

THE ANCIENT NOTION OF SELF- PRESERVATION IN THE THEORIES OF HOBBS AND SPINOZA



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Table of Contents

Declaration of Originality and Word Count	i
Dissertation Summary.....	ii-iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv-v
Textual Conventions & Abbreviations.....	vi-viii
Preface	1
1.1 The Notion of Self-Preservation in the Philosophy of Aristotle	14
Motion: A Conceptual Link in Aristotle’s Philosophy	17
The Soul as Form and Capacity in <i>De anima</i>	20
The Senses and Self-Preservation	24
Desire and the Good in <i>Eudemian</i> and <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>	34
The Self as ‘Other’ in Aristotelian Ethics	40
Conclusion.....	45
1.2 The Notion of Self-Preservation in Stoic and Epicurean Thought	48
Bodies and Resistance in Stoic and Epicurean Natural Philosophy.....	51
Epicurean <i>Hedonê</i> as Self-Preservation	56
Self-Preservation and Stoic <i>Oikeiōsis</i>	66
Natural Politics in Stoic, Peripatetic and Epicurean Thought.....	77
Conclusion.....	84
2. The Reception and Dissemination of Aristotelian, Stoic and Epicurean Thought in Sixteenth- and Early- Seventeenth-Century Europe	86
The Scholastic Aristotle.....	88
Aristotle in Europe’s Catholic Universities	90
The Protestant Engagement with Aristotle.....	92
The Humanist Aristotle	94
Seneca, Justus Lipsius and the Emergence of Neostoicism	99
Stoic Thought in the Civil Philosophy of Hugo Grotius	105
Pierre Gassendi and the Advent of Neop Epicureanism	115
Conclusion.....	125

3. The Ancient Notion of Self-Preservation in the Theories of Thomas Hobbes	128
Hobbes, Scholasticism and the ‘New Science’	128
Self-Preservation in the Natural Philosophy of Hobbes	155
Self-Preservation in Hobbes’s Moral Psychology	174
Self-Preservation and the Formation of the State in Hobbes’s Political Philosophy	194
Conclusion	201
4. The Ancient Notion of Self-Preservation in the Theories of Benedict Spinoza	206
‘Spinoza the Stoic’: A Reassessment	209
Nature, Providence and Self-Preservation in the Early Ethical Works	219
Spinoza and Cartesian <i>Conatus</i>	234
Self-Preservation and Hellenistic Philosophy in Spinoza’s <i>Ethics</i>	247
Self-Preservation and the Formation of the State in Spinoza’s Political Writings	266
Conclusion	272
Works Cited	277

Declaration of Originality and Word Count

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing that is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text. I further declare that no part of this dissertation has already been or is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma, or other qualification here or at any other University.

I attest that the word count of this dissertation does not exceed the 80,000 word limit set out in the guidelines of the *Faculty of History PhD Course Handbook* (Sec. 4.3.1, p. 15) and on the Board of Graduate Studies' *Format of the Thesis* webpage (<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/current/submitting/phd/format.html>).

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Dissertation Summary

Over the course of four sections this PhD examines the ways in which the Aristotelian, Stoic and Epicurean philosophers portray bodily activity. In particular, it argues that their claims regarding bodies' natural tendency to preserve themselves, and seek out the goods capable of promoting their well-being, came to influence Hobbes's and Spinoza's later accounts of natural, animal and social behaviour.

The first section presents the ancient accounts of natural and animal bodily tendencies and explores the specific ways in which the Aristotelian, Stoic and Epicurean views on animal desires came to complement and diverge from each other. After investigating the perceived links between natural philosophy, psychology and ethics, the section proceeds to consider how the ancients used this 'unified' view of nature to guide their accounts of the soul's primary appetites and desires. Also examined is the extent to which civil society is portrayed as a means of securing the individual against others, and how Aristotelian *philia*, Theophrastian *oikeiotês* and Stoic *oikeiôsis* came to stand in opposition to the fear-driven and compact-based accounts of social formation favoured by the Epicureans.

The second section considers how the ancient accounts of impulsive behaviour and social formation were received and diffused via new editions of ancient texts, eclectic readings of Aristotle, and the attempts of Neostoic and Neop Epicurean authors to update and systematise those philosophies from the late sixteenth century onwards. The particular treatments of Hellenistic thought by authors such as Justus Lipsius, Hugo Grotius and Pierre Gassendi are considered in detail and are placed within the context of the growing trend to use Stoic and Epicurean thought to replace the authority of Aristotle in the areas of science, psychology, and politics.

The final two sections are devoted respectively to considering the ways in which Hobbes and Spinoza encountered the Hellenistic accounts of bodies and demonstrating how these earlier accounts came to feature in each of their own

discussions of bodily tendencies. Engaging with a wide range of their texts, each section develops the many nuances and contours that emerged as both writers developed and fine-tuned their accounts of bodily actions. This reveals the many ways in which the ancient accounts of self-preservation helped to unify large aspects of Hobbes's and Spinoza's own philosophical *corpus*, while equally showing how a well-developed account of bodily tendencies might challenge the scholastic worldview and expand further the boundaries of the so-called 'New Science'.

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During my time studying in Cambridge I have been fortunate in meeting many graduate students from around the world and I have had the pleasure of calling many of them my friends. From our conversations, shared PhD trials and tribulations, trips to the pub and countless rounds of golf, their camaraderie has reduced my stress-levels while enriching me socially and personally. Special thanks are due in particular to my good friend and former MPhil classmate Chris Haffenden, whose editorial skills and ability to construct well-crafted sentences and fluid prose still remain more enviable than imitable.

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It is difficult to convey fully the extent of my gratitude to Anna Plassart and I would most likely fail if I attempted to do so in such a short space as this. However, I hope it will suffice to say that her sense of humour, ability to listen and general *joie de vivre* have never faltered or failed to raise my spirits and that I look forward to whatever future adventures may come our way.

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7 July 2010

Textual Conventions & Abbreviations

TEXTS

In my use of primary sources, I have relied on either the most recent or standard editions available. When a modern edition has been consulted the original date of the work's publication is provided in brackets after the title in the first relevant footnote and the Works Cited section.

Although I have tended to use the authoritative English translations for most texts, these are not always entirely reliable or accurate. In some instances they may not exist. Where the author's particular phrasing or term is of central importance to an argument, or a translation is unclear or unavailable, I have provided the original passage or term either parenthetically or in the footnotes. When I have supplied my own translation I have done so in the footnotes. I have also indicated there those instances in which a quotation or translation has been borrowed.

CONVENTIONS

When I have placed my own emphasis I have done so in italics and indicated this change in the footnotes. For modern titles I have adopted the Headline style of capitalisation. In the case of non-English and pre-twentieth-century works, I have left the title capitalisations and punctuations as they were originally published. I have, however, updated all spellings in the text and the titles to modern British English.

REFERENCING

Page numbers refer to the particular edition I have used. If applicable, the particular volume in which a work is found is indicated with a Roman numeral in the first full citation and in the Works Cited section. Books, chapters and sections are all indicated with Arabic numerals.

For citations from Aristotle's works I have supplied the corresponding column numbers from Immanuel Bekker's *Aristotelis Opera* (Berlin: Prussian Academy of Sciences, 1831-1836). For Descartes's works I have provided the section numbers found in Charles Adam's and Paul Tannery's *Oeuvres de Descartes* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1897-1910).

ABBREVIATIONS

Below are the abbreviations I have adopted throughout the dissertation for referencing certain primary texts and sourcebooks:

Ancient Philosophy Sourcebooks

HP – *Hellenistic Philosophy* (eds. B. Inwood and L.P. Gerson)
H.Phil. – *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (eds. A.A. Long and D. Sedley)
Lives – Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*

Aristotle

<i>DA</i> – <i>On the Soul</i>	<i>MA</i> – <i>Movement of Animals</i>
<i>DC</i> – <i>On the Heavens</i>	<i>MM</i> – <i>Magna Moralia</i>
<i>DS</i> – <i>Sense and Sensibilia</i>	<i>Phys.</i> – <i>Physics</i>
<i>EE</i> – <i>Eudemian Ethics</i>	<i>Pol.</i> – <i>Politics</i>
<i>EN</i> – <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>	<i>R</i> – <i>Rhetoric</i>

Epicurus

KΔ – *Principal Doctrines/Sovran Maxims*
Vat. Coll. – *Codex Vaticanus Graecus*

Cicero

De amic. – *On Friendship*
De fin. – *On Ends*
De nat. – *On the Nature of the Gods*
De off. – *On Moral Obligation*
Par. Stoic. – *Paradoxa Stoicorum*

Grotius

DIBP – *The Rights of War and Peace*
DIP – *The Law of Prize and Booty*

Descartes

DM – Discourse on the Method

Ep. – Letters

Med. & Obj. and Rep. – Meditations on First Philosophy & Objections and Replies

PP – Principles of Philosophy

Rules – Rules for the Direction of the Mind

Hobbes

BL – John Aubrey’s Brief Lives

DC – De cive (English version)

DCo. – Concerning Body

DCo. (L) – De corpore (Latin version)

DH – De homine

DM – De motu (also known as the Critique of Thomas White’s ‘De mundo’ or the Anti-White)

EL – Elements of Law

Ep. – Letters

Lev. – Leviathan

LN&C – Questions

Concerning Liberty,

Necessity & Chance

ST – Short Treatise on First Principles

Spinoza

Ep. – Letters

Ethics:

A – Axiom

C – Corollary

Def. – Definition

DE – Definition of the Emotions

E – Explication

L – Lemma

Post. – Postulate

Pr. – Proof

P – Proposition

S – Scholium

PCP&MT – Principles of Cartesian Philosophy and Metaphysical Thoughts (using the same in-text abbreviations as Ethics)

PT – Political Treatise

ST – Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being

TdIE – Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect

TTP – Theological-Political Treatise

Preface

Even the most cursory glance at the writings of Thomas Hobbes and Benedict Spinoza reveals how central the notion of self-preservation was to their understanding of how nature directed physical, human and political bodies. From the simplest of bodies to the emotive complexities of humans, every type of body is said to demonstrate a natural tendency to resist its destruction and an active striving to restore its parts. So compelling was the natural tendency to protect and defend the human body from violent death, to achieve security, and to promote its general well-being, that the notion of self-preservation provides the foundation on which each author's account of human nature is constructed. The many manifestations of these bodily concerns in our daily activities and social interactions, they argued, were what justified the ranking of self-preservation as the first among nature's many rights and laws and this made it an unavoidable element in any theory intent on explaining the formation of civil society. Couched in the language of appetites and aversions, pleasures and pains, the passions of fear and desire, and external and internal motions, Hobbes and Spinoza employ elaborate preservation-driven accounts of human nature that testify to how important the concern for self had become to seventeenth-century accounts of human nature and civil association.

This PhD aims to look beyond these obvious appearances of self-preservation in the natural, ethical and political theories of Hobbes and Spinoza by examining what is altogether less clear: namely how their usages and understandings of self-preserving behaviours appropriated many of the same terms and arguments utilised in the earlier Epicurean and Stoic writings on natural bodily tendencies. By the seventeenth century the notion of self-preservation could be understood as a broadly Hellenistic doctrine and one whose philosophical importance had been re-established thanks to the prodigious efforts of Renaissance scholarship. This continent-wide interest in the Stoic and Epicurean worldviews at the end of the sixteenth century

ensured that the Hellenistic schools' views were now readily available to Europe's growing class of intellectuals via new and updated editions, translations and commentaries. From the early presses of Europe the views of Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus, Epicurus and Lucretius, to name but a few, re-emerged and were quickly integrated into the ever-expanding humanist approach to the studying and writing of contemporary philosophical treatises.

By the middle of the seventeenth century many of the interpretative difficulties that had initially appeared when ancient philosophy was first put into the service of contemporary politics, jurisprudence and theology had already been overcome. This had been achieved in the substantial reconstructions of Stoic and Epicurean philosophy produced by authors such as Justus Lipsius and Hobbes's long-time friend Pierre Gassendi. In the writings of Marin Mersenne, a friend to Hobbes, Descartes and Gassendi and the intellectual patron to other mathematical and scientific luminaries of the period, one finds another example of how authors were hard at work giving 'early modern European culture a continuity by making a conscious articulation between its past and its expected future.'¹ As we shall see later on, these writers served as important figures in the development of the 'Neohellenistic' spirit of the age and helped to extend the intellectual trajectory of Stoicism and Epicureanism as esteemed contributors to Europe's flourishing *respublica litterarum*. Figures such as these are not merely transitory in the history of philosophy, however, and their intellectual output and efforts to reshape ancient thought showed others the possibilities that arose when one 'put new wine into old bottles.'² As the seventeenth century progressed it was often these writers' reclamations and rehabilitations of Hellenistic philosophy that came to cast the longest shadow on the landscape of intellectual Europe, and it was in their works that one could find more than a hint of relief from the centuries of heated arguments over

¹ Alistair C. Crombie, 'Marin Mersenne (1588-1648) and the Seventeenth-Century Problem of Scientific Acceptability', *Physis: Rivista internazionale di storia della scienza*, 17 (1975), 186-204.

² Margaret J. Osler, 'New Wine in Old Bottles: Gassendi and the Aristotelian Origin of Physics', *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 26 (2002), 167-84.

what Aristotle and his ecclesiastical and scholastic commentators had had to say about this or that particular subject.

Frequently these humanistic investigations into, and usages of, alternative accounts of ethics, natural philosophy, and politics would garner the attention of later readers, and it would be on these more recently established interpretative grounds that new attacks and defences concerning the nature of bodies would appear. The sustained interest in self-preservation and its seemingly wide philosophical applicability around this period also says something about the perceived ability of Hellenistic ideas to help penetrate even the most recalcitrant areas of the prevailing philosophy. It is in Hobbes's and Spinoza's accounts of bodies that the aspirations of Lipsius and Gassendi may be said to have been partially realised. Their engagements, however, only represent a small part of the wider contemporary interest in using the perceived authority of the Hellenistic authors to articulate the rudiments of human nature and sociability. In the writings of authors such as Grotius and certain 'eclectic' Aristotelians such as Montecatini and Arnisaeus, one is struck by how the early-modern interest in the nature of bodies and their relationships often led to the direct importation of the method, form, or content of Stoic and Epicurean arguments and terms. The usages of these early contemporaries are examined as part of the larger reception of Stoic and Epicurean thought that took place in the decades before Hobbes and Spinoza took up their respective pens. As others have shown, Hellenistic thought, with its emphasis on the notions of self-interest, self-love, and self-preservation, also played a central role in the work of other luminaries of the period such as Samuel Pufendorf, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and many of Europe's early political economists.³

³ The Stoic and Epicurean influences on Rousseau's philosophy have been discussed at length in the work of Christopher Brooke, most recently in Christopher Brooke, 'Rousseau's 'Second Discourse': Between Epicureanism and Stoicism', in Christie McDonald and Stanley Hoffmann (eds.), *Rousseau and Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 44-57 and more generally in Christopher Brooke, 'Stoicism and Anti-Stoicism in the Seventeenth Century', in H.W. Blom and L.C. Winkel (eds.), *Grotius and the Stoa* (Assen: Royal Van Gorcum Press, 2004), 93-115. For an account of how 'self-love' was incorporated into eighteenth- and nineteenth-century economic thought see

The impact of this expansive humanist culture and its many advocates on Hobbes and Spinoza, as well as its ability to help them and others transcend the demands of contemporary religious orthodoxy, has been noted by many. Hobbes is frequently argued to have had a particularly strong Epicurean (and hence atheistic) strand running through his natural and political philosophy. Indeed many of his associates in England and France have also been counted as having displayed everything from an enthusiastic to a casual support for the atomic doctrine in their own writings and correspondence. The centrepiece of Spinoza's thought, his ethical philosophy, has equally been observed as bearing the imprint of ancient thought. Unlike Hobbes, however, his views on the connectedness of nature to its parts, the impulse to self-preservation, and the ordering of the passions have been portrayed as essentially Stoic (but equally atheistic) in their content and structure. The extent of these ancient and contemporary influences, and scholars' varying interpretations of them, will be discussed at length in the sections devoted specifically to Hobbes and Spinoza. In brief, however, they may be said to represent a valuable and vibrant area of scholarship in the substantial literature that exists for each writer, and an especially important one for those who seek to place the Hobbesian and Spinozistic worldviews not just within the context of their own locations and times, but also within the larger history of philosophy. Many of these accounts have therefore been careful to speak clearly and directly to the important role these previous philosophical traditions had on shaping the doctrines of Hobbes and Spinoza, while at the same time situating them within the scientific and philosophical discourse of the mid- to late- seventeenth century. It is, for example, through objections to Descartes's 'first' principles of natural philosophy that Hobbes and Spinoza both cut their philosophical teeth, and through which Spinoza in particular first began to incorporate notions such as striving and resistance into his own fledgling work. Any presentation of these authors' doctrines is therefore always going to be beholden to

Pierre Force, 'First Principles in Translation: The Axiom of Self-Interest from Adam Smith to Jean-Baptiste Say', *History of Political Economy*, 38/2 (2006), 319-38 (esp. pp. 323-30).

some extent to the rapid changes in, and contemporary responses to, the scientific, political and religious *status quo* of seventeenth-century Europe.

Some of these readings of Hobbes and Spinoza, however, have attempted to diminish or altogether sever the contemporary connection, arguing that it occludes the fundamentally Epicurean and Stoic aspects of their thought. What these arguments generally fail to appreciate, however, is the extent to which the reception and development of Hellenistic thought was frequently employed to help animate and augment these contemporary understandings of bodies and their particular natures. Rather than asserting the strictly ‘Neostoic’ or ‘Neoepicurean’ agendas favoured in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, Hobbes’s and Spinoza’s writings have come down to us as examples of how many in the mid-seventeenth-century were more likely to promote a ‘Neohellenistic’ solution to a philosophical problem *du jour*, and with less of the fanfare and theological motivation that had accompanied the earlier efforts of writers such as Lipsius or Gassendi. It is thus strongly contended that rather than having incurred indebtedness to a single ancient school in their discussions on self-preservation, Hobbes and Spinoza incorporated central elements from both the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers to produce contemporary accounts of bodies, and that this often led them to use ancient positions in a complementary manner which would have appeared alien to an ancient reader.

There is much benefit to be had in approaching an author’s work under the auspices of collective, rather than specific, appropriation. Primarily, it helps modern readers better understand the precise ways in which Hellenistic thought contributed to the development of early modern philosophy in general and how specific arguments became useful buttresses for contemporary lines of inquiry. Margaret Osler, for example, has found the ‘metaphor’ of appropriation quite useful for giving ‘agency to particular thinkers, and enabling us to understand them in their own

particular historical and intellectual contexts.’⁴ Recognising where these appropriations have occurred also serves to remind us, she adds, that ideas do not influence subsequent ideas, nor do they develop by their own intrinsic power. Instead, ‘particular individuals in real historical contexts deploy and develop earlier ideas to solve problems of their own.’⁵ For Hobbes and Spinoza, and many of their contemporaries, appropriating earlier ideas became an important tool in their individual struggles to bring a ‘new philosophy’ into existence.⁶

These efforts to bridge the sometimes substantial historical gaps in the development and usage of a particular idea have proven fruitful ground for modern intellectual historians, who desire to go beyond the single question of whether a particular source was consulted by an author. Instead, it has become a far more interesting and profitable task to ‘disentangle and reconstruct’ those particular elements in a text that link the author’s views to those of previous and successive thinkers, helping to show both the continuity and divisions that frequently occur within specific fields of inquiry and the larger history of philosophy.⁷ These reconstructions are greatly aided if a scholar can also provide the full trajectory of an idea or argument rather than merely generalised and isolated accounts of how it came to rest in a given context. Self-preservation, because of its presence within all accounts of body, the many psychological and physiological discussions which attend it, and the contentiousness surrounding its placement amongst other natural goods, is not easily reducible to how one particular ancient or early-modern author may have chosen to portray it in their writings. Instead, as the sections devoted to Aristotle and the Hellenistic schools make clear, the complexities and nuances

⁴ Margaret J. Osler, ‘Early Modern Uses of Hellenistic Philosophy: Gassendi’s Epicurean Project’, in Jon Miller and Brad Inwood (eds.), *Hellenistic and Early Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 30–44 (p. 30).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Stephen Menn, ‘The Intellectual Setting’, in Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, II vols. (I; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 33–86 (p. 34).

⁷ Donald Rutherford, ‘Introduction’, in Donald Rutherford (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1–9 (p. 6).

associated with the notion of self-preservation were discussed and debated over many centuries, and it is because of these different approaches to a shared point of interest that a seventeenth-century argument concerning the nature of bodies might well be the product of their having engaged with multiple intellectual traditions.

Apart from the sizeable efforts of the Stoics and Epicureans to provide philosophy with a strong understanding of the body's relation to itself and the external world, the seventeenth century's engagement with these earlier schools of thought was spurred on by the anti-Aristotelian climate that had developed during the later stages of the previous century. With Aristotle and his adherents serving as straw men for the non-scholastic and humanist writers, Hobbes and Spinoza wrote about natural philosophy, politics, and ethics at a time when many were taking an active interest in other philosophies' abilities to supply alternative, workable accounts of nature. Eventually these interests would lead to a diminishing of the centuries-long gravitas of Aristotelian philosophy within Europe's universities and churches, as the pressures from the politics of the confessional divide and the rapidly emerging 'New Science', with its emphasis on mechanical principles, resistance and continuous motion, began to take their toll. Hobbes and Spinoza could be found joining a growing list of contemporary writers who approached the views of their predecessors in the hope of seizing on these alternative and attractive models and drafting their own approaches to the study of bodies. In a recent sketch of what philosophical life looked like around this time, Donald Rutherford has noted that authors would frequently turn to the past as part of their larger attempts to understand and write about the rapidly changing conditions of the world around them. Free of the stale disputations and textual commentaries that had dominated scholastic thought in Europe's medieval universities, seventeenth-century philosophers could be found charting their own courses of philosophical investigation and 'actively studying, disagreeing with, and responding to the views of their contemporaries and recent

predecessors.⁸ Philosophy thus became something of a shared activity and its truths the result of carefully crafted syntheses drawn from previous intellectual traditions and frequently competing lines of thought. However, the views of the various ancient philosophies were not always given equal attention, so that while the writings of Stoic and Epicurean philosophers profited and flourished from the efforts of able Renaissance editors and doxographers, the views of Plato and the Peripatetics comparatively lagged behind. In the view of A.A. Long, this lack of interest almost certainly owed to the latter philosophies' failure to have secured a 'monopoly' over Greek philosophy before the emergence of the increasingly assertive and expansive Stoic and Epicurean schools.⁹ This is not to say that, at least in the case of the Peripatetics, they need remain entirely silent in the later discussions of bodily relations. On the contrary, it is precisely through the similarities between Theophrastian *oikeiotês* (known via the widely read text of Porphyry) and Stoic *oikeiôsis* that the notion of self-preservation acquired much of the robustness which made it attractive and relevant to the arguments of numerous, and occasionally opposed groups of authors. Yet while the Stoic and Theophrastian discussions would have provided ample insight into how the notion of self-preservation permeated human sociability, the most serious scholars of ancient thought would have also recognised that these terms' conceptual origins lay as far back as the fourth-century writings of Xenophon.¹⁰

Certainly the wisdom of the ancients was something to be celebrated and disseminated for many, but for their own parts neither Hobbes nor Spinoza can be said to have actively promoted the worldviews of those long since departed. Indeed, it would be difficult to find two thinkers who were less interested in acknowledging the role previous authors had had on the development and language of their own

⁸ Ibid. (p. 6). The movement from university-based to private, individual-based philosophy is also discussed in Richard Tuck, 'The Institutional Setting', in Garber and Ayers (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, Vol. I, 9-32 (pp. 13-14).

⁹ A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy* (2nd edn.; London: Duckworth, 1986) (p. 9).

¹⁰ Michael Erler, 'Stoic *Oikeiôsis* and Xenophon's Socrates', in Theodore Scaltsas and Andrew S. Mason (eds.), *Zeno of Citium and his Legacy: The Philosophy of Zeno* (Larnaca: Master Print Demetriades Bros Ltd., 2002), 239-57 (pp. 242-45).

accounts of body. Hobbes's words for the ancient Hellenistic schools in *Leviathan* are particularly vociferous and filled with denigration for their perceived 'wisdom' in the areas of natural philosophy and ethics. It was this deep-seated contempt for ancient political thought (and particularly that of Aristotle), for example, which led him to declare famously that his treatment of civil philosophy in *De cive* was the progenitor of the subject. Rhetorical flair and claims of originality aside, however, Hobbes's own words often betray his acquaintance with the numerous contributions of his predecessors. At one particularly illuminating junction in his writings, he can be found positioning his own account of the soul's self-preserving motions within the linguistic and psychological contexts of both the Stoa and the Garden. Spinoza likewise employs a vocabulary in support of his claims for organisms' natural 'striving for self-preservation' that suggests far more than a casual familiarity with the arguments of Zeno and his followers. Words and phrases alone do not tell the whole tale, however, and indeed the intellectual traditions which both Hobbes and Spinoza inherited had also done much to instil an appreciation of these earlier arguments regarding the essence of human nature and natural bodies.

Arriving at a full understanding of how the Hellenistic schools helped to shape Hobbes's and Spinoza's usage of self-preservation requires one to depart from much of the existing literature. There has been a frequent tendency in the modern commentaries to seize upon each author's *magnum opus* and hold it up as the embodiment of their entire philosophical programme or as a self-contained set of philosophical arguments. This has been particularly true, it seems, for Spinoza, who has garnered substantial scholarly attention for the propositions offered in his posthumously-published *Ethics*. In Hobbes scholarship, there has been less of a tendency to speak to one text, but rather to gravitate towards one aspect of his thought while quickly passing over or ignoring the others. While Hobbes's contributions to the field of political science are numerous and worthy of close and critical examination, as are Spinoza's own attempts at geometrically demonstrating the extensiveness of nature, it is important that one keeps the entirety of the

Hobbesian and Spinozistic systems in play and investigates how each of their areas supported and integrated with the others. Thus while self-preservation can be shown to have played a central and important role in each author's well-known accounts of human nature and political association, both writers' engagement with, and development of, the ancient arguments and terms at the heart of these accounts are the products of a distillation process that occurred in earlier manuscripts, correspondence and texts. In the case of Hobbes, it may also be seen to continue beyond the more famous discussions and analysis of political bodies. By working through the larger corpus of Hobbes's and Spinoza's philosophical output the true scope and complexity, and the overall importance of self-preservation to their larger philosophical projects becomes clear. When we step back to take in this larger philosophical picture we may also be said to be engaging in the investigative method suggested by Hobbes himself, who after chiding those clerics who had approached Scripture from citations of obscure passages and clouded the understanding of its meaning with their narrow readings, wrote:

For it is not the bare words, but the scope of the writer that gives the true light, by which any writing is to be interpreted; and they that insist upon single texts, without considering the main design, can derive nothing from them clearly; but rather by casting atoms of Scripture, as dust before men's eyes, make everything more obscure than it is; an ordinary artifice of those that seek not the truth, but their own advantage.¹¹

The scope and breadth of the early-modern engagement with the ancient arguments concerning self-preservation becomes clear over the course of the last three sections of this dissertation. Each section shows how a specific author or group of authors developed their own account of bodily relations either by departing from or modifying particular elements in their predecessors' worldviews. In each section

¹¹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan [1651]*, ed. Richard Tuck (Revised Student edn.; Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) (43, p. 415).

the discussion of self-preservation and bodily tendencies is laid out chronologically (insofar as is possible with ancient texts and fragments), so that the reader is better able to see how these discussions came to play an important role in the development of a variety of philosophical arguments, ranging from the properties of all physical bodies, to the similarities in animal and human psychology, and finally to the complex accounts of natural rights and social- political relations that often developed as extensions of these initial investigations into natural motivating forces.

Of final pressing concern is the question of what a close reading of the ancient sources, and in particular their accounts of self-preservation, may be said to contribute to our own modern understanding of Hobbes's and Spinoza's theories. It is not enough simply to suggest that ancient philosophy was in a position to offer sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors with a full, alternative account of bodies' natural activity. Nor is it enough to believe that contemporary thought was itself unable to advance the discussion of natural tendencies beyond what had appeared in the earlier Hellenistic texts. Instead, what Hobbes's and Spinoza's usages of self-preservation demonstrate is that not all areas of ancient thought were rejected out of hand, and that in many cases the ancient and recently revived philosophies of the Stoics and Epicureans were co-opted into later philosophical discourse because their detailed arguments, specific terms and pliable notions appeared to be worth vindicating and disseminating. As Susan James has pointed out, although Spinoza would have himself been 'philosophically indifferent to the fact that the theory he was drawing on was an ancient one,'¹² and Hobbes almost certainly would have rejected any such attributions, there is much to be gained in appreciating how certain unrecognised 'allegiances' helped shape many of the doctrines on which these authors' reputations would rise and fall.

¹² Susan James, 'Spinoza the Stoic', in Tom Sorell (ed.), *The Rise of Modern Philosophy: The Tension Between the New and Traditional Philosophies from Machiavelli to Leibniz* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 289-316 (p. 291).

Hobbes's and Spinoza's shared belief in the explanatory power of self-preservation holds fast in all the realms of their thought: from natural philosophy to psychology and from their ethics to their political thought. It is from the simple and commonly-held assertion that bodies naturally 'strive' for their preservation that each attempts to clarify the complex nature of bodily activity, hoping to illuminate in the process how self-preservation is capable of stoking powerful passions such as desire and fear. In each of these usages, the nuances, phrasings and terms found in the earlier Epicurean and Stoic discussions of bodies continue to do the philosophical work both Hobbes and Spinoza require. However, the failure of Hobbes and Spinoza to acknowledge the good work of their predecessors is only a small difficulty the modern scholar must contend with, especially when one considers that neither author completely mimics the positions put forward by their predecessors. As a testament to the ability of each of these competing worldviews to help clarify the complex nature of bodies, Hobbes and Spinoza break from the Neostoic and Neopieurean camps by importing aspects of *both* Stoic and Epicurean thought into their writings. The close reading of the ancient sources in the early chapters of this dissertation thus establishes what may be seen as the distinctive claims and contributions of the ancient philosophers before they were subjected to the philosophical blending of views that became increasingly acceptable and common as the centuries progressed. This blending is clearly on display in the works of Hobbes and Spinoza and indeed it is their own reliance on self-preservation to secure the foundations of their theories that shows the extent to which both of them worked tightly within, and contributed to, a discursive tradition that traced its roots back to arguments devised in the Hellenistic schools.

Despite Hobbes's vehement denunciations in *Leviathan* and Spinoza's silence about the contributions ancient philosophy had made to understanding the world-at-large, the centrality each gives to natural, self-regarding behaviour in their work demonstrates that ancient philosophy was not altogether dismissed. Instead, the notion's ancient origins were simply played down as part of the larger effort to

develop a 'new' account of science while self-preservation continued to connect what might otherwise remain a set of disparate and unconnected attempts to explain the fundamental principles of natural activity. In reading Hobbes and Spinoza we then come to see their usage of self-preservation as transcending a strictly ancient-contemporary dichotomy. This owes to their preference of using the notion to analyse all bodily activity, while simultaneously showing self-preservation to be a philosophical notion capable of resisting the transformations to earlier lines of inquiry they were making in the fields of natural philosophy, ethics, psychology and politics.

With the method and scope clarified and these myriad philosophical and historical considerations in mind, let us turn our attention now to the ancient accounts of bodies so that we might see in detail how the notion of self-preservation looked and operated in its earliest forms.

1.1 The Notion of Self-Preservation in the Philosophy of Aristotle

At first glance, it might seem surprising that Aristotle is the first person of interest in an account of how the notion of self-preservation operates in the seventeenth-century writings of Hobbes and Spinoza. Whereas the idea that bodies are naturally driven to look after their well-being and security plays an explicit role in each of these latter authors' discussions of the primary motivating forces in ethics and politics, at no point in his extant writings does Aristotle indicate that animals possess a specific impulse, tendency or desire to protect the body and its constitution. Such an interpretation may be said to stand in opposition to that found in Cicero, who would later attribute to Aristotle and other pre-Hellenistic philosophers such as Xenocrates an 'account of the primary constitution of nature' in which they emphasised the virtuousness of 'following nature' while holding self-preservation to be the 'chief good' at which every organism aimed.¹ Charting the philosophical and historical roots of self-preservation, it seemed clear to Cicero that Zeno and the other early Stoics had merely developed an alternative terminology for advancing a set of arguments they had encountered elsewhere. Cicero's claims, however, crucially failed to indicate where in Aristotle's writings any such views appear, or what particular arguments the notion of self-preservation was intended to support. For their own part, the doxographer Diogenes Laertius and later Stoic writers such as Seneca and Hierocles remained noticeably silent on whether any historical or philosophical connection existed between Aristotle, the Peripatetics and the Stoics in regards to self-preservation.

¹ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *On Ends*, ed. H. Rackham (Loeb Classical Library; London: W. Heinemann Ltd., 1967) (4.16-20; 5.24-27).

Cicero's argument that a natural desire to promote and protect the health of the body existed in Aristotle's philosophy rested on his belief that his predecessor's writings demonstrate at times a noticeable interest in how nature prompted individuals to look after their own well-being and security, and in the realm of politics, how this natural love of self and others served as the source from which all familial, social and political relations sprang. As we shall see, despite the issues raised by Cicero's claims, it is nevertheless possible to detect at certain junctures in Aristotle's writings many of the broad themes which would be fleshed out in detail in the later Stoic and Epicurean accounts of natural behaviour. However, before we can attempt to highlight the ways in which Aristotle's views contributed to these later and better-known accounts of self-preserving behaviours and tendencies, it is important to set out some key interpretative pitfalls that must be avoided. First, rather than ascribing an outright endorsement of a natural tendency towards self-preservation to Aristotle, as Cicero did, we should instead focus on how certain texts in the *corpus Aristotelicum* deal with many of the terms and concepts which came to animate later Hellenistic and early-modern formulations of the body's natural and chief goods. In this way, we may see Aristotle as having invoked the notion of self-preservation in his philosophy, without having explicitly ascribed a specific impulse to it. This presence asserts itself, for example, in his assertion that humans possess, and frequently act in accordance with, a natural sense of 'self-love'. Outside the ethical context, this tempered approach will also help us appreciate other aspects of Aristotle's thought. For example, the notion of self-preservation may be said to underlie the various discussions about how a natural love for the body and an overarching desire to promote its well-being supply the psychological motive for explaining the soul's pursuit of objects which can sustain it and promote its life-supporting functions. Second, because these positions develop in various places, rather than as one self-contained set of arguments or observations, we must not be tempted into constructing a theory of corporeal relations that is unsubstantiated by the texts themselves, or to overstate Aristotle's own position on how he saw nature helping the soul to stave off its destruction. To do so would be to advance the type of

mythologies that frequently arise when historians attempt to make classical authors say what *they* want them to say.²

This section will approach Aristotle's contribution to understanding bodies and their self-preserving tendencies in the manner previously suggested by Susan James and others, showing how his writings on motion, the soul, the senses, and ethics all helped to establish what would become key aspects of the later and more formalised arguments of ancient and early-modern philosophy.³ Such an interpretation will also reinforce the continuous presence Aristotle and his views were to have in later Hellenistic and early-modern philosophy. As we shall see later on, Aristotelianism in all of its various 'guises' became an inescapable consideration for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century philosophers because of its ability to set the terms around which many of their own debates concerning human nature and political association centred. Such breadth rendered the philosophy, for both ancient and early-modern author alike, a common 'starting point' in respect to their own approaches to questions regarding bodily activity and passivity could be found either to agree or disagree. In considering how Aristotle envisages the soul's various capacities, and looking at the prominence given to the ability of perceived pleasures and pains to elicit the earliest types of appetitive and aversive movements in particular, Aristotle's work came to provide an important source for those who believed the soul's motions and functions could speak of nature's larger dictates.

² As Quentin Skinner has warned, there is a 'perpetual danger in our attempts to enlarge our historical understanding,' when 'our expectations about what someone must be saying or doing will themselves determine that we understand the agent to be doing something which he would not – or even could not – himself have accepted as an account of what he *was* doing.' James Tully and Quentin Skinner (eds.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics* (Cambridge: Princeton, 1988) (p. 31).

³ Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) (pp. 30-31); Rutherford, 'Introduction' (pp. 6-7).

Motion: A Conceptual Link in Aristotle's Philosophy

While the pursuit of *eudaimonia* guides Aristotle's account of ethics, it is the process of motion or change (*kinēsis*) that supplies the conceptual link for answering the larger questions about the nature of all bodies and their souls. Motion also provides the philosophical background against which central topics such as the matter and form of bodies, the soul's appetites and desires, and the processes of imagination and sense perception emerge. These early attempts to capture the underlying motive principles of nature also give Aristotle's approach a broad historical appeal, as the interest in motion and change connect his philosophy not only with the approaches taken by some of western philosophy's earliest figures but also with those taken by many of the schools and writers who would rise to prominence in the centuries after his death.

Clarifying the inseparability between the body, the soul and its motions constituted the chief objective of Aristotelian natural philosophy and psychology. It also helped establish the Aristotelian worldview as a clear alternative to the motionless worlds advocated by Eleatic philosophers such as Parmenides and Melissus or the element-based accounts of motion proposed by early 'physicists' such as Democritus or those of Plato.⁴ In large part because of the types of arguments offered by Aristotle and his Peripatetic heirs, motion remained a *cause célèbre* in many later accounts of natural philosophy. By the beginning of the third century BC, one could find Epicurean and Stoic philosophers respectively setting out to refute or refashion the tenets concerning motion in Aristotelian natural philosophy and psychology along the lines of their own worldviews. Such was Aristotle's overriding interest in motion that it enabled some form of methodological consensus to emerge, even in those instances when his views were being criticised or altogether replaced. Although later mechanist writers such as Descartes, Hobbes and Gassendi would all take issue with the Aristotelian 'categories' of motion (holding that only local motion

⁴ Aristotle, *Physics* in J. Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, II vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), Vol. I (1.2, 184b15ff., p. 315); Aristotle, *On the Soul* in Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. I (1.2, 404b15ff., p. 645).

existed), their constant attempts to frame the study of natural philosophy, psychology and ethics in terms of bodies in motion nevertheless spoke closely to the original course charted by their ancient opponent. It is towards understanding how these natural, psychological and ethical usages of motion helped Aristotle explain the life-sustaining operations of the soul that we will now turn our attention.

Owing to the primacy and pervasiveness of *kinēsis* Aristotle argues that an examination of the body's potential and actual motions is the most likely approach for yielding an understanding of its particular essence. 'Nature,' Aristotle writes in *Physics*, 'is a principle of motion and change, and it is the subject of our inquiry. We must therefore see that we understand what motion is; for if it were unknown, nature too would be unknown.'⁵ At the heart of Aristotelian physics one finds distinctions concerning motion operating within the definitions of both natural and artificial bodies. In the case of the former, natural bodies' essences are characterised by the possession of an internal or self-initiating principle of motion, while artificial bodies are only said to be capable of movement imparted to them through 'violent' or external force (*dunamis*).⁶ Because these latter forces are 'unnatural' (and physics is only concerned with what is natural), they remain, strictly speaking, outside of the immediate realm of physical investigation.⁷ This overriding importance of natural motion in securing the basic tenets of the Aristotelian worldview has captured the attention of modern commentators, each of whom has used it in various degrees to address what they believe are the key considerations in Aristotle's work. For James, the textual prominence of motion owes primarily to the various dimensions which Aristotle wants to lend to it. In speaking of 'the way a thing acts, describing a

⁵ Aristotle, *Physics* (3.1, 200b13-15, p. 342).

⁶ Ibid. (2.1, 192b9ff., p. 329). A larger discussion of natural and unnatural motions occurs in Aristotle, *On the Heavens* in Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. I (3.2, 300a20ff., p. 492). Aristotle argues there, for example, that 'every body has its natural movement, which is not constrained or contrary to its nature.'

⁷ As we shall see, they do receive a significant amount of attention in the two *Ethics*' discussions of what constitutes 'natural' and 'unnatural' actions. On the categorisation of external 'force' and 'violence' in Aristotle's physical system see the comments in Helen S. Lang, *The Order of Nature in Aristotle's Physics: Place and the Elements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) (pp. 208-15).

physical change, or postulating that bodies require contact between each other,' an object is said to have undergone motion.⁸ These attributions may be said to stem from motion's ubiquitous nature, a point which texts such as *De anima* and *Physics* continually seek to press home.

Such straightforward invocations have also been subject to misinterpretation on occasion. For their own part Alan Code and Julius Moravcsik have suggested that one of the distinguishing features of natural bodies is not only their possession of an internal source of motion, but also their possession of a natural ability to resist change.⁹ Their interpretation seems to place a principle of conservation at the very core of Aristotelian physics, and by extension posits that the existence of all natural bodies owes to a natural function capable of preserving a body's matter and form. The implications for other ensouled things are equally strong. In the later natural philosophies of the Epicureans and Stoics one can find arguments regarding natural bodies' resistive abilities and properties. However, the attribution of such principles to Aristotelian thought goes too far. Rather than making a resistance to change an essential characteristic of natural bodies, one only finds Aristotle arguing that natural bodies and their souls possess a tendency towards motion.¹⁰ Code and Moravcsik's claims, on the other hand, fit more comfortably with his psychology, and this is a point we will consider shortly. Works such as *Physics* and *De anima* are intended to demonstrate how nature and soul possess their own hegemonic and organising principles and how motion demonstrates the ways in which nature and soul interact with one another. Physically and psychologically this relationship is manifest most clearly in natural bodies' capacity for experiencing locomotion, alteration, decay, and growth in a particular place (*topos*) and at a particular time.¹¹ An understanding of these basic motions' natures further allows the philosopher to go beyond the

⁸ James, *Passion and Action* (p. 36).

⁹ Alan Code and Julius Moravcsik, 'Explaining Various Forms of Living', in Martha C. Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (eds.), *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 129-45 (p. 130).

¹⁰ Aristotle, *Physics* (2.1, 192b14-15, p. 329).

¹¹ Aristotle, *DA* (406a12-13); Aristotle, *Physics* (2.1, 192b12-16, p. 329).

characteristics of all natural bodies and examine the particularly complex motions at work in the human soul, supplying a ‘way of talking about thinking and about the processes which seem to involve both thought and motion.’¹² This renders the account of essence and nature as a clear attempt to get beyond a simple investigation of the material constituents and properties of bodies and to expose the efficient causes that explain *why* and *how* a body moves or changes at all.¹³ The origin of a natural being’s motion is its soul, or what Aristotle famously terms in *De anima* ‘an actuality of the first kind of a natural body having life potentially in it.’¹⁴ To understand this definition, we need to consider the more basic categories of substance.

The Soul as Form and Capacity in *De anima*

According to Aristotle, ‘every natural body which has life is a substance, and so a substance in the sense of being a composite’ on account of its possessing both matter and form.¹⁵ The bulk of Aristotle’s metaphysics, as Stephen Everson has pointed out, revolves around distinguishing between the various types of substance that exist within the cosmos.¹⁶ Substance is said to exist in one of three senses: in the sense of matter which is not a ‘this’, in that of form or essence which is a ‘this’, or as a composite of both form and matter. All matter is potentiality, while form is actuality.¹⁷ This actuality has two degrees, which Aristotle illustrates by distinguishing between knowledge and reflecting. The acquisition of knowledge moves the potentiality of the intellect to a first level of actuality; the further activity

¹² James, *Passion and Action* (p. 36).

¹³ Michael Frede, ‘On Aristotle’s Conception of the Soul’, in Nussbaum and Rorty (eds.), *Essays on Aristotle’s De Anima*, 93-107 (p. 95).

¹⁴ Aristotle, *DA* (2.1, 412a27-28, p. 656).

¹⁵ *Ibid.* (412a15-16); also Aristotle, *Metaphysics* in Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. II (5.4, 1014b16ff., pp. 1602-3).

¹⁶ Stephen Everson, ‘Psychology’, in J. Barnes (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 168-94 (p. 171).

¹⁷ Aristotle, *DA* (2.1, 412a6-10, p. 656).

of reflection to a second actuality.¹⁸ The soul is an actuality of the first kind, that is, one that actualises the body. It possesses a potential for life while still leaving space for a further degree of actualisation of these potentials as part of living.¹⁹ The different capacities represent different kinds of actualities and help distinguish between the types of living things. All natural bodies are classed within the third type of substance since they have both form and matter – and to specify between the various natural bodies one must enquire as to what the form of that particular body is.²⁰ In the case of living things, this is to consider its *psuchê* and its capacities, and as we shall see shortly, many of these capacities and their objects are geared towards the preservation of the body’s soul and sustaining those motions and functions necessary for the continuance of life.

For Aristotle, the attempts of the earlier philosophers to devise general ‘definitions’ of the soul by downplaying the differences between the souls of plants, animals and humans in favour of highlighting their commonalities left much to be desired.²¹ It is precisely the opposite approach that Aristotelian psychology intends to take. Any account of soul that denotes these specific and different capacities between the various types of soul will be the most useful and rigorous.²² Some commentators, however, have found difficulty in Aristotle’s application of the matter-form distinction to the soul in relation to the body, as Aristotle insists that a natural body cannot exist *as that body* except insofar as it is informed by the soul. That is to say, the matter of which the soul is the principle of life is necessarily already alive.²³ The matter cannot be specified independently of the form, and hence the form-matter

¹⁸ Ibid. (2.2, 414a4ff., p. 659).

¹⁹ Ibid. (414a27-29).

²⁰ Ibid. (2.3, 415a12-13; 2.4, 415a14-16, p. 660).

²¹ Ibid. (2.1, 412a7, p. 656; 412b4,10 and 413a9-10, p. 657, and 414b25-28, 32-33, p. 660).

²² ‘It is evident that the way to give the most adequate definition of soul is to seek in the case of *each* of its forms for the most appropriate definition.’ Ibid. (2.3, 415a12-13, p. 660).

²³ ‘The problem with Aristotle’s application of the matter-form distinction to living things is that the body that is here the matter is itself ‘already’ necessarily living. For the body is this head, these arms, etc. (or this flesh, these bones, etc.), but there was no such thing as this head before birth and there will not be a head, properly speaking, after death. In short, the material in this case is *not* capable of existing *except* as the material of an animal, as matter *so in-formed*.’ J.L. Ackrill, ‘Aristotle’s Definitions of *Psuchê*’, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 72 (1972-73), 119-33 (pp. 125-26).

distinction breaks down. Whether this is a problem for Aristotle or not (his point may precisely be the *difference* between natural objects and artefacts as regards the contingency of the matter-form relationship), what it does show is that for Aristotle, natural bodies are essentially and irreducibly alive.²⁴ And since the principle or form of life is the soul, this backs up the larger point made by Code and Moravcsik about how closely related the subject matter of physics, biology and psychology are in Aristotle's writings. 'In the case of a living thing, its soul, and hence its form, is its nature, and its 'psychological' activity is the exercise (*energeia*) of the various capacities and potentialities (*dunamis*) assigned to its soul. Since the natural/physical activity of a thing just is the activity due to its nature, it follows that for a living thing its natural/physical activity just is its psychological activity.'²⁵ It is on account of this cohesion that Amélie Oksenberg Rorty has characterised the arguments in *De anima* as an 'ancient case study in philosophical biopsychology.'²⁶

Biology clearly plays an important role in Aristotle's understanding of the soul's psychic powers - powers which are all responsible for contributing to the preservation of the body's motions, the sustenance of its growth and the prevention of its destruction. While the *Physics* proposes four types of cause in the cosmos – material, formal, efficient, and final – the soul is said to exist as the formal and final cause of the body. It is also the principle instigator of change within the body and the source of its living.²⁷ Central to the notion of 'living' is the ability of the soul's capacities to aid its existence and promote those activities in which life consists. Reproduction and nourishment are what allow the soul to partake in the 'eternal and divine' and it is these activities, according to Aristotle, which represent the *telos*

²⁴ Miles Burnyeat speaks of Aristotle's 'deeply alien' conception of the physical to a modern understanding of body in light of Descartes's conception of it. See M.F. Burnyeat, 'Is an Aristotelian Philosophy of Mind Still Credible? A Draft', in Nussbaum and Rorty (eds.), *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, 15-26 (p. 21).

²⁵ Code and Moravcsik, 'Explaining Various Forms of Living', (pp. 130-31).

²⁶ Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, 'De Anima: Its Agenda and Its Recent Interpreters', in Nussbaum and Rorty (eds.), *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, 7-13 (p. 7).

²⁷ The full account of the causes is given in Aristotle, *Physics* 2.3. The particular causes attributable to soul are found in *DA* (2.4, 415b8-12, p. 661).

towards which ‘all things strive, that for the sake of which they do whatsoever their nature renders possible.’²⁸ Yet such phrasing, Aristotle continues, is itself ‘ambiguous’ so that the phrase ‘for the sake of which’ requires further elaboration. It may refer to the end for which something is done or ‘the being in whose interest the act is done.’²⁹ Because living things are unable to continuously partake in the divine and eternal because of their inevitable decay, they achieve nature’s end in the way most conducive to their own natures. As such the organism ‘remains not indeed as the self-same individual but continues its existence in something like itself – not numerically but specifically one.’³⁰

The presence of any one particular capacity is determined by the type of soul a body possesses. The most rudimentary of ensouled things are said to be plants, which despite their immobility and lack of sensation, can be found exhibiting a capacity for self-nutrition and reproduction and the corresponding motions of growth and decay.³¹ In spite of their relative simplicity, the nutritive capacity of a plant’s soul shares with other types of soul the ability to interact with external substances, and it is on account of the nutritive power’s capacity to absorb or ingest food that the soul perseveres in its existence. This owes primarily to the substantive nature of food, which Aristotle claims has the power to increase the ‘bulk of what is fed by it’ (connoting a motion of growth) and serves as an ‘agent of generation’ within the soul itself.³² Although this generative power is not capable of bringing substance into existence, since nothing has a power to generate itself, it does contribute to an existing body’s preservation.³³ Indeed Aristotle’s descriptions of the nutritive power all speak closely to this specific function, and terms such as ‘maintenance’ and ‘continuance’ help him convey the fundamental end towards which he believes this

²⁸ Aristotle, *DA* (415a25ff.).

²⁹ *Ibid.* (415b1-2).

³⁰ *Ibid.* (415b5-9).

³¹ *Ibid.* (2.2, 413a25-35; 416a19ff., p. 658).

³² *Ibid.* (2.4, 416b10-12, p. 662). On the difference between nutrition and growth see the remarks in Rosamond Kent Sprague, 'Plants as Aristotelian Substances', in L.P. Gerson (ed.), *Aristotle: Critical Assessments* (London: Routledge, 1999), 359-68 (pp. 365-67).

³³ Aristotle, *DA* (2.4, 416b15-16, p. 663).

rudimentary power always aims – the preservation (*sōzein*) of the organism’s soul and body.³⁴ It is here, in the description of the soul’s primary functions rather than in the *Physics*’s definition of natural bodies, that one may begin to detect the presence of a principle of conservation operating in Aristotelian thought. Approaching the nature of soul through a consideration of how the body is formally and materially affected in the absence of nourishment (plants, for example, wilt and shrivel when they are not fed) allows Aristotle to reiterate just how interconnected the soul and its capacities are with the physical form of the organism. By highlighting the inseparability between the nutritive power and the continued existence of the soul, Richard Sorabji believes Aristotle was able to make one of the more innovative contributions to how ancient philosophers conceived of the relationship between the soul and the body.³⁵

The Senses and Self-Preservation

While plants remain wholly reliant on the nutritive power of their souls to achieve physical growth in their bodies and maintain themselves, more complex souls possess additional powers that act in concert with nutrition to preserve them and prevent their destruction. The presence of these powers emerges clearly in Aristotle’s account of the senses and the soul, which appears in *De anima* and also in *De sensu*, a short treatise comprising part of the *Parva Naturalia*. In each of these texts Aristotle can be seen to combine what he takes as the first-order perceptions – sight, sound, hearing, smelling and tasting – with the soul’s higher-order consciousness of these perceptions, highlighting along the way their self-reflective and intentional qualities.³⁶

³⁴ Ibid. (416b17-20).

³⁵ Richard Sorabji, 'Body and Soul in Aristotle', *Philosophy*, 49 (1974), 63-89 (p. 66).

³⁶ Aristotle, *DA* (3.2, 425b10-17, p. 677). See also the discussion in John E. Sisko, 'Reflexive Awareness "Does Belong" to the Main Function of Perception: Reply to Victor Caston', *Mind*, 113/451 (2004), 513-21.

The *De sensu*, like the later parts of *De anima*, demonstrates how the sensitive capacities provide animal and human souls with a natural means of distinguishing between external objects. It also describes how these sensations aid the soul in its pursuit of beneficial ends while helping it avoid those objects which are potentially harmful. Understanding the relationship between the soul and its attributes, which is portrayed as a ‘natural harmony’, becomes essential for understanding how the soul ultimately selects life-sustaining and pleasurable objects. The selection of such ends is said to owe to the attributes which arise when the soul and body are considered in conjunction – passion, appetite, and desire, as well as pleasure and pain, all of which are found in the animal and human soul and all of which ‘either imply sensation as a concomitant or have it as a medium.’³⁷ There are certain attributes that may be ascribed to all living things, and Aristotle groups them into four pairs: waking and sleeping, youth and old age, inhalation and exhalation, life and death.³⁸ In terms of the animal’s preservation these occurrences may also exist as ‘affectations or states of sensation’ which serve as a ‘means of defending and safeguarding’ the animal from external threats.³⁹ Other soul-body affectations are said to be concerned with the destruction or privation of the body and actively work to prevent such occurrences.

That sense-perception aims at, and provides, the *telos* of self-preservation to the perceiver is a point Aristotle develops in his consideration of the contact and distal senses. In describing the ‘special’ sense of taste, for example, Aristotle writes that ‘it is by taste that one distinguishes in food the pleasant from the unpleasant, so as to flee from the latter and pursue the former; and savour in general is an affection of the nutritive part.’⁴⁰ In any animals that possess the faculty of locomotion, taste may be said to operate with the external senses to secure the animal’s body from any threats it might perceive. ‘To all that possess them they are *a means of preservation*

³⁷ Aristotle, *Sense and Sensibilia* in Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. I (1, 436a 6-9, 436b1-9, p. 693).

³⁸ Ibid. (436a10-16).

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid. (436b15-18, p. 694).

in order that, guided by antecedent perception, they may both pursue their food, and shun things that are bad or destructive. [...] They bring in tidings of many distinctive qualities of things, from which knowledge of things both speculative and practical is generated in the soul.⁴¹ This notion that the soul (and by extension nature) plays a primary role in guiding the animal's pursuit and avoidance of pleasure- and pain-inducing objects is itself a theme which Aristotle will develop in greater detail elsewhere. As we shall see, the idea that humans advance towards the good and retreat from the bad came to occupy a central position in the account of natural behaviours at the heart of his ethical writings. That there was an element of self-awareness involved in these movements is also revisited and elaborated upon. These arguments further provided a philosophical standard around which the later Hellenistic schools and political theorists of the seventeenth century could rally their respective causes. In the writings of the Stoics and the Epicureans, as well as those of Hobbes and Spinoza, equal credence is given to the view that nature-directed pursuits and avoidances represented the key to understanding the psychological motivations driving human behaviour. Putting these revealing and argumentatively ripe points aside until later, let us continue examining how Aristotle believed the other senses helped protect the body from harm.

The close unison between body and soul also explains why an animal's senses are self-considered or reflexive in character. In *De anima* 3.2 Aristotle argues that in addition to the soul possessing senses, it also entertains an awareness of those senses. This signals the two dimensions of sensation: the actual perception of the object and the awareness of the sense organ's perception of the object.⁴² Each of the senses, we are told, is further said to be relative to a particular group of sensible qualities. As we have just seen in Aristotle's analysis of taste, the purpose of sense perception is the animal's self-preservation, which itself supports the larger argument

⁴¹ My emphasis; *ibid.* (436b19-437a4).

⁴² Aristotle, *DA* (3.2, 425b12-17).

for species preservation found in *De anima*.⁴³ When we consider the nature of perception, John Sisko has argued, we become aware of why the senses take ‘reflexive awareness as part of their primary function.’⁴⁴ Reflexive awareness is what Aristotle uses to link the soul’s first-order perceptions to the self, and these in turn link the self to the world. ‘Without the higher-order awareness of perception,’ Sisko concludes, ‘first-order experience would not be immediately and self-evidently perceived to be one’s own.’⁴⁵ This is why perception alone is unable to secure the *telos* of preserving the organism. On this point Aristotle and Stoics again appear to be in strong agreement given that the discussions of self-preservation in authors like Cicero, Seneca and Hierocles are all predicated on the primacy and importance of an animal’s sense of self-awareness. For Aristotle, this natural concern for the self is manifested in the senses themselves, and the olfactory and tactile senses demonstrate this particularly well. For example, the former sense is said to have as its ‘sole function’ the ‘safeguarding of one’s health’ when it smells disagreeable odours, while animals and humans require the information they derive through tactual sensation to survive.⁴⁶

The human soul may also engage with external objects via its imaginative capacity, since *phantasia* acts alongside appetite to form representations on the basis of perception and helps initiate motion.⁴⁷ As Andrea Falcon has suggested, it is not difficult to see why Aristotle believes both perception and *phantasia* bring about progressive motions in the soul. ‘Progressive motion is a case of navigation from one place to the other; and at times this motion even requires highly sophisticated navigational abilities [...]. While perception provides the animal with sensitivity to the environment, *phantasia* presents it with the goal of motion, which also happens

⁴³ See the references to *DA* 2.4 on page 9 above. Sections 1, 3 and 4 of *De sensu* make it clear that the text was written to support the positions previously established in the *De anima*.

⁴⁴ Sisko, ‘Reflexive Awareness’, (p. 519).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Aristotle, *DS* (5, 444a14-15, p. 704) and Aristotle, *DA* (3.12, 434b10-15, p. 691).

⁴⁷ Aristotle, *DA* (3.8, 432b16, p. 687).

to be the object of desire – e.g. home or food.’⁴⁸ Others have suggested the interplay between perception and *phantasia* is complementary in nature, with Martha Nussbaum and Stephen Everson portraying the activity of perception as ‘registering the proper sensibles while *phantasia* interprets the perceived information, allowing the individual to discriminate between substances as such and act on them.’⁴⁹ The particular ability of *phantasia* to motivate the animal and direct its actions, however, remains a complex area in Aristotle’s psychology given his tendency to treat imagining and thinking as distinct activities.⁵⁰ Malcolm Schofield has also pointed out that the differences between imagining and perceiving are not always clearly maintained. For example, in *De anima* 3.3 he notes that there are a ‘range of “appearances” which Aristotle seems to allocate to *phantasia* which are not ‘obviously instances of mental imagery, but seem more like examples of direct sensory experience.’⁵¹ This has led to some of Aristotle’s modern commentators taking imagination to be ‘a comprehensive faculty by which we apprehend sensory and quasi-sensory presentations generally.’⁵² Although the sensory imagination provides an immediate medium through which the soul and body can fend off external threats, human souls also possess the ability to consider antecedent perceptions, which additionally aids their pursuit of pleasurable things and shunning of destructive things. It is through the cognitive aspects of imagination that the soul is simultaneously capable of conjuring up past perceptions even while it is engaged in the process of perceiving present objects, a notion Hobbes would seek to modify

⁴⁸ Andrea Falcon, *Aristotle and the Science of Nature: Unity without Conformity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) (p. 94).

⁴⁹ Nussbaum’s account is presented at length, along with Everson’s views of them, in Stephen Everson, *Aristotle on Perception* (Clarendon Aristotle Series; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) (pp. 159-60).

⁵⁰ ‘For imagination is different from either perceiving or discursive thinking, though it is not found without sensation, or judgement without it. That this activity is not the same kind of thinking as judgement is obvious. For imagining lies within our own power whenever we wish (e.g. we can call up a picture, as in the practice of mnemonics by the use of mental images), but in forming opinions we are not free: we cannot escape the alternative of falsehood or truth. [...] Within the field of judgement itself we find varieties – knowledge, opinion, understanding, and their opposites.’ Aristotle, *DA* (3.3, 427b14-27, p. 680).

⁵¹ M. Schofield, ‘Aristotle on the Imagination’, in Nussbaum and Rorty (eds.), *Essays on Aristotle’s De Anima*, 249-77 (pp. 249-50).

⁵² *Ibid.* (p. 250).

centuries later when he depicted imaginations of past things as weaker sensations best referred to as memories or ‘decaying sense’.⁵³

The distinction between the animal and human souls’ basic, everyday needs and the higher intellectual needs of the human soul continues in Aristotle’s discussion of sight and represents but one example of how the fourth century categorised the desires and set the stage for later Hellenistic discussions.⁵⁴ On the one hand, the sense of sight may be counted as the ‘superior sense’ because of its ability to ‘supply the primary wants of life.’⁵⁵ Through the faculty of sight, animals are able to discern those qualities which make objects distinctive and which set off the common sensibles of figure, magnitude, motion, and number from other more complex concepts.⁵⁶ On the other hand, when it comes to humans, sight yields its primacy to hearing because the latter is what enables us to engage in intellectual discourse – for words are the verbal expression of symbols and are thus only perceptible to the ear.⁵⁷

Having now seen how sense perception aids the animal’s self-preservation, let us consider how some of the other attributes of the soul and body are said to maintain the organism. In particular, it will be helpful to say a few words about the animal’s pursuit and avoidance of external stimuli, a central component in the later accounts of self-preservation, and one which arises from two distinct sources of movement in Aristotelian thought: appetite and thought. These movements also represent umbrella concepts for Aristotle, as appetite (*orexis*) is comprised of other motions, such as wishing and desiring, while thought stands as its own category of motion.

⁵³ Hobbes, *Lev.* (2, p. 15).

⁵⁴ Plato, for example, had also held out that there was a distinction between the individual’s basic and intellectual needs. See the discussion in Julius Moravcsik, *Plato and Platonism: Plato’s Conception of Appearance and Reality in Ontology, Epistemology, and Ethics, and its Modern Echoes* (Issues in Ancient Philosophy; Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) (pp. 298-300).

⁵⁵ Aristotle, *DS* (1, 437a 4-5, p. 693).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* (437a9, p. 694).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* (437a10-15)

When Aristotle speaks of the powers of thought in *De anima* he also draws attention to the ability of the soul to calculate the means by which a particular end can be achieved. Given the exclusivity of thought to the human soul, it exists as a potential source of movement that is foreign to animals, which act only in accordance with sensory imagination.⁵⁸ *Orexis*, on the other hand, is to be found in both animals and humans and is characterised by its always having a relation to a specific end and a corresponding outwards or reaching motion.⁵⁹ This does not mean, however, that thought and appetite necessarily remain unconnected in those souls which possess both capacities. On the contrary, Aristotle maintains that the objects of appetite serve to ‘stimulate’ practical thought in the following way: the objects of appetite initiate their own movement in the animal’s soul, which in turn gives rise to a thought or imagination that subsequently manifests itself as a second and distinct movement. Although appetite may also originate movements that are irrational, its position as the ‘single faculty’ of animal movement is reaffirmed throughout.⁶⁰ Sense perception is unable to serve as the singular source of motion since ‘there are many animals which have sense-perception yet are stationary and unmoving throughout,’⁶¹ while intellect cannot provide the impetus because it ‘contemplates nothing practicable, and says nothing about what is to be avoided or pursued, while movement always belongs to one who is avoiding or pursuing something.’⁶² Aristotle’s characterisation has, however, sparked a modern reconsideration of how inseparable animals’ internal desires and wishes actually are from their attempts to obtain them. As David Furley has argued, animals perceive things in the external world and then initiate an internal sequence to obtain them if certain conditions are met. These pre-determined conditions are what imbue the animal’s motions with

⁵⁸ Aristotle, *DA* (3.10, 433a9-14, p. 688).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* (433a15-18).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* (433a21-26, pp. 688-89); The ability of desire to serve as the ‘force and power’ capable of initiating movement is also discussed in Aristotle, *Movement of Animals* in Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. I (10, pp. 1094-95).

⁶¹ Aristotle, *DA* (3.9, 432b19-21, p. 687).

⁶² *Ibid.* (432b26-29, p. 688).

meaning because they make the object of desire (*orekton*) relevant to the self.⁶³ As part of this ‘internal sequence’ one finds Aristotle giving imagination a far more important role than Hobbes does in his account of sensation. In particular, he distinguishes it from the other capacities because it can stand in opposition to knowledge and is present in both animals and humans.⁶⁴ The same applies to the desiderative capacity, which may be found in both animals and humans on account of its having both rational and irrational components due to its proximity to the faculties of reasoning (rational) and those of wanting and passion (irrational). Whereas Aristotle’s characterisation of appetites and desires as the initiators of animal movement can be found occurring in other later attempts to explain the mechanics of self-preservation, seventeenth-century authors such as Descartes, Hobbes and Spinoza will take umbrage with his suggestion that appetites themselves are not motions.⁶⁵

In those instances where an appetite such as desire conflicts with reason there may be other motivating forces that appear alongside appetite to cause a movement in the soul. As Martha Nussbaum has pointed out, Aristotle’s usage of desire is always directed at or for ‘the apparent good’ so that an animal’s desire provides a means by which they can conceive ‘the premise of the good.’⁶⁶ Cynthia Freeland, who notes that Aristotle universally subscribes to the view that the perceptual or locomotive abilities of the animal are intended to secure these goods, has examined these means further. In looking to bring about what is best for the animal, these abilities must be able to relate and adapt to the complex and ever-changing conditions of the animal’s particular environment. As such, sensation and appetite are constituted in such a way that they filter from the external world all the information necessary for determining whether a particular stimulus is pleasant and

⁶³ David Furley, 'Self-Movers', in Mary Louise Gill and James G. Lennox (eds.), *Self-Motion from Aristotle to Newton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3-14 (p. 13).

⁶⁴ Aristotle, *DA* (3.10, 433a10ff., p. 688).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* (3.10, 433b16ff., p. 689).

⁶⁶ Martha C. Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Martin Classical Lectures, New Series; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) (p. 81). See for example Aristotle, *DA* (3.10, 433b15-16, p. 689).

apt for pursuit or harmful and to be avoided. From the soul's natural constitution and the interplay of its capacities, we come to see how it is that the 'actions of individual animals exemplify the goal-directedness belonging to the species as a whole.'⁶⁷ One may take Freeland as having correctly interpreted Aristotle's view of pleasure and pain as the primary motivational forces, since we are told in a later section of *De anima* that one of the major instigators of action is fear, which is the soul's perception of impending harm or pain.⁶⁸ Although fear is not grounded in an actual perception of an external stimulus and is hence irrational, it retains a force capable of inducing movement in the animal nonetheless, as the animal attempts to avoid the pain as if it were actually present.

To understand the extent to which Aristotle relied upon 'deliberative desires' as a way of speaking about why animals pursued pleasure and avoided pain, T.H. Irwin has postulated that a 'want-explanation' theory underpins Aristotle's approach. If an animal chooses something via the capacity of desire it becomes clear that one cannot then also argue that the ultimate end for their action came about through the process of deliberation. However, this subordination of rational deliberative capacity is not without its own shortcomings since desire-based actions might conceivably bring about ethically dubious actions. By removing this rational component, Aristotle is advocating a mental process in which only primary tendencies such as appetite and fear are left to guide an animal's pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain. Such a possibility does not seem to trouble Aristotle because elsewhere we are told that animals are in possession of an 'innate spirit' that naturally moves upward, a sign of growth and a movement that is natural to living organisms.⁶⁹ As such, what the animal desires serves an explanatory function: the

⁶⁷ Cynthia A. Freeland, 'Aristotle on Perception, Appetition, and Self-Motion', in Gill and Lennox (eds.), *Self-Motion from Aristotle to Newton*, 35-64 (p. 48).

⁶⁸ Intellect, though it 'often thinks of something fearful or pleasant', is not said to 'command fear' even though it can be said to move the heart. See Aristotle, *DA* (3.9, 432b26ff., p. 688).

⁶⁹ Aristotle suggests that 'upwards movement' is the superior form of rectilinear motion. See Aristotle, *DC* (2.5, 288a2-4, p. 475). Regarding the more general discussion on how upwards and downwards motions relate to bodies see also *DC* (3.2, 301b16ff., p. 494). This point is also brought up in Aristotle, *MA* (10, 703b4ff., p. 1095).

level of desire an animal demonstrates for a particular object is indicative of how much that animal believes the object will contribute towards satisfying its own demands.⁷⁰ That these basic desires should gravitate towards the growth of the animal is axiomatic since Aristotle includes within his discussion of desire in *De anima* a restatement of the ‘naturalness’ of growth and decay found in his *Physics*. In rejecting the primacy of the nutritive capacity in favour of the desiderative capacity, he remarks that ‘the motion of growth and decay is found in all animals.’⁷¹ Addressing these basic desires also serves another broader and important purpose: it provides the philosopher with a means by which to take up the question of the animal’s natural character, which, as we shall see shortly, becomes a key consideration in Aristotle’s ethical writings.

We are now in possession of the Aristotelian schema detailing how motion, soul and body are intimately linked and how the senses enable the soul to interact with, and protect itself from, the external world.⁷² We have further seen how the appetitive capacity is powerful enough to induce movement on its own, and how it may also be conjoined with sensitive imagination and (where applicable) reason to provide an additional means of assessing whether a particular perceived object is capable of satisfying desire. By linking up desire and sensations with the human *telos* of happiness, Aristotle’s ethics continues to build on the motive premises established in *Physics* and the bio-psychological arguments of *De anima* and *De sensu*. In particular, the ethical works demonstrate that through a pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain, the cultivating of friendships and humans’ natural sociability, the soul not only achieves its *telos* of promoting life but acquires the means by which it might flourish.

⁷⁰ T.H. Irwin, 'Aristotle on Reason, Desire, and Virtue', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 72/17 (Oct. 2 1975), 567-78 (p. 574).

⁷¹ Aristotle, *DA* (3.9, 432b9-11, p. 687).

⁷² *Ibid.* (3.12, 434b10ff., p. 691).

Desire and the Good in *Eudemian* and *Nicomachean Ethics*

Before attempting to map out how the soul's appetites and desires influence individual behaviours, Aristotle's ethics clarifies the ends the motions of the soul aim at. The end of these motions is the attainment of *eudaimonia* (happiness), which is a good we desire for its own sake and which other goods such as honour and pleasure contribute towards.⁷³ Happiness is characterised in terms of self-sufficiency and completeness, and it is on account of this 'completeness' that commonly pursued goods such as reputation, wealth, and culture are only able to serve as means to the end of happiness, since none are capable of serving as the true end of an action on account of their transient and other-defined natures.⁷⁴

Like other ensouled creatures, humans possess a particular nature, and the best way for them to live is by fulfilling those natures by acting in accordance with reason and the virtues of their souls. 'The function of man [is] a certain kind of life,' Aristotle writes, 'and this [is] an activity or actions of the soul implying a rational principle, and the function of a good man [is] the good and noble performance of these, and if any action is well performed when it is performed in accordance with the appropriate excellence [then] human good turns out to be an activity of soul in conformity with excellence.'⁷⁵ Julia Annas has commented that in 'an ethics of virtue,' such as Aristotle's, one can find no 'obvious room for supererogation. There is no "floor" of minimal moral obligation for the agent to rise above; being a fully virtuous agent is an ideal for everyone. The development of virtue is a process that everyone starts and continues to go along; there are no levels that only moral heroes are supposed to reach.'⁷⁶ Such a lofty understanding of virtue, she continues, also creates a situation in which there are some virtues which all may be expected to

⁷³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* in Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. II (1.7, 1097b1-7, p. 1734).

⁷⁴ Ibid. (1097b7-20, pp. 1734-35); Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* in Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. II (1.2, 1214b7-11, p. 1923). These are rejected at length in Aristotle, *EN* (1.5, pp. 1731-32).

⁷⁵ Aristotle, *EN* (1.7, 1098a7ff., p. 1735).

⁷⁶ Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) (p. 116).

achieve, and ‘virtue’ which only ‘exceptional’ people are capable of attaining.⁷⁷ In acting in accordance with our passionate natures Aristotle is keen to stress the ability of pleasure and pain to ‘supervene’ on human behaviours and the pursuit of virtue, but at the same time to show how these more rudimentary states of the soul are equally capable of motivating individual action.⁷⁸ Aristotle agrees with Eudoxus that pleasure is ‘supremely’ important in our accounting of the goods and attempts to understand human activity, and in support of such a claim he presents further evidence that the status of the body’s health and its constitution help the soul determine what particular course of action we take.⁷⁹ In what will come to mark an important break with the Epicureans’ advocacy of pleasure and pain in the following century, however, Aristotle argues that the life of pleasure is itself only suitable for particular types of individuals and that, while it is a good, it cannot supply a universal *modus vivendi* on account of its failure to partake in reason.⁸⁰

The good life is characterised as that which consists of activities that support the soul in its function of ‘producing living’, so that goods inside the soul always appear more desirable than those originating outside of it.⁸¹ To understand better which goods are most capable of supporting this end, Aristotle turns to consider the objects the rational intellect and irrational appetite suggest for pursuit. Preserving the distinction between the soul’s considerative and desiderative parts also allows Aristotle to tackle the wider question of which objects are best suited to bringing about the most desirable and beneficial ends. This renders appetitive actions as less suitable than deliberative actions for securing the goods of the soul, given that the former’s capacity is unable to evaluate the potential pleasures and pains which may result from the pursuit or avoidance of a perceived good. Because of reason’s ability to guard against the effects of rash and spontaneous actions, the intellect is said to be

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Aristotle, *EN* (1.8, 1099a5-11, p. 1737, 7.12, 1152b25, p. 1821).

⁷⁹ Ibid. (1.12, 1101b28-31, p. 1740).

⁸⁰ These individuals are said to be children, slaves and brutes in Aristotle, *EE* (1.5, 1215b15ff., p. 1924).

⁸¹ Ibid. (2.1, 1218b33-34; 1219a24, pp. 1929-30).

intimately tied to the characterisation of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ things, since these are the relative descriptions it employs in ‘the pursuit or avoidance of certain pleasures and pains.’⁸²

Of particular interest for ascertaining the nature of virtue and happiness are those natural functions which suggest certain objects for pursuit and others for avoidance. These may be found in the broad range of emotional responses and actions which the soul either initiates or is subjected to. Voluntary actions are said to be those that agree with desire, choice or thought. They take their origin in the soul itself, and because they are self-caused they are praiseworthy or blameworthy.⁸³ In the praising or condemning of an action, Sarah Broadie has noted that Aristotle is asking us not to consider the completed action but rather the *doing* of the action itself, as it is to the *doing* that the term ‘voluntary’ is applied.⁸⁴ Acts arising from the dictates of the sensual appetite may be considered voluntary in nature, and because of their unforced character, they instil a sense of pleasure.⁸⁵ Involuntary actions, on the other hand, are those which occur when something ‘external moves a thing, or brings it to rest against its own internal tendency,’ which indicates the usage of force.⁸⁶ Involuntary actions and the pain they instil have an equally important place in our understanding of the nature of human actions. As Broadie continues, ‘It is natural – not contentious – to view a voluntary agent as himself the *origin* of his action. For something like this holds true of every natural substance. None, including human agents, can act in total independence of external conditions, but they are nonetheless sources themselves of the behaviour which reveals their nature.’⁸⁷ This helps explain why it is that an individual is capable of acting in both continent and incontinent ways. The former ‘forcibly drags himself from the pleasant appetites (for

⁸² Ibid. (2.4, 1221b28-35; 1221b41-1222a2, pp. 1934-35).

⁸³ ‘Since excellence and badness and the acts that spring from them are respectively praised or blamed – for we do not give praise or blame for what is due to necessity, or chance, or nature, but only from what we ourselves are causes of.’ Ibid. (2.6, 1223a9-12, p. 1936).

⁸⁴ Sarah Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) (p. 125).

⁸⁵ Aristotle, *EE* (2.7, 1223b22-28, p. 1938).

⁸⁶ Ibid. (1224b10ff.).

⁸⁷ Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle* (p. 130).

he feels pain in dragging himself away against the resistance of desire)’ while the latter ‘drags himself contrary to his reason.’⁸⁸ There is, however, less pain associated with the incontinent action since by following the appetite the individual may still be said to experience some feeling of pleasure.

Recognising that certain types of actions are undertaken as a means of securing desired ends also illuminates the importance of agency in Aristotle’s philosophy. Looking at the status of voluntary and involuntary actions, one finds that the social and moral conventions crucial to Aristotle’s account of political association are themselves centred on an individual’s tendency to pursue the good and avoid the bad. These natural desires may be reinforced by means of a system of rewards and punishments, so that the law can be said to contribute significantly towards the institutionalising and modifying of our most basic and natural impulses.⁸⁹ However, society can only prescribe a set of normative ethics, meaning that it remains incumbent upon the individual to decide whether to adhere to them or not. As we have seen, although the voluntary actions of the continent individual may originate in reasoned choice (*prohairesis*), the pull of their irrational desires may nevertheless cause them to act in a manner that is considered to be socially unacceptable. In *Nicomachean Ethics* voluntary acts are said often to disregard what is considered to be the supreme good as they act instead on the basis of immediate gratification. Because an individual’s actions serve as a ‘revelation of self’, voluntary acts also expose a series of naturally-existent causal connections, which are both empirical and metaphysical in character and which illuminate how nature or reality operates.⁹⁰ Aristotle’s championing of a view of nature wherein individuals have a natural desire to pursue the pleasant and avoid the painful demonstrates his belief that this ‘internal tendency’ helps unite biology, psychology, and ethics into one linked area of study.

⁸⁸ Aristotle, *EE* (2.8, 1224a31-36, p. 1939).

⁸⁹ Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle* (pp. 128-29).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* (p. 129).

A particularly interesting case-study for how voluntary actions may be contrary to both nature and reason can be found in Aristotle's discussion of bravery. Irrationality, if we recall from *De anima*, stems primarily from the individual undertaking any action that could be said to hinder its soul's natural movement towards growth. Aristotle restates this position when he categorises the soul as 'the cause of the pleasant and the unpleasant; for the situation is that the pleasant appears good to the soul, and the pleasanter better, the unpleasant bad, and the more unpleasant worse.'⁹¹ In speaking of the irrationality of a particular action, the dominating emotions that can hinder the soul's biological and ethical growth are said to be either fear or foolhardiness. In each case, the soul is compelled to act in an extreme way so that each comes to exist as an emotional contrary to the other.⁹² Those whose souls have become rife with fear find their actions deemed 'cowardly' because they are overly fearful when they should not be and they are lacking in confidence, while those who possess an excess of confidence and courage are said to be foolhardy because they are unable to recognise the limits of their abilities. Bravery for Aristotle represents a middle habit between the two and it is this 'median' that prepares the ground for how Aristotle believes humans relate to their bodies as he considers the role the emotions play in encouraging potentially life-threatening and 'brave' actions.⁹³

If 'reason does not bid men to endure what is very painful or destructive *unless* it is noble,' then the rationality of an action will be determined by the extent of its nobleness.⁹⁴ The majority of people cannot be considered brave, and we can safely assume this because bravery is what enables an individual to confront what most others perceive of as destructive or painful.⁹⁵ The brave are then atypical in their actions because of their ability to act *contra* the natural desire to avoid pain and

⁹¹ Aristotle, *EE* (2.10, 1227a38-1227b1, p. 1944).

⁹² *Ibid.* (3.1, 1228a26ff., p. 1945).

⁹³ *Ibid.* (1228b2-3, p. 1946).

⁹⁴ My emphasis; *ibid.* (1229a7-11, pp. 1946-47).

⁹⁵ 'Pleasure and life are the two things most highly prized by ordinary people.' Aristotle, *Rhetoric* in Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. II (1.6, 1362b16-18, p. 2166).

unpleasantness. The pleasure and pain principle further enables Aristotle to argue that ‘normal’ individuals act in ways that consider the state of their own bodies and the consequences any particular activity might have on it. Outside of *Eudemian Ethics* this view can be found in *Rhetoric*’s discussion of the role which fear plays in the decision-making process:

If fear is associated with the expectation that something destructive will happen to us, plainly nobody will be afraid who believes nothing can happen to him; we shall not fear things that we believe cannot happen to us, nor people who we believe cannot inflict them upon us; nor shall we be afraid at times when we think ourselves safe from them.⁹⁶

This characterisation of fear is in keeping with what Aristotle had earlier claimed were the ends which both ‘individuals’ and ‘all men in common’ strive for as they considered the objects worth pursuing and avoiding. Although the chief end is, as in the ethical treatises, happiness, *Rhetoric* points to other ‘constituents’ such as ‘a good condition of the body’ and ‘the power of guarding and utilising one’s body’ as other worthwhile considerations.⁹⁷ That a fear of bodily harm could affect the actions of so many non-brave individuals is also understandable given the paramount status Aristotle assigns later to the health of the body:

A thing productive of a greater good is itself a greater good than that other... if what is wholesome is more desirable and a greater good than what gives pleasure, health too must be a greater good than pleasure... that which stands less in need of other things is the greater good, since it is more self-sufficing... that which is an origin of other things is a greater good than that which is not, and that which is a cause is a greater good than that which is not; the reason being the same in each case, namely that without a cause and an origin nothing can exist or come into existence.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Ibid. (2.5, 1382b29-33, p. 2203).

⁹⁷ Ibid. (1.5, 1360b4-6, 14-17, p. 2163).

⁹⁸ Ibid. (1.7, 1363b34-1364a1, 5-6, 9-12, p. 2169).

It is clear that Aristotle is speaking here about the individual's existence as the 'origin' and 'greater good' that enables other goods such as pleasure to exist. Life, because it facilitates the enjoyment of other goods, must then be considered as a pre-eminent and necessary condition for the attainment of happiness, and the *sine qua non* for any discussion of ethical and virtuous behaviour.

As we have seen, the desire to avoid harm, experience pleasure and stay alive all operate as strong motivating forces in the soul because of their ability to secure the *telos* of happiness. Individuals are driven by their souls in ways which make the experiencing of pleasure and the sustaining of life possible, and despite the presence of practical intellects they can be guided solely by 'the nature given to them by *their* nature.'⁹⁹ Aristotle is adamant that humans are social animals by nature, and as such, their pursuit of pleasure and security positively and negatively affect their interaction with others.¹⁰⁰ It is on account of these social natures that humans also come to possess a greater awareness of their own natural desires and wishes and learn how to achieve them through their interactions with others.

The Self as 'Other' in Aristotelian Ethics

In Aristotelian natural and ethical philosophy the over-arching emphasis on happiness as the ultimate *telos* of choice and action prompts additional questions about just *whose* happiness Aristotle believes we should fundamentally strive for and the means by which it is ultimately secured. As part of suggesting that the 'best possible life' is the goal towards which all humans are naturally driven, many of Aristotle's texts are nuanced in a way that demonstrates how nature preserves the individual's soul and body through the pursuit of both egoistic and altruistic concerns. That these two competing attitudes could co-exist peacefully within a

⁹⁹ My emphasis; Aristotle, *EE* (7.14, 1247b20-26, p. 1978).

¹⁰⁰ Aristotle, *EN* (1.7, 1097b7-11, p. 1734); Aristotle, *The Politics and The Constitution of Athens*, ed. Stephen Everson (Revised Student edn.; Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) (1.2, 1253a30, p. 14).

single ethical framework is an argument that has been recently expounded by many of Aristotle's modern commentators.¹⁰¹ According to Claudia Baracchi, for example, whatever the 'mode of being at stake may be' for Aristotle, any eudaimonic existence entails that the 'being is or lives in such a way as to give itself over fully to what or who it is, or is to be.'¹⁰² This perpetual striving to attain happiness from things which are outside of us, or to avoid those things which may instil a sense of unhappiness, requires a 'relinquishing of one's self-enclosure in order, paradoxically, to find one's completeness and completion.' As we shall see, there exists in Aristotle's writings a 'cluster of conditions' which may be seen to address not only this teleological notion of happiness as fulfilment, but which also speak to those specific psychological and biological motivations that aid the creature in its 'becoming and protect and promote it along the trajectory of its unfolding.'¹⁰³

A particularly fruitful context for addressing the subject of an individual's self-awareness and desire to live the good life is the nature of social interactions and friendships. Through individuals' interaction with others one finds Aristotle promoting 'a robustly realist account of intentionality' in which individuals may be seen to project their own internal desires onto those around them.¹⁰⁴ Julia Annas, for example, has read Aristotle as having characterised friendship as a type of relationship born of reciprocity so that friendships lacking in such 'mutuality' became ethically subordinate to all others.¹⁰⁵ This view had already been advanced in the work of Bernard Williams, who characterised Aristotelian individuals as

¹⁰¹ Recent attempts to show how egoism and altruism operate in Aristotle's ethics include Claudia Baracchi, *Aristotle's Ethics as First Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Lorraine Smith Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Paul Schollmeier, *Other Selves: Aristotle on Personal and Political Friendship* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994), and Dennis McKerlie, 'Friendship, Self-Love, and Concern for Others in Aristotle's Ethics', *Ancient Philosophy*, 11/1 (1991), 85-101.

¹⁰² Baracchi, *Aristotle's Ethics as First Philosophy* (p. 83).

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* (p. 81).

¹⁰⁴ Matthew MacKenzie, 'The Illumination of Consciousness: Approaches to Self-Awareness in the Indian and Western Traditions', *Philosophy East and West*, 57/1 (2007), 40-62.

¹⁰⁵ Julia Annas, 'Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism', *Mind*, 86/344 (October 1977), 532-54 (p. 534).

advancing 'I-desires' in their relationships with others.¹⁰⁶ The desires of individual 'A', Williams argues, are manifest in their relation to individual 'B' precisely because the relationship is governed by how both A and B relate to themselves. When individual A wishes, for example, that individual B should be well, they may be understood as conveying something they believe is also desirable for their own self. Annas supports this view elsewhere, arguing that self-love is not only compatible with altruistic actions but that our altruistic actions are in fact acts of self-love.¹⁰⁷ Williams's and Annas's views are grounded in Aristotle's claim that friends are in essence 'another self,' which in turn demands that egoism serves as a conceptually prior consideration whenever an individual attempts to extend their desires to others. Such a reading casts serious doubt on whether an idea such as true altruism could in fact ever really exist in Aristotle's ethics, and as Annas has concluded (in light of Williams's interpretation) Aristotle appears unconcerned by the fact that people would come to identify their own interests in other people or that they might view another's interest as their own. Such a claim, she suggests, only reveals 'a fact of human nature and as such requires no philosophical defence' from Aristotle.¹⁰⁸ Although the egoistic components of social interaction and friendship seem not to require any serious philosophical consideration for Aristotle, the ends that these relationships promote do.

Considering how desire may spur the individual to pursue potentially conflicting ends, Aristotle approaches the question of desire according to its ability to secure the good or the pleasant. To reconcile these two different ends, he suggests that 'if we love what we desire and if desire is for the pleasant,' the end we would seek would be that which is pleasing. However, if we substitute wishing for desire, then the end is said to be good.¹⁰⁹ While Aristotle never explicitly says that one of these goods is the maintenance of the body or its preservation, he does not entirely

¹⁰⁶ Bernard Williams, *Problems of the Self: Philosophical Papers 1956-1972* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973) (pp. 261-64).

¹⁰⁷ Julia Annas, 'Self-Love in Aristotle', *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 27 (1988), 1-18 (pp. 6-10).

¹⁰⁸ Annas, 'Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism', (p. 543).

¹⁰⁹ Aristotle, *EE* (7.2, 1235b19-23, p. 1957).

dismiss the potential for bodily considerations to inspire sociability. For example, after rejecting the suggestion that the good and the pleasant are different ends pursued with separate faculties of the soul, Aristotle counters that desired and wished ends should instead be conceived of in terms of their truth.¹¹⁰ Such a partitioning exposes the reasons why objects are attractive or repellent at all – because of their ability to positively or negatively affect the soul. For example, in *Eudemian Ethics* things that are advantageous to a healthy body are considered as absolute goods to a body, while things that are absolutely pleasing are considered to be so because of their absolute pleasantness to a healthy body.¹¹¹ However, while the pleasant and the good may take the healthy body as a common point of reference, Aristotle is silent on those particular things that should be considered absolutely bad or displeasing. Instead, he merely suggests that what is not considered as absolutely good ought to be avoided because it cannot benefit the individual.¹¹²

That a natural desire for the health of the body and its preservation is pre-supposed in our relationships with the self and others is patent for Aristotle. One finds this view emerging as part of his larger claims about the self-reflection that underpins the best friendships, or those that lead to a ‘mutual returning of love and choice’ and come about through viewing a friend as ‘one’s self *qua* different.’¹¹³ Self-reflection and self-gain form the central elements in Aristotle’s social philosophy since our desires for others are rooted in what we ultimately desire for ourselves.¹¹⁴ As part of the natural love of self (*philia*) we come to desire many things for ourselves and the preservation of the body is said to accord with other virtues:

¹¹⁰ Aristotle had rejected this in *DA* (3.10, 433a17 ff., p. 688); *ibid.* (7.2, 1235b25-29, p. 1957).

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* (1235b30-36).

¹¹² *Ibid.* (1236b36-38, p. 1959).

¹¹³ *Ibid.* (1236b1ff.; 1237a35ff., p. 1960). In the spurious work *Magna Moralia*, the good man is said to engage in a friendship with the self and will love his friends in a way that allows him to feel noble in his efforts. See Aristotle, *Magna Moralia* in Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. II (2.13-14, 1212a27-1212b21, p. 1919).

¹¹⁴ Aristotle, *EN* (9.8, 1168a35-1868b6, p. 1846). Aristotle, *MM* (2.11, 1210b34-35, p. 1916).

Now each of these is true of the good man's relation to himself... For his opinions are harmonious, and he desires the same things with all his soul; and therefore he wishes for himself what is good and what seems so, and so does it, and does so for his own sake (for he does it for the intellectual element in him, which is thought to be the man himself); and he *wishes for himself to live and be preserved*, and especially the element by virtue of which he thinks. For *existence is good to the good man, and each man wishes himself what is good...*¹¹⁵

There are other instances in which self-preservation supplies the context for ascertaining what the good man wishes for himself and others. In a famous passage discussing the difference between voluntary and involuntary actions, Aristotle invokes the imagery of a storm-battered ship to argue that any 'sensible' person would choose to throw their goods overboard if it meant that the ship might be saved from sinking and that they and their crew would be kept from death.¹¹⁶ A passage in *Rhetoric* adds additional weight to this view by arguing that 'doing good' means acting in accordance with 'the preservation of life or the means of life.'¹¹⁷ For Aristotle then, good actions are those that aim to preserve the body, or actions which are natural and ethical complements to the soul's function of 'producing living'. In addition, since we wish ourselves to be healthy, we also wish it for others, which is useful for cultivating a particular type of social attitude regarding the treatment of others. While Aristotle stops short of suggesting that individuals possess a natural impulse to consider their own body, he has shown that the soul's faculties often take such considerations into account. Further, in making a desire for health one of the hallmarks of ethically good behaviour and a natural function of the soul, Aristotle skirts the potentially troublesome point of an ethics based on self-regard by cleverly interweaving egoism with sociability. The other result of such a synthesis is that we also have a basis for speaking about what constitutes pleasure, since this end is concerned with body awareness.

¹¹⁵ My emphasis; Aristotle, *EN* (9.4, 1166a10-20, p. 1843).

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* (3.1, 1110a519, p. 1752).

¹¹⁷ Aristotle, *Rhet.* (1.5, 1361a30-32, p. 2164).

The 'paradigm' of pleasure requires at base, in D.S. Hutchinson's words, an 'awareness of something that holds our attention.'¹¹⁸ In his view, it is the inextricable relationship between the organism's soul and body that provided Aristotle's ethics with the grounds for arguing that the natural state of the body occupies a considerable part of the agent's attentions. Hutchinson may have understated the case, however, for as the passage in *Rhetoric* has shown, the state of the body *seizes* the individual's attention rather than merely piquing it. This awareness remains a primary consideration in any account of activity and if 'unimpeded' it will enable the agent to derive complete pleasure from their experiences.¹¹⁹ Such thorough enjoyment remains a distinct possibility since pleasure derives from the 'best-conditioned organ standing in relation to the finest of its objects,' and the soul can never be said to abandon life. Complete pleasure is thus subject to the amount of awareness which attends any activity, and in considering the body and the active functions required to maintain it, we might see Aristotle as having articulated the point that in looking after one's life we experience the most natural type of pleasure and happiness.

Conclusion

Contrary to Cicero's assertion in *De finibus*, Aristotle never explicitly formulates the view that living organisms possess a natural tendency to preserve their bodies or that the security of the individual is responsible for the formation of the *polis*. Like other Greek writers of the fourth and third centuries BC, Aristotle plays up the 'naturalness' of activities which promote the individual's health and happiness, so much so that in the physical, psychological and ethical treatises there is no reason to think that an expressly formulated account of self-preservation would have been foreign to his larger worldview. There are many times when Aristotle's teleology

¹¹⁸ D.S. Hutchinson, 'Ethics', in Barnes (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, 195-232 (p. 211).

¹¹⁹ Aristotle, *EN* (10.4, 1174b18-19, p. 1857).

appears to take life as an obvious *sine qua non* condition and one whose continued preservation quietly provides the biological background against which any pursuit of pleasure-inducing objects necessarily depends. Perhaps the preservation of life was such an obvious or ingrained aspect of animal psychology that it did not warrant any explicit formulation in the various texts – operating as the ‘background hum’ to Aristotelian biology and ethics and assigned an explanatory value that only occasionally becomes visible. Despite their quiet presence, Aristotle’s views regarding the paramount importance of life can be fleshed out. It is in his many discussions of naturalness, for example where nature is said to guide each organism’s activities, or where animals and humans are said to use their senses, appetites, desires, and self-awareness to promote the soul’s life-sustaining function or direct their voluntary actions, that the notion of self-preservation may be seen establishing its presence. This desire for life need not be limited specifically to individual pursuits either, and it is through our relationships with others that Aristotle believes we come to possess another important means of promoting the body’s health and security. Indeed, it is from our consideration of, and continued engagement with, others that we come to understand better what it is we actually want for our own selves.

What Aristotle’s philosophy demonstrates then is that nature has many ways by which it is able to direct the organism to look towards the state of its body and soul. These imperatives are achieved both at the individual and social level and exist in both rational and irrational creatures. However, in contrast with what can be found in the work of other ancient and early-modern accounts of animal and human nature, these actions do not arise from any specific natural impulse that communicates the imperative need to preserve oneself from death or to flee from pain. As we will now see, it was in the work of the Hellenistic schools that writers could be found using specific impulses and desires to parlay Aristotle’s initial and oftentimes brief considerations of our desires and wishes for bodily health into a fully developed theory of self-preservation. In these accounts, the preservation of the organism exists as a natural imperative which is sourced from every natural body’s properties and

which, in the case of humans, exists as the chief ethical good and the fount from which all social and political relations ultimately spring.

1.2 The Notion of Self-Preservation in Stoic and Epicurean Thought

The philosophical schools and sects that arose in and around Athens in the centuries after Aristotle's death continued to develop the areas of natural philosophy, ethics and politics further. Smaller sects such as the Cyrenaics, the Cynics and the Dialecticians could be found, for example, establishing their authority on particular subjects such as the uncompromised pursuit of pleasure, the unreliability of sensory-derived knowledge, and the power of logical proofs.¹ It was in the writings of the Stoics and the Epicureans, however, that detailed analyses of the natural and psychological aspects of action most clearly emerged as centuries of Greek and Roman adherents of each school attempted to elaborate further on the 'two-parameter' analysis of action established by Aristotle. Stoic and Epicurean philosophers provided their readers with a series of empirical arguments that underpinned a system of ethics in which desire and cognition remained the two 'principal' elements responsible for explaining animal and human activity.² In this chapter the primary focus will be on how these schools understood these natural tendencies and activities of bodies, and in particular how their ethical discussions derived from a particular set of claims originating within natural philosophy. After examining the nature of physical bodies, and the psychological and ethical intricacies of pleasure and self-preservation, we will then be in a strong position to consider how other desires were said to relate to these natural tendencies. In particular, this

¹ The development of each school and sect is discussed in Tiziano Dorandi, 'Chronology', in K. Algra, J. Barnes, J. Mansfield, and M. Schofield (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 31-54. For the Stoics in particular see David Sedley, 'The School from Zeno to Arius Didymus', in Brad Inwood (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 7-32. For the development of Epicureanism see in particular Diskin Clay, *Paradosis and Survival: Three Chapters in the History of Epicurean Philosophy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998) and more recently his, David Sedley's, and Michael Erler's contributions in James Warren (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

² Brad Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) (p. 9).

will allow us to see how the notions of natural kinship and utility came to underpin each respective school's theory about the nature of political association.

Although Aristotle's texts had already demonstrated how interconnected the subject matter of physics and biology was with the subjects of psychology, ethics and politics,³ the followers of Zeno and Epicurus set out to treat philosophy systematically in order to emphasise the close unity of its parts. Despite the source material for the schools remaining comparatively paltry when placed alongside the Aristotelian corpus,⁴ the extant accounts reveal the determination of both schools to show that the dictates of nature informed the behaviours of simple and complex bodies. As we shall see, however, this common approach was unable to secure any significant concord between the Stoic and Epicurean worldviews, and in particular, the two philosophies would remain in conflict over their explanations of the basic elements of the cosmos, the primary ends towards which nature directed an animal's earliest desires, and the motivations which brought about the formation of the *polis*. Much of this discord was probably due to each school having taken the substance of their central arguments and their terminology from different sources. In the case of Epicureanism, its oft-maligned account of pleasure was conceptually tied to the atomist natural philosophy found in the earlier teachings of Leucippus and Democritus.⁵ Similarly, Stoicism can be (and has been) portrayed as its own 'intellectual movement', but one which historically drew its water from the wells of Socratic and Cynic thought.⁶ The early Stoic philosophers, however, also became

³ The availability of Aristotle's writings and their immediate influence on the teachings of the third-century Hellenistic schools is a point on which modern scholars remain sharply divided. See Jonathan Barnes, 'Life and Work', in Barnes (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, 1-26 and F.H. Sandbach, *Aristotle and the Stoics* (Supplementary Volume, 10; Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1985), and for a direct rejection of Sandbach's argument, Priscilla Sakezles, 'Aristotle and Chrysippus on the Physiology of Human Action', *Apeiron*, 31/2 (1998), 127-65.

⁴ This is a common lament in contemporary accounts of Hellenistic doctrines. See in particular J. Mansfield, 'Sources', in Algra, Barnes, Mansfield, and Schofield (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, 3-30.

⁵ The connection with Democritus is discussed in detail in chapter two of J. Gosling and C.C.W. Taylor, *The Greeks on Pleasure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

⁶ This description originated in Max Pohlenz's classic study of the school *Die Stoa* (Göttingen, 1948) and continues to 'capture something of the longevity and protean variability of Stoicism' as discussed

adept at developing arguments which aimed at ‘refining the philosopher’s intuitions, challenging their imagination and analytical talents, and guiding them in making the hard choices which defined the kind of life one might lead.’⁷ The same aims also motivated Epicurean thought, and indeed, the school showed itself over the centuries as being more than capable of moving beyond a simple reiteration of their atomic forbears’ materialism and constructing their own substantial account of ethical and political philosophy.

In the writings of the Stoics and Epicureans the salutary benefits associated with understanding the connection between the natural world’s structure and activity were deemed beneficial to philosopher and non-philosopher alike. Epicurus could be found writing to Menoeceus, for example, that the study of natural science provided the most useful introduction to other aspects of the school’s philosophical programme.⁸ After commenting on the ‘marvellous structure of the Stoic system and the miraculous sequence of its topics,’ Cicero’s Stoic spokesman Cato noted the ease with which his school could show that the perfection of nature’s order and structure extended to each of its parts.⁹ Cosmology and an understanding of the universe’s particular parts thus provided both Stoic and Epicurean philosophers with a means of expounding on the operations and structure of nature, while areas such as ethics and psychology were intended to demonstrate how complex bodies interacted with, and mimicked the actions of, the cosmos.

in Brad Inwood, 'Stoicism, An Intellectual Odyssey', in Inwood (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, 1-6.

⁷ Ibid. (pp. 1-2).

⁸ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. R. D. Hicks, II vols. (Loeb Classical Library; London: W. Heinemann Ltd., 1925) (10.142-43; KΔ 11-12).

⁹ Cicero, *De fin.* (3.74).

Bodies and Resistance in Stoic and Epicurean Natural Philosophy

There is a fundamental disagreement between how Stoic and Epicurean philosophers understand the nature of the cosmos. Whereas a Stoic philosopher views the world as a dynamic *continuum* with infinitely divisible matter and no void gaps, an Epicurean subscribes to a worldview in which discontinuity reigns.¹⁰ Void co-exists alongside atomic bodies, which are impermeable and contain parts of too small a magnitude to analyse.¹¹ Stoic physics holds, on the other hand, that only bodies exist and are capable of acting and being acted upon.¹² Yet despite these fundamental disagreements over the composition and structure of the cosmos, both schools recognised the close relationship that existed between the physical world and its parts. The early Stoic archons, for example, had taught philosophy as a tripartite subject composed of physics, ethics and logic. Other Stoics were wont to compare it to an animal: logic, Diogenes Laertius stated, was like the skeleton and muscles, ethics was the flesh, and physics represented the animal's ruling part – its soul. Other examples might also serve to reinforce the close layering between each part. In the case of an egg, logic represented the shell, ethics the white, and physics the yolk, while a fertile field's enclosing wall corresponded to the aims of logic, its produce was analogous with the flourishing of the ethical life, and its soil recalled the generative and sustaining qualities of the wider physical world.¹³ Metaphors aside it is clear that Stoic philosophy preached that an intimate connection existed between physics and ethics, so much so that the *telos* of human life was said to be to 'live comfortably with nature'.¹⁴ Epicurean philosophers also stressed the unity of the physical world and its parts, albeit less metaphorically. Epicurus portrays physics as the area concerned with first principles such as 'becoming and perishing' and the

¹⁰ These differences are fleshed out in detail in the now-classic study S. Sambursky, *The Physical World of Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962).

¹¹ David Sedley, 'Hellenistic Physics and Metaphysics', in Algra, Barnes, Mansfield, and Schofield (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, 355-411.

¹² See for example B. Inwood and L.P. Gerson (eds.), *Hellenistic Philosophy* (2nd edn.; Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997) [II-44, 46, 49].

¹³ Laertius, *Lives* (7.39-41).

¹⁴ *Ibid.* (7.87).

structure of nature, while ethics deals with the objects of pursuit and avoidance and the chief goods.¹⁵ By pinning down the principles of the simple bodies and then expanding these investigations to include more complex bodies, physics showed itself capable of providing an insight into those aspects of nature that united each body in the cosmos.¹⁶ It is these close connections which give us reason to consider how the principles of each school's physics paved the way for such later ethical contentions that bodies naturally strive to ward off potentially destructive things.

One of the key tendencies that both Stoic and Epicurean philosophers attribute to natural bodies is that of an internal resistance towards their potential dissolution or destruction. The importance of this tendency was especially pronounced in Epicurean physics, given that the notion of resistance was indicative of the more fundamental laws of conservation. As Lucretius argues, the ability of bodies to endure in the face of destruction was attributable to their solid and unchanging nature. It was also due to nature having appointed a 'definite and permanent limit to the process of destruction, since we observe that each thing is renewed, and that for every kind of being there is established a specific period of time in which it is able to attain the bloom of maturity.'¹⁷ Rejecting any *ex nihilo* account, the Epicureans argue that simple bodies were as incapable of being generated out of nothing as they were of being annihilated into nothing. Atomic bodies enjoy a perpetual existence while compound bodies remain susceptible to change, and it is these changes that become integral to describing the consequences of bodily interaction. Resistance can be found operating as the implicit notion in the Epicureans' larger understanding of atomic bodies in Lucretius and others' accounts of bodily subsistence. The ability of a body to subsist eternally and preserve itself from destruction is explicable in various ways. A body's solidity, for example,

¹⁵ Ibid. (10.30).

¹⁶ David Sedley, 'The Inferential Foundations of Epicurean Ethics', in Stephen Everson (ed.), *Ethics* (Cambridge Companions to Ancient Thought; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 129-59.

¹⁷ Titus Carus Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, trans. Martin Ferguson Smith (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2001) (1.561ff., p. 17).

enables it to repel blows and makes it impenetrable to anything that might destroy the close cohesion of its internal parts, while other bodies, such as void and the universe, may simply be immune from receiving external blows.¹⁸ The self-contained nature of the universe then prevents the ‘generation of new entities, the annihilation of existing entities, the removal of parts, or the importation of new parts.’¹⁹ The conservation of matter through this natural ability to resist destruction originates in the physical makeup of the atoms themselves.²⁰

Stoic philosophers were no less interested in the notions of corporealism and ‘vitalism’, and indeed the nature of the physical body occupied such a position in their writings that David Hahn believes that ‘no idea is more deeply ingrained in Stoic philosophy than the conviction that everything real is corporeal.’²¹ As part of the school’s working definition of body, itself most likely borrowed from the account presented in Plato’s *Sophist*,²² one can often find resistance being cited as a universal characteristic of bodies alongside the ‘threefold extensions’ of length, breadth and depth.²³ In using the specific term ‘*antitupia*’ to denote this internal ability of bodies to resist against the striking of other bodies, Galen provided the Stoic account with a term that had been previously employed in both the Aristotelian and Epicurean discussions of bodies’ ability to resist destruction through an act of repelling. Our deeper understanding of how natural resistance operates in Stoic physics, however, emerges primarily through various Stoic and later non-Stoic commentators’

¹⁸ Laetius, *Lives* (10.39) and Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (3.816-18, p. 89).

¹⁹ Sedley, ‘Hellenistic Physics and Metaphysics’, (p. 365).

²⁰ Laetius, *Lives* (10.41).

²¹ David E. Hahn, *The Origins of Stoic Cosmology* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1977) (p. 3).

²² The influence of this particular work on Stoic physics is discussed in detail in Jacques Brunschwig, *Papers in Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) and more recently in Katja Vogt, ‘Sons of the Earth: Are the Stoics Metaphysical Brutes?’, *Phronesis*, 54 (2009), 136-54.

²³ I say ‘often’ here because while the property of resistance features in the Stoic definition of bodies offered by Galen, it is not included in the definition given by Apollodorus in his *Physics* and cited by Diogenes Laetius. As Jacques Brunschwig has suggested, the absence in Apollodorus’s account may owe to the fact that he understood the notion of resistance as ‘implied by the very notion of a body.’ See Galen, *On Incorporeal Qualities* (19.483.13-16) as reproduced in A. A. Long and David Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, II vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) (45F); Laetius, *Lives* (7.135); Jacques Brunschwig, ‘Stoic Metaphysics’, in Inwood (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, 206-32 (pp. 210-211).

discussions of mixture. Taking for example the early Stoic archon Chrysippus's understanding of this phenomenon, we find that mixtures can only occur when one element is physically able to overcome the resistive properties of another element.²⁴ As Sorabji and others have noted, this conception of resistance allowed the Stoics to explain how multiple bodies could continue to remain in existence even when occupying the same place as other bodies, and it also established a line of argument that stood in stark contrast to what the Aristotelian view had postulated.²⁵

The Stoics believed bodies possessed a 'selective' resistance that manifests itself when one body interacts with another. Water and wine, for example, might imperceptibly mix with each other on account of their shared liquid state, but neither were singularly, or even collectively, strong enough to break down the resistance offered by the utensil which stirred them. Being of the same physical state, however, was not always enough to ensure that mixing would occur at all. One can see this most noticeably in the inability of oil and vinegar to mix while water and vinegar do.²⁶ Such interactions were explained in particular detail in the writings of Alexander Aphrodisias, a later Peripatetic author who wanted to demonstrate how the Stoic view had broken from the Aristotelian distinction between 'actual' and 'potential' existence.²⁷ Describing how air and fire blended, the school held that 'the capacity to be separated again from one another is a peculiarity of blended substances, and this only occurs if they preserve their own natures in the mixture.'²⁸ The reason 'preservation' plays such a prevalent role in the Stoic account is that they believed that 'many bodies preserve their own qualities whether they are present in evidently smaller or larger masses.'²⁹ As a result, the Stoics found nothing

²⁴ Arius Didimus (fr. 28) as cited in R. Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators, 200-600 AD*, III vols. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005) (II, p. 300)

²⁵ See Ibid. (p. 290ff.); Dirk Baltzly, 'Stoic Pantheism', *Sophia*, 42/2 (2003), 3-33 (pp. 6-7); S. Sambursky, *Physics of the Stoics* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959) (pp. 11-16). Aristotle, *DA* (418b17, p. 666).

²⁶ Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators, 200-600 AD* (p. 301).

²⁷ See Sambursky, *Physics of the Stoics* (p. 12) and Sandbach, *Aristotle and the Stoics* (pp. 33-34).

²⁸ Alexander Aphrodisias, *On Mixture* (216.25-217) as reproduced in Long and Sedley, *H.Phil.* (48C).

²⁹ Ibid.

‘remarkable’ in the ‘fact’ that bodies may become mutually unified while at the same time remaining capable of preserving and even co-extending their own qualities.³⁰ The notion of resistance thus became central for explaining the nature of the physical body itself, and it was on account of each body’s ability to persist and preserve itself when interacting with other bodies that the Stoics believed they had discerned an important truth about the nature of all types of matter.³¹

By describing the properties and natural activities of the parts that comprised the cosmos the Stoic and Epicurean schools believed they had established one of the principles necessary for understanding its structure. Remarking on the especially tight connection between the larger physical world and its constituent parts, Zeno may be said to have summarised both the Stoic and Epicurean positions when he spoke of Nature’s cohesiveness and defined it as ‘a force moving of itself, producing and preserving in being its offspring in accordance with seminal principles within definite periods, and effecting results homogenous with their sources.’³² Putting the Epicurean objections of infiniteness aside, Zeno also believed Nature might produce utility and pleasure as the by-products of its munificence so that ‘the analogy of human craftsmanship’ always remained apt.³³ One cannot overstate the importance of these physical conceptions in providing both the Stoics and Epicureans with a scientific account of physical reality and a coherent interpretation of the principles operating throughout the natural world.

Turning away from the nature of simple physical bodies to consider the more complex bodies of animals and humans, we find this tendency to resist and preserve the body equally pervades the Stoic and Epicurean accounts of moral psychology. That the topic of qualities in natural philosophy could transition so tidily into a discussion of ethics is a view that, as noted at the beginning of the chapter, was

³⁰ Ibid. (48C). Other accounts of the ‘persistence’ of bodies while mixing can be found in Stobaeus and Plutarch’s accounts of the Stoic position. See Long and Sedley, *H.Phil.* (48D-E).

³¹ Eric Lewis, ‘The Stoics on Identity and Individuation’, *Phronesis*, 40/1 (1995), 89-108 (p. 90).

³² Laertius, *Lives* (7.149).

³³ Ibid.; the Epicureans hold that the universe is infinite in scope and duration. See Laertius, *Lives* (10.41-42; 60) and Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (1.958-97, p. 29).

tightly woven into the fabric of each school's philosophical curriculum. It was thus to nature that ethics owed its intelligibility, and it was precisely this point which Lucretius could be seen to stress when he noted that the 'terrifying darkness that enshrouds the mind' could not be 'dispelled by the sun's rays and the dazzling darts of day, but by the study of the superficial aspect and underlying principle of nature'.³⁴

Epicurean *Hedonê* as Self-Preservation

The basis of Epicurean philosophy is the soul's lifelong and nature-driven pursuit of pleasure, an end that was as prone to being misconstrued by their ancient contemporaries as it was by their later critics. For their part Stoic and Christian writers confidently insisted that any natural desire for pleasure would lead to numerous 'immoral consequences', or was at best only a by-product of an animal's greater desire for self-preservation.³⁵ Such characterisations, however, failed to acknowledge the extent to which the promotion and protection of the body's health had come to reside in the Epicurean understanding of pleasure and pain. As Epicurus and his followers were wont to stress, the pleasure they held to be the 'first and native good' was not philosophical short-hand for the 'pleasures of the prodigal' or the 'pleasures of sensuality' but rather the pleasure that arose as the body and soul strove to preserve a painless state.³⁶ Such was the importance of avoiding needless pain that Lucretius goes so far as to call pleasure the 'sustainer of life.'³⁷ Thus while Epicureanism tried to reassure its followers that 'death was nothing to us' and aimed to remove the anxiety and fear that came from dwelling on one's mortality,³⁸ it could

³⁴ Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (2.60, p. 37).

³⁵ Cicero, *De fin.* (3.17); Laertius, *Lives* (7.86). Some of the later criticisms of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors will be dealt with in the next section of the thesis.

³⁶ Laertius, *Lives* (10.131); Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (2.15-22, pp. 35-36); Cicero, *De fin.* (1.33).

³⁷ Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (2.971, p. 59).

³⁸ *Ibid.* (3.830ff., p. 89); Laertius, *Lives* (10.124-27; KΛ 2, 10.139); The equation of death with the dissolution of the atoms in the soul, and the attempts by Epicurus, Lucretius and other later Epicureans such as Diogenes of Oinoanda to render death as a psychologically non-troubling, physical

also be found advocating the health of the body and the mind as formidable psychological motivations.³⁹

That the health of the body and its promotion was as important to the Epicureans as it was to the Stoics appears clearly in the formers' well-attested view that animals actively seek out those objects that instil a sense of pleasure while avoiding those objects and situations that instil a sense of pain. Writing on the futility that comes from pursuing 'chimerical pleasures', Epicurus considered it the role of ethics to demonstrate how the locus of pleasure always remained within the body itself.⁴⁰ In the more general views of the Epicurean school we find that pleasure and pain represent a simple and universal way of speaking about the 'good' and the 'bad'. All animate things come to associate the 'good' with objects that are capable of imparting pleasure because they produce in us a feeling of kinship (*oikeion*), while they identify the 'bad' with those pain-inducing objects that contribute to a feeling of foreignness (*allogtrion*).⁴¹

In addition to pleasure's ability to inspire feelings of kinship and goodness in the individual, the Epicureans' view that pleasure also attended the natural 'restoration' of body and soul kept them in line with the earlier sentiments of Aristotle and other Greek writers such as Empedocles and Plato.⁴² Far from creating a base and hedonistic account of pleasure, the Epicureans present pleasure as the desirable sensation that arises as the body's parts work to restore themselves. As we

process are discussed in detail in James Warren, *Facing Death: Epicurus and his Critics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004). As Charles Segal has also pointed out, by de-emphasising its 'somatic aspects' and highlighting its atomic character, the Epicurean description of death as 'the separation of soul-atoms from the body and their return to the reservoir of atomic material in the universe,' makes the end of life more scientific than fear-inducing. Charles Segal, *Lucretius on Death and Anxiety* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) (pp. 33-34).

³⁹ Laertius, *Lives* (10.128).

⁴⁰ Ibid. (KA 26, 10.148).

⁴¹ Ibid. (10.34).

⁴² Empedocles, *D.K.* 31A95: 'Pleasure is the influence of like elements on like and - in the case of pleasures from eating and drinking - by compensation for a shortcoming of something or other in the organism,' and Plato, *Timaeus* (64C-D) where the restorative aspects of pleasure are highlighted when we consider that 'an impression produced in us contrary to nature and violent, if sudden, is painful; and, again, the sudden return to nature is pleasant.' Both as cited in Boris Nikolsky, 'Epicurus on Pleasure', *Phronesis*, 46/4 (2001), 440-65 (p. 446).

have already seen, Aristotle had also highlighted the restorative attributes of pleasures when he referred to them as those ‘activities and ends’ which bring about a ‘restoration’ or ‘recovery’ of the individual’s soul to ‘its normal or natural state of being.’⁴³ Taking the restoration of the body as its chief aim, our feelings and sensations are programmed by nature to tell us that pleasure is good and pain is bad. As a result the Epicureans assert that it is only from a ‘clear and certain understanding’ of the relationship between pleasure and the health of the body that the basis for all of our choices and aversions becomes clear.⁴⁴

Highlighting the power of self-reflection alongside the restorative aspects of pleasure further enabled the Epicureans to demonstrate how ethics is rooted in nature’s dictates, since the ‘study of the nature and the species of desire belongs to inquiry into human nature.’⁴⁵ It is through ‘sober reasoning,’ Epicurus argues, that we are able to ‘search out the grounds of every choice and avoidance, and banish those beliefs through which the greatest tumults take possession of the soul.’⁴⁶ Prudence or practical wisdom (*phronēsis*) serves as a guide to attaining long-lasting pleasure and guards us against false opinions that prevent us from recognising which objects to pursue and how to pursue them. To aid in this deliberative process certain pleasures may be classified as ‘natural’, and possibly ‘necessary’, or as simply ‘groundless’. The pursuit of necessary desires often contributes directly to the individual’s happiness as well as to the promotion of their life and its ease.⁴⁷ According to Epicurus these labels provide the philosopher with a means of distinguishing the most important types of pleasures from those that arise from vain beliefs and work to pervert the body’s necessary desires.⁴⁸ However, as Philip Mitsis and Elizabeth Asmis have pointed out, Epicurean doctrine does not demand that the individual expunge all beliefs, only those that are harmful, so that the *pathē* come to

⁴³ Aristotle, *Rhet.* (1.11, 1369b35ff.), Aristotle, *EN* (7.12, 1153a1ff.).

⁴⁴ Laertius, *Lives* (10.128).

⁴⁵ Michael Erler and M. Schofield, 'Epicurean Ethics', in Algra, Barnes, Mansfield, and Schofield (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, 642-74 (p. 651).

⁴⁶ Laertius, *Lives* (10.132).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* (10.127).

provide the standard of truth and criterion by which all actions can be judged.⁴⁹ As a result, clarifying the true relationship between pleasure and belief becomes as important as detailing the many potential guises pleasure might take.

Despite accusations to the contrary by the Cyrenaics and the Stoics, the Epicureans were adamant that they had not ‘conflated’ the two positions of pleasure and the absence of pain or redefined the terms so that they became a single motivational force.⁵⁰ Insofar as an individual possessed a consciousness of their feelings, the Epicureans believed they also retained an awareness of both pleasure and pain, thus denying the possibility that any ‘neutral state’ of feeling could ever exist.⁵¹ Rather than conflating pleasure and the absence of pain, Epicurus is believed by Cicero and Diogenes Laertius to have advocated two varieties of pleasure – kinetic and *katastematic* – and that these helped him to explain the multiple states by which pleasure fulfilled the body’s natural and necessary desires.⁵² *Katastematic* or static pleasures are said to occur after the removal of a particular pain, as for example when the thirsty man has slaked his thirst or the hungry man has digested his food. Kinetic pleasures, on the other hand, contain connotations of activity and motion,

⁴⁹ Phillip Mitsis, *Epicurus' Ethical Theory: The Pleasures of Invulnerability* (Cornell Studies in Classical Philology; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988) (pp. 42-43) and Elizabeth Asmis, *Epicurus' Scientific Method* (Cornell Studies in Classical Philology; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984).

⁵⁰ The Cyrenaics held that pleasure was a ‘moderate emotion’ of the mind while pain was a ‘rough’ one. They also drew a distinction between their view of pleasure as the chief good and that of the Epicureans. In Diogenes’s biography of Aristippus, he writes, ‘the pleasure which the [Cyrenaics] call the chief good, is not a state, which consists in the absence of all pain, and is a sort of undisturbedness, which is what Epicurus admits as such. The Cyrenaics think that there is a distinction between the chief good and a life of happiness, for that the chief good is a particular pleasure, but that happiness is a state consisting of a number of pleasures, among which, both those which are past, and those which are future, are both enumerated.’ Laertius, *Lives* (2.89-90). The charge that Epicurus’s definition of pleasure as ‘the absence of pain’ gave it an esoteric usage appears in Cicero, *De fin.* (2.6-19).

⁵¹ Cicero, *De fin.* (1.38).

⁵² *Ibid.* (2.9); Laertius, *Lives* (10.136). Numerous scholars have pointed out that this distinction is far more obscure than *De finibus* 2.9 makes it appear. This has caused them to treat the discussion in *De finibus* with caution, and occasionally, outright scepticism. For a discussion see Erler and Schofield, ‘Epicurean Ethics’, (pp. 654-55) and Michael C. Stokes, ‘Cicero on Epicurean Pleasures’, in J.G.F Powell (ed.), *Cicero the Philosopher: Twelve Papers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 145-70 (pp. 156-59). For an outright dismissal of the Ciceronian distinction see Gossling and Taylor, *The Greeks on Pleasure* (p. 375ff.); J.M. Rist, *Epicurus: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) (Appendix D), and Nikolsky, ‘Epicurus on Pleasure’, (p. 441, fn. 4).

given that they arise as the natural needs of the body and minds are being satisfied. Whether such divisions were in fact intended to explain the varieties of pleasure, it is certainly the case that the notions of activity and gratification do appear prominently in the school's attempts to elaborate on the nature of the chief good.⁵³

Despite the variations of pleasure one may experience, the basis of each of these pleasures remains closely tied to the larger and more general descriptions relied upon by the Epicureans to explain the individual's own desires, needs, rational preferences, and ultimately, knowledge of nature's dictates.⁵⁴ Sensory gratification plays an important role in helping to acquire the 'greatest pleasure', and indeed Epicurus writes elsewhere of being unable to 'conceive of the good' divorced from the pleasures accompanying 'taste and sexual experience and listening to music'.⁵⁵ Plutarch provides us with further evidence of how the Epicureans believed the removal of pain from the flesh imbued the mind with a corresponding feeling of joy. The pleasures of the stomach, for example, are described as 'a delightful motion through the flesh which is transmitted upward, resulting in a particular pleasure and joy of the soul.'⁵⁶ What emerges from these accounts and descriptions is that motive pleasures (motive in that they affect the senses) stimulate the mind as it contemplates the body free from the burdens of pain.⁵⁷ To this end the senses work in conjunction with our natural desire for pleasure by suggesting various ways in which we might experience pleasure. As we will later observe, the motive characterisation of pleasure and pain would prove equally appealing to later writers such as Hobbes who also looked to detail the process through which the external objects, the animal's senses and their soul all interacted with one another.

⁵³ Cicero, *De fin.* (1.37).

⁵⁴ Mitsis, *Epicurus' Ethical Theory* (p. 47); Stokes, 'Cicero on Epicurean Pleasures', (p. 157).

⁵⁵ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Cicero on the Emotions: Tusculan Disputations 3 & 4*, ed. Margaret Graver (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002) (3.41).

⁵⁶ Plutarch, *Non posse* (1087b) as cited in Erler and Schofield, 'Epicurean Ethics', (p. 655); also Epicurus, *The Extant Remains*, trans. Cyril Bailey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926) (5.b.1, p. 121) where active pleasures are said to be motive and impart 'joy' and 'exultation'.

⁵⁷ Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* (3.41).

One of the primary reasons the Epicureans believe we pursue pleasure is because of its ability to contribute to our well-being, and indeed many of the extant sources speak to this ability as part of their argument for why pleasure should be seen as the soul's chief good or *summum bonum*. In the first book of Cicero's *De finibus*, for example, the Epicurean spokesman Torquatus provides a detailed description of why nature recommends first and foremost the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain. Eschewing any syllogistic proof that the pursuit of pleasure motivates the animal from birth, he argues that Epicurus believed that the desirability of pleasurable things took its source in those objects that acted upon the animal's senses. Without sensation the animal was said to have no means by which to engage with the larger world, and because the senses operate independently of reason they serve as the filter through which the animal was directed towards those things that were most in accordance with nature.⁵⁸ Later Epicureans, however, felt this position required buttressing since not all philosophers could be convinced that the goodness of pleasure and badness of pain were self-evident. To this end, they provided proofs to demonstrate that the desirability of pleasure and the undesirability of pain were equally 'graspable' by the intellect and reason.⁵⁹ As part of the move away from a strictly sensory account of these two motivating factors, the Epicureans used a 'cradle argument' to demonstrate that the mind was naturally endowed from birth with a 'conception of the desirability of having pleasure and not having pain.'⁶⁰ One can find this view emerging in Torquatus's statement that pleasure itself is never rejected, disliked or avoided itself; it is only bypassed when 'those who do not know

⁵⁸ Cicero, *De fin.* (1.30). The view of pleasure as being 'graspable through the senses alone' is also found in Seneca, *Ep.* 124.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* (1.31).

⁶⁰ This appears at the end of the section of Epicurean ethics in Laetius, *Lives* (10.137). The best account of this usage remains Jacques Brunschwig, 'The Cradle Argument in Epicureanism and Stoicism', in M. Schofield and G. Striker (eds.), *The Norms of Nature: Studies in Hellenistic Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 113-44. Other accounts are given in Erler and Schofield, 'Epicurean Ethics', (p. 650) and Raphael Woolf, 'Pleasure and Desire', in Warren (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism*, 158-78.

how to pursue pleasure rationally encounter consequences that are extremely painful.’⁶¹

Torquatus also endeavours to show how the short-term experiencing of pain has the potential to bring about not only a greater sensation of pleasure but also the security of the individual. The attainment of long-lasting pleasure, he argues, is closely related to the avoidance of death and the gaining of personal advantage. This is evidenced, for example, in the past exploits of the Torquatii on the field of battle:

Do you really believe that they charged an armed enemy, or treated their children, their own flesh and blood, so cruelly, without a thought for their own interest or advantage? Why, even wild animals do not act in that way; they do not run amok so blindly that we cannot discern any purpose in their movements and their onslaughts. Can you then suppose that those heroic men performed their famous deeds without any motive at all? What their motive was, I will consider later on: for the present I will confidently assert, that if they had a motive for those undoubtedly glorious exploits, that motive was not a love of virtue in and for itself. – He wrested the necklet from his foe. – Yes, and saved himself from death. – But he braved great danger. – Yes, before the eyes of an army. – What did he get by it? – Honour and esteem, the strongest guarantees of security in life. – He sentenced his own son to death. – [...] If his purpose was by inflicting pain upon himself to establish his authority as a commander, and to tighten the reins of discipline during a very serious war by holding over his army the fear of punishment, then his action aimed at ensuring the safety of his fellow citizens, upon which he knew his own depended.⁶²

⁶¹ Cicero, *De fin.* (1.32-33). This position marks just one example of how the Epicureans split from the pursuit of *hedonê* advanced in the writings of the Cyrenaic philosophers who held that pleasure should be pursued in all instances while pain should always be avoided. The differences between the two schools views on pleasure are discussed in Laertius, *Lives* (10.136-37).

⁶² Cicero, *De fin.* (1.34-35). Also see Plutarch, *Against Colotes* (1117a) where Epicurus writes to Anaxarchus, ‘I summon you to constant pleasures, and not to virtues, which provide [only] empty, pointless, and disturbing expectations of rewards.’ Reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [1-39].

Views such as these demonstrate that the Epicureans were aware that the pursuit of pleasure was often closely linked to questions of self-preservation. By forgoing the siren song of an immediate pleasure the individual might in turn experience potentially greater pleasures and security. The close association between pleasure and security of the body emerges clearly in some of the later sources. Diogenes of Oinoanda, for example, can be found describing the ways in which the fear of death and the fear of pain appear in tandem. ‘But as it is, this fear [of pain] is sometimes manifest and sometimes not. It is manifest when we clearly avoid some evil, for example fire, fearing that we might meet our deaths as a result of it.’⁶³ Often these fears may remain hidden within the individual, but the good Epicurean ‘will fear pain but not death,’ as it will be ‘this fear of pain that will suffice to ensure that they can function in day-to-day situations without needlessly endangering themselves.’⁶⁴ The importance of remaining alive need not, however, be entirely associated with the evils of pain. Taking up the question of what the pleasant life consists in, Plutarch proposes the link between the body’s health and the experiencing of pleasure. ‘The stable condition of the flesh and the reliable expectation concerning this contains the highest and most secure joy, for those who are able to reason it out.’⁶⁵ As the Epicureans make clear, however, it is not the pleasure connoting a well-balanced state of body and mind that moves us to act, but rather the pleasures that we derive from our own *pathē* or awareness of this balance that drives us to seek out ways of preserving it.⁶⁶

In the *Letter to Menoecus* Epicurus analyses human desires by considering their ‘naturalness’ and ‘necessity’, with the intention of showing how certain desires help promote our own happiness while others work to secure the body’s tranquillity and existence. ‘We must reckon that some desires are natural and others empty, and of the natural some are necessary, others natural only; but of the necessary some are

⁶³ Diogenes of Oinoanda (fr. 35, II Smith) as cited in Warren, *Facing Death* (p. 11).

⁶⁴ Diogenes of Oinoanda as cited in *ibid.* (p. 12).

⁶⁵ Plutarch, *A Pleasant Life* (1089d) as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [I-36].

⁶⁶ Laertius, *Lives* (10.136).

necessary for happiness, others for the body's freedom from disturbance, and others for life itself.⁶⁷ Although Aristotle had already distinguished between the ability of both necessary and non-necessary desires to achieve happiness,⁶⁸ his tendency to place hunger and thirst alongside sexual and other physical appetites is not endorsed by Epicurus. In his view only food and clothing, but not sex, can be classified as both natural and necessary, as the pleasures they give are species of the larger genus of happiness.⁶⁹ Sex, for its part, is a natural desire but not a necessary one.⁷⁰ While others link natural and necessary desires to the body's appetites, and take them to produce lower types of pleasure, Epicurus believes that natural desires are the only ones a person will continuously seek out and benefit from.⁷¹ Indeed, at one point he argues that the 'first measure of security' (or 'salvation') is to be found in tempering those desires which threaten to wreak 'havoc' on the body and mind.⁷² That sex and other non-necessary desires are unable to provide security is made clear through the failure of pain to arise when they go unfulfilled.⁷³

By speaking to the oftentimes-illusory nature of the objects which the animal's appetites might pursue, the Epicureans hoped to liberate their philosophy from the charges of self-indulgence and profligacy that their critics levelled against them. As they were intent to show, the basis for each desire remains the minimisation or complete removal of pain from the body, so that the 'cries of the flesh' are always most apparent when we are hungry, thirsty and cold.⁷⁴ Such is the desire to satiate each of these deficiencies that Lucretius sees all creatures being instinctively driven to nourish their bodies, so that the allure of desired objects becomes singularly

⁶⁷ Ibid. (10.127). This division is also discussed in Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* (5.93).

⁶⁸ Aristotle, *EN* (3.11, 1118b8-27, p. 1766).

⁶⁹ Erler and Schofield, 'Epicurean Ethics', (p. 658).

⁷⁰ The Epicureans' dismissal of sexual intercourse as a 'necessary' pleasure occurs throughout the extant sources. See for example Laertius, *Lives* (10.118), Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (4.1058-1191) and Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* (5.94). In Athenaeus's *Deipnosophists* sexual pleasure is ranked alongside taste and listening as one of the pleasures which constitute the good. (12, 546ef) as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [I-37].

⁷¹ Laertius, *Lives* (10.129-32).

⁷² Epicurus, *Extant Remains* (5, Vat. Coll. 80).

⁷³ Laertius, *Lives* (ΚΔ 30, 10.149).

⁷⁴ Epicurus, *Extant Remains* (5, Vat. Coll. 33).

capable of ‘propelling’ the body into action.⁷⁵ These movements are facilitated by nature itself, as nature’s provenance and the natural objects of our desire are said to be easily attainable and readily available.⁷⁶ There is, however, a fixed extent to the ‘goals and limits of the flesh’ and certainly the Epicureans recognised that physical pleasures could not continue infinitely.⁷⁷ Such limits help to explain why it is that the ‘flesh endures the storms of the present alone, while the mind those of the past and future as well as the present.’⁷⁸ As a result it is in the mind that the greatest pleasures are said to arise, a claim that the Epicureans believe is empirically valid given the animal’s apparent contentedness with pleasure from the moment of their birth.⁷⁹ Though we may then still attempt to satisfy the natural and necessary desires of the flesh, it is thanks to the mind and the mind alone that we are ‘equipped to plan for an optimal balance of pleasure and pain, by virtue of its grasp of time and its understanding of the limits of pain as well as pleasure.’⁸⁰

With its emphasis on the removal of pain in the body and its suggestion that nature directs us towards this end, the Epicurean account of desire provides an analysis of the ways in which pleasure contributes to, and continuously promotes, the health of the body and the tranquillity of the soul. Yet this ethics of self-concern was to suffer greatly, as blanket charges of excessive hedonism and moral laxity were not easily dismissed. Moreover, as these charges began to accumulate over the centuries, these criticisms contributed to Epicureanism’s increasing isolation from other ancient philosophies. Indeed, as Catherine Wilson has noted, ‘the vindication of pleasure was a significant feature of early modern moral philosophy,’ and it was only after the views of Epicurus and his followers had been scrutinised by these later writers that ‘the issue of basic human welfare, understood as the satisfaction of non-intellectual

⁷⁵ Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (4.859-890, p. 123).

⁷⁶ Laetius, *Lives* (ΚΑ 15, 10.144); Stobaeus, *Florilegium* (17.23) as cited in Erler and Schofield, ‘Epicurean Ethics’, (p. 659).

⁷⁷ Laetius, *Lives* (ΚΑ 18 and 20, 10.144–45).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* (10.137).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Erler and Schofield, ‘Epicurean Ethics’, (p. 661).

needs, was brought to the fore.⁸¹ While these later treatments and vindications will be considered shortly, let us for the present time keep our attention on the contemporary criticisms of the Stoics.

Self-Preservation and Stoic *Oikeiōsis*

Many of the bodily concerns found in Epicurean thought were given equal consideration in the Stoic accounts of ‘appropriate’ action. Though the school bypasses the pursuit of pleasure altogether by arguing that nature directs all animals to preserve their own constitution, Stoic arguments frequently ‘locked horns’ with the Epicurean contention that the transcendent status of pleasure was beyond discussion.⁸² Like their rivals, they too would produce an account of an animal’s earliest desires that drew on the authority of empiricism and the language of kinship. Further, although the school was equally committed to showing how potential pleasures and pains played a motivational role in animal psychology, they were classified instead under the rubric of the passions and treated as a topic separate from the animal’s primary impulse. This reclassification is due to the Stoics rejecting the Epicurean portrayal of human behaviour as the product of a single, omnipresent impulse and the Stoics’ insistence that human actions were the result of native impulse and rational deliberation. Such is the prevalence of these counter-claims in the extant Stoic sources that many modern scholars have argued that without the Epicurean account of pleasure there would have been no basis for the Stoic account of natural kinship (*oikeiōsis*) to emerge at all.⁸³ Other scholars have suggested

⁸¹ Catherine Wilson, 'Epicureanism in Early Modern Philosophy', in Warren (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism*, 266-86 (pp. 276-77).

⁸² M. Schofield, 'Stoic Ethics', in Inwood (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, 233-56 (pp. 246-47).

⁸³ See Brad Inwood and Pierluigi Donini, 'Stoic Ethics', in Algra, Barnes, Mansfield, and Schofield (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, 675-738 (pp. 677-78) and Nicholas P. White, 'The Basis of Stoic Ethics', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 83 (1979), 143-78. The point is also argued forcefully in S.G. Pembroke, '*Oikeiōsis*', in A. A. Long (ed.), *Problems in Stoicism* (London: The Athlone Press, 1971). The classical account of *oikeiōsis* as an anti-Epicurean argument is found in M. Pohlenz's *Die Stoa*.

oikeiōsis is but one way of arguing for the fundamental axioms of Stoic ethics or that its purpose in Stoic writings is to demonstrate how the Stoa had developed a theory of indifference that broke with the Cynics.⁸⁴

Stoic discussions of the soul are focused in large part on the ability of natural desire and reason to bring about specific and identifiable actions. This particular emphasis may well have been due to the influence of Aristotle's *De anima* and *De motu animalium*, texts in which the animal's soul was held to be the source from which all the voluntary actions of desire and the intellect arose.⁸⁵ Yet in contrast with Aristotle, the Stoics could be found conceiving of the effects of nature in an animal's 'undeveloped' and 'developed' states.⁸⁶ While Aristotle had made constant recourse to nature in his physical and ethical writings to describe the reasons why an organism pursued a specific *telos*, it was the Stoics who sought to explain how nature guided the organism throughout its entire developmental process.

The Stoic interest in the ability of nature to move animals is attested to in the writings of the later commentator Origen, who notes that the Stoics understood the animal's motions as the product of either internal or external processes.⁸⁷ It is within this group of self-initiating movers that the Stoics, like Aristotle, also placed plants. The internal movement of animals is 'sustained by physique or soul' and is initiated

⁸⁴ Gisela Striker, *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) (p. 281).

⁸⁵ This view is supported by Troels Engberg-Pedersen, who has argued that the Stoic discussions of soul can frequently be found retaining many of the 'peculiarities' of *De anima*. Such borrowings have also led both him and Priscilla Sakezles to suggest that the 'basic conceptual moves' in the Stoic account of the soul should be seen as 'addresses and responses' to the earlier Aristotelian positions. See Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *The Stoic Theory of Oikeiōsis: Moral Development and Social Interaction in Early Stoic Philosophy* (Studies in Hellenistic Civilization II; Esbjerg: Aarhus University Press, 1990) (p. 18) and Sakezles, 'Aristotle and Chrysippus on the Physiology of Human Action'. For his own part, Sandbach is resistant to any claim of the texts comprising the modern *Corpus Aristotelicum* as having exerted an appreciable influence on the third-century Stoa. See F.H. Sandbach, *The Stoics* (2nd edn.; London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1989) (see pp. 1, 33-34, 55-57).

⁸⁶ See Striker, *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics* (p. 286).

⁸⁷ Origen, *On Principles* (3.1.2-3) as reproduced in Long and Sedley, *H.Phil.* (53A).

‘when an impression occurs within them and calls forth an impulse.’⁸⁸ In the work of other commentators, such as Calcidius, the power of the soul in guiding the animal’s actions is such that it overtakes nature in fulfilling the animal’s requirements for nutrition and growth.⁸⁹ Yet the soul was not assumed by all to be the singular driving force behind animal activity, and the earlier views of Galen and others provide an alternative account of how the Stoics believed nature *and* soul worked together to initiate animal behaviour and direct the animal towards the objects most capable of ensuring its health.⁹⁰ This would not, however, seem to correspond with what Chrysippus had intended when he spoke of the ways in which nature had differentiated the various types of animals. In addition to impulsive movements, rational creatures were able to ‘pass judgments on impressions’ with the intention of accepting some and rejecting others in the hopes of bringing about a particular desired end. As a result, the power of impulse could be supplanted by ‘reason prescribing action.’⁹¹

With nature playing such an early and instructive role in human psychology, the Stoics approached the subject of ethics as one would examine the relationship of a part to the whole, and often did so in a way that blurred the distinction between the cosmic and animal senses of the term.⁹² Such distinctions were most likely of little use to the Stoic philosopher anyway, given that Zeno, Cicero and Seneca could all be found arguing that the cosmos possessed human attributes such as sense perception and rationality.⁹³ It is against this backdrop that we come to find the Stoics arguing that virtue is a by-product of our natural functions and using this characterisation to promote a theory of development, which would come to stand in opposition to the

⁸⁸ Ibid.; cf. Laertius, *Lives* (7.86) wherein plants are said to strive for preservation but without the aid of a specific impulse.

⁸⁹ *Commentary on Plato’s ‘Timaeus’* (220) as reproduced in Long and Sedley, *H.Phil.* (53G).

⁹⁰ *Against Julianus* (5) and ps.-Galen, *Introduction* (13) as cited in Anna Ju, ‘Chrysippus on Nature and Soul in Animals’, *Classical Quarterly*, 57/1 (2007), 97-108 (p. 97).

⁹¹ Plutarch, *Moralia*, trans. Harold Cherniss, XV vols. (Loeb Classical Library, 13; London: W. Heinemann Ltd., 1976) (1037F).

⁹² Inwood and Donini, ‘Stoic Ethics’, (p. 676).

⁹³ Ibid. (fn. 4); Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* (9.104-10); Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* (11.22); Seneca, *Ep.* 92.30.

Epicurean contention that pleasure was the primary natural good. These rejections, as we will see, come about in large part through an examination of *oikeiōsis* and speak closely to the natural adaptedness, or *oikeiotês*, which Theophrastus had developed along the lines of the discussions of self- and other-love found in Aristotle's ethics.⁹⁴ The overlapping of these two notions of kinship will be examined shortly when we consider the Stoic views on social relations. For the present, let us first consider how the basis of Stoic ethics provided its readers with an account of human nature which they believed trumped the Epicureans' hedonism-based ethics by using a specific impulse to self-preservation to recast the animal's earliest and hence, most natural, desires.

That all living creatures possessed a natural kinship with their own bodies and towards each other is an argument that features in the writings of the Early, Middle and Late Stoa. Its initial formulation had probably been established in Zeno's now-lost works *Of Life according to Nature* and *Of Impulse, or Human Nature*.⁹⁵ We do know that kinship was discussed in the work of the third archon Chrysippus, *On Ends*, wherein he argued that the animal's first impulse is directed towards self-preservation, because of the animal's natural affinity for its own constitution.⁹⁶ Centuries later, Cicero and his Stoic spokesman Cato furthered this argument with their claim that 'immediately upon birth a living creature feels an attachment for itself, and [possesses] an impulse to preserve itself and to feel affection for its own constitution and for those things that preserve that constitution.'⁹⁷ In writings of the Late Stoa, such as those of Seneca and Hierocles, and quasi-Stoics such as Arius Didymus, the primacy of the self is re-asserted by focusing on the ways in which self-awareness of the body and its constitution guided the pursuit and avoidance of

⁹⁴ C.O. Brink, '*Oikeiōsis* and *Oikeiotês*: Theophrastus and Zeno on Nature in Moral Theory', *Phronesis*, 1/1 (1955-56), 123-45 and, more generally, Striker, *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics* (pp. 281-82).

⁹⁵ Laertius, *Lives* (7.4).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* (7.85).

⁹⁷ Cicero, *De fin.* (3.16) and Marcus Tullius Cicero, *On Duties*, eds. M.T. Griffin and E.M. Atkins (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) (1.11, p. 6).

all external objects.⁹⁸ Such were the desire and efforts of the Stoics to establish self-preservation as the impetus for animal activity that Plutarch could be found asking why it was, ‘for heaven’s sake,’ that Chrysippus ‘wearies us to death in writing that we have an appropriate disposition relative to ourselves as soon as we are born and to our parts and our offspring?’⁹⁹

The Stoic account of ‘personal’ *oikeiōsis* may be said to revolve around a few key contentions, each of which promote the naturalness and moral acceptability of a self-centred ethics. As we have just seen, it is a common feature in Stoic ethics explicitly to link the animal’s primary impulse with the goal of the preserving the body and its various parts. In support of this contention the Stoics could also be found, like their Epicurean opponents, employing a ‘cradle argument’ to validate empirically their own claims about these early actions. In support of self-preservation’s primary status Cicero wrote that the Stoics:

urge that infants desire things conducive to their health and reject things that are the opposite before they have ever felt pleasure or pain; this would not be the case, unless they felt an affection for their own constitution and were afraid of destruction. But it would be impossible that they should feel desire at all unless they possessed self-consciousness, and consequently felt affection for themselves. This leads to the conclusion that it is love of self which supplies the primary impulse to action.¹⁰⁰

The importance of the child and young animal’s self-awareness, and its role in their desire for self-preservation, also emerges clearly in Seneca and Hierocles’s usages of

⁹⁸ Seneca, *Ep.* 121 as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [II-107], Hierocles, *Elements of Ethics* as reproduced in A. A. Long, *Stoic Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) (p. 262ff.). The philosophical leanings of Arius Didymus are discussed in David E. Hahm, ‘The Diaeretic Method and the Purpose of Arius’ Doxography’, in W. Fortenbaugh (ed.), *On Stoic and Peripatetic Ethics: The Work of Arius Didymus* (Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities; New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, Inc., 1983), 15-37.

⁹⁹ Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* (1038B) as reproduced in Long and Sedley, *H.Phil.* (57E). The slightly later accounts of the anthologist Aulus Gellius’s, *Attic Nights* (12.5, 7) and Alexander Aphrodisias’s, *On Soul* (II.14 and 25) provide further evidence of the doctrine’s centrality.

¹⁰⁰ Cicero, *De fin.* (3.16-17).

the cradle argument. In one particular letter Seneca argues that animals ‘come into this world with knowledge’ of their body and its parts, and that this knowledge is part of ‘nature’s sound training.’¹⁰¹ Nature can be seen to guide the young in such a way that ‘all find the constitution in which they are in congenial,’ so that while babies might one day develop into ‘something greater,’ this does not mean that ‘the state in which they are born is not according to nature.’¹⁰² Hierocles is equally interested in embryology, and his *Elements of Ethics* represents one of the lengthier attempts we possess of a Stoic philosopher trying to determine whether the dictates of nature cease or persist after birth.¹⁰³ This recently-uncovered text provides a further endorsement of Seneca and the earlier Stoics’ views by arguing that self-perception of the body and its needs is not only present from the moment of an animal’s birth, but is also observable through its innate knowledge of how to utilise those parts which are particularly well-suited for self-defence and attacking.¹⁰⁴ The perception of good and bad things is equally said to exist from birth and this in turn confirms the primary and *a priori* status of self-perception.¹⁰⁵ In the writings of Seneca and Hierocles, all animals are said to be motivated to protect their constitution by natural fear, a psychological response that further indicates that nature does not ‘abandon’ her young. At the root of the fear are said to be the ‘most certain guardianships’ which innately compel every living organism to look after itself and to ‘know immediately what is dangerous and to avoid what is life-threatening.’¹⁰⁶ Nothing can be said to reflect this disposition more clearly, Hierocles argues, than the fact that ‘animals under all circumstances seek to preserve

¹⁰¹ Seneca, *Ep.* 121.5 as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [II-107].

¹⁰² *Ibid.* (121.16).

¹⁰³ See Ju, 'Chrysippus on Nature and Soul in Animals', (p. 97).

¹⁰⁴ Hierocles, *Elements of Ethics* (col. 1.51-3.52) as reproduced in Long, *Stoic Studies* (p. 263).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* (col. 5.38-6.24).

¹⁰⁶ Seneca, *Ep.* 121.18 as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [II-107]. The discussion of how Seneca used fear as a motivating concept in his ethics, and how he believed he could come to grips with violence through philosophical consolation, is considered in detail in both Catharine Edwards, 'The Suffering Body: Philosophy and Pain in Seneca's Letters', in J.I. Porter (ed.), *Constructions of the Classical Body* (The Body in Theory: Histories of Cultural Materialism; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 252-68 and Catharine Edwards, 'Self-Scrutiny and Self-Transformation in Seneca's Letters', *Greece & Rome* 44 (1997), 23-38.

themselves.’¹⁰⁷ Animals do not then come into life without the fear of death, and the avoidance of potentially life-extinguishing things remains its ‘lifelong companion.’¹⁰⁸ They remain aware of their own needs and through self- and other-perception they come to see how they relate to the natural world. Any hostility or antipathy on the part of the animal towards itself would thus entail some sort of contradiction in nature,¹⁰⁹ and it is from each of these accounts that we come to understand the ways in which nature guides us to preserve our own constitutions, while undermining the Epicurean mantra ‘death is nothing to us’.¹¹⁰

In addition to fear the Stoics can also be found attempting to refute the Epicurean contention that pleasure is the primary and universal animal instinct. Whereas Epicurean accounts of pleasure are silent regarding the arguments of their rivals, the extant Stoic sources are replete with dismissals of *hedonê* and *voluptas*. This is captured in the doxographical writings of Diogenes quite well: for example, when he presents Chrysippus’s rebuttal of the Epicurean contention that the animal’s primary impulse is to pleasure. Pleasure, Chrysippus and other Stoics hold, is not to be counted as the chief good but rather as a ‘by-product which supervenes when nature all by itself has sought out and attained those things which are suited to its constitution.’¹¹¹ It is also characterised as an ‘aftermath comparable to the condition of animals thriving and plants in full bloom.’¹¹² Earlier on Chrysippus himself had likewise revealed the determination of the early Stoa to prevent the ascendancy of Epicurean pleasure to the status of chief good. This comes across to us primarily in the titles of his own now-lost ethical writings: ‘Of the Good or Morally Beautiful and Pleasure’, ‘Proofs that Pleasure is not the End-in-Chief of Action’, ‘Proofs that Pleasure is not a Good’, and ‘Of the Arguments Commonly used on behalf of

¹⁰⁷ Hierocles, *Elements of Ethics* (col. 6.53-7.48) as reproduced in Long, *Stoic Studies* (p. 263).

¹⁰⁸ Apart from Seneca, this sentiment can be found in Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* (12.5, 7) and Cicero, *De fin.* (5.24).

¹⁰⁹ Brunschwig, ‘Cradle Argument’, (p. 129).

¹¹⁰ Laertius, *Lives* (ΚΑ 2, 10.139).

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* (7.85-86).

¹¹² *Ibid.*

[Pleasure]’.¹¹³ The characterisation of pleasure as a secondary good features in the writings of the Middle and Late Stoa as well. In *De finibus* Cicero’s Stoic spokesman Cato resorts to moralising to keep self-preservation classified as the primary good. ‘Pleasure is not to be reckoned among the primary objects of natural impulse; and I very strongly agree with [the Stoics], for fear lest many immoral consequences would follow if we held that nature had placed pleasure among the earliest objects of desire.’¹¹⁴ These reductions, however, merely play up the trope of Epicurean pleasure as a form of unbridled licentiousness or profligacy rather than engage with the self-preserving and motivational aspects of pleasure.

A more studied argument for pleasure’s secondary status can be found in Stobaeus’s discussion of the passions. According to the Stoics, the passions represent an ‘excessive’ impulse which is uncontrolled by the dictates of reason, or an ‘unnatural motion of the soul.’¹¹⁵ Among the passions there are to be counted those which are primary and principal, and others which are ‘referred to these.’ The primary passions are said to be desire, fear, pain and pleasure. Desire and fear are the principal passions given their concern for the ‘apparent good and bad’ while pleasure and pain supervene on these. Echoing the views of Chrysippus, Stobaeus argues that pleasure is what we experience ‘when we achieve what we desired or escape what we were afraid of,’ while pain is what occurs when we miss out on those things we desired or encounter those things which we fear.¹¹⁶ These impulses are directed towards the future, and hence there is a potential for both success and failure when we act in accordance with them. If the things that the individual desires or fears are not in their own power, then they may be said to be left to the fates. But because these impulses take the apparent good and bad as their object, they may be understood as being forms of *orexis* and *ekklisis*. The successes and failures we then experience as we pursue these apparent goods and evils may also be said to have a

¹¹³ Ibid. (7.202).

¹¹⁴ Cicero, *De fin.* (3.17).

¹¹⁵ John Stobaeus, *Anthology* (2.10) as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [II-95].

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

marked effect on our happiness, and indeed as Brad Inwood has pointed out, it was the regulation of these emotional states which characterised the moral programmes of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius during the Late Stoa.¹¹⁷ The happiness that we experience also helps to distinguish the temporality of the primary passions from the subordinate ones. Whereas the former concern themselves with the acquisition and avoidance of what appears to be good and bad, and hence looking towards the future, the secondary passions of pleasure and pain are ‘directed at internal psychic reactions’ which immediately indicate the success or failure of the animal’s endeavour.¹¹⁸ This is a distinctive element in Stoic thought – the notion that the passions are beliefs and, as such, that they contain a distinct cognitive dimension that only the Sage is fully capable of mastering.¹¹⁹ However, as we shall see, the temporality of the passions, particularly in regard to hope and fear, and the idea that they were a type of motion in the soul, would also resonate loudly in the attempts of Hobbes and Spinoza to explain for their own readers the substantial effects they believed the passions had in motivating the individual to act in a certain ways.¹²⁰

There is then a considerable part of Stoic ethics that is dedicated towards establishing the various ways in which a natural and ‘personal’ *oikeiōsis* may be seen to guide the animal towards the preservation of its body. Countering the Epicurean contention that pleasure is the chief good, natural kinship is manifested through the directives of impulse and desire, is reinforced through the animal’s self-awareness of its body’s constitution, becomes identifiable through the observable and uncorrupted behaviours of infants, and is finally reaffirmed by the subordination of the two motivations of pleasure and pain within the Stoics’ schema of the primary passions. It is from this multi-tiered approach that the various Stoics confidently asserted that their school’s moral psychology had laid bare the most primitive and powerful forces at work in the animal’s soul and established the affiliation to self as the motive

¹¹⁷ Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action* (p. 146).

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Laertius, *Lives* (7.117).

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* (7.110-11).

behind all activity. They had shown, at least to their own satisfaction, that by following self-directed desires and fears the individual was acting in a virtuous and commendable way and that this *homologia* was itself consistent with the ultimate *telos* of life.¹²¹

The personal dimensions of *oikeiōsis* are also useful for explaining how nature recommended the benefits of social interaction and political association. Using the love of self as a starting point common to all animals, the school argued that once reason was applied to the impulse for self-preservation, humans developed a more ‘social’ form of *oikeiōsis* in which they came to recognise that their own survival was best promoted through contact with others. Eschewing the Epicurean notion that the wise man ought to free himself from the ‘prison of politics’,¹²² the Stoics use ‘social’ *oikeiōsis* to highlight the natural roots of justice and lay the foundations necessary for clarifying the connections between each inhabitant of the cosmic city.¹²³ As Malcolm Schofield has argued, while there was a definite Cynic colouring to the Stoic view of man being a ‘citizen of the universe’,¹²⁴ the school’s playing up of the social aspects of kinship also recalled the discussions of *philia* found in Aristotle’s ethics, and subsequently developed in the account of *oikeiotês* laid out by the Peripatetic philosopher Theophrastus. The derivation of both *oikeiōsis* and *oikeiotês* from *oikos* (household) was intended to capture the close connections within a family, although it might in practice be used to denote ‘anything which

¹²¹ Ibid. (7.87): ‘Zeno, in his book *On the Nature of Man*, said that the goal was to live in agreement with nature, which is to live according to virtue. For nature leads to virtue. And similarly Cleanthes in *On Pleasure* and Posidonius and Hecaton in their books *On the Goal*. Again, “to live according to virtue” is equivalent to living according to the experience of events which occur by nature, as Chrysippus says in book one of his *On Goals*.’

¹²² Epicurus, *Extant Remains* (5.58).

¹²³ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *The Nature of the Gods*, ed. P.G. Walsh (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) (2.154, p. 103).

¹²⁴ M. Schofield, *The Stoic Idea of the City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) (p. 64). This is perhaps not surprising given the time Zeno spent under the tutelage of Crates shortly after he arrived in Athens from Citium and the Cynic influences which were said to be at work in Zeno’s now-lost political text *Republic*. See Laertius, *Lives* (7.2-4).

peculiarly belongs to a person, including non-family *philoï*.¹²⁵ The term *philia*, as we have seen previously, connoted the same imagery and was itself employed by Aristotle as an explanation for the types of personal and social relationships the individual might cultivate. It was the strength of our ‘philia’ affections which determined how close we were to those around us, keeping them in ‘orbit’ in much the same way the planets are by the gravity of the Sun.

While these commonly held views over the naturalness of human relations might have unified aspects of the Aristotelian and Stoic worldviews, they also provided yet another contrast with what could be found in the writings of the Epicureans. For their own part the Epicureans saw nature as having little role to play in explaining how justice arose between individuals or how social unions formed and, more importantly, endured. This left their political thought devoid of any naturalist language and dependent upon the passion of fear and the notion of utility to communicate to their readers what they believed the psychological motives behind political association were. The divergence of the Stoic and Peripatetic positions from those of the Epicureans thus provided a stark contrast for both their contemporary and later readers concerning how one might understand the relationship of the individual to the *polis* and towards others. Over the centuries each of these competing conceptions would also claim the support of various writers seeking to ground their own account of political philosophy in a discourse on human nature. For the present time, let us turn our attention to fleshing out the similarities and differences between the schools on how the preservation of the body explains the origins of the *polis*.

¹²⁵ Mary Whitlock Blundell, 'Parental Nature and Stoic *Oikeiōsis*', *Ancient Philosophy*, 10/2 (1990), 221-42 (pp. 223-24).

Natural Politics in Stoic, Peripatetic and Epicurean Thought

In the concluding sections of Hierocles one clearly sees how *oikeiōsis* was germane to the Stoics' social and political theory. This is achieved by way of reiterating the kinship that animals are said to feel with their own offspring and by showing how the individual comes to see their own good as directly related to the states of those who are closest to them.¹²⁶ Plutarch traces this view back to Chrysippus, who maintained that from the moment of birth onwards, humans and other animals (except fish) possess a love of self and a love towards their (future) offspring.¹²⁷ Other Stoics such as Seneca had also made it clear that nature could provide for the animal's own survival through the collective efforts of others.¹²⁸ Although animals feel the strongest sense of kinship with those to whom they are most biologically and emotionally similar, Hierocles and the other Stoics contended that such affections might also extend to all members of the same nation or race. Such is the strength of these natural affections to bind animals together into communities that the Stoics, like Aristotle in his own account of the formation of the *polis*, come to see 'man as a social animal' and argue that '[individuals] have been bound together and united by Nature for civic association,' and are driven by nature to create families and relationships with others.¹²⁹ Political societies also arise as a result of the desire to 'protect private property' and that which is 'one's own.'¹³⁰

Friendships are also grounded in a consideration of one's own particular needs and we are naturally driven to seek out the company of others in both the private and public spheres. Cicero speaks to this point when he considers how an individual might go about procuring his or her own safety without disrupting social harmony. Friendship also promotes justice since the protection of the self is enhanced most fully by the insulation others provide from social, political and

¹²⁶ Hierocles, *Elements of Ethics* (col. 9.1-10) as reproduced in Long, *Stoic Studies* (p. 263); Cicero, *De off.* (1.11, p. 6).

¹²⁷ Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* (1038B) as reproduced in Long and Sedley, *H.Phil.* (57E).

¹²⁸ Seneca, *Ep.* 121.22 as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [II-107].

¹²⁹ Long, *Stoic Studies* (col. 11.14-19); Cicero, *De fin.* (3.66); Cicero, *De off.* (1.11, p. 6).

¹³⁰ Cicero, *De off.* (2.73, p. 93).

economic troubles.¹³¹ The virtue that comes from *oikeiōsis* and natural sociability, according to Panaetius, originates in the preservation of human association and bonding. This renders justice as the ‘assigning to each his due’ and makes refraining from harming anyone else one particular application of ‘the more fundamental and more general obligation to maintain human society.’¹³² Cultivating strong relationships based on affection rather than utility thus provides a measure of security that enables individuals to seek out additional means of protecting themselves without alienating others in the process.¹³³ Any Epicurean notion of necessity is rejected in favour of the naturalness of such associations. This is because all friendships entail a certain amount of self-projection which springs from an ‘attachment of the mind’ and a ‘sense of affection’ rather than any calculation of the possible advantages to be gained.¹³⁴

Over time the individual’s soul moves from being guided solely by the dictates of impulse to being directed by reason and this entails new modes of behaviour and the performance of rational and ‘appropriate acts’.¹³⁵ The addition of reason brings about an expansion of what constitutes an appropriate action, and one finds that these reasoned actions take into consideration our relationships with others. As Diogenes Laertius notes, examples of ‘appropriate acts’ are honouring one’s parents, brothers and homeland, always taking care of one’s health and sacrificing one’s property when necessary.¹³⁶ Such acts are further said to be ‘becoming’ of a rational being. ‘It is through reason,’ we find Cicero arguing, ‘that nature also unites

¹³¹ For a discussion of how the individual Stoics developed this point see M. Schofield, ‘Social and Political Thought’, in Algra, Barnes, Mansfield, and Schofield (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, 739-70 (p. 763ff.).

¹³² Ibid.; Cicero, *De off.* (1.11-20, pp. 6-9).

¹³³ See J.C. Fraisse, *Philia: la notion d'amitié dans la philosophie antique: essai sur un problème perdu et retrouvé* (Bibliothèque d'histoire de la philosophie; Paris: J. Vrin, 1974) (p. 339), and more recently, Benjamin Fiore, S.J., ‘The Theory and Practice of Friendship in Cicero’, in John T. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship* (SBL Resources for Biblical Study, 34; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 59-76.

¹³⁴ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *On Friendship & The Dream of Scipio*, ed. J.G.F Powell (Warminster: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1990) (8.27).

¹³⁵ Laertius, *Lives* (7.108).

¹³⁶ Ibid. (7.107-8).

man with man and joins them in bonds of speech and common life. Moreover, it breeds in them a particular affection for their own offspring and spurs them to take part in meetings and assemblies, to strive to attain the things which contribute to their livelihood and wellbeing – not for themselves alone, but for their wives, children and all others a man holds dear and is obliged to protect.’¹³⁷ As the individual’s rational powers increase, so too does their moral development and their awareness of their responsibilities towards others. Such a position, Cicero continues, not only shows the familial origins of justice but also reveals the significant overlap that existed between the Stoic position and that of their Peripatetic contemporaries. It was the followers of Aristotle who were ‘the first of any philosophers to teach that the love of parents for their offspring is a provision of nature; and that nature has ordained the union of men and women in marriage, which is prior in order of time, and is the root of all the family affections. Starting from these first principles they traced out the origin and growth of all the virtues.’¹³⁸

Charting the linguistic similarities between Peripatetic *oikeiotês* and Stoic ‘social’ *oikeiôsis* Cicero’s assertion appears to be on the whole a valid one. In the work of Theophrastus, largely preserved in fragmentary form by the Neoplatonist writer Porphyry, we find that the three types of friendship established by Aristotle are present: those based on character, pleasure and utility.¹³⁹ As Aristotle had argued, friendship and justice were possible between any individuals who were of the same species or who could share in a system of law or be party to an agreement.¹⁴⁰ Theophrastus developed this position further by suggesting that it was through man’s natural kinship that such relationships ultimately arose.¹⁴¹ This kinship is said to originate in the household (*oikos*) and focuses on the inclusiveness of nature rather than on the exclusivity of rational *phronêsis*. Although Theophrastus does not deny

¹³⁷ Cicero, *De off.* (1.12, p. 6).

¹³⁸ Cicero, *De fin.* (4.17).

¹³⁹ Aristotle, *EN* (8.3, 1156a6ff., p. 1826).

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* (8.11, 1161b2-8, p. 1835).

¹⁴¹ Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*, ed. Gillian Clark (Ancient Commentators on Aristotle; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999) (3.25).

that reason marks out humans from other forms of life, his conceptualisation is intended to stress the natural connections that he believes bind all living things together. This has the noticeable effect of expanding the account of ‘phialial’ justice found in *Nicomachean Ethics*. In that text, the strength of our relationships with others was said to depend largely on whether they are in our immediate family or not, and had been represented through the usage of concentric circles to illustrate the self at the centre with others orbiting around us.¹⁴² Seeing children as part of ourselves, Aristotle then proceeded to argue that this sensing of ourselves in others equally explains how we interact with others.¹⁴³ Theophrastus refines this view to say that those born from the same people are naturally akin (*oikeioi*) to each other and that these feelings of natural kinship extend to people of the same race and species.¹⁴⁴ This kinship, or *oikeiotês*, is also reinforced through the functions of the body and the soul, since all humans are related to each other through the nature of the soul’s appetites, passions, sensations and ability to reason.¹⁴⁵ *Oikeiotês* therefore considers the question of human relationships from the natural perspective, redrawing the border between ethics and biology while also speaking closely to the unity underpinning the Stoic account of human social relations.¹⁴⁶

While the general outline and form between the Peripatetics and the Stoics may then appear to be similar, there are also reasons why the Stoics cannot be accused of simply borrowing their account of social relations from Aristotle or their Peripatetic contemporaries. In particular, while the topic of familiarisation was useful for helping Aristotle, Theophrastus and the Stoic Hierocles develop the idea of ‘concentricity’ in their respective writings, the former accounts lacked any noticeable

¹⁴² Aristotle, *EN* (8.12, 1161b17ff., p. 1835).

¹⁴³ *Ibid.* (1161b33ff.; 1162a13, p. 1836).

¹⁴⁴ Porphyry, *On Abstinence* (3.25).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ Brink, ‘*Oikeiōsis* and *Oikeiotês*’, (p. 137); R. Sorabji, ‘Is Theophrastus a Significant Philosopher?’, in Johannes M. Van Ophuijsen and Marlein Van Raalte (eds.), *Theophrastus: Reappraising the Sources* (Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities; New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, Inc., 1998), 203-21 (p. 215).

attempt to narrate human development over two distinctive stages.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, self-preservation is a topic that, as we have already seen, Aristotle only tangentially discusses. However, it comes to form the initial consideration in the Stoic accounts of how individuals come to understand themselves and learn how to pursue a life in accordance with reason.¹⁴⁸ Only after nature has taught them the importance of securing their own person do individuals then proceed to consider the other ways in which they might flourish as a social and political species. That the security of the body always remains paramount had been established clearly by the beginning of the Middle Stoa, when Panaetius had taken the self to be the highest class of property in his consideration of expedients. Cicero argues that in any comparison of goods there is a natural ranking that takes place. Although virtue is strictly speaking the only good which exists, the body is still considered by the Stoics to be an external expedient or a ‘preferred good’ that should be classed in the first tier.¹⁴⁹ Unlike Aristotle, the Stoics do not place their primary focus on the functions of the soul to explain why the animal acts as it does, but rather they can be found constantly referring back to Nature as the fount of all tendencies and preferences, making it the definitive source for explaining personal and social behaviour.¹⁵⁰

For their part the Epicureans could be found agreeing with the Stoics that the preservation of the body had a role to play in explaining the formation of the *polis*. They also agreed with their rivals that friendship was desirable and that its origins were located in the individual’s recognition of its salutary benefits.¹⁵¹ Where they importantly differ, however, is in their assertion that the origins and cohesiveness of

¹⁴⁷ ‘Familiarisation’ is the translation of *oikeiōsis* used in Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (p. 149, n. 33). Annas’s view is criticised by Jill Frank, who sees impulse as guiding human development and activity throughout their lives rather than in one particular stage. See chapter 1 in Jill Frank, *A Democracy of Distinction: Aristotle and the Work of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

¹⁴⁸ On this point, Engberg-Pedersen takes Cicero to mean that because humans and animals take self-preservation to be their initial goal we also come to find out that ‘certain logical facts about the faculty of perception’ are also inextricably tied into the theory when we attempt to justify such a claim. See Engberg-Pedersen, *Oikeiōsis* (p. 45)

¹⁴⁹ Cicero, *De off.* (2.88, p. 99-100).

¹⁵⁰ Tad Brennan, *The Stoic Life: Emotions, Duties, and Fate* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005) (p. 155).

¹⁵¹ Epicurus, *Extant Remains* (Vat. Coll. 23).

society are not the product of any natural kinship or love of others, but rather the establishment of a mutual trust built on fear and reinforced through punitive laws. It is the combative and violent nature of individuals, rather than love, which underpins Epicurus's contention that anything that 'secures protection from others' represents a natural good and speaks to the relative, rather than natural, character of justice.¹⁵²

The need for defence arises once people come into enlarged social groupings and is noticeably absent in the Epicurean accounts of life at the individual and familial levels. Living apolitically or self-sufficiently enables the individual to experience a life in which irrational fears and desires are foreign, and one that allows them to focus their daily efforts on the attainment of pleasure. Indeed, Lucretius goes so far as to describe the natural state in primitive and pastoral terms in an effort to stress its distance from the commotions and intrigues of political life.¹⁵³ The benefits of this type of existence are always available to those who choose to seek out their causes and it is only when we begin to pursue socially desirable ends such as honour and wealth that our enjoyment of pleasure and safety begins to fade.¹⁵⁴ As social ends become more desirable, the *foedus amicitiae* holding these small groupings together gives way to class division and political oppression.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, the fear of death at the hands of others who desire to attain these socially desired ends becomes so great that life becomes a struggle for existence. Far from a natural love of others or the self-gratification that comes from recognising one's own self in others, Lucretius paints an altogether more dire account of how this fear comes to dominate the individual's thoughts.¹⁵⁶ As individuals increasingly choose to 'abandon the good life and make for themselves a worse one,' one finds that it is on account of the unrelenting fear of death and the false social pleasures that avarice emerges,

¹⁵² Laertius, *Lives* (10.140; 151).

¹⁵³ Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (5.1105, p. 167).

¹⁵⁴ Laertius, *Lives* (10.154); Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (2.37-53, pp. 3-4). Epicurus can be found congratulating his friends for steering clear of the pitfalls of 'culture' in a fragment preserved in Athenaeus 588A (Long and Sedley, *H.Phil.*, 25F) and Laertius, *Lives* (10.6).

¹⁵⁵ David Konstan, *Some Aspects of Epicurean Psychology* (Leiden: Brill, 1973) (p. 38).

¹⁵⁶ Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (3.80-86, p. 70).

completing the breakdown of friendships and enabling the emergence of the ‘competitive struggle that destroys all of the pleasures in life.’¹⁵⁷

Failing to entice the individual with the tranquillity and pleasure that awaited those who retired from the world-at-large,¹⁵⁸ it was left to the laws to restore some measure of pleasantness back into the social setting. Indeed it was only when individuals chose to respect the laws that justice could be said to emerge at all, since natural justice was itself the product of ‘pledges of mutual advantage which restrained men from harming one another and saving them from being harmed.’¹⁵⁹ ‘If things are unable to establish compacts among themselves,’ Epicurus argues, ‘then there are no grounds from which we can describe any action as being ‘just’ or ‘unjust’.’¹⁶⁰ Indeed, whereas justice is a natural concept in Stoic thought, tied explicitly to the notion of kinship, the Epicureans see it as an altogether relative concept dependent upon the presence of a compact.¹⁶¹ These mutual pledges, and by extension the preservation of the body from external threats, then, only remain useful if those who transgress them are subject to punishment.

The Epicurean and Stoic accounts of society and politics are intimately connected with their theories about the natural world, and rely heavily on their views about the nature of human psychology, and the self-interested foundations of ethics. This manifests itself clearly in their political theories, with Schofield arguing that they demonstrate a ‘preoccupation with the basic rationale of society, and the roles of law, justice and utility within it.’¹⁶² That both Stoic and Epicurean philosophers believed that the intricacies of human nature supplied the *raison d’être* for social and political groupings also placed them squarely within a tradition that would develop over the proceeding centuries. Later political theorists such as Grotius and Spinoza in Holland, Hobbes and Locke in England and Pufendorf in Germany all confidently

¹⁵⁷ B. Farrington, ‘The Meaning of *Persona* in *De rerum natura* 3.58’, *Hermath*, 85 (1955), 3-12 (p. 8).

¹⁵⁸ Laertius, *Lives* (10.143).

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.* (10.150).

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² Schofield, ‘Social and Political Thought’, (p. 769).

claimed to have developed their own ‘scientific’ accounts of how natural desires and fears were responsible for the formation of the body politic. However, as we shall see in later sections, the historical and intellectual context for many of their views remained firmly rooted in the arguments regarding the nature of bodies that had developed in the shade of the Porch or among the trees of the Garden.

Conclusion

In the writings of the Stoics and Epicureans there is a noticeable attempt from each school to show how the body and the preservation of its physical state provided the basis for understanding the actions of both physical and animal bodies. Using resistance as an intrinsic property, the two schools crafted an account of natural philosophy in which bodies tended to retain their individual identity even when interfered with by other bodies. The notions of restoration and preservation both came to play a role in their accounts of animal psychology as well, which is perhaps not that surprising given the intended holism of each school’s philosophy. This led to similarities in the way the two schools approached the question of bodily tendencies. Stoic and Epicurean philosophers could both be found arguing that the most uncorrupted evidence of natural desire was the actions of infants, an empirical argument intended to signal the most natural and appropriate of goods. Both schools also relied on the notion of kinship to stress the feelings of sameness which arose in the animal as they considered the personal benefits bestowed by the goods they pursued. However, terminological differences prevented any ethical concordance from developing between the two schools. The Epicureans, for their part, considered the pursuit of *hedonê* as a striving for the preservation of the painless state, while the Stoics saw personal *oikeiōsis* as the reason the animal naturally tended to protect the body and its constitution from harm. Yet the former’s early and substantial contributions to the establishment of the body and its health as the core tenets of animal psychology were lost as a result of the Stoics misconstruing pleasure as

condoning profligacy and promoting immorality. Stoic doctrine, however, would suffer in its own way as its own brand of self-centred ethics and overt determinism proved to be as theologically thorny as the Epicurean motive of pleasure. The recovery and serious study of Epicurean and Stoic natural and moral philosophy, therefore, would be long in coming, and as a result many of its central authors and texts required substantial reworkings and reintroductions from those Renaissance scholars who harboured their own reasons for engaging with these Hellenistic worldviews.

2. The Reception and Dissemination of Aristotelian, Stoic and Epicurean Thought in Sixteenth- and Early Seventeenth-Century Europe

Before proceeding to trace out the specifically Hellenistic contours in Hobbes and Spinoza's accounts of bodies and their self-preserving tendencies, it will be useful if we first examine how Aristotle, the Stoics and the Epicureans had been received and digested from the end of the sixteenth century onwards. Although this section will focus on what are the later and more developed stages of each of these philosophy's receptions and usages, this purposefully narrow scope is by no means intended to suggest that early-modern engagements with classical philosophy were limited to this particular period. On the contrary, these later conversations with the ancients and the publication of their texts largely owed to early-modern authors' desires to eliminate much of the interpretative residue that had accumulated from centuries of medieval and Renaissance scholarship. They were also intended to convey what they saw as important and alternative viewpoints, which were capable of contributing to the re-shaping of contemporary philosophical discourse.

Despite the over-arching authority of the scholastic Aristotle in matters scientific and religious, there remained certain writers who could be found advocating the importance of engaging with other Hellenistic authors and texts. Following on from the recoveries of the early Renaissance, when scholars such as Petrarch and Poggio Bracciolini had brought the Stoic and Epicurean philosophies back into the light,¹ the dissemination of classical philosophy had continued

¹ It has been said that Petrarch's discovery of some previously lost letters of Cicero at Verona in 1345 heralded the beginning of the Italian Renaissance. From the initial finding of the *Epistulae ad familiares* came subsequent rediscoveries of Cicero's legal speeches, events which led to a humanist reappraisal of the author and established him as a *tour de force* on key contemporary issues such as civic virtue, republicanism and liberty, and the dangers of tyranny. The rediscovery of the Epicureans is said to have occurred in 1417 when Bracciolini came across a copy of Lucretius's *De rerum natura* while looking for manuscripts of classical authors. See George Kennedy, 'Cicero's Oratorical and Rhetorical Legacy', in James M. May (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Cicero: Oratory and Rhetoric* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 481-501 (p. 491), Neal Wood, *Cicero's Social and Political Thought* (Berkeley:

unabated from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This process was mostly facilitated through the publication of new critical editions, both in vernacular languages and updated Latin translations, and in-depth commentaries on many of Hellenistic philosophy's most important texts. Such efforts were not confined to particular areas of philosophy, and over time Stoic and Epicurean doctrines became objects of attraction to those scholars who yearned for philosophical, scientific and political systems that were capable of standing independently from the 'truths' expressed in the predominantly theological approaches of the medieval period.²

Hoping to avoid the wholesale perpetuation of the views expressed by earlier scholastic and humanist commentators, many writers chose to begin their arguments anew and to rework the Hellenistic philosophies in a way that best suited their own purposes. Far from being complete revisitations of Stoic and Epicurean thought, many authors tended only to rely on these philosophies as a form of historical supplementation, or as a means of buttressing those areas where the prevailing, contemporary philosophical viewpoint appeared especially vulnerable. There are many examples of these 'limited' recoveries of ancient thought in the late sixteenth and early-seventeenth century philosophy, and they are largely distinguishable by their efforts to situate Stoic or Epicurean positions within an interpretative framework already established by the author's own views. Such applications of ancient doctrine can be found, for example, underpinning the work of Hugo Grotius and certain eclectic Protestant Aristotelians, whose collective contributions to natural law theory appeared as 'evolutionary' given their careful and innovative fusion of Aristotelian sociability with Stoic individualism.³ These continued usages of Aristotle to promulgate a particular point of view serve as an affirmation of the dominant position his philosophy continued to enjoy beyond the walls of Europe's

University of California Press, 1988) (p. 2), and Howard Jones, *The Epicurean Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1989) (p. 142).

² This desire could be found in the writings of both secular and religious thinkers who employed ancient doctrines to help differentiate the spheres of morality, religion and politics. See J.B. Schneewind, *The Invention of Autonomy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

³ This characterisation is borrowed from Stephen Buckle, *Natural Law and the Theory of Property: Grotius to Hume* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

medieval universities. They also demonstrate that while a particular Hellenistic tradition might not prove to be wholly attractive to a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century author, it might nevertheless contain distinct elements that were worth importing and drawing on for additional support. However, others did attempt to get beyond a limited engagement with the Stoic and Epicurean philosophies. Given the thorough and complex nature of their own reassessments, scholars such as Justus Lipsius and Pierre Gassendi came to represent notable exceptions to this trend of partial engagement. Building upon the earlier receptions of the Renaissance humanists, they came to form the vanguard of a new type of scholarship that believed the complete reconstruction and transmission of Hellenistic thought into early-modern discourse could positively change the direction of philosophical inquiry. This task, as we shall see now, would prove difficult.

The Scholastic Aristotle

Although much of European intellectual culture from the medieval period onwards can be said to have rested on a ‘common literature’ that drew from the works of various ancient authors, one should be careful not to overstate the nature of this philosophical plurality.⁴ Surveying the landscape of sixteenth and early seventeenth-century thought it becomes quickly apparent that of all the philosophical systems that managed to survive beyond antiquity none were as textually intact or influential as that of Aristotle.⁵ This dominance spanned both the secular and religious spheres and consequently set the tone for how philosophy and science were taught in Europe’s universities and employed in the writings of its learned and ruling classes. Europe’s Catholic and Protestant universities aided the diffusion of Aristotelian thought in equal parts, and it was ultimately through scholastic textbooks and commentaries that

⁴ Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government, 1572-1651* (Ideas in Context; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) (p. 4).

⁵ Major historiographies of Aristotle and his influence on this period can be found in C.B. Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983); M.W.F Stone, 'Aristotelianism and Scholasticism in Early Modern Philosophy', in Steven Nadler (ed.), *A Companion to Early Modern Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 7-24; and Menn, 'The Intellectual Setting'.

Aristotle was continually filtered down to his modern audience. Such was the inherent tension, however, between the Catholic and Protestant interpretations of the Aristotelian worldview and their specific usages of it that the philosophy was often employed in the defence of opposing ends.

As universities spread throughout Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the forces of confessionalization and state building largely shaped the form, content and purposes of Aristotelian thought.⁶ Institutions and individuals eager to push one confessional creed or style of governance took advantage of the important role philosophy continued to play in the education of Europe's learned individuals. The presence of Aristotle thus remained a unifying feature on the landscape of Europe's university culture, having been present from its medieval foundations in countries such as Italy, France, and England. Because of the expansive and relatively complete and cohesive nature of Aristotle's views, universities had become reliant upon these texts and the numerous commentaries they generated as the primary means of philosophical instruction. However, the works of Aristotle did not comprise an entirely holistic system of thought, so that the texts and their commentaries formed something more akin to a 'loose and variously usable encyclopaedia', in which one could find entries on logic, physics and metaphysics, cosmology and meteorology, rhetoric and politics, and animals.⁷ It was only because scholars continuously drew from these writings that a strong feeling arose amongst authors that the practical availability of the texts had created a 'shared intellectual repertory' that had accumulated its authority over the centuries.⁸ Of course, this tradition could not prevent individual universities from using particular texts and passages to support their own conclusions, even when they might appear

⁶ Ian Hunter, 'The University Philosopher in Early Modern Germany', in Conal Condren, Stephen Gaukroger, and Ian Hunter (eds.), *The Philosopher in Early Modern Europe: The Nature of a Contested Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 35-65 (p. 36).

⁷ C.B. Schmitt, 'Philosophy and Science in Sixteenth-Century Universities: Some Preliminary Comments', in J.E. Murdoch and E.D. Sylla (eds.), *The Cultural Context of Medieval Learning: Proceedings of the First International Colloquium on Philosophy, Science, and Theology in the Middle Ages - September 1973* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1975), 485-537 (p. 514).

⁸ Ibid.

‘radically incompatible’ with another institution’s interpretations.⁹ Despite these potential interpretative inconsistencies, the overall availability of the texts was such that they ensured Europe still possessed something of a common philosophical language into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, albeit one that had developed numerous political and confessional dialects.

Aristotle in Europe’s Catholic Universities

The scholastic engagement with Aristotle was particularly acute in the curricula of Europe’s Catholic universities, which taught their students to systematically engage with the entire spectrum of Aristotelian thought.¹⁰ Of the various Orders operating in countries like France, Italy and the Iberian Peninsula it was the Jesuits who became particularly adept at making scholastic Aristotle the handmaiden to the Catholic Church’s confessional agenda. French institutions such as the Collège Royal and University of Paris relied on the *collège de plein exercice* developed in the fifteenth century to inculcate the principles of Aristotelianism into their advanced students.¹¹ This plan was adopted throughout the forty or so Jesuit colleges in existence in the country by 1610, and became a central aspect in the instructing of boys from the age of ten to eighteen in all methods of philosophical study.¹²

Much of the school and university curricula owed to the Orders’ attempts to use Aristotelian ethics and science to buttress the teachings of Christian doctrine, and

⁹ Hunter cites as an example the discussion of the soul’s nature in *De anima*. In the secular medical faculties of northern Italy, the Aristotelian soul was taken to be material and mortal, while in the Jesuit philosophy faculties it was said to be immaterial and immortal. See Hunter, 'University Philosopher', (pp. 37-38).

¹⁰ An account of how various Catholic scholastics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries used the curricula to ‘systematically rearrange *quaestiones* according to topic’ can be found in Dennis Des Chene, *Physiologia: Natural Philosophy in Late Aristotelian and Cartesian Thought* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996) (pp. 8-11).

¹¹ Jill Kraye, 'Conceptions of Moral Philosophy', in Garber and Ayers (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, Vol. II, 1279-316 (pp. 1279-80).

¹² The Jesuit College at La Flèche, for example, claimed both Descartes and Mersenne among its alumni, while Gassendi held a chair of mathematics at the Collège Royal from 1645-48. See Tuck, 'The Institutional Setting', (p. 19).

this in turn created a body of followers who were equally able to defend the faith's central tenets. In an effort to strengthen the link between Aristotle and the church, and perhaps glaze over the philosophy's own pagan roots, many students' interactions with Aristotelian philosophy came via a well-established blend of Peripatetic and Thomist moral philosophy. Ecclesiastical authorities, eager to protect their 'physico-theological' interpretation of scripture from subversion, thus remained ever vigilant against attempts to denigrate the synthesis the curricula had carefully created.¹³ The importance of this synthesis was explicitly laid out in Ignatius of Loyola's foundational *Constitutions* and the *Ratio studiorum*, which regulated teaching across the entire spectrum of Jesuit universities.¹⁴ While the Dominican Thomas Aquinas had shown how Christianity and Peripateticism could be happily married, others began to question the strength of their union. A primary point of contention with this merging was the considerable amount of 'hermeneutic gymnastics' a scholar or priest often had to perform to reconcile a specific point of scripture with the philosophy.¹⁵ In an effort to aid those who found themselves unable to make the necessary textual or interpretative contortions, however, the writings of other Latin commentators approved by the Order were often recommended for consultation. It was, for example, through this Thomistic filter that the authors of the *Coimbrian Commentaries*, the standard philosophical textbooks in

¹³ Cees Leijenhorst and Christoph Lüthy, 'The Erosion of Aristotelianism: Confessional Physics in Early Modern Germany and the Dutch Republic', in Cees Leijenhorst and J. M. M. H. Thijssen (eds.), *The Dynamics of Aristotelian Natural Philosophy from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 375-411 (pp. 375-76).

¹⁴ In an attempt to solidify Aristotle's position amongst the Order's members, the role of his philosophy was discussed by the Roman College of the Order and formally established during the decade of 1560-70. See Charles H. Lohr, 'The Social Situation of the Study of Aristotelian Natural Philosophy in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries', in Leijenhorst, Lüthy, and Thijssen (eds.), *The Dynamics of Aristotelian Natural Philosophy from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century*, 343-48 (pp. 345-46). The *Ratio studiorum* of 1599, which specifically prescribed the Thomist Aristotle, set out the 'Rules for the Professor of Philosophy' in the following terms: 'Since the arts and the natural sciences prepare the mind for theology, serving to perfect its knowledge and use, and themselves helping to reach this end, the teacher... shall treat them as preparing his hearers, especially our members, for theology, inciting them to knowledge of their creator... In matters of importance let him not deviate from Aristotle, unless something occurs that is foreign to the doctrine which academies everywhere approve of; and much more if it contradicts orthodox faith.' See Edward A. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *St. Ignatius and the Ratio Studiorum* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933) (p. 160).

¹⁵ This phrase comes courtesy of Krayer, 'Conceptions of Moral Philosophy', (p. 1281).

sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Jesuit education, drew up their schematic presentations of Aristotelian metaphysics, logic, and physical science.¹⁶ By making such prescriptions, later Latin commentators formed an important interpretative boundary whereby Aristotelian thought was presented as being in accordance with the *'opiniones communes et approbatae'*.¹⁷

The Protestant Engagement with Aristotle

Aquinas and subsequent generations of Dominicans had demonstrated that natural human reason, as interpreted by Aristotelian philosophy, was capable of validating many important Christian doctrines, such as the existence of God and the immortality of the soul.¹⁸ In the Protestant universities of northern Europe, Aristotle thus remained firmly ensconced and protected within the philosophy curriculum. In 1636, for instance, Oxford University passed the Laudian statutes, which prescribed *Nicomachean Ethics* as the set text for moral philosophy, a prescription that would remain in effect for more than a century. Other parts of the corpus, however, did not receive such important institutional endorsement, and it was not until the beginning of the seventeenth-century that Aristotle's metaphysics, for example, began to emerge from a prolonged absence in many universities' arts courses.¹⁹ Because the Protestants could not abide by the Catholic insistence that Aristotelian science always be connected with the tenets of Christian theology, the Protestant Aristotle managed to duck many of the scientific criticisms and challenges that would be

¹⁶ These are the *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis* which began in 1592 and covered Aristotelian texts such as *Physics* (1592, 1602, 1609, and 1625), *De anima* (1598, 1600), and *Nicomachean Ethics*. They are discussed in Steven Nadler, 'Doctrines of Explanation in Late Scholasticism and in the Mechanical Philosophy', in Garber and Ayers (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, Vol. I, 513-52 (pp. 516, 546 n.14). Also see Kraye, 'Conceptions of Moral Philosophy', (p. 1283).

¹⁷ This placed the Greek commentaries and texts strictly off limits as the 1566 decree of Francis Borgia, the general of the Order, and the *Ratio studiorum* of 1586 and 1591 indicate. See L. Lukács (ed.), *Monumenta paedagogica Societatis Jesu* 7 vols. (Rome: Institutum Historicum S.J., 1965-1992) as well as Lohr, 'Social Situation', (p. 346).

¹⁸ Menn, 'The Intellectual Setting', (p. 35).

¹⁹ Tuck, 'The Institutional Setting', (p. 20).

levelled against the church during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²⁰ Furthermore, by eschewing the Catholics' rigid adherence to showing the biblical *truth* of Aristotelian philosophy, the Protestant Aristotle remained interpretatively flexible and open to being juxtaposed alongside other lines of argument.

Despite the centuries of precedence afforded to Aristotle in the areas of scientific, religious, and political life, by the sixteenth century Aristotelian philosophy found itself occupying the uncomfortable position of having to explain away questions it had not been intended to answer. Internal reformers within the Catholic Church soon came to view Aristotelianism as a large and attractive battlefield on which they might confront a wide variety of opponents.²¹ In Protestant countries such as England, Germany and the Low Countries one could still find loyal Aristotelians who, despite relying on the same set of sources as their Catholic counterparts, had begun 'arriving at radically different conclusions in logic, natural philosophy, metaphysics, ethics and theology.'²² While Luther and the early Reformers had adopted an extremely anti-Aristotelian line, other Protestant educators were torn between rejecting Aristotle outright and advocating a 'serious reforming of the traditional basis of the papist educational system.'²³ For many, reform could be achieved through a type of Aristotelianism that was sympathetic to the efforts of Renaissance humanism, a coupling that would prove to be invaluable in their attempts to reduce the systematic adherence to Aristotle in the Catholic universities.

There also remained a notable difference in the textbooks used in universities such as Oxford, Leiden, and Rotterdam and those used at places like Padua, Madrid, or Paris. While Protestant universities continued to impress the Aristotelian corpus on their students throughout the century, they did so without employing much, if any,

²⁰ Menn, 'The Intellectual Setting', (p. 38).

²¹ Leijenhorst and Lüthy, 'Erosion of Aristotelianism', (p. 377) and also chapter two in Sachiko Kusukawa, *The Transformation of Natural Philosophy: The Case of Philip Melancthon* (Ideas in Context; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) (pp. 27-74).

²² Stone, 'Aristotelianism and Scholasticism in Early Modern Philosophy', (p. 7).

²³ Christia Mercer, 'The Vitality and Importance of Early Modern Aristotelianism', in Sorell (ed.), *The Rise of Modern Philosophy*, 33-67 (p. 53).

of the scholastic mode of exposition used by their Catholic counterparts. Style was not the only difference. Protestant presentations of Aristotle also abandoned the Thomist paradigm in favour of more pedagogical models. This usually entailed a scheme in which ethics was taught dichotomously: *eudaimonologia* focused on happiness or the ends of ethics while *aretologia* taught virtue or the means of attaining that end.²⁴ Towards the last quarter of the seventeenth century the German scholastic and jurist Jakob Thomasius could be found expressing a desire to remove much of the ‘scholastic accretion’ that had been accumulating since medieval times. Longing to return to the *original* Aristotle, as opposed to the Aristotle that had been filtered through countless scholastic commentaries, Thomasius stressed the value of placing Aristotle’s texts into their historical context and considering them within the larger corpus of ancient philosophy, not apart from it.²⁵

The Humanist Aristotle

Perhaps the most interesting attempts at bringing the views of the other ancient schools into alignment with those of Aristotle appeared on the pages of the humanist commentators on *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*. From the middle of the sixteenth century onwards many of them could be found highlighting the similarities they believed existed between Aristotle and the later Stoics. In particular scholars were beginning to pick up on the concomitance between Aristotle’s and the Stoics’ views on the natural sociability of all animals, with the added benefit that any textual coupling would offer readers additional historical and philosophical support for the soundness of the Aristotelian worldview. Such philological treatments, C.B. Schmitt has argued, almost certainly owed to the decision of humanist scholars to approach Aristotle’s views in Greek and to their ‘rather broad knowledge of classical

²⁴ Kraye, 'Conceptions of Moral Philosophy', (p. 1284).

²⁵ See both Christia Mercer, 'The Seventeenth-Century Debate between the Moderns and the Aristotelians: Leibniz and the *Philosophia Reformata*', in I. Marchlewitz and A. Heinekamp (eds.), *Leibniz' Auseinandersetzung mit Vorgängern und Zeitgenossen* (Studia Leibniziana Supplementa, 27; Stuttgart: Steiner, 1990) (pp. 20-21) and Kraye, 'Conceptions of Moral Philosophy', (p. 1280).

institutions and texts.²⁶ When compared with the medieval scholastic treatments of the *corpus*, these later commentators became identifiable by the relative historical sophistication that appeared in their writings. Another noticeable trend emerging from these humanist treatments of Aristotle was the attempted placing of his views into some form of historical and philosophical context. As their approach became more widespread, late sixteenth-century readers stood as the beneficiaries and inheritors of humanist commentators' detailed knowledge of Aristotle's texts and their successes in relating different parts of the *corpus* to one another.²⁷

Clear examples of how the humanists believed Aristotle might be placed into conversation with the Stoics can be found occurring throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In his 1538 work *Philosophiae moralis epitome*, for example, Philip Melanchthon considered the positive aspects of natural other-loving behaviour that Aristotle had set out in *Nicomachean Ethics*. Using the term '*storgai phusikai*' to describe these affections, he rejected the Epicurean notions of profit [*utilitas*] and pleasure as the motives behind paternal love. The motives, he suggested, were instead to be found in the Stoic account of natural impulses, where the love of others had been identified as a type of self-love.²⁸ Later jurists also sought to draw out the similarities between Aristotle and the Stoics on this particular point. Writing almost fifty years after Melanchthon, Johannes Althusius also asserted the importance of natural inclination in bringing both men and animals together, although he denied that animals possessed equity and law because of their foundations in reason.²⁹ The Dutch lawyer Matthaeus Wesembeek likewise claimed that the power of natural law was grounded in natural inclination. Echoing both Melanchthon and Althusius he argued that 'natural law blossoms from natural inclinations, which like *storgai*

²⁶ Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (p. 18).

²⁷ *Ibid.* (p. 19).

²⁸ Melanchthon, *Philosophiae moralis epitome* (1538) (pp. 20, 41) as cited in Annabel Brett, *Changes of State: Nature and the Limits of the City in Early-Modern Natural Law* (Forthcoming, Princeton: Princeton University Press) (ch. 3). I would like to express my gratitude to Dr Brett for providing me with a draft copy of this work.

²⁹ Johannes Althusius, *Iuris romani libri duo* (Basel, 1586) (I.1.2) as cited in *ibid.*

phusikai, are embedded in all animals, or the common nature of men and beasts.’³⁰

This remained the case even though the former was in possession of reason while the latter was not.

The coupling of Aristotelian and Stoic themes, as well as using the ancient *topos* of placing Stoicism and Epicureanism in contrast, could also be found outside of the juridical treatments of *alterity*.³¹ As we saw in both of the earlier sections on Aristotelian and Stoic ethics, there is much similarity to be found between the philosophies’ presentation of other-love, or *philautia*, as a type of self-love. This overlapping was in turn picked up on by some of Aristotle’s humanist commentators, many of whom used their own discussions of human behaviour as a chance to herald this Aristotelian-Stoic alliance. In the 1540 commentary on *Nicomachean Ethics* by the Benedictine Joachim Perionius, for example, Aristotle’s account of *philautia* is supplemented with references to Cicero’s *De finibus* and *De officiis*, works in which the Stoic position on self- and other-love is clearly laid out. To drive home the important role that ‘other-love’ had played in both Aristotelian and Stoic ethics, Perionius also supplied his readers with the textual loci necessary for uncovering the Stoic refutations of *hedonê* as the Epicureans’ primary animal inclination.³²

This same approach could also be found in the humanist treatments of Aristotle’s *Politics*. In 1576 Pier Vettori produced a commentary entitled *De optimo statu civitatis* in which Cicero was systematically used to reinforce Aristotle’s earlier claim that individuals were naturally inclined to form political communities.³³ While security remained paramount for both Cicero and Vettori, further amalgamations of

³⁰ Matthaeus Wesenbecius, *Commentarius in institutionum iuris libros III* (I.2.1) as cited in *ibid*.

³¹ This term is what Annabel Brett has used to describe ‘natural law as a sphere of behaviour towards others.’

³² Joachim Perionius, *De optimo genere interpretandi commentarii* (Paris, 1540) (pp. 192-93).

³³ The weaving of Aristotle and Cicero in Vettori’s work has been described by Annabel Brett in the following terms: ‘The central passage in which Aristotle argued for a natural inclination in man to political community offered a picture that could reasonably be seen as in essence very similar to a the Ciceronian story, with its stress on the exceptional individual able to draw men from the rudeness of their nature.’ See Annabel Brett, ‘The Matter, Forme, and Power of a Commonwealth’: Thomas Hobbes and Late Renaissance Commentary on Aristotle’s *Politics*, *Hobbes Studies* 23/1 (2010), 72-102.

Aristotelian and Stoic thought focused on their claims that humans possessed a natural instinct for society. This claim additionally appears in Antonio Montecatini's commentary of 1587, where he too considered the relationship between a natural inclination to sociability and an animal's overriding desire to self-preservation. Taking his prompt from Cicero's *De officiis* he likewise presented Stoic doctrine as capable of augmenting what Aristotle had said about the forces behind political association.³⁴ Although Henning Arnisaeus cannot be counted among the humanist Aristotelians, his 1615 commentary *De republica* is nevertheless interesting because it shows how an heir to Montecatini and other *Politics* commentators might equally advance the Aristotelian account of sociability alongside that of the Stoics.³⁵ Indeed, Arnisaeus's placement of textual references also says something about the harmony he believed existed between the two traditions. References to *De officiis* and *De finibus* appear immediately after the conclusion of the Aristotelian account of *hormé* in the *Politics* and directly before the discussion of *philautia* as it had appeared in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. According to Annabel Brett this linking owes to 'Arnisaeus's concern with stressing that the origins of the family [were] not purely in need or indigence, but in the impulse of nature. That impulse is at base the desire for self-preservation, something that is suggested directly by Aristotle's text.'³⁶ When considered in conjunction with the earlier commentators, Arnisaeus's fusing together of Aristotelian and Stoic philosophy provides clear evidence that for many 'eclectic Aristotelians' there was nothing philosophically disingenuous in forging a consensus view from what both Aristotle and the Stoics had said about the self-directedness of the natural impulse to associate and form political societies.

These humanist interests in making the other ancient texts speak to the views of Aristotle were also spurred on by practical considerations. As Gerhard Oestreich

³⁴ Antonio Montecatini, *Politicorum, hoc est civilium librorum tertius* (Ferrara: Balminus, 1597) as discussed in Brett, *Changes of State* (ch. 5) and Brett, 'Hobbes and Late Aristotelian Commentary on Aristotle's *Politics*'.

³⁵ Henning Arnisaeus, *De republica seu relectionis politicae libri duo* (Strausburg: L. Zetzner Erben, 1636) (I.1.7.3-4, pp. 17-18).

³⁶ Brett, *Changes of State* (ch. 5).

has suggested, these were born largely from contemporary demands to put many of the newly recovered ancient views into immediate social practice.³⁷ The writings of eclectic Aristotelians such as Montecatini and Arnisaeus certainly attest to these demands, and it is because of Cicero's perceived authority on the subject of property and rights that he could be found ranking so highly on the list of suitable sources. Although Cicero's paganism could not be easily concealed, his philosophical prestige was seen to be sufficient enough that most writers would continue attempting to put his eloquent rhetoric into the service of developing a Christianised moral doctrine. Although many of Cicero's philosophical writings had been unknown to medieval scholars, the dissemination of his minor works and the lesser rhetorical works from the Renaissance onwards had occasioned a Ciceronian revival, first in Italy and then throughout Western Europe.³⁸ In looking to uproot Aristotle from his centuries-old position as the *de facto* authority within Europe's intellectual circles, Ciceronian rhetoric became one of the preferred weapons by which humanist scholars began to combat the Stagirite.³⁹ Presenting philosophy in conjunction with rhetoric and not in isolation from it, the humanist interest in Cicero contributed to their shared belief that the comprehension of any discipline could be helped significantly through 'the imaginative and historical literature of antiquity.'⁴⁰

Yet as the serious study of these 'alternatives' increased, there was no immediate decline in Aristotle's influence. Instead the ascent of Stoicism and Epicureanism would remain slow and gradual. As Susan James has remarked, despite the increasingly fragile standing of Aristotelian thought by the end of the sixteenth

³⁷ Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, trans. David McLintock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) (p. 1).

³⁸ Kennedy, 'Cicero's Oratorical and Rhetorical Legacy', (p. 492). Sixteenth-century editions of *De finibus* often contained texts such as *Academica*, *Tusculan Disputations*, *On the Nature of the Gods*, *On Divination*, *On Fate*, *On Duties*, *The Dream of Scipio* or the letters of Cicero's brother Quintus.

³⁹ Besides referring to the tension between the 'scholastic' and 'humanist' traditions, Tuck suggests we might also characterise this divide as 'theological' versus 'oratorical' since each tradition drew on a specific set of ancient texts in their attempts to promote these two ends. See Richard Tuck, *The Rights of War and Peace: Political Thought and the International Order from Grotius to Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) (p. 16).

⁴⁰ Tuck, 'The Institutional Setting', (pp. 16-17).

century, it would have been impossible for ‘the planks of the vast and cumbersome Aristotelian ship to have all been replaced simultaneously.’⁴¹ Rather than scuttling the ship and creating an intellectual vacuum in the process, it often became a common feature in the non-scholastic writings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to rely on Aristotle in some instances while refuting him in others.⁴² This inability to completely surrender the past derived in large part from the humanist-inspired view that *each* of the philosophical schools had shown in their own doctrines how to arrive at certain and useful truths. The challenge, as scholars would soon discover while plotting their new courses, was to find a way to amalgamate all of these diverse truths into a coherent and unified ‘New Philosophy’.⁴³

Seneca, Justus Lipsius and the Emergence of Neostoicism

While Cicero might have succeeded in providing scholars with some of the rhetorical and philosophical counter-balance they desired, it was through the life work of the Flemish philologist Justus Lipsius that Senecan Stoicism was presented as the panacea to scholastic Aristotelianism. For Lipsius, though, the more serious challenge would be to demonstrate how Stoicism could be brought into accord with Christian theology and the demands of contemporary politics.⁴⁴ Successfully

⁴¹ James, *Passion and Action* (p. 22).

⁴² Consider for example the words of the seventeenth-century theologian Johann Gerhard in his *Methodus studii theologici*: ‘Aristotelian philosophy is to be preferred to other philosophies, for the sake of its more perfect philosophical mode of reasoning and for the sake of one’s opponents, against whom the theologian must descend into the arena, because many of them make use of Aristotelian philosophy, even when they abuse of it.’ (p. 132) as cited in Leijenhorst and Lüthy, ‘Erosion of Aristotelianism’, (p. 376).

⁴³ James, *Passion and Action* (p. 23).

⁴⁴ Petrarch may be said to have aided the transmission of Stoic ethics in a series of dialogues on topics such as ‘Sorrow’, ‘Fear’, ‘Joy’ and ‘Hope’ in his 1492 treatise *De remediis utriusque fortunae*. In applying Stoic thought specifically to politics, politicians such as Niccolò Niccoli and Lorenzo de’ Medici (grandson of the famous Lorenzo the Magnificent) began to consider the school’s discussions on virtue as a fount for the characterisation of noble behaviour. Yet these platitudes, recorded in their friend Poggio Bracciolini’s 1440 dialogue *De nobilitate*, were more often than not shallow and uncritical of Stoic philosophy as a cohesive philosophical worldview. As a result, such texts remained largely ineffective as vehicles for the wholesale transmission of Stoic philosophy. For more on these pre-Lipsian engagements with, and criticisms of Stoicism, see Jill Kraye, ‘Stoicism in the Renaissance from Petrarch to Lipsius’, in Blom and Winkel (eds.), *Grotius and the Stoa*, 21-46.

resuscitating Stoicism, however, also meant addressing many of the well-entrenched criticisms and prejudices against Stoic thought.⁴⁵

There was of course nothing unique in appealing to antiquity to support or criticise a particular argument: the humanists and ‘eclectic’ scholastics had been doing this with some success since the early Renaissance. However, by examining Stoicism as a complete philosophical system, rather than as a specific supplementation or critique, Lipsius signalled the arrival of a new ‘paradigm’ in early-modern thought.⁴⁶ Lipsius chose to approach questions of moral and political philosophy from a historical perspective, an approach which represented a broadside to many of the scholastic writers who had for centuries been upholding the ‘validity’ of Aristotle’s views while ignoring the historical contexts in which they had originally been developed.⁴⁷ This meant shifting away from the demands of practical philosophy, with its emphasis on moral case analysis and rhetoric, in favour of a theoretical conception of philosophy that drew largely from the dictates of

⁴⁵ For example in Lorenzo Valla’s *De vero falsoque bono*, published in the 1440s, Valla argued that pagans such as the Stoics never lived virtuously and hence had no basis from which to promote virtuous living. He attacked Stoic ethics by arguing that virtue could not take precedence over the ‘goods of the body’ and ‘goods of fortune’ since these had been given to mankind by nature for its benefit. He also challenged the Stoics on the grounds that that the deeds of their oft-cited heroes Cato and Brutus were driven by *utilitas* or expediency rather than human nature. In looking to sever the perceived link between Stoic philosophy and Christian theology, Valla rejected the correspondence between Seneca and St. Jerome, which Petrarch had turned to for patristic support of a philosophical-religious proximity, by insisting, as St. Paul had, that the theological virtues were more pleasing to God than the philosophical ones. For more on Valla, and particularly his defence of Epicurean *voluptas*, see Maristella Lorch, *A Defense of Life: L. Valla's Theory of Pleasure* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1985), and more recently Maristella Lorch, ‘The Epicurean in Lorenzo Valla’s *On Pleasure*’, in Margaret J. Osler (ed.), *Atoms, 'Pneuma', and Tranquility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 89-114.

⁴⁶ The ‘Lipsian paradigm’ is a phrase used by Adriana McCrea to distinguish Lipsius from his predecessors, such as Calvin and Erasmus, who had only ‘flirted with or borrowed Stoic ideas’ instead of adopting them wholesale, for example, in their commentaries on Seneca. According to Halvard Leira, it became a ‘hallmark’ of Lipsian scholarship to ‘incorporate both late Renaissance traits and the precursors of the early-modern age.’ See both Adriana McCrea, *Constant Minds: Political Virtue and the Lipsian Paradigm in England, 1584-1650* (The Mental and Cultural World of Tudor and Stuart England; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) and Halvard Leira, ‘At the Crossroads: Justus Lipsius and the Early Modern Development of International Law’, *Leiden Journal of International Law*, 20/1 (2007), 65-88 (pp. 65-66).

⁴⁷ Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (pp. 4-5).

contemporary events – an approach that would in time come to link the Lipsian method with that of later authors such as Grotius, Hobbes, Spinoza and Pufendorf.⁴⁸

Lipsius set out to systematically and comprehensively recast much of Stoicism by showing how the philosophical prescriptions contained in its ethics were useful for addressing the court politics of Europe. The scope of Lipsius's project first became apparent in 1584 with the publication of *De constantia*, a title derived from Seneca's *De constantia sapientis*. Throughout the work's dialogue, Lipsius shows himself to be a humanist dedicated to bringing Roman Stoicism to the forefront of European intellectual life, and as a writer especially concerned with dispensing advice in a time of significant political and religious upheaval.⁴⁹ As Richard Tuck has pointed out, Lipsius's dialogue with Charles de Langhe also showed that he harboured a 'particular concern' for 'the preservation of the self not only from external attack but also from the passions which might leave it open to attack.'⁵⁰ Langhe can be found trumpeting *apatheia* and reason as the remedy to the anxieties and fears we foolishly believe we can flee, in the hope that a return to Stoic principles will relieve the 'stress on a *social* morality [so that] the ethical need to subordinate one's own interests to those of the republic disappears completely.'⁵¹ The self-interested dimension of political association appears, for example, when Langhe considers the reasons behind the formation of the commonwealth – it offers a security of private goods that a single individual simply cannot provide.⁵² Despite *De constantia*'s surface appearance as an early-modern self-help manual, Lipsius

⁴⁸ This transition has been explored in detail in Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (New York: The Free Press, 1990) (pp. 34-35) and Leira, 'Justus Lipsius and the Early Modern Development of International Law', (p. 66).

⁴⁹ Justus Lipsius, *De constantia libri duo: qui alloquium praecipue continent in publicis malis* (Lyon: Franciscus Raphelengius, 1584). In addition to multiple reprintings throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this work had been translated into English as early as 1594. It was subsequently republished in translated form in 1653, 1654, and 1670.

⁵⁰ Tuck, *Philosophy and Government* (p. 51) and more recently Halvard Leira, 'Justus Lipsius, Political Humanism and the Disciplining of 17th Century Statecraft', *Review of International Studies*, 34 (2008), 669-92.

⁵¹ Justus Lipsius, *Two bookes of constancie [1584]*, trans. Sir John Stradling (London: Richard Iohnes, 1594) (1.2, p. 3; 1.3, p.7); Tuck, *Philosophy and Government* (p. 51).

⁵² Lipsius, *De constantia* (1.11, pp. 25-26).

presents his readers with more than a reintroduction to Stoicism's therapeutic elements. The frequent considerations of Stoic fate and providence are meant to identify the 'intractability' of external events as the reason why individuals are *necessitated* to act in particular ways – either according to the dictates of fate itself or the unceasing demands of self-preservation.⁵³ At the heart of the work's self-preservation argument one finds not only the recognition that nature acts necessarily, but also the belief that constancy can provide a remedy for the Continent's collective and growing theological-political anxieties. The Lipsian brand of self-directed ethics shows how it was the Stoics' mastery of the passions and their emphasis on maintaining a constancy of mind that made it well-suited as an 'anthropological discipline'.⁵⁴

The further result of promoting a philosophy that recognised the importance of self-interest in maintaining social cohesion was that it provided as much instruction to troubled princes as it did to the common reader. In *Politica*, a 1589 manual Lipsius wrote to instruct princes on how to govern their principalities, the realities of necessity and self-interest join forces to caution princes about unnecessary territorial expansion:

As for me, I should be of this opinion that the Prince in desperate matters *should always follow that which [is] most necessary to be effected, not that which is honest in speech*. Then I say, let him decline gently from the laws, yet not except it be for his own conservation, but never to enlarge his estate. For necessity which is the true defender of the weakness of man, does break all laws. And as the Poet says, *He does not hurt, who hurt against his will*.⁵⁵

Such prescriptions, Tuck has noted, were largely intended to show how Neostoicism differed from the princely advice of Machiavelli. 'Laws could be broken for

⁵³ Tuck, *Philosophy and Government* (p. 54).

⁵⁴ Constancy is said to be 'a right and immovable strength of mind, while patience is 'the mother of constancy ... a voluntary suffering without grudging.' Lipsius, *De constantia* (1.4, p. 9); see also Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State* (p. 14).

⁵⁵ Justus Lipsius, *Sixte bookes of politickes or civil doctrine [1589]*, trans. Sir William Jones (London: William Ponsonby, 1594) (4.14, p. 123).

preservation, but not for any other reason, such as the enhancement of a ruler's or his country's glory.⁵⁶ However, while *De constantia* and the *Politica* served to introduce a Neostoic conception of preservation to a wide audience by speaking to the political anxieties of the late sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, it would be another twenty years before the publications of the *Manuductio ad Stoicam philosophiam* and the *Physiologiae Stoicorum* revealed how Lipsius intended to systematically update Stoic philosophy in its entirety.⁵⁷

Standing apart from *De constantia* and *Politica*, Lipsius's two works of 1604 differ notably in their overall scope and approach. By the beginning of the seventeenth-century, Lipsius was less concerned with putting specific virtues into practice and dispensing political advice than showing his readership the interconnected and holistic nature of his chosen philosophical viewpoint. Seeking to secure a place for Stoic ethics as an instructive and non-detachable part of the school's larger philosophical system, the *Manuductio* praised and defended Stoic claims of nature as the source of virtuous behaviour, arguing that these aspects of Stoic doctrine were traceable all the way back to the school's inception. To dampen the paganism of his chosen sources, and remove the shadow this would cast on his own support for Stoic *homologia*, Lipsius took the additional but necessary step of equating Stoic nature with the Christian God.⁵⁸ While the work succeeds in priming the reader about the school's worldview and earlier influence, it is perhaps just as notable for the philological prowess its author employs to support his claims. Frequently one can find Lipsius's marginal citations of the Senecan *corpus* intermingling with those from Cicero, Diogenes Laertius, Sextus Empiricus, Stobaeus, and many other ancient writers who engaged with Stoic thought. Readers of this work would therefore have been provided with a remarkably thorough index

⁵⁶ Tuck, *Philosophy and Government* (pp. 57-58).

⁵⁷ Justus Lipsius, *Manuductionis ad Stoicam philosophiam libri tres, L. Annaeo Senecae aliisque scriptoribus illustrandis* (Antwerp: Ioannes Moretus, 1604).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* (1.1.3, pp. 8-15).

of the school's views on a wide array of philosophical topics from a broad range of Stoic and non-Stoic sources.

However, while the breadth of both the *Manuductio* and the *Physiologiae* was substantial, neither work accentuates the Stoic accounts of self-preservation or other-love. This is perhaps more understandable in the case of the latter work, as Lipsius could not have neatly broken off his discussion of Stoic materialism and the qualities of physical bodies to consider what had been treated largely under the heading of ethics. In the case of the former text, the generality with which Lipsius treats his subject serves as a similar prohibition on discussing such a specific doctrine. This is not to say that Lipsius's omission was due to his ignorance of the Stoic view on animal bodies and the impulses which they believed guided them. In the year following the publication of these two works, Lipsius's edition of Seneca's *Opera omnia* showed him to be well-versed in those Stoic authors who had expounded upon the school's position that self-preservation was the primary natural impulse. In the first footnote to Moral Letter 121, where Seneca discusses the notions of self-preservation and an animal's pnoceptive sense, Lipsius calls the reader's attention to both Diogenes's *Lives* and Cicero's *De finibus* for earlier accounts of how self-preservation and other-love form the basis of all animal behaviour.⁵⁹

From the appearance of *De constantia* in 1584 to his own thorough treatment of Seneca's works in 1605, Lipsius developed a variation of Stoic thought that took the *sententiae* of the ancient authors as its principal vocabulary and applied them to political and religious questions. Relying on the universal nature of reason and the demands of necessity, the Lipsian project yielded useful lessons for both subjects and rulers alike. Moreover, in suggesting that the tenets of Stoicism need not be entirely at odds with Christian doctrine, Lipsius had made a strong case for Stoicism's ability to re-claim areas previously dominated by the followers of Aristotle. Although

⁵⁹ The footnote refers the reader back to *Lives* 7.86 (for Chrysippus's view) and books 3 and 5 of *De finibus* (for the Stoic spokesman Cato's views). See Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *L. Annaei Senecae philosophi Opera quae exstant omnia / a Iusto Lipsio emendata et scholiis illustrata*, ed. Justus Lipsius (3rd edn.; Antwerp: Balthasar Moretus, 1632) (p. 666).

Lipsius had sincerely hoped that Neostoicism would help prevent widespread political and social conflicts across Europe, it was ultimately unable to do so. It was also unable to find enough religious stature to join Aristotelianism at the core of the university philosophy curricula of Europe. The failure of Neostoicism to make any inroads into the core of the university philosophy curriculum meant that it could not spread through the more traditional avenues of textbooks and commentaries. However, many of its central arguments concerning the identification of nature with God, the importance of emotional constancy, and the acceptability of a self-interested ethics would take hold in places beyond Antwerp. In particular, the countries of England, Spain, and France became homes to authors who made their own attempts at popularising Stoicism among a wider audience.⁶⁰ Eschewing the method and layout of the scholastic treatise, their efforts appeared primarily in vernacular publications of ‘works of literature and philosophical *haute vulgarization*, religious tracts, and psychological self-help manuals’ which helped to ensure that the dissemination of Stoic thought continued unabated.⁶¹ Stoicism had found its own champions and it would be only a matter of time before Zeno and his followers would again have their say in the philosophical discourse of the period.

Stoic Thought in the Civil Philosophy of Hugo Grotius

While many writers were touting Seneca’s Stoicism as a workable solution to the physical and ethical questions of the day, others only attempted to highlight the contemporary relevance of specific aspects of the philosophy in their work. Thus while Stoicism prospered from the broad support it received from the efforts of Hugo Grotius, unlike Lipsius he can be found employing large swathes of ancient philosophy to address many of the most pressing legal and economic issues of the

⁶⁰ Krayer, 'Conceptions of Moral Philosophy', (p. 1286). Major Neostoics of the period included Bishop Joseph Hall in England, Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo, Francisco de Quevedo, and Alonso Núñez de Castro in Spain, and Guillaume du Vair, Pierre Corneille and the Abbé d’Aubignac in France.

⁶¹ Ibid.

day.⁶² Because Grotius chose to keep a multitude of ancient and contemporary positions in play, his own recommendations of Stoic methodology appear somewhat paler than what had been offered in the texts of Lipsius and the other Neostoics.⁶³ As a result of these frequent and liberal borrowings from both Stoic and non-Stoic sources, Richard Tuck has concluded that an alternating ‘Aristotelian and un-Aristotelian’ current can be found running throughout Grotius’s thought – the product of a philosophical ‘schizophrenia’ which prevents the scholastic or humanist tradition from asserting itself over the other.⁶⁴ Annabel Brett, however, has rejected this diagnosis by pointing out that, like other civil philosophers of the early seventeenth century, Grotius recognised that ‘civic humanism, with its concern for internal concord, the ‘reason of state’ idiom, with its emphasis on conservation and its preoccupation with the threat of dissolution,’ could accord well with ‘political Aristotelianism, which emphasised the constitution of a *respublica* and generated the key question for *scientia civilis*, how to construct such a unity out of the natural plurality and diversity of individuals.’⁶⁵ It is this multiplicity of traditions within his writings that explains why Grotius could assert on the one hand that Aristotle was the ‘prince of philosophers’ while on the other hand treating non-Aristotelian sources as important advisers to his court.⁶⁶ Demonstrating some of the ‘eclectic Aristotelianism’ we have seen in other natural jurisprudential writings of the period, Grotian civil philosophy goes further than the humanist commentators had by interweaving arguments from each of the ancient milieus of thought that attempted to explain the origins of political life.

⁶² As scholars such as Hans Blom and Laurens Winkler have attempted to show in their recent discussions of Grotius and Stoicism, Grotius tended to see the ‘wisdom of the ages’ as a singular corpus of thought from which the truth could be extracted. See the Introduction in Blom and Laurens Winkler (eds.), *Grotius and the Stoa* (p. 4).

⁶³ *Ibid.* (pp. 10-11).

⁶⁴ Richard Tuck, *Natural Rights Theories: Their Origin and Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) (p. 63).

⁶⁵ Annabel Brett, ‘Natural Right and Civil Community: The Civil Philosophy of Hugo Grotius’, *The Historical Journal*, 45/1 (2002), 31-51 (p. 32).

⁶⁶ Hugo Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace [1625]*, ed. Richard Tuck, trans. J. Barbeyrac, III vols. (Natural Law and Enlightenment Classics; Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005) (III, Prol. 1625 ed., p. 1757).

There is a confluence of Aristotelian, Stoic and Epicurean philosophy residing at the centre of *De iure praedae*'s (*DIP*) long unpublished account of the law of nature and the formation of the civil state. Taking the root of civil government to be discoverable in 'the very fount of nature', Grotius approvingly cites the views of Cicero and other Stoic philosophers alongside those of Aristotle.⁶⁷ In considering the origins of justice, however, Grotius had come to disagree with Aristotle's assertion that justice is other-directed; siding instead with the Stoic claim that justice remains self-directed in character.⁶⁸ Tracing out the 'universal aspect of nature' which Chrysippus held out as the 'origin and beginning of justice', Grotius argues that God has 'fashioned creation and willed its existence' with the result that every individual part has 'certain natural properties' that preserve and guide it towards its own good, in conformity 'with the fundamental law inherent in its origin.'⁶⁹ This 'fact' is why the 'old poets and philosophers' have 'rightly deduced' that love, which takes self-interest as its primary aim, is the first principle of the whole natural order. Citing Horace, the Academics, and Cicero, Grotius points out that 'all things in nature are tenderly regardful of self, and seek their own happiness and security.'⁷⁰ The phenomenon of self-love discussed by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is also observable in all creatures and is presented by Grotius as a manifestation of the 'true and divinely inspired self-love' spoken of in the Stoic texts. While *philautia* is characterised as immoderate self-interest, the notion of justice, Grotius insists, is to be sourced in the dictates of one's own body. Referring to Seneca, Grotius concludes:

⁶⁷ Hugo Grotius, *Commentary on the Law of Prize and Booty [1604]*, trans. G.L. Williams and W.H. Zeydel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950) (p. 7).

⁶⁸ 'Owing, however, to the fact that we are more frequently impelled toward the first extreme [i.e. inflicting injury on others rather than enduring injury ourselves], the precept of regard for others is usually held up to us with excessive zeal, the implication being that we are by nature sufficiently inclined to care for ourselves. Nevertheless, the wise man does not belittle himself, nor does he neglect to avail himself of his own advantages, since no other person will use them more properly. By the same token, he will repel every injury to himself in so far as law and justice permit him to do so. Thus the good man will be free from [...] the disposition to accord himself less than his due.' Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid. (p. 9).

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Other authorities, distinguishing more subtly between terms, maintain that such concern is the function not so much of justice as that love [for self] to which we are impelled by nature; but at the same time, they admit that in human affairs the first principle of a man's duty relates to himself.⁷¹

All creatures understand what their duty to themselves is via a two-fold classification of objects which holds that a conception of good and evil exists in the two mental attitudes of desire and aversion that are implanted by nature in all living creatures.⁷² In expanding the good and evil things into two distinct classes Grotius advocates a two-pronged account of the natural law that follows an explicitly Hellenistic schema.

The first class, which helps form the law of nature, is what Grotius holds to be the 'first and most important group,' and may be read in Aristotelian and Stoic terms. It is concerned with those things that directly affect the body itself – illness, death, mutilation of the body's parts, and more positively, the body's health.⁷³ The second precept, however, recalls the views of the Epicureans as well as the earlier view of Plato. Speaking of external goods, Grotius notes the power of those things that induce feelings of pleasure or pain to affect our actions: honour, riches and pleasure, or infamy, poverty, and pain.⁷⁴ Instead of highlighting the previous divisiveness of these positions, Grotius incorporates them as the first two precepts of the natural law: 'Accordingly from this combination of concepts, two precepts of the natural law emerge: first, that it shall be permissible to defend [one's own] life and to shun that which threatens to prove injurious; secondly, that it shall be permissible to acquire for oneself, and to retain, those things which are useful for life.'⁷⁵ Citing the bulk of Cicero's Stoic writings as his source,⁷⁶ Grotius argues that the natural law

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid. (p. 10).

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Grotius's citation is to Book 3 of Plato's *Republic*.

⁷⁵ Grotius, *DIP* (p. 10).

⁷⁶ Grotius cites *De officiis* 1.11, where the Stoic position on self-preservation and other-love is summarised, *Academics* 4.2.131, and *De finibus* 4.16 and 5.24, where Cicero suggests the Stoics have followed Xenophon, Aristotle and other older philosophers in making self-preservation the chief good of animal behaviour. On this last point, recall the earlier discussion above on page 14.

shall not be violated when we choose what is useful to us even if it is at the expense of another, and stresses that there was agreement on this view amongst the ancient schools.⁷⁷

The political implications of this view are hammered out in the physical-cum-political view that bodies repel injurious bodies, while they attach themselves to ones that are useful. What becomes an all-important task then is discerning those things that contribute specifically to our *being* from those which contribute to our *well-being*. The benefits that accrue from the mutual association of bodies are the subject towards which Grotius's commentary turns next. As he argues, God would have judged it an 'insufficient provision' if individuals were only commended to themselves. Instead the formulation of the natural and 'everlasting covenant' which relates individuals to themselves and others can best be summed up in the words of Seneca: 'You must needs live for others, if you want to live for yourself.'⁷⁸ The importance of other-love continues elsewhere in *DIP*, and indeed it is because Grotius feels that it 'behoves us to have a care for the welfare of others' that he continues to argue that an internal and external notion of the good and justice can exist simultaneously.⁷⁹ Proceeding from these precepts of human behaviour, Grotius feels confident in moving on to consider those other laws of nature which he believes arise from humans' natural love of self and others.

In his later work *De iure belli ac pacis (DIBP)*, Grotius moves away from the claims of utility favoured by the Epicureans and leans more heavily on the views of the Stoics to explain the foundations of natural law. Modern scholars, however, remain in disagreement over the school's precise contributions to this aspect of Grotian thought. In Tuck's view, it was the Stoic usage of self-preservation that initially caught Grotius's attention in the first edition of *DIBP* before he was forced

⁷⁷ 'Moreover, no member of any sect of philosophers, when embarking upon a discussion of the ends [of good and evil], has ever failed to lay down these two laws first of all as indisputable axioms. For on this point the Stoics, the Epicureans, and the Peripatetics are in complete agreement, and apparently even the Academics have entertained no doubt.' Grotius, *DIP* (pp. 10-11).

⁷⁸ Ibid. (p. 11).

⁷⁹ Ibid. (pp. 11-13).

to turn away from it in the second edition as ‘part of a campaign to make [his] views appear more acceptable to the Aristotelian, Calvinist culture of his opponents in the United Provinces.’⁸⁰ While he believes Grotius seized on the idea of self-preservation as the primary, universal motivating force in an effort to confront sceptics such as Michel de Montaigne and Pierre Charron, Tuck argues that the social aspects of Stoic *oikeiōsis* and Aristotelian *philautia* were less attractive for Grotius since it was their Epicurean rivals who would have had more to contribute on this point.⁸¹ Others have refuted this interpretation by arguing in exactly the opposite manner – claiming Grotius preferred Stoic sociability over self-preservation – while there are those who have suggested, and quite correctly given what we saw in section one, that self-preservation and sociability are two aspects of a single impulse that cannot be divided.⁸² Particularly useful for understanding how Grotius employed both aspects of *oikeiōsis* in his writings are the recent views of Christopher Brooke, who has shown the extent to which the Stoics, and in particular Cicero’s *De finibus*, helped Grotius formulate his account of ‘*appetitus societatis*’ and natural law.⁸³

In the Prolegomena to the 1625 edition of *DIBP* Stoicism serves to foil the scepticism of Carneades and others who hold that law was the by-product of self-interest.⁸⁴ Because interests vary according to customs, times and peoples, the sceptics argue that there cannot be a universally binding natural law. The sceptic position also stipulates that pursuing the good of others is inimical to one’s own pursuit of the good, thus presenting self-love and self-interest as diametrically

⁸⁰ Tuck, *Rights of War and Peace* (p. 99).

⁸¹ ‘Grotius did not mean ... that natural men were sociable in anything like the Aristotelian sense. Instead, we might say that they were sociable in the Epicurean sense, for ... Epicureanism did permit a thin notion of human sociability.’ Grotius, *DIBP* (I, Introduction, p. 89); also see Tuck, *Rights of War and Peace* (pp. 94-99).

⁸² See Robert Shaver, ‘Grotius on Scepticism and Self-Interest’, *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 78 (1996), 27-47 (p. 28); Brian Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights: Studies on Natural Rights, Natural Law and Church Law, 1150-1625* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997) (p. 323) and Jon Miller, ‘Innate Ideas in Stoicism and Grotius’, in Blom and Winkel (eds.), *Grotius and the Stoa*, 157-75 (p. 162).

⁸³ In the proceeding discussion I will be following many of the central arguments found in Christopher Brooke, ‘Grotius, Stoicism, and *Oikeiōsis*’, *Grotiana*, 29 (2008), 25-50.

⁸⁴ Grotius, *DIBP* (III, Prol., 1625 ed., pp. 1746-47).

opposed to other-love. Grotius counters all of these claims by stating that although nature drives all animals to seek their own interests, these pursuits are ‘tempered’ by an affection for family and species that stems from ‘some extrinsic principle of intelligence.’⁸⁵ Humans, on the other hand, operate according to the dictates of an internal principle and the construction of societies that protect their own lives and property is deemed to be indicative of the rational powers they possess. In separating actions undertaken as the result of a non-rational natural impulse from those done rationally, Grotius upholds *oikeiōsis* as the notion most capable of explaining how all creatures come to co-exist peacefully.⁸⁶ However ‘social’ *oikeiōsis* is also presented as a product of rational minds – which makes it exclusive to humans and hence not in complete conformity with the Stoic account – and Grotius can even be found replacing the familial aspects of the Stoic accounts with a more general ‘care for society’.⁸⁷ Despite these modifications and his recognition that *ius* always contains an element of other-awareness, Grotius’s discussion of natural law is built around what remains a fundamentally Stoic framework.⁸⁸

This framework would also serve as the basis for Grotius’s consideration of whether one could ever justly declare war on another. After having sided with Chrysippus and the Stoics in their belief that *ius* is to be found in ‘Jupiter himself’,⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Ibid. (p. 1747).

⁸⁶ The division of lower animals, infants and children from rational man is made in each of the central sources for Stoic *oikeiōsis*: Cicero, *De fin.* (3.16-20, 4.16-18); Cicero, *De off.* (1.11-12, p. 6); Laertius, *Lives* (7.86-87); Seneca, *Ep.* 121.16ff. as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [II-107].

⁸⁷ ‘This care for society in accordance with the human intellect, which we have roughly sketched, is the source of *ius*, properly so called, to which belong abstaining from another’s possessions, restoring anything which belongs to another (or profit from it), being obliged to keep promises, giving compensation for culpable damage, and incurring human punishment.’ Grotius, *DIBP* (III, Prol., 1625 ed., pp. 1747-48); Brooke, ‘Grotius, Stoicism, and *Oikeiōsis*’, (p. 46).

⁸⁸ Grotius, *DIBP* (III, Prol., 1625 ed., p. 1749); see also the more general accounts of the expansion of *oikeiōsis* from self to other in Reinhard Brandt, ‘Self-Consciousness and Self-Care: On the Tradition of *Oikeiōsis* in the Modern Age’, in Blom and Winkel (eds.), *Grotius and the Stoa*, 73-91 (pp. 74-75) and Engberg-Pedersen, *Oikeiōsis*.

⁸⁹ Grotius, *DIBP* (I, p. 91): ‘The Law of Nature itself, whether it be that which consists in the maintenance of society, or that which in a looser sense is so called, though it flows from the internal principles of man, may notwithstanding be justly ascribed to God, because it was his pleasure that these principles should be in us. And in this sense Chrysippus and the Stoics said, that the original of right is to be derived from no other than Jupiter himself; from which word ‘Jupiter’ it is probable the Latins gave it the name ‘jus’.

the law of nature is laid out along the lines set out in book three of Cicero's *De finibus*. Quoting directly and substantially from that text Grotius can be found arguing that two types of 'natural principles' operate in the world: the 'first impressions of nature' and 'the rule of our actions'.⁹⁰ The first impression of nature is said to be the 'instinct whereby every animal seeks its own preservation' and which makes it love its condition and those things which maintain it and avoid those things which threaten it.⁹¹ Showing again that humans are different from the other animals, Grotius continues with Cicero's account of how reason develops and supersedes impulse as the driving force behind our decorous actions. Inquiring further into what the law of nature consists we also come to know what is unjust: 'that which has a necessary repugnance to a reasonable and sociable nature.'⁹² Yet despite managing to reproduce both aspects of *oikeiōsis*, Grotius is also guilty of eliding certain important parts of Cicero's account. For Brooke, the chapter's silence on the 'connection between *oikeiōsis* and self-consciousness, the claims that self-love provides the primary motivation to action,' and the rebuttal of Epicurean *hedonē* as the primary object of desire suggests that Grotius was not concerned with defending Stoic *honestum* as the chief end good as Cicero had been.⁹³ Instead, Grotius chooses to 'recycle' parts of Cicero's passage to come to a conclusion that would speak closely to what Hobbes and Spinoza would argue later in their own accounts of human nature. Looking back over the landscape of Grotius's argument, Brooke posits that, 'On the one hand, human beings are always expected to be pursuing the goods that pertain to self-preservation, while, on the other hand, no particular *summum bonum* is acknowledged, and nor is the absence of such considered to derail the project of setting suitable rules to govern practical reasoning.'⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Ibid. (p. 180).

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid. (p. 182).

⁹³ It should be noted that while Grotius does not produce Cicero's account of animal self-consciousness, he does produce his own extensive list of ancient authors who had discussed nature having given 'every animal the strength to defend and help itself.' This list includes Xenophon, Ovid, Horace, Lucretius, Galen, and Aristotle.

⁹⁴ Brooke, 'Grotius, Stoicism, and *Oikeiōsis*', (p. 42).

In the 1631 edition of *DIBP* Grotius explicitly links ‘Man’s desire of society’ to the Stoic term ‘*oikeiōsis*’. However, unlike in *DIP* or the first edition of *DIBP*, he rejected the notion that private advantage should serve as a natural motivating principle.⁹⁵ He also incorporates a brief discussion of infant tendencies that portrays them as being directed by the same extrinsic principle that the lower animals discussed in the first edition of *DIBP* had been. Grotius departs from the Stoic account when he looks for empirical evidence that children have a ‘propensity to do good’.⁹⁶ By the time Grotius does return to discussing the rational faculty and the use of speech to differentiate humans from other animals he is only ‘partially following the Stoics’ since he is taking the ‘different aspects of *oikeiōsis* and juxtaposing them along the way in the same set of claims.’⁹⁷ Adults for both the Stoics and Grotius act similarly in their actions towards ‘things that are alike’ and it is this consistency of selecting objects that forms a key aspect of ‘personal’ *oikeiōsis*. ‘Social’ *oikeiōsis* is then returned to in the hope that its foundations in the general precepts of nature will be clearer to the reader.⁹⁸

Beginning in *DIP* and continuing in the editions of *DIBP*, there is a trend to move away from a theological and dialectic conception of the natural law in favour of a secular and positivist account.⁹⁹ As Grotius had himself noted, ‘many ancient and modern writers’ had already touched on several of the points he himself had made throughout his works, and indeed the account of human nature bears out the *consensus omnium* of his predecessors and contemporaries. This renders the Grotian account of the general principles of human nature as axiomatic in nature, with the

⁹⁵ Grotius, *DIBP* (I, pp. 79-81); In the extensive footnote provided by Barbeyrac the ‘natural inclination of mankind to live in society’ is said to be ‘a principle which has been admitted by the wise and learned of all ages.’ In the substantial *index locorum* which follows, he links the Aristotelian discussion of *philautia* found in *Eudemian Ethics* 8.10 with *Politics* 1.2 (but surprisingly not the discussions in *Nicomachean Ethics* 9.4 which were used in the Prolegomena to *DIP*) to those found in Cicero *De fin.* 3.20 and 5.23, *De off.* 1.4.7 and 1.4.44, Seneca *De beneficiis* 7.1 and *Ep.* 95, and Diogenes Laertius *Lives* 7.123 (I, p. 79, VI. fn. 2).

⁹⁶ Ibid. (I, pp. 82-83); Brooke, ‘Grotius, Stoicism, and *Oikeiōsis*’, (p. 47).

⁹⁷ Brooke, ‘Grotius, Stoicism, and *Oikeiōsis*’, (p. 48).

⁹⁸ Grotius, *DIBP* (I, pp. 85-87).

⁹⁹ Introduction to Grotius, *DIP* (xx-xxi).

author producing a more thorough and rigorous account of mankind's primitive and natural condition than either the scholastics or humanists had in their previous treatments of the subject.¹⁰⁰ Upon the completion of this significant intellectual undertaking Grotius could also lay claim to having demonstrated, at least to the satisfaction of later readers such as John Selden, Hobbes, Spinoza and Pufendorf, that a top-down approach to human nature could produce a systematic, scientific, and workable account of human morality and civil politics.¹⁰¹

By the end of the sixteenth and the early-seventeenth centuries, then, a noticeable counter-current had begun to develop in response to the theological, juridical and scientific dominance of Aristotelianism. Lipsius attempted to steer clear of the accumulated wreckage of centuries of translations, interpretations, critical editions and commentaries on Aristotle by promoting the entirety of Stoic ethics and physics to his readers; Grotius spent considerable effort developing a juridical philosophy in which Stoicism operated both in conjunction with other ancient traditions and sometimes exclusively to construct the foundations of natural law and civil philosophy. Though both scholars did much to aid the transmission of Stoic thought during the early- to mid-seventeenth century and, hence suggest plausible alternatives to Aristotle, it was thanks to the efforts of other scholars that the other important area of Hellenistic thought – Epicureanism – came to exert its own significant presence on the intellectual landscape of early-modern Europe.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Tuck, 'Grotius and Selden', in J.H.A. Burns and Mark Goldie (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 499-529 (pp. 499, 505).

¹⁰¹ Consider the comments of Grotius in the introduction to *DIP*: 'It is expedient for our purposes to order the discussion [of the work] as follows: first, let us see what is true universally and as a general proposition; then, let us gradually narrow this generalisation, adapting it to the special nature of the case under consideration. Just as the mathematicians customarily prefix to any concrete demonstration a preliminary statement of certain broad axioms on which all persons are easily agreed, in order that there may be some fixed point from which to trace the proof of what follows, so shall we point out certain rules and laws of the most general nature, presenting them as preliminary assumptions which need to be recalled rather than learned for the first time, with the purpose of laying a foundation upon which our other conclusions may safely rest.' (p. 7).

Pierre Gassendi and the Advent of Neoepicureanism

As with Neostoicism, the philosophy of Epicurus profited significantly from the desires of writers to find an alternative to Aristotelianism. When compared with the late Renaissance reception of Stoic thought, however, Epicureanism found itself the least studied of the Hellenistic schools.¹⁰² Such neglect almost certainly owed to the pre-humanist view of Epicurean philosophy as being immoral and irreligious – views that became less likely to be dispelled as its intellectual profile decreased. While the scholars of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance knew Epicurean doctrine thanks to the writings of Lucretius and Diogenes Laertius, there remained a collective tendency on the part of Protestants and Catholics alike to dismiss the school on the grounds of its incitement to hedonistic behaviour.¹⁰³ Yet as scholars began to re-read the philosophy's key texts, often as part of their engagement with the Stoa, they found not an incitement to immorality but rather a series of empirical claims regarding the dictates of nature and measured advice on how to achieve a state of mental tranquillity.¹⁰⁴ Over time scholars' resistance to the Epicurean worldview would begin to subside and by the seventeenth century the Garden's emphasis on scientific truths derived through observation and the importance of imperceptible motions counted some of the so-called New Science's most celebrated authors as supporters.

The writings of Pierre Gassendi helped rescue Epicurean doctrine from the disrepute it had fallen into over the centuries by catapulting it into the centre of the philosophical and scientific discourse occurring across Europe. This rehabilitation arose largely from Gassendi's need to fill the philosophical void he had created for himself in *Exercitationes paradoxicae adversus Aristoteleos* (1624), wherein Aristotelian logic, ethics and psychology were all rejected for their unsatisfactory attempts to explain natural phenomena and activity. Because of their failure to grasp

¹⁰² Jones, *The Epicurean Tradition*, (p. 183).

¹⁰³ George D. Hadzsits, *Lucretius and his Influence* (Our Debt to Greece and Rome; London: George G. Harrap & Company Ltd., 1935), (see pp. 278-79).

¹⁰⁴ Menn, 'The Intellectual Setting', (p. 57).

the intricacies of natural philosophy, he believed the Aristotelians' self-proclaimed knowledge of nature and their claims of rigorous argumentation were hollow. Further indicting scholastic philosophy, Gassendi maintained that the constant veneration of Aristotle had rendered the study of philosophy as little more than a 'childish game',¹⁰⁵ while his all-pervasive authority in philosophy had given rise to an almost 'cavalier' treatment of other classical sources.¹⁰⁶ In an effort to stem the tide of this perceived anti-classicalism, Gassendi adopted a type of 'mitigated humanism',¹⁰⁷ wherein the views of alternative authors were held up as authoritative sources for promoting those ideas he believed to be most in line with the emerging scientific trends of the time.¹⁰⁸ Yet unlike contemporaries such as Descartes and Hobbes who were wont to trumpet their own contributions to the study of philosophy while downplaying those of the past, Gassendi confronted the scepticism surrounding natural philosophy's ability to uncover the operating principles of the external world by showing how Epicureanism best underlined the tenets of mechanistic philosophy.

In 1628, with his initial criticisms and rejections of Aristotelianism published, Gassendi turned his attention towards vindicating those whose philosophical ideas he felt had suffered the most from the scholastic hegemony. As he noted in letters to his friend and patron Nicolas Claude Fabri de Peiresc, the famous humanist and scholar, and Erycius Puteanus, a student of Lipsius, Epicureanism was a particularly ripe candidate for the type of philosophical makeover Gassendi was proposing.¹⁰⁹ Puteanus would have been particularly receptive of this proposal, as he had himself

¹⁰⁵ Pierre Gassendi, *Opera omnia*, VI vols. (Lyon: L. Anisson, 1658) (III, Preface, p. 106).

¹⁰⁶ See Menn, 'The Intellectual Setting', (p. 57).

¹⁰⁷ This phrase is found in Osler, 'Gassendi's Epicurean Project', (p. 41).

¹⁰⁸ See Veronica Gventsadze, 'Aristotelian Influences in Gassendi's Moral Philosophy', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 45/2 (2007), 223-42 and Lynn Joy, *Gassendi the Atomist: Advocate of History in an Age of Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Joy points out that Gassendi 'viewed the task of a philosopher as one of providing rational justifications of those principles which, at a particular time in the history of philosophy, are believed to be the most probable. He did not hold any philosopher responsible for providing a permanent epistemological foundation for all true beliefs.' (p. 208).

¹⁰⁹ The letter to Peiresc is dated 25 April 1626 and is the first time Gassendi mentions and interest in Epicurus. See Antonia LoLordo, *Pierre Gassendi and the Birth of Early Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) (p. 20ff.).

recently attempted to salvage Epicurean ethics from the pages of Seneca.¹¹⁰ In the same letter, Gassendi intimated that he was composing an *Apology* of Epicurus which he intended to append to future versions of the *Exercitationes*. The scope of the project, however, was to expand far beyond the planned defence of the school's founder, and by 1631 Gassendi found himself in the midst of a comprehensive reconstruction of the school's entire philosophy. As a result, the proposed biography did not appear until the 1647 publication of *De vita et moribus Epicuri* and the 1649 translation of Book Ten of Diogenes Laertius's *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, which had been lacking in the earlier editions of that text. Although the biographical reclamation took longer than Gassendi had originally intended, other aspects of Epicurean doctrine found their way into publication more quickly. As a result, Gassendi was soon able to demonstrate how the atomist accounts of natural bodily motion and psycho-ethics could secure a stronger foothold for the recently emergent mechanist worldview while simultaneously promoting Christian orthodoxy.¹¹¹

Despite his enthusiasm for Epicurus and stated mistrust of scholastic philosophy, the break with Aristotelian philosophy was less complete than Gassendi publicised or perhaps even recognised himself. This is not entirely surprising given Gassendi's position as professor of philosophy at Aix-en-Provence and his Catholic allegiances. While Gassendi's ethics is consistently Epicurean in its arguments and conclusions, much of its supporting physics remains tied to the framework established earlier by Aristotle.¹¹² As we have seen, the underlying arguments regarding nature and motion in texts such as *De anima*, *De sensu* and the various texts on animals are continuations of the animate-inanimate and natural-unnatural dichotomies of motion established in *Physics*, wherein universal principles are said

¹¹⁰ This work is entitled *Epicuri sententiae aliquot aculeatae ex Seneca* and was published in Louvain in 1609. This interest in Seneca as a source may be said to have been piqued from Puteanus's earlier published work on Justus Lipsius - *Lipsiognema anniversarium, sive Iusti Lipsii ... laudatio funebris* (Antwerp, 1607). See Gassendi, *Opera omnia* (VI, p. 11).

¹¹¹ Gventsadze, 'Aristotelian Influences in Gassendi's Moral Philosophy', (p. 226).

¹¹² Osler, 'New Wine in Old Bottles', (p. 167).

to represent the origin of further specific investigations into nature.¹¹³ Gassendi likewise came to recognise that physics or natural philosophy remained the study of first principles and the causes of things. The primary status and scope of physics is reaffirmed explicitly in the second section of Gassendi's posthumously published *Syntagma philosophicum* (1658). Physics is the name of a type of philosophy 'qualified in Latin by "*Naturalis*", that is to say, Natural Philosophy. 'Nature' is used to designate both the generative principle and the thing that is born and thus embraces everything which gives or receives birth, and further, everything which is understood by the entirety of things.'¹¹⁴ Physics also provided the foundation from which to launch investigations into the human soul, as the soul's immaterial or non-rational parts existed within the created universe. This made them subject to the same causal nexus of nature as other immaterial bodies.¹¹⁵ In addition physics was comprised of three 'general parts' with each part confining itself to an aspect of nature more or less specific than the others. In the largest sense, physics dealt with 'the nature of things universally,' and this meant the investigation into general principles such as 'space, time, material principles, active causes; motions, changes, qualities, birth, death; and if there are other things of this kind.'¹¹⁶

From this Aristotelian schema Gassendi approaches the specifics of his natural philosophy through the material and efficient principles of natural bodies, although unlike Aristotle, he argues the bodies are atomic in nature. These initial formulations of causation also demonstrated how ancient atomism might be reconciled to contemporary theology. In the first place, the infinite Epicurean cosmos is replaced with a created universe in which God oversees and maintains the bodies

¹¹³ This is the entire premise of the first chapter of *Physics*, wherein Aristotle argues at length for a philosophy built upon universal principles that can be used to consider more particular ones and argues with his predecessors about how many starting principles there might actually be. See Aristotle, *Physics* (1.1, 184a-84b, pp. 315-16).

¹¹⁴ *Syntagma philosophicum* in Gassendi, *Opera omnia* (I, p. 125) as cited in Osler, 'New Wine in Old Bottles', (p. 174).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* (p. 175).

¹¹⁶ *Syntagma philosophicum* in Gassendi, *Opera omnia* (I, p. 130) as cited in *ibid.* (p. 175).

within it.¹¹⁷ Whereas atomist philosophers such as Epicurus and Lucretius had argued that motion was inherent within atomic bodies,¹¹⁸ Gassendi suggests that motion is infused into matter during this creative process. 'It may be supposed that the individual atoms received from God [...] the force requisite to moving, and to imparting motion to others [...] All this to the degree that he foresaw what would be necessary for every purpose he had destined them for.'¹¹⁹ God becomes the origin of all the atoms in the universe and his providence replaces the atomic swerve as the ultimate determinant of their natural motion. Such adjustments were intended to free atomist doctrine from the claims of atheism that had plagued it since its inception. Beginning with the Stoics and continuing with early Christian apologists, critics had equated the cosmic void with godlessness and chided the school's adherence to freedom of movement despite the ability of atomic motions to determine all natural events.¹²⁰ God-infused atoms thus constitute the material principle in the Gassendian universe and are characterised by their natural fullness, solidity and hardness. They also move about continuously through the cosmic void and do so imperceptibly.¹²¹ Secondary causes, which occur throughout the natural world when atoms encounter each other, are explained via the traditional Epicurean doctrine. This altogether collapsed the need for final causes as an explanation of natural motion, as it was the motions derived from these collisions that explained how and why atoms remained in a constant state of motion. That motion were instilled via atomic collisions also placed Gassendi in opposition to Aristotle and the later scholastics who had argued that motion could be imparted from a distance.¹²² In holding that atoms were continuously in motion and could impart motions into other bodies, Gassendi

¹¹⁷ Laertius, *Lives* (10.44).

¹¹⁸ See Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (2.284, p. 42).

¹¹⁹ Pierre Gassendi, *The Selected Works of Pierre Gassendi*, ed. Craig B. Brush (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1972) (pp. 400-1).

¹²⁰ A typical Stoic rejection of this position can be found in Cicero, *De nat.* (1.69); for Christian attacks on Epicureanism see, for example, the third-century works of Arnobius and Lactantius. Although, as Augustine suggests, by the fourth century the Epicureans were thought to no longer pose any real threat to the promulgation of Christian doctrine.

¹²¹ Osler, 'New Wine in Old Bottles', (p. 177). These descriptions can all be found in the biography of Epicurus that Gassendi eventually translated, see Laertius, *Lives* (10.39-44).

¹²² Osler, 'New Wine in Old Bottles', (p. 178).

revealed Epicureanism as the classical predecessor to the inertial physics which would become via Galileo, Descartes, Isaac Beckmann and Hobbes one of the major *causes célèbres* of the New Science.

In *De motu impresso* (1642) Gassendi filled this argument out more fully by arguing that the divinely produced motion or ‘horizontal movement’ was ‘perpetual’ as long as another force did not intervene and change its direction. If any resistance did occur, then the motion of the body was destroyed.¹²³ Speaking to the freedom of all bodies, Gassendi argues that a natural bodily motion is one that is not impeded by these destructive resistances. Unnatural motions, on the other hand, are brought about through resistance and the violent impacts caused from external forces. The ability of a body to move in two directions is indicative of its freedom (*libertas*) while those bodies capable of singular, voluntary motions are said only to exhibit willingness (*libentia*) to move.

The idea that a body’s natural motions are uninhibited and free from coercion also plays a central role in Gassendi’s attempts to rehabilitate Epicurean ethics. Humans operate via divinely sourced impulses and their *actio spontanea* is characterised by the lack of any ‘coercion, violence, repugnancy or opposition.’¹²⁴ Similarly, changes in our natural appetite have an analogous relationship to the properties of atomic bodies. Since the impact of an external force is said to bring about a change in the atom’s motion, so the impact from another perceived good is said to effect a change within our own psychological disposition.¹²⁵ This enables pleasure to be treated in similarly mechanical terms, with Gassendi terming it a ‘motion of the soul’ and echoing Epicurus’s earlier account of its motive character.¹²⁶

¹²³ Lisa T. Sarasohn, 'Motion and Morality: Pierre Gassendi, Thomas Hobbes and the Mechanical World-View', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 46/3 (Jul.-Sept. 1985), 363-79 (p. 373).

¹²⁴ *Syntagma philosophicum* in Gassendi, *Opera omnia* (II, p. 822) as cited in *ibid.* (p. 375).

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* (p. 373).

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* (p. 375) and Lisa T. Sarasohn, *Gassendi's Ethics: Freedom in a Mechanistic Universe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996) (pp. 70-75). Laetius, *Lives* (KA 18, 10.144). ‘Pleasures in Motion’ is discussed in length in C. Diano, 'Note Epicuree II', *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica (New Series)*, 12 (1935), 253-64.

Attempting to mitigate the charges of hedonism that had plagued Epicurean ethics since antiquity, Gassendi recasts the notion of pleasure to stress its divine origins and virtuous character:

Rather it is suitable that we regard with wonder that cunning of the most wise Artificer of Nature; for as every action was going to be wearisome in itself, even those that would be natural..., he therefore seasoned every action, with a certain allurements of pleasure; and the more necessary the particular act was to be ... the greater he willed the pleasure to be.¹²⁷

The pursuit of pleasure throughout our lives is what keeps our souls in motion and this continuity mimics the inertial motion exhibited by Lucretius's account of atoms.¹²⁸ Unlike in the work of his contemporaries, however, Gassendi does not rely on the term '*conatus*' or 'endeavouring' to describe these internal motions. Instead, he sees the impulse to pursue pleasure working in conjunction with reason, a partnership which enables us to determine the most fulfilling pleasures and represents the hallmark of human freedom and the uniqueness of our mental powers.¹²⁹ The negative connotations associated with the pursuit of pleasure are subdued largely through Gassendi's equation of pleasure and virtue and his contention that the dictates of right reason (*ratio sana*) operate as the ultimate calculator of pleasure and pain.¹³⁰ In drawing upon the calculus of pleasure and pain, Gassendi takes up other familiar Epicurean positions, arguing for example that we should not fear the power of God or the inevitability of death, which is portrayed as nothing but the cessation of sensual perception and pain.¹³¹

These nature-driven pursuits also give Gassendi recourse for updating Epicurean political philosophy by reiterating how the pleasurable life is inseparable

¹²⁷ *Syntagma philosophicum* in Gassendi, *Opera omnia* (II, p. 701) as cited in Sarasohn, 'Motion and Morality', (p. 376).

¹²⁸ Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (2.251-262, p. 41).

¹²⁹ Sarasohn, 'Motion and Morality', (p. 377).

¹³⁰ Lisa T. Sarasohn, 'The Ethical and Political Philosophy of Pierre Gassendi', *The Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 20/3 (1982), 239-60, (p. 241).

¹³¹ The basic Epicurean view can be found in Laetius, *Lives* (10.139).

from virtues such as ‘political prudence’.¹³² Drawing heavily on Lucretius and the later sayings of Epicurus, political society is said to arise from a compact between individuals who desire peace and tranquillity of mind above all else.¹³³ What may be said of the natural rights of apolitical individuals is interesting in that Gassendi reveals the overlap that exists between Epicurean political thought and Stoic moral psychology. ‘What man has from nature, so that he might exist, he also has the faculty of maintaining and preserving himself; and of using all things which are necessary, conducive, and useful for this preservation. Furthermore, it is this faculty itself, which can be said to consist the first right of nature; consequently [this] right of nature is primary [and] nothing more ancient is given by nature.’¹³⁴ Upon entering society, the preservation of life is promoted by the terms of the *pactum* agreed to between individuals and this in turn reiterates the utility of the social setting.¹³⁵ The transition from ‘natural’ man to ‘political’ man is said to come about through natural sociability, a point in which Gassendi can be seen to stand alongside Aristotle, the Stoics and Grotius, and against the Epicureans and his friend Hobbes.¹³⁶

These religious and political shifts, many of which demonstrated Epicureanism’s capacity for interpretive flexibility, helped Gassendi rid the philosophy of the atheistic and hedonistic claims that had plagued it over the centuries. Central to Epicureanism’s transmutation was the insertion of God at the creation of the natural and pervasive atoms. As a result, Epicurean philosophy was

¹³² ‘Of all this, the beginning and greatest good is prudence. Wherefore prudence is a more precious thing even than philosophy; from it spring all the other virtues, for it teaches us we cannot lead a life of pleasure which is not also a life of prudence, honour, and justice; nor lead a life of prudence, honour, and justice which is not also a life of pleasure. For the virtues have grown into one with a pleasant life, and a pleasant life is inseparable from them.’ Ibid. (10.132).

¹³³ Sarasohn, ‘The Ethical and Political Philosophy of Pierre Gassendi’, (p. 244); Laertius, *Lives* (10.143, 154).

¹³⁴ *Syntagma philosophicum* in Gassendi, *Opera omnia* (II, pp. 794-95) as cited in Sarasohn, ‘The Ethical and Political Philosophy of Pierre Gassendi’, (p. 245). While Epicurus speaks of the security of political association, there is no parallel to this statement of ‘self-preservation as the first right of nature’ in either Epicurus or Lucretius.

¹³⁵ *Syntagma philosophicum* in Gassendi, *Opera omnia* (II, p. 755) as cited in ibid. (pp. 248-49).

¹³⁶ Aristotle, *Pol.* (1.2, 1253a18-19, p. 14); Seneca, *De beneficiis* (4.17.3); Grotius, *DIBP* (III, Prol., p. 1747); Epicurus sees ‘natural justice’ as coming about through expediency and elsewhere characterises the useful, rather than natural features of political life; see for example Laertius, *Lives* (10.150).

no longer obliged to answer for the non-Christian origins of its founders.¹³⁷ With God as the creator and first mover in the atomic world his providence was said to explain the continuousness of atomic motion and the observable phenomena produced in all naturally motive bodies. This stress on the divine and efficient causes of motion thus heralded the appearance of an updated account of Epicureanism that rendered any continued abandonment of the school's larger world-view unnecessary. With God present at the beginning of and during atomic motion, Christianised atomism could promote itself as an attractive substitute to the prevailing scholastic teleology since the free motions of atoms required no pre-determined destination to be understood.¹³⁸ The efficacy of inertial motion also appealed to the various authors of the New Science, who could use atomic motion as a means of explaining, or drawing analogies with, natural bodily activity. These theological, ethical and scientific adaptations further signalled that Gassendi's account of Epicureanism was contemporary rather than historical in character and that he could be flexible in its application. Such adaptations and interpretative shifts did, however, remain within the bounds of acceptable humanist scholarship. As Gassendi set out in the *Exercitationes*, modern authors should, where prudent, make their own additions to previous lines of thought, and for Epicureanism, it was because of these additions that the philosophy was able to achieve the relevance that it had hitherto lacked.

Although Gassendi presided over the full-fledged revival of Epicureanism, he was by no means the only scholar or scientist of the early seventeenth century who saw the potential in forwarding atomic explanations for natural phenomena. As Sylvia Murr has shown, Gassendi's contacts around the Continent were numerous, and through them he was able to rally others to the atomist cause.¹³⁹ In England, one could find a circle of scholars at Northumberland whose interest in applying atomist principles to aid the study of subjects such as chemical atomism extended the

¹³⁷ Sarasohn, 'The Ethical and Political Philosophy of Pierre Gassendi', (p. 240).

¹³⁸ Jones, *The Epicurean Tradition* (pp. 178-79).

¹³⁹ Sylvia Murr, *Gassendi et l'Europe, 1592-1792* (De Pétrarque à Descartes; Paris: J. Vrin, 1997).

discussion of Epicurean thought into new areas of scientific investigation.¹⁴⁰ By the early-seventeenth century the circle boasted some of the most active members in experimental science in Elizabethan England, and also counted a young and inquisitive Thomas Hobbes as a frequent correspondent.¹⁴¹ Outside of the Northumberland circle, their feelings about mechanical philosophy and its ability to advance a new science were shared by leading exponents such as Walter Charleton, who later undertook his own substantial defence and expansion of Gassendi's Neop Epicureanism in the middle of the seventeenth century with his *Physiologia Epicuro-Gassendo-Charltoniana* (1654) and a defence of Epicurean morals (1656).

By the 1630s scientists were beginning to recognise that not only could the 'atomical' doctrine eclipse the previous, vague physical explanations provided by Aristotelianism, but that it could also help decipher results obtained from their own experiments. However, these new and recurrent engagements with atoms and the implications of their motions did deviate from the classical presentations of Epicurus and Lucretius. Such updatings were seen as necessary if the philosophy was to overcome its pagan origins and thrive in the by-now rapidly developing field of *philosophia naturalis*. As the efforts of Gassendi and others attest, the philosophy of

¹⁴⁰ See in particular the discussion concerning the corpuscularianism of Robert Boyle and Daniel Sennert in section three of William Royall Newman, *Atoms and Alchemy: Chymistry and the Experimental Origins of the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006) (pp. 157-216).

¹⁴¹ Members included Nicholas Hill, Thomas Hariot, Robert Hues, Walter Warner, Nathaniel Torporley, and Thomas Allen. Hariot seems to have found atomism particularly useful to his work in physics and mathematics, and would count amongst his friends Robert Payne, a member of the 'Welbeck Academy' and someone with whom Hobbes frequently corresponded. As Hariot wrote to Kepler in 1606, 'I have now led you to the doors of nature's house, wherein lie its mysteries. If you cannot enter because [the doors] are too narrow, then [...] contract yourself into an atom, and you will enter easily. And when you later come out again, tell me what wonders you saw.' Hariot to Kepler, 6 Dec. 1606 as cited in Robert Kargon, 'Thomas Hariot, The Northumberland Circle and Early Atomism in England', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 27/1 (1966), 128-36 (p. 129). On the relation of Hobbes, Hariot and Robert Payne see Noel Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002) (p. 10). For a general overview of the English contribution to atomism see chapter three of Antonio Clericuzio, *Elements, Principles and Corpuscles: A Study of Atomism and Chemistry in the Seventeenth Century* (International Archives of the History of Ideas; Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press, 2000).

the Garden had re-emerged and was now occupying a front-line position in the battle to stem the tide of Aristotelianism across Europe.¹⁴²

Conclusion

Until the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, philosophy as an institutional subject was dedicated to the promotion of Aristotelian conceptions of nature, ethics, and physics. Although humanists from the Renaissance onwards had recovered and produced many new editions of non-Aristotelian texts for scholars to consider, their attempts to open the door wider to potential classical alternatives were never intended to reconstruct these ancient systems of thought entirely.

The entrenchment of Aristotelian philosophy, in all its various guises, owed to the substantial and constant reinforcements it received from Europe's universities and churches, and it was on the strength of the relative completeness of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* that the philosophy was able to outpace the Hellenistic schools in terms of contemporary commentaries and, most crucially, dissemination. Yet this dominance proved to be the philosophy's Achilles heel, as it frequently left Aristotelian thought susceptible to a wide array of philosophical, theological, political and rhetorical critiques. Ecclesiastical disputes between Protestants and Catholics often turned acrimonious when Aristotle was used to reinforce particular points of scripture. Other scholars who were looking to strengthen Aristotelian views with the more rhetorical and elegant Latin of Cicero soon found themselves engaging with the worldviews of the Hellenistic schools. As these readings intensified, they attracted the attention of humanists and less dogmatically-inclined scholastics, so that over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries previously closed avenues of Stoic and Epicurean thought were critically reassessed and gradually reopened. As a result, some began to place Aristotle's views alongside those from other philosophical persuasions, in an effort to lend a historical and philosophical

¹⁴² Jones, *The Epicurean Tradition* (p. 190).

robustness to scholastic doctrine. This is clearly on display in the work of certain ‘eclectic Aristotelians’ such as Perionius, Montecatini and Arnisaeus, who could all be found relying on Aristotelian and Stoic discussions to motivate their commentaries’ discussions of the ethically and politically important notions of *philautia* and self-preservation. In using this broader philosophical brush, they were able to paint over those areas in which scholastic political and ethical philosophy had become unsightly or singularly unconvincing.

In the course of examining and utilising the ‘alternative’ philosophies of Stoicism and Epicureanism, many scholars also began to realise that the natural world was far more complex than the scholastics and ecclesiastics had tended to suggest.¹⁴³ However, for those scholars who sought to combat Aristotelian natural philosophy with the Hellenistic philosophies, their work was tempered by the contemporary tendency to present these views in a Christianised version. The views of most pagan philosophies not already appropriated by the ecclesiastical and university authorities were thus initially adopted in partial or fragmentary ways. This made potentially tricky aspects of Stoic or Epicurean doctrine easier to ignore or pass over and helped ensure that an author’s intention to prop up tenets of Christian theology remained clear.¹⁴⁴ Even in the larger recoveries undertaken by scholars such as Lipsius, Grotius and Gassendi, one still notices the distinctive and reoccurring trope of shaping ancient ethical and physical doctrines to conform to contemporary religious and political demands. In many instances, their revivals of classical thought were only able to proceed once they had succeeded in joining the Christian God with the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers’ omnipotent nature.

The trajectory of the reception and dissemination of Stoic and Epicurean thought proceeded gradually over the course of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. As the seventeenth century progressed, Hobbes and Spinoza

¹⁴³ Roger Ariew and Alan Gabbey, ‘The Scholastic Background’, in Garber and Ayers (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, Vol. I, 425-53, (p. 426).

¹⁴⁴ Gilles D. Monsarrat, *Light from the Porch: Stoicism and English Renaissance Literature* (Collection Études Anglaises; Paris: Didier-Érudition, 1984) (p. 22).

would continue supporting this trend of drawing on specific aspects of ancient thought to address contemporary questions in natural, ethical and political philosophy. Certainly the influence of Aristotle would remain difficult to shake off for both writers, and perhaps especially so for the older, Oxford-educated Hobbes. In reflecting upon the more recent past, corresponding with friends and perusing many of the books on their own library shelves, however, they would have seen how scholars such as Lipsius and Gassendi had been able to draw on Stoic and Epicurean doctrines to great effect in assaulting the once impregnable fortress of Aristotelianism. However, while Hobbes and Spinoza may have employed Hellenistic philosophy in support of their own claims about bodies and their natural tendencies, their reasons for doing so distinguish them from many of the authors just considered. Unconvinced by the need to buttress Christian theology with additional philosophical support, Hobbes and Spinoza instead turned their attentions to putting the Hellenistic accounts of bodies to work for the new, mechanical accounts of ethics and politics that had emerged in earnest during the early decades of the seventeenth century.

3. The Ancient Notion of Self-Preservation in the Theories of Thomas Hobbes

As an undergraduate at Oxford at the turn of the seventeenth century, Hobbes had been introduced to the fundamental principles of Aristotelian philosophy. The methods and conclusions of the scholastics, and in particular their physics and logic, however, seem to have carried little weight with the young student.¹ Passing from the life of a student schooled in the humanist curriculum and its tradition of retrieving and preserving the views of the canonical authors to that of a tutor and then a writer, Hobbes would rebel against the scholastic accounts of natural philosophy, ethics and politics which had come to dominate the intellectual landscape since the Middle Ages.²

Hobbes, Scholasticism and the 'New' Science

A large amount of scholastic philosophy's errors, Hobbes contended, stemmed from its practitioners' undiminished reverence for the authority of Aristotle. Their overriding commitment to shape contemporary philosophical investigation to fit the views expressed in the Aristotelian texts and commentaries had in essence rendered the study and writing of philosophy as little more than an exercise in 'Aristotelity'.³ In his major political work *Leviathan* and elsewhere Hobbes would make clear that

¹ Karl Schuhmann, *Hobbes: une chronique* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1998) (p. 23). For an account of the humanist education and Hobbes's 'early humanist career' see Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) (pp. 22-23, 230-31) and Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London: Duckworth, 1986).

² Broad surveys of Hobbes's philosophical program can be found in each of the following: Noel Malcolm, 'Hobbes and Spinoza', in Burns (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450-1700*, 530-57; James, *Passion and Action*; Tom Sorell, *Hobbes* (The Arguments of the Philosophers; London: Routledge, 1986); Cees Leijenhorst, *The Mechanisation of Aristotelianism: The Late Aristotelian Setting of Thomas Hobbes' Natural Philosophy* (Medieval and Early Modern Science 3; Leiden: Brill, 2002).

³ Hobbes, *Lev.* (46, p. 462).

the time for relying on the ‘absurd’ natural philosophy, the ‘repugnant’ politics and the ‘ignorant’ ethics of Aristotle had now passed.⁴ Particularly concerning for Hobbes were the claims about the nature of physical bodies taught by scholastic natural philosophy and the trouble these had caused when they were extended into other areas of philosophy. Instead of deriving the value of *philosophia prima* from the authority of a particular figure or pre-established set of views, Hobbes suggested one might find it in the clarity with which a philosopher defined things such as motion, action, passion and the other elements necessary for explaining the ‘nature and generation of bodies’.⁵ To this one might also add the preservation of bodies, given the frequency with which Hobbes’s writings seek to elaborate upon the inherent powers he believes are responsible for maintaining bodies and their motions. In any case, the clarity Hobbes desired was not to be found in the Aristotelian accounts of bodies and motion, where centuries of imported metaphysical terminology had vitiated their attempt to explain these most basic, yet important, premises of nature.⁶

Hobbes’s prescription for emending the study and writing of philosophy was to embark on a lifelong process of overhauling the scholastic positions which he felt were outmoded in their explanations. He looked to achieve this by supplying his own accounts about the nature of physical, political and ethical bodies and their relationship to each other. Although Aristotle’s contention that ‘everything that is in motion must be moved by something’⁷ continued to set the tone for how seventeenth-century natural philosophers described the origins of bodily motion, many of Hobbes’s contemporaries had begun to question what the character of that ‘something’ was. The predominant explanation remained the Aristotelian one, wherein motion was conceived of not as an efficient and continual process, but rather as a change of state that occurred as a body strove towards a specific end. This

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid. (p. 463).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Aristotle, *Physics* (7.1, 241b34, p. 407).

conception had led Aristotle and his later followers to claim (confusingly, for Hobbes, Descartes and others)⁸ that motion was the ‘fulfilment of what exists potentially, insofar as it exists potentially.’⁹ This portrayal of a body as transitioning ‘from something *to* something’, meant that the ‘to’ remained the irreducible cause of any motion’s initiation. Consequently, scholastic natural philosophy continued to carry with it ‘pervasive connotations of completion, wholeness, and satisfaction.’¹⁰

By the early 1630s there were alternative accounts of bodies that Hobbes could have used to help attack the scholastic views on bodies and motion. For many modern scholars the basis of Hobbes’s philosophical system can be traced back to his engagement with the contemporary scientific tradition initiated by the experimental science of Galileo and then continued by others around Europe. In the natural philosophies of Galileo, Descartes and Gassendi the notion of teleology to explain bodily motion had been rejected in favour of a mechanical worldview. This presented a universe in which bodies acted upon bodies and were said to possess internal active powers capable of preserving and maintaining their motions, even in the face of external resistance. At Pisa Galileo had famously demonstrated this tendency as part of his investigations into the uniform motions of falling bodies. In his 1632 work *Dialogues Concerning the Two New Sciences* he had noted that:

[...] Body is by nature continuously accelerated so that it meets with more and more resistance in the medium. Hence a diminution in its rate of gain of speed until finally the speed reaches such a point and the resistance of the medium becomes so great that, balancing each other, they prevent any further acceleration. [This] reduces the motion of the

⁸ René Descartes, *The World [1664]* in John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (eds.), *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, III vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), Vol. III (AT XI, 39, pp. 93-94).

⁹ Aristotle, *Physics* (3.1, 201a28, p. 343).

¹⁰ Thomas A. Spragens, Jr., *The Politics of Motion: The World of Thomas Hobbes* (London: Croom Helm, 1973) (p. 57).

body to one which is uniform and which will thereafter maintain a constant value.¹¹

Such motive characteristics, which over time coalesced into the principle of inertia,¹² stood in direct contrast to the scholastic view that all bodies contained a natural *terminus ad quem* and strove towards a state of rest. They also noticeably contradicted the long-held view that motion existed as a state of continuous decay or that motion was itself simply a sequence of observable changes that a body underwent. In the new Galilean account, notions such as continuity, equilibrium and resistance became the preferred means of detailing the tendencies of all physical bodies and of recasting the nature of their motions.

By 1634, Hobbes had become aware of Galileo's views on the motions of material bodies and the controversies they had created in Italy. In a letter to Newcastle, he stated his intention to purchase a copy of the controversial *Dialogues* the next time he travelled to London so that he could read for himself the positions which were challenging the Church's long patronage of Aristotelian cosmology.¹³ Being up-to-date on these works was also necessary given that Hobbes was busy preparing for an upcoming tour of the Continent with the young William, future third earl of Devonshire. From 1634 to 1636, Hobbes was able to meet with various scientific luminaries in Italy and France as part of William's trip, and while in

¹¹ Galileo Galilei, *Dialogues Concerning Two New Sciences [1632]*, ed. Antonio Favaro, trans. Henry Crew and Alfonso Salvio (New York: Macmillan, 1914) (119).

¹² The history of this principle is complex, with Galileo, Gassendi, Descartes and the Dutch natural philosopher Isaac Beeckman all having some claim to its development. As Sarasohn contends, it was Gassendi who was 'the first thinker to publish the correct formulation of the principle of inertia' in his 1642 work *De motu impresso*. Beeckman (in his *Journal*) and Descartes (in *The World*) had both earlier formulated the principle of constantly moving bodies but, for their own reasons, had not published their views. Sarasohn, 'Motion and Morality', (p. 363). For a fuller account of this rich debate see both Julian B. Barbour, *The Discovery of Dynamics: A Study from a Machian Point of View of the Discovery and the Structure of Dynamical Theories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) (pp. 432-35) and E.A. Burt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1954) (p. 129).

¹³ Hobbes to William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle, 26 Jan. [5 Feb.] 1634 in Thomas Hobbes, *The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. Noel Malcolm, II vols. (Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) (I.10, p. 19).

Florence he had the opportunity of paying a visit to Galileo.¹⁴ On the return trip from Italy, Hobbes would have had further opportunity to learn about the developing mechanical natural philosophy when he stopped over in Paris. During his time there he made the acquaintance of Marin Mersenne, who not only counted among his close friends Descartes and Gassendi but who had himself recently published a work entitled *Les mechaniques de Galilée*, in which the basic mechanical principles of Galileo's thought had been made available to a wider French readership.¹⁵ Galileo's contributions to the development of a new account of natural philosophy and Mersenne's promotion of them were not lost on Hobbes. Years later Hobbes would break with his normal habit of remaining silent about the philosophical advances made by others when he credited Galileo with having 'first opened to us the gate of natural philosophy universal, which is the knowledge of nature by *motion*', and by citing Mersenne, Gassendi and Kepler for having advanced the field even further.¹⁶

This endorsement of the Galilean method has led many of Hobbes's modern readers to consider the ways in which Galileo's views on bodies and their tendencies could have influenced Hobbes's own later accounts. In the now classic work by Frithiof Brandt, the edifice of Hobbes's entire philosophy is said to be 'built up on the foundation of one single, quite simple idea, the idea of motion' and it is through Galileo's work that he was first introduced to this 'old-established fact.'¹⁷ Following

¹⁴ As Aubrey recounts the meeting in his biography of Hobbes, 'When [Hobbes] was at Florence, he contracted a friendship with the famous Galileo, whom he extremely venerated and magnified; and not only as he was prodigious wit, but for his sweetness of nature and manners. They pretty well resembled one another as to their countenances, as by their pictures [it] appear[s]; were both cheerful and melancholic-sanguine; and both had a [similarity] of fate, to be hated and persecuted by the ecclesiastics.' John Aubrey, *Brief Lives [1669-96]*, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick (Boston: David R. Godine, 1999) (p. 157).

¹⁵ Marin Mersenne, *Les mechaniques de Galilée [1634]*, ed. Bernard Rochot (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966).

¹⁶ Thomas Hobbes, *Concerning Body [1656]* in Sir William Molesworth (ed.), *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, XI vols. (I; London: John Bonn, 1839-45) (Ep. Ded., viii-ix).

¹⁷ Frithiof Brandt, *Thomas Hobbes' Mechanical Conception of Nature* (Copenhagen: Levin and Munksgaard, 1928) (pp. 379, 318-19). 'Hobbes posits Galileo's laws of motion quite abstractly [...] and on no point does he show any interest in verification. His exposition corresponds closely to the point of view from which he treats the doctrine of motion, the propriety of which Galileo admits, but does not act upon himself, viz. the point of view arbitrarily imagining several kinds of motion and considering the relations and consequences connected therewith.' Another who has supported the

on from Brandt's argument, others such as Thomas Spragens, Jr. have come to see the usage of Galilean motion in Hobbes's thought as an 'analogical permeation' rather than a direct borrowing. Noting how the idea of continuous motion helps Hobbes to explain the nature of each type of body his philosophy covers, Spragens has argued that the apparent unity between these investigations does not come from the derivation of an idea or a common materialism between each element. Instead, the break with the scholastic philosophers appears mainly as a result of Hobbes having used the Galilean-inspired notion of continuity to make an analogous break with Aristotle's social cosmology and that this division was then extended into other areas such as psychology and politics.¹⁸ Galilean motion, according to Douglas Jesseph, may then provide the primary context for understanding how Hobbes's own mechanistic conception of the world arose. In particular, it is from Galileo that Hobbes was supplied with the cosmological view that motion is the one great universal causal principle capable of uniting each type of body.¹⁹ From these initial readings Hobbes developed what became his *sine qua non* for understanding the natural world: the universe operates as a mechanical system and everything which occurs in that system, from the motions of the smallest and simplest of bodies, to the internal processes of deliberation, to the actions of political society, is reducible to 'mathematically-specifiable' laws of motion. The world we experience is therefore a by-product of the motions of material bodies.²⁰ In the wake of Galileo's experiments and then-revolutionary claims about how these bodies acted independently and when in contact with other bodies, the door had been opened wide for Hobbes to absorb the implications of these views, while seeking new ways to 'extend and amplify the central theses in Galileo's natural philosophy.'²¹

Hobbes's philosophy as a restatement of motive principles is Richard Peters, who characterises Hobbes as 'a man almost bemused by the wonder of motion,' and the 'great metaphysician of motion.' See Richard Peters, *Hobbes* (London: Penguin Books, 1956) (p. 94).

¹⁸ Spragens, *The Politics of Motion* (p. 7).

¹⁹ Douglas M. Jesseph, 'Galileo, Hobbes, and the Natural Book', *Perspectives on Science*, 12/2 (2004), 191-211 (p. 192).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

Galileo may then be responsible for having supplied one of the most fundamental claims in all of Hobbes's thought: that all bodies strive to protect and preserve the continuity of their motions from external threats. This effectively cast the psychological model that Hobbes would employ in his own account of human bodies as inertial in character, with the urge for self-preservation, and self-interest, coming to express the universal tendency of all bodies to remain in a state of motion.²² In applying the characteristics of physical motion to the 'subtleties and complexity of mental motions,'²³ Hobbes might then be in a position to demonstrate the role continuous motion had to play beyond what had been expressed initially in Galilean natural philosophy. This would entail developing an account of animal motions that stressed the common psycho-physiological attributes of motion while also highlighting the ways in which motion and sensation closely interacted. Applying the concepts of drives and endeavours from mechanical natural philosophy to psychology would further give Hobbes the ability to produce a 'scientific' account of how an individual's actions and passions originated. As Jeffrey Barnouw has cautioned, however, while the physical aspects of endeavors may have already been available in the work of Galileo, this did not mean that Hobbes could simply cross-apply the term to his own psychological investigations. Instead, the application of a term like *conatus* to the internal motions of the mind and body would also need to be mapped onto the various appetites and aversions which served as conscious motive forces behind each individual's voluntary actions.²⁴ With this 'metaphorical mechanisation' in place, Hobbes could then claim to have made a distinctive contribution to the field of seventeenth-century psychology and the establishment of a new psycho-physical vocabulary.²⁵

²² Spragens, *The Politics of Motion* (p. 69); Paul Hurley, 'The Many Appetites of Thomas Hobbes', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 7/4 (1990), 391-407 (p. 398).

²³ A.P. Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) (p. 91).

²⁴ Jeffrey Barnouw, 'Hobbes's Psychology of Thought: Endeavours, Purpose and Curiosity', *History of European Ideas*, 10/5 (1989), 519-45 (p. 521).

²⁵ *Ibid.* (p. 519).

While some have taken Spragens's claims about the central role of continuous motions seriously, the possibility that Hobbes took these views directly from Galileo's texts has proved less convincing. In Michel Verdon's interpretation, for example, one can still find the 'pervasive analogy of motion' guiding Hobbes's account of human and political bodies, which seemingly reaffirms that Hobbes did in fact have 'a clear understanding of the issues in physics before he elaborated his moral and political philosophy.'²⁶ Yet in Verdon's view, it was through Hobbes's readings of his rival Descartes rather than Galileo himself that the idea of continuous or inertial motion began to first manifest itself. This filtered engagement with the idea of continuous motion, however, did not prevent Hobbes from 'employing a classical physical theory' that in turn made possible the foundations for developing a motive or mechanic account of psychology. As such, Verdon chooses to broaden the background of Hobbes's usage of mechanical motion by painting it in more Continental hues: 'The most appropriate model to use in the effort to find a systematic unity between Hobbes' physics and political philosophy is an atomist version of the Cartesian cosmology.'²⁷ Such a model, Verdon continues, is based upon the 'radically new conceptions of the individual, society, and the state,' which had begun to emerge by the 1630s. Although the roots of many of these ideas had appeared over the course of many centuries, it is in the works of Thomas Hobbes that they can be found appearing together. Reiterating then the cohesion of views presented as part of the New Science, Verdon concludes that it was Hobbes who began to 'apply to the study of society the revolutionary approach which Galileo, Descartes, and Hobbes himself had achieved in the study of physical phenomena. The coincidence between the "New Science" and Hobbes's political philosophy [therefore] cannot be fortuitous because both are linked in time and in the arrangement of their parts.'²⁸

²⁶ Michel Verdon, 'On the Laws of Physical and Human Nature: Hobbes' Physical and Social Cosmologies', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 43/4 (Oct.-Dec. 1982), 653-63 (p. 656).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

However, while Hobbes would cite the contributions of his Florentine contemporary Galileo with approval, the antagonistic relationship he shared with Descartes prevented such plaudits from being extended to this other key purveyor of the New Science.²⁹ Leaving their personal antagonisms to one side for now, there is little doubt that Descartes had also been shifting the study of motive bodies away from the standard teleology-based accounts. Since the early 1630s, his writings on natural philosophy had sought to highlight the continuity of motion as an intrinsic property of material bodies. As he wrote in *The World*:

I believe countless different motions go on perpetually in the world [...] and [that] there is nothing anywhere which is not changing. From this I know clearly that a flame is not the only thing in which there are a number of minute parts in ceaseless motion, but that every other body has such parts, even though their actions are not so violent and they are so minute that they cannot be perceived by any of our senses [...] by my reasoning their motions cannot possibly ever cease, or even change in any way except in respect of their subject.³⁰

Referring to the minute and imperceptible nature of certain motions and recognising that motive changes were relative to each particular body, Descartes presented his account of bodies as an answer to the ‘very strange nature’ of scholastic motion. According to him, while it appeared that all things ‘have their perfection as an end

²⁹ ‘Mr. Hobbes was wont to say that had Descartes kept himself wholly to Geometry that he had been the best Geometer in the world but that his head did not lie for philosophy. He did very much admire him, but said that he could not pardon him for writing in defence of transubstantiation, which he knew to be absolutely against his judgement, and done merely to pay a compliment to the Jesuits.’ Aubrey, *BL* (pp. 94-95). Indeed, Descartes was equally dismissive of Hobbes’s attempts at writing on natural philosophy. As he wrote to an unknown Jesuit around 1643, ‘I find him [Hobbes] to be much more astute in moral philosophy than in metaphysics or physics.’ Elsewhere, Descartes takes Hobbes to task when Hobbes suggests that Descartes is in agreement with some of his views: ‘When he [Hobbes] says that I approve of that part of his writings to which I do not object, and on which I say nothing, he is wrong again. The true explanation, rather, is that I do not take part of his writings seriously enough to think that I was obliged to spend my time refuting it.’ René Descartes, *Letters [1619-46]* in Cottingham, Stoothoff, and Murdoch (eds.), *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol. III (pp. 119, 230-31). This relationship is detailed further in G.A.J. Rogers, ‘Hobbes and his Contemporaries’, in Patricia Springborg (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 413-40 (pp. 419-22).

³⁰ Descartes, *The World* (AT XI, 10-11, pp. 84-85). This work had been completed by this time but was to remain unpublished for another thirty years.

and strive only to preserve themselves,' the scholastics continued to portray moving bodies as 'having no other end and no other goal than rest and, contrary to all the laws of nature, striving on [their] own accord to destroy [themselves].'³¹ This view was untenable for Descartes because, as he saw it, the constant strivings of a body to remain in motion served as indicators of the broader laws of nature that guided the dispositions and qualities present in all matter.³² However, it was one thing to draft an answer to scholastic motion and something altogether different to make it available to those in positions of academic or ecclesiastical power. Descartes, now in possession of a strong alternative to the scholastic account of bodies and their tendencies, remained understandably reluctant to expose himself to the same abuse Galileo had received after considering natural motion in his *Dialogue*.³³ As a result, Descartes chose to withhold the publication of the views expressed in *The World* until 1644, when he would present many of them as 'laws of nature' in his celebrated work *Principles of Philosophy*.

Hobbes's usage of the 'conatus-principle' served to reaffirm the law of persistence which Descartes and Galileo had both commented upon. However, as Juhani Pietarinen has argued recently, Hobbes importantly disagreed with Descartes's separation of motions and tendencies. Descartes believed that such a distinction was warranted after having observed unfermented wine moving through a wine-vat. 'It is necessary to distinguish between the movement and the action or tendency to move,' he wrote, 'for we may very easily conceive that the parts of wine at one place should tend towards one hole and at the same time towards the other, even though they cannot actually move towards both holes at the same time [...].'³⁴

³¹ Ibid. (AT XI, 40, p. 94).

³² Ibid.

³³ René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and Seeking the Truth in Sciences [1637]* in Cottingham, Stoothoff, and Murdoch (eds.), *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol. I (AT VI, 60, pp. 141-42).

³⁴ Juhani Pietarinen, 'Conatus as Active Power in Hobbes', *Hobbes Studies*, 14 (2001), 71-82 (p. 73). Pietarinen only cites Descartes's position as having appeared in the *Discourse on Method* when in fact it actually appears in the attached essays given over to demonstrating Descartes's method in practice. This particular observation appears in the first of these essays, which specifically deals with optics

In Hobbes's early account of optics, however, the Cartesian distinction was cast out and the definition of a body's tendencies as its motions asserted.³⁵ As Hobbes would go on to show in his more developed applications of continuous motions, and in particular those which operated within the realm of human psychology, the motions of the mind were inextricably tied to the human body's tendency to pursue those things which aided its existence. The presence of such a division in the work of Descartes therefore suggests that in addition to battling with the scholastic accounts, there also remained important non-scholastic views with which Hobbes would have to engage as he attempted to detail each type of body and what he took to be their natural tendencies. Agostino Lupoli has also argued that this disagreement with Descartes represents the key to understanding the origins of Hobbes's natural philosophy. Like Pietarinen, he has portrayed these at-a-distance clashes between Mersenne's friends as the basis for explaining the difficulties each author faced in their attempts to sort out the relationship between matter and motion and confront the scholastic interpretations.³⁶

The circle of Mersenne could have also provided another contemporary source for Hobbes's understanding and application of continuous motion throughout his philosophy. Although Hobbes would join with Descartes in denying that a vacuum existed,³⁷ thus placing him at odds with a central tenet of Gassendi's Epicurean project, Lisa Sarasohn has argued that Hobbes and Gassendi both came to

and light. In it, the wine is intended to serve as an analogy for how Descartes believes that luminous bodies act. See 'Optics' in Descartes, *DM* (AT VI, 88, p. 155).

³⁵ Thomas Hobbes, 'Treatise on Optics, Harl. 6796 [c.1640]', in Ferdinand Tönnies (ed.), *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic* (2nd edn.; London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1969), 211-26 (pp. 214-15). For an account of this work's precise date see in particular Richard Tuck, 'Hobbes and Descartes', in G.A.J. Rogers and Alan Ryan (eds.), *Perspectives on Thomas Hobbes* (Mind Association Occasional Series; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 11-41.

³⁶ Agostino Lupoli, 'Power (Conatus-Endeavour) in the 'Kinetic Actualism' and in the 'Inertial' Psychology of Thomas Hobbes', *Hobbes Studies*, 14 (2001), 83-103.

³⁷ Descartes had denied the possibility of a vacuum or void in nature in many of his texts. See for example, René Descartes, *Rules for the Direction of the Mind [c. 1628]* in Cottingham, Stoothoff, and Murdoch (eds.), *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol. I (AT X, 424-25, p. 48), 'Optics' in Descartes, *DM* (6, 86, p. 154), and René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy [1644]* in Cottingham, Stoothoff, and Murdoch (eds.), *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol. I (AT VIII, 49, p. 229).

use inertial motion as a 'root-paradigm' for analogically describing the basis of psychological behaviour and political activity.³⁸ As we saw in the preceding chapter, Gassendi had already been hard at work on clarifying the nature of motion during the 1630s as part of his ever-growing project to resuscitate Epicurean philosophy. Unlike Descartes's views in *The World*, Gassendi's atomic model and applications of motion to the areas of politics and psychology had started to become available by 1637, shortly after Hobbes had left Paris with William, but before his return in 1640 as a self-exile. On becoming an active member of Mersenne's intellectual circle, Hobbes and Gassendi formed a friendship that would endure over the years. Although they would correspond regularly through letters, it was through the figure of Mersenne that they would be able to read the other's work. These textual and contextual associations have thus led Sarasohn, Paganini and others to suggest that it was because of the strength of Hobbes's and Gassendi's personal relationship, as well as their mutual disdain for scholasticism and their common materialistic approach to natural philosophy, that Gassendi came to represent the major contemporary influence on Hobbes's writings.³⁹ Over time, Hobbes would also come to develop a psychology that portrayed human behaviour as determined by the motion of external objects acting on the senses. With human behaviours reducible to bodies acting upon other bodies, atomistic natural philosophy has been argued by many to represent an attractive source from which both Hobbes and Gassendi might have taken the underlying principles for their own mechanical accounts of human psychology.

It is understandable why these advocates of the New Science have been portrayed as having supplied Hobbes with certain foundational claims about bodies and motions that he could both adopt and expand on in his own writings. With modern scholars remaining divided over which of these authors influenced Hobbes's

³⁸ Sarasohn, 'Motion and Morality', (p. 363).

³⁹ See Gianni Paganini, 'Hobbes, Gassendi and the Tradition of Political Epicureanism', *Hobbes Studies*, 14 (2001), 3-24 and Tom Sorell, 'Seventeenth-Century Materialism: Gassendi and Hobbes', in G.H.R. Parkinson and Stuart Shanker (eds.), *The Renaissance and 17th Century Rationalism* (Routledge History of Philosophy, IV; London: Routledge, 1993), 219-52.

writings the most, what remains a shared view among them is that Hobbes relied on a contemporary-sourced account of continuous motion to unite each of the respective parts of his own philosophy. Support for the cross-textual transmission of continuous motion is usually produced by way of mentioning the proposed structuring of the *Elements of Philosophy*, the tripartite project which Hobbes hoped to assert a specific set of claims about the nature of physical bodies and then carry these claims into his accounts of human and political bodies. This is certainly an intriguing interpretation; not least because it argues that Hobbes's account of bodily tendencies was intended to provide the reader with a common thread with which they could weave together other claims in his philosophy. That the motions of natural bodies had a role to play in clarifying the basis of human activity, moreover, seems to be a point Hobbes had advocated with his inclusion of 'motive powers' into the two principal parts of man – mind and body – in his 1640 manuscript *Elements of Law*.⁴⁰ Owing to the rapid decline of Charles I's political power throughout the 1640s, however, Hobbes's philosophical system was unable to develop in the way he originally intended. After fleeing to France in fear of his life (as Aubrey famously recounts the story),⁴¹ Hobbes abandoned his designs of a general-to-specific approach to the study of bodies and their motions and gave himself over to defending the power and legitimacy of the sovereign in *De cive* and *Leviathan*. As a result of these tumultuous years in exile, Hobbes published (and subsequently began to defend) his accounts of the body politic more than a decade before he was able to return to complete the more 'difficult' elements of natural and human bodies – areas in which many of the claims appearing in Hobbes's political philosophy originate.⁴²

⁴⁰ Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic [1640]*, ed. Ferdinand Tönnies (2nd edn.; London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1969) (1.1.5-7, p. 2).

⁴¹ Aubrey, *BL* (p. 151).

⁴² See Thomas Hobbes, *On the Citizen [1642]*, eds. Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) (Pref., p. 13). As Hobbes emphasised in the epistle dedicatory to *De homine* – the second part of *Elements* but the last part published – 'man could not just be considered a *natural body*, but also a part of the *body politic*; for that reason he had to be considered as both man and citizen, that is, that the first principles of physics had to be conjoined with those of politics, the most difficult with the

There appear to be both positive and negative consequences for our reading of Hobbes's philosophy if we adopt the view that contemporary scientific thought, as well as Hobbes's own approach to writing philosophy, supplied a conception of motion that was intended to unite his entire philosophical system. The positive consequence seems to be that, given the frequency with which Hobbes invokes motions and tendencies throughout his writings, the particular motif of self-preservation represents the universal trait Hobbes sees operating within each type of body. By tracing the tendency of self-preservation as it appears in each element, we might then be in a better position to determine whether the natural, moral and political philosophies actually align in their discussion of natural tendencies, and what, if any, modifications Hobbes may have had to make to secure such a unity. This is not to suggest, however, that the views of self-preservation expressed in the natural philosophy are themselves simply more generalised versions of the claims expressed in Hobbes's moral and political philosophy. In what I will call the 'unity thesis' this tendency does seem to hold a particular sway, and indeed one can find each scholar who subscribes to it attempting to read each particular part of Hobbes's philosophy in a way that makes its specific views about bodily inclinations and motions dependent on the section which had preceded it. As Tom Sorell has pointed out, this interpretative method forces us to accept Hobbes's system of thought as a type of 'continuous deduction' whereby the lastly demonstrated 'principles of morals and politics are supposed to be deduced from the truths of physics, the truths of physics from those of mechanics, and the truths of mechanics from those of geometry.'⁴³ For his own part, however, Hobbes never prescribes or endorses any such reading of his work. Instead of reading the ethics and politics as having come from the account of bodies given in the physics, he only suggests that they should be

easiest.' See Thomas Hobbes, *Man and Citizen: De cive [1642] and De homine [1658]*, trans. Charles T. Wood, T.S.K. Scott-Craig, and Bernard Gert (New York: Humanities Press, 1978) (p. 35).

⁴³ Sorell, *Hobbes* (p. 5). Hobbes's interest in geometry is famously said by Aubrey to have come as a result of his having attended a party at which he found a copy of Euclid's *Elements* laying open to Proposition 47, which demonstrated the principles of Pythagoras's Theorem. From that proposition Hobbes began to trace back through the preceding propositions, proofs and corollaries until he arrived at Euclid's initial demonstration of the side ratios of a triangle. See Aubrey, *BL* (p. 331).

considered after that account.⁴⁴ Sorell thus provides a sound reminder for examining how a notion like self-preservation exists within the confines of Hobbes's entire philosophy, and a method for sifting through the particular ways in which Hobbes shapes the claim to fit the contours of the particular area of philosophy he is treating.

The other more obvious consequence of the unity thesis, which rests on Hobbes's relation to the contemporary New Science, is that it forces the reader to disregard the possibility that other, earlier sources could have aided Hobbes in his quest to confront the legacy of Aristotle. As we have seen in the previous chapter, by the 1630s the revival of Hellenistic philosophy as a possible counter to scholastic thought was well under way. In large part because of the efforts of Lipsius, Gassendi, Grotius and others around Europe, the views of the Stoics and Epicureans had become more accessible, more discussed and increasingly more attractive for those dissatisfied with the prevailing accounts of natural, moral and political philosophy. Although an author might choose to apply principles drawn from either of these ancient schools in their own work, this does not mean that they were altogether unconcerned about what their peers were thinking. As Stephen Gaukroger has noted, there were in fact many ways in which an author might 'conceive of, put to use, and reassess' antiquity in their own writings.⁴⁵ Even for those uninterested in launching their own full-blown revival or defence of a particular school's views (and indeed most seventeenth-century writers clearly were not interested in doing so), antiquity had a useful supplementary role to play. It might, for example, help to formulate or lend support to a specific idea or argument, or provide an alternative viewpoint with which to defend or attack more recent claims. Moreover, recovering the major arguments and terms used by the Hellenistic philosophers had become a considerably

⁴⁴ Hobbes, *DCo*. 'After *physics* we must come to *moral philosophy*; in which we are to consider the motions of the mind, namely, *appetite, aversion, love, benevolence, hope, fear, anger, emulation, envy, etc.* [...] And the reason why these are to be considered after *physics* is, that they have their causes in sensation and imagination, which are the subject of *physical* contemplation.' (1.6.6, p. 72-73); Sorell, *Hobbes* (pp. 5-6).

⁴⁵ Stephen Gaukroger, 'The Idea of Antiquity', in Stephen Gaukroger (ed.), *The Uses of Antiquity: The Scientific Revolution and the Classical Tradition* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), ix-xvi (ix).

easier task by Hobbes's time. Thanks in large part to the recent flood of updated editions and translations of central expositors such as Lucretius, Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus and the biographer Diogenes Laertius, the views of the Epicureans and Stoics were now more accessible than they ever had been.

In the case of Hobbes, the widespread availability of these texts may help to explain why it is that certain key terms and arguments of the Hellenistic philosophers appear throughout his writings. As we have seen, one of the reasons Hobbes has been identified so closely with the New Science is that, like Galileo and Descartes, he uses the term '*conatus*' to describe the beginnings of the internal motions or 'endeavorings' he believed were responsible for preserving the body. However, while Hobbes may have joined with his contemporaries in working out the implications of conative motion as part of his own natural philosophy, he also believes *conatus* or endeavorings can help to explain the voluntary motions and passions of animals. Applied to the case of humans, *conatus* is said to originate in the mind's imagination and serves as the imperceptible motion responsible for initiating later observable motions such as walking, speaking and striking.⁴⁶ With *conatus* responsible for instigating the motive sequence, Hobbes relies on other terms to detail how this internal motion actually preserves the body. When bodies move towards something they are said to act from appetite or desire, and when they move away from something they are said to demonstrate aversion. As Hobbes points out, it was the earlier Graeco-Roman accounts of human psychology, with their collective emphases on appetites and aversions, which had supplied the vocabulary for speaking about the basic forces operating in human nature. Through the usage of terms such as *appetitus* and *aversio* and the earlier *hormê* and *aphormê*, the Hellenistic philosophers had been able to convey to their readers something of a 'natural truth' about the source of human actions and passions.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Hobbes, *Lev.* (6, p. 38).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Pointing out that his own usage of appetite and aversion conforms to these earlier usages, Hobbes's moral psychology proceeds to reiterate some of the most central claims captured by both the Stoic and Epicurean usages of these terms. On the one hand, Hobbes may be seen to advance a strongly Stoic position when he constructs his account of psychology around the claim that the desire for self-preservation explains why it is that certain actions and passions arise. Portraying self-preservation as the primary aim of appetitive or aversive motions, and arguing that such self-sustaining appetites and aversions originate at birth, Hobbes relies on the same ethical cadre developed by the early Stoic archons and continued in the writings of Cicero, Seneca and the other Roman Stoics. On the other hand, while these views may signal that a common approach exists within Stoic and Hobbesian moral psychology, Hobbes also can be seen to depart from the path adhered to by the Stoic philosophers. This deviation mainly comes through Hobbes's usage of pleasure and pain to characterise the sensations the mind experiences as it either enables or hinders the body's vital motions. Instead of relegating pleasure and pain to a list of emotions which are to be rationally overcome, Hobbes breaks with the Stoics by suggesting that all appetites and aversions are accompanied by the sensation of pleasure and displeasure and that together these help clarify how other passions and our voluntary actions arise.⁴⁸ This renders pleasure and pain as unavoidable considerations when exploring the complex nature of the passions, and infuses Hobbes's thought with a line of investigation that had been explored by Aristotle and developed fully by the Epicureans.

As Hobbes traces out the implications of the desire for self-preservation, other areas in which Hellenistic views appear to have appropriated emerge. This can be seen to occur, for example, when Hobbes characterises self-preservation as a right of nature or when he suggests that it is because individuals fear violent death that they group themselves into political associations. While the Stoics had argued that seeking one's preservation was acting in accordance with Nature's dictates and hence

⁴⁸ Ibid. (6, p. 40).

virtuous and right,⁴⁹ the Epicureans had used the fear of death to explain how political covenants originated.⁵⁰ By agreeing that the fear of death plays a decisive role in motivating individuals to leave the natural state for the political one, Hobbes sides with the Epicureans at the expense of Aristotle and the Stoics who had placed the origins of society in a specific impulse towards sociability. Taken together then, the psychological and political applications of the body's desire for self-preservation would appear to indicate that Hobbes not only applied the views of the Hellenistic philosophers where his own arguments demanded, but also that he believed he could appropriate the views of the rival schools in ways which made them compatible.

It is a difficult business to uncover the possible influences on an author simply by poring over their bookcase, especially when that author tends to downplay the contributions of others in his own works.⁵¹ Understandably, Hobbes would have wanted to trumpet his own contributions to the study of philosophy, and according to J.J. Hamilton he often did this by 'giving the impression that he read very little.' As a result his philosophy and its doctrines, considered by him to be the only true ones, were to be seen as the product of 'first principles and observations' stemming from his own 'creative genius'.⁵² This *modus operandi* is largely corroborated by Aubrey, who reported for example that Hobbes had said 'that if he had read as much as other men, he should have known no more than other men.'⁵³ Hobbes did not, however, mean to convey the point that reading others' views was itself an unprofitable venture. On the contrary, as he would counsel in the later *Decameron physiologicum*, 'If in your own meditation you light upon a difficulty, I think it is no loss of time, to enquire what other men say of it, but to rely only upon reason.'⁵⁴ This seems to be nothing more than a further reproach to the tendency of some philosophers to revere

⁴⁹ Laertius, *Lives* (7.88).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* (10.150).

⁵¹ J.J. Hamilton, 'Hobbes's Study and the Hardwick Library', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 16/4 (1978), 445-53.

⁵² *Ibid.* (p. 445).

⁵³ Aubrey, *BL* (p. 349).

⁵⁴ Thomas Hobbes, *Decameron physiologicum: Or, Ten Dialogues of Natural Philosophy [1678]* in Molesworth (ed.), *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, Vol. VII (p. 72).

personages rather than to engage critically with their work. At some risk to Hobbes's self-professed originality then, the books with which Hobbes surrounded himself at Hardwick Hall may well have something important to say about the authors and views he felt it important to be aware of, or those to which he may have turned when he himself began having trouble forming a particular argument.

Using these titles as a starting point, one finds that the potential certainly existed for a close engagement with the views of the ancient Stoa and its many expositors. This could have come in the form of the *Opera omnia* of authors such as Cicero, Seneca and Lipsius, or the edition of Epictetus's *Morals* that rested on the shelves. It could have also come through a more contemporary filter such as Grotius's recently published *De iure belli ac pacis*, wherein we have already seen how Stoic *oikeiōsis* was recently appropriated and reintroduced into contemporary political discourse.⁵⁵ Hamilton's catalogue does not indicate which edition of this work the Cavendish library contained, but it is important to recall that for Richard Tuck it was through a reading of the 1625 edition that Hobbes encountered Grotius's usage of self-preservation and this provided a sceptic-proof account of natural rights.⁵⁶ Having read the Grotian account, Hobbes's own work demonstrates that the notion of self-preservation was part of a confrontation with, rather than an endorsement of, a specific strand of Hellenistic thought.

The suggestion that a contemporary author had been responsible for introducing the rudiments of Stoic philosophy into his own arguments had also been a charge Hobbes had heard, and responded to, during his own lifetime. For Hobbes's famous antagonist Bishop John Bramhall the connection between Hobbes and the

⁵⁵ According to Istvan Hont, by 'making self-preservation the single ultimate value governing all human affairs,' Hobbes 'imbibed the positive core of the reason of state doctrine with even more determination than Grotius. Hobbes refused, however to extend the protected domain of self-defence to the pursuit of external economic aggrandisement. Instead of expansion and aggression, he emphasised the primacy of fear, the anticipation of harm, and preparations for impending necessity.' See Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2005) (pp. 17-22).

⁵⁶ Tuck, *Rights of War and Peace* (pp. 96-97).

Stoics had appeared clear and in his estimation Hobbes's knowledge and usage of Stoic philosophy was undeniable, especially in the area of human psychology. However, for Bramhall the intermediary source that Hobbes had relied upon was not the political writings of Grotius. In what would become a protracted debate on the status of the will, Bramhall claimed that Hobbes's views instead bore the distinctive mark of Stoic fatalism as it had been described in Lipsius's *De constantia*.⁵⁷ In his defence, and perhaps to promote what he felt was his own originality on the matter, Hobbes flatly denied that he was familiar with the attempt to merge 'Christian and Stoical' necessity. He also went so far as to claim ignorance of the author responsible for suggesting such a unison, a surprising claim given that Cavendish's library contained Lipsius's complete works and Hobbes had discussed him previously both in his correspondence and in his translation of Thucydides's *Peloponnesian War*.⁵⁸ Elsewhere, and long before the controversy with Bramhall erupted, Hobbes had suggested that it was impossible to know exactly what principles and what methods had been used by Zeno when he explained the Stoic account of fate to his pupils.⁵⁹ Whether Hobbes was simply noting the difficulty in recovering the views of the early Stoic archons (a common lament even today) or signalling his own ignorance of how this view originated is difficult to determine. What is apparent, however, is Hobbes's

⁵⁷ Ancient and Neo-Stoicism are employed throughout Bramhall's 'Discourse of Liberty and Necessity' to illuminate what he sees as the inspiration for Hobbes's own positions. Typical of the rapprochements Bramhall uses are the critiques of a 'titular liberty' and an 'empty shadow of contingency' in the face of a God who has determined the state of all things. See Thomas Hobbes, *Hobbes and Bramhall on Liberty and Necessity [1654-58]*, ed. V.C. Chappell (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) (pp. 6-7).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* (p. 29); In a letter from 1658, Henry Stubbe cites an obscure passage from Lipsius's *De recta pronuntiatione* regarding the usage of accent marks in Greek and Latin to Hobbes. Because this is an 'arcane' work and Stubbe provides only a 'casual' reference, David Burchell takes this as evidence of Hobbes's familiarity with the author and the work (which appears in volume 1 of Lipsius's *Opera omnia*). Burchell also notes, using Hamilton's catalogue, that Cavendish owned the 1594 William Jones translation of Lipsius's *Politics* and that this work had been the only 'modern authority' cited in the introduction to Hobbes's 1629 translation of Thucydides. See Hobbes, *Corr.* (I.104, p. 384; 8/[18] Dec. 1656), Thomas Hobbes, *The History of the Grecian War [1629]* in Molesworth (ed.), *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, Vols. VIII-IX (xxiv) and David Burchell, 'The Disciplined Citizen: Thomas Hobbes, Neostoicism and the Critique of Classical Citizenship', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 45/4 (1999), 506-24 (pp. 518-19).

⁵⁹ Thomas Hobbes, *Critique du 'De Mundo' de Thomas White [1642-43]*, eds. Jean Jacquot and Harold Whitmore Jones (Paris: J. Vrin, 1973) (fol. 391, p. 428).

belief that the Stoic account of fate was capable of withstanding contemporary criticism.⁶⁰

Yet while Bramhall may have claimed to have found in Hobbes's writings the distinct imprint of the Stoa, this cannot explain how the Stoic view on self-preservation may have come to feature so prevalently in Hobbes's own writings. As we have seen, Lipsius, unlike Grotius, noticeably passed over this part of Stoic ethics as he attempted to highlight the virtues of constancy and its applicability to contemporary court politics. While he may have counselled Stoic restraint in political matters, he could not have represented a direct source from which Hobbes encountered the view that all things tend to their self-preservation. Instead, Hobbes would have found something of an index to the school's views on this point in Lipsius's widely produced edition of Seneca's works.

In spite of Hobbes's denials about having encountered the work of Lipsius, the impact of ancient Stoic thought on the development of his philosophy has not been a point lost on his modern readership, although its influence has been detected in areas other than those Bramhall initially noted. Hobbes, for example, has been said to utilise much of the common classical legacy available to scholars of the period while developing further those areas in which he believed contemporary thought had established its authority.⁶¹ Seizing on Hobbes's importation of Stoic terminology in *Leviathan*, Richard Hillyer has taken Hobbes to have espoused the middle ground of a 'moderate classicalism' in his political writings, whereby he moves between the 'opposite extremes' of regarding the ancient philosophers as authoritative on some subjects but superseded in other areas.⁶² What Hillyer fails to realise in his assessment of Hobbes's classicalism, however, is that it may be said to extend beyond the immediate confines of the political writings. For Jeremy Kassler the engagement with Stoic philosophy does go beyond 'moderate classicalism' and the

⁶⁰ Ibid. (fols. 391-393, pp. 428-30).

⁶¹ Richard Hillyer, 'Hobbes's Explicated Fables and the Legacy of the Ancients', *Philosophy and Literature*, 28 (2004), 269-83 (p. 271).

⁶² Ibid. (p. 282).

immediate realm of political association. For him, Hobbes ‘adumbrated a version of Stoicism’ when he portrayed sensation as a passive and inwards motion and conception as an active and outwards motion. In the accounts of voluntary motions, Hobbes set out, like the Stoics, to show how one ought to live in accordance with nature. In coming to terms with Stoic *homologia*, Kassler believes we arrive at ‘the fundamental tenet of Hobbes’s entire philosophy.’⁶³ This is because for both Hobbes and the Stoics the power of nature is manifested immanently through impulse, and as Kassler concludes Hobbes takes up with the Stoic view that these natural ‘conative states’ are always directed towards or away from some thing and the body’s preservation.⁶⁴

The potential proximity between Hobbes and the Stoa has occupied other scholars as well. Considering the successes enjoyed by Lipsius and other Neostoics, David Burchell has suggested that it was through the Neostoic presence in England that Hobbes’s philosophy came to be ‘indebted to without actually being a part of that culture.’⁶⁵ According to Susan James, the seeds of this culture and most likely Hobbes’s interests in Stoicism had been planted by the educational curricula of the day. While Aristotle continued to dominate the study of natural philosophy, students were nevertheless able to learn the views of other authors such as Cicero and Seneca when they considered, for example, what the moral and political significances of the passions were. ‘This training,’ James believes, was largely responsible for ‘making certain strands of Stoicism available,’ and this in turn installed it as a ‘part of the intellectual background of seventeenth-century philosophers writing on the passions.’⁶⁶ In the case of Hobbes, however, this background eventually came to

⁶³ Jamie C. Kassler, 'The Paradox of Power: Hobbes and Stoic Naturalism', in Gaukroger (ed.), *The Uses of Antiquity*, 53-78 (pp. 55-56).

⁶⁴ Ibid. (p. 68).

⁶⁵ See Burchell, 'The Disciplined Citizen', (pp. 519-20).

⁶⁶ James, *Passion and Action* (p. 24).

occupy a prevalent position in his thought, since James sees Hobbes's scheme of the passions bearing the imprint of Stoic metaphysics.⁶⁷

The impact of the Stoics could be felt in other areas too, and, in particular, Peter Barker has noted the 'failure of modern historians' to consider the ways in which Stoic physics may have also worked itself into Hobbes's writings.⁶⁸ This oversight is all the more difficult to understand since, as Barker reminds us, the Stoics took physics to be a 'prerequisite' for understanding the actions of animal bodies. Thus if one finds similarities between Stoic and Hobbesian ethics, then there may well be reason to suspect that a proximity also exists between the two respective accounts of natural bodies as well. Although there is no attempt within the literature to suggest that Hobbes intended to provide his readers with a complete reconstruction of Stoic philosophy, his relationship with this particular ancient school is still seen as playing a considerable role in explaining where some of the most central elements in his physics, ethics and political philosophy originate.

As we have already seen, Stoicism was not the only Hellenistic philosophy that had recently been pressed into service against scholastic philosophy, and certainly one cannot overlook the potential impact Epicurean thought may have had on Hobbes's writings. The relationship between Hobbes's thought and that of the Epicureans has long been recognised by many of Hobbes's contemporary and modern readers; in fact, even Hobbes himself briefly remarked upon this. As a life-long advocate of the mechanist philosophy, Hobbes could not have failed to see in Epicureanism the ancient origins of a worldview in which the interaction between bodies was presented as the grounds from which natural, ethical and political philosophy could be commonly approached. While the views of Aristotle had failed to entice the young scholar trying to come to terms with how the natural world operated, the potential for atomism to contribute to an anti-scholastic account of

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ P. Barker and B.R. Goldstein, 'Is Seventeenth-Century Physics Indebted to the Stoics?', *Centaurus*, 27/2 (1984), 148-64 (p. 150).

nature appeared strong. As Hobbes recalled in his verse biography, it was ‘Democritus [who] taught me what was silly and how much more one man knows than the crowd.’⁶⁹ The seemingly positive influence of one of atomic philosophy’s original expositors may help explain why in *Leviathan*’s over-arching dismissal of Hellenistic thought the Epicureans are strikingly absent from the otherwise all-inclusive list.⁷⁰ The early endorsement of Democritus and the non-inclusion of Epicureanism in the list of ‘fabulous traditions’ might also suggest that perhaps there was something in this particular area of ancient philosophy that Hobbes found attractive. As many of Hobbes’s contemporary and modern readers have suggested, the reason for such relatively positive treatments stems from the fact that his own views were themselves largely in agreement with those of the Garden.⁷¹

According to the Cambridge Platonist Joseph Glanvill, Hobbes was most notable for being an author who had employed Epicurean principles into his writings without also securing them to the ‘principles of religion.’⁷² His usage of atomic doctrine, Glanvill noted, stood in contrast with other ‘corpuscularian philosophers,’ such as Descartes and Gassendi, both of who had ‘laboured much in asserting the Grand Articles of Religion against [Hobbes,] the infidel and atheist’.⁷³ Hobbes’s perceived usage of atomic philosophy to chastise religion was also remarked upon by

⁶⁹ Thomas Hobbes, *Vita* (London, 1679) (4) as cited in Sarasohn, 'Motion and Morality', (p. 365, fn. 9).

⁷⁰ Hobbes, *Lev.* (46, p. 460). Hobbes mentions the Academics, Sceptics, Peripatetics, Stoics and Jews in his account of the ancient schools of thought.

⁷¹ Jon Parkin, *Taming the Leviathan: The Reception of the Political and Religious Ideas of Thomas Hobbes in England 1640-1700* (Ideas in Context; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) (pp. 260, 393).

⁷² Joseph Glanvill, *Essays on several important subjects in philosophy and religion* (London: J.D., 1676) (pp. 33-34). Glanvill himself had earlier attempted to use ancient atomist philosophy to refute the views of Aristotle, but as Gaukroger has noted, he did this not because he actually believed atomism to be a better natural philosophy, but because it was the ‘the first or original philosophy’. As Glanvill wrote, ‘[T]he *Aristotelian* was not the ancient *Philosophy*, but the *Corpuscularian* and *Atomical*, which to the great hindrance of Science lay long buried in *neglect* and *oblivion*, but hath in these latter Ages been again restored to the *light* and it’s deserved *repute* and *value*.’ Joseph Glanvill, *A Letter to a Friend Concerning Aristotle*, appended to *Scire/I tuum nihil est: or, The Author’s Defence of the Vanity of Dogmatizing ...*, (London, 1665) (pp. 88-90) as reproduced in Gaukroger, ‘The Idea of Antiquity’, (xi).

⁷³ Glanvill, *Essays* (pp. 33-34).

Richard Baxter (1615-91), who chose not to portray Hobbes as a solitary Epicurean rebel but rather, along with Spinoza, as a ‘monster of inhumanity’.⁷⁴ In Baxter’s opinion this was primarily due to their collective presentation of individual self-interest as the highest end of human action and ‘[the] object of rational love and desire.’ Further demonstrating each author’s supposed allegiance to Epicureanism, in Baxter’s view, was their joint claim to hold ‘no Good, but that which relatively is good, [...] with personal life and pleasure as the end, or other things as a means thereto.’⁷⁵ But perhaps the most serious and wide-ranging accusation of Hobbes as having imbibed fully the doctrines of Epicurus came in the form of John Dowell’s critique of *Leviathan*. After reading the work it had become altogether clear to him that, ‘the design of Mr. Hobbes easily appears [...] in the sense of the Epicurean philosophy, from which Hobbes borrows his principles, moral, natural, and political.’⁷⁶

The case for an ancient Epicurean influence has also been built up in other more recent attempts to identify the influences within Hobbes’s natural and political philosophy. M.M. Goldsmith has argued, for example, that much common ground exists between the Epicurean and Hobbesian reliance on the fear of death as the primary source of motivation in the creation of political society.⁷⁷ The invocation of Epicurean thought by Hobbes to make such a case was not only a deliberate act, but characterises what Goldsmith has portrayed as Hobbes’s overall approach towards constructing a ‘modern’ account of political philosophy. For Hobbes this essentially meant ‘combining existing elements into a new pattern’ and ‘clarifying and formulating’ them in such a way that they appeared to his readers to have been

⁷⁴ Richard Baxter, *Church-history of the government of bishops and their councils [...]* (London: B. Griffin, 1680) (Preface).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ John Dowell, *The Leviathan heretical, or, The charge exhibited in Parliament against M. Hobbes justified by the refutation of a book of his entitled The historical narration of heresy and the punishments thereof* (Oxford: L. Lichfield, 1683) (p. 11).

⁷⁷ M.M. Goldsmith, ‘Hobbes: Ancient and Modern’, in Sorell (ed.), *The Rise of Modern Philosophy*, 317-36.

transformed.⁷⁸ By giving the fear of death such a prominent position in his political philosophy, a subject Hobbes famously claimed to be no older than his work *De cive*,⁷⁹ Epicurean thought enabled Hobbes to break away from writers such as Aristotle, the Stoics and Grotius, all of whom saw society as originating in the individual's natural sociability. The fear of death and its ability to serve as a continuous motivating action in human psychology also helped link Hobbesian natural philosophy and political philosophy together. As Sarasohn has portrayed Hobbes's usage of fear, it acts as a type of 'dynamic impetus to human and societal development,' which is intended to recall to one's mind the idea of bodies and inertial movements established in Hobbes's natural philosophy.⁸⁰ Because humans constantly deliberate about the potential rewards and punishments of every particular object, the calculus of pleasure and pain which features so prominently in Epicurean ethics comes to play an equally important role in Hobbes's attempts to explain how human bodies operate. Pacchi perhaps best summed up this shared concentration when he suggested that 'the common horizon of earthly mortality' was a central concern for 'both the subjects of *Leviathan* and the inhabitants of the Garden.'⁸¹ Yet given that the Epicurean ethical programme also sought to mitigate the fear of death in individuals, Paganini has gone on to suggest that Pacchi also painted Hobbes's usage of self-preservation as something of a boundary between how he and the Epicureans understood moral behaviour. As he suggests, 'the true Epicurean sage would have branded the Hobbesian individual's extreme preoccupation with self-preservation as a pathological form of that *'numquam desinendi libido'*, the "strongest and oldest of all desires".⁸² The real agreement with the Epicureans, Paganini argues, is to be found in Hobbes's reclamation of their political and

⁷⁸ Ibid. (p. 317).

⁷⁹ Hobbes, *DCo.* (Ep. Ded., ix).

⁸⁰ Sarasohn, 'Motion and Morality', (p. 376).

⁸¹ Arrigo Pacchi, 'Hobbes e l'epicureismo', *Rivista di storia della filosofia*, 33 (1978), 54-71 as cited in Paganini, 'Hobbes, Gassendi and the Tradition of Political Epicureanism', (p. 4).

⁸² This is a reference to Plutarch, who had suggested that Epicureanism would need to solve for the 'longing of being' as part of the philosophy's larger attempt to uncover the relationship between things we loved and hated. See Plutarch, *Non posse* (1104c). Also see *ibid.* (p. 4, fn. 6) and Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire* (p. 201).

juridical tradition, which had used contracts, laws and justice as the best means of overcoming the 'inter-human' conflicts of the natural state.⁸³

Within the literature we have examined on Hobbes thus far there are two key views which need to be reconciled if we are to understand how self-preservation functions in Hobbes's philosophy and to determine what tradition or traditions may have helped him formulate the view that all bodies strive to preserve themselves. The first is the unity thesis's claim that self-preservation, understood via the context of natural and continuous bodily motions, provides a common theme through which the entirety of Hobbes's philosophy can be profitably approached. As we have just seen, this view is largely attributable to those who see in Hobbes's account of bodies and their motions the imprint of the New Science. While their claim that self-preservation provides a common theme within his writings seems plausible, their sourcing of the notion from the writings of Galileo, Descartes and Gassendi stands in need of closer examination. The second view to consider is what might be called the 'Hellenistic source' thesis, or the claim that Hobbes's notion of self-preservation was itself the product of a much larger incorporation of Hellenistic doctrine into his writings. Given that these potential influences have been characterised elsewhere as either Stoic or Epicurean, in each case Hobbes comes across in the literature as having engaged extensively with the views of his predecessors and as having helped push forward the revival of Hellenistic philosophy occurring around Europe at the time. This also suggests that Hobbes was more rhetorical than straightforward in his attempts to paint his philosophy as being devoid of the arguments and sentiments of the 'vain' philosophers. What these accounts fail to point out, however, is that it was through the specific importation of Hellenistic philosophy that Hobbes was able to devise an account of bodily tendencies that joined his accounts of natural, human and political bodies together. Only by investigating how Hobbes's usage of self-preservation develops in each particular account of bodies can the claims for an ancient reading of this notion be substantiated. In doing so, we might then be able to

⁸³ Paganini, 'Hobbes, Gassendi and the Tradition of Political Epicureanism', (pp. 4, 9, 15).

remodel the unity thesis so that it can support a Hellenistic interpretation of Hobbes's account of self-preservation.

Self-Preservation in the Natural Philosophy of Hobbes

Although contemporary politics prevented Hobbes from publishing his philosophy in the order he intended, his plan to install physics at the head of a trilogy on the powers and properties of bodies recreated the approach to philosophy recommended initially by the Hellenistic philosophers and more recently by Jesuit universal philosophy.⁸⁴ As we saw in the sections devoted to Epicurean and Stoic thought, each school ordered philosophy so that logic preceded physics, which was followed by ethics, and concluded with politics.⁸⁵

Examining the order of topics proposed in *Elements of Philosophy*, one finds the Hobbesian approach to philosophy mimicking that recommended by both the Epicureans and Stoics. In *De corpore*, Hobbes's most substantial investigation into natural bodies and physical principles, and the first section of the trilogy, his account of logic precedes the discussion on physics. These are each treated prior to *De homine*, the section dedicated to exploring ethical questions concerning topics such as choice and aversion. These discussions also reappear in truncated form in the

⁸⁴ According to Copleston, 'In the course of the seventeenth century *Cursus philosophici* tended to take the place of the former commentaries on Aristotle. This is not to say, however that the former custom was altogether abandoned.' Perhaps the best example of this was the *Cursus philosophicus* of Rodrigo de Arriaga, a Jesuit teacher in Prague who endorsed the logic-physics-ethics order of philosophical study. According to Schmitt, Arriaga's book was one of the most widely-known scholastic textbooks of the seventeenth century and appeared in numerous editions throughout the century. See Frederick Copleston, *Late Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy* (A History of Philosophy; London: Continuum, 2003) (pp. 345-46); Rodrigo de Arriaga, *Cursus philosophicus* (Antwerp: B. Moret, 1632); and C.B. Schmitt, 'Galileo and the Seventeenth-Century Text-Book Tradition', in Paolo Galluzi (ed.), *Novità celesti e crisi del sapere: atti del convegno internazionale di studi Galileiani* (Florence: Giunti Barbèra, 1984), 217-28. For a more general analysis of the shape of scholastic texts in the seventeenth century see, Patricia Reif, 'The Textbook Tradition in Natural Philosophy, 1600-1650', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 30 (1969), 17-32 and C.B. Schmitt, 'The Rise of the Philosophical Textbook', in C.B. Schmitt, Quentin Skinner, Eckhard Kessler, and Jill Kraye (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 792-804.

⁸⁵ See the discussion above on pages pp. 51-52.

opening sections on human nature which set the tone for the political philosophy of *De cive*. Although each section may have been intended to stand on its own arguments and conclusions, the similarity in how Hobbes and the Hellenistic philosophers arranged their philosophies to highlight the relation of each part to the others remains striking.

Hobbes's investigations into the origins of natural bodies' motions and tendencies only reached full maturity with the publication of *De corpore* in 1655 (Latin) and 1656 (English). However, much of his natural philosophy had already been established in the decade before in manuscripts circulated amongst his friends. According to some modern accounts, however, Hobbes's first attempt at describing the nature of physical bodies may have come as early as the mid 1630s, when he was still in frequent contact with Sir Charles Cavendish and his atomic-minded circle at Welbeck Abbey.⁸⁶ Around this time a manuscript with the simple heading 'Principles' (hereafter *Short Treatise*) appeared. While its authorship has long remained a point of contention among modern Hobbes scholars,⁸⁷ its portrayal of nature as a set of necessary and sufficient causes, its division of material things into active and passive components, and its discussions of motion as the product of internal and external sources are themes which can be found resonating elsewhere within Hobbes's philosophy. In any case, even if Hobbes was not the author of the *Short Treatise*, the manuscript was at least produced in a milieu that Hobbes was known to have worked in. This potential authorship of the work is also worth noting briefly given the tendency of the manuscript to utilise Hellenistic philosophy to

⁸⁶ Tönnies had suggested *Short Treatise* was composed in 1630. Brandt accepts this as plausible but also places an upper-limit of 1636 as the date of the work's composition. See Brandt, *Thomas Hobbes' Mechanical Conception of Nature* (pp. 48, 152). See also Stephen Clucas, 'The Atomism of the Cavendish Circle: A Reappraisal', *The Seventeenth Century*, 9/2 (1994), 247-73.

⁸⁷ For a debate on the authorship of the work see (against Hobbes's authorship): Timothy Raylor, 'Hobbes, Payne, and *A Short Tract on First Principles*', *The Historical Journal*, 44/1 (2001), 29-58, 'Robert Payne and the *Short Tract*' in Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes*, and Tuck, 'Hobbes and Descartes'. For the pro-Hobbes view see for example Brandt, *Thomas Hobbes' Mechanical Conception of Nature*, Jean Bernhardt's introduction to the work, Zagorin, 'Hobbes's Early Philosophical Development', Leijenhorst, *Mechanisation of Aristotelianism*, Karl Schuhmann, '*Le short tract*, première œuvre philosophique de Hobbes', *Hobbes Studies*, 8 (1995), 3-36, and Pietarinen, '*Conatus* as Active Power in Hobbes'.

demonstrate certain ‘principles’ that the author believes govern the motions of physical bodies.

After portraying bodies as either active or passive in character, the *Short Treatise* details the nature of causes and the means by which bodies are able to set others in motion. In each of these discussions, the author’s views may be said to demonstrate an affinity with the earlier Hellenistic positions. This can be seen for example in the author’s contention that the sufficient cause of motion by which active bodies work on passive bodies is also a necessary cause.⁸⁸ This description of causation extends into the effects as well, for if all causes are necessary and sufficient then so too are all the effects that they bring about.⁸⁹ Such an equation had itself featured in the Stoic view of the fates, which took necessity and fate to be the same cause and a central concern for physical inquiry.⁹⁰ This was because the Stoics viewed fate as an ‘eternal, continuous and ordered motion’ that from the time of Zeno onwards had been described as capable of moving matter.⁹¹ What importantly united all Stoic accounts of fate was their author’s insistence that nature had supplied all of its constituent parts with everything required for acting in accordance with their own principles.⁹²

⁸⁸ Thomas Hobbes (attrib.), *Court traité des premiers principes: Le "Short Tract on First Principles" de 1630-1631: La naissance de Thomas Hobbes à la pensée moderne*, trans. Jean Bernhardt (Epiméthée; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1988) (1, Prin. 11).

⁸⁹ Ibid. (1, Prin. 12).

⁹⁰ According to Cicero, ‘Nothing has happened which was not going to happen and for the same reason nothing will happen the efficient causes of which nature does not contain. From this we recognise that Fate is not what is called superstitiously but what is called scientifically, the eternal cause of things.’ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *On Divination: Book I*, ed. David Wardle (Clarendon Ancient History Series; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) (125-26, p. 86). Also see Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De fato* (192.3-14) and Aetius, *Placita* (I.28) in Long and Sedley, *H.Phil.* (55J & N). These texts would have been unknown to the author of the *Short Treatise* despite the similarity of their views.

⁹¹ Theodoretus, *Graecarum Affectionum Cura* (6.14) as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [II-78].

⁹² ‘Nature is defined as a force moving of itself, producing and preserving in being its offspring in accordance with seminal principles within definite periods, and effecting results homogenous with their sources. [...] That all things happen by fate or destiny is maintained by Chrysippus, Posidonius, Zeno and Boëthus. Fate is defined as an endless chain of causation, whereby things are, or as the reason or formula by which the world goes on.’ Laetius, *Lives* (7.149).

In other areas, however, the Epicurean view of bodily interaction may have also been taken into consideration. This especially appears to have been the case in the brief account of how active bodies act on passive bodies at a distance, which is said to occur through either ‘the medium’ or the continuous emanation of species.⁹³ As Epicurus had argued, particles continually stream off the surface of bodies, and although we cannot perceive any diminution in the body’s form, this is because other particles quickly fill in the gaps.⁹⁴ From our own experiences with light, the author also believes that we are able to recognise that species operate in straight lines and that this explains why objects appear as a singular object.⁹⁵ This description seems to be an almost exact recitation of what had appeared in Epicurus. As Epicurus had argued, bodies are able to impress themselves on our senses through ‘the medium of the air’ or by means of rays of light or current going from them to the sense organs.⁹⁶ These motions are so continuous and rapid that they appear as a single continuous object, which explains why species are able to retain the ‘mutual interconnection’ with the object from which they are emanating.⁹⁷ The similarities in the two accounts of body emissions may be said to continue in discussions of species interactions occurring elsewhere in the manuscript. As species emanate from the body, for example, the author argues that this may be said to demonstrate ‘conveniency’ or ‘disconveniency’, which are taken as equivalent to the Greek terms ‘sympathy’ and ‘antipathy’. These properties are in turn said to explain why bodies possess an internal ability to attract and repel other bodies.⁹⁸ This tendency is observable via

⁹³ [Hobbes], *ST* (2, Prin. 1 and 2, Conc. 5). The invocation of species in the *Short Treatise* is cited by Malcolm as one of the greatest indications that the work is not by Hobbes, but by Robert Payne, another member of the Welbeck Circle. As Malcolm argues: ‘When the author of the ‘Short Tract’ put forward an account of the successive multiplication of species as the alternative to his own theory [of local motion] he was gesturing not vaguely at the textbook tradition, but referring quite particularly to a doctrine found in the writings of Roger Bacon – writings in which, as we know, Payne had long had a special interest.’ Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (p. 112). Later on in *De corpore*, Hobbes will reject the notion of species when he argues that ‘an accident cannot depart from its subject.’ See Hobbes, *DCo.* (2.8.20-21, pp. 116-17).

⁹⁴ Laertius, *Lives* (10.48-50).

⁹⁵ [Hobbes], *ST* (2, Conc. 7).

⁹⁶ Laertius, *Lives* (10.49).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* (10.50).

⁹⁸ [Hobbes], *ST* (2, Conc. 9).

everyday experience, as for example when one considers how a loadstone operates. Upon encountering steel in the medium, the author argues that a loadstone appears to ‘fortify’ its motion through the conveniency it enjoys with the steel. In the case of disconveniency, the lesser body is weakened by the stronger body and as a result may be said to ‘retire back from the other’.⁹⁹ Lucretius had also considered this same tendency in his discussion of certain bodies’ magnetic properties. After reminding his readers that discharged particles are capable of producing different effects on the senses, he provides a list of naturally occurring phenomena in which particles may be shown to weaken or strengthen various substances. Sun weakens earth and ice, for example, while fire strengthens bronze and water hardens iron.¹⁰⁰ Having established that different substances can bring about different responses, the discussion turns to the particular case of magnets. As particles emanate from the stone towards the iron, the impact of these projections causes the stone to move forward with its whole mass as it attempts to fill in the void created by the displaced air. Similarly, when the stone recedes it does so because it finds that another substance has prevented the appearance of a channel in which it can move.¹⁰¹ In both cases, the emanations from the stone to the magnet explain how its motion is either assisted or hindered. The similarities here are striking and may owe to the Lucretian account of magnetism having already made its presence felt in England in the years before the appearance of the *Short Treatise*.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Ibid. (2, Conc. 9 Cor.).

¹⁰⁰ Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (6.960ff., p. 203).

¹⁰¹ Ibid. (6.1040-80, pp. 205-6).

¹⁰² By the turn of the seventeenth century William Gilbert (1544-1603) had already established himself as an authority on the phenomena of magnetism via his work *De magnete*. In that widely available work, the sections of Lucretius’s poem dealing with loadstones had been cited and discussed, but not always favourably. Gilbert, for example writes, ‘little has been written by the ancients about the about the causes of the attraction of iron: some trifling remarks of Lucretius and others are extant.’ Gilbert does, however, cite a substantial portion of the discussion of magnetism which appears in book six of *De rerum natura*, and it is these passages which appear to have captured the attention of the *Short Treatise*’s author as well. Although the modern commentator Jacquot has suggested that in his later discussions of magnetism (and specifically in *De motu*) Hobbes sided with Gilbert’s claim that the earth acted like a magnet, he fails to consider the possibility that Gilbert’s work may have also served as the filter through which he could have gained access to these earlier Atomist positions. In addition to Lucretius’s views on loadstones and magnets, this work would have

Whether or not the *Short Treatise* represents Hobbes's first attempt at composing an account of bodies and their tendencies, it is nonetheless interesting that the manuscript appears to draw from both Stoic and Epicurean philosophy in its attempts to present a compelling account of physical bodies and their 'principles'. This suggests that at least certain members of the Welbeck circle believed ancient thought was capable of supplying an account of bodies that could not only challenge the generally-accepted views of the scholastics, but could also help advance the principles emerging from the new mechanical science. For now, however, let us turn our attention away from the contentious origins of Hobbes's philosophy and towards a text in which his authorship remains free of doubt.

Between 1642 and 1643, Hobbes produced a sizeable manuscript entitled *De motu* in which he attempted to refute the account of natural philosophy forwarded by Thomas White in his just published *De mundo dialogi tres*.¹⁰³ Like Hobbes, White had taken up residence in Paris in the early 1640s, and as a member of Mersenne's circle of friends, he began promoting an eclectic brand of natural philosophy. In both *De mundo* and the later *Institutiones peripateticae* (1646) White aimed to situate the new scientific theories arising out of physics and cosmology within the more traditional frameworks of Aristotelian scholasticism and Christian theology. The influence for this hybrid approach might very well have come from another Englishman, Sir Kenelm Digby, whom both Hobbes and White knew from their

also been capable of supplying arguments drawn directly from Galen's *De naturalibus facultatibus*, a work in which the ancient physician had also referenced the views of Epicurus on attraction as part of his own investigations into the attractive properties of like and unlike bodies. See William Gilbert, *De magnete [1600]*, ed. P. Fleury Mottelay (Reprint edn.; Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1991) (pp. 3-4, 98-101) and Jean Jacquot, 'Notes on an Unpublished Work of Thomas Hobbes', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London (1938-1996)*, 9/2 (1952), 188-95 (p. 192).

¹⁰³ I am following scholars such as Pacchi and more recently Schuhmann, Leijenhorst and Horstmann in using the title *De motu* instead of the more commonly used titles 'Anti-White' or 'De mundo'. As Schuhmann argues, Mersenne knew the work in question as *De motu, loco, et tempore*. In rejecting the title 'Anti-White', Schuhmann follows Pacchi's earlier suggestion that the aim of the work was not simply to refute White's *De mundo* but rather to provide Mersenne's circle of friends with an elaboration of Hobbes's own natural philosophy and the integral role of motion within it. See Karl Schuhmann, 'Hobbes dans les publications de Mersenne en 1644', *Archives de Philosophie; Bulletin Hobbes VII*, 58/2 (1995), 2-7 (pp. 4-5) and Frank Horstmann, 'Hobbes on Hypotheses in Natural Philosophy', *The Monist*, 84/4 (2001), 487-501 (p. 498, n. 3).

association with the circle at Great Tew. After praising the ‘profound learning’ on display in *De mundo*, for example, Digby would go on to produce a version of ‘Aristotelian atomism’ in his *Two Treatises* (1645) concerning the nature of bodies and soul.¹⁰⁴

Despite *De mundo*’s best attempts to expound a biblically sympathetic mechanical philosophy based around the model of Galileo’s *Dialogues*, Hobbes was the first to seize on many of the work’s most troubling arguments. Far from advancing the understanding of nature and its constituent properties, White’s continued reliance on the convoluted explanations and definitions of the scholastic philosophers only served, in Hobbes’s estimation, to impede the important advances being made elsewhere. What was needed, and what he in turn hoped to supply, was an account of nature, bodies and motions that was not to be judged by its Aristotelian patronage, but rather by its ability to clearly define these terms and set out the ways in which they were related.¹⁰⁵ Yet as the text shows, Hobbes had placed himself in a difficult position by attempting to describe the specific natures of bodies without making recourse to any type of specific power driving them on. For their own part, each of the Stoic and Epicurean schools had been able to free themselves from the potential-actual model favoured by Aristotle and later scholastics such as White, and

¹⁰⁴ Praise for White’s *De mundo* can be found in Digby’s *Observations*: ‘Mr White, whose name I believe your lordship has met, in his excellent book, “*De Mundo*,” newly printed at Paris, where he now resides, and is admired by the world of lettered men there, as the prodigy of these latter times. Indeed, his three dialogues upon that subject (if I am able to judge anything) are full of the profoundest learning I ever yet met. And I believe, who has well read and digested them, will persuade himself there is no truth so abstruse, nor hitherto conceived out of our reach, but man’s wit may raise engines to scale and conquer. I assure myself, when our author has studied him thoroughly he will not lament so loud for Aristotle’s mutilated and defective philosophy, as in *Boccaline* Cæsar Caporali does for the loss of Livy’s shipwrecked decades.’ See Thomas Browne and Kenelm Digby, *Religio Medici with the ‘Observations’ of Sir Kenelm Digby [1643]* (New York: John B. Alden, 1889) (p. 151).

¹⁰⁵ Hobbes’s dissatisfaction with the scholastic way of writing philosophy appears at its strongest in the first three folios, where he argues that ‘all the sciences would have been mathematical had not their authors asserted more than they were able to prove. Indeed, it is because of the temerity and the ignorance of writers on physics and ethics that geometry and arithmetic are the only mathematical ones.’ In a later folio he points out that White’s statement that the ‘reader should not hope to see anything proved true’ in *De mundo* is ‘an ill-omened statement to make the start of the work.’ See Thomas Hobbes, *Thomas White’s ‘De Mundo’ Examined [1642-43]*, trans. Harold Whitmore Jones (London: Bradford University Press, 1976) (fol. 5v, p. 24 and fol. 7, p. 26).

it was in the writings of the Stoics and Epicureans that one could find the necessary conceptual tools for evoking the dynamic tendencies of bodies by referencing their internal tendencies.

Coming directly on the heels of *De cive*'s lengthy treatment of the nature of political bodies and most likely at Mersenne's behest,¹⁰⁶ *De motu* represents Hobbes's first attempt at producing a detailed consideration of many of scholastic natural philosophy's most basic terms and principles. Demonstrating a strong aversion to any type of teleological explanation, Hobbes soon expands his initial investigations to detail what he believes are the internal tendencies responsible for keeping bodies in a state of rest or motion. Through an examination of each body's *conatus* Hobbes also attempts to do away with the scholastic divisions of 'violent' and 'natural' motion – arguing that such descriptions tell us nothing about all the movements a body is capable of producing. By presenting bodies as the possessors of active, internal and self-preserving characteristics, Hobbes's rebuttal of the scholastic positions may therefore be seen to follow down a path that had been cleared earlier.

One particular source of irritation for Hobbes was White's contention that 'nature is the principle of motion.'¹⁰⁷ In combining a body's nature with its movements, White propounded a world-view in which bodies that possessed 'simple natures' were also those that underwent 'simple motions', so that the two carried the same meaning.¹⁰⁸ However, as Hobbes argues, the "principle" of motion could not be considered as anything more than the local motion responsible for moving from one place to another close by.¹⁰⁹ In an effort to separate a body's motions from its nature, Hobbes proceeds to set out clearly, through propositions and logical definitions rather than rhetoric and metaphorical language,¹¹⁰ what the term 'motion' actually

¹⁰⁶ Martinich, *Hobbes* (p. 182); Jacquot, 'Notes on an Unpublished Work', (p. 192).

¹⁰⁷ Hobbes, *DM* (fol. 37, p. 70).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* See also Descartes, *Rules* (AT X 402, 426, pp. 34, 48).

¹¹⁰ Hobbes promotes logic as the best means of achieving the desired clarity because it is 'a simple form of speech, without tropes or figure; for every metaphor has by its very nature a double significance and is ambiguous.' This is in direct contrast to White, who at the beginning of his work

means, and to sever the notion that a body's nature and its motions are coincidental. As Hobbes argues, by making a thing's nature and its motions one and the same, White has failed to recognise that every body, from the simplest ones (*materia prima*) to the most massive stars, can be 'carried' by non-simple motions.¹¹¹ White's conflation of nature and motion thus means that the nature of any body could be described as 'simple and non-simple' due to its ability to undergo both types of motion. Hobbes, however, believes he can alleviate the difficulty caused by coupling nature and motion together by considering a stone in flight. Proceeding upwards, the stone requires the presence of some active principle to help it maintain its trajectory; yet when we ponder the nature of the stone itself we do not think of it as being capable of initiating such upward movement. Hobbes thus posits a distinction between what a stone actually 'is' and what the stone is capable of 'doing'. There then remains only a terminological distinction separating what are called 'natural' motions, 'which can become' and are invisible, and 'vehement' motions, whose causes are external and clearly discernable to us.¹¹²

The confusion within this division would also remain, according to Hobbes, even if one attempted to amend the definition of nature to read, 'Nature is the principle of natural motion.'¹¹³ This would be as unintelligible as White's earlier definition because it is impossible to describe what a stone's 'natural motion' actually is without having prior knowledge of what its nature is. As a result, Hobbes argues that the only plausible definition of nature is 'the body's potential to work or to act – a nature essential to it – i.e. included in, or to be inferred from, its definition.'¹¹⁴ When this new definition is applied to different types of bodies, we begin to see, for

starts out by claiming '*Philosophiam non esse logicè tractandam.*' See Hobbes, *DM* (fols. 5, p. 21, and 6v, pp. 24-26).

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* (fol. 37-37v, pp. 70-71).

¹¹² *Ibid.* (fol. 38, p. 71): 'In a word, 'that which can become' is natural; and there is a difference between 'natural' and 'vehement' only because a motion whose cause we do not see we attribute to nature; but a thing whose cause we do see clearly we call 'vehement'. So the 'potential to motion' is not motion [itself] unless it is also the principle of motion, for the 'principle' of any single thing is its *pars prima.*'

¹¹³ *Ibid.* (fol. 37v).

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

example, that it is in the nature of all animals to sense and of humans to reason. Seizing on the differences between the body's potential to motion and its actual motions, Hobbes then asks the reader to consider the natural movements of the Earth. As Hobbes argues, 'earth could not be earth unless it could be moved even upwards, because the nature of body is the ability to be moved in any direction.'¹¹⁵ The 'upwardness' the Earth experiences is therefore said to be the result of 'something natural driving [it] on'.¹¹⁶ When we then speak of a body's 'natural motion,' Hobbes believes that we are only referring to the proved or inferred potential that can arise from that body's own definition.

Despite having mentioned that the earth and other bodies possess a 'natural' driving force capable of explaining their motions, it is only in a later section of *De motu* that Hobbes attempts to develop this claim further. In addition to describing this force as *conatus* (tending), Hobbes can also be seen promoting for the first time the view that bodies tend towards the preservation of themselves and their motions. This may again be said to match up with the views expressed by the Hellenistic philosophers, who had used internal inclinations to explain a natural body's self-preserving and resistant tendencies. However, despite the similarities the immediate prompt for Hobbes's account remains White's *De mundo* wherein it had been argued that the outermost form of the world's surface is fixed and that its shape remains static and constant.¹¹⁷ Given this unchanging nature and White's rejection of the view that the heavens are hard,¹¹⁸ the explanation for the outer surface remaining in an undisturbed state is due to every 'movement and striving [*conatus*]' in a body is directed internally rather than externally.¹¹⁹ However, as Hobbes proceeds to argue, *conatus* is a far more dynamic principle than White admits, since it can be said to extend outwards as well as inwards, and it is through these 'tendings' alone that

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. (fol. 38, p. 71).

¹¹⁷ Ibid. (fol. 117v, p. 147).

¹¹⁸ Hobbes commends White for agreeing on this point with Copernicus, Galileo and other 'very well-known scientists'.

¹¹⁹ Hobbes, *DM* (p. 148).

bodies attempt to restore their parts when disturbed and offer resistance when encountered by other bodies.

Reasserting that motion is always local in character, Hobbes portrays a body's *conatus*, impulses, forces and efforts not as potential motions but rather as an actual motion.¹²⁰ This redefinition of *conatus* is noteworthy for two reasons: first, it succinctly captures Hobbes's belief that every part of a movement is itself a motion and that the principle of motion must operate in accordance with its primary part.¹²¹ Second, it demonstrates that Hobbes thought enough of White's views not to be able simply to ignore them. Instead, he felt compelled to offer up a lengthy refutation. This would then suggest that an expansion of Pietarinen's analysis of the development of *conatus* in Hobbes's writings is correct. As we saw earlier, it is his contention that by conjoining a body's *conatus* with its motions in the unpublished *Treatise on Optics* and then later in *De corpore*, Hobbes directly challenged the Cartesian view that a body's *conatus* and its motions were in fact two distinct things.¹²² What *De motu* indicates, and what Pietarinen has failed to consider, however, is that Hobbes's engagement with White's views provided him with another early opportunity to explain the nature of motion and to do so as part of his larger confrontation with the more predominant physical views of scholastic philosophy. By the early 1640s, the accounts offered by White in *De mundo* seemingly provided Hobbes with as much of a reason for clarifying the relationship between inclinations and motions as the writings of Descartes did.

Taking a body's *conatus* to be synonymous with its actual motions, Hobbes outlines how *conatus* functions and, through a series of examples, explains what movements may be associated with it. Part of the trouble in elucidating the origins of conatic motion may be said to stem from its very nature: it exists as a motion that is

¹²⁰ 'Now everyone knows that motion is nothing but the loss of an initial position and the continual acquisition of a second one.' Ibid. (fol. 118v, p. 148).

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Pietarinen, 'Conatus as Active Power in Hobbes', (p. 73).

‘very small and indistinguishable to the eye.’¹²³ Nevertheless, Hobbes believes the principle of *conatus* may be demonstrated in the case of two iron balls having encountered each other. If the two balls press on each other and come to a state of rest, then neither can be said to possess *conatus*. If the two balls manage to avoid each other, and hence fail to impede the other’s motion, then Hobbes suggests that each ball would continue to move as before. *Conatus* therefore is associated with the continuity of motion, rather than with rest, and lies in bodies that tend towards movement.¹²⁴ That bodies possess an intrinsic *conatus* is also evident, Hobbes continues, by the fact that if two heavy balls come to rest on the ground, they would continue to descend immediately if the ground were removed beneath them. The *conatus* that each ball possesses therefore may be said to aim continuously at restoring it back to its motive state. This idea of *conatus* as responsible for restoring a body back to its normal state is developed in detail in the example of a bowstring. For Hobbes *conatus* explains why it is that a bowstring moves from a state of tension when the archer has pulled on it to one of non-tension upon its release. When the ‘impediment is removed’ we find that the bowstring’s *conatus* helps restore it back to a straightened state. As Hobbes argues, it is the body’s *conatus* that ‘tries to restore its parts [to their former state of non-tension or less tension].’¹²⁵ After successfully restoring those parts, the body can no longer be said to possess *conatus*. Since the removal of the impediment is not an action, an action is always required to move a body which was previously at rest.¹²⁶ The origins of these actions are again attributable to *conatus*, for the iron ball in motion or the bowstring in recoil are said

¹²³ Hobbes, *DM* (fol. 119, p. 149). Hobbes had already considered the imperceptibility of motion as early as 1636, when he wrote to William Cavendish from Paris: ‘In things that are not demonstrable, of which kind is the greatest part of natural philosophy, as depending on the motion of bodies so subtle that they are invisible, such as are air and spirits, the most that can be attained unto is to have such opinions, as no certain experience can confute, and from which can be deduced by lawful argumentation, no absurdity, and such are your Lordship’s opinions [...] that the variety of things is but variety of local motion in the spirits or invisible parts of bodies.’ What Hobbes goes on to conclude in the letter that he does not in the passage about imperceptible motion in *De motu* is that this motion is heat. See Hobbes, *Corr.* (I.19, p. 33; 29 July/8 Aug.).

¹²⁴ Hobbes, *DM* (fol. 119, p. 149).

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* (fol. 119v, p. 149); cf. [Hobbes], *ST* (1, Conc. 5).

to contain an internal mover capable of initiating their respective motions. As Hobbes concludes, a body's *conatus* may be said to present itself in two ways: either through a tending of the whole body or through the actual motions of its inner and invisible parts.¹²⁷ Moreover, the presence of this internal tendency in the body's internal parts explains why it is that bodies are able to resist change, since resistance is an action, and all actions are themselves motions.¹²⁸

Both Epicurean and Stoic physics also hold that bodies possess an internal power capable of resisting external forces and maintaining the body's motions. As Lucretius had argued, the 'commotions' responsible for the motions of matter were themselves 'secret and imperceptible'.¹²⁹ In observing the movement of particles, as for example in a beam of sunlight, one could see these particles, 'under the impulse of unseen blows, changing course and being forcibly turned back, now this way, now that way, in every direction.'¹³⁰ This description may then conjure up the same type of mental images Hobbes had intended with his example of a bowstring after its release. As the resistance offered by the archer's fingers is removed, the bowstring moves rapidly forward and backwards as it seeks to return towards its earlier state of non-tension, thus imitating the frantic movements of the particles in a beam of sunlight. Similarities in description, however, are only one area in which the Epicureans appear to have produced an account of internal powers that can speak to Hobbes's *conatus*. In *De motu* a body's *conatus* is said to present itself either through the observable motions of the entire body or through the motions of its inner and invisible parts. Epicurean philosophy had similarly argued that the presence of the body's imperceptible 'internal blows' could manifest itself in two ways: it could, they argued, present itself in the observable motion of a larger, compounded body or it might also exist via the impulsion caused by the impact of the 'unseen blows of the

¹²⁷ Hobbes, *DM* (fol. 119v, pp. 149-50).

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* (fol. 120, p. 150).

¹²⁹ Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (2.12-35ff., p. 38).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.* (2.130-40, pp. 38-39).

atoms'.¹³¹ Further, this inherent tendency was also said to explain the resistive properties of all natural bodies. Considering the particular case of heat particles, Lucretius notes that while they are 'impeded by external circumstances' and this in turn slows their motion, these bodies 'consist of parts combined into a single unity, and their exertions carry them in the same direction that they took in the beginning.'¹³² As resistance is reduced, the motion of all particles increases.

The Stoics had likewise made resistance an integral part of how all bodies were understood. A body, they claimed, is that which 'has three-fold extension [i.e. length, breadth and depth] along with resistance.'¹³³ Elsewhere this resistance was described as a 'tensile movement' that could be said to move both simultaneously inwards and outwards. The inwards movements produced unity and substance while the outwards movements produced more measurable things such as quantity and qualities.¹³⁴ Through a discussion of 'tension', the Stoic philosophers also captured the notion of *conatus* demonstrated through Hobbes's example of a bowstring. Considering birds which appeared to be suspended in flight, Galen presented the Stoic question of whether it was more correct to describe them as motionless or to suggest that they were moving upwards to the same extent that the weight of their bodies were carrying them downwards. The latter description would be the most accurate, he contended, because if one were to remove a bird's 'muscular tension' it would fall quickly to the ground. This internal tendency ensured that the bird could 'evenly counterbalance its innate downward inclination due to weight by the upward motion resulting from [its] tension.' Such tension was held to be the result of the body

¹³¹ Ibid.; Lucretius describes this in terms of a 'scale of movement': 'The scale of movement ascends from the atoms and by degrees passes within the range of our senses, so that eventually movement is extended to those particles that we can perceive in the sun's light, although the blows that cause their movement are imperceptible.'

¹³² Ibid. (2.150ff., p. 39; 3.806ff., p. 88): 'All things... repel impact and allow nothing to penetrate them.'

¹³³ Galen, *On Incorporeal Qualities* (19.483.13-16) as reproduced in Long and Sedley, *H.Phil.* (45F); cf. Laertius, *Lives* (7.135) in which these three extensions are cited but no reference to resistance is made.

¹³⁴ Nemesius, *De natura hominis* (70.6-71.4) as reproduced in Long and Sedley, *H.Phil.* (47J). Although Nemesius's comments appear in a discussion of the soul, because the Stoics believe that the soul is corporeal, these movements may be said to exist in all bodies.

undergoing ‘contrary movements in turn,’ which make it appear to stay in the same place as a result of the speed and suddenness of the changes and the minute distance of the movements.’¹³⁵

Although the account of *conatus* offered in *De motu* was not generally available until the late twentieth century,¹³⁶ the work strongly indicates to its modern readers that Hobbes felt confident in refuting White with an account of bodies and their internal powers that overlaps with important areas of Hellenistic physics. From *De motu* onwards, it would be through the term ‘*conatus*’ that Hobbes would continue developing his view that all types of bodies strove or endeavoured to promote the continuance and preservation of their internal motions in the face of external resistance. Certainly this interest in the internal tendencies of bodies continues in Hobbes’s only published account of natural philosophy, the first of the three ‘elements’ comprising his philosophical system, *De corpore*. Because much of the views on *conatus* had already been developed in the passages of *De motu*, the work becomes notable for our purposes for its many diverse considerations of how Hobbes believes bodily endeavours can manifest themselves.

The first, and perhaps most noteworthy, difference between how *conatus* is presented in *De motu* and in the later *De corpore* can be found in Hobbes’s expansion of its definition. Whereas *De motu* had only asserted that a body’s *conatus* was its actual motions, in the later text Hobbes stresses the quickness and minuteness of conatic motion: ‘I define “endeavour” to be motion made in less space and time than can be given.’¹³⁷ This highlighting of a body’s motions in relation to both space

¹³⁵ Galen, *On Muscular Movement* (4.402.12-403.10) as reproduced in *ibid.* (47K).

¹³⁶ This history of this discovery and the authorship of the work are recounted in Jacquot, ‘Notes on an Unpublished Work’, (pp. 188-90). In his introduction to *De motu* Jacquot portrays the work as an early draft of *De corpore*.

¹³⁷ Hobbes, *DCo.* (3.15.2, p. 206); The confirmation that ‘endeavour’ is Hobbes’s translation for ‘*conatus*’ is corroborated via the Latin edition of the previous year: ‘Primo definiemus *Conatum esse motum per spatium et tempus minus quam quod datur.*’ See Thomas Hobbes, *De corpore: Elementorum philosophiae sectio prima [1655]*, ed. Karl Schuhmann (Paris: J. Vrin, 1999) (p. 155). In the second paragraph of the section Hobbes presents the definition of *conatus* which appeared in *De motu* when he writes, ‘In like manner, endeavour is to be conceived as motion.’

and time had, as we have just seen, already been noted by Galen's presentation of the Stoic idea of bodily tension as the 'result of the speed and suddenness of the changes and the minute distance of the movements.' What *De corpore* does then is to make the Stoic view more explicit by situating it prominently within the newly enlarged definition of *conatus*. Continuing to emphasise the speed with which conatic motions occur, Hobbes argues that a body's 'impetus' or quickness of motion is in fact nothing more than the quantity or velocity of its endeavours.¹³⁸ By referring to the speed and imperceptibility of a body's *conatus* Hobbes is attempting to capture for the reader the precise 'moment' at which he believes a body's impulse, force or active tendency is initiated.¹³⁹

Endeavour is also reaffirmed as the reason why all motive bodies are able to resist destruction and preserve their own motions after coming into contact with other bodies. The resistant tendencies of bodies had only been briefly hinted at in *De motu*, wherein resistance was said to be a reaction, and all reactions are actions which are themselves nothing but motions. In *De corpore*, however, this internal tendency is fleshed out definitionally rather than deductively. Resistance is now, for example, said to be 'the endeavour of one moved body either completely or partially contrary to the endeavour of another mobile body,' occurring when two bodies come into physical contact with each other.¹⁴⁰ This resistance manifests itself through a body's 'pressing' on the other body, whereby the pressing body's *conatus* can partially or wholly displace the pressed body. However, while the *conatus* of one body may enable it to advance on another body through pressing, the pressed body is not entirely without means of restoring itself. Endeavouring is also responsible for aiding in the restoration of the body and its affected parts, as bodies 'by reason of [their] internal constitution, return every one of [their] parts into its own place.'¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Hobbes, *DCo.* (3.15.2, p. 207).

¹³⁹ Jeffrey Barnouw, 'The Psychological Sense and Moral and Political Significance of 'Endeavor' in Hobbes', in Daniella Bostrenghi (ed.), *Hobbes e Spinoza: Scienza e Politica* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1992), 399-416 (p. 401).

¹⁴⁰ Hobbes, *DCo.* (p. 211).

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

This internal tendency can again be observed in everyday objects such as springs, blown bladders and other bodies that rely on their *conatus* to restore them back to their normal and unaffected state after having been compressed. That these types of bodies are able to continually resist and restore themselves, Hobbes believes, is a testament to the ceaseless activity of the body's conative motion.¹⁴²

The purportedly endless strivings of a body's *conatus* may also be said to demonstrate how Hobbes's account of motion came to oppose what Aristotle and the scholastics had long claimed about bodies and their motions. In the Aristotelian model of motion substance always remained immobile within a process of change.¹⁴³ As Spragens points out, this rendered motion as something that 'takes place within the immutable boundaries of immanent form,' thus making a movement something that was both limited and finite.¹⁴⁴ Change also occurred within such boundaries, and this belief is what gave rise to Aristotle's argument that changes took place 'from something to something.'¹⁴⁵ The emphasis on the 'to' had in turn infused the Aristotelian-based accounts of motion, from the scholasticism of the Middle Ages through to what Hobbes had learned at Oxford at the turn of the seventeenth century, with overtones of completeness, wholeness and as having satisfied some natural end.¹⁴⁶ As we have seen in Hobbes's account of *conatus*, however, the movements of physical bodies are unordered, unstructured and, in the absence of resistance, unlimited. They are also 'endless and aimless' – a characterisation intended to overturn the Aristotelian 'from ... to ...' presentation for one in which motion exists as a perpetual chain of linked but goalless movements. As Hobbes had indicated early on in *De corpore*, the account of *conatus* that appeared there was directed at the 'writers of metaphysics' who designed other causes for consideration. In addition to

¹⁴² 'All endeavour, whether strong or weak, is propagated to infinite distance. [...] [In the face of resistance] it does not matter that endeavour, by proceeding, grows weaker and weaker, until at last it cannot be perceived by sense. For motion may be insensible; and I do not here examine things by sense and experience, but by reason.' Hobbes, *DCo.* (3.15.7, pp. 216-17).

¹⁴³ Aristotle, *Physics* (5.2, 225b10ff., p. 381).

¹⁴⁴ Spragens, *The Politics of Motion* (p. 56).

¹⁴⁵ Aristotle, *Physics* (5.1, 225a, p. 380).

¹⁴⁶ Spragens, *The Politics of Motion* (p. 57).

a body's efficient and material causes, they had counted a body's formal and final causes alongside. Yet for Hobbes a body's essence and end is the same as its efficient causes, and *conatus* represents this. The only bodies that might be said to operate in accordance with a final cause, Hobbes concludes, are those which possess sense and will, and even then he takes these to be the efficient causes of their motions.¹⁴⁷ Yet despite this explicit rejection of the teleological portrayal of motion favoured by Aristotle and others, like Aristotle, Hobbes extends his understanding of motion to all types of bodies. Aristotle had argued that the movements of physical, animal and human bodies all remained subject to the dictates of motion while the Hobbesian account held that all types of movements, regardless of the body they occur in, tended towards the 'purposeless, automatic preservation of an original impetus.'¹⁴⁸

The emphasis Hobbes places on the ability of *conatus* to preserve the original impetus of a body, as well as to resist and restore it, has served as a source of disagreement in the literature. In Spragens's view Hobbesian *conatus* is intended to 'transform the Aristotelian concept of *hormê*' so that 'the basic urge becomes not self-fulfilment (the actualisation of potentiality) but self-preservation.'¹⁴⁹ All organisms, by virtue of possessing *conatus*, thus act in accordance with natural tendencies or inherent strivings and these strivings, as we have seen in both *De motu* and *De corpore*, appear to take as their concern the promoting of the body's ability to resist and persist rather than the fulfilment of any *telos*. Yet Jeffrey Barnouw has criticised Spragens's assessment by suggesting that it is 'basically misleading' to link *conatus* singularly with self-preservation or inertial motion.¹⁵⁰ Instead, he interprets Hobbesian *conatus* as 'essentially plural, a multiplicity of active tendencies, incipient and incremental, which are caused by and have reference to particular objects of

¹⁴⁷ Hobbes, *DCo.* (2.10.7, pp. 131-32).

¹⁴⁸ Spragens, *The Politics of Motion* (p. 68).

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.* (p. 70).

¹⁵⁰ Barnouw, 'Endeavor' in Hobbes', (p. 407). In an earlier statement of this view 'inertial motion' is altogether omitted from the sentence. See Barnouw, 'Hobbes's Psychology of Thought', (p. 524).

desire and aversion.’¹⁵¹ As a result, Hobbes does not ‘hypostatise the urge to self-preservation into a unity drive which would engross all particular aims.’¹⁵² However, while the motions of desire and aversion may help to isolate the psychological dimensions of *conatus*, the physical usages in *De motu* and *De corpore* are enough to overturn Barnouw’s assertion that conative motion is not directed towards the body’s self-preservation. The ‘self’ part of the equation may be found, for example, in the fact that *conatus* is intrinsic and that it cannot be conceived of as something distinct from the body’s actual motion. The ‘preservation’ aspect becomes apparent when one considers what it is that each invocation of endeavour has in common. While it is true that Hobbes never explicitly states anywhere in his natural philosophy that ‘bodies endeavour to preserve themselves,’ he regards endeavouring as inseparable from such self-preserving movements as resistance, reaction and the ability of a body to restore its parts after a collision. Though these may appear as a multiplicity of tendencies, Hobbes’s separate treatment of them cannot obscure the fact that each of these movements is related by their shared role in preserving the shape, speed and internal motions that constitute a physical body.

Having now seen how physical bodies are moved as well as preserved through the unobservable and infinite strivings of their *conatus*, and with the potential Hellenistic elements of Hobbes’s argument identified, let us proceed to consider how Hobbes envisioned ‘endeavouring’ operating within more complex types of bodies. The physical descriptions of *conatus* may better situate us for understanding why it was that Hobbes believed his ethical portrayal of *conatus* shared a terminological and conceptual similarity with the ancient Greek accounts. In conjoining *conatus* with an animal’s hormetic and aphormetic tendencies Hobbes’s writings may further be said to reproduce the same sets of claims and arguments that had featured so prominently in Stoic and Epicurean ethics. What remains to be seen in the accounts of how these voluntary motions contribute to the preservation of the animal’s body is the level of

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

importance Hobbes ascribes to the factors of pleasure and pain in moving the animal towards or away from a perceived object. If Hobbes can be shown to make pleasure and pain an integral part of the animal's deliberative process, then we will have strong support for an Epicurean reading of his views. However, if Hobbes is found arguing that the first voluntary movements of the animal's body are in fact directed towards its self-preservation, instead of the acquisition of pleasure, then a case for his thought as Stoic in character can be demonstrated.

Self-Preservation in Hobbes's Moral Psychology

The ability of motion to explain the most basic behaviours of animals was a point which Hobbes considered frequently. In both his manuscripts and published writings, Hobbes would refine continuously the idea that perceived external motions were the causes responsible for initiating a sequence of mental and bodily motions necessary for sustaining the animal. By choosing to explain self-preservation and conative motion via the apparatus of the senses, however, much of Hobbes's position had already been covered by the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers when they highlighted the close links between *phantasia* and self-preservation as part of their own ethical writings. This external-internal method could be found being recommended, for example, by the Stoic Hierocles, whose views had become more prominent thanks to the parallel Latin-Greek editions of Johann Stobaeus's *Eclogae* which had begun to appear during the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries.¹⁵³ By way of introduction to the school's ethics, he wrote, 'It seems right to say a few words about sensation. For this contributes to knowledge of the first thing which is appropriate, the subject which we said would be the best starting-point for the elements of ethics. We should realise that as soon as an animal is born it perceives itself [and ...] its own parts. ... Both that it has them and for what purpose it has them, and we ourselves

¹⁵³ Among the editions of the *Eclogae* which appeared around this time were those published at Venice in 1536, at Zurich in 1559, at Antwerp in 1575, and at Lyon in 1620.

perceive our eyes and our ears and the rest.’¹⁵⁴ Self-perception, however, was rooted in the operations of the senses and it was through them that all self-preserving actions originated. As Stobaeus continues:

What activates impulse is precisely an impression capable of directly impelling a proper function. In genus, impulse is a movement of the soul towards something. In species, it is seen to include both the impulse which occurs in rational animals and the one found in the non-rational; but these species have not been given corresponding names. For desire is not a rational impulse, but a species of this. One would correctly define rational impulse by saying that it is a movement of thought towards something in the sphere of action. The contrary of this is repulsion.¹⁵⁵

Sense perception had also featured prominently in Epicurean philosophy. Such was its importance to the Epicurean philosophers that they proffered sensation as the universal criterion of truth and the basis for explaining a wide range of bodily functions.¹⁵⁶ Like the Stoics and Epicureans, Hobbes chooses sense perception as his entry point into the psychology of animals, and in his writings one can find sensory-derived movements of thought characterised in desiderative and repulsive terms. That he should choose this specific entry point into animal activity also seems plausible because, as authors such as Schuhmann and Tuck have forcefully argued, it

¹⁵⁴ Hierocles (1.34-9, 51-7) as reproduced in Long and Sedley, *H.Phil.* (57C).

¹⁵⁵ Stobaeus, *Eclogae* (2.86.17-87.6) as reproduced in *ibid.* (53Q). As Long and Sedley point out in their analysis of how the Stoics understood the force of perceptions, ‘Logically, and within a creature’s experience, impression is the primary faculty. In the same context, Hierocles insists that an animal immediately on birth ‘perceives itself’, and that self-perception is prior to any perception of externals. Self-perception, or recognition of the kind of animal one is, seems to be the outcome of the fact that body and soul are constantly conjoined and interacting. [...] Soul interaction can be so translated (most literally, ‘striking against’ and ‘being struck in return’): from this interaction an awareness or ‘impression’ in the mental sense results. Most basically then, while this will frequently refer to sense-perception, we may take the faculty itself to cover all states of awareness, including pleasures and pains, which were explained as objects of ‘internal touch.’ Long and Sedley, *H.Phil.* (p. 321).

¹⁵⁶ See Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (4.479ff., p. 113) and Laetius, *Lives* (10.49-53).

was due to the inadequacies of the existing accounts of sense perception that Hobbes first began writing philosophy.¹⁵⁷

Although Hobbes discusses appetite and aversion in *De homine*, the section dedicated to human nature in his philosophical trilogy, the details of these motivating forces had been laid out previously in his 1640 manuscript *The Elements of Law*, a work whose circulation hastened Hobbes's departure from an England rife with royal and parliamentary tension.¹⁵⁸ These views had also been expounded upon once Hobbes had settled into Mersenne's circle in Paris, most notably in the later sections of *De motu*. The *Elements*, however, had given Hobbes his first opportunity to lay out for his readers the method by which he intended to elucidate the nature of appetite and aversion and to survey the 'powers' and 'principal parts' which comprised humans. According to Hobbes, human nature is reducible to the 'sum' of an individual's natural faculties and powers, which include nutrition, motion, generation, sense, and reason among others.¹⁵⁹ These faculties may themselves be sub-divided into two categories that pertain to either mind or body. Because the powers of the body can be understood in multiple ways, Hobbes's intends to keep his account focused solely on the nutritive, generative, and motive powers. The powers

¹⁵⁷ See the introduction to *DCo. (L)* where Schuhmann argues, 'Il est en effet bien connu que la réduction du sentir au mouvement local constitua l'une des toutes premières intuitions philosophiques de Hobbes; elle lui fournit même la maxime fondamentale de sa physique, commandant d'expliquer tous les phénomènes naturels par le mouvement local.' (xxi) [It is in effect well-known that the reduction of sensing to local movement constitutes one of the very first philosophical intuitions of Hobbes. It furnishes to him even the fundamental maxim of his physics, ordering to explain all the natural phenomena by local movement.] For Tuck, addressing the validity of optics became Hobbes's way of not only delivering up a 'set of *a priori* principles' around which his own physical or ethical science could be based, but it also served as a means of demolishing the sceptic worldview which held that no knowledge could be derived from the senses. See Richard Tuck, 'Optics and Sceptics: The Philosophical Foundations of Hobbes's Political Thought', in Edmund Leites (ed.), *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe* (Ideas in Context; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 235-63 (p. 238). The difference between these accounts and its potential application to the *Short Treatise* is that while Schuhmann believes Hobbes was the author of the manuscript, Tuck does not.

¹⁵⁸ 'Of this treatise, though not printed, many gentlemen had copies, which occasioned much talk of the author; and had not his majesty dissolved the Parliament, it had brought him in danger of his life. Bishop Manwaring (of St. David's) preached [Hobbes's] doctrine, for which, among others, he was sent prisoner to the Tower. Then though Mr. Hobbes, it is time now for me to shift for myself, and so withdrew into France, and resided at Paris. This little manuscript treatise grew to be his book *De cive*, and at last grew there to be the so formidable *Leviathan*.' Aubrey, *BL* (p. 151).

¹⁵⁹ Hobbes, *EL* (1.1.4, p. 2).

of the mind can be adequately covered under the headings of imaginative and motive.¹⁶⁰ Highlighting what will serve as the basis of his natural philosophy in later works, Hobbes uses the motions of the mind and body to explain how it is that animals strive to preserve themselves.

It is through the dynamics of sensation, which is the mental conception an object produces,¹⁶¹ that Hobbes lays out the sources from which he believes all voluntary motions originate in the animal body. When animals perceive an image, they are in effect sensing the ‘apparition’ of an object’s ‘motion, agitation, or alteration’. These apparitions continue beyond the immediate realm of the sense organs and continue to operate within the animal’s brain, spirits, or what Hobbes calls ‘some internal substance of the head.’¹⁶² These apparitions or ‘seemings’ exist as intermediaries through which animals and humans interact with the external world, and Hobbes goes so far as to suggest that these motions are all that exist; there can be no accidents or qualities of body despite what our senses may lead us to believe since ‘nothing can make any thing in itself.’¹⁶³

Building on the idea of apparitions as motions in the mind, Hobbes attempts to demonstrate how these motions proceed to affect the body itself. Of particular importance to showing how the motions of the mind proceed to the heart and back is the notion of ‘endeavouring’ or what Hobbes believes is the ‘internal beginning of animal motion,’ which is responsible for ‘soliciting’ us towards those things which appear delightful and which ‘provokes’ us into avoiding those things that appear displeasing.¹⁶⁴ As motions travel down from the sense receptors in the mind to the heart they can either help or hinder the body’s vital motions, an interaction which prompts one of two possible responses.¹⁶⁵ If these sensory motions help the vital motion continue then they elicit a feeling of delight, pleasure or contentment, while

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. (1.1.6-7).

¹⁶¹ Ibid. (1.2.2, p. 3); Hobbes, *DM* (fol. 338, p. 368).

¹⁶² Hobbes, *EL* (1.2.3, p. 4).

¹⁶³ Ibid. (1.2.9-10, p. 7).

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. (1.7.2, p. 28).

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. (1.7.1, p. 28); Hobbes, *DM* (fol. 338v, p. 365).

the sensory motions which hinder the vital motion instil a sense of pain.¹⁶⁶ These motions are therefore said to ‘consist’ in either pleasure or pain, and it is because of their effects on the body’s vital motion that we are solicited or provoked into a specific action.¹⁶⁷ In using the term ‘consists’ to characterise the delightful and painful aspects of *conatus*, Hobbes may be seen to underscore the tight relationship that these two divergent psychological elements share with the animal’s overriding desire to preserve itself.

Although Hobbes does not elaborate on what exactly these ‘vital motions’ are in either the *Elements* or *De motu*, his description of them in *De corpore* indicates that they are intended to refer to the heart’s ability to circulate blood.¹⁶⁸ In that text, Hobbes had also suggested that these motions possessed both a resiliency and an ability to resist disruption if they were impeded by the ‘actions of sensible objects.’ As the body bends and straightens itself, it undergoes a process of self-restoration, the effect of an in-built tendency that confirms Hobbes’s view that every body progresses towards a state of greater ease and aptitude.¹⁶⁹ This would also support the larger characterisation of the heart as a physical body like any other; when it is acted upon or moved it also acts or reacts.¹⁷⁰ From these responsive actions the motions, which travel back from the heart towards the mind, thus originate and either an imagination or bodily motion results.¹⁷¹

The acquisition of things that aid the vital motion has a direct role to play in how successful the animal will be in preserving itself. However, in opposing the views of

¹⁶⁶ Hobbes, *EL* (1.7.1, p. 28); Hobbes, *DM* (fols. 348v-349, p. 377).

¹⁶⁷ Hobbes, *EL* (1.7.2, p. 28); This motion-based account of psychology remains intact in *De motu*, where Hobbes replaces the terms ‘solicitation’ and ‘provocation’ with a singular conatic ‘urge’ to describe how the body towards or away from the object. Hobbes, *DM* (fol. 349, p. 378).

¹⁶⁸ William Harvey had published his account of the blood’s circulation in *Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis et sanguinis in animalibus* in 1628. In *De corpore* Hobbes acknowledges him as his source: ‘Vital motion is the motion of the blood, perpetually circulating (as has been shown from many infallible signs and marks by Doctor Harvey, the first observer of it) in the veins and arteries.’ Hobbes, *DCo.* (4.25.12, p. 407).

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*; cf. Hobbes, *DM* (fol. 119v, p. 149); Hobbes, *EL* (1.5.14, p. 23).

¹⁷⁰ Hobbes, *DM* (fol. 338v, p. 365).

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.* (fol. 339); In *Elements of Law* these imaginations are said to be ‘weaker’ than the initial sensory derived imaginations. See Hobbes, *EL* (1.7.4, p. 29).

scholars such as David Gauthier and Paul Hurley, Bernard Gert has attempted to dismiss these vital motions by suggesting that they in fact ‘held no great interest for Hobbes.’¹⁷² The vital motions, he argues, were not themselves worth detailing because they are senseless and, although essential to the human organism, operate regardless of our mental state. If they do hold any relevance, it is only because ‘they could explain how a materialist account of psychology can be made compatible with an accurate explanation of human behaviour.’¹⁷³ However, Gert believes no such explanation is important for Hobbes’s philosophy. But this seems to miss the point entirely. As we have seen so far, it is precisely the promotion and hindering of these supposedly ‘irrelevant’ vital motions that makes animal activity intelligible and provides the emotions with a common point of reference. By suggesting that the end of our appetites and aversion is the maintenance of this motion, Hobbes’s account of animal psychology is penetrated by his materialism and takes this vital motion as its *raison d’être*. This would therefore support Hurley’s contention that Hobbes saw animals as ‘self-maintaining engines, with bodies biologically programmed to increase vital motion, which accounts not only for the necessary status of self-preservation, but also for its status as the ultimate, lexically prior end as well.’¹⁷⁴ One cannot therefore simply write off the vital motions as irrelevant since they remain central to how Hobbes explains the motive forces that operate on all animal bodies. Indeed as Gauthier has argued the point, Hobbes wanted to characterise all natural phenomena in terms of motion, which would make all animate things definable precisely by those motions that they shared commonly, and the vital motion was the most important of those motions.¹⁷⁵

In light of the close interconnection between pleasure and pain and the animal’s desires and aversions it is tempting to see in Hobbes’s introduction to the voluntary

¹⁷² Bernard Gert, ‘Hobbes’s Psychology’, in Tom Sorell (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 157-74 (p. 159).

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Hurley, ‘The Many Appetites of Thomas Hobbes’, (p. 396).

¹⁷⁵ David P. Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan: The Moral and Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969) (p. 5).

motions the views of the Epicureans when they spoke of the means by which tranquillity was achieved in mind and body. As Epicurus wrote to Menoeceus, when one considers natural desires ‘it [becomes] possible to refer every choice and avoidance to the health of the body and the soul’s freedom from disturbance, since this is the end belonging to the blessed life.’¹⁷⁶ This freedom from disturbance is what everyone aims at in their actions – namely relief from pain and anxiety. As we have already seen, pleasure was itself inextricably bound up with the senses and had been touched upon by Cicero’s Epicurean spokesman Torquatus in his defence of the school’s chief good:

The pleasure we pursue is not that kind alone which directly affects our physical being [actual nature] with a delightful feeling, - a positively agreeable perception of the senses [in company with a certain delight]; the greatest pleasure according to us is that which is experienced [perceived] as a result of the complete removal of pain.¹⁷⁷

What appears to yoke the Hobbesian and Epicurean positions together is their equal stress on the ability of pain to stymie or restrain the animal’s activity in some way. This characterisation is captured for Hobbes by the word ‘hindrance’ while for the Epicureans the obstacle of pain is intended to be a negation of their notion of pleasure as a type of ‘emancipation’ from emotional or physical uneasiness. Casting pain as a type of ‘brake’ on the soul, Epicurus had argued that once pain is removed a state of equanimity arises. ‘The tempest of the soul is laid; seeing that the living creature has no need to go in search of something that is lacking, nor to look for anything else by which the good of the soul and of the body will be fulfilled.’¹⁷⁸ As a result, those who properly understand what contributes to the pleasure of the soul and mind will ‘direct every preference and aversion toward securing the health of body and tranquillity of mind, seeing that this is the sum and end of a blessed life.’¹⁷⁹ And this state of mind and body seemingly reflects the state of ease towards which

¹⁷⁶ Laertius, *Lives* (10.127-28).

¹⁷⁷ Cicero, *De fin.* (1.37) with the translation from Long and Sedley (21A) interpolated.

¹⁷⁸ Laertius, *Lives* (10.128).

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Hobbes believes all animals eventually tend.¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, when Hobbes turns to explain the relationship between pleasure and the ends of an appetitive motion, he argues that once the desired object has been obtained then the motion also terminates. At this point the animal experiences a specific delight called ‘fruition’ which has the effect of rendering the good and the end as nothing other than different ‘considerations’ of the same thing.¹⁸¹ The possibility that the end and the good were separable was a question which Cicero had also posed to his Epicurean interlocutor when he asked, ‘How can we possibly know what the nature of [the end of goods] is without comparing notes as to what we mean [...] by the term ‘end’ and by the term ‘good’ itself?’¹⁸² In Torquatus’s response one can sense an endorsement of the Hobbesian position: ‘Pleasure is the end of things desirable, the final and ultimate good.’¹⁸³

With pleasure and pain playing such an active and noticeable role in Hobbes’s account of voluntary actions, it would appear that an Epicurean interpretation of his position would be the most appropriate. However, contained within his account of conative motion are subtleties and particular nuances of argument that suggest that Hobbes’s understanding of these self-preserving motions owes more to the Stoics than might at first appear to be the case. This can best be demonstrated by closely considering the relationship pleasure and pain share with the body’s vital motions. In the *Elements*, the body is said to possess a ‘motion in which consists pleasure or pain’; but, as we have already seen, each of these emergent aspects is only understandable in the context of its ability to promote or hinder the body’s vital motion.¹⁸⁴ Pleasure and pain therefore exist in Hobbes’s psychology as the two by-products responsible for explaining whether the body has been able to preserve itself from an externally perceived threat. This may then explain why pleasure never usurps the preservation of the vital motions as the animal’s primary concern, which it

¹⁸⁰ Hobbes, *EL* (1.5.14, p. 23).

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.* (1.7.5, p. 29).

¹⁸² Cicero, *De fin.* (2.5).

¹⁸³ *Ibid.* (2.6).

¹⁸⁴ Hobbes, *EL* (1.7.2).

would have to do for an Epicurean rather than Stoic interpretation to be successful. Instead, as Hobbes has already suggested, once we attain pleasure we experience fruition and this concludes the particular endeavouring. Moreover, some ends reveal themselves as either *propinqui* (near) or *remoti* (farther off).¹⁸⁵ Over the course of their lives, animals ceaselessly desire objects, and desire always presupposes for Hobbes a ‘farther end’. In particular, pleasing things may be considered as the way or means to these further ends, and indeed, we are right to call them profitable.¹⁸⁶ What Hobbes is suggesting, then, is that as we continue to succeed in promoting our vital motion, we continue to experience pleasure, and as the need to promote the vital motion remains with us throughout our life, the end of the greatest pleasure always remains far off.

The case for self-preservation as the greatest good is made more explicit in a later section of the *Elements* and Hobbes’s other treatments of human nature, most particularly in *De homine*. For Hobbes there are two sorts of pleasures that the animal may experience - one related to the body and another related to the mind. The greatest sensual pleasures, Hobbes writes, are those that result from our ‘giving continuance to our species; and the next, by which a man is invited to meat, for the preservation of his individual person.’¹⁸⁷ In each of these sensual pleasures the focus always remains on the preservation of the body, either indirectly through offspring or through direct reference to nutrition.¹⁸⁸ This case is put far more directly in *De homine*, though, when after reiterating the nature of appetite and aversion, Hobbes claims:

The greatest of goods for each is his own preservation. For nature is so arranged that all desire good for themselves. Insofar as it is within their

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. (1.7.6).

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. (1.7.9).

¹⁸⁸ This recalls the earlier division outlined in *EL* 1.1.6.

capacities, it is necessary to desire life, health, and further, insofar as it can be done, security of future time.¹⁸⁹

However, while death may be counted as ‘the greatest of all evils,’ Hobbes also believes individuals may sometimes prefer death if the pains of life become too much to bear.¹⁹⁰ Although Hobbes does not say as much, we might suspect that he is here tacitly advocating the potential of suicide to render death as a good, a view which would tie him to another Stoic position.¹⁹¹ However, this point is not dwelt on at any length as the status of self-preservation as the greatest good is immediately trumpeted again through a consideration of things such as the notion of power and the utility of friendship.

The status of self-preservation as the ‘greatest of goods’ is perhaps best explained through certain dispositions that Hobbes believes each individual possesses and acts in accordance with. On his view, our dispositions or inclinations towards certain things derive from a six-fold source, with the constitution of the body appearing at the top of the list.¹⁹² That it should appear there at the expense of pleasure and pain is due to the fact that previously the motivating powers of the pleasurable things of the flesh had been dismissed for being ‘excessively well-known, their pleasure balanced by loathing, and because some of them are offensive.’¹⁹³ Furthermore, given the importance of the body’s constitution and its ability to move us into action, and the fact that it does this over the course of an individual’s entire life, it seems Hobbes may have intended to graft it onto another type of pleasure. Beyond the pleasures of the flesh, Hobbes also suggests that

¹⁸⁹ Hobbes, *DH* (11.6, p. 48).

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*; Hobbes, *DM* (fol. 372v, p. 408).

¹⁹¹ ‘They [the Stoics] tell us that the wise man will for reasonable cause make his own exit from life, on his country’s behalf or for the sake of his friends, or if he suffer intolerable pain, mutilation, or incurable disease.’ Laertius, *Lives* (7.130); ‘When a man’s circumstances contain a preponderance of things in accordance with nature, it is appropriate for him to remain alive; when he possesses or sees in prospect a majority of the contrary things, it is appropriate for him to depart life.’ Cicero, *De fin.* (3.60-61); also see Stobaeus, *Anthology* (II.11m) as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [II-95].

¹⁹² Hobbes, *DH* (13.1, p. 63).

¹⁹³ *Ibid.* (11.15, p. 53).

individuals seek out ‘felicity’ because its acquisition is unattainable in the present life. Because the pursuit of self-preservation requires continuous efforts which are the result of ceaseless desires, its position as the ‘greatest good’ owes to its unique ability to allow any sensation of pleasure to occur at all.

Having established the important position which self-preservation enjoys in Hobbes’s psychology, let us now proceed to consider in which ways his account of animal motion reiterates some of the Stoic philosophers’ own contentions. Firstly, the pre-eminent status of self-preservation and the constitution of the body as the starting point for an animal’s inclinations had been a common feature in every Stoic account of ethics. Secondly, one could find them portraying pleasure as a subordinate motivating factor. In the pages of Seneca, the body’s constitution had been referred to as ‘the leading part of the soul in a certain disposition relative to the body.’¹⁹⁴ Given the primacy of the body’s awareness of its powers and the ways in which it is constituted, he had propounded the school’s view of psychology which held that all animals were ‘compelled to understand what is dangerous [...] and] that as soon as each animal takes its safety to be congenial, it seeks what will help it and fears what will harm it.’¹⁹⁵ Central to this and other accounts of Stoic ‘personal’ *oikeiōsis* was the belief that there existed a specific natural impulse that directed the animal towards what was useful and away from what was harmful. Because this impulse was deemed to be both natural and primary, the Stoics believed that it was unnecessary for ‘thought to enunciate it,’ or for any planning to be made to experience its effect.¹⁹⁶ Hobbes, who had argued in his account of human psychology in the *Elements* and his account of sovereign power in *De cive* that when it came to the ‘necessaries’ of appetites and fears there was no room for deliberation, had likewise captured this immediacy.¹⁹⁷ The fact that that these ‘necessaries’ were brought on through an impulse or inclination was another point around which

¹⁹⁴ Seneca, *Ep.* 121.10 as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [II-107].

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* (121.21).

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Hobbes, *EL* (1.12.2); Hobbes, *DC* (6.3, p. 77).

Hobbes can be said to have joined with his Stoic predecessors. As Hobbes indicated in *Leviathan*, but noticeably fails to replicate in his other accounts of human nature, his own usage of appetites and aversions conforms to the ancient Greek terms ‘*hormê*’ and ‘*aphormê*’.¹⁹⁸ That natural inclination had a useful role to play in explaining things such as appetite and aversion had been a sentiment that had featured in both Cicero’s examination of the mind and in Diogenes Laertius’s restatement of the earlier Stoic positions. As the former wrote: ‘the natural composition of the mind is twofold: the first component consists of the appetites, which the Greeks call *hormê*, and which provide the spur and constantly changing direction of the passions. The second consists of reason, which teaches and explains what should be done and what avoided.’¹⁹⁹ Hobbes had vehemently rejected any division between what might be called the ‘rational’ appetite and the ‘animal’ appetite, but he did support an account of a sensory-derived *conatus* that relied on deliberation to explain how it was that an animal decided which objects to pursue and which to avoid.²⁰⁰ This cognitive dimension of the passions is a point we will consider shortly.

That self-preservation always looms largely within the deliberative process is also sketched out in detail in *De motu*. Recalling the analogy of the sinking ship found in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, Hobbes argues that the necessary causes which contribute to our preservation provide an inducement for us to throw the goods overboard during a storm because ‘we expect to receive a greater evil by doing than by not doing.’²⁰¹ The reason we choose to surrender our goods in this situation, and hence act voluntarily, is because ‘of all the good things’ the possession of these goods might confer, they can never ‘outweigh the greatest of the evil ones, namely

¹⁹⁸ Hobbes, *Lev.* (6, p. 38).

¹⁹⁹ Cicero, *De Off.* (1.28, p. 74); also see Cicero, *De fin.* (3.23): ‘And just as our limbs are so fashioned that it is clear that they were bestowed upon us with a view to a certain mode of life, so our faculty of appetite, in Greek *hormê*, was obviously designed not for any kind of life one may choose, but for a particular mode of living.’

²⁰⁰ Hobbes, *EL* (1.12.2), Hobbes, *DM* (fol. 410v, p. 447), Hobbes, *Lev.* (6, p. 44).

²⁰¹ Hobbes, *DM* (fol. 372, pp. 407-8).

sudden death.’²⁰² At this juncture it would be difficult indeed to reconcile Hobbes’s sentiment with the central Epicurean contention that ‘death is nothing to us.’²⁰³ In opting to save ourselves by throwing the goods into the sea, we demonstrate the important ability to choose between our short-term goods and long-term existence, or what Hobbes believes is a rapid exchange between appetites and aversions.

The Stoics would have remained the primary and most readily available source for Hobbes to garner additional support for his position that self-preservation always remained the animal’s primary concern or that pleasure could never replace self-preservation as the most important motivating factor in animal psychology. In direct refutation of the Epicurean position and by extension those later authors such as Gassendi who would continue to provide pleasure with a favoured position in their ethics,²⁰⁴ Diogenes had presented the Stoic hierarchy as a clear alternative. In their accounting, pleasure could not be counted the first impulse of animals because it only arose only *after* they had ‘sought and found the means suitable to the animal’s existence or constitution. As such, it was said to be a ‘by-product’ or ‘aftermath’ comparable to ‘the condition of animals thriving and plants in full bloom.’²⁰⁵

Moreover, in the work of Cicero one could locate the Stoic equivalent of Hobbes’s characterisation of the satiable pleasures as being loathsome and ‘offensive’. In his own account as to why the impulse to self-preservation always takes precedence over the impulse to pleasure, Cicero had suggested why the Stoics adhered to this ranking. ‘Pleasure,’ they argue, ‘is not to be reckoned among the primary objects of natural impulse [...] for fear [of the] many immoral consequences would follow if we held that nature has placed pleasure among the earliest objects of

²⁰² Ibid. (fol. 372v, p. 408); Aristotle, *EN* (3.1, 1110a4-19, p. 1752).

²⁰³ Laetius, *Lives* (10.125); Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (3.830-69, pp. 89-90).

²⁰⁴ Gassendi had opened his *Exercitationes* with an outline of his proposed method for rehabilitating Epicurean philosophy, and for the book concerning moral philosophy he wrote: ‘It hardly requires a lengthy capitulation. In one word, it teaches Epicurus’s doctrine of pleasure by showing in what way the greatest good consists of pleasure and how the reward of human deed and virtues is based on this principle.’ Gassendi, *Selected Works* (3.102); also see the chapter entitled ‘The Ethics of Pleasure and Freedom’ in Sarasohn, *Gassendi's Ethics: Freedom in a Mechanistic Universe* (pp. 51-76).

²⁰⁵ Laetius, *Lives* (7.86).

desire.²⁰⁶ Part of the reason why an appetite to pleasure could not exist as the irreducible element in a psychological theory, both Hobbes and the Stoics argued, is that it was prone to change over time, thus making pleasure difficult to define objectively. As Hobbes wrote, ‘because the constitution of a man’s body is in continual mutation, it is impossible that all the same things should always cause in him the same appetites and aversions; much less can all men consent, in the desire of almost any one and the same object.’²⁰⁷ The ‘almost’ is perhaps the most telling part of Hobbes’s statement. Given that pleasure means different things to different people, what always remains the irreducible object of any pursuit is the preservation of the individual. The idea that pleasure was a fleeting and ‘mutative’ good had also been highlighted by Seneca, who had used these properties to argue pleasure always remained subordinate to the animal’s desire for self-preservation:

The animal finds itself congenial; for there must be something to which all else can be referred. I seek pleasure. For whose sake? Mine. Therefore, I am looking out for myself. I flee pain. For whose sake? My own. Therefore, I am looking out for myself. If I do everything in order to look out for myself, then looking out for myself is prior to everything else. This concern for oneself is in all animals; it is not acquired, it is innate.²⁰⁸

The Stoics had also relied on the terms *hormê* and its Latin variant *conatus* to explain the origins of the animal’s voluntary and self-preserving actions. Throughout Stoic philosophy these terms became shorthand ways of capturing the naturalness of an animal’s most primitive psychological tendency. *Hormê*, Cicero wrote, was designed to bring the animal’s actions into conformity with nature, and hence, to secure what the school argued was the Chief Good. From this harmony arose happiness, with the result that all ‘wise men at all times enjoy a happy, perfect and fortunate life, free

²⁰⁶ Cicero, *De fin.* (3.17).

²⁰⁷ Hobbes, *Lev.* (6, p. 39).

²⁰⁸ Seneca, *Ep.* 121.16-17 as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [II-107].

from all hindrance, interference or want.’²⁰⁹ What is interesting is that the Stoics, much as the Epicureans had done with the natural impulse to pleasure, characterise the animal’s ability to pursue this desired good as a type of ‘freedom’ or what Hobbes had argued was an unhindered action. After declaring self-preservation to be the ‘greatest good’ Hobbes can be found concluding his account of animal psychology in *De homine* in a way that emphasises the concluding sentiment of Cicero’s argument:

For of goods, the greatest is always progressing towards even further ends with the least hindrance. Even the enjoyment of a desire, when we are enjoying it, is an appetite, namely a motion of the mind to enjoy by parts, the thing that it is enjoying. For life is perpetual motion that, when it cannot progress in a straight line, is converted into circular motion.²¹⁰

The question of the voluntary brings us to another of the major areas of affinity between Hobbes and the Stoics, the nature of the will. According to Hobbes, while animals are free to act on the basis of their appetites and aversions, they not free to decide what their appetites and desires are. Hence any ‘willed’ action is necessitated rather than free.²¹¹ As he writes in *De motu*, ‘Actions alone are voluntary; passions and faculties, such as feeling, understanding, loving, fearing, wishing and not wishing are not voluntary.’²¹² This determinism is highlighted a few pages later when he portrays the freedom of animals as ‘merely the exchange or reciprocation of appetite and aversion; and the reason for this that appetite and revulsion, and the will of all animals, have their causes. The said alteration is correctly called freedom, because the impediment [to action] works not through external factors but through internal, i.e. through the intellect and through the mind-picture of things to be chosen; for if the will lacked a cause, [the will itself] would be

²⁰⁹ Cicero, *De fin.* (3.26).

²¹⁰ Hobbes, *DH* (11.15, p. 54).

²¹¹ Hobbes, *EL* (1.12.1, p. 61), Hobbes, *Lev.* (6, p. 45).

²¹² Hobbes, *DM* (fols. 370v-371, p. 407).

freedom.²¹³ Deliberation thus becomes a process of the passions, although it remains closely linked to thought,²¹⁴ and this recasting allows Hobbes to confront the scholastic view directly; he sees willed actions as remaining causally tied to the initial appetites and aversions prompted by senses, while his opponents continue to understand willing as the product of a special faculty or independent power.²¹⁵ The binding of the will to the dictates of the body's appetites and aversions, however, posed serious questions for Hobbes's contemporaries about how free the will, and indeed the individual, actually were in his philosophy. After taking in what appeared to be the seemingly contradictory position of Hobbes, Bishop Bramhall was quick to seize on the strongest evidence of the Stoic current coursing through his opponent's philosophy. Citing the neo-Stoic positions of Lipsius alongside those of early archons such as Chrysippus, Bramhall noted that the school 'held an eternal flux and necessary connection of causes, but they believed that God does act *praeter et contra naturam*, besides and against nature.'²¹⁶ For Bramhall there could, however, be 'not much material' between whether they attributed necessity to God or to the heavenly bodies or to a connection of other causes, since in the end this all amounted to the establishment of 'necessity' as the guiding force within the Stoic cosmos. That freedom was the victim in such a worldview also seemed more than obvious to him and others.

Perhaps Bramhall was in fact on to something in his accusations that Hobbes had merely provided a thinly veiled account of Stoic free will. More recently, Susan James has clearly and confidently reaffirmed his accusations of Hobbes's seemingly

²¹³ Ibid. (fol. 372v, p. 408).

²¹⁴ This point has been discussed in many recent commentaries on Hobbes's account of the role the passions play in the deliberative process which initiates action. See for example, Philip Pettit, *Made with Words: Hobbes on Language, Mind, and Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009) (p. 143); Quentin Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) (pp. 26-27); Annabel Brett, *Liberty, Right, and Nature: Individual Rights in Later Scholastic Thought* (Ideas in Context; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); James, *Passion and Action* (pp. 276-84).

²¹⁵ Robert Sleight, Jr., V.C. Chappell, and Michael Della Rocca, 'Determinism and Human Freedom', in Garber and Ayers (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, Vol. II, 1195-278 (p. 1219).

²¹⁶ Hobbes, *LN&C* (§18, p. 7). Bramhall is quoting Lipsius, *De constantia* (I, 20).

Stoic account of the will and the passions. As we have seen, Hobbes traces out the motions of the mind down to the heart, and then via the *conatus* back to the mind. From these motions the passions arise. But while appetite and fear may be definitionally opposed to one another, they never compete directly with each other. Instead, they each give way to the other so that deliberation becomes nothing other than a sequence of alternating appetites and fears. James has portrayed these psychological ‘forces’ behind an animal’s actions as singular in nature and Hobbes’s conceptualisation of them as ‘profoundly indebted’ to the Stoics, who had likewise presented deliberation as an oscillatory mental process.²¹⁷ This is demonstrated, for example, in the views of the Stoic archon Chrysippus, who tells us that feeling and indecision are ‘not the conflict and civil war of two parts, but the turning of a single reason in two different directions, which escapes our notice on account of the swiftness and sharpness of the change.’²¹⁸ In what Tad Brennan has described as a ‘popular model’ for the Stoic position, Cicero had argued that the end of deliberation was ‘to conform to virtue always, and so far as the other things go which are in accordance with nature, to select them if they do not conflict with virtue.’²¹⁹ The Stoic Sage therefore deliberates with one eye towards the dictates of nature and the other ‘within the bounds set by the demands of virtue.’²²⁰

Deliberation for both the Stoics and Hobbes involves the contemplation of past events, present circumstances and future possibilities and has the ability to temper straightforward or rash actions. It is the power of deliberation, James believes, which explains why Hobbes takes issue with the figure of Medea in his reply to Bramhall. Explaining that all deliberations must eventually cease with the selection of an appetite or an aversion, Hobbes refutes the famous dictum, ‘I see the better course, but follow the worse,’ [*video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*] in

²¹⁷ James, *Passion and Action* (p. 272).

²¹⁸ Plutarch, *Moralia* (441C, F) as reproduced in *ibid.* (p. 273).

²¹⁹ Cicero, *De off.* (3.13, p. 105). Tad Brennan, ‘Stoic Moral Psychology’, in Inwood (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 257-94 (pp. 279-83). Brennan incorrectly cites this passage as *De off.* 3.11.

²²⁰ Brennan, ‘Stoic Moral Psychology’, (p. 281).

an attempt to highlight what he believes are the conflicted states the passions create within our minds. While Hobbes agrees that the decision facing Medea is unenviable, he does not believe that her choice was predetermined to be the worse one. ‘It is true indeed the will should follow the direction of the understanding; but I am not satisfied that it does evermore follow it. [...] Medea saw many reasons to forebear killing her children, yet the last dictate of her judgment was that the present revenge on her husband outweighed them all, and thereupon the wicked action necessarily followed.’²²¹ Hobbes therefore utilises the notion of oscillation in the decision-making process, and in the words of Martha Nussbaum, shows that, like the Stoics, he is able to ‘comprehend fully the complex agony of these conflicts,’ without ‘downplaying their cognitive content, thinking in terms of contending forces.’²²²

Deliberation and the will are also used in Hobbes’s writings to support the status of self-preservation as the ‘greatest good’. Moving beyond the dictates of the body’s hormetic and aphormetic tendencies, the centrality of self-preservation is reinforced through the various appetites, aversions, fears and hopes the mind may act upon. This is highlighted, for example, in Hobbes’s recasting of Aristotle’s analogy of the sinking ship. Considering the nature of ‘voluntary’ and ‘involuntary’ actions, Hobbes argues that the former are actions or omissions which are caused by an act of willing, or from appetite and fear.²²³ Actions that arise from outside of the deliberative sequence, or as Hobbes says, originate from the ‘necessity of nature,’ are said to be involuntary.²²⁴ When Hobbes stresses the appetitive or fear-induced nature

²²¹ Hobbes, *LN&C* (§23, pp. 34-35). James’s assertion that Hobbes is drawing on Seneca’s *Medea* rather than Ovid’s is difficult to follow. In Bramhall’s initial citation of the line, no author is cited by name (§23, p. 12) and when Hobbes replies to Bramhall’s quote, he mentions only ‘a poet, in the person of Medea’ as the source of the quote. Molesworth’s edition (which James cites) makes no mention of either Seneca or Ovid as the author. In the more recent edition of Chappell, Ovid is cited as the author and *Metamorphoses* 7.21-22 as the locus of the passage (see p. 12, fn. 46). The attribution to Ovid rather than Seneca would also seem to be suggested by Spinoza’s own citation of this famous line, both in an Oct. 1674 letter to Georg Schuller (*Ep.* 58) on the determined status of the will and in his discussion of the ability of the emotions to affect our judgments in *Ethics* 3P2S. In both cases Ovid, rather than Seneca, is listed by the modern editor of those works as the source in question.

²²² Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire* (pp. 383-86).

²²³ Hobbes, *EL* (1.12.3, p. 62).

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

of voluntary acts he is largely echoing Aristotle's sentiment that 'it would be odd to describe as involuntary the things one ought to desire; and we ought both to be angry at certain things and to have an appetite for certain things, e.g. for health and learning.'²²⁵ However, to drive home his own point about the difference between voluntary and involuntary acts, Hobbes confronts Aristotle directly:

The example of him that throws his goods out of a ship into the sea, to save his person, is of an action altogether voluntary. There is nothing there involuntary, but the hardness of the choice, which is not his action, but the action of the winds. What he himself does is no more against his will than to fly from danger is against the will of him that sees no other means to preserve himself.²²⁶

In the Aristotelian account, it had also been suggested that an action done under duress is ultimately voluntary, although the difficulty of the decision is liable to render the characterisation of the action more 'mixed' than Hobbes wants to allow:

In the abstract no one throws goods away voluntarily, but on condition of its securing the safety of himself and his crew any sensible man does so. Such actions, then, are mixed, but are more like voluntary actions; for they are worthy of choice at the time when they are done, and the end of an action is relative to the occasion.²²⁷

What both accounts may be said to hold in common is that they take the roots of all voluntary actions to be internal – for Hobbes in the appetite and for Aristotle 'in the principle that moves the instrumental parts of the body' – and these are connected with deliberation.²²⁸ The abstraction Aristotle refers to, however, does not find a parallel in Hobbes's work. Despite the difficulty one might face in making the

²²⁵ Aristotle, *EN* (3.1, 1111a29-31, p. 1754).

²²⁶ Hobbes, *EL* (1.12.3, p. 62).

²²⁷ Aristotle, *EN* (3.1, 1110a8-19, p. 1752).

²²⁸ Hobbes, *EL* (1.12.3, p. 62); Aristotle, *EN* (3.1, 1110a15-17, p. 1752).

decision to throw one's goods overboard, Hobbes remains adamant that actions arising from appetite or anger always contain a deliberative element because they are done in the hope of bringing about some desired end.²²⁹

Having suggested that the body's basic appetites and aversions are what reinforce the paramount status of the body's survival, and that these involuntary motions feature centrally in the mind's deliberations, Hobbes's moral psychology provides an account of motivating forces which strongly resembles Stoic 'personal' *oikeiōsis*. However, while Hobbes may have agreed with the Stoic contention that self-preservation formed the irreducible consideration in all voluntary actions, he importantly came to disagree with the school's later assertions that this same impulse towards preservation explained the natural sociability responsible for political association. In works such as *De cive* and his most famous political work, *Leviathan*, Hobbes breaks away from the Stoic account of the formation of the state. This comes primarily through his contention that it is our mutual fear of others, a natural desire for self-preservation, and the strength of the covenanted sovereign to maintain cohesion and promote peace that drives us from the natural state and into the safety of the political one. While the rejection of 'social' *oikeiōsis* enabled Hobbes to distance himself from the natural sociability argument found in Aristotle's *Politics* and the discussions of *philautia* that had featured in his and later Peripatetic ethics, important elements in Hobbes's writings remained closely bound to earlier political discourse. In turning now to consider how self-preservation manifests itself within the last type of body, the political, let us consider the ways in which elements of the Hobbesian political apparatus reiterate much of what had already been argued in Epicurean philosophy.

²²⁹ Hobbes, *EL* (1.12.4); cf. Aristotle, *EN* (3.1, 1111a34-b3, p. 1754): 'What is the difference in respect of involuntariness between errors committed upon calculation and those committed in anger? Both are to be avoided, but the irrational passions are thought not less human than reason is, and therefore also the actions which proceed from anger or appetite are the man's actions. It would be odd, then, to treat them as involuntary.'

Self-Preservation and the Formation of the State in Hobbes's Political Philosophy

In their respective applications of the notion of self-preservation to the subject of the formation of the state, Hobbes's political writings serve as indictments of the view developed initially in the pages of Aristotle, and continued in the later writings of the Stoics and Grotius's *DIBP*. In each of these respective accounts of how the protective environment of the political setting arose, nature remained the fount from which the sociability of all animals was said to flow.²³⁰ In the Stoic writings and Grotius's earlier *DIP* the desire for sociability had been portrayed as the developed and rational aspect of each animal's more basic impulse to preserve itself, to look after its offspring, and to seek out those things that it considered to be in its own interests.²³¹ While Aristotle had never explicitly endorsed the notion that the impulse of self-preservation existed or had driven animals into a community, *philautia* and the later Peripatetic notion of *oikeiotês* had shown how the love of others was ultimately rooted in a love of self and this disposition helped create a naturally concentric model for understanding social relations.²³²

Despite accepting that the desire for self-preservation drives individuals into the political state, Hobbes explicitly rejects the notion that society itself is the result of any natural impulse. Such rejections had been an early and prominent feature of his political writing, and in the opening sections of *De cive*, for example, one can find Hobbes chastising the position favoured by his ancient predecessors and Dutch contemporary:

²³⁰ Aristotle, *Pol.* (1.2, 1253a25-31, p. 14); Aristotle, *EN* (8.12, 1161b12ff.); Cicero, *De fin.* (3.63); Grotius, *DIBP* (III, Prol., p. 1747).

²³¹ 'It is held by the Stoics to be important to understand that nature creates in parents an affection for their children; and parental affection is the source to which we trace the origin of the association of the human race in communities. This cannot but be clear in the first place from the conformation of the body and its members, which by themselves are enough to show that nature's scheme included the procreation of offspring.' Cicero, *De fin.* (3.62); cf. Cicero, *De off.* (1.11, p. 6); Grotius, *DIP* (Prol., p. 11).

²³² Aristotle, *EN* (8.12); Porphyry, *On Abstinence* (3.221).

The majority of previous writers on public affairs either assume[s] or seek[s] to prove or simply assert that man is an animal born fit for society [...] On this foundation they erect a structure of civil doctrine. [...] This axiom, though very widely accepted, is nevertheless false; the error proceeds from a superficial view of human nature.²³³

In the presumably ‘correct’ account of human nature that follows, Hobbes proceeds to argue that the origins of our sociability are not to be found in the operations of nature itself but rather in the dictates of ‘chance’ and advantages of utility.²³⁴ In considering man without civil society we are thus told that if nature were the source of mutual association then everyone would love everyone else in equal measure. But because we seek out those who can provide us with ‘honour or advantage’, ends that can be calculated rationally, then any notion of man possessing a natural kinship appears false.²³⁵ As we have already seen, Aristotle argued that friendships based solely on utility were ‘full of complaints; for as [friends] use each other for their own interests they always want to get the better of the bargain, and they think they have got less than what they should.’²³⁶ Such ‘complaints’, however, are what Hobbes takes as the *raison d’être* for political association. From experience he argues that it becomes clear to ‘anyone who gives serious consideration to human behaviour,’ that ‘every voluntary encounter is a product of either of mutual need or the pursuit of glory; hence when people meet, what they are anxious to get is an advantage for themselves [...] which is reputation and honour among their companions.’²³⁷ Society is then designed for the ‘sake either of advantage or glory’ and as a ‘product of love of self, not of love of friends.’²³⁸ In Tuck’s view, this contra-Aristotelian position had developed largely as a result of Hobbes having read the work of the early

²³³ Hobbes, *DC* (1.2, pp. 21-22).

²³⁴ *Ibid.* (p. 22).

²³⁵ ‘Reason reaches the same conclusions from the actual definitions of will, good, honour and interest [*utilitas*].’ *Ibid.* (p. 23).

²³⁶ Aristotle, *EN* (8.13, 1162b5-21, p. 1837).

²³⁷ Hobbes, *DC* (1.2, pp. 23-24).

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

Grotius, and in particular those arguments of his unpublished *DIP* which had filtered into the first edition of *DIBP*. However, Tuck's assertion that Hobbes was relying on this particular edition for his own account of sociability, as well as the argument that Grotius was himself rejecting the notion of other-love, remains controversial.

After considering the 'natural order' and the 'laws of nature' in *DIP*, Grotius had suggested that 'the old poets and philosophers have rightly deduced that love, whose primary force and action are directed to self-interest, is the first principle of the whole natural order.'²³⁹ What Grotius appears to be picking up on here is precisely that which had been suggested by the opponents of Hobbes rather than Hobbes himself: while self-love remains the antecedent cause to other-love, because our self-interest is often best promoted through the protection and esteem afforded by others, both 'loves' remain necessary for explaining the nature of social interaction. This sentiment also reappears in the 1625 edition of *DIBP*, which Hobbes was supposed to have read. Instead of rejecting Aristotle and the Stoics, Grotius can be found arguing that 'among the things which are unique to man is the desire for society [*appetitus societatis*]. [...] When it is said that nature drives each animal to seek its own interests [*utilitates*], we can say that this is true of the other animals, and of man before he came to the use of that which is special to man; though we should also make this exception in the case of other animals, that the pursuit of their own interests is tempered by a regard partly for their own offspring, and partly for members of their own species.'²⁴⁰ In taking this line, Grotius is again emphasising the concentric nature of social relations that had originally appeared in the pages of Aristotle, Theophrastus, Hierocles, and other Stoic authors.

Turning to the specific question of how Hobbes understands the origins of society, we find that the feeling of mutual fear among individuals overrides any notion of natural human benevolence. As Hobbes argues, if there were no fear of others then our attitudes would quickly turn towards the ways of dominance rather

²³⁹ Grotius, *DIP* (Prol., p. 9).

²⁴⁰ Grotius, *DIBP* (Prol. (1625), p. 1747).

than the means of society.²⁴¹ This fear arises in large part from the weaknesses each individual perceives in their own body, a claim which echoes the Stoic tendency to highlight the body's frailties and slight defensive capabilities.²⁴² In suggesting that the elements of fear and utility foster political relationships, however, the Hobbesian account of social formation breaks with the impulse-based account of political association favoured by the Stoics and others by joining with that of the Epicureans.²⁴³ Like them, Hobbes can be found arguing that it is the fear of death that primarily drives individuals into the legislated company of others and suggests peace as the most preferable *modus vivendi*. The cause of this mutual fear was said to stem both from the equality of individuals in the natural state as well as their willingness to do harm to others in their quest to obtain what they desire.²⁴⁴ As Lucretius had similarly commented, it was only when the human race had become 'utterly weary as it was of leading a life of violence and worn out with feuds, [that it became] more ready to submit voluntarily to the restraints of ordinances and stringent laws.'²⁴⁵ According to Kinch Hoekstra, Hobbes joined Lucretius and a long line of other classical thinkers when he attempted to highlight the desperate state of

²⁴¹ Hobbes, *DC* (1.2, p. 24). On the autonomy and vulnerability of men see also Robert Lawton and Helen Pringle, 'A Life Well Lost? Hobbes and Self-Preservation', *Hobbes Studies*, 6 (1993), 58-79

²⁴² Hobbes, *DC*: 'The cause of men's fear of each other lies partly in their natural equality, partly in their willingness to hurt each other. Hence we cannot expect security from others or assure it to ourselves. Look at a full-grown man and see how fragile is the structure of his human body (and if it fails, all his force, strength and wisdom fail with it); see how easy it is for even the weakest individual to kill someone stronger than himself. Whatever confidence you have in your own strength, you simply cannot believe that you have been made superior to others by nature.' (1.3, pp. 25-26) Cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 121.21: 'If, however, you insist, I shall tell you how every animal is compelled to understand what is dangerous. It is aware that it is made of flesh; and so it is aware of what can cut and burn and bruise flesh, of the animals which are equipped for hurting it; it regards their appearance as hostile and threatening. These things are closely connected; for as soon as each animal takes its safety to be congenial, it seeks what will help it and fears what will harm it.' (as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [II-107]); The defensive powers and frailties of animal bodies are also discussed in Hierocles, *Elements of Ethics* (col. 1.51-3.52) (reproduced in Long, *Stoic Studies* (p. 263), although much of this work would have been unavailable to Hobbes due to its later discovery.

²⁴³ 'If the reason [for meeting] is public affairs, a kind of political relationship develops, which holds more mutual fear than love.' Hobbes, *DC* (1.1, p. 22). This argument, along with others, is cited by Jon Parkin as one of the common charges of Epicureanism levelled at Hobbes by his contemporary critics. See Parkin, *Taming the Leviathan* (pp. 134-35).

²⁴⁴ Hobbes, *DC* (1.3, p. 26).

²⁴⁵ Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (5.1140ff., p. 168).

man outside the civil setting.²⁴⁶ This desire to remain free of conflict is what helps prepare the stage for Hobbes's account of individual natural rights, which in the absence of a strong sovereign power and laws he believes remain constantly at risk of being violated by the actions and designs of others. Indeed it remains Hobbes's view that there can be no blame placed on individuals who, 'amid so many dangers from men's natural cupidity', choose to look out for themselves, especially since they 'cannot will to do otherwise.'²⁴⁷ Our inability to act in a contrary manner owes primarily to our desire to pursue the good and avoid the bad, and in particular, death, that 'greatest of natural evils.'²⁴⁸

These desires (or 'uncontrollable dictates of nature') bring about what Hobbes terms the 'first foundation of natural right' which holds that 'each man may protect his life and limbs as much as he can,' and that each may use 'any means and action' necessary for preserving oneself.²⁴⁹ This had likewise been the view of Epicurus, who had noted 'that in order to obtain security from other men any means whatsoever of procuring this was a natural good.'²⁵⁰ In the absence of civil laws it is left to each individual to decide the ways in which they will secure their person.²⁵¹ Because individuals commonly desire the same things, but may not be able to share in them equally, they often become enemies and enter into a state of war with one another.²⁵² This further creates a condition in which both Hobbes and the Epicureans argue that justice is self-defined, which is the same as saying that there can be no

²⁴⁶ Kinch Hoekstra, 'Hobbes on the Natural Condition of Mankind', in Springborg (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's Leviathan*, 109-27 (pp. 113-14). Edward Clarendon, a contemporary critic of Hobbes, had also suggested that this conceptual model was Epicurean in origin in his essay 'Of Liberty' and appears to have Hobbes's political philosophy as his target, although he does not explicitly name it as such. However, such a charge of Epicurean sympathising is notably absent from Clarendon's posthumously published attack on *Leviathan*. See both Edward Hyde, *A collection of several tracts of the Right Honourable Edward, Earl of Clarendon* (London: T. Woodward ... and J. Peele, 1751) (p. 143) and Edward Hyde, *A brief view and survey of the dangerous and pernicious errors to church and state, in Mr. Hobbes's book, entitled Leviathan* (Oxford: Unknown, 1676).

²⁴⁷ Hobbes, *DC* (1.7, p. 27).

²⁴⁸ Hobbes, *EL* (14.6, p. 71); Hobbes, *DC* (1.7, p. 27); Hobbes, *DH* (11.6, p. 48).

²⁴⁹ Hobbes, *DC* (1.7, p. 27; Ep. Ded., p. 4).

²⁵⁰ Laertius, *Lives* (10.141).

²⁵¹ Hobbes, *DC* (1.7-8, p. 27); Hobbes, *Lev.* (14, p. 91); Hobbes, *EL* (14.6-8, pp. 71-72).

²⁵² Hobbes, *Lev.* (13, p. 87).

justice at all.²⁵³ As Hobbes points out, however, such relationships are ultimately detrimental to each individual's overall desire to preserve themselves and, because of this overriding desire, individuals choose to transfer the absolute liberty and powers they enjoy in the natural state for the relative safety afforded by the laws of the civil state.²⁵⁴

For Hobbes words alone were unable to secure the allegiance of individuals to the authority of the newly formed civil state.²⁵⁵ As a result, he came to rely on the notion of a covenant to designate that an actual transfer of rights had occurred and to signal the willingness of the individual to seek their security through a submission to the authority of the sovereign power. Obedience to the law is ensured through the surrender of the right to all things and the power to self-adjudicate.²⁵⁶ In return for the transferring of the individual's absolute rights, the security of the state and the maintenance of peace become incumbent upon the sovereign.²⁵⁷ Although a covenant might originate in an individual's short-term fear for their security, this in Hobbes's view rendered it no less binding than if they had been forged through an individual's 'covetousness.'²⁵⁸ The security and peacefulness of the covenanted society had also been a prominent feature in Epicurean political thought, and indeed many of the same observations about the tumultuousness of life in the natural state had rendered the relative tranquillity of the civil state an equally attractive option to the school's adherents.

In the Epicurean account of the pre-covenanted state the notion of justice is as fluid and self-referential as it is in the writings of Hobbes. For Lucretius the reason why individuals had chosen to submit themselves to the laws of the civil state were because they were 'sick and tired of a life of violence' in which 'each individual was

²⁵³ Hobbes, *EL* (17.6, p. 91); Hobbes, *Lev.* (13, p. 90); Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (5.1019-27, p. 164); Laertius, *Lives* (10.150).

²⁵⁴ Hobbes, *EL* (15.2, p. 75); Hobbes, *DC* (2.3-4, p. 34); Hobbes, *Lev.* (13, p. 90).

²⁵⁵ Hobbes, *EL* (15.6, p. 77); Hobbes, *DC* (2.7, p. 35); Hobbes, *Lev.* (14, p. 94).

²⁵⁶ Hobbes, *DC* (2.3, p. 34); Hobbes, *Lev.* (14, p. 92).

²⁵⁷ Hobbes, *Lev.* (18, p. 121).

²⁵⁸ Hobbes, *EL* (15.13-14, pp. 79-80); Hobbes, *DC* (2.16, pp. 38-39).

prompted by anger to exact vengeance more cruelly than is now allowed by equitable laws.²⁵⁹ For those individuals who could immediately recognise the utility engendered by the law soon found that the need for killing others became unnecessary. If the utility of the law was not immediately apparent, then the threat of punishment would suffice.²⁶⁰ Yet not all were able or willing to ameliorate their situation and, ‘to the end that they may neither inflict nor suffer harm,’ Epicurus argues, ‘those tribes which either could or would not form mutual covenants [were] without either justice or injustice.’²⁶¹ Because of political society’s ability to foster justice and promote its members’ security, Epicurean thought was also concerned with charting out how individuals had moved away from their non-covenanted groupings. Beginning with those individuals who had only desired to ‘obtain huts and skins and fire’ for themselves, Lucretius suggests that neighbours soon began to form friendships, and ‘eager not to harm one another and not to be harmed,’ sought out the most conducive means of protecting themselves and their families.²⁶² The desired harmony was largely effected because a ‘good and substantial number preserved their contracts honourably.’²⁶³ Had they failed to keep to their agreements, however, the consequences would have been no less than the ‘total destruction’ of the human race. As a result, these newly constituted societies offered the promise of a much more secure and pleasurable existence for their inhabitants. ‘Those who drew up laws and customs and established monarchical and other forms of government brought life into a state of much security and tranquillity and banished turmoil; and if anyone should remove these things, we would live a life of beasts, and one man on meeting another will all but devour him.’²⁶⁴ It is precisely this same sentiment of lawless chaos that Hobbes attempts to capture in his famous description of life in the

²⁵⁹ Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (5.1140ff., p. 168).

²⁶⁰ Porphyry, *On Abstinence* (1.7.3-4, p. 33).

²⁶¹ Laertius, *Lives* (10.150).

²⁶² Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (5.1010-28, p. 164).

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ Plutarch, *Against Colotes* (1124D) as reproduced in Long and Sedley, *H.Phil.* (22R).

natural state, a world in which continual fear and violent death made any existence ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.’²⁶⁵

For Hobbes and the Epicureans, then, the individual’s best chance of preserving themselves against the desires and designs of others is through mutual agreements and laws designed to curb the unlimited freedom of acquisition found in the natural state. Each account holds that civil society is a product of these agreements, and in contrast to Aristotle, the Stoics, and the later writings of Grotius, they forcefully reject the notion that a specific social impulse has any role to play in explaining why political associations arise. Although the Hobbesian account admittedly examines the nature of political obligations and rights in far more detail than any Epicurean discourse had attempted, three things remain common to both. The first is their bleak characterisation of life outside of the political setting, and the second is their shared belief that utility and security, rather than any natural love of others, remain the primary considerations for explaining the origins of the social setting. The third is the method by which both believe political associations are formed and maintained, namely through the establishment of covenants between individuals to allow a sovereign, and ideally a monarch, to serve as the adjudicator between all involved parties, and when necessary, to punish those who transgress against the civil law.

Conclusion

Having now considered the physical, psychological and political usages of self-preservation in Hobbes’s theories, the case for a Hellenistic interpretation of his claim that bodies naturally strive to preserve themselves appears strong. In each instance, from the conative striving of the bowstring that demonstrates the body’s internal ability to restore its parts to the idea that the desire for self-preservation serves as the motivating factor in political association, Hobbes’s positions draw on

²⁶⁵ Hobbes, *Lev.* (13, p. 89).

many of the arguments and terminological usages found in both Stoic and Epicurean philosophy. Although Hobbes remained dismissive of the earlier achievements in philosophy and never openly endorsed the Neohellenism of his time, his texts demonstrate a level of indebtedness to the arguments and method of his predecessors. It is therefore reasonable to expand the Stoic-centred arguments of scholars such as Oestreich, James and Burchell to accommodate what is Hobbes's sustained and close engagement with Hellenistic philosophy. Given the frequency with which these arguments appear, and recognising their central placement within each text, it also becomes clear that Hellenistic philosophy had helped supply the basis for many of the examples, arguments and terms which Hobbes used to unite each particular element's account of bodies and their tendencies.

The consequence of this seemingly sustained engagement with the views of the Hellenistic schools is that it forces us to reconsider whether Hobbes's philosophy is best understood as a product crafted exclusively in the context of the New Science. As the 'unity thesis' scholars have argued, it was primarily from reading the works of Galileo and engaging with the members of Mersenne's circle that Hobbes began to first appreciate the possibilities of a non-teleological worldview and to recognise the potential of extending the principles of mechanism into the areas of animal psychology and politics. Although each scholar has claimed to find in Hobbes's manuscripts, texts and correspondence support for claiming the influence of one author over another, they remain jointly committed to the view that the contemporary scientific investigations into inertial motion had supplied Hobbes's philosophy with a common and unifying aspect. As we have seen, however, there was already much that had been written about the internal tendencies of bodies to preserve their motions in the face of resistance, and many of the ancient texts in which these arguments appear were being published and circulated as part of the Neostoic and Neoepicurean movements' attempts to challenge the authority of Aristotle and the scholastic philosophers. Thanks to authors such as Gassendi and William Gilbert, Hobbes could have gained access to the *prima philosophia* and political thought of

classical authors such as Epicurus and Lucretius even if he had not chosen to access the school's views directly. In the writings of Grotius and Lipsius, Stoic authors such as Cicero, Hierocles, and Seneca had once again become relevant voices for those interested in the mechanisms behind animal psychology. The Hellenistic arguments Hobbes advances were therefore not buried within sources that were lost to history but rather remained available for consultation in works which formed the basis of any standard philosophical library of the time, and they provided a canon from which even those loosely associated with the Neostoic and Neoepicurean movements could challenge the authority of the prevailing views in physics, ethics and politics.

There are also other consequences of examining Hobbes's usage of self-preservation in the light of these Hellenistic sources. One is that the ancient elements at work in the notion of self-preservation may be said to augment the views of those who have already found in Hobbes's writings clear evidence of his having had a strong association with either the Stoic or the Epicurean school. This has already been suggested, for example, in the assertions that Hobbes's usage of covenanted language in politics or his schema of the passions are best understood as having been respectively Epicurean or Stoic in both presentation and character. However, as the notion of self-preservation shows, and particularly in the context of animal psychology, any attempt to paint Hobbes in uniquely Stoic or Epicurean hues fails to capture the subtleties often working within his accounts of bodies and their tendencies. Unlike a Stoic, Hobbes is prepared to give pleasure and pain a central position within his account of the body's appetites and aversions. However, unlike an Epicurean, he is not prepared to place the pursuit of pleasure over that of the body's preservation. These small inclusions or admissions suggest that the Hellenistic reading, rather than a strictly Stoic or Epicurean one, is the most appropriate way to understand how the views of the ancients came to reside in the Hobbesian account of bodily resistance and tendencies.

The final contribution that our examination of self-preservation may be said to have added to the 'ancient' view of Hobbes is in demonstrating how Hellenistic

thought can be seen to have played a part in each of the ‘elements’ in Hobbes’s philosophy, rather than in just one specific text. By focusing specifically on the notion of self-preservation the Hellenism incorporated into the physical, psychological and political writings of Hobbes has helped to provide each text with a consistent and unified tendency that is common to all types of bodies. Although Hobbes may have attempted to distance himself from the arguments of the earlier philosophers at the end of *Leviathan* and elsewhere, what appears more likely is that these dismissals were part of a concerted rhetorical attempt to create a place for Hobbes’s work among the other luminaries of the period. This perhaps explains why Hobbes felt it unnecessary to cite his sources when constructing or refuting particular arguments and why he failed to include the Epicureans, the closest ancient proponents of the mechanical philosophy, among his list of ‘vain’ philosophers. Although the attacks on scholastic philosophy and their rigid adherence to the views of Aristotle appear sincere, the frequency with which Hobbes’s views on bodies and tendencies echo what had already been suggested in the Hellenistic philosophies are too numerous to be simply ignored.

We may thus conclude that in his own particular way Hobbes helped contribute to the dissemination of Hellenistic thought occurring at this time by producing arguments that were drawn from well-known sources, but without replicating the fanfare that characterised the rehabilitative projects of authors such as Lipsius and Gassendi. The most profitable way of reading Hobbes’s account of self-preservation and endeavouring, therefore, is as having been inspired initially by the mechanical philosophy’s general interest in continuous motions but as having been filled out by the earlier accounts of bodily tendencies and motion presented in the writings of the recently back *en vogue* Epicurean and Stoic philosophies. Thus while both the existing ‘unity thesis’ and ‘Hellenistic’ thesis are equally valid, we find that in their current forms they paint only a part of the larger picture concerning Hobbes’s method and influences. Yet while such an amalgamation of contemporary and ancient thought may have helped Hobbes formulate his critiques of Aristotelianism,

it remains to be seen whether such an approach was equally useful to those who were less directly involved in overthrowing the scholastic worldview. In moving away from the period in which the reaction against scholasticism was at its greatest, to one in which its persuasive powers had been greatly eroded by decades of advocacy for the mechanical science, let us now turn to consider the ways in which Hellenistic philosophy motivated the account of self-preservation in the work of Hobbes's later Dutch contemporary Benedict Spinoza.

4. The Ancient Notion of Self-Preservation in the Theories of Benedict Spinoza

As we have just seen, Hobbes actively joined with European contemporaries such as Descartes and Gassendi during the 1630s and 1640s to rectify what he believed were the errors of scholastic philosophy and its pallid ‘Aristotelity’. The result of their collective efforts was the increasing acceptance of a mechanistic worldview in which all bodies remained in continuous motion, were subject to the causes resulting from their interacting with other bodies and displayed a natural resistance to external change. By invoking the term ‘*conatus*’, with its connotations of incessant striving, Hobbes, in particular, had shown his readers how the principles of the New Science could comfortably rest alongside specific strands of Hellenistic thought in the areas of psychology, ethics and civil philosophy. Hobbes, however, was not alone in his desire to describe the natural striving of bodies to maintain their shape and cohesion or to extend the primary notion of self-preservation beyond the purview of natural philosophy. By the 1660s the Dutch writer Benedict Spinoza could be found placing his own strong emphasis on the ability of bodies’ self-preserving tendencies to illuminate the tight connection between nature and its parts. Having been able to ‘cut through the aftermath’ of scholastic philosophy, Spinoza was able to look beyond the institutional struggles of his immediate predecessors and state his philosophical views without resorting to the vindictiveness and rhetoric which authors like Hobbes had used to distance themselves from the scholastics and the Hellenistic schools. This is not to say that Spinoza’s philosophy remained non-confrontational or shied away from challenging those who had seemingly brought the study of philosophy into disrepute. On the contrary, such was Spinoza’s determination to see the previous errors of philosophical investigation righted, that, on reading Spinoza’s own censures

of the powers that be, Hobbes famously exclaimed that even he ‘durst not write so boldly!’¹

It is largely because of Spinoza’s distance from Europe’s medieval university culture that the Aristotelian straw man is largely absent in his writings, with the effect that Spinoza is left relatively unfettered in attempts at promoting the New Science and better positioned to criticise the views of some of its well-known patrons. While Hobbes’s work on political bodies is only mentioned in passing, there was much in Descartes’s account of bodies that was to be admired, and critiqued. As we shall see, Spinoza was certain that his famous contemporary’s dualist approach to mind and body had crucially severed the unity that explained why the condition of the animal’s body played such an important and pre-eminent role in the mind’s psychology. This in turn had reduced much of the imperativeness behind each organism’s striving to preserve itself, so that Spinoza came to see the mind-body discussion as being in urgent need of refashioning along the lines of a singular and unified account. The Cartesian influence would retain a strong hold on how the young Spinoza came to understand and craft his own account of bodies, and indeed it is this contemporary connection which provides one of the philosophical contexts to which Spinoza’s philosophy and its accounts of bodily tendencies remains tied.

Refuting certain aspects of Cartesian natural philosophy and psychology also provided the young Spinoza with the opportunity to clarify his own views on the universal dictates of nature and the animacy of bodies, while providing a platform from which to trumpet what he believed was the strong motivational power of *conatus* and the ‘naturalness’ of self-preservation. With the initial criticisms of Descartes behind him, Spinoza turned his attention to the subjects of ethics and politics to demonstrate further the importance of self-preservation in human nature. This was accomplished largely through a juxtaposing of some of Hellenistic

¹ This quote appears in John Aubrey, *Brief Lives, chiefly of contemporaries, set down by John Aubrey, between the years 1669 & 1696*, ed. Andrew Clark, II vols. (I; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898) (I, p. 375). It does not appear in the more recent but heavily pared down edition by O.L. Dick.

philosophy's best-known arguments regarding self-preservation and the passions with Spinoza's own desires to see the power of nature geometrically and rationally explained. In making such prominent use of both the Stoic and Epicurean philosophies of body, Spinoza's writings provide a clear example that the dialogue between ancient and contemporary philosophers remained strong into the middle and later decades of the seventeenth century.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the simultaneous presence of ancient and contemporarily sourced arguments in Spinoza's theories has given many of his commentators considerable ground on which to assess where Spinoza's intellectual debt actually lies. In considering how the notion of self-preservation develops and matures in Spinoza's philosophy, the views of Descartes, the Stoics and the Epicureans all appear to have legitimate grounds for staking a claim to having shaped the Dutch thinker's arguments. If we are to understand best how the notion of self-preservation operates in Spinoza's writings it will thus be useful to make the acquaintance of what Lee Rice has termed the 'Stoic inner man clothed by Descartes in Galilean robes' residing within Spinoza's thought.² Such sartorial imagery, we shall see, goes a long way towards identifying the various traditions Spinoza had at his disposal when he considered the nature and tendencies of natural, animal and political bodies. Over the course of this section, we will consider how Descartes tailored an account of bodies which Spinoza altered largely along Stoic lines to address the errors of his predecessors and contemporaries. But before we proceed to examine Spinoza's doctrines themselves, let us first see how others have seen fit to fashion them.

² Lee Rice, 'Emotion, Appetition, and *Conatus* in Spinoza', *Revue internationale de philosophie*, 119/20 (1977), 101-16 (p. 116).

‘Spinoza the Stoic’: A Reassessment

That scholars have attempted to place Spinoza’s account of self-preservation squarely within the Stoic tradition is understandable – after all, as we have seen, it was the Stoics more than any other group of philosophers who relied on a specific, natural impulse to self-preservation to explain animals’ connectedness to the world-at-large and to each other. The seeming agreement with the structure and conclusions of their arguments has provided justification for Spinoza’s contemporaries and modern readers to place him comfortably on the Painted Porch. In the seventeenth century, for example, some of Spinoza’s most notable contemporaries showed little hesitation in portraying him as either a new Stoic (as was the charge of his one-time correspondent Leibniz),³ or in characterising the Stoics as the Spinozists of their day (as was the claim of Vico).⁴ After reading Spinoza’s *Opera Posthuma* (which contained the previously unpublished *Ethics*), the German natural law thinker Nikolaus Gundling felt confident in comparing the Dutch philosopher to Zeno of Citium, the Stoic founder himself.⁵ These perceived philosophical and personal proximities with the Stoa continued into the following century, as for example when Spinoza’s French antagonist Pierre Bayle suggested that the Stoic doctrine of the ‘world-soul’ was synonymous with Spinoza’s own conception of Nature.⁶

While such attributions and characterisations helped to forge the view that Spinoza’s philosophy had incurred a sizable, yet unacknowledged, debt to the Stoa, these early interpretations suffered from the lack of any sustained or systematic attempts by their authors to parallel Spinoza’s system with any of the widely

³ Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989) (p. 218).

⁴ Giambattista Vico, *The First New Science*, ed. Leon Pompa (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) (1.335).

⁵ Nikolaus Gundling, *Gundlingiana*, V vols. (Halle, 1715-28) (V, pp. 189, 239, 242) as cited in Jonathan I. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man 1670-1752* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) (p. 458).

⁶ ‘Le dogme de l’âme du Monde, qui a été si commun parmi les Anciens ; & qui faisoit la partie principale du Système des Stoïques, est dans le fond celui de Spinoza.’ [The dogma of the soul of the world, which was so common amongst the Ancients, and which was the main part of the Stoic system, is in fact that of Spinoza.] Pierre Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, IV vols. (5th edn.; Amsterdam, 1740) (IV, p. 253).

available Stoic texts. Moreover, they failed to point out any potential injection of Stoic thought into Spinoza's own ample and central discussions of self-preservation. Although Spinoza's claim that bodies naturally strive to preserve themselves animates all aspects of his philosophy, and is a claim which explicitly appears in all but one of his texts, these early commentators failed to appreciate the extent to which such readily available Stoic sources such as Cicero and Seneca or the biographies of the early Stoic archons found in Diogenes Laertius's text may have been called upon in support of Spinoza's own arguments. Rather than tracing out the proximities or divergences of such a frequent and central assertion in both philosophies, their interests in Spinoza's Stoicism was limited either to making broad philosophical generalisations or to playing to the eagerness of their readership to see in Spinoza's Stoic-like equation of God and Nature the fount of his dangerous religious heterodoxy.⁷ Yet while the accusation that Spinoza's 'Stoicism' drove him to commit these deep religious heresies came out in the interpretations of his philosophy put out by Bacon and Bayle, for example, their charges of impiety were also largely symptomatic of the growing divide between perceived theological-based interpretations of nature and their own favoured mechanistic interpretations.

Modern commentators, for their part, have made their own specific claims for why Spinoza's philosophy incurred a sizeable debt to Stoicism, but unlike their predecessors, they have noted the similar incorporation of self-preservation at the

⁷ In the publisher's introduction to Bacon's posthumously published *Baconiana*, for example, Spinoza's 'infidelity' is said to arise from his having 'libelled the Holy Scriptures themselves,' by maintaining, against Bacon but in agreement with the Stoics, that there is no such thing as free will. Rather there are merely causal acts determined by the dictates of nature. This riposte from Bacon's editor may have well been brought on by Spinoza himself. In an early letter to Henry Oldenburg, where Spinoza lays out his own conception of God, one finds a pointed critique of Bacon's position on free will. As Spinoza writes, Bacon and Descartes, 'have gone far astray from true knowledge of the first cause and of the human mind,' and Bacon in particular, 'speaks very confusedly on the subject, and simply makes assertions while proving hardly anything.' Particularly vexing for Spinoza is that 'Verulam' takes human 'will to be free and more extensive than the intellect,' suggesting that the latter is not characterised by 'dry light, but receives infusion from the will.' See both Benedict Spinoza, *Letters [1661-76]* in M.L. Morgan (ed.), *Complete Works*, trans. S. Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002) (2, [Sept. 1661]) and Francis Bacon, *Baconiana, or, Certain genuine remains of Sr. Francis Bacon, Baron of Verulam, and Viscount of St. Albans in arguments civil and moral, natural, medical, theological, and bibliographical now for the first time faithfully published* (London: Richard Chiswell, 1679) (pp. 13-14).

core of each philosophy's discussion of bodies. Of those who see Spinoza's account of self-preservation as being primarily Stoic in origin, few have argued the case as strongly as Susan James. For James, Spinoza is wholly Stoic in his treatment and classification of the passions, which are themselves intimately connected to the mind's perception of its power to preserve the body. As a result, James argues that *Ethics* 'constitutes a reworking' of some of Stoicism's most central doctrines.⁸ As evidence of this reworking, she continues, one need look no farther than Spinoza's reassertion of the fundamental Stoic dictum that nature directs us to look after our own preservation first and foremost and that such acts are done in accordance with our natural, proper functions.⁹ It is for these reasons that one may confidently speak of 'Spinoza the Stoic'. James, however, is not alone in situating *Ethics*'s account of self-preservation within the confines of the Stoa. In the work of Bernard Carnois, one can find a similar view of the ancient origins of Spinoza's account. In his assessment, it is in the Ciceronian, Senecan and Epictetian accounts of *hormê* that one may find the antecedents of Spinoza's *conatus* since both terms have their conceptual root in the natural tendency to preserve oneself.¹⁰ By way of this common philosophical vocabulary, Carnois has gone on to suggest that a '*dynamisme*' exists between the Stoic and Spinozistic accounts of desiderative behaviours, and that they are joined by the view that the desire for self-preservation makes its presence felt through natural tendencies and rational decisions.¹¹ Over the years the views of James and Carnois have come to form the core of an interpretation of Spinoza that strongly focuses on the influence of the ancient tradition. Their readings have often been propagated by other scholars, who, when speaking of the ancient Stoics, make it a point to indicate that a clear philosophical path leads from the school to Spinoza. As Martha Nussbaum has argued, Spinoza is but one in a long line of western philosophy's greatest thinkers to have incurred 'a considerable debt' to the writings of the

⁸ James, 'Spinoza the Stoic', (p. 296).

⁹ James, *Passion and Action* (p. 255) and James, 'Spinoza the Stoic', (p. 291).

¹⁰ Bernard Carnois, 'Le Désir selon les Stoïciens et selon Spinoza', *Dialogue*, 19 (1980), 255-77 (p. 255).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Hellenistic schools, and Stoicism in particular.¹² While Spinoza could be said to be ‘aware of Aristotle’ in his writings, Nussbaum’s reading of these texts goes further than most by suggesting that Spinoza himself claimed the Stoics as his most important philosophical predecessors, although she notably fails to point out where such an explicit and indeed unparalleled acknowledgment occurs.¹³

Binding Spinoza’s philosophy and his theory of self-preservation so closely to the Stoa has necessarily come at a (high) price for investigating the contemporary influence on his thought. For example, attempting to mitigate the influence of the later philosophical tradition, and in particular the impact of Cartesianism, James has argued that any attempt ‘to regard Spinoza as a modern philosopher,’ comes at the expense of the ‘equally important ancient strand’ running throughout his thought.’¹⁴ Recognising that Spinoza was likely to have read extensively in the subjects of ethics and natural philosophy, Paul Kristeller has argued for the co-existence of ancient and contemporary sources within Spinoza’s *Ethics*. Although his conclusions were that the work’s account of self-preservation was largely Stoic in inspiration, Kristeller’s approach nevertheless speaks to the importance of maintaining a broad interpretation of Spinoza’s thought so that the historical transmission of ideas in his work can be fully appreciated.¹⁵ Crucially, it is by maintaining this larger interpretative scope that we are also better able to identify the distinctly classical elements in Spinoza’s thought. For example, by presenting Spinoza’s account of self-preservation in *Ethics*

¹² Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire* (p. 4).

¹³ Martha C. Nussbaum, 'Review Essay: 'Epicurus' Ethical Theory: The Pleasures of Invulnerability' ', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 51/3 (Sept. 1991), 677-87.

¹⁴ James, 'Spinoza the Stoic', (p. 291).

¹⁵ ‘As with all other original thinkers, Spinoza read many of his predecessors, knew their doctrines, often transformed them, and occasionally even cited them. The knowledge of his sources may help us to understand better certain aspects of his thought, and above all, to define more precisely his place in a philosophical tradition which is not uniform but fairly continuous and which extends from Greek antiquity down to modern times.’ In speaking to this larger tradition with which Spinoza was engaging, Kristeller points out that traces of ancient scepticism, Platonism and Epicureanism can be detected running alongside the more apparent Cartesian, Aristotelian and Stoic influences. P.O. Kristeller, 'Stoic and Neoplatonic Sources of Spinoza's 'Ethics'', *History of European Ideas*, 5/1 (1984), 1-15 (pp. 1-2).

or elsewhere solely through the lens of Latin Stoicism,¹⁶ one misses the important fact that it is via Spinoza's engagement with Descartes that the reader is first introduced to what commentators such as James and Carnois have argued is one of that work's most predominately Stoic themes: the idea that all bodies continually strive to preserve themselves. Prior to writing *Ethics*, Spinoza published his own interpretation and 'reworking' of the Cartesian view of motion and presented to his readers a physics-based understanding of *conatus* and self-preservation that noticeably expanded the idea of what types of bodies could be said to possess a natural tendency to preserve themselves. This represented a shift away from the more well-known animal-centric, psychology-based arguments forwarded by many Stoic writers and towards a theory that encompassed all natural bodies, regardless of their possessing any mental capacity.

Downplaying this contemporary influence also obscures certain relevant points for promoting a Hellenistic interpretation of Spinoza's thought. For example, it is from the Cartesian-inspired discussion of bodily strivings that one first encounters Spinoza adopting the Lucretian phrase 'insofar as it is in itself' (*quantum in se est*) to qualify natural bodily tendencies. This inclusion proves difficult to reconcile with a purely Stoic interpretation of Spinoza's doctrines, if only because it would appear to indicate that Descartes's earlier reliance on this Atomist description of natural potency had filtered into the work of his Dutch contemporary.¹⁷ Yet for some, Spinoza's philosophical dalliance with the Stoics' rivals had gone beyond what had appeared in the pages of Descartes. As the English Presbyterian Richard Baxter fulminated, the seeds of Spinoza's 'impiousness' were sown in the Atomistic doctrines his philosophy was planted in:

¹⁶ It must, however, be through a Latin lens that we examine Spinoza, for as he points out in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, his knowledge of Greek was 'insufficient'. Benedict Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise [1670]* in Morgan (ed.), *Complete Works* (10, p. 498).

¹⁷ This is the general thesis found in I. Bernard Cohen, 'Quantum in se est: Newton's Concept of Inertia in Relation to Descartes and Lucretius', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London (1938-1996)*, 19/2 (1964), 131-55. However, Cohen makes no mention of Spinoza in his work and does not attempt to extend his argument to, or its implications for, the later readers of Descartes's *Principles of Philosophy*.

And the root of this man's inhumanity is his Epicurean principles of Philosophy about God and *Nature*, supposing God to be but the *Eternal necessary necessitating first cause of all things and motions, as the Sun is of Light and heat, who can do no more nor less than he doth*, moving the world as a Clock or Watch by mere invariable necessity, that never did or can do a miracle, or alter the necessitating course of nature.¹⁸

Because these 'causes and motions' lie at the heart of God's nature, and it is this nature which is extended to all natural bodies, the possibility remains that Epicureanism was able to claim for itself a distinct position in Spinoza's explanations of the necessary motivations responsible for driving all physical bodies to seek their own preservation.

Identifying and then determining the ways in which these ancient and contemporary strains intermingle in the early physical accounts is also crucial for understanding the later, more-studied works. For example, it is via the physical account of bodies and their stated tendency to join forces in an effort to protect themselves that the political account of self-preservation may be said to logically follow. Yet in turning to this specific consideration of how human bodies function amongst each other and within the confines of the State, Spinoza veers away from the influence of Descartes and instead towards that of another of his major contemporaries - Hobbes. While there has always been a contentious point in Spinoza scholarship about how much of Hobbes's work Spinoza might have actually read, there are legitimate grounds on which to suspect that Spinoza's view about state formation as a result of our desire to preserve ourselves is Hobbesian in its

¹⁸ Richard Baxter, *The second part of The nonconformists plea for peace being an account of their principles about civil and ecclesiastical authority and obedience ...: mostly written many years past and now published to save our lives and the kingdoms peace, from false and bloody plotters ...* (London: John Hancock, 1680) as cited in Rosalie L. Colie, 'Spinoza in England, 1665-1730', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 107/3 (1963), 183-219 (p. 191).

inspiration.¹⁹ Yet, as we have seen, Hobbes's views on security and preservation bear a close relation to what is found in the Hellenistic sources, particularly as espoused by Epicurus and Lucretius. Any engagement with Hobbes then leaves open the distinct possibility that, as with Descartes, the ancient aspects in Spinoza's political account of self-preservation have been filtered through the work of an intermediary source rather than being directly sourced. One must therefore beware of suggesting at the outset that Spinoza's thoughts were 'profoundly influenced' by the Hellenistic tradition alone,²⁰ and instead let the accounts of self-preservation generally and *conatus* specifically demonstrate how each of the various ancient and contemporary influences on Spinoza's thought announce themselves.

The overwhelming focus on self-preservation as it appears in *Ethics* has come to feature in other scholars' commentaries, which, despite portraying the work as a vehicle for the limited transmission of Stoic doctrines into early-modern discourse, have tended to place less emphasis on Spinoza's overall indebtedness to the school. A.A. Long, for example, has argued that while Spinoza was unable to reassemble Stoic thought in its entirely classical form (mainly because of Lipsius and others' earlier attempts to blend it with Christian theology), his ethics nevertheless were able to capture much of its spirit.²¹ Unwilling to support the stronger thesis that Spinoza 'directly mirrored' his Stoic predecessors or claimed allegiance to the school, Long has only spoken of Spinoza's philosophy as sharing an 'intellectual, theological and methodological affinity' with his predecessors' system.²² This is evident, he claims, in their joint agreement that humans are subject to, and never

¹⁹ William Sacksteder, 'How Much of Hobbes Might Spinoza Have Read?', in Genevieve Lloyd (ed.), *Spinoza: Critical Assessments* (London: Routledge, 2001), 222-35.

²⁰ James, 'Spinoza the Stoic', (p. 310).

²¹ Long's view stands in contrast to that of Wilhelm Dilthey, who claimed that 'Spinoza's individualist approach to ethics mimic and agree with the Stoa in such comprehensiveness and detail that it betrays a knowledge of the school derived from the unavoidable filter of Lipsius' widely read work *De constantia*.' William Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften: Weltanschauung und Analyse des Menschen seit der Renaissance und Reformation*, II vols. (10th edn.; Stuttgart: Teubner, 1977) (p. 285) as cited in A. A. Long, 'Stoicism in the Philosophical Tradition: Spinoza, Lipsius, Butler', in Inwood (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, 365-92 (p. 369).

²² *Ibid.* (pp. 366-67); see also Long, *H.Phil.* (pp. 208-9).

above, the dictates of the natural world and that God is understood to be the cause of this ‘world system’.²³ Like Carnois, Long does, however, recognise that both ethical systems rely heavily on the notion of impulses and reason to explain how living creatures preserve themselves. Yet in making this key assertion, he conjoins their ethical systems incorrectly. According to him (and he appears to be alone in holding this view), Spinoza’s *conatus* is equivalent to Stoic *pneuma*, which he argues the Stoics used to describe the internal ‘sustaining’ power required to preserve particular beings and indicate the source of their individual substance.²⁴ What is further interesting about this specific claim is that Long does not rely on the Stoic tradition to support his contention, but rather draws from the anti-Stoic writings of Plutarch, Nemesius, Alexander and Galen. That he should have had to turn away from the school itself to make such a claim is probably because, as we have already seen in the accounts of Cicero and Diogenes Laertius, Stoic ethics relies on *hormê*, not *pneuma*, to explain the origins of the living creature’s self-preserving behaviour. Although an early contemporary such as Grotius could be found relying on *pneuma hektikon* to explain the cohesion of bodies in *DIBP*, his account of a singular ‘disposition’ (*hexis*) was not meant to incorporate a body’s impulses or natural movements.²⁵ Instead, it is in the Ciceronian account of Stoic ethics that the terms

²³ Long, ‘Stoicism in the Philosophical Tradition’, (p. 374).

²⁴ Ibid. (p. 374, fn. 11). Long cites Alexander’s *On Mixture*, a fragment of Nemesius, Plutarch’s *On Stoic Self-Contradictions*, and Galen’s *Medical Introduction* in support of his argument. According to Long, the school insisted that the mixing of fire and air creates the breath which is said to blend with, and passes through, all bodies. At no point, however, does the idea of a divine breath, let alone one composed of multiple substances, enter into Spinoza’s account of how bodies maintain themselves. For Spinoza, there is only *one* substance and our *conatus* to self-preservation is never described in terms that would suggest it to be a mixture of anything. Nemesius’ argument removes the idea of mixture altogether, thus moving it marginally closer to Spinoza’s understanding, and even suggests that ‘every body needs something to sustain it.’ But this sustaining is not said to derive from our natural essence, but rather from a tensile reverberating movement in the soul. Spinoza never attributes self-preservation to a specific internal motion, he only argues that it tends *towards* motion as understood via change of place. The same criticisms also apply to the accounts of Plutarch and Galen, who continue to discuss multiple substances and their composition as the keys to unlocking the natural motions in animate and non-animate things. See Long and Sedley, *H.Phil.* (47I, J, M and N).

²⁵ See Grotius, *DIBP* (II.9). As Annabel Brett has shown, moreover, the Grotian usage of *pneuma hektikon* is itself ‘analogical’ since the Stoics only used the term to refer to the cohesion of single natural bodies – such as stone or wood. See Brett, ‘Natural Right and Civil Community’, (pp. 48-49).

'*conatus*' and '*appetitus*' are given as the Latin equivalents of Greek *hormê*,²⁶ a terminological affinity which had, as we just saw, recently been affirmed in the work of Hobbes.²⁷ While Long does note the similarities between Spinoza's and the Stoics' charting of self-preserving behaviour from nature-based to reason-based (failing, however, to mention any possible parallel with *oikeiōsis*), his claims that Spinozistic *conatus* and Stoic *pneuma* are synonymous fail, as we shall see, to capture Spinoza's understanding of human essence as radiating from a single, unmixed substance whose laws are made manifest through our natural desires.

Still others have attempted to conjoin Spinoza's account of self-preservation to the ancient tradition, though in their estimation this relationship is rather more broadly Hellenistic than strictly Stoic in scope. Such a macroscopically classical view may be said to provide the pivot point on which the broader interpretations of scholars such as Edwin Curley and Jonathan Israel turn. Curley offers a view different from Long's equation of *conatus* and *pneuma* by suggesting that Stoic *hormê* serves as an antecedent to Spinoza's *conatus*. Unlike those who want to see Spinoza's philosophy as being predominately Stoic in inspiration, however, Curley's analysis places the philosopher within the larger Hellenistic tradition by arguing that it was along the lines of the *conatus* doctrine that Spinoza was able to 'reconcile' Stoic and Epicurean ethics.²⁸ Curley recognises, as Jean-Marie Guyau had previously,²⁹ that self-preservation in Spinoza eventually comes to include additional considerations of pleasure, pain and joy. This potential fusion of Stoic and Epicurean ethical principles in Spinoza's work has been picked up more recently by Israel, although he seems to have overstated the case by suggesting that Spinoza has 'subsumed' pleasure into the actual 'driving mechanism' of *conatus* itself.³⁰ Instead of maintaining the distinction hinted at by Curley, wherein Stoic first principles are

²⁶ Cicero, *De nat.* (2.22.58, 2.47.122); Cicero, *De fin.* (4.25).

²⁷ Hobbes, *Lev.* (6, p. 38).

²⁸ Edwin Curley, *Behind the Geometrical Method: A Reading of Spinoza's 'Ethics'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) (p. 114).

²⁹ Jean-Marie Guyau, *La morale d'Épicure et ses rapports avec les doctrines contemporaines* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1927).

³⁰ Israel, *Enlightenment Contested* (p. 466).

used simultaneously to illuminate the importance of Epicurean ones, Israel has collapsed them into a single ethical urge. As we shall see, however, Spinoza is very careful in his work to keep self-preservation as the primary end of natural behaviour and to keep the concepts of pleasure and pain located under the category of attending passions. Unfortunately, while scholars such as Curley and Israel may have tapped into a small, but important, Epicurean vein running throughout Spinoza's expansive presentation of *conatus*, their accounts are noticeably abbreviated and lacking in any comparisons between the relevant sources. Instead of developing the idea of Spinoza as a Hellenistic philosopher, rather than as a strictly Stoic or Epicurean one, they avoid the important questions of how exactly these traditions came to co-exist within Spinoza's philosophy, and, more importantly, if such a claim can be substantiated beyond a few select passages in *Ethics*. These are key considerations if one is to shift the interpretation of Spinoza's presentation of self-preservation as being not exclusively Stoic in tone but rather more broadly Hellenistic in character.

One way to avoid conflating the ancient and contemporary distinctions that occur throughout Spinoza's writings is to expand the focus of our inquiry beyond the pages of *Ethics*. In looking at a broader spectrum of Spinoza's views on bodies, nature and tendencies we will be better able to determine where the various elements in the account of self-preservation first appear in Spinoza's thought. By working our way through these earlier texts we can establish what the central claim about natural tendencies and self-preservation is and then pinpoint the ways in which Spinoza modifies that claim in subsequent texts. One should not assume that the account of self-preservation offered in *Ethics* is self-derived, or to borrow from Spinoza's famous description of God from that work, *causa sui*. Instead, one must sift through the earlier works and their embryonic views about natural tendencies and bodies to see where the central elements found in the discussion of self-preservation in *Ethics* ultimately take their root. Depending on which aspect of the claim we are looking at, be it physical, ethical or political, one cannot assume that each of these is necessarily beholden to the same intellectual tradition. Thus, instead of arguing from the outset

that Spinoza's view of self-preservation is entirely derived from one particular tradition or source, it will be far more useful to consider how the notion of self-preservation evolved before making its appearance in *Ethics*. In taking account of these philosophical and textual developments we can then adequately determine the extent to which the final account of self-preservation serves to unite any ancient or contemporary sources from which Spinoza may have been drawing from.

Nature, Providence and Self-Preservation in the Early Ethical Works

The attainment of true happiness and the nature of virtue are two topics on which Spinoza spent a considerable amount of time writing, and they formed two of the primary considerations for the young philosopher as he sat down to compose the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* (hereafter *TdIE*) sometime between 1657 and 1660. While this first work was to remain incomplete, its passages nevertheless reveal the author's determined hope of developing a system of ethics that was in accordance with the new scientific philosophy developing around Europe, yet still sympathetic towards the contemplative life upheld so prominently throughout much of classical philosophy. In addition to its philosophical enterprise, the text also retains a historical significance. *TdIE* represents the starting point for uncovering Spinoza's earliest views on natural behaviours, with the text providing foundations for many of the views that Spinoza would refine and expand further in his more mature work.

Spinoza attempts to demonstrate the philosophical benefits of synthesising modern and ancient strands of thought early on in *TdIE*, as for example when he adopts the Cartesian method of 'demolishing' commonly held opinions and substituting rational first principles to counter the belief that wealth, honour and sensual pleasure are intrinsically able to impart happiness. Instead of accepting these transitory objects as aids to human happiness, Spinoza argues that their commonly perceived 'goodness' is relative to those who possess them, with the effect that

ethically central terms such as ‘good’ and ‘evil’ become meaningless.³¹ At the heart of this ethical reductionism and the rejection of these particular objects is a hope that the philosopher might discover a constant and universal guiding principle. It is in charting such a course, however, that Spinoza’s indictments come to reiterate much of what had been recommended in both Aristotelian and Stoic ethics. As Aristotle had shown earlier, ‘happiness’ is a notoriously difficult term for people to define. This is largely due to the fact that individuals frequently and mistakenly attempt to locate its source in ‘some plain and obvious thing, like pleasure, wealth, or honour.’³² The Stoics had famously attempted to overcome this difficulty by labelling the commonly pursued ‘ends’ of wealth, pleasure and honour [good reputation] as ‘indifferent’ objects on account of their being able to be used both well and badly.³³ Because of the strong disagreements and social competitions these pursuits often provoked, and the trouble that their relative natures posed for ethical philosophy as a whole, Spinoza can be found arguing like Epictetus that philosophy should, where possible, alleviate conflict by targeting the primary causes of our differences.³⁴

Tellingly, for Spinoza, one of the ways in which the means to our ‘supreme’ and universal happiness reveals itself is by an object’s ability to promote our bodily and mental health. Following the rejections found in both Aristotle and the Stoics, Spinoza sees sensual pleasure as an inadequate guiding principle because ‘the mind is so utterly obsessed by it’ that we become hindered from contemplating anything else.³⁵ In addition to its all-consuming nature, sensual pleasure fails to promote the mind’s well-being because of its ephemeral qualities. Because pleasure is often fleeting, the mind frequently experiences a ‘profound’ sense of depression when it

³¹ Benedict Spinoza, *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* [1657-60] in Morgan (ed.), *Complete Works* (1, 12, pp. 3, 5).

³² Aristotle, *EN* (1.2, 1095a20-25, pp. 1730-31; 1.5, 1095b13-1096a10, p. 1731-32). See the discussion above on pp. 33-34.

³³ Laertius, *Lives* (7.102).

³⁴ Epictetus, *Discourses* (II.11.13) as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [II.105].

³⁵ Spinoza, *TdIE* (4, p. 4); Recall the Stoic rejection of *hedonê* on account of its ‘immoral consequences’ [*multa turpia*] in Cicero, *De fin.* (3.17).

passes, and this in turn affects its overall clarity.³⁶ As a result, sensual pleasure, like wealth and honour, is said to contribute little to our preservation; instead it often brings about the very causes of our destruction.³⁷ Like his classical predecessors, Spinoza can be found exhorting his readers to reconsider their unceasing pursuits of pleasure and other chimerical ‘goods’ and to direct their efforts towards the attainment of more permanent and universal objects. To understand these, one could have also turned to Descartes, who, like Spinoza, was convinced that philosophy could elucidate the nature of these permanent and universal truths. In his first ‘rule’ for uncovering the truth, the Frenchman had argued that humans are often ‘led astray’ because of their tendency to ignore the ‘general end of universal wisdom’ and their failure to ‘direct [their] studies towards particular ends.’³⁸ Of the ‘respectable and commendable ends’ that the New Science might elucidate and recommend were those that were most ‘conducive to the comforts of life or to the pleasure to be gained from contemplating the truth.’³⁹ As a result, science could position itself as an integral part in securing a type of happiness that was ‘complete and untroubled by any pain.’⁴⁰ In both the classical and Cartesian accounts, it was the job of the philosopher to understand not only the nature of the objects individuals pursued, but to remain cognisant of the mental and bodily contexts which suggested such pursuits in the first place.

The aim of Spinoza’s ethics as it appears in the *TdIE* and elsewhere is to demonstrate the ways in which the mind and body are unified with the processes and dictates of the larger natural world, thus trumpeting nature as the only true guide for attaining happiness.⁴¹ As the title of Spinoza’s first work makes explicit, our intellects undergo an ‘emendation’ as they begin to recognise that the fount of virtuous behaviour lies in following nature. The idea that Nature could and should

³⁶ Spinoza, *TdIE* (4, p. 4).

³⁷ *Ibid.* (7-8, pp. 4-5). Later on Spinoza will suggest in the short ‘rules for living’ section of the work that we ought to ‘enjoy pleasures just so far as suffices to preserve health.’ (17, p. 6).

³⁸ Descartes, *Rules* (AT X, 360, p. 9).

³⁹ *Ibid.* (AT X, 361, p. 10).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Spinoza, *TdIE* (13, p. 6).

serve as the basis of ethics had of course been a staple in philosophical writings for centuries. From Aristotle and the Hellenistic schools to the more recent work of Spinoza's fellow countrymen Grotius and contemporary Hobbes, nature's intelligibility explained why a body's actions were the way they were while its normative dimension helped to explain why bodies' actions ought to be the way they were. Yet while each of these authors provided an insight into how nature guided the actions of animals and humans, it is in Spinoza's insistence that the dictates of nature also contained therapeutic qualities that the Hellenistic influence becomes clearly manifest.

Spinoza's education and reading habits would have given him a familiarity with the Hellenistic accounts of nature. After leaving the Talmud Torah school of Menasseh ben Israel and Saul Levi Morteira around the age of fourteen, he would have been introduced to many of them by his Latin teacher Franciscus van den Enden. From Van den Enden's classes Spinoza quickly became fluent in the *lingua franca* of intellectual Europe while receiving instruction in the subjects of medicine, physics, history, politics and philosophy.⁴² Given Van den Enden's own humanist background,⁴³ it is likely that his own students would have engaged with the views of ancient writers such as Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics as well as the neoclassical thinkers of the Renaissance.⁴⁴ However, while the exact contents of Van den Enden's curriculum remain unknown, what is certain is that many of the authors and texts that would have been models for teaching philosophical Latin continued to circulate

⁴² Antonio R. Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Human Brain* (New York: Harcourt, 2003); Steven Nadler, *Spinoza: A Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) (p. 109).

⁴³ Van den Enden had been born in Antwerp in 1602 and was later educated by the Jesuits in the humanities and philosophy. His teaching responsibilities included Latin grammar, syntax, poetics and rhetoric in the various Belgian Jesuit colleges, and in time, he took up the study of theology at the University of Leuven (where Lipsius had earlier been a student). Yet Van den Enden was not to remain in good standing with the Order and in 1633, the year after Spinoza's birth, he was asked to leave its membership. While the exact reason for Van den Enden's abrupt dismissal remains unknown, philosophical disagreement seems a likely possibility for the future radical free-thinker. For more on Van den Enden's life see Wim Klever, 'A New Source of Spinozism: Franciscus Van den Enden', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 29/4 (1991), 613-31.

⁴⁴ Nadler, *Spinoza: A Life* (p. 109).

widely amongst Europe's booksellers and their clientele during the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As was discussed earlier, the texts of Cicero and Seneca as well as Latin editions of Greek authors such as Epictetus and Diogenes Laertius were by now widely available and the currency of these texts and their contents is made evident by the fact that many of them found their way into Spinoza's personal library. Although their presence on his shelves is in and of itself no direct indication that Spinoza actually read any of these works, it still gives us a good idea of what sort of authors and subjects he felt were worth keeping close to his writing desk.⁴⁵ Among the classical authors Spinoza acquired are many of Rome's greatest playwrights and literary figures and a sizeable collection of Roman historians that notably includes Lipsius's edition of Tacitus's *Annals*. Philosophy also takes up a large amount of the shelf space, and in particular, one finds the ancient treatments of the subject particularly well represented. For example, in addition to a two-volume set of Aristotle (Plato is entirely absent) Spinoza possessed editions of Cicero's *Letters*, Seneca, Epictetus's *Enchiridion* and Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations*. Rounding out the other major philosophical works are more recent works of Descartes as well as those in which the classical tradition still loomed largely, for example those of the Spanish Stoic apologist Francisco de Quevedo and Hobbes's *De cive*.⁴⁶ That many of these works may have been in Spinoza's possession from an early age is hinted at by one of his earliest biographers, who suggests that it was only after Spinoza acquired an 'understanding of the Latin Language' from Van den

⁴⁵ As Kristeller counsels the reader in his own discussion of Spinoza's library, 'We do not read only the books which we own, and vice versa, we do not read all the books which happen to be in our library.' Kristeller, 'Stoic and Neoplatonic Sources of Spinoza's 'Ethics'', (p. 5). Damasio, however, only pays lip service to this view when he says about the contents of Spinoza's bookshelves, 'It is a bit risky to judge a man's reading habits by the size and contents of his library, but somehow this bookcase rings true.' See Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza* (p. 263).

⁴⁶ Spinoza's library was sold off after his death in 1677 and there has been a certain amount of conjecture involved in its recreation. However, by going back through the original inventories taken before the sale, almost all of the titles, if not the exact editions Spinoza owned, have been reacquired. For more on this project and, perhaps more importantly, the inventory of what Spinoza was said to have owned, see Adri K. Offenbergh, 'Spinoza's Library: The Story of a Reconstruction', *Quaerendo*, 3/4 (1973), 309-21.

Enden's school that he found himself 'more capable for research into physical things,' and that from then on he turned his attention primarily to philosophy.⁴⁷

The engagement with these classical authors may help to explain why Spinoza's claims about the importance of understanding the order of nature appear so faithfully to reproduce the Stoic account of *homologia*.⁴⁸ If the mind is to be able to understand the dictates of Nature, Spinoza suggests, it must first be able to reproduce a faithful image of it.⁴⁹ In order to do so, the mind must first fortify itself by holding on to the sole idea that admits of Nature's origin and entirety, with other ideas being predicated upon this basis.⁵⁰ The life in agreement with Nature, first espoused by Zeno and then expanded upon by subsequent Stoic archons and philosophers, is synonymous with the virtuous life, and the goal towards which nature directs us.⁵¹ Diogenes Laertius mentions that Chrysippus argued that following nature was considered 'appropriate' because it accurately represented human nature for what it truly was, subordinate to, and dependent upon, the dictates of the larger cosmos. By acting according to our own natures, as Chrysippus and the other Stoics argued, we were only demonstrating our being governed by a law common to all things. What is more, this law is noticeably devoid of subjective notions such as good and bad and is not driven by emotions such as hope and fear. Instead it operates and commands only through the dictates of universal right reason.⁵² Spinoza is similarly concerned in his promotion of Nature's power to highlight the positive aspects of the synergy humans have with an entity that is larger and more powerful than they are. In understanding nature, Spinoza joins the Stoics in believing that errors in judgment become more infrequent and the causes of our actions become more intelligible.⁵³

⁴⁷ Johannes Colerus, *The life of Benedict de Spinoza Written by John Colerus, ... Done out of French* (London: D. L., 1706) (p. 6).

⁴⁸ Spinoza, *TdIE* (40, pp. 11-12).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* (42, p. 12).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Laertius, *Lives* (7.87).

⁵² *Ibid.* (7.89).

⁵³ Compare Spinoza, *TdIE* (58, p. 16) where Spinoza warns of the dangers of perceptions without an understanding of Nature with Laertius, *Lives* (7.54) wherein Chrysippus argues that preconception is a

In their more mature form these ‘self-apparent’ and ‘directive’ lines of argumentation would help Spinoza consider the ways in which nature operates, and more specifically, how it directs us towards the preservation of our being. What the passages in *TdIE* represent then is an entry point for assessing how important understanding and following nature’s dictates is to Spinoza’s own thought and later arguments concerning the natural striving for self-preservation. *TdIE* is able to accomplish this even though it remains the only text in which Spinoza makes no explicit mention nature having imparted a tendency towards self-preservation in all bodies. Instead, it would fall to other texts to demonstrate how each body’s tendency to preserve itself from destruction served as an important indicator of the union nature had with its parts. In the work Spinoza set aside the *TdIE* to complete – the *Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being* – one finds a significant reformulation of the claims regarding the power of nature and the ways in which it manifests itself in the actions of bodies. Additionally, and for the first time in Spinoza’s thought, one also finds an explicit account of how bodies may be seen to demonstrate a natural striving to preserve themselves, strivings which are in turn used to validate what would become Spinoza’s famously contentious equation of God and Nature.⁵⁴

The account of self-preservation presented as part of the discussion of divine providence in the *Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being* (hereafter *Short Treatise*) certainly appears to be more than just casually influenced by Spinoza’s knowledge of Stoic doctrine. Because of this seeming congruity it is therefore surprising that this work should go unaccounted for in the Stoic interpretations of

‘general notion’ which comes ‘by the gift of nature’ and serves as a sound basis upon which other ideas or notions can be subsequently based.

⁵⁴ This conceptualization of God as a synonym for ‘Nature’ had a particular appeal to Spinoza from a young age onwards according to Salomon van Til, a reformed theologian who was a professor at Leiden. Although Spinoza is said to have formed the view that ‘nature had to be the only God’ after talking with Van den Enden, it was this premise which Spinoza would subsequently use his own work to ‘build further on and give a nice glimmer to.’ Solomon von Til, *Het Voor-Hof der Heydenn, voor alle Ongeloovigen geopent* (Dordrecht, 1694) (p. 5) as cited in Wim Klever, ‘Spinoza’s Life and Works’, in Don Garrett (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 13-60 (p. 18).

Spinoza's philosophy offered by James, Carnois and others. This is unfortunate because the text's account of divine providence suggests that Spinoza's allegiance to the Stoa predates the early 1670s, when he began writing the most 'Stoic' sections of *Ethics*. When dealing with an author with as short a writing career as Spinoza, a career which spans no more than twenty years at most, such chronological shifts have tremendous consequences for characterising Spinoza's usage of Stoic thought as lifelong rather than limited only to his 'later' work.

As in the *TdIE*, the thrust of *Short Treatise* is the seemingly Stoic pronouncement that nature is as an active power and that it can be observed extending its activity into particular things, imbuing them with both general and specific qualities.⁵⁵ Detailing this activity becomes an important task for the natural philosopher, as it is through these individual connections that nature transmits its distinctive character into each body.⁵⁶ As a result of this interaction between nature and all physical bodies, the former's 'perfect and immutable character' demonstrably operates in each body's aversion to the causes of its own destruction and its inability to transform itself into better things.⁵⁷ Such attributions of nature's activity and character, which the Stoics had relied on throughout their physics and ethics, are similarly used by Spinoza as a means of prefacing his own account of the specific, active tendency individual things demonstrate in pursuing their own preservation.

Central to the discussion of self-preservation in the work is the claim that an individual thing's striving [*poginge*] to maintain and preserve in its existence is

⁵⁵ Laertius, *Lives* (7.147): '[God] is the craftsman of the universe and as it were a father of all things, both in general and also that part of him which extends through everything; he is called by many names in accordance with its powers.'

⁵⁶ This idea will be captured more fully in *Ethics* via the phrase '*natura naturata*'.

⁵⁷ Benedict Spinoza, *Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being* [c. 1662] in Morgan (ed.), *Complete Works* (1.1, p. 39). See also Seneca, *Ep.* 121.24: 'In no animal will you find contempt for itself, nor even neglect [...]' as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [II-107], Cicero, *De fin.* (3.16): '[All living things] conceive an antipathy to destruction and to those things which threaten destruction,' and Laertius, *Lives* (7.147): 'God is an animal, immortal, rational, perfect in happiness, immune to everything bad, providentially [looking after] the cosmos and the things in the cosmos.'

synonymous with the striving found throughout the whole of Nature.⁵⁸ Drawing upon the activeness of nature established earlier on in the text (as well as in passages of *TdIE*), Spinoza constructs the foundation of his theory around the belief that nature prevents things from seeking their own destruction on account of their tending or *conatus* towards self-preservation and self-improvement.⁵⁹ Such self-regarding actions are themselves indicative of nature's possessing both a general and special type of providence. Each of these may be seen as bearing a resemblance to the discussions of natural preservationist tendencies found in earlier Stoic texts. For example, when general providence is said to be 'that through which all things are produced and sustained,' one may see this as largely echoing the sentiments of Seneca when he claimed that nature passes itself completely onto all things.⁶⁰

Unlike the tendency for self-preservation suggested via nature's general striving, the *particular* striving each thing exhibits as it attempts to preserve itself wholly is said to demonstrate how natural tendencies exist at an individual level as well. For Spinoza the difference between the two can be largely explained through a relationship of the body's parts to the whole body. All of our limbs, he suggests, are 'provided for and cared for' precisely because they are parts of the body, itself being provided for by Nature's general providence.⁶¹ However, special providence is said to operate when we observe the tendency of an arm or a leg to preserve itself, not on account of the limb being a part of the larger body, but rather on account of its being a separate, individual entity. While the body may thus be said to exhibit a natural striving to preserve its existence, this striving also independently exists in each specific body part as well.⁶² Having disregarded a discussion of inanimate bodies, the accounts of Cicero, Seneca and Hierocles only locate the tendency to preserve

⁵⁸ Spinoza, *ST* (1.5, p. 53).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Seneca, *Ep.* 121.20 as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [II-107].

⁶¹ Spinoza, *ST* (1.5, p. 53).

⁶² A discussion of limbs and their role in self-preservation features in both Seneca and Hierocles, for example, but neither attributes a specific self-preserving tendency to the limbs themselves. Instead, limbs are only considered as parts bestowed by nature for aiding the larger body in its attempts to preserve itself.

oneself in the behaviour of ‘living creatures’ or ‘animals’ and came to rely heavily on *conatus* as a means of distinguishing the innate tendencies of animal bodies.⁶³ As we have seen, however, the notion of striving and resistance had also made themselves felt in the Stoic discussion of natural bodies. By referencing these natural strivings, both Spinoza and the Stoics are able to pepper their respective accounts with quantitative terms such as ‘all’ and ‘every’ to help convey their belief that this tendency exists throughout nature, and is universal in scope. Whether the tendency is more or less observable in the tendencies of animals is seemingly of less philosophical importance than stating that it actually exists. However, Spinoza’s repeated usage of an impersonal subject strongly suggests that already by this early stage in his usage of self-preservation he was ready to fill in what Stoic natural philosophy had only presented in outlined form. Moving beyond the more famous animal-specific presentations of striving, Spinoza’s explicit extension of self-preserving tendencies to *all* natural things and their parts, bypasses a strictly psychological conceptualisation of self-preservation. It does this by removing any reference to consciousness, affections or dispositions and describes the basis of such self-regarding activity solely through the workings of nature.

The naturalness of self-preserving behaviour is made clear when one examines the relationship between the claims made in the first and second sentences of the discussion on divine providence. In the first sentence, which is meant to clarify the attribute of providence, striving is said to be ‘[that] which we find in the whole of Nature and in individual things to maintain and preserve their own existence.’⁶⁴ Providence, in other words, becomes a synonym for describing an all-pervasive force whose effects are not merely confined to a biological or psychological account of a thing’s life-preserving tendencies. This ontological recasting of natural tendencies is

⁶³ Cicero, *De off.* (1.11, p. 6): ‘Self-preservation is a universal instinct in living creatures’; Cicero, *De fin.* (3.16): ‘...a living creature feels an attachment for itself, and an impulse to preserve itself and to feel affection for its own constitution and for those things which tend to preserve that constitution’; Hierocles, *Elements of Ethics* (9.3-10) in Long and Sedley, *H.Phil.* : ‘...an animal’s appropriate disposition relative to itself is <self-preservation> and, to things which contribute to the needs of its constitution, selection...’ (57D).

⁶⁴ Spinoza, *ST* (1.5, p. 53).

specifically highlighted in the second sentence. ‘It is manifest,’ Spinoza argues, ‘that no thing could, through its own nature, seek its own annihilation, but, on the contrary, that every thing has in itself a striving to preserve its condition, and to improve itself.’⁶⁵ This account of self-preservation is therefore focused on a thing’s condition rather than its possession of a soul. Further, the discussion of special providence represents an early illustration of what will eventually become the underlying panpsychist claim made in *Ethics*: that all things are animate to a certain degree and that as part of their ‘animacy’ they display certain natural tendencies. While such a view is only hinted at in the *Short Treatise*, the usage of ‘things’ conveys Spinoza’s belief that *all* objects demonstrate a tendency towards self-preservation because they exist as extensions of God:

For if existence pertains to the nature of a thing, then it is certain that we must not look outside it for its cause; but if such is not the case, then we must always look outside the thing for its cause. Since, however, the first pertains to God alone, it is thereby proved [...] that God alone is the first cause of all things. [...] God then is the cause of, and providence over, particular things only. If particular things had to conform to some other Nature, then they could not conform to their own, and consequently could not be what they truly are.⁶⁶

It is this universal striving towards self-preservation that helps Spinoza, at least in Stuart Hampshire’s analysis, ‘qualify’ what were the ‘overly crude and mechanical or atomistic’ accounts of physics because it enabled him to show how all bodies are united into a larger and all-encompassing system of nature.⁶⁷ One might even add that it also reflects the tendency of the Stoics to give what Jacques Brunschwig has termed ‘the stamp of full existence’ to all bodies, not just those ‘entities commonly

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid. (1.6, pp. 54-55).

⁶⁷ Stuart Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) (p. 67).

recognised as bodies.’ This enlargement of the term in turn demonstrates how both the Stoics and Spinoza were able to use the notion of self-preservation to ‘justify their own claims of corporeality for entities which are not obviously corporeal.’⁶⁸ Like the Stoics then, Spinoza does not feel the need to *reduce* the class of existent things striving to maintain their existence to ‘ordinary bodies such as tables and trees’ but rather attempts to *enlarge* the class of corporeal existent beings to include ‘imperceptible entities’ as well.⁶⁹ Relying on the notion of ‘striving’ thus helps to break down the previously held divisions between ‘living’ and ‘non-living’ adhered to in natural philosophy by assimilating these two categories into one larger grouping of bodies that are only differentiated by ‘different degrees of structural complication.’⁷⁰

Instead of remaining at a strictly physical level, Spinoza joins his Stoic predecessors by extending the idea of a relative unity between bodies to all levels of internal organization. However, the full implications of this extension can also create conceptual difficulties that are difficult to grasp. As Michael Della Rocca has pointed out in regards to Spinoza’s panpsychism, ‘no matter how apparently unthinking and inanimate’ a particular object is, he nevertheless attributes mental powers to it.⁷¹ Germane in form to what appears in the later passages in *Ethics*, the discussion of providence in *Short Treatise* intimates that Spinoza’s understanding of animation agrees with what could be found in the Stoic tradition, while simultaneously diverging from the scholastic and Cartesian traditions. Even though Descartes’s writings had suggested, for example, that rocks in a sling, light and other natural bodies possessed *conatus*, there is no accompanying suggestion that the presence of such a tendency also made these bodies animate. In fact, Descartes is quite clear that these natural motions are not synonymous with animation:

⁶⁸ Brunschwig, ‘Stoic Metaphysics’, (p. 211).

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism* (p. 68).

⁷¹ Michael Della Rocca, *Spinoza* (Routledge Philosophers Series; London: Routledge, 2008) (pp. 146-47). I am grateful to Professor Della Rocca for providing me with an advance copy of this work.

When I write that the globules of the second element [i.e. matter divided into spherical particles] ‘strive’ to move away from the centers around which they revolve, it should not be thought that I am implying that they have some thought from which this striving proceeds. I mean merely that they are positioned and pushed into motion in such a way that they will in fact travel in that direction, unless they are prevented by some other cause.⁷²

What Descartes is careful to maintain, both here specifically in the context of *conatus* and throughout his philosophy as a whole, is that there is *res cogitans*, which is animate, and *res extensa*, which is inanimate. In holding fast to this dichotomous presentation of bodies, Descartes noticeably rejects the Aristotelian understanding of animacy, i.e. that natural bodies possess various capacities for change and motion. While Descartes does suggest that these tendencies may in fact be found in all natural bodies, he limits any discussion about their animacy to only the most complex and rational bodies – i.e., humans.⁷³ Such divisions, while important for helping Descartes get beyond the scholastic debates on the limits of animate bodies, are themselves largely irrelevant for Spinoza. Because every thing exists as a part of nature, all bodies exhibit the same natural tendencies. The distinction between artificial and natural, animate and inanimate is therefore blurred because of the natural extension and animation of every thing becomes inseparable from its connection with nature.⁷⁴ There is nothing in the scholastic or Cartesian worldviews

⁷² Descartes, *PP* (AT VIII A, 3, 108, art. 56, p. 259).

⁷³ Consider the definition of soul given by Descartes in *Objections and Replies*: ‘For I consider the mind not as part of the soul but as the thinking soul in its entirety.’ René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy and Objections and Replies [1641]* in Cottingham, Stoothoff, and Murdoch (eds.), *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol. II (AT VII, 356, p. 246).

⁷⁴ As Spinoza had suggested earlier on regarding the unity that exists throughout Nature, ‘If there were different beings in it [,] then it would be impossible for them to unite with one another.’ Spinoza, *ST* (1.2, p. 43).

that can admit an understanding of animation and self-preservation that is as far-reaching as Spinoza's.⁷⁵

As was the case with the earlier *TdIE*, Spinoza failed to complete the *Short Treatise* and, as a result, his earliest discussion of self-preserving tendencies remains largely unappreciated in the work of those who have advanced a Stoic reading of his philosophy. Yet despite the work's abrupt ending, this embryonic account of self-preservation and natural strivings managed to take hold elsewhere in Spinoza's writings. At the same time *Short Treatise* was being composed, Spinoza was simultaneously attempting to make the central claims in Descartes's *Principles of Philosophy* (hereafter *Principles*) more transparent. This intellectual project had arisen largely from a pedagogic exercise intended to help a young philosophy student Spinoza was tutoring come to grips with the substantial and important claims about natural bodies in the work's second part.⁷⁶ Despite the fact that the resulting *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy* arrived at the press nearly twenty years after its model, the text remains an important part of the Spinozistic textual corpus, firstly because it remains the only work Spinoza ever published under his own name in his lifetime, and secondly because the work enabled him to demonstrate for the first time his interest in, and views on, some of the most important debates occurring

⁷⁵ Someone who may have come closest to Spinoza's panpsychism is the Italian and one-time Dominican philosopher Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639), an anti-Peripatetic writer who advances an account of 'pansensism' in his 1617 work *De sensu rerum et magia*. In his own attempts to describe the workings of the natural world, Campanella chose 'occult philosophy,[which] showed the cosmos to be a living, conscious statue of God.' In particular, he believed the universe was reducible to 'parts and particles' that had 'sensations... enough for their conservation.' (pp. 28-32). As part of the nature of all things, there could be said to be three great and universal '*influxus*': Necessity, Fate and Harmony; all of which helped to explain physical structure, the relations amongst bodies and their properties, and the effects that such relationships had on the universe-at-large. It seems very doubtful, however, that Spinoza would have read or even been aware of his early contemporary's work. For more on Campanella's thought, and in particular his discussion on the 'world-soul', see Brian Copenhaver, 'The Occultist Tradition and Its Critics', in Garber and Ayers (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, Vol. I, 454-512 (pp. 460-63).

⁷⁶ This is Johannes Caesarius, whose lessons with Spinoza remained a source of jealousy amongst the other Collegiate members but whose abilities were of such a standard that Spinoza felt unable to introduce his young student to his own personal views of Descartes' work so early on in his studies. See Spinoza, *Ep. 9* (Spinoza to Simon de Vries, [Feb. 1663]), '[...] As yet he is too boyish, unstable, and eager for novelty rather than for truth. Still, I am hopeful that he will correct these youthful faults in a few years time.'

throughout natural science in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Moreover, the appended *Metaphysical Thoughts* gave Spinoza cause to consider the Cartesian conception of *conatus* in contrast with what had been suggested by the scholastic philosophers. In taking up with these differences, Spinoza began to refine the account of *conatus* produced in the *Short Treatise* so that it became more Cartesian in its formulation. Although this would have a noticeable impact on how his later discussions of self-preserving tendencies looked, this point has been generally relegated to the background of one scholar's recent joint study of the two writers.⁷⁷

Although the exact relationship of *Metaphysical Thoughts* to the larger *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy* has itself been debated, with Jacob Freudenthal having gone so far as to argue that the former predates the latter and is hence not intended to preach the Cartesian gospel,⁷⁸ the text certainly betrays the effects of its author's protracted engagements with his famous contemporary. In particular, one begins to notice, even when referring back to the contemporary *Short Treatise*, how certain phrasings and conceptualisations encountered in Descartes's *Principles* begin to find their way into Spinoza's evolving vocabulary for describing the notion of self-preservation. This is a point which needs to be considered in full, before we take up with the more famous accounts of *Ethics*.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Neither *Principles of Cartesian Physics* nor *Metaphysical Thoughts* features with any significance in Derk Pereboom's joint study of both Descartes and Spinoza. Instead, he focuses on highlighting the potential Stoic influences in both Descartes and Spinoza. See Derk Pereboom, 'Stoic Psychotherapy in Descartes and Spinoza', in Lloyd (ed.), *Spinoza: Critical Assessments*, 149-84.

⁷⁸ These views were set out originally in Jacob Frudenthal, 'Spinoza und die Scholastik', *Philosophische Aufsätze - Eduard Zeller zu seinem fünfzigjährigen Doctor-Jubiläum gewidmet* (Leipzig: Fues's Verlag, 1887), 85-138. However, they have been recently taken up with in a far more recent article by Carlos Fraenkel. In particular, he has attempted to explain away the differences in *Short Treatise* and *Metaphysical Thoughts* by suggesting that the former was never intended for publication, but instead only produced to satisfy the demands of Spinoza's fellow Collegiates. *Metaphysical Thoughts*, however, was meant to serve as a bridge between the *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy* and the later *Ethics*. See Carlos Fraenkel, 'Maimonides' God and Spinoza's 'Deus Sive Natura', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 44/2 (2006), 169-215.

⁷⁹ This oversight seems to be due largely to the general view that Spinoza's own scientific contributions were themselves minimal and that the 'scientific' texts *Principles of Cartesian Physics* and *Metaphysical Thoughts* had little to offer their readers in terms of expanding the boundaries of contemporary science. As Alan Gabbey has remarked, '[Spinoza] was not a significant figure in mathematics, or in any of the *scientiae mediae* such as optics. Nor was he a significant natural

Spinoza and Cartesian *Conatus*

That Descartes was in a position to offer a useful model for explaining the self-preserving tendencies of natural bodies is understandable given that in his own account of *conatus* and self-preservation he had focused on the activities of things rather than animals.⁸⁰ These descriptions had themselves come about as part of the lofty and largely revisionary intentions of Descartes, who, as we discussed in section three, had hoped to gently replace the physics being taught in the universities of Europe with an account of bodies that could be explicated through efficient terms rather than teleology. Indeed, of all the broadsides scholastic philosophy was to receive in *Principles*, it is the Cartesian account of *conatus* that Spinoza appears to have seized upon in his own writings. Moreover, because Spinoza's earlier work had yet to extend the classical conceptions of natural bodily motions and tendencies from natural philosophy to ethics, his writings still lacked a specific term or set of terms which could adequately bridge the two subjects. By the 1660s, Spinoza thus found himself in need of a new criterion by which he could demonstrate that a natural, as well as psychological, tendency towards self-preservation existed. The extent to which Cartesian physics helped supply him with such a criterion is a point to which we will now turn and one which will require saying a few words about the Cartesian worldview itself.

One of the ways in which Cartesianism supplied the premises for advancing a non-psychological account of self-preservation is through its portrayal of nature as *res extensa*, where the essence of corporeal bodies is explained via extension in length, breadth and depth essence, and *res cogitans*, where thought constitutes the

philosopher, except qua expositor of Descartes, or to the extent that physics underpins his psychology and ethical and political philosophy.' See Alan Gabbey, 'Spinoza's Natural Science and Methodology', in Garrett (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, 142-91 (p. 146).

⁸⁰ 'It is quite clear to anyone who attentively considers the nature of time that the same power and action are needed to preserve anything at each individual moment of its duration as would be required to create that thing anew if it were not yet in existence. Hence the distinction between preservation and creation is only a conceptual one, and this is one of the things that are evident by the natural light.' Descartes, *Med. & Obj. and Rep.* (AT VII, 3, 49, p. 33). These conceptual differences are detailed in Descartes, *PP* (AT VIIIA, 1, 30, art. 62, p. 214).

nature of thinking bodies. ‘Everything else which can be attributed to body,’ Descartes argues, ‘presupposes extension and represents a mode of an extended thing.’⁸¹ Cartesian metaphysics and physics, therefore, do not appeal to the possession of a mind to explain a thing’s most basic and natural behaviours. Starting with an investigation into ‘bodies’ other universal principles soon reveal themselves, meaning that metaphysics becomes a way of discovering the primary attributes of God, the non-material aspects of the human soul and finally determining those unconfused notions which exist within us.⁸² From such a natural foundation one can proceed to consider how these principles manifest themselves throughout the various bodies occupying the universe. Moreover, the benefits of such a top-down approach seem to have been picked up on by Spinoza, who suggested that the ‘best way to understand the nature of Plants or Man’ was through a consideration of the inner mechanisms responsible for the promotion and maintenance of their existence. After uncovering the common links between various physical bodies, one would acquire a deep knowledge not only of plants and animals, but of ‘everything in the visible world’ as a result of understanding these universal principles.⁸³ Thus when Descartes describes the specifics of natural extension, which is what Spinoza’s account of providence in *Short Treatise* had also intended to demonstrate, certain qualities such as shape, size, colour and motion reveal themselves as the primary means of clarifying the infinite and divine connections appearing throughout nature.⁸⁴

Of particular interest for elucidating the natural extension of bodies is a consideration of the motions and actions they can be said to exhibit. Whereas the Scholastics had attempted to explain the relation of motion and nature through a convoluted definition intended to explain all the changes in a body’s state,⁸⁵ the

⁸¹ Descartes, *PP* (AT VIII A, 1, 25, art. 53, p. 210).

⁸² *Ibid.* (Preface to the French edition of 1647, AT IX B, 14, p. 186).

⁸³ Benedict Spinoza, *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy and Metaphysical Thoughts [1663]* in Morgan (ed.), *Complete Works* (3, p. 174).

⁸⁴ Descartes, *PP* (AT VIII A, 1, 31, art. 64, p. 215).

⁸⁵ In *The World* Descartes had specifically taken issue with the definition of motion and the illustrative examples provided by Aristotle in his *Physics*. The definition of motion (in Descartes’ rendering) is

Cartesian account of motion confines itself to inquiring into only local and constant motions.⁸⁶ The importance of acknowledging local motion as a cause capable of explaining natural phenomena, and indeed supporting the entire edifice of physics, was therefore made into a substantial claim by Descartes, who looked to the shapes, divisions and activity of matter for ‘indubitably’ true axioms that were rigorous enough to stand as mathematical proofs.⁸⁷ More importantly, Descartes believed that when one considered corporeal behaviour through transitive motions, certain ‘laws’ governing their activity could be deduced. In formulating these specific laws of motion, Descartes supplied his readers with an account of bodily preservation that relies on God’s ‘immutability and constancy’ to emphasise nature’s universal and unchanging character.⁸⁸ God represents the primary and universal cause of motion on account of his having created all matter, along with its motion and rest, in the universe.⁸⁹ Through ‘regular concurrence’ he is further said to continuously preserve all that was initially created.⁹⁰ Yet while motion may be conceived of as a particular mode of matter, Descartes wants to emphasise that despite the constancy of the created universe in individuals there remains room for variation in movement. For example, while some things may be able to differentiate themselves by virtue of their speed in relation to another body, this does not mean that God’s constancy has been interrupted.⁹¹ Rather God’s preservation of bodies-at-large and their strivings to move in alternate directions indicates that the laws of nature operate at both the

‘the actuality of a thing in potentiality insofar as it is in potentiality.’ [*Motus est actus entis in potentia, prout in potentia est*] See Descartes, *The World* (AT XI 39, pp. 93-94).

⁸⁶ ‘The philosophers also posit many motions which they think can take place without any body’s changing place, like those they call *motus ad formam*, *motus ad calorem*, *motus ad quantitatem* and numerous others. For my part, I am not acquainted with any motion except that which is easier to conceive than the lines of the geometers – the motion which makes bodies pass from one place to another and successively occupy all the spaces which exist in between.’ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Descartes, *PP* (AT VIII A, 2, 78-79, art. 64, p. 247).

⁸⁸ ‘It is easy to accept that God, who is, as everyone must know, immutable, always acts in the same way.’ Descartes, *The World* (AT XI 38, p. 93).

⁸⁹ Descartes, *PP* (AT VIII A, 2, 61, art. 36, p. 240).

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid. ‘Now there are some changes whose occurrence is guaranteed either by our own plain experience or by divine revelation, and either our perception or our faith shows us that these take place without any change in the creator; but apart from these we should not suppose that any other changes occur in God’s works, in case this suggests some inconstancy in God.’

general and individual level, the same premise formulated in Spinoza's account of general and special providence.

The first law of Cartesian physics holds that each and every thing, insofar as it is able [*quantum in se est*], always continues to preserve its current state.⁹² This preservation is continuous and only ceases upon the body being altered or destroyed by a larger external force.⁹³ The subject of this law, 'each and every thing', is intended, much as in Spinoza's presentation in *Short Treatise*, to move the discussion of tendencies away from animals to all natural bodies. In suggesting that a thing's ability to preserve its current state will remain unchanged until acted upon by a greater external cause,⁹⁴ the Cartesian account supports Spinoza's assertion that 'no thing could, through its own nature, seek its own annihilation.'⁹⁵ This tendency to remain in motion is also easily observable. In the flight of a stone, for example, it will naturally continue to fly through the air if resistance or other bodies are not encountered.⁹⁶ When speaking of the 'second element' (i.e. fluid in a stable state), this striving is said to operate in each particle's attempts to move away from the centre around which they revolve. While this may be seen as an early attempt to describe the principles of centrifugal force, this example is also noteworthy for its implication that an object's *conatus* is not dependent upon any mental process.⁹⁷ Bodily strivings therefore are the result of a thing's having been 'positioned and pushed into motion in such a way' that it will naturally continue to move until

⁹² This law is based on an earlier formulation found in *The World*, which was not published because of the tensions exacerbated by the trial of Galileo in Rome. Almost certainly because of the hostility shown to the Italian scientist, Descartes chose to tread carefully around the idea that objects stay in motion until a larger external force 'stops or retards it.' As he writes, 'The philosophers have excluded motion from the rule – which is just the thing I most definitely wish to include in it. Do not think, however, that I intend to contradict them: the motion they speak of is so very different from the one I conceive that it may very easily happen that what is true of the one is not true of the other.' See chapter 7 in Descartes, *The World* (esp. AT XI 38-39, pp. 93-94).

⁹³ Descartes, *PP* (AT VIII A, 2, 62, art. 37, pp. 240-41).

⁹⁴ 'Nothing can by its own nature tend towards its opposite, or towards its own destruction.' Ibid.

⁹⁵ Spinoza, *ST* (p. 53).

⁹⁶ Descartes, *PP* (AT VIII A, 2, 63, art. 38, p. 241).

⁹⁷ This point is illustrated by Descartes in *PP* (AT VIII A, 3, 108, art. 57, fig. 5, p. 259).

impeded on by some other cause.⁹⁸ Descartes's account of *conatus* thus holds that the natural laws governing motion in the smallest of natural bodies are the same laws which explain the tendencies in larger and more complex bodies as well.⁹⁹

From Descartes's first law other laws can be seen to follow, each of which are meant to clarify further the ways in which a body preserves in its natural state. For example, bodies in motion do not just tend to stay in any type of motion, but rather in rectilinear motion on account of God's immutability and the simplicity by which his laws operate.¹⁰⁰ These acts of preservation also remain constant, for God aids the body and its motions throughout their duration, not just at the moment of their creation.¹⁰¹ This contention is supported primarily through the claim that God's active preservation of the world and its contents is identical to the original act of creation.¹⁰² Divine constancy is imparted to the various bodies comprising the natural world and maintains each individual body specifically through the 'impulses and transfers of actions' that occur within their various parts.¹⁰³ These impulses and transfers are essential to understanding the body's *conatus*, since all bodies are said not only to demonstrate natural tendencies, but more specifically a tendency towards motion.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Descartes, *PP* (AT VIII A, 3, 108, art. 56, p. 259).

⁹⁹ As Spinoza sums up this section of *Principles*, 'We seek principles that are simple and easy to know; for unless they are such, we shall not be in need of them. The only reason why we assign seeds to things is to get to know their nature more easily and, like mathematicians, to ascend from the clearest to the more obscure and from the simplest to the more complex.' Spinoza, *PCP&MT* (3, p. 175).

¹⁰⁰ Descartes, *PP* (AT VIII A, 2, 63, art. 39, pp. 241-42).

¹⁰¹ '[God] always preserves the motion in the precise form in which it is occurring at the very moment when he preserves it, without taking any account of the motion that was occurring a little while earlier. It is true that no motion takes place in a single instant of time; but clearly whatever is in motion is determined at the individual instants which can be specified as long as the motion lasts, to continue moving in a given direction along a straight line, and never in a curve [...].' Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid. (AT VIII A, 2, 66, art. 42, p. 243).

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ 'By *conatus to motion* we understand, not some thought, but that a part of matter is so situated and stirred to motion that it would in fact be going in some direction if it were not impeded by any cause.' Spinoza, *PCP&MT* (3, Def. 3, p. 176) Also Descartes, *The World* (AT XI 39-40, pp. 93-94).

As Spinoza understands Descartes here, this specific conceptualisation had also been intended as a way to simplify and correct the various accounts of internal motions ‘the philosophers’ had attributed to bodies. For the *novator* Descartes, his success in bringing about a shift in how motion was understood depended on his ability to cut through the myriad definitions scholastic writers had attributed to it over the previous centuries. However, Descartes seemed undaunted by the challenge. As he wrote to Mersenne in 1640, ‘I do not think that the diversity of the opinions of the scholastics makes their philosophy difficult to refute. It is easy to overturn the foundations on which they all agree, and once that has been done, all their disagreements over detail will seem foolish.’¹⁰⁵ By the seventeenth century terms such as *philosophia naturalis*, *physica* and *physiologia* had become short-hand for investigating not only the active and passive capacities of natural bodies, but also their actions, qualities, and properties. However, natural philosophy could even be extended to cover the functions and limits of the mind and soul. As a result, treatises on natural philosophy might seamlessly introduce a whole range of conceptually related theological or psychological questions and disputations. According to Denis Des Chene, the Aristotelians had been able, mainly by appealing to ‘common sense and authority,’ to use these commentaries and treatises to categorise the movements of natural bodies through an elaborate explanation of *natural* changes.¹⁰⁶ In particular, they had presented natural change via two distinctive characteristics: it proceeded spontaneously after being initiated and it eventually ceased spontaneously after arriving at some *terminus*. While these characteristics were ‘most evident in the actions of animals,’ even inanimate things could be seen as operating according to the same principle of spontaneous initiation and termination.¹⁰⁷ Of particular significance to this view of natural bodies was the term ‘*motus*’, which signified the actual change that took place, and hence became a prominent feature in the numerous

¹⁰⁵ Descartes to Mersenne, 11 Nov. 1640 in Descartes, *Ep.* (AT III, 232, p. 156).

¹⁰⁶ Des Chene, *Physiologia: Natural Philosophy in Late Aristotelian and Cartesian Thought* (p. 21).

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

scholastic attempts to bring things such as activity and passivity under one terminological heading.¹⁰⁸

It is precisely this ‘asymmetry’ in the description of natural changes between agent and patient that Cartesian natural philosophy seeks to address.¹⁰⁹ However, Descartes did not intend to take on the entire edifice of scholastic natural physics, despite his references to the ‘the philosophers’ throughout his writings. What is more likely, as Descartes’s letters written around the time he was composing *The World* (where the tendency towards motion was first sketched out) suggest, is that he was attempting to refute what he knew of the Jesuit commentaries and *cursus* from his time at La Flèche and the collected scholastic positions found in central textbooks such as the *Coimbran Commentaries* on Aristotle’s *Physics* and Eustachius a Sancto Paulo’s *Summa quadripartita*.¹¹⁰ These earlier attempts were vexing for Descartes because they attributed a stability and ‘realness’ to moving bodies that did not exist in those at rest.¹¹¹ Such a claim ultimately proved troublesome because it importantly failed to consider how even motion’s natural ‘opposition’ (i.e. rest) still managed to display the body’s natural tendency to persist in its current state. Bodies at rest could not, at least in the Cartesian rebuttal, be said to demonstrate any more or less of a self-preserving tendency than their more active counterparts.¹¹² In removing this dichotomy between active bodies and resting bodies, one could begin to challenge

¹⁰⁸ As Des Chene notes, ‘*motus*, action, and passion are not really “distinct”, but only distinct *a ratione*, one and the same entity conceived under various relations.’ Ibid. (p. 23).

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. (p. 24).

¹¹⁰ In Descartes’ letters, however, only the Coimbran College and two specific Jesuits are cited by name - Franciscus Toletus and Antonius Rubius. In the *Fourth Reply* Descartes mentions Suárez as having used the term ‘materially’ in an ‘identical sense’. However, as the letter to Mersenne makes clear, while Descartes saw Jesuit Aristotelianism as a significant source of opposition to his physics, he was in no mood to work his way through the substantial body of Aristotelian commentaries they had produced throughout Europe. As a result, he hoped instead to tackle their entire ‘Philosophy’ through a compilation of their arguments and ended up asking for the work of a particular ‘Chartreuse or Feuillant’ who had collated many of the previously existent works into one tome – Eustachius’ *Summa*. See Descartes, *Corr.* (30 Sept. 1640, p. 78); Descartes, *Med. & Obj. and Rep.* (AT VII, 235, p. 164); Dennis Des Chene, ‘Descartes and the Natural Philosophy of the Coimbra Commentaries’, in Stephen Gaukroger, John Schuster, and John Sutton (eds.), *Descartes’ Natural Philosophy* (Routledge Studies in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy; London: Routledge, 2000), 29-45.

¹¹¹ Descartes, *The World* (AT XI 40, p. 94).

¹¹² Descartes, *PP* (AT VIII A, 2, 66, art. 43, p. 243).

the philosophers' assertion that all bodies tend towards rest and, ultimately, their own destruction.¹¹³

The understanding of *conatus* as being a tendency towards motion, and more specifically Descartes's rejections of the earlier scholastic accounts of motion, is clearly on display in the first part of Spinoza's *Metaphysical Thoughts* and its arguments regarding the body's self-preserving motions. After having reiterated the supreme goodness of God, whose beneficence is portrayed in Cartesian terms as being manifested through his concurrence in preserving each individual thing,¹¹⁴ the text adopts the same corrective tone as *Principles*. In particular, Spinoza wants to point out the confusion that has resulted from their conflating a 'distinction of reason' with a 'real or modal distinction'.¹¹⁵ This arises when scholastic philosophers attempt to distinguish between the thing or body itself and the *conatus* to preserve itself, which Spinoza says every thing possesses. Whereas the thing and its *conatus* are distinguishable by reason and words, in reality the two are 'in no way distinct from one another'.¹¹⁶ As in the Cartesian analysis, the inseparable relationship between *conatus* and existence demonstrates itself when one considers the ability of motion to preserve itself.¹¹⁷

Bodies cannot also be said to lose the force of motion, for in making such a claim one would be suggesting that they are in fact losing a part of their nature, which would contradict the tendency towards preserving their motion. But Spinoza humours the opposing viewpoint by considering what the implications would be if the body's *conatus* to motion did in fact exist externally to the natural laws of

¹¹³ Ibid. (AT VIII A, 2, 62, art. 37, pp. 240-41) and Descartes, *The World* (AT XI 40, p. 94).

¹¹⁴ Recall Descartes' view of God: '[He] created matter, along with its motion and rest; and now, merely by his regular concurrence, he preserves the same amount of motion and rest in the material universe as he put there in the beginning.' Descartes, *PP* (AT VIII A, 2, 61, art. 36, p. 240) and Spinoza, *PCP&MT* (1.6, p. 188).

¹¹⁵ Spinoza, *PCP&MT* (1.6, p. 188).

¹¹⁶ This echoes Descartes's chiding of the scholastic account of motion as relying on 'magic words' to 'try and explain things which are self-evident in terms of something even more evident: what they do is to explain something else or nothing at all.' See Descartes, *Rules* (12, AT X, 426, pp. 48-49).

¹¹⁷ Spinoza, *PCP&MT* (1.6, p. 188).

motion. If one were to uphold the *conatus* as a type of ‘metaphysical good’ (which it would be if it existed outside of nature’s laws), then one would quickly fall into an infinite regression of attributing a conative power of preservation to the *conatus* itself, which would itself have a *conatus* for preserving itself and so on and so on. The only way to break away from such endless attributions is to stop extending a desire [*desiderium*] for preservation to every individual thing and to recognise that the body’s desire to preserve itself is in fact inseparable from the body itself.¹¹⁸ This break with the Scholastics revolves around the shared Cartesian-Spinozistic view that the body’s *conatus* is identical with its essence, and hence cannot be conceived of as any distinct entity or function that exists outside of the actual body. By linking the *conatus* to natural motion, the need to understand bodies in terms of specific ends is therefore removed as perfection and form have been replaced by active functions and powers to continue in existence. As David Bidney noted, Spinoza used this distinction to launch a two-pronged attack on the Scholastics in his discussion of *conatus* in *Metaphysical Thoughts*. Firstly, he defines *conatus* in terms of a continuous motion or force and characterised it as possessing a staying power that can only be hindered by a greater external power. Secondly, *conatus* is used to get around the metaphysical difficulty that attends the claim that unmoved things can initiate physical motion. It does this by pointing out the fallacies that arise when we attempt to project our own mental processes onto things that are themselves not in possession of any mental capabilities.¹¹⁹ Instead, as the text sets out, all natural essences should instead be defined through their actual motive functions. This means appealing to each individual thing’s continuous striving to remain in existence, an argumentative move that results in all natural and rational things coming under one explanatory heading.

However, while Spinoza may have felt compelled to admonish the Scholastics for their confused understanding of *conatus* in a subsequent elaboration

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ David Bidney, *The Psychology and Ethics of Spinoza: A Study in the Logic and History of Ideas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940) (pp. 96-97).

of the philosophers' account of life, he undermines his earlier argument (and by extension Descartes's) when he posits a distinction between the force to preserve and the body itself. After suggesting that some will only attribute life to those things which have both soul and body, Spinoza elaborates on his own understanding of the term when he says 'there is no doubt that it [life] should also be attributed to corporeal things not united to minds and to minds separated from body.'¹²⁰ This extension is possible because life is nothing but the term we use to designate 'the force through which things persevere in their own being.'¹²¹ Yet as he continues, such force is different from things themselves, so that we 'quite properly' say that things themselves *have* life. Only when one speaks of God, whose force to preserve himself is the same as his essence, can the two be conceptually conjoined.¹²² For Jesuit Scholastics such as Franciscus Toletus, Suárez, Petrus Fonseca and the Coimbrian authors, the definition of 'life' had become 'a more pressing or at least more prominent question than in their predecessors' [work].¹²³ Whereas Aristotle had suggested in *De anima* that souls are capable of self-motion, as these later commentators demonstrated self-motion was capable of being understood in a variety of different ways. When one spoke of self-motion, did it mean, for example, that self-motion was limited to the motion of its vital operations terminating within itself, rather than externally? Or might the principle of these vital motions – the initiator – be in fact 'intrinsic' to them, which would make their motion different from projectiles? Neither proposal, Des Chene has concluded, 'is entirely satisfactory, especially when "being alive" is applied, not only to plants and animals, but to purely spiritual beings and to God.'¹²⁴ Yet whereas Descartes seeks to render this distinction between internal and external sources of motion moot, Spinoza's

¹²⁰ Spinoza, *PCP&MT* (2.6, p. 197).

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Dennis Des Chene, *Life's Form: Late Aristotelian Conceptions of the Soul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000) (pp. 12-13).

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

removal of the *conatus* from the body itself resurrects many of the questions his predecessor had attempted to quell.¹²⁵

There is little that can be done to resolve the argumentative inconsistency in the discussion of self-preservation in *Metaphysical Thoughts*. In the first part of the work, the argument follows familiar Cartesian lines of presentation and arrives at an understanding of *conatus* that reiterated its inseparability from a body's natural internal motions. And again, in the post-Scholastic consideration of God, one can find a description of God's activity and concurrence in preservation as involving both motion and continuity.¹²⁶ However, by suggesting that bodies could contain a division between their power to preserve themselves and their actual essence, one cannot help but feel that essence and *conatus* are in fact not as intertwined in Spinoza's account of bodies as had appeared to be the case. If anything, what the failure to promote a consistent conception of *conatus* indicates is that in the years leading up to the work's publication in 1663, Spinoza's account of self-preservation was still being shaped by a variety of different and competing traditions, some Hellenistic and some contemporary.

While the Cartesianism of the first part of *Metaphysical Thoughts* is skewed by the seeming adherence to the scholastic account of *conatus* proffered in the second part, there remains at least one way in which Spinoza's reading of Descartes shaped his own account of self-preservation from the 1660s onwards. In future discussions of self-preservation Spinoza can be found attaching the qualifying phrase 'insofar as it is able' [*quantum in se est*] to his own characterisation of bodies' natural tendencies. Its inclusion is primarily intended to demonstrate that such strivings exist as a function of an object's individual bodily powers, or in the case of

¹²⁵ As Des Chene summarizes Cartesian physiology, 'The very idea of a natural division between the living and the nonliving becomes obscure,' because the gamble of the 'beast-machine' view of life is that 'the physical (or the psycho-chemical) would eventually make good on its promise to annex the vital.' Ibid. (p. 13).

¹²⁶ God's creation of the universe is again said to be synonymous with his preservation of it, and this preservation covers only the same quantity of motion as was initially created. Spinoza, *PCP&MT* (2.10, p. 204; 2.11, p. 207).

more complex bodies, their mental powers. This emphasis on potency - i.e. that some bodies are naturally better suited to defend and preserve their existence than others - further lends itself to the establishment of a natural hierarchy for addressing the various types of bodies that exist throughout nature. In this non-exclusive structure it becomes possible to accommodate the fact that more complex bodies are able to rely on both mental and bodily powers to aid in their preservation while less complex bodies such as plants and rocks remain dependent only on their comparatively weaker bodily powers. However, while this qualification may seem particularly useful in the descriptive sense, its inclusion in Spinoza's future accounts of self-preservation suggests another role for explaining the Cartesian influence on his philosophy: as a contemporary and well-known route through which he could access particular aspects of classical Atomism and apply them to his still-developing account of bodies' self-preserving tendencies.

In his far-ranging discussion of how some of the seventeenth-century's most notable natural scientists attempted to elaborate upon their belief that all bodies possessed an internal resistance to change, I.B. Cohen showed how writers such as Descartes, Gassendi and Newton all relied on the phrase '*quantum in se est*' as a means of characterising bodies' natural proportional forces. In their respective accounts such proportional force was correlated to the mass of a body, with the result that larger bodies possessed a greater internal power for staving off their own destruction. This force therefore became a central component in any natural explanation of how bodies were able to remain in their current state of motion. By calculating a particular body's ability to resist, '*quantum in se est*' became a useful phrase for capturing the notion that resistance in bodies was in essence 'quantitatively limited'.¹²⁷ However, while Descartes and others may have been particularly pleased in having found a way to express the fundamental claims of their own revolutionary physics, their writings (and by extension, all those that relied on the phrase afterwards) incurred an indebtedness to a phrase that was anything but

¹²⁷ Cohen, '*Quantum in se est*', (p. 133).

contemporary. Rather by incorporating ‘*quantum in se est*’ into their respective *primae leges*, Descartes and Newton had helped conjoin the inertial physics of the seventeenth century with the classical Epicurean tradition, and in particular, as it had been presented in Lucretius’s well-circulated poem *De rerum natura*. This accorded with the larger desire to see atomic principles updated and applied to the contemporary study of natural philosophy. While Lucretius might then wax poetically about elements such as fire or ‘smiling crops and trees’ demonstrating a natural tendency to move upwards, his views very much accorded with the mechanist view that all types of bodies were capable of maintaining these types of movements if they could overcome the downward forces of their own weight.¹²⁸ What the insertion of the Lucretian phrase served to reiterate more than anything, however, was that the forces necessary for moving, maintaining and resisting were always to be found inside the body, not externally to it. Indeed, when one considers the ways in which Descartes and Spinoza use the phrase in their own writings, what may be said to link their respective accounts with those of the Epicureans is their belief that all bodies exhibit an internal power to resist and preserve themselves and that only larger external forces have the ability to interrupt this natural tendency.¹²⁹

Although Cohen himself did not pick up on any shared conceptualisation between Spinoza and the Epicureans, his account still manages to speak clearly to the larger trend that many of natural philosophy’s most substantial accounts of self-preservation remained partially, but significantly, bound up with Epicurean philosophy. In failing to include Spinoza, an avid reader and critic of Descartes and someone whose own usage of ‘*quantum in se est*’ predated Newton’s by more than a

¹²⁸ ‘Certainly flames tend upward at their birth and as they increase, and lustrous crops and trees grow upward too, though all bodies, left to themselves, are drawn downward by their weight.’ Lucretius, *Nature of Things* (2.188-90, p. 40) Two other examples occur in the same section, in lines 201-2 and 203-5, and a third is found a little later on in lines 246-48 when Lucretius suggests it is a ‘plain and manifest observation that objects with weight, left to themselves, cannot travel an oblique course when they plunge from above.’

¹²⁹ Lucretius explicitly ties this ability to resist external blows to an object’s weight, or more specifically to its natural downward force. Ibid. (2.288-89, p. 42).

decade, Cohen's thesis remains open for extension.¹³⁰ Moreover, highlighting the atomist strands attached to Spinoza's self-preservation argument suggests that a strictly Stoic interpretation of *Ethics* is difficult. As we now turn our attention to that text, let us instead consider the ways in which the larger body of received Hellenistic philosophy was adopted and put to use in the shaping of Spinoza's most detailed account of bodies' self-preserving tendencies.

Self-Preservation and Hellenistic Philosophy in Spinoza's *Ethics*

Although *Ethics* remained unpublished until after Spinoza's death in 1677, largely for fear of reigniting the firestorm of criticism that had greeted the anonymously-published *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* in 1670, Spinoza had been working on its various propositions on and off since at least 1662 – or more than a year before the publication of the *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy*.¹³¹ Yet in what would prove to be his most well-known attempt at explaining human behaviours and demonstrating

¹³⁰ The potential significance of Spinoza's inclusion of '*quantum in se est*' in his own account of conative strivings has largely gone overlooked, although Michael Della Rocca has touched upon it to some degree in his own work. As he has recently pointed out, much to the detriment of those who see Spinoza's account of self-preservation as largely Stoic-inspired, the amalgamation of 'striving' and 'ability' into a single proposition in *Ethics* has its roots in the contemporary work of not only Descartes, but also Hobbes. However, Della Rocca only hints at the consequences that the presence of such contemporary constructions has for any modern attempts to source Spinoza's account of self-preservation. This is because Della Rocca's analysis remains largely concerned with examining, and then critiquing, the philosophical veracity of the account of self-preservation itself. Thus while his work serves as an important introduction to approaching the possible sources for the account of self-preservation in *Ethics*, much work remains to be done if one is to trace the historical 'dots' Spinoza's account seeks to connect. See Michael Della Rocca, 'Spinoza's Metaphysical Psychology', in Garrett (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, 192-266 (pp. 194-95, 201).

¹³¹ Spinoza's fears about publishing *Ethics* are made clear in a letter to Henry Oldenburg. See Spinoza, *Ep.* 68 ([Sept.] 1675, pp. 935-36). An earlier letter to Spinoza from Oldenburg in the middle of 1662 urges the philosopher 'not to begrudge scholars the learned fruits of your acute understanding both in philosophy and theology, but to let them be published despite the growlings of pseudo-theologians.' Oldenburg presses on by saying that he will not allow Spinoza's thoughts on 'Nature's mysteries' to remain buried in eternal silence. While Oldenburg remained ignorant of the true scope of Spinoza's project, a fact borne out in their later correspondence, there is little doubt the 'thoughts' he is referring to here is an early draft of *Ethics*, which was circulating amongst Spinoza's Collegiate friends. The manuscript's presence is also confirmed in a letter from Jarig Jelles to Spinoza written some six months after Oldenburg's, which contains comments, questions, and critiques of the first part of the work. See Spinoza, *Ep.* 7 ([July] 1662, p. 777; 8/24 Feb. 1663, pp. 778-80).

how freedom from the passions derived from an understanding of Nature's 'immutable and fixed order', Spinoza's descriptions of self-preserving tendencies and the relationship of the passions with *conatus* bear an unacknowledged, but clearly detectable, indebtedness to Stoicism.

Drawing from the investigations of Nature and physical bodies in the earlier texts, *Ethics* relies on a geometrically ordered scientific structure to demonstrate how physics and psychology can be fused together to form a single investigation into Nature.¹³² To achieve this ambitious goal, the first part of the work revisits the nature of God, confirming to the reader that existence can only be part of God's essence and that God, as the efficient cause responsible for all things' existence, directs every thing to act in particular and determined ways.¹³³ In the following part the mind and cognition are again examined, with particular emphasis being placed on the idea that mind and body are in fact inseparable. This unity comes to have a particular relevance for understanding the actions of the individual, whose mind possesses an awareness of body that, while imperfect, makes it impossible for their bodily functions to go unperceived.¹³⁴ By linking mind and body so closely, there can also be a renewed emphasis on the role of motion in explaining natural behaviours. Thus one finds bodily maintenance, even for those bodies with minds, being primarily characterised in motive rather than psychological terms:

The individual thing so composed retains its own nature, whether as a whole it is moving or at rest, and in whatever direction it moves, provided that each constituent part retains its own motion and continues to communicate this motion to the other parts.¹³⁵

¹³² Rice, 'Emotion, Appetition, and *Conatus* in Spinoza', (p. 101).

¹³³ Benedict Spinoza, *Ethics* [1677] in Morgan (ed.), *Complete Works* (1.P25 and P26, p. 232).

¹³⁴ Ibid. (2.P13, p. 251): 'The object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body – i.e., a definite mode of extension actually existing, and nothing else,' and (2.P30, pp. 262-63): 'We can have only a very inadequate knowledge of the duration of our body.'

¹³⁵ Spinoza, *Ethics* (2.P13L7, p. 254).

It is the maintenance of these motions in the smaller bodies comprising the body's 'constituent parts' that ultimately enables it to be preserved by way of a continuous regeneration.¹³⁶ That this conception of preservation extends to human bodies as well is evident by the fact that the basic nature affecting human bodies is no different from that working inside other individual things, all of which are animated to some degree.¹³⁷ Remarking on the indistinguishable relationship between the organism's *conatus* and its essence, Henry Allison has remarked that in Spinoza's account of self-preservation, 'One can no more help striving to preserve one's being than a stone can help falling when dropped. It is simply one's nature, and nothing can violate the laws of one's own being.'¹³⁸ However, while motion may remain the central precept in our understanding of natural bodily preservation, human's self-preserving activities carry additional considerations. As complex bodies, humans are also subject to the demands of natural desires and appetites and, as such, the physical account of self-preservation developed in texts such as *Short Treatise* and the *Metaphysical Thoughts* is transformed into a detailed psychological account of the internal forces that prompt humans to seek out their own preservation.¹³⁹

At the outset of the third part, which contains the primary account of self-preservation as part of its larger attempt to uncover the 'Origin and Nature of the Emotions', the idea of an 'imperfect awareness' of the body is revisited. That this should be a topic of concern for Spinoza is revealing, for such an inquiry had itself been a common feature in the Stoic explanation of how animals were directed towards their own preservation. In the accounts of Cicero, Hierocles and Seneca, an animal's awareness of its own constitution was seen as nature's way of reinforcing the intimate connection between mind and body. This was crystallised in the Ciceronian account of self-consciousness, wherein it is said to precede desire and

¹³⁶ Ibid. (2.P13Post4, p. 255).

¹³⁷ Ibid. (2.P13S, pp. 254-55).

¹³⁸ Henry E. Allison, *Benedict de Spinoza* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975) (p. 134).

¹³⁹ David Lachterman, 'The Physics of Spinoza's *Ethics*', in Robert Shahan and J.I. Biro (eds.), *Spinoza: New Perspectives* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 71-112.

prompt the animal into action.¹⁴⁰ So strong is the attachment between the mind and body that there is no one who would not prefer to have all of the body's parts 'sound and whole' rather than 'maimed or distorted' yet 'equally serviceable.'¹⁴¹ However, while Cicero indicates that such an attachment between mind and body exists in all animals, it is Seneca who draws particular attention to the imperfect nature of the union. As he points out, it is far easier to understand nature than to try to explain it. This is particularly the case with babies and animals, who remain aware of their bodily constitution despite not knowing what a constitution is. Instead, they tend to act according to a vague and incomplete understanding of their body's needs and desires.¹⁴²

This opacity is also evident in Spinoza's description of the mind's inability to understand fully its own powers and weaknesses. When he notes that no one has been able to determine the limits of the body's capabilities or explain its structure and functions accurately, he is, like the Stoics, reiterating that a true understanding of body is impossible because of our inability to define it outside of its relationship with the mind.¹⁴³ Because this connection has never been properly detailed, humans tend to believe that their actions are free because they remain ignorant of the causes which actually determine them.¹⁴⁴ Yet this is not to suggest that the root of these actions always remains hidden away beyond the realm of our understanding. Rather, the source of these natural and primary actions, at least in humans, is revealed when proper weight is given to mental decisions on the one hand and the appetites and physical states of bodies on the other. As Yirmiyahu Yovel has pointed out, the theory of action and living at the heart of *Ethics* is in fact underpinned by a theory of self-preservation. The account of *conatus* is intended to blend these two elements in such a way that bodily self-preservation remains the primary consideration even

¹⁴⁰ Cicero, *De fin.* (3.16).

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* (3.17).

¹⁴² Seneca, *Ep.* 121 as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [II-107].

¹⁴³ Spinoza, *Ethics* (3.P2S, pp. 280).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

though it is transcended by a prolonged consideration of the mind's activity.¹⁴⁵ Although Yovel's analysis does not speak to any specific philosophical influence, the transition from a purely physical account of *conatus* to one expressed in terms of virtues and desires that embrace reason over mere survival (what Yovel refers to as '*conatus intelligendi*') indicates that Stoicism may well have served as a useful supplement to the initial Cartesian understanding of self-preservation. Such a movement away from Cartesian physics to Stoic ethics is not altogether incompatible or contradictory either, since survival remains the unifying theme throughout each account.¹⁴⁶ In turning to the principal discussion of bodily preservation in *Ethics* the tendency is first portrayed via the now familiar non-psychological description, with particular emphasis again being laid on the claim that 'all things' possess a *conatus* regardless of their mental capabilities.

The self-preservation argument initially emerges through the claim that every thing, insofar as it is able (*quantum in se est*), endeavours to persist in its own being.¹⁴⁷ This striving for persistence is said to be the physical manifestation of God's acting in a definite and determinate way through each thing, which further reaffirms the earlier contention found in *Short Treatise* and Descartes's *Principles* that nothing can naturally seek out the causes of its own destruction.¹⁴⁸ Such explicit claims regarding the natural avoidance of destruction had also been a prominent feature in the Stoic accounts, though in these accounts an animal's natural antipathy towards, or contempt for, its own destruction was always the result of its having

¹⁴⁵ Yirmiyahu Yovel, 'Transcending Mere Survival: From *Conatus* to *Conatus Intelligendi*', in Yirmiyahu Yovel (ed.), *Desire and Affect: Spinoza as Psychologist: Papers Presented at the Third Jerusalem Conference (Ethica III)* (Spinoza by 2000; New York: Little Room Press 1999), 45-61 (pp. 47, 50).

¹⁴⁶ Yovel suggests that *prolonging existence*, which I take to be the physical account, and *enhancing the power to exist*, which I take to be the goal of the psychological account, are used interchangeably by Spinoza throughout Book 3.

¹⁴⁷ Spinoza, *Ethics* (3.P6, p. 283).

¹⁴⁸ This had been shown in the preceding proposition, 'No thing can be destroyed except by an external cause.' (3.P4, p. 282). See also Spinoza, *ST* (1.5, p. 53) and Descartes, *PP* (AT VIII A, 2, 62, art. 37, pp. 240-41).

experienced a variety of conceptions, fears or volitions.¹⁴⁹ That there can be no division between animals and non-animals in the Spinozistic account is entailed through the equation of the thing's *conatus* with its actual essence,¹⁵⁰ so that, unlike in the Stoic account, plants can be said to demonstrate the same type of natural strivings as animals.¹⁵¹ In comparing the two views at this early juncture, psychology still appears to have little role to play in explaining the notion of self-preservation. Instead, Spinoza remains content to bypass such references by continuing to equate a thing's *conatus* with its essence, thus leaving the door open for considering other ways in which all bodies may be said to be united by their natural strivings. One particular way in which this unity manifests itself, Spinoza argues, is in the indefiniteness of every essence, a state that will continue so long as the essence maintains an amount of power sufficient enough to preserve itself against greater external forces.¹⁵² With the subtle inclusion of power into the discussion, however, one soon finds that the universal aspects of self-preservation begin to fade into the background of Spinoza's argument.

By implicitly asking the reader to consider the specific types of powers that all things possess, one is able to shift from considering self-preservation solely in physical terms to considering them in psychological ones. This transition is eased because although minds may possess ideas, like bodies they also possess their own self-preserving powers. As Yovel has pointed out, 'we understand that our striving to persevere in our existence and to enhance its power is best served by following certain counsels of reason.'¹⁵³ There may then be said to be two distinct versions of *conatus* operating in *Ethics*. In the first, we are driven to preserve ourselves by

¹⁴⁹ Cicero, *De fin.* (3.16): '[A living creature] conceives an antipathy to destruction and to those things which appear to threaten destruction.'; Laetius, *Lives* (7.85): 'It was not likely that nature should estrange the living thing from itself [...]'; Seneca, *Ep.* 121 as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [II-107]: 'In no animal will you find contempt for itself.'

¹⁵⁰ Spinoza, *Ethics* (3.P7, p. 283).

¹⁵¹ Again recall the claims found in Laetius, *Lives* (VII.86) where plants are not said to have any impulse (or *conatus* via Cicero's translation of *hormē*) towards self-preservation

¹⁵² Spinoza, *Ethics* (3.P8, p. 283).

¹⁵³ Yovel, 'Transcending Mere Survival', (p. 48).

whatever mental and bodily powers are at our disposal. However, in the second and ‘richer and more coherent’ version, our *conatus* facilitates our power to express ourselves and enhance our existence.¹⁵⁴ Activity and happiness come to factor into our consideration of what ‘existence’ ultimately entails and as a result the promotion of our self-preservation evolves from a simple directive of nature into a more dynamic and mentally fulfilling endeavour. In dissecting the Spinozistic *conatus*, survival and rationalism may be seen to go hand-in-hand because minds and bodies are presented as inextricably linked to each other. As Spinoza argues, the mind remains aware of its *conatus* solely because it possesses an idea of its body.¹⁵⁵

There are, however, certain strivings that can only be said to occur in the mind and these are referred to as ‘will’.¹⁵⁶ Given the tight relationship between body and mind, establishing the precise nature of mental *conatus* can be somewhat confusing. As Spinoza had indicated earlier, the will goes beyond a singular concern for the body’s ‘vicissitudes’ because it only strives to affirm or deny the veracity or falseness of things.¹⁵⁷ It cannot then be misconstrued as the striving of the mind to seek out those things that are beneficial or to shun those things that are harmful, as this would require a consideration of the body.¹⁵⁸ The mind, as Genevieve Lloyd interprets Spinoza here, may be said to exhibit its own tendency to maintain its power of acting and understanding. While the interconnectedness of mind and body makes it difficult for the mind to act unilaterally, it is able to understand things beyond the body’s ‘vicissitudes’.¹⁵⁹ In this way, the mind reveals itself to be a dynamic thing concerned with, and affected by, its own specific objects. To help maintain the distinction that Spinoza intends, the will becomes synonymous with the

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. (p. 50).

¹⁵⁵ Spinoza, *Ethics* (3.P9Pr., p. 284).

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. (3.P9S).

¹⁵⁷ This definition can be found in *ibid.* (2.P48S, p. 272) and Spinoza, *ST* (p. 80ff.).

¹⁵⁸ Spinoza, *Ethics* (2.P48S, p. 272).

¹⁵⁹ Genevieve Lloyd, *Part of Nature: Self-Knowledge in Spinoza's 'Ethics'* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994) (p. 98).

mind's intellect, a power that helps bring about those things that promote our self-preservation.¹⁶⁰

This distinction between mental and mind-body *conatus* is important since when strivings are said to be the result of the mind and body working in unison it is no longer said to be indicative of 'will' but rather 'appetite'.¹⁶¹ This type of striving is far more primitive, as is made clear when it is said to constitute the essence of humans (and animals) and to determine them to act in ways that promote their preservation, the fundamental tendency of a body.¹⁶² However, the ways in which appetite expresses itself vary since each individual thing is governed by its own particular nature.¹⁶³ There is also no substantial difference between a body's appetite and its desire, in that the latter implies a consciousness of the former. The power of appetite and desire are such that even 'the good' is relegated to being but a function of them - we do not endeavour, will, and desire things because they are good, but rather consider them to be good precisely because we endeavour, will and desire them.¹⁶⁴ Depending upon the outcome of these pursuits the mind experiences either an increase or decrease in its perception of its conative powers, with the result that it passes into a state of greater or lesser perfection.¹⁶⁵ It is through these 'passive transitions' (*passiones*) that we come to understand how the primary emotions such

¹⁶⁰ Spinoza, *Ethics* (2.P49C, p. 273).

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.* (3.P9S, p. 284).

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ Spinoza suggests, for example, that horses and humans both experience lust, although the former is driven by horse lusts while the latter is driven by human lusts. As he mentions later in *Ethics*, 'Each individual lives content with the nature wherewith he is endowed and rejoices in it, that life wherewith each is content and that joy are nothing other than the idea or soul [*anima*] of the said individual, and so the joy of the one differs from the joy of another as much as the essence of the one differs from the essence of the other.' (3.P57S, p. 309). The specific relationship of men and 'beasts' in *Ethics* has been of particular interest to Margaret Wilson, who sees appetite and desires as a way in which Spinoza is able to incorporate all sentient things into his 'general account' of the mind and its nature. In particular, this account differs from the Cartesian account in that it ascribes thought to animals thus joining them closer to us, while still allowing enough room to allow for the ways in which their minds are different than ours. See Margaret D. Wilson, "'For They Do Not Agree in Nature with Us': Spinoza on the Lower Animals', in Rocco J. Gennaro and Charles Huenemann (eds.), *New Essays on the Rationalists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 336-52 (p. 337).

¹⁶⁴ Spinoza, *Ethics* (3.P9S, p. 284).

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.* (3.P11S, pp. 284-85).

as desire, pleasure [*laetitia*] and pain [*tristitia*], those chief considerations in the Aristotelian and Epicurean accounts of natural action, are able to affect the mind's power to preserve itself.¹⁶⁶ However, by suggesting that these passive states and active emotions have a central role to play in our understanding of why we pursue some things and avoid others, Spinoza has also been said to have made some of Stoicism's most central considerations and claims about self-preservation his own.

The emotions exist in Spinoza's account as natural mental reactions to our perceptions of how well we are able to persevere in our existence. Since our desire to preserve ourselves is synonymous with our essence, the mind is said always to endeavour, insofar as it is able, to think of those things which increase the body's power of activity.¹⁶⁷ As Susan James has argued, this account of the passions as mental transitions was notable for its portrayal of things such as desire, pleasure and pain as functional ideas that served to demonstrate the complex natural dispositions humans have towards their own preservation.¹⁶⁸ Our passions exist as an integral component in an elaborate mental structure in which the emotions of pleasure, pain and desire are themselves guided by the larger causal chain in nature that suggests self-preservation to all things.¹⁶⁹ Passions therefore become as natural as *conatus* itself and, because Spinoza does not hold to a dichotomous soul-body view like Descartes,¹⁷⁰ the mind and body work in tandem to promote the preservation of the entire individual. This has led James and Kristeller to join with Carnois in seeing

¹⁶⁶ In what follows I have followed Morgan's translation of *laetitia* and *tristitia* as pleasure and pain, which also appears in Edwin Curley's and G.H.R. Parkinson's respective translations of *Ethics*.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* (3.P12, p. 285).

¹⁶⁸ James, *Passion and Action* (p. 147).

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Recall that this division had been removed earlier in Part 3 when Spinoza claimed 'each man's actions are shaped by his emotion; and those who furthermore are prey to conflicting emotions know not what they want, while those who are free from emotion are driven on to this or that course by a slight impulse. Now surely all of these considerations go to show clearly that mental decision on the one hand, and the appetite and physical state of the body on the other hand, are simultaneous in nature; or rather, *they are one and the same thing...*'. Spinoza, *Ethics* (my emphasis; 3.P2S, p. 281). Descartes had introduced his division of body and soul into this philosophy shortly after drawing his famous conclusion '*cogito ergo sum*'. In Part 4 of the *Discourse* he states, 'This 'I' – that is, the soul by which I am what I am – is entirely distinct from the body, and indeed is easier to know than the body, and would not fail to be whatever it is, even if the body did not exist.' Descartes, *DM* (AT VI, 33, pp. 127).

Spinoza's rubric of the passions and his attribution of a natural endeavour to preserve ourselves as evidence of his selecting from, and interpreting, Stoic philosophy.¹⁷¹ According to James, Spinoza's adoption of pleasure, pain and desire as the 'primary' emotions has its genesis largely in the work of Cicero, who relied on mental pleasure and pain, and the coupling of desire and fear to describe the natural inclinations and aversions all humans possessed.¹⁷² While the power of grief, fear, desire and pleasure to prompt self-preserving actions had also featured in Zeno and Hecato's much earlier work,¹⁷³ it is in the later sections of the widely available *De finibus* that Spinoza would have found a specific equation of natural impulse with the desire for self-preservation.¹⁷⁴ From studying this desire, which Cicero characterises in essential terms when he says 'we must study what we ourselves are,'¹⁷⁵ we come to gain a clearer knowledge of the true and natural character of man and a better understanding of how the body and mind are related. Understanding these appetitive functions also has clear benefits for ethics: they provide us with a guide for assessing the dictates of our natural hormetic impulses, our duties to ourselves and each other, and even a means of characterising virtue itself.¹⁷⁶ As Carnois notes, Stoic *hormê* and Spinozistic *conatus* appear to be linked in two distinct ways: they both suggest that individuals strive to realize themselves fully in accordance with their own specific nature, and they suggest that these strivings are directed towards a specific, and in both cases virtuous, type of living.¹⁷⁷ Because Nature does not act with any particular end in view, and because compiling a catalogue of all the emotional variations found

¹⁷¹ James, *Passion and Action* (p. 151), James, 'Spinoza the Stoic', (p. 296), and Kristeller, 'Stoic and Neoplatonic Sources of Spinoza's 'Ethics'', (p. 5).

¹⁷² James, 'Spinoza the Stoic', (p. 298). Cicero's brief account of passions in the specific context of ethics is found in *De finibus*, wherein he divides emotions (*perturbationes*) into four classes with subdivisions: sorrow (*aegritudo*), fear (*formido*), lust (*libido*), and pleasure. See Cicero, *De fin.* (3.35)

¹⁷³ Laertius, *Lives* (7.111).

¹⁷⁴ Cicero, *De fin.* (4.25).

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* (4.39).

¹⁷⁷ Carnois, 'Le Désir', (p. 259).

in humans would be impossible,¹⁷⁸ the emphasis throughout both Stoic and Spinozistic ethics remains firmly focused on the efficient rather than the teleological cause.¹⁷⁹ As such desire comes in Spinoza to have the same dual character that it does in Stoicism: in its most primitive formulation we express desire merely through a striving to persevere in our existence. In its more advanced form our primitive desires are eclipsed by our engaging with and understanding the world around us.¹⁸⁰

Much of the Stoic vocabulary, and in particular the equation of non-rational desire with appetite, colours Spinoza's account of human self-preservation. When humans seek out the protection of their bodies, they do so with an awareness of their actions since there can be no real distinction between human appetite and desire.¹⁸¹ When Spinoza uses the term 'desire' to denote this tendency, he indicates his having employed it as a catch-all term for describing all of our 'endeavours, urges, appetites, and volitions.'¹⁸² It may also be said to partake in the circular nature of Stoic *homologia*, which, as we saw in the first section, holds that following nature, and hence acting virtuously, means following the natural striving to preserve oneself.¹⁸³ The link between virtue and preservation features elsewhere in Spinoza's argument, as for example when he argues that the more we strive to preserve ourselves and seek our own advantage the more we are endowed with virtue. Moreover, if we neglect our preservation, thus failing to act in full accordance with our nature, then our virtue

¹⁷⁸ 'I think everyone is quite convinced that emotions can be combined with one another in so many ways and give rise to so many variations that they cannot be numbered.' Spinoza, *Ethics* (3.P59S, p. 310)

¹⁷⁹ Spinoza's rejection of teleology can be found throughout *Ethics*. In the appendix to Part 1 he stated that Nature does not act with an end in view and in the preface to Part 4 he reiterates this view by suggesting that what we take to be a 'final cause' is another way of discussing human appetite as a causal starting point. For the Stoics, the end suggested by Nature was the virtuous life, which was itself only attained through the constant selection of the things most in accordance with one's nature. This is not therefore an end with any sense of termination, but rather one that only appears as a result of the individual making the constant efforts required to conform to their individual nature. See *Ethics* (1, Appendix, p. 239 and 4, Preface, p. 321) and Laetius, *Lives* (7.87-88).

¹⁸⁰ Spinoza, *Ethics* (4.P26, p. 333).

¹⁸¹ 'I acknowledge no difference between human appetite and desire. For whether a man is conscious of his appetite, the appetite remains one and the same.' Ibid. (3.DE1E, p. 311).

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid. (4.P22, p. 332).

diminishes and we are said to be weak.¹⁸⁴ However, while Spinoza and Cicero appear to have found a common ground for expressing the desiderative behaviours of humans and linking these up with virtuous activity, there remains an incongruence when one considers how each situates the emotions of pleasure and pain in their account of natural tendencies.

The failure of the Stoic texts to use the ‘transitions’ of pleasure and pain to explain the mental effects of our natural desires is largely the result of the school’s unwillingness to integrate the passions into their central claim that humans possess a natural tendency to preserve themselves. Only in Diogenes Laertius’s text can one find something similar to what Spinoza is expressing. For example, while the discussion of pleasure is held off until after the primary impulse towards self-preservation has been dealt with, Diogenes does at least suggest that the Stoics considered pleasure a ‘by-product’ of the impulse that is comparable to an animal or plant in full bloom.¹⁸⁵ It would therefore be difficult to suggest that the Stoic portrayal of pleasure captures the sense of the mind undergoing a positive increase in its powers as Spinoza’s account does. Further, given that no more attention is paid by the Stoics to the role of pleasure in the context of self-preservation, and their generally negative or indifferent characterisations of pleasure, the notion of pleasure as having a positive role to play in the preservation of the body is lacking.¹⁸⁶ However, as Spinoza makes clear, we constantly endeavour to bring about whatever we imagine is conducive to pleasure and the mind, insofar as it is able, only tries to think of those things which affirm its power of activity.¹⁸⁷ We do this not only because of pleasure’s ameliorating properties but also because we see others pursuing it as well.¹⁸⁸ This quest to attain pleasure may appear almost intoxicating at times, since our desires are proportional to the amount of pleasure a particular thing

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. (4.P20, pp. 331-32).

¹⁸⁵ Laertius, *Lives* (7.86).

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. (7.102-3).

¹⁸⁷ Spinoza, *Ethics* (3.P12, P28, P54, pp. 285, 293, 306).

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. (3.P29, p. 293).

can bestow.¹⁸⁹ The Stoics, however, always keep pleasure separate from the instinct towards self-preservation and never conceive of it as having an assisting or positive role to play in its procurement. When impulse and passion do finally appear together in the Stoic account of the soul's cognitive faculty, it is only to highlight their excessive and unnatural character.¹⁹⁰

Spinoza also uses the desire to preserve oneself as a means of mapping other active emotions. Self-preservation thus lends itself, in a way that is alien to the Stoic texts, to unlocking the very foundations of the mind's emotive activity. Strength of mind comes about through the experiencing of emotions such as courage and nobility, which are related to the mind's understanding of its conative powers and hence take their root in the desire for preservation. Whereas courage signals a desire to preserve oneself according to the dictates of reason alone, nobility is an expression of the same desire but with a regard for aiding others as well.¹⁹¹ The Stoics certainly believed the emotions were capable of producing an effect on the mind; for example, pain is said to bring about a mental contraction while pleasure instils a sense of elation.¹⁹² Yet while the idea of an increase and decrease in the mind's powers appears to resonate to some extent with the Stoic discussion of *eupatheiai*, there is no attempt on the part of Seneca, Cicero or any other Stoic to link up such fluctuations with the actual impulse towards self-preservation.¹⁹³ Instead the Stoics seek to counsel as to the negative effects of all the passions and expunge them from their ethics on account of their ability to impart unhappiness and bring about improper

¹⁸⁹ 'Since pleasure increases or assists man's power of activity, it can readily be demonstrated in the same way that a man affected with pleasure desires nothing other than to preserve it, and with all the greater desire as the pleasure is greater.' Ibid. (3.P36, P37, p. 297).

¹⁹⁰ Laertius, *Lives* (7.110): 'Passion, or emotion, is defined by Zeno as an irrational and unnatural movement in the soul, or again as impulse in excess.' According to Andronicus of Rhodes, a Peripatetic philosopher from the first century AD, the Stoics considered 'pleasure an irrational swelling, or a fresh opinion that something good is present, at which people think it right to be swollen [i.e. elated].' Andronicus, *On passions* (1) as reproduced in Long and Sedley, *H.Phil.* (65B).

¹⁹¹ Spinoza, *Ethics* (3.P59S, p. 310).

¹⁹² Laertius, *Lives* (7.111-14).

¹⁹³ *Eupatheiai* covers the 'three emotional states which are good': joy (*khara*), caution (*eulabeia*) and wishing (*boulêsis*). Joy is said to be a 'counterpart of pleasure' because it is 'rational elation.' Ibid. (7.116).

behaviours.¹⁹⁴ In fact, such was the perceived ruthlessness of the Stoic philosophers to bring about the life free from the turbulence of the passions that Spinoza, in a rare direct mention of the school, admonishes them for their insistence on believing that the passions could be completely eradicated through a training of the will.¹⁹⁵

Instead of turning to the Stoic tradition for his understanding of pleasure and pain in aiding self-preservation, Spinoza would have found more support for his project in Epicurean and Aristotelian ethics, which had incorporated the opposing emotions of pleasure and pain to great effect in their accounts of natural behaviour. In these accounts, as we have seen previously, it was towards pleasure that we were naturally inclined and pain from which we naturally retreated. In the Epicurean portrayal, pleasure and pain exist as feelings common to all animate beings and are said to be the result of something's either being perceived as favourable or hostile.¹⁹⁶ In this formulation there exist certain natural and necessary desires, with those who have obtained a 'clear and certain understanding' of nature coming to prefer things that instil pleasure in the mind.¹⁹⁷ In particular, these desires are said to focus on securing the health of the body and tranquillity in the mind, suggesting that the Epicureans also recognise pleasure's ability to highlight the interconnectedness of body and mind.¹⁹⁸ Indeed, so important is pleasure to the individual that Epicurus suggests that it serves as the criterion of what constitutes the good, while pain implicitly serves as the criterion of evil.¹⁹⁹ This important ethical function is picked

¹⁹⁴ A quick survey of various Stoic texts reveals the preponderance of negative terms and phrases they used to describe the passions. Terms such as 'excessive', 'irrational', and 'disturbing' are used to express their sentiment that passionate behaviour and their ensuing effects on the mind are 'contrary to nature'. For example Stobaeus calls the passions 'overpowering' and the precursors to rash behaviour. Galen's account of the Stoic soul holds that the passions are responsible for an animal's being 'pushed to excess and disobedience to reason' on account of the passions being 'irrational' and an 'excessive impulse.' Seneca suggests that the mind 'suffers' the passions rather than creates them. However, Seneca does at least mention that the mind has an awareness of the passions, if only because it has to assent to them. See Stobaeus, 2.88,8-90.6; Galen, *On Hippocrates' and Plato's Doctrines* (4.2.10-18) and Seneca, *On Anger* (2.3.1-2.4) as reproduced in Long and Sedley, *H.Phil.* (65 A, J, X).

¹⁹⁵ Spinoza, *Ethics* (5, Preface, p. 363).

¹⁹⁶ Laertius, *Lives* (10.34).

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.* (10.127-28).

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.* (10.128).

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.* (10.129).

up on by Spinoza, as for example when he takes pleasure and pain to be none other than the individual's conscious acknowledgement of what is good and evil.²⁰⁰ Such designations, however, are not confined only to Epicurean thought and the possibility remains that Spinoza could have also incorporated some of the views of Aristotle into his own account of pleasure and pain. As in the Epicurean account, the importance of pleasure and pain had earlier been taken by Aristotle to be the 'province of the political philosopher,' for it was through his knowledge of the two that he could adduce what was good and what was bad.²⁰¹ Indeed pleasure can be considered as a good in part because it applies to natural constitutions and states.²⁰² The positive evaluation and naturalness of pleasure found in the Epicurean and Spinozistic accounts is also captured by Aristotle, as for example when he uses pleasure to describe those processes which restore the individual back to their healthy and natural state.²⁰³ These pleasures are able to exist and be considered apart from our natural appetite and pains, a view that enables Aristotle, like Spinoza, to conceive of each as distinct and imperceptible activities that occur in the mind rather than as actual physical processes.²⁰⁴

The ability of pleasure and pain to instil in us a sense of good and evil becomes an important consideration in how the emotions inform our behaviours, especially when such emotive states are said to be in conflict. When this happens the emotions become an internal threat to our *conatus* because they blur the distinction between good and evil. As Spinoza points out repeatedly, our existence in nature is already tenuous since we cannot control the external causes that may bring about our

²⁰⁰ Spinoza, *Ethics* (4.P8, p. 326); see also 4.Def 1 and Def 2, where Spinoza defines 'good' as 'that which we certainly know to be useful to us,' and 'bad' as 'that which we certainly know to be an obstacle to our attainment of some good.' (p. 322). Andrew Youpa's explicit referencing of self-preservation in these definitions is unsupported by the text in Morgan's edition. See Andrew Youpa, 'Spinozistic Self-Preservation', *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 41/3 (2003), 477-490 (p. 486).

²⁰¹ Aristotle, *EN* (7.11, 1152b1-3).

²⁰² *Ibid.* (7.12, 1152b26-29).

²⁰³ *Ibid.* (1152b33-34).

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.* (1153a8-17).

destruction.²⁰⁵ Because of the tenuousness of our existence, it is in our interest to understand the emotions and to use our knowledge of them to minimize their potentially negative effect on our *conatus*. This becomes a somewhat difficult task, however, for the force exerted by the passive emotions is greater than our internal power of preservation, with the result that we are often unable to eradicate the effect of the emotion completely.²⁰⁶ Understanding the emotions therefore becomes essential to our preservation since they have the ability to affect positively and negatively both the well-being of body and mind. In the case of negative emotions, for example those of aversion, fear or despair, our internal activities or powers are singularly unable to counteract their ability to bring about a transition towards a more painful and, hence, less perfect state of being.²⁰⁷

It is only through the presence of a stronger and more pleasurable emotion, which may be said to strengthen the mind's power to exist, that such negative effects can be overcome.²⁰⁸ The inability to counteract negative emotions with stronger positive ones also carries direct consequences for our ability to preserve ourselves. So powerful are the threats posed to our mental and bodily health that even the desires rooted in a true knowledge of good (pleasure) and evil (pain) can be checked.²⁰⁹ The strength of a particular desire is measured proportionally, by the strength of the emotion from which it arises. However, because emotions are rooted in external things their power cannot be measured solely in human terms. Instead their external natures are defined in terms of forces and increases which are said to surpass our own indefinitely.²¹⁰ As a result of our being unable to overcome this potency through any internal mechanism, the amount of power we have to preserve

²⁰⁵ 'There is in Nature no individual thing that is not surpassed in strength and power by some other thing. Whatsoever thing there is, there is another more powerful by which the said thing can be destroyed'; 'The force [*vis*] whereby a man persists in existing is limited, and infinitely surpassed by the power of external causes.' Spinoza, *Ethics* (4.P3, p. 324).

²⁰⁶ Ibid. (4.P5 and P6, p. 325).

²⁰⁷ Ibid. (3.DE1E, p. 311).

²⁰⁸ Ibid. (4.P7, p. 325).

²⁰⁹ Ibid. (4.P15, p. 329).

²¹⁰ Ibid. (4.P15Pr., p. 329).

ourselves is dependent on how well we are able to direct positive or pleasure-inducing emotions against the negative ones. Whereas the Stoics had tended to see all emotions as inherently bad and unrelated to the success of the individual in maintaining their existence, Spinoza wants to show how desire and the pleasurable emotions must work in tandem if they are to promote the individual's power to exist in the face of such greater and destructive emotive forces. This is why desires which are rooted in pleasure, and hence assist the *conatus*, are said to outweigh those desires which take their root in pain.²¹¹ Since desire is the essence of man, which is none other than the striving to preserve himself, its power is couched in internal and human terms. Yet by attaching it to pleasurable emotions, whose power is derived from external causes, this power can be said to increase markedly. In the case of pain such an increase cannot be said to occur for it only exists as an external cause that does not partake in the power of human desire.

What Spinoza has established thus far is that the power to preserve ourselves is not altogether assured when our actions are the result of following internal desires and external emotions. Our conative powers are constantly assailed and threatened by forces that are largely beyond our control, but insofar as we are able to experience pleasurable emotions we retain a means of defending ourselves and promoting our internal power. However, this is by no means a defence that can be said to be either constant or impregnable. The threat of being overcome by negative emotions at any time simply remains too great, and the consequences for our mental and bodily stability too disruptive, for us to remain entirely dependent upon the possible effectiveness of any pleasurable emotional parry. Like the Stoics, Spinoza also recognised that suicide remained an option when the mind's powers had been diminished by the negative emotions.²¹² Humans, though, are not only governed by their primitive desire for self-preservation; by showing how conflicted we are when

²¹¹ Ibid. (4.P18, p. 330).

²¹² Ibid. (4.P18S): 'Those who commit suicide are of weak spirit and are completely overcome by external causes opposed to their own nature.' For more on the co-existence of self-preservation and suicide in Spinoza's thought, see Mitchell Gabhart, 'Spinoza on Self-Preservation and Self-Destruction', *The Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 37/4 (1999), 613-28.

we allow the emotions to dictate our behaviours Spinoza is in fact showing why humans need to understand better the weapons nature has left at our disposal. This marks a shift in how Spinoza's account of self-preservation is presented – from that of an active *conatus* being subjected to the passive transitions of pleasure and pain imparted by a multitude of external emotions, to an account of *conatus* that focuses on the ability of internal rational activity to promote and strengthen its natural strivings.

When one considers the ways in which humans use reason to protect themselves, and particular from the actions of others, Spinoza's account of self-preservation appears to have incurred two separate, but not incompatible, debts. In the first instance, one could well see the transition from an appetitive account of self-preservation to a rational one as bearing the imprint of the transition from personal *oikeiōsis* to social *oikeiōsis* as found largely in the work of Cicero. In his account, as we saw earlier, as humans begin to acquire reason, they begin to see that the best means of securing themselves and their property lies through social cooperation.²¹³ As they move away from a life guided purely by their instinct for self-preservation, reason suggests increased interactivity and the strengthened social bonds liberate the individual from focusing solely on their preservation and instead enable the life of the philosopher.²¹⁴ The benefits of moving from instinctive to rational living are similarly picked up on by Spinoza when, having reiterated that the laws of nature dictate to us the preservation of our own body, he recognises the impossibility of preserving oneself without requiring external things or living a life unrelated to things outside ourselves.²¹⁵ Preservation of the individual and the perfection of mind do not therefore come about through isolated existence. Rather they both come about

²¹³ 'It is through reason that nature also unites man with man and joins them in bonds of speech and common life. Moreover, it breeds in them a particular affection for their own offspring and spurs them on to take part in meetings and assemblies, to strive to attain the things which contribute to their livelihood and well-being, not for themselves alone, but for their wives, children and all others a man holds dear and is obliged to protect.' Cicero, *De off.* (1.12, p. 6).

²¹⁴ Ibid. (1.13).

²¹⁵ Spinoza, *Ethics* (4.P18S, p. 330).

by understanding the many advantageous things which exist externally to us, and whose procurement aids us in preserving ourselves.

Of particular benefit are those things that are in harmony with our nature – since when two things of the same nature combine they create an individual twice as strong as if they had remained separate.²¹⁶ As such, there is nothing more advantageous to humans than other humans, and as we come to establish harmony between our bodies and minds the individual goal of self-preservation becomes a commonly shared goal of self-preservation.²¹⁷ This is an important claim, for Spinoza goes on to suggest what Cicero had earlier made explicit: animals cannot be said to partake in the community of men, nor mutually aid us in the preservation of our being because they lack the most important part of a human's nature - the rational faculty.²¹⁸ Instead, their different natures render them largely unable to assist or check our power of activity, although there is a scale by which those things that are 'more in agreement with our nature' are said to be more advantageous to us and hence better than those things that are 'less in agreement'.²¹⁹ Although animals may be less in agreement with our nature than other humans, this does not mean that individuals are capable of complete agreement. In both the Ciceronian and Spinozistic accounts there is the caveat that, although humans may procure their security more easily by working in concert, at no point can any human be said to preserve themselves for the sake of something else.²²⁰ While the individual's *conatus*

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Cicero, *De off.* (1.11, p. 6); Spinoza, *Ethics* (4.P29, p. 335) – this reiterates the earlier point about animals found in 3.P57S and is crystallised later on when Spinoza argues, 'The principle of seeking our own advantage teaches us to be in close relationship with men, not with beasts or things whose nature is different from human nature, and that we have the same right over them as they over us. Indeed, since every individual's right is defined by his virtue or power, man's right over beasts is far greater than their rights over man. I do not deny that beasts feel; I am denying that they are on that account debarred from paying heed to our own advantages and from making use of them as we please and dealing with them as best suits us, seeing that they do not agree with us in nature and these emotions are different in nature from human emotions.' (4.P37S1, p. 339).

²¹⁹ Spinoza, *Ethics* (4.P31C, pp. 335-36).

²²⁰ Ibid. (4.P25, p. 333): 'Nobody endeavours to preserve his being for the sake of some other thing.' Cicero, *De off.* (1.111, p. 43): 'If anything at all is seemly, nothing, surely is more so than an evenness

may thus be said to be strengthened through mutual cooperation, in no way can it also be said to have been transcended by this newly created social order. This tension between the natural desires of the individual and society is picked up by Cicero, who sees it as ‘quite in accordance with nature’ that each man should be more eager to acquire the necessities of life for himself than to provide them for others.²²¹ However, nature forbids us to acquire the wealth, resources and opportunities we need to preserve ourselves by directly interfering with the efforts of others.²²² There is therefore much that would seem to suggest that the social aspects in Spinoza’s notion of self-preservation are Stoic in their derivation. Like Cicero, Spinoza sees a distinct transition occurring between lives lived according to the dictates of nature and those lived in accordance with reason, while Spinoza posits a distinction between the imaginative and rational living. He suggests that it is only in the company of other humans that our preservation is truly promoted and that the mutual friendship and happiness promoted in the social and political spheres fortifies our nature.²²³ Moreover, like the Stoics, Spinoza also recognises the divisiveness of the passions and the ability of reason to unify the strivings of humans to collectively promote their existence and increased understanding of the world they inhabit.²²⁴

Self-Preservation and the Formation of the State in Spinoza’s Political Philosophy

However, while the Stoic account of social relations may have been incorporated into these later propositions in *Ethics*, Spinoza need not necessarily have gone all the way back to antiquity to find such a detailed account of how political society arose. Indeed, many of the social elements found in Spinoza’s account of self-preservation also appear to bear the imprint of the contemporary work of fellow countryman Hugo

both of one’s whole life and of one’s individual actions. You cannot preserve that if you copy someone else’s nature and ignore your own.’

²²¹ Cicero, *De off.* (3.22, p. 108).

²²² Ibid. (3.21, p. 108).

²²³ Ibid. (2.13, p. 67); Spinoza, *Ethics* (4.P31C, pp. 335-36).

²²⁴ Cicero, *De off.* (1.136, pp. 52-53; 3.27, pp. 109-10); Spinoza, *Ethics* (4.P34, pp. 336-37).

Grotius and that of Hobbes, whose *De cive* Spinoza owned and read and whose views he had incorporated and refuted in his earlier *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*.²²⁵ As we have already seen in the case of both of these authors, their discussions of social formation and self-preservation relied on both Stoic and Epicurean elements to explain how individuals left the natural state and formed law-bound societies. In Spinoza's account of the basis of the state and the natural and civil rights of individuals one likewise finds the Stoic notions of self-preservation and necessity operating alongside the Epicurean claims that fear and utility also play a role in driving individuals into civil society.

Like Hobbes and Grotius, Spinoza crafts his account of the formation of the state around the notion that self-preservation is what initially drives individuals to seek out the company of others.²²⁶ This is because all see the desire for preserving the body as a manifestation of the 'supreme law of Nature'.²²⁷ Spinoza, however, does not agree with the Epicurean or Hobbesian contention that a fear of death provides the sole motivation for establishing social compacts. While he does admit that 'there is nobody who does not desire to live in safety free from fear, as far as is possible,' the driving force behind social formation is said to be necessity.²²⁸

²²⁵ In that work Spinoza makes the first of two direct mentions of Hobbes's work. In a note to the discussion of the state of nature and natural laws found in chapter 16, Spinoza signals his disagreement with Hobbes about whether reason always favours peace, suggesting that Hobbes does not hold to such an optimistic view. However, in *De cive* Hobbes makes it explicit that 'Reason is still the same, and changes not her end, which is *Peace*, and *Defence*'. See Spinoza, *TTP* (16, n. 33, p. 580) and Hobbes, *DC* (3.29, p. 54).

²²⁶ This view, as we have seen, permeates all of Hobbes's political thought, although Spinoza scholars debate which of Hobbes's works outside of *De cive* Spinoza might have actually read. For example, William Sacksteder suggests that *The Elements of Law* and *Leviathan* were off-limits to Spinoza as he possessed no knowledge of the English Language and that even when *Leviathan* was Latinized it would have only confirmed what Spinoza, who was hard at work on *TTP*, would have previously encountered in the pages of *De cive*. However, Noel Malcolm has pointed out that when *Leviathan* was translated into Latin it was done so in Amsterdam, where Spinoza was living at the time, and by one of Spinoza's friends. This work appeared in 1668 and thus very well could have been consulted before Spinoza published his *TTP* two years later. In any case it remains inconclusive whether or not Spinoza read the work. See both Sacksteder, 'How Much of Hobbes Might Spinoza Have Read?', and Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (p. 47).

²²⁷ Spinoza, *TTP* (16, p. 527); Hobbes, *DC* (1.7, p. 27); Grotius, *DIBP* (III, Prol., 1625 ed., pp. 1746-47).

²²⁸ Spinoza, *TTP* (16, p. 528).

Moreover, necessity dictates that individual rights be placed into ‘common ownership’ and that the individual appetite guiding individuals outside of the social setting yield to the dictates of reason.²²⁹ As we have seen, the transition from a life driven by appetite to one of reason resides at the heart of Stoic *oikeiōsis*. By suggesting that individuals ‘keep appetite in check insofar as it tends to another’s hurt, to do to no one what they would not want done to themselves, and to uphold another’s right as they would their own,’ Spinoza upholds the importance of ‘other-awareness’ as Cicero, Seneca and Hierocles had in their own accounts of explaining justice in social relations.²³⁰

Although self-preservation and reason are promoted through common living, Spinoza believed that nature alone could not ensure the survival of the civil setting. Instead, and this is where Spinoza may be read as an Epicurean-Hobbesian, he suggests these necessarily established social unions are solidified by way of a compact with others.²³¹ As a result of these agreements the individual is said to be relieved of the burden of looking after their security and property and are able to seek out the ways of bettering their condition. Yet Spinoza does not follow Hobbes in suggesting that covenants made through fear are binding. Rejecting Hobbes’s claim that an agreement made with a robber in return for one’s life is valid, Spinoza reiterates that it is individual power and the natural inclination to avoid evil which ultimately decide whether a promise made under duress remains unbroken.²³² Thus fear cannot be said to bind us to our promises. Spinoza argues, instead, that it is utility which plays the strongest role in deciding whether a compact remains in

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Cicero, *De off.* (1.11-12, pp. 42-43).

²³¹ The break with the Stoics on this point is perhaps best captured in Stobaeus, who quotes the Stoics as believing ‘justice exists by nature and not by convention.’ See John Stobaeus, *Anthology* (II, 11b) as reproduced in Inwood and Gerson (eds.), *HP* [II-95].

²³² ‘To make the point more clearly understood, suppose that a robber forces me to promise to give him my goods at his pleasure. Now since, as I have already shown, my natural right is determined by power alone, it is quite clear that if I can free myself from this robber by deceit, promising whatever he wants, I have the natural right to do so, that is, to pretend to agree to whatever he wants.’ Spinoza, *TTP* (16, p. 529).

force.²³³ Although individuals may transfer their right of self-judgement and natural powers to the community, for the state to retain sovereignty over its members it must not abuse its position. This minimises the danger of submitting oneself absolutely, Spinoza argues, as sovereign powers are always liable to shift from one individual to another or from one body of individuals to another.²³⁴ The sovereign power is most likely to be retained by those who control the appetites of their subjects and recommend reason as the means towards peace and harmony.²³⁵

Hobbes and Spinoza also differ about the status of self-preservation once inside the state. For example, Spinoza sees society operating largely in accordance with the same natural principles that guide individuals outside of the state, with the resulting harmony owing to the fact that individuals who pursue virtue also come to desire it for others as well.²³⁶ This sentiment fell into line, for example, with what Spinoza's friends the De la Court brothers and Van den Enden had each suggested in their own accounts of political society.²³⁷ Showing an affinity for the arguments of Aristotle, the Stoics and more recently Grotius, they assert that 'self-love is the origin of all human actions,' while elsewhere arguing that 'self-preservation is the supreme law' which governs the activities of all men.²³⁸ It is then perhaps not surprising that Spinoza also comes to suggest that reason promotes this common highest good to all men because such a good is in no way foreign to our very essence.²³⁹ Since our essential desires are rooted in reason they are thus accessible to all and may be said

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid. (16, p. 530).

²³⁵ Ibid. (16, p. 531).

²³⁶ Spinoza, *Ethics* (4.P37, p. 339).

²³⁷ The possibility that Spinoza's reading of Hobbes's *De cive* is influenced by the De la Courts is a point made in Jon Parkin, 'Taming the Leviathan - Reading Hobbes in Seventeenth-Century Europe', in T.J. Hochstrasser and P. Schroder (eds.), *Early Modern Natural Law Theories* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), 31-52 (p. 40).

²³⁸ *Consideratien en exempelen van staat* (Amsterdam, 1660) (p. 1) and *Politieke Discoursen* (Amsterdam, 1662) (p. 91) as cited in Malcolm, 'Hobbes and Spinoza', (p. 548); Van den Enden was said to have expressed this view in a summarised account of his *Vrye Politijke Stellingen* found amongst the papers of his former Latin student Latréaumont. See the discussion in Klever, 'A New Source of Spinozism', (p. 620).

²³⁹ Spinoza, *Ethics* (4.P36S, pp. 338-39).

to govern all.²⁴⁰ Yet the idea of extrapolated individual desires maintaining social cohesion is not to be found in Hobbes. Instead, as he points out repeatedly, it is because men fear each other that they are willing to transfer their natural right of security to a greater power.²⁴¹ Fear does not assume in *Ethics* the prominent role that it had in Hobbes, as dwelling on its potentially overpowering effects would have been detrimental to Spinoza's larger plan of showing how our love of, and interaction with, others is what enables us to reign in the passions and partake in a 'blessed existence'.²⁴²

It is not certain, however, that Spinoza himself entirely understood the prominent role natural desire continued to play in the Hobbesian state.²⁴³ The extent to which an individual in Hobbes's philosophy remained in possession of their natural rights was a topic Spinoza broached in an oft-cited letter to his friend Jarig Jelles. According to Spinoza, he could not agree with Hobbes that individuals entirely transferred or ceded their natural rights to the sovereign upon leaving the natural state and entering into the civil State.²⁴⁴ Yet Spinoza seems to have

²⁴⁰ 'Since the highest good sought by men under the sway of emotion is often such that only one man can possess it, the result is that men who love it are at odds with themselves [...] But he who endeavours to guide others by reason acts not from impulse but from kindly concern, and is entirely consistent with himself.' Ibid. (4.P37S1).

²⁴¹ 'And so it comes about that we are driven by mutual fear to believe that we must emerge from such a state and seek allies [*socii*]; so that if we must have *war*, it will not be a war against all men nor without aid.' Hobbes, *DC* (1.13, p. 30).

²⁴² This aim is suggested in the last book of *Ethics*, wherein the clear and distinct understanding of our natures and emotions are said to lead us to a love of God and that such love occupies the 'chief place' in our mind. Blessedness is said to be virtue itself and because we enjoy it we are able to keep our emotions in check. See Spinoza, *Ethics* (5.P15, P16, and P42, pp. 371, 382).

²⁴³ In addition to the question of transferring the natural right broached in the letter with Jelles, Harry Wolfson finds another difference between the two political philosophers: 'According to Hobbes the war of everyone against everyone expresses the original nature of man: the state of peace is due only to the "fear of death" and to a "desire of such things as are necessary to commodius living, and a hope by their industry to obtain them"; according to Spinoza it is a vitiation of the original nature of man by emotions which surpass his native power or virtue. To Hobbes, again, the civil state with its laws is to serve as a curb upon the native impulse of man; to Spinoza it is an instrument whereby man is enabled to live according to his native impulses.' See Harry A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Spinoza: Unfolding the Latent Processes of His Reasoning* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948) (p. 247).

²⁴⁴ 'With regard to political theory, the difference between Hobbes and myself [...] consists in this, that I always preserve the natural right in its entirety, and I hold that the sovereign power in a State has right over a subject only in proportion to the excess of its power over that of a subject. This is

misrepresented the views of his contemporary to Jelles, for while Hobbes may have constructed the foundations of the State on the irrevocable transfer of certain natural rights, namely the right to decide what is good and bad and the right to all things, he, unlike Spinoza, does not suggest that we entirely give up our natural right of self-preservation.²⁴⁵ Moreover, for Hobbes those acts that are done out of necessity, out of a desire for peace or the preservation of the body, are deemed ‘right’ and those who perform such acts are considered ‘just’.²⁴⁶ Even in an act of union, whereby the ‘wills of all men are submitted to the will of one man, or one counsel,’ the right of self-defence remains intact.²⁴⁷ Because self-preservation is incorporated into the *Law of Nature*, it is also a dictate of right reason, which retains its authority in civil society both as the ‘sum of moral philosophy’ and as a law in accordance with teachings of the Holy Scriptures.²⁴⁸

A return to *Ethics*, however, suggests that Spinoza may have in fact followed Hobbes more closely on the idea of a rights transfer, and the prominence afforded to self-preservation politically, than his letter would initially indicate. While Spinoza argues that ‘every man exists by the sovereign natural right,’ a right that allows him to judge what is both good and bad to act in accordance to what he thinks in his best advantage, he is adamant that men must ‘give up’ this natural right if they are to live in harmony and to establish a feeling of mutual confidence amongst themselves.²⁴⁹ Societies, which use laws and the collective power of their people to preserve themselves, can only be sustained if they successfully claim back the natural right of

always the case in a state of nature.’ Apart from the earlier mention of Hobbes in the notes to *TTP*, this is the only other time Hobbes is referred to by name. Spinoza, *Ep.* 50 (2 June 1674).

²⁴⁵ ‘No one is obliged by any agreement he may have made not to resist someone who is threatening him with death, wounds or other bodily harm. For there is in every man a kind of supreme stage of fearfulness, by which he sees the harm threatening him as the worst possible, and by natural necessity does his best to avoid it; and it is understood not to be able to do otherwise.’ Hobbes, *DC* (2.18, p. 39); Spinoza, *TTP* (16, p. 530): ‘The sovereign power is bound by no law, and all must obey it in all matters; for this is what all must have covenanted tacitly or expressly when they transferred to it all their power of self-defence, that is, all their right.’

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.* (3.30, p. 55).

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.* (5.7, p. 72).

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.* (3.32-33, pp. 55-56).

²⁴⁹ Spinoza, *Ethics* (4.P37S2, pp. 340-41).

avenging oneself and deciding what is good and evil.²⁵⁰ Thus the Hobbesian and Spinozistic conceptions of society appear, despite Spinoza's indication to the contrary, to have much in common regarding the inviolable status of the natural law to self-preservation within the State and as regards the transfer of others which aid us in attaining that goal. We enjoy a continued right to defend ourselves in the State according to each philosopher, but we are no longer entitled to mete out revenge as we see fit nor to adjudicate between what is good and bad. Instead, we surrender these natural aides to our preservation to the sovereign so that 'common rules of behaviour and laws' may be established with our preservation becoming an integral part of the State itself.²⁵¹

Conclusion

The notion of self-preservation in Spinoza's philosophy borrowed equally from his readings in both ancient and contemporary natural philosophy, ethics and politics. While Spinoza's continued insistence that all things demonstrate a tendency to preserve themselves appears on the surface to be a restatement of the central tenet of Stoic ethics, as we have seen there is much in Spinoza's understanding of preservation as a resistance to external forces and bodies that suggests his strong familiarity with, and borrowing of, elements of Cartesian physics helped him support this conclusion. So strong is this influence that even in the later passages of *Ethics*, where Spinoza has moved well away from his account of physical bodies to consider the particularities of humans in civil society, he reminds us that a body's striving to preserve itself is nothing but its maintaining of 'the proportion of motion-and-rest'.²⁵² This portrayal, which reiterates views initially expressed in *Principles of Cartesian Physics* and *Metaphysical Thoughts*, captures the full extent of Spinoza's understanding of self-preservation as a natural tendency that is to be found in *all*

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid. (4.P39, p. 342).

things and, as such, one which speaks in a more dynamic and universal tone than what Stoic ethics had argued. More specifically, it shows that self-preservation remained, as it had for Hobbes, a notion singularly capable of unifying the physical, ethical and political accounts of bodies. It does this by taking preservation to be an irreducible aspect of bodies in motion and an effect that explains how they can maintain their motions and physical form after coming into contact with more powerful external forces. As such, the account of motion established in Spinoza's earlier accounts of natural philosophy provides the foundation upon which the more targeted ethical and political accounts of self-preservation are based.

For his own part, Descartes has a crucial role to play in understanding the origins of Spinoza's account of self-preservation. It is, after all, from Spinoza's readings of his contemporary's views on bodies and their animation that he begins to develop a far more radical philosophy of panpsychism. In targeting motions, rather than psychological impulses, Descartes supplied Spinoza with a view of bodies that shifted the focus of self-preserving tendencies established by the Stoic philosophers. Instead, the recasting of the term 'animated' served to imbue all bodies with tendencies that had previously been discussed at length in the school's consideration of the most complex types of physical organisms. Spinoza is further able to stretch the understanding of a body's animation from what he found in Cartesian physics, showing how natural tendencies of humans serve to demonstrate the interconnectedness of all natural things and are subject to the same universal laws of motion. Where contemporary thought found itself incapable of expressing how things were limited in their individual abilities to conform to this law of preservation, Spinoza followed Descartes's incorporation of a view of bodily powers that was Epicurean in origin. Through Descartes's initial reliance on the phrase '*quantum in se est*' to qualify the body's powers to preserve itself, Spinoza inherited a synthesis of ancient and contemporary physical discourse that became useful for characterising a thing's inherent natural abilities as well as linking these strivings back to the natural world-at-large. Moreover, the phrase emphasised that the body's ability to

preserve itself always remained subject to its avoiding larger and more powerful external bodies. From this fundamental premise, Spinoza advocated that the best assurance for the body's continued survival came not from isolated existence but rather from joining forces with other bodies – a claim that held as true in physics as it did in politics.

Since individuals in the natural and civil state recognise that their security and happiness are dependent upon maintaining peaceful relationships with others, the idea that 'bodies' join together to protect themselves and their property shows how political philosophy contributed to the unifying powers of self-preservation in Spinoza's thought. Yet while the fundamental physical premise upon which Spinoza's understanding of human relations is rooted in his natural philosophy, as we have seen, applying self-preserving tendencies to the subject of political bodies placed him in a tradition which counted Grotius and Hobbes as two of its most recent, and widely read expositors. In each of their writings, there was a tendency to clarify the natural relationship of the individual with their person, and Spinoza may be said to have followed them in turning to both Epicurean and Stoic philosophy to illuminate the intricacies of this relationship. While the characterisation of general providence in *Short Treatise* points to a marked expansion of the Stoic position, Spinoza nevertheless appears, as Carnois, James and others have suggested, to have found the Stoic account of desire to be useful for explicating the specific functions of human *conatus* later on in his writings. This equation of desire with initial natural impulses and virtuous living had featured centrally in discussions of *homologia* in Stoic ethics, and it was from their texts that Spinoza found a useful way of applying his general physical claims about bodily tendencies to the specific case of humans who were subject to the forces of the passions. Spinoza may also be said to mimic the Stoic account of *oikeiōsis* when he traces out the shift from the life lived according to the dictates of natural appetite to one lived in accordance with reason. As this shift occurs and humans come to see their self-interest and happiness as being intricately bound up with the collective powers and activities of others, Spinoza

brings a large strand of his ethics into alignment with the Ciceronian account of natural appetite and sociability. However, like Hobbes, he does not defer to the power of nature to explain sociability, but rather turns to the efficacy of covenants, necessity and utility favoured in the Epicurean accounts to explain the legal and psychological mechanisms responsible for turning self-love into a concern for the well-being of others.

In having now considered how the claim that bodies possess a tendency to preserve themselves resides throughout the entirety of Spinoza's philosophy, it becomes apparent that important connections do exist between Spinoza and Hellenistic philosophy, as well as between Spinoza and his contemporaries. One must, therefore, remain vigilant against overstating the role of any particular influence on his account of self-preservation. To portray this view as singularly derived is to blur the boundaries between where one particular influence ceases and another may be said to begin, a fact borne out only when we move away from looking at self-preservation as it appears in one particular philosophical context or against the background of one specific philosophical tradition. By focusing on how self-preservation features throughout Spinoza's thought one can begin to illuminate the genealogy of how he incorporated the views and terminology of both his contemporaries and the Hellenistic philosophers into his account of bodies and their tendencies. Thus while Cartesian physics prompted the young Spinoza to consider the nature of bodies and their powers, and lent him important terms such as *conatus* and the qualifying phrase '*quantum in se est*', it was via the engagement with the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers that Spinoza proceeded to develop in great detail the psychological manifestations of the simple, yet fundamental, assertion that bodies naturally strive to preserve themselves. This places Spinoza within the larger milieu of seventeenth-century authors who had turned their attention to the views of the recently revived Stoic and Epicurean schools and employed many of their arguments about the natural tendencies of bodies to formulate a contemporary account of nature's relationship to its parts, the fundamental forces of human psychology and

the origins of political association. By deftly weaving elements from these two traditions into his own arguments, Spinoza's philosophy reveals a writer who was comfortable drawing upon the many intellectual traditions at his disposal. It also reveals how the ancient discussions of self-preservation continued to remain key to seventeenth-century philosophy's desire to unlock the essence of nature and the individual.

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