future.” In this narrative, “[t]he irrational suffering of the community’s history is redescribed by the individual not as horrific, meaningless moments, but as necessary stages on the way to the creation of a whole community led by this whole individual.”

I basically agree to this interpretation, while maintaining that it tends to underestimate the terribleness of the political implications of willing and affirming all the past. In order to make the political implications clearer, two points should be added to Church’s interpretation of the creator’s narrative of the past.

First, that a narrative is “coherent” does not mean that it deceptively harmonizes all the elements it contains and thereby proves that the current condition is the best stage that human beings have ever achieved, or is in a progressive movement toward a perfect

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31 *Twilight of the Idols*, “Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,” [49], 554.
32 Jeffrey Church, *Infinite Autonomy*, 155. It is probably because Church interprets Nietzsche’s genealogical narrative as a Hegelian dialectic process that he is still able to make insightful observation about the will to power of Nietzsche’s future creator after misunderstanding the will to power of human beings in Nietzsche’s account of human’s prehistorical period.
end of history free of any contradictions. That is what we find in various nationalistic narratives since the Enlightenment. On the contrary, the narrative that Nietzsche proposes gives a full account of the irreconcilable tensions in history and thereby demonstrates the everlasting need of continuous overcoming.

Second and more importantly, the creator not only acknowledges that all the sufferings in the past is necessary for the present to be as such, but also actively will sufferings in the future, so that he can incorporate them into the conditions for greater expressions of will to power. In other words, to affirm every reality and not to negate does not mean to take care of the present existence of everything, or to lessen or eliminate their sufferings, but to throw everything and oneself back to the “sweep and countersweep and ebb and flood”\(^\text{33}\) of eternal becoming, which necessarily involves “injury, assault, exploitation, destruction,”\(^\text{34}\) with an aim of continuously creating of an ever better self. More specifically, if one wills the “sovereign individual,” one has to simultaneously will the punishments and sufferings that serve as the necessary conditions of its coming into being; and if one wills greater expression of will to power than the “right to make promise” in the future, then one should not refrain from, but actively will all the horrible events that lead to the new creation. In this process, the strong creator may affirm the value of existence of the weak not by respecting their rights of self-preservation, but just by the opposite – by exploiting and destroying the weak – as long as the creator does so not out of a will to destroy, which would still be reactive, but a will to create, and could integrate


\(^{34}\) *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 2\(^{nd}\) essay, [11], 76.
the exploitation and destruction into his project of creation; for without the creator’s exploitation and destruction, the weak would not have the chance to take a role and be assigned a value in the creation of new values. Therefore, for the sake of greater expressions of will to power, the creator not only creates a narrative to affirm the value of sufferings, but also to participate in “pain and suffering,” “war and destruction.”

Here we could finally understand why Nietzsche’s teaching of will to power cannot be reconciled with equal human rights and modern states. Hobbes’s normalization of the ultimate aim of the desire of power – making self-preservation a natural right for all individuals – is one of the major intellectual origins of the conception of equal human rights in modern political thought; his conception of the sovereign state as the public guarantor of the equal rights among citizens is also widely acknowledged in both theories and practices of modern politics. However, Nietzsche not only despises the Hobbesian desire of power, as it ultimately aims at self-preservation instead of creating values and thus is an expression of will to power even weaker than the slaves’; but also sees that after the aim of Hobbesian desire of power is made a right and receives acknowledgement and protection from the political authority, the equal rights among individuals actually restrict the strong from expressions of will to power greater than the pursuit of self-preservation and commodious living. This is because the greater will to power would have been formed by destroying, exploiting and incorporating the smaller ones, while the equal rights doctrine buttressed by the state power artificially limits the degrees of destruction and

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exploitation among individuals, and thus confines the will to power of humankind within a narrow range. In short, for Nietzsche, the modern principle of equal rights terminates possibilities for future greater expressions of will to power. Hence Nietzsche condemns the ethics that is prevalent among his contemporaries, which is centered around “the equality of rights,” as “herd morality.”36 He thinks such equal rights “could all too easily be changed into equality in violating rights…into a common war on all that is rare, strange, privileged, the higher man, the higher soul, the higher duty, the higher responsibility, and the abundance of creative power and masterfulness”37 and would lead to “[t]he over-all degeneration of man…into dwarf animal of equal rights and claims.” With regard to the modern state, which in Nietzsche’s eyes has replaced the priests as the guardian of the “herd” while by its acknowledgment and protection of equal rights of self-preservation reducing the will to power of the people to a level weaker than the slaves’, he calls it the “the coldest of all cold monsters” that brings about “death of peoples.”38

36 *Beyond Good and Evil*, “Natural History of Morals,” [201], [202], 113-5.
5. Conclusion: Understandings of Life and Conceptions of Politics

In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche offers a brief account of how the “true world,” first constructed by Plato’s Socrates, then worshiped in Christianity, and preserved in modern times in Descartes’s *cogito* and Kant’s thing-in-itself, “finally became a fable.”

Viewed within this account, Hobbes’s theory of human passions and his concept of desire of power, may be regarded as an early harbinger of “[t]he cockcrow of positivism” that ends the suppression by the “true world” over the actual life. He sees the human body as a locus of interactions among various passions and refuses to presuppose any effective obligating power of pre-set natural laws over human passions in the natural condition. It is perhaps this affirmation of the innocence of all passions that wins Hobbes compliments from the young Nietzsche. In addition, Hobbes’s assumption that individuals are obstacles to one another in their pursuit of power may have appealed to Nietzsche, who later develops his teaching of will to power, claiming that all organizations in the world are in constant competition and conflict.

However, although Hobbes refutes the effectiveness of the obligations from the “true world,” he simply falls into the other side of the dichotomy between truth and appearance and between mind and body: by constructing a seemingly scientific account of human nature, Hobbes anchors all human passions to the vital motion of the body and reduces “life” to the preservation and well-functioning of the body. Therefore, the desire of power of Hobbesian individuals ultimately aims at the preservation and

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commodiousness of physical life. Even the desire for recognition is in some way interpreted in *Leviathan* as an expression of more fundamental passions – the fear of death and desire for self-preservation – in the security dilemma of the natural condition. To live, for Hobbesian individuals, is therefore simply to stay alive and to acquire and possess as many goods as possible, so as to prolong physical life and increase its commodiousness. Hobbes renders self-preservation a natural right precisely in an effort to make it possible for every human beings to live this sort of life. With that, he understands the state to be the public guarantor of the most basic, inalienable part of that natural right.

In contrast, for Nietzsche, who in his mature works has abolished the “apparent world” along with the “true” one and “dives into becoming,” life is will to power. He does not pay serious attention to the physical life or death of individuals, for, according to his teaching of will to power, to live is not simply to preserve the current status of being, but to exploit, integrate and expand, so as to always become grander and stronger. Hence, in Nietzsche’s eyes, the Hobbesian desire of power, which aims at self-preservation and is fulfilled through everlasting reflection on the past, calculation and prudence is only a frustrated expression of will to power; it is a life that abandons the pursuit of the great in favor of the mere preservation of physical existence. In this sense, then, although Hobbesian individuals share the same psychological conditions and mechanism with Nietzschean slaves, their desire of power is even weaker than the will to power of the slaves. This is because Nietzschean slaves are driven by *resentiment*; they are still willing

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to risk their physical existence in order to pursue revenge, prove the superiority of their lives to that of their masters, and create new values.

Nietzsche believes that human life involves more possibilities than the pursuit of physical preservation and well-being through calculation and prudence. Moreover, he maintains that it is possible for humankind to liberate itself from the old value system created by slaves’ *ressentiment* – the ascetic ideal – and to realize an unprecedented level of greatness, if only the most creative among human beings organize their drives and affirm all the reality that has been and will come. Nietzsche therefore finds that the state's guarantee of a universal “right” to self-preservation can only serve to frustrate the kind of “injury, assault, exploitation, [and] destruction” that is necessary for creation, the truly “correct” for human beings. The Hobbesian individuals with equal rights of self-preservation are what Nietzsche calls “last men” – men who have forgetting “What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is a star?,” men who have stopped becoming, men in whom the will to power has stagnated forever, effectively dying. This sort of “organizational death,” for Nietzsche must not be the final product of the entire human history full of sufferings, so he calls for an actively willing of sufferings and destruction that can lead to future – and greater – expressions of will to power.

Understandably, most people find the political ramifications of Nietzsche’s teaching unacceptable; and his specific remarks on political issues may seem unsystematic, “Romantic” or even “childish,” as Martha Nussbaum suggests. However, Nietzsche’s

3 Ibid., 1st part, “Zarathustra’s Prologue,” [5], 129.
4 Martha Nussbaum, “Is Nietzsche a political thinker?” *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 5:1

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importance for students in political theory remains; for even though he might not offer a
typical political theory, his teaching of will to power, which replaces being with becoming,
shakes the metaphysical foundation of almost all preceding interpretations of human life,
as well as the conceptions of politics that correspond to these interpretations. It is usually
supposed that Nietzsche’s philosophy undermines “the Christian-Cartesian view” of self
and the interpretation of human life – individuals as moral agents with inherent dignity
– based on that view. Yet this comparison between Hobbes and Nietzsche shows that,
since the teaching of will to power breaks the dichotomy between mind and body, the
Hobbesian interpretation of human life, which asserts the universal pursuit of self-
protection and commodious living on the basis of a less substantive concept of self and
a more materialistic understanding of human passions, is also extremely limited and
unsatisfactory when viewed in light of Nietzsche’s philosophy.

Surly, on the other hand, by focusing relentlessly on the greater fulfillment of
humanity’s infinite possibilities, Nietzsche’s philosophy challenges all boundaries and
thus inevitably challenges the security of individuals and the peace of society. If Hobbes
were able to read Nietzsche’s philosophy, he might probably find it better catches his will
to power than his own philosophy: as a philosopher who seeks to founded a novel view of
life and a new political order for human beings, Hobbes’s own will to power is much
grander than the desire of power he assigns to the individuals in his writings. But Hobbes
would certainly sneer (with his iconic sarcastic smile) at any ideas that attempt to fully

actualize the political implications of Nietzsche’s teaching of will to power in practice. This is not only because Hobbes values security and peace as the basic conditions on which any common life among human beings can be formed and thus as the primary goals of politics, but also because he simply does not believe that any individuals could be strong enough to create new modes of life after completely denying the basic right of self-preservation of the weak – the strong would first be destroyed by the united revenge of the weak, before they could make any creations.

By comparing the thought of Nietzsche and Hobbes, we can see that different conceptions of politics are traceable to different understandings of human life; a given political order can thus be understood as a way to assert an associated understanding of life. In this sense, modern political thought can be understood as an everlasting exploration between Hobbes and Nietzsche. This exploration reveals the tensions that exist between fundamental aspects of the modern human condition: on one hand, the need to acknowledge and satisfy the basic, common needs of all individuals, and, on the other, the need to provide space for those who hope to overcome themselves and fulfill their greater aspirations.
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