Philosophy 306: Egoism and Altruism
Reading for Thursday, January 29

Thomas Hobbes, from Leviathan (1651).
Chapter XIII: Of the Natural Condition of Mankind as Concerning Their Felicity, and Misery

1. Nature hath made men so equal, in the faculties of the body and mind; as that though there be found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body or of quicker mind than another; yet when all is reckoned together, the difference between man and man is not so considerable as that one man can thereupon claim to himself any benefit to which another may not pretend as well as he. For as to the strength of body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others that are in the same danger with himself.

2. And as to the faculties of the mind, setting aside their arts grounded upon words, and especially that skill of proceeding upon general and infallible rules called science; which very few have, and but in a few things, as being not a native faculty, born with us; nor attained (as prudence), while we look after something else, I find yet a great equality amongst men than that of strength. For prudence is but experience, which equal time equally bestows on all men, in those things they equally apply themselves unto. That which may perhaps make such equality incredible is but a vain conceit of one's own wisdom, which almost all men think they have in a greater degree than the vulgar; that is, than all men but themselves and a few others whom by fame or for concurring with themselves, they approve. For such is the nature of men, that howsoever they may acknowledge many others to be more witty, or more eloquent, or more learned, yet they will hardly believe there by many so wise as themselves; for they see their own wit at hand, and other men's at a distance. But this proveth rather that men are in that point equal, than unequal. For there is not ordinarily a greater sign of the equal distribution of any thing, than that every man is contented with his share.

3. From this equality of ability ariseth equality of hope in the attaining of our ends. And therefore if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to their end (which is principally their own conservation, and sometimes their delectation only) endeavor to destroy or subdue one another. And from hence it comes to pass that where an invader hath no more to fear than another man's single power; if one plant, sow, build, or possess a convenient seat, others may probably be expected to come prepared with forces united to dispossess and deprive him not only of the fruit of his labor, but also of his life or liberty. And the invader again is in the like danger of another.

4. And from this diffidence of one another, there is no way for any man to secure himself, so reasonable as anticipation; that is, by force or wiles, to master the persons of all men he can, so long till he see no other power great enough to endanger him; and this is no more than his own conservation requires, and is generally allowed. Also because there be some, that taking pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, which they pursue farther than their security requires; if others, that otherwise would be glad to be at ease within modest bounds, should not by invasion increase their power, they would not be able, long time, by standing only on their defence, to subsist. And by consequence, such augmentation of dominion over men, being necessary to a man's conservation, it ought to be allowed him.

5. Again, men have no pleasure (but on the contrary a great deal of grief) in keeping company, where there is no power able to over-awe them all. For every man looketh that his companion should value him at the same rate he sets upon himself: and upon all signs of contempt or undervaluing, naturally endeavors as far as he dares (which amongst them that have no common power to keep them in quiet is far enough to make them destroy each other) to extort a greater value from his contemners [i.e. devaluers], by damage; and from others, by the example. [restatement: If a man sees someone undervaluing him, unless there is some common power {such as the power of the state, or a sovereign} to restrain him, he attempts to damage this other person in order to get that person to value him

6. So that in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel. First, competition; secondly, diffidence; thirdly, glory.

7. The first maketh man invade for gain; the second, for safety; and the third, for reputation. The first use violence, to make themselves masters of other men's persons, wives, children, and cattle; the second, to defend them; the third, for trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other sign of undervalue, either direct in their persons or by reflection in their kindred, their friends, their nation, their profession, or their name.

8. Hereby [i.e. as we can see from the above] it is manifest that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war as is of every man against every man. For WAR consisteth not in battle only, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known: and therefore the notion of time is to be considered in the nature of war; as it is in the nature of weather. For as the nature of foul weather lieth not in a shower or two of rain but in an inclination thereto of many days together, so the nature of war consisteth not in actual fighting, but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is PEACE.

9. Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of war, where every man is enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time wherein men without other security than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them with. In such condition there is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

10. It may seem strange to some man, that has not well weighed these things, that nature should thus dissociate and render man apt to invade and destroy one another; and he may therefore not trusting to this inference made from the passions, desire perhaps to have the same confirmed by experience. Let him therefore consider with himself, when taking a journey, he arms himself and seeks to go well accompanied; when going to sleep, he locks his doors; when even in his house he locks his chests; and which when he knows there be laws and public officers, armed to revenge all injuries that shall be done him; what opinion he has of his fellow-subjects, when he rides armed; of his fellow citizens, when he locks his doors; and of his children, and servants, when he locks his chests. Does he not there as much accuse mankind by his actions, as I do by my words? But neither of us accuse men's

nature in it. The desires and other passions of man are in themselves no sin. No more are the actions that proceed from those passions, till they know a law that forbids them: which till laws be made, they cannot know: nor can any law be made till they have agreed upon the person that shall make it.

11. It may peradventure be thought that there was never such a time nor condition of war as this; and I believe it was never generally so, over all the world; but there are many places where they live so now. For the savage people in many places of America, except the government of small families, the concord whereof dependeth on natural lust, have no government at all; and live at this day in that brutish manner as I said before. Howsoever, it may be perceived what manner of life there would be, where there were no common power to fear; by the manner of life, which men that have formerly lived under a peaceful government, use to degenerate into a civil war.

Bishop Joseph Butler, from Five Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel (1726). In the following passages, Butler is criticizing Hobbes, but a different work than the Leviathan, although the spirit of both works is very similar. But Butler's argument does not speak *directly* to the passages or the argument from the Leviathan above.

Sermon I: Upon Human Nature, footnote 4:
Suppose a man of learning to be writing a grave book upon human nature, and to show in several parts of it that he had an insight into the subject he was considering; amongst other things, the following one would require to be accounted for: the appearance of benevolence or goodwill in men toward each other in the instance of natural relation, and in others (Hobbes, Of Human Nature c. ix. &7). Cautious of being deceived with outward show, he retires within himself to see exactly what that is in the mind of man from whence this appearance proceeds; and, upon deep reflection, asserts the principle in the mind to be only the love of power, and delight in the exercise of it. Would not everybody think here was a mistake of one word for another; that the philosopher was contemplating and accounting for some other human actions, some other behavior of man to man? And could anyone be thoroughly satisfied that what is commonly called benevolence or goodwill was really the affection meant [i.e, the love of power], except by being made to understand that this learned person had a general hypothesis to which the appearance of goodwill could not otherwise be reconciled? That what has this appearance is often nothing but ambition; that delight in superiority often (suppose always) mixes itself with benevolence only makes it more specious to call it ambition than hunger of the two: but in reality that passion [i.e. {I think!} hunger] does no more account for the whole appearances of goodwill than this appetite [i.e. love of power] does. Is there not often the appearance of one man's wishing that good to another which he knows himself unable to procure him; and rejoicing in it, though bestowed by a third person? And can love of power possibly come in to account for this desire or delight? Is there not often the appearance of men's distinguishing between two or more persons, preferring one before the other to do good to, in cases where love of power cannot in the least account for the distinction and preference? For this principle can no otherwise [i.e. no more] distinguish between objects than as it is a greater instance and exertion of power to do good to one rather than to another. [rephrase of last sentence: This principle can only distinguish between motives to action insofar as one is a greater instance and exertion of power to do good to one rather than to another {since the principle is claiming that a desire to exercise power is the only human motive}].

Again, suppose goodwill in the mind of man to be nothing but delight in the exercise of power; men might indeed be restrained by distant and accidental considerations; but these restraints being removed, they would have a disposition to, and delight in, mischief as an exercise and proof of power; and this disposition and delight would arise from or be the same principle in the mind, as a disposition to, and delight in, charity. Thus cruelty, as distinct from envy and resentment, would be exactly the same as in the mind of man as goodwill—that one tends to the happiness, the other to the misery of our fellow creatures is, its seems, merely an accidental circumstance, which the mind has not the least regard to. These are the absurdities which even men of capacity run into when they have occasion to belie their nature, and will perversely disclaim that image of God which was originally stamped upon it, the traces of which, however faint, are plainly discernible upon the mind of man.

Footnote 5
Everybody makes a distinction between self-love and the several particular passions, appetites, and affections; and yet they are often confounded again. …
And as self-love and the particular passions and appetites are in themselves totally different, so that some actions proceed from one and some from the other, will be manifest to any who will observe the two following very supposable cases. One man rushes upon certain ruin for the gratification of a present desire; nobody will call the principle of this action self-love. Suppose another man to go through some laborious work upon promise of a great reward, without any distinct knowledge what the reward will be; this course of action cannot be ascribed to any particular passion. The former of these actions is plainly to be imputed to some particular passion or affection, the latter as plainly to the general affection of principle of self self-love. That there are some particular pursuits or actions concerning which we cannot determine how far they are owing to one, and how far to the other, proceeds from this, that the two principles are frequently mixed together and run up into each other.

Sermon IV: Upon the Love of Our Neighbor
5. Every man hath a general desire of his own happiness, and likewise a variety of particular affections, passion, and appetites to particular external objects. The former proceeds from or is self-love, and seems inseparable from all sensible creatures who can reflect upon themselves and their own interest or happiness, so as to have that interest [as] an object to their minds. What is to be said of the latter [i.e. the 'particular affections, passions, and appetites'] is that they proceed from, or together make up, that particular nature according to which man is made. The object the former [i.e. the desire for happiness] pursues is something internal—our own happiness, enjoyment, satisfaction. Whether we have or have not a distinct particular perception what it is or wherein it consists, the objects of the latter are this or that particular external thing which the affections tend towards, and of which it hath always a particular idea or perception. The principle we call "self-love" never seeks anything external for the sake of the thing, but only as a means of happiness or good; particular affections [by contrast] rest in the external things themselves. One belongs to man as a reasonable creature reflecting upon his own interest or happiness. The other, though quite distinct from reason, are as much a part of human nature.