

# **Subjectivity is Objective.**

## **Thomas Hobbes on Normative Truth**

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*Abstract:* Much controversy surrounding Hobbes's interpretations springs from a puzzle – how can subjectivist assumptions lead to an objective theory of morality and politics? Two different strands coexist in the history of philosophy: the first emphasizes his moral psychology, while the other stresses the universality of the laws of nature. My hypothesis is that Hobbes's subjectivism allowed for some degree of objectivity in two ways. First, by reducing values to individual preferences they become facts, recognizable as true or false. Second, subjective desires still have factual objective consequences. With these two qualifications, Hobbes subjectivism can be made compatible with an objective science of morality. This idea is captured in the distinction between real and apparent goods, under which non-compliance appears to be an apparent good for its objective negative consequences. While for a moral scientist, the risks posed by the state of nature are sufficient to warrant cooperation, the sovereign's sanctions provide more obvious negative consequences for the less forward-looking.

*Keywords:* Hobbes, Objectivity, Truth, Hypothetical imperative.

*notizie di POLITEIA*, XXXIV, 129, 2018. ISSN 1128-2401 pp. 98-113