

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
WILLIAM, EARL OF NEWCASTLE,  
GOVERNOR TO THE PRINCE HIS HIGHNESS,  
ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY  
COUNCIL.



## *THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY*

My most honoured Lord,

From the two principal parts of our nature, Reason and Passion, have proceeded two kinds of learning, mathematical and dogmatical. The former is free from controversies and dispute, because it consisteth in comparing figures and motion only; in which things truth and the interest of men oppose not each other. But in the later there is nothing not disputable, because it compareth men, and meddleth with their right and profit; in which, as oft as reason is against a man, so oft will a man be against reason. And from hence it cometh, that they that have written of justice and policy in general, do all invade each other, and themselves, with contradiction. To reduce this doctrine to the rules and infallibility of reason, there is no way, but first to put such principles down for a foundation, as passion not mistrusting, may not seek to displace; and afterward to build thereon the truth of cases in the law of nature (which hitherto have been built in the air) by degrees, till the whole be inexpugnable. Now (my Lord) the principles fit for such a foundation, are those which I have heretofore acquainted your Lordship withal in private discourse, and which by your command I have here put into method. To examine cases thereby between sovereign and sovereign, or between sovereign and subject, I leave to them that shall find leisure and encouragement thereto. For my part, I present this to your Lordship for the true and only foundation of such science. For the style, it is therefore the worse, because I was forced to consult when I was writing, more with logic than with rhetoric. But for the doctrine, it is not slightly proved; and the conclusions thereof are of such nature, as, for want of them, government and peace have been nothing else to this day, but mutual fear. And it would be an incomparable benefit to commonwealth, if every man held the opinions concerning law and policy here delivered. The ambition therefore of this book, in seeking by your Lordship's countenance to insinuate itself with those whom the matter it containeth most nearly concerneth, is to be excused. For myself, I desire no greater honour than I enjoy already in your Lordship's known favour; unless it be that you would be

pleased, in continuance thereof, to give me more exercise in your commands; which, as I am bound by your many great favours, I shall obey, being,

My most honoured Lord,  
Your Lordship's most humble and obliged Servant,  
Thomas Hobbes.

*May 9, 1640.*

# PART I

## CHAPTER 1

*1, 2, 3. Preface. 4. Man's nature. 5. Division of his faculties. 6. Faculties of the body. 7. Faculties of the mind. 8. Power cognitive, conceptions and imagery of the mind.*

1. The true and perspicuous explication of the elements of laws, natural and politic, which is my present scope, dependeth upon the knowledge of what is human nature, what is a body politic, and what it is we call a law. Concerning which points, as the writings of men from antiquity downward have still increased, so also have the doubts and controversies concerning the same. And seeing that true knowledge begetteth not doubt nor controversy, but knowledge; it is manifest from the present controversies, that they which have heretofore written thereof, have not well understood their own subject.

2. Harm I can do none, though I err no less than they. For I shall leave men but as they are, in doubt and dispute. But intending not take any principle upon trust, but only to put men in mind of what they know already, or may know by their own experience, I hope to err the less; and when I do, it must proceed from too hasty concluding, which I will endeavour as much as I can to avoid.

3. On the other side, if reasoning aright I win not consent (which may very easily happen) from them that being confident of their own knowledge weigh not what is said, the fault is not mine but theirs. For as it is my part to show my reasons, so it is theirs to bring attention.

4. Man's nature is the sum of his natural faculties and powers, as the faculties of nutrition, motion, generation, sense, reason, &c. For these powers we do unanimously call natural, and are contained in the definition of man, under these words, animal and rational.

5. According to the two principal parts of man, I divide his faculties into two sorts, faculties of the body, and faculties of the mind.

6. Since the minute and distinct anatomy of the powers of the body is nothing necessary to the present purpose, I will only