

Redefining the Hobbes-Spinoza Connection: The Role of Natural Theology in Hobbes's Understanding of Natural Right, the Laws of Nature, Sovereignty, Civic Education, and Liberty

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Abstract: This dissertation looks to redefine the way we look at Thomas Hobbes's political philosophy, and in turn, show how close Baruch Spinoza and Hobbes's philosophies truly are. Our revised interpretation of Hobbes will be driven by a reinterpretation of Hobbes's theology along naturalistic lines. We will show that Hobbes's natural theology, like Spinoza's, structures the whole of his political thought. Through understanding Hobbes's political theory in light of his natural theology we will learn that the aim of the Hobbesian commonwealth is self-government and perfect freedom. In addition to this, we will deflate the distinction between nature and artifice in Hobbes by showing that the purpose for which the commonwealth was generated was to bring man into closer harmony with nature. Lastly, we will show that the similarities between Hobbes and Spinoza are driven by a similar Stoic logic which underpins both of their political thought.

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Hobbes scholars who have discussed Hobbes's religious views seem to discuss his views within the context of his revealed theology, asking, was Hobbes an orthodox Christian¹ or a surreptitious atheist?² This dissertation is concerned with the overlooked³ matter of natural theology and its ramifications on Hobbes's wider thought. Natural theology often relies on the thought that within the particular ordering of things in nature there exists a purpose, and this purpose is the final cause in the ordering discerned. The reason why natural theology has gone overlooked in Hobbes is because by ruling out final causes he seems to have ruled out natural theology. However, Hobbes did not so much eliminate final causes from his thought as adapt them to his mechanistic-materialist metaphysic.

This paper will show how Hobbes's understanding of causation structured his natural and revealed theology. In doing so we will demonstrate that Hobbes, in some way, held a

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- 1 Martinich, A.P., 'The Interpretation of Covenants in *Leviathan*' in *Leviathan after 350 Years*, ed. by Tom Sorell and Luc Foisneau (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 217-240; Martinich, A.P., *The Two Gods of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Religion and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). See also A. P. Martinich and Curley's exchange discussed in Edwin Curley's 'Calvin and Hobbes, or Hobbes as an Orthodox Christian', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* vol. 34 (1996): 257-271. Also, see Juergon Overhoff's book *Hobbes's Theory of the Will: Ideological Reasons and Historical Circumstances* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000) for a discussion of how Hobbes rigorously defended his doctrine, showing how it fit with Luther and Calvin's thought, 141-159.
 - 2 Curley, Edwin, 'The Covenant and God in Hobbes's *Leviathan*', from *Leviathan after 350 Years*, ed. by Tom Sorell and Luc Foisneau (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 199-216; Forster, Greg, 'Divine Law and Human Law in Hobbes's *Leviathan*', *History of Political Thought*, vol. 24 no. 2, (2003): 189-217; Skinner, Quentin, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Of course, atheism, as it was understood in the early modern period is hardly equatable to a modern understanding of the term. Atheism did not simply connote non-belief in God or any other deity; it was used to cover a wide range of heterodox theological views; see, Aylmer, G.E., 'Unbelief in Seventeenth-Century England' in *Puritans and Revolutionaries: Essays in Seventeenth-Century History presented to Christopher Hill* ed. Donald Pennington and Keith Thomas (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978): 22-46
 - 3 There are some though, who *have* (either explicitly, implicitly, incompletely, or unknowingly) made this connection; see: Jamie C. Kassler's 'The Self as a Taut String: Hobbes and Stoic Naturalism III' in *Musical Humanism and Its Legacy: Essays in Honor of Claude V. Palisca* ed. Nancy Kovaleff Baker and Barbara Russano Hanning (Stuyvesant: Pendragon Press, 1992), 109-128; Paul F. Grendler's 'Pierre Charron: Precursor to Hobbes', *The Review of Politics* vol. 25 no. 2 (1963): 212-224; Kinch Hoekstra's 'Hobbes on Law, Nature, and Reason', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* vol. 41 no. 1 (2003), 113-14.

naturalistic conception of God, a conception very similar to Spinoza's. We will also show that Hobbes and Spinoza's politics, informed by their mechanistic-materialist metaphysics and natural theology, are nearly selfsame. In addition to this, the information gained from this essay will show that there is a definite Stoic logic to how Hobbes and Spinoza understood the concepts underpinning their politics—the consequence of the naturalistic foundations of their politics.

Hobbes's natural theology, like Spinoza's, structures the whole of his political thought. By understanding Hobbes's political thought in the light of his natural theology we will gain a more profound understanding of virtually every aspect of Hobbes's political theory: from natural right to the obligation to obey the laws of nature, and from the structure and form of the commonwealth to Hobbes's conception of liberty and the authority of the sovereign; and ultimately the impetus which lay behind the entire Hobbesian system of politics--which cannot be reduced simply to fear,⁴ or peace generated through fear; but instead, perpetual peace and the systematic mitigation of fear.⁵ Hobbes, firmly grounding his work in information yielded from scientific explorations of man and the material universe, believed himself to have created a trustworthy guide to giving existence to a political ideal.⁶

The idea that Hobbes's *Leviathan* is, to some degree, instructional⁷ has been a persistent

4 Strauss, Leo, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Origins and Its Genesis* tr. Elsa M. Sinclair (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1963), 23.

5 Richard Tuck ends 'The Utopianism of Leviathan' in *Leviathan after 350 Years*, ed. by Tom Sorell and Luc Foisneau (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 125-138, with something similar to this thought. Kinch Hoekstra later repudiates Tuck's view of Hobbes's philosophy as utopian in 'A lion in the house: Hobbes and Democracy' in *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought* ed. Annabel Brett, James Tully, and Holly Hamilton-Bleakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), calling Hobbes 'very largely anti-utopian', 216.

6 Hobbes, Thomas, *On the Citizen* ed. and tr. Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 5 (hereafter referred to as *De Cive*).

7 J.W.N. Watkins in *Hobbes's System of Ideas* (London: Hutchinson, 1965) is helpful in understanding how *Leviathan* might be instructional, discussing the process by which one might internalize those *dicta* found within *Leviathan*, likening it doctor's orders and then, responding to C.B. Macpherson's criticisms, playing chess, 77-79. I think, ultimately, however, Tracy B. Strong articulates the intended purpose of Hobbes's *Leviathan* best, '*Leviathan* is the scripture necessary to the understanding of sovereignty that Hobbes has established...a writing

one in the secondary literature. More recently, attention has been paid to the more liberal aspects of Hobbes's work like democracy,⁸ toleration,⁹ utopianism,¹⁰ civic education,¹¹ and civic virtue.¹² These explorations into Hobbes's "liberal" side have provided us with a differential image of Hobbes, one freed of those stifling features of Hobbes's theory--such as absolutism--which have, since the publication of *Leviathan* in 1651, been used to describe Hobbes's political theory.¹³ We look to contribute to the newly revised image of Hobbes being carved out in the secondary literature. However, the revised view we look to form will be driven by Hobbes's metaphysics and natural theology. With this understanding it will be demonstrated that Hobbes and Spinoza's respective political philosophies are nearly identical. We will show that the outcome of both Hobbes and Spinoza's political theory is self-government; that the Hobbesian and Spinozian polity is to be understood as a community inhabited by rationalistic individuals living in absolute

through which each individual could encounter him- or herself more as an embodiment of (civil) truth. (This is, incidentally, why there is explicitly not need for a "noble lie" in Hobbes and why Hobbes is perhaps the most egalitarian of all theorists); 'How to write Scripture: Words, Authority, and Politics in Thomas Hobbes', *Critical Inquiry* vol. 20 no. 1 (1993), 158.

- 8 Tuck, Richard, 'Hobbes and Democracy' in *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought* ed. Annabel Brett, James Tully, and Holly Hamilton-Bleakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 171-190. For Kinch Hoekstra's 'response' to Tuck, see 'A lion in the house: Democracy and Hobbes' (op. cit.). Also, Alan Apperley's 'Hobbes on Democracy', *Politics* vol. 19 no. 3 (1999): 165-171.
- 9 Ryan, Alan, 'Hobbes, toleration and the inner life,' in *The Nature of Political Theory*, ed. by David Miller and Larry Seidentop, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983): 197-218; Ryan, Alan, 'A more tolerant Hobbes?,' in *Justifying Toleration*, ed. by Susan Mendus, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988): 37-60; Tuck, Richard, 'Hobbes and Locke on Toleration' in *Thomas Hobbes and Political Theory* ed. Mary Dietz (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1990): 153-171; Owen, J. Judd, 'The Tolerant Leviathan: Hobbes and the Paradox of Liberalism', *Polity* vol. 37 (2005): 130-148; Curley, Edwin, 'Hobbes and the Cause for Religious Toleration' (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association 1 September 2005).
- 10 Tuck, Richard, 'The Utopianism of Leviathan' in *Leviathan after 350 Years* (op. cit.). And although Noel Malcolm in 'Hobbes's Theory of International Relations' in *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002): 432-456, never uses, explicitly, 'utopian' as an adjective to describe Hobbes's work, Malcolm's piece is helpful if you wish to understand the more utopianistic elements of Hobbes.
- 11 Lloyd, S.A., 'Coercion, Ideology, and Education in Hobbes's Leviathan' in *Reclaiming the History of Ethics: Essays for John Rawls* ed. Andrews Reath, Barbara Herman, and Christine M. Korsgaard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 35-65.
- 12 Dietz, Mary, 'Hobbes's Subject as Citizen' in *Thomas Hobbes and Political Theory* ed. Mary Dietz (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1990): 153-171; Burchell, David, 'The Disciplined Citizen: Thomas Hobbes, Neostoicism and the Critique of Classical Citizenship' *Australian Journal of Politics and History* vol. 45 no. 4 (1999): 506-524.
- 13 Michael Oakshott worked particularly hard to interpret Hobbes's political philosophy along non-absolutist lines; see his 'Introduction to *Leviathan*' in *Hobbes on Civil Association* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), 60-64.

freedom.

Outlining what is to come: Chapter I will show that Hobbes's theology is naturalistic and will begin to demonstrate how foundational Hobbes's natural theology is to his politics. We will do this by showing how Hobbes's understanding of man's passions, natural right, and the laws of nature are all structured by his natural theology and mechanistic-materialism. We will weigh Spinoza's conception of man's passions, natural right, and the laws of nature against Hobbes's, demonstrating how Spinoza's thought tracks Hobbes's.

In Chapter II we will evaluate Hobbes's conception of sovereignty in light of the information gained from Chapter I and show that Hobbes cared not so much for the form that sovereignty takes, but rather, its function and its ability to uniformly apply and enforce law. How Hobbes approaches sovereignty will then be compared with Spinoza's approach, showing how many Spinoza scholars weighing in on this subject have concluded wrongly about the nature of the Hobbes-Spinoza connection as it concerns sovereignty.

Chapter III will look at Hobbes's educational apparatus, its form, its function, as well as the views disseminated by it. Chapter III will also address the issue of liberty within Hobbes's work. With regard to Hobbes's educational system, what will be shown is that for Hobbes fostering those attributes within the commonwealth's citizenry which would tend towards the perpetuation and continued stabilization of the commonwealth does not involve brainwashing or deceit.¹⁴ Much to the contrary; because Hobbes's views on education are informed by both his materialism and his nominalism¹⁵ he thought the self-evident truths taught by the state to be

14 This idea stands in stark opposition to Kinch Hoekstra's in 'II--The End of Philosophy (The Cast of Hobbes)', (presented at the Meeting of the Aristotelian Society, University of London Monday 24 October 2005): and David Wootton's 'Thomas Hobbes's Machiavellian Moments' in *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain: History, Rhetoric, and Fiction 1500-1800* ed. Donald R. Kelley and David H. Sacks, 142.

15 Parkin, Jon, 'Thomas Hobbes and the Problem of Self-Censorship' (paper presented at the 2007 Morrell

indubitable. We will show that the Hobbesian citizen, by embracing these truths, no longer stands in conflict with nature. The object of the Hobbesian educational system, through the re-education of its citizens in the correct usage and meaning of words, is to free its citizens from irrational wants and desires. It will teach the citizens of the Hobbesian commonwealth how to act according to what is best for his or her sustenance, and in doing so will create a citizenry which is both peace-engendering and peace-sustaining. However, without understanding how Hobbes's natural theology influences his politics, it would be impossible to understand completely the ends for which civic education is undertaken.

Additionally, it has been commented that one of the fundamental differences between Hobbes and Spinoza is their conception of liberty. Hobbes defines liberty as freedom from external impediment whereas Spinoza defines liberty rationally.¹⁶ If we were to take what Hobbes says *verbatim*, then we would conclude that Hobbes's theory contains only one conception of liberty. However, we will show that alongside Hobbes's materialistic conception of liberty exists a rationalistic conception of liberty. This second, rationalistic, conception of liberty tracks Spinoza's conception of liberty, and until this point, has received no explicit attention by Hobbes scholars.¹⁷ We will show that civic education, through the rationalistic mindset it fosters, is the means to the utopian condition Hobbes envisages, in which war is banished and peace reigns between citizens in perpetuity.

The conclusion considers the picture of Hobbes and Spinoza that has emerged in more general terms, and explores the relation of their thinking to wider currents of thought. In

Conference on the subject of Self-Censorship), 17.

16 Malcolm, Noel, 'Hobbes and Spinoza' in *Aspects of Hobbes* (op. cit.), 51.

17 Jamie C. Kessler in 'The Self as a Taut String: Hobbes and Stoic Naturalism III' (op. cit.) does however make the argument that Hobbes has a stoically-based conception of freedom, and in this way implicitly asserts the existence of a rationalistic conception of liberty in Hobbes.

particular, the conclusion considers whether and how far Hobbes and Spinoza can be read as continuations of Stoic lines of thinking and the difference made by reading them in this way (e.g. supplies unifying thread in otherwise apparently diverse claims about particular topics by each thinker).¹⁸

18 Steven B. Smith in his article 'What kind of Democrat was Spinoza?', *Political Theory* vol. 33 no. 9 (Feb. 2005), does not disapprove of this connection outright, however, sees Spinoza's being associated with Stoicism as being an obstacle to the proving the *Ethics* as a political work, 8, 14.

Chapter I: God and Nature

The first step in recasting the way in which we understand the purpose of the political system Hobbes creates is understanding the foundations upon which his political system rests. This chapter will outline how Hobbes conceived of God and show how his conception of God affected his understanding of man's passions, his natural right (man's pre-political rights) and the laws of nature. Chapter II will then focus on how these pre-political rights and obligations help to structure Hobbes's conception of sovereignty.

In addition to this, this chapter will juxtapose Hobbes's understanding of the passions, natural right and the laws of nature with Spinoza's. We will demonstrate that the goal of Hobbes's political theory, like Spinoza's, is not to remove man from nature but to bring man into harmony with nature (understood as the divine order). In order to do this however, we must first demonstrate that Hobbes conceived of God in a naturalistic way.

Section I: Hobbes's Naturalistic God

Many in the early modern period were, in some way, upholding what had become a tradition¹⁹ of using classical thought as a vehicle for Christian theology. However, Hobbes took presumably ancient ideas, such as materialism and determinism, to extremes which would have made his contemporaries uneasy.²⁰ Hobbes was rigorous in his application of mechanics and materialism and used these ideas to ground his theology.²¹

19 See Chapter 10 in Pierre Hadot's in *What is Ancient Philosophy?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2002); and Martin Heidegger's *An Introduction to Metaphysics* tr. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) for similar questioning, 133-34.

20 Sarasohn, 'Motion and Morality: Pierre Gassendi, Thomas Hobbes, and the Mechanical World-View', *Journal of the History of Ideas* vol. 46 no. 3 (1985), 369.

21 William B. Glover points out that sometimes Hobbes looks almost like a Calvinist; 'God and Thomas Hobbes',

Hobbes's mechanistic-materialism pervades virtually every aspect of his philosophy, making his philosophy a departure from others writing at this time who were reluctant to overturn key Christian ideas (such as free will).²² However, unlike Spinoza, Hobbes seems to have disguised many of his ideas beneath a Christian veneer, thus after reading Spinoza Hobbes famously exclaimed '[I] durst not write so boldly'.²³ Hobbes was a Christian of a different sort. Like Spinoza, Hobbes was incredulous when it came to belief in the occult. Hobbes not only demystified religion, but outright dismissed the possibility of supernatural phenomena, such as prophecy.²⁴ What makes Hobbes different is that we find his theology not in his biblical exegesis, but tucked away and hidden in what he wrote on causation.

George Wright astutely notes in a footnote in his extremely informative book *Religion, Politics and Thomas Hobbes*, 'While Hobbes emphasizes the rupture between ancient and modern science, there are also of course large continuities, and he himself utilizes a concept of causality whose origin he acknowledges stems from the Greeks.'²⁵ In *De corpore* Hobbes seems to move towards a more heterodox position, *implying* God's immanence, discarding any notion of a transcendent, immaterial God. In addition to this, he adapts Aristotle's teleological view of causation to his materialism, reducing efficient, material, formal, and final causes to material and

Church History vol. 23 no. 9 (Sep 1960), 276.

22 For instance see Justus Lipsius' *TVVO BOOKES Of constancie* tr. John Stradling (London: Richard Johnes, 1595), *Early English Books Online*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/fulltext?ACTION=ByID&ID=D00000998558860000&SOURCE=var_spell.cfg&WARN=N&FILE=../session/1220821620_16828 (Accessed July 21, 2008), 45; also see Sarasohn, 'Pierre Gassendi, Thomas Hobbes, and the Mechanical World-View', 369.

23 Curley, Edwin, 'I Durst Not Write So Boldly' or how to read Hobbes's theological-political treatise' in *Hobbes e Spinoza* ed. Daniela Bostrenghi (Napels: Bibliopolis): 497-593.

24 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, (London: Andrew Crooke, 1651), *Early English Books Online*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/fulltext?ACTION=ByID&ID=D00000121658130000&SOURCE=var_spell.cfg&WARN=N&FILE=../session/1220812246_22155 (Accessed January 9, 2008), 10; 32; 169; 197.

25 Wright, George, *Religion, Politics, and Thomas Hobbes* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 183 fn. 27.

efficient causes.²⁶ Hobbes believed

we must enquire first, what motion causeth such and such motion in the whole, that is, when one body invades another body which is either at rest or in motion...and, again, what motion this second body will generate in a third, and so forwards.²⁷

While Hobbes's redefinition of causality in *De corpore* implies God's materiality (demonstrating the lengths to which Hobbes was willing to defend his materialistic world view), Hobbes does say elsewhere that 'motion and rest' as attributed to God is not to be understood 'in the same sense in which they are attributed to bodies.'²⁸

However, Hobbes, in his work on liberty and necessity, gives us reason to believe that he held a naturalistic conception of God. In 'Of liberty and Necessity' Hobbes opined, 'nor could I think any man could make *stoical* and *Christian* two kinds of *necessity*, though they may be two kinds of *doctrine*.'²⁹ This statement is somewhat precarious. Even if Christian doctrine differs from Stoic doctrine, because Stoic necessity is grounded in naturalism this statement seems to imply that Christian necessity should be defined in like terms.³⁰ Nevertheless, Hobbes wished to divorce his revealed theology from Greek thought.

Wright points out that Hobbes attempts to throw off the yoke of early Greek thought from his biblical exegesis (effectively de-Hellenizing Christian theology), producing a materialist-driven biblical exegesis³¹ and interpretation of the Trinity.³² Yet, because both his interpretation

26 Stanton, Timothy, 'Hobbes's redefinition of the commonwealth' (paper presented at the Morrell Political Theory Workshop 5 November 2007), 14.

27 Hobbes, Thomas, *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic* ed. J.C.A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 198 (hereafter referred to as *The Elements of Law*).

28 Hobbes, Thomas, *Thomas Hobbes: Thomas White's De Mundo Examined*, tr. Harold Whitmore Jones (London: Bradford University Press, 1976), 321 (hereafter referred to as *De Mundo*).

29 Hobbes, 'Of Liberty and Necessity' in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes* ed. William Molesworth, reprinted edition, Vol IV (Germany: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1962), 260.

30 However, at the time that Hobbes was writing, Stoic theology and Christian theology were thought to have been reconcilable; see: Brooke, Christopher, 'How the Stoics became Atheists' *The Historical Journal* vol. 49 no. 2 (2006): 387-402, especially, 390.

31 Wright, *Religion, Politics, and Thomas Hobbes*, 189.

32 *ibid.*, 192.

of the Trinity and his biblical exegesis are the consequence of his materialism, Hobbes produces an exegesis and interpretation of the Trinity apparently motivated by his metaphysics, thus infusing his revealed theology with Greek ideas. Nonetheless, Hobbes is committed to his biblical exegesis, believing it to be correct, and is equally committed to his metaphysics, which asserts the corporeality of God and the mechanical structure of the universe; and the idea that God is corporeal seems to lend itself to the thought that God is discoverable. Hobbes seems to infer this idea in 'An Historical Narration Concerning Heresy and the Punishment Thereof', saying,

And for the same reason, the earth, the air, the stars, heaven, and their parts, are all of them things real. And because whatsoever is real here, or there, or in any place, has dimensions, that is to say, magnitude; that which hath magnitude, whether it be visible or invisible, finite or infinite, is called by all the learned a *body*. It followeth, that all real things, in that they are *somewhere*, are corporeal.³³

However, Hobbes's repeated statements that God is purely incomprehensible seems to be incompatible with the idea of a corporeal God (a God which is 'real' has 'dimensions' and is '*somewhere*') insofar as if He is corporeal He should be able to be discovered through reason (even if God as a totality cannot be comprehended, how He manifests himself through nature should be able to be found out through reason, and Hobbes is reluctant to tow this line). The Oxford geometer and antagonist, John Wallis, reached these same conclusions and used them as grounds to assert Hobbes's atheism. However, as Jon Parkin points out, '[e]very serious charge of atheism levelled at Hobbes had to work from the consequence of his doctrines rather than from any of his *written* statements...This allowed Hobbes to read as both a theist and an atheist.'³⁴ Parkin further points out that Hobbes avowedly adhered to the doctrine of 'upholding

33 Hobbes, 'A Historical Narration Concerning Heresy and the Punishment Thereof' in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes* ed. William Molesworth, reprinted edition, Vol. IV (Germany: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1962), 393.

34 Parkin, Jon, *Taming the Leviathan: The Reception of the Political and Religious Ideas of Thomas Hobbes in*

legally approved positions'.³⁵ What Hobbes held theologically does not simply appear on the pages of his written work; rather, it must be extracted out of his written work.

Jean-Baptiste Lantin, who knew Hobbes while he was in exile in Paris, remembered an anecdote Hobbes told which can be adduced as evidence that Hobbes was writing esoterically. Lantin recalled, 'He used to say that he sometimes made openings, but could not reveal his thoughts more than half-way; he said he imitated people who open the window for a few moments, but then close it again immediately for fear of the storm.'³⁶ Hobbes's doctrines were, and still are, widely considered to be inconsistent, and often paradoxical and inherently contradictory. This has led some, such as Edwin Curley³⁷ and Michael Oakeshott,³⁸ to question what Hobbes wrote, asking whether the contradictory nature of much of Hobbes's thought (or his tendency to equivocate) is simply the result of his ignorance (or carelessness), or if perhaps Hobbes intentionally developed thought which was inherently contradictory. While the thesis that Hobbes was intentionally ambiguous or contradictory can never be proven definitively, we should take the words attributed to Hobbes by Lantin very seriously. In addition, we should take seriously Hobbes's own words which, like Spinoza's, express his concern about the possible misinterpretation of his thought.

There is a reason why Hobbes titles the epistle to the reader in 'Of Liberty and Necessity' 'To the Sober and Discreet Reader' and wished that this treatise would not see bookstore shelves. Spinoza expresses a similar concern, indicting the masses for being 'guided' not 'by reason' and for being at the 'mercy of impulse', and as a result, excluded them from his readership, saying, 'I

England 1640-1700 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 152-153.

35 *ibid.*, 152.

36 Malcolm, Noel, 'Hobbes and the European Republic of Letters' in *Aspects of Hobbes* (op. cit.), 542.

37 Curley, Edwin, 'The Covenant and God in Hobbes's *Leviathan*', 215-16; see however Edwin Curley's 'Calvin and Hobbes' (op. cit.), 18.

38 Oakeshott, Michael, 'The Moral Life in the Writings of Thomas Hobbes' in *Hobbes on Civil Association* (op. cit.), 118.

would prefer they [the masses] disregard this book completely rather than make themselves a nuisance by misinterpreting it after their wont.³⁹ Hobbes was worried about the reception of his work (and, ironically, his own self-preservation), and wished to work against and not for those forces responsible for the religious and political upheaval occurring at the time when he was writing. What can be suggested is that Hobbes was not unaware of these tensions in his philosophy, and that these discontinuities alert us to the fact that Hobbes perhaps believed something different from what he asserted on paper. For some though, this suggestion is going too far.

A.P. Martinich regards esoteric readings as 'overestim[ing] the abilities of philosophers.'⁴⁰ Again and again Martinich uses Occam's razor as his guide in interpreting Hobbes: that the simplest and most evident explanation is more than likely the correct explanation. What Martinich's view entails, at worst, is a diminished view of Hobbes's genius, and at best, a simpleminded approach to Hobbes's work.

In response⁴¹ to Paul Davis' article⁴² on Hobbes's translation of Homer's *Odyssey*, which makes use of the esoteric thesis,⁴³ Martinich takes the position that Davis' argument lacks cogency because the evidence Davis adduces is not weighty enough to support the conclusions he draws. Whereas Davis sees hidden meaning in Hobbes's words at the close of his preface to *Odyssey* (Hobbes stating, 'But why without Annotations? Because I had no hope to do it better

39 Spinoza, Baruch, *Theological-Political Treatise* tr. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998), 8 (hereafter referred to as *TTP*).

40 Martinich, A.P., 'On the Proper Interpretations of Hobbes' Philosophy', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* vol. 34 (1996), 64.

41 Martinich, A.P., 'Hobbes's Translations of Homer and Anticlericalism' *The Seventeenth Century* vol. 16 no. 1 (2001): 147-157.

42 Davis, Paul, 'Thomas Hobbes's Translations of Homer: Epic and Anticlericalism in Late Seventeenth-Century England' *The Seventeenth Century* vol 12 no. 2 (1997): 231-255.

43 Davis claims that Hobbes's translation of the Homeric texts were anticlerical because of the 'low' language Hobbes's translation utilizes as well as his lack of annotations; *ibid.*, 237-243; 244-248.

than is already done by Mr. *Ogilby*'),⁴⁴ Martinich argues that Hobbes was never an 'annotating scholar' and interprets Hobbes's words as being indicative of his tired state (Hobbes was at that time in his eighties) or possibly his laziness.⁴⁵ There is no *definitive* reason why we shouldn't accept Martinich's counterargument. After all, Hobbes, in a letter to Samuel Sorbiere dating 1646, attributes the slow pace of his work on *De corpore* partly to his laziness.⁴⁶ This does not preclude however the possibility that there is more than meets the eye with regard to Hobbes's translation of Homer's *Odyssey*, and Davis provides more than an adequate amount of evidence to support this conclusion. Davis picks up on Hobbes's esotericism, and possibly because of his myopia, Martinich does not.

The truth is, as Parkin indicated, Hobbes rarely lets us know his true position⁴⁷ on politics or philosophy. The question is, did Hobbes write with his own maxim in mind, that '[a] certainty of Error in any part of a thing, implies a possibility of Error in the whole'?⁴⁸ It is true that the partial infection of a thing does not guarantee that the whole thing itself will be infected. But surely, given the reception Hobbes *knew* his work would receive⁴⁹ he was not going to publish something he could not defend (either philosophically, or biblically, or both). Additionally, most

44 Hobbes, Thomas, 'TO THE READER. CONCERNING The VERTUES of an HEROIQUE POEM' to *Homer's Odyssees* by Homer (London: J.C., 1675), *Early English Books Online*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/fulltext?ACTION=ByID&ID=D00000107366270000&SOURCE=var_spell.cfg&WARN=N&FILE=../session/1220811611_18170 (Accessed November 1, 2007). 16.

45 Martinich, 'Hobbes's Translations of Homer and Anticlericalism', 149-150.

46 Hobbes, Thomas, '1 June 1646, Hobbes to Samuel Sorbiere, from Paris' in *The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes* vol. 1 ed. Noel Malcolm (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 133.

47 Kinch Hoekstra in 'Tyrannus Rex vs Leviathan', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* vol. 82 (2001): 420-446, demonstrates the pliability of Hobbes's *expressed* political views.

48 Hobbes, Thomas, 'THE *Last Sayings, or Dying Legacy* OF Mr. Thomas Hobbs of Malmesbury, Who departed this Life on Thursday, Decemb. 4. 1679', *Early English Books Online*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/fulltext?SOURCE=var_spell.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=D00000093401070000&WARN=N&SIZE=16&FILE=../session/1220813037_26743&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&DISPLAY=AUTHOR (Accessed June 18, 2008).

49 For instance, much to Hobbes's dismay, the edition of *De cive* published in 1647 bore the inscription 'Academic Tutor to His Serene Highness the Prince of Wales' and Hobbes, writing to Sorbiere, was worried that his noxious writings, which he admits 'offen[d] the opinions of almost everyone', might serve as a 'pretex[t] on which to stir up popular ill feeling against the royal family'; Hobbes, Thomas, '22 March 1647, Hobbes to Samuel Sorbiere, from Paris' in *The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes* (op. cit.) vol. 1, 157.

errors in Hobbes's work are cosmetic or simple "slips of the pen" (such as his misquoting the bible). It is unreasonable to believe however that Hobbes would have made gross errors as it concerns the most integral elements of his philosophy.

When it comes to inconsistencies in his *doctrine* he was incredibly reluctant to budge, especially regarding the core components of his theology (as is demonstrated by the dismissive tone of his response to Bishop John Bramhall's book *The Catching of Leviathan*).⁵⁰ We should do our best therefore to inspect, as much as possible, any inconsistencies that crop up in Hobbes's thought to see if those inconsistencies are the product of flawed thinking or if they are indicative of Hobbes's supposed esoteric writing style. In light of this, we should not impugn Hobbes for the inconsistencies in his theology, as those inconsistencies alert us to the fact that Hobbes might be 'opening the window'.

Hobbes wrote a response to Thomas White's *De Mundo* in 1642 which discussed God in detail. There, he discusses God in such a way that appears to contradict our thesis that Hobbes held a naturalistic conception of God, and at one point asserts, 'neither He nor an angel can have dimensions, or can be circumscribed, either in the whole or in part, by space, not even in the mind'. He continues, "'body" is "that which has dimensions or which occupies space in the imagination".⁵¹ Hobbes then, coming close to defining God as matter in motion defers to Scripture, saying Scripture 'attribute[s] both [motion and rest] to Him, yet not in the same sense in which they are attributed to bodies, but in a manner that we cannot understand.'⁵² Hobbes again, refuting the idea that the universe could be both born (created) and eternal, defers to

50 Hobbes, Thomas, 'An Answer to a Book Published by Dr. Bramhall, Late Bishop of Derry; Called the "Catching of Leviathan"' in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes* ed. William Molesworth, reprinted edition, Vol. IV. (Germany: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1962): 279-384.

51 Hobbes, *De Mundo*, 311.

52 *ibid.*, 321.

Christian doctrine:

if it be indeed true, [I say,] that an act and a deed of God are performed in the same way as the acts and deeds of created things we can understand, then clearly the world must be eternal. For acts and deeds are conceivable only if motion be a pre-requisite [to action]. They presuppose two different bodies, one of which is the agent, or the mover, or the efficient [cause], and the other the patient, or the moved (which receives the effect). But this state of affairs is inconceivable [as existing] before the creation of the world. How, then, are philosophers to be answered? Not by philosophy, but from the teachings of the Christian Faith[.]⁵³

Hobbes's thought here is predicated on an idea he put forward earlier in his response to White.

The idea is that because God created the universe *ex nihilo* He cannot be understood rationally insofar as the concept of nothingness is inconceivable.⁵⁴ Yet, Hobbes in the Appendix to the Latin *Leviathan* says something rather interesting when contrasted with what he said in 1642.

In the Appendix interlocutor B (who it can be assumed is Hobbes) maintains 'God is signifies the same as God exists, i.e., when the substantive verb is analyzed, *God is being* [*Deus est ens*] or [in Greek] *ho on*.⁵⁵ This declaration might seem rather inconsequential, however, when compared with what Hobbes said in 1642 it could prove to be of some significance. In 1642, Hobbes, avoiding defining God in a naturalistic way, defined God as *entia* and not *ens*. He took the former (*entia*--the plural form of *ens*) to signify that 'of which we have no picture in the mind, so that a man is quite unable either to perceive them or to imagine them', e.g., 'God and the angels'.⁵⁶ The latter (*ens*) signifying 'body' or "'that which has dimensions or which occupies a space in the imagination"'.⁵⁷ It could be that Hobbes in stating '*Deus est ens*' is simply making the obvious statement that God is existent, but given Hobbes's dissociation of God from *ens*--or bodies with dimension, it is curious that Hobbes would use *ens* to describe God ontologically.

When this fact is combined with Hobbes's other statements in the Appendix about God's nature,

53 *ibid.*, 410.

54 *ibid.*, 313.

55 Hobbes, Thomas, 'Latin Appendix' in *Leviathan* ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), 499 (hereafter referred to as 'Appendix').

56 Hobbes, *De Mundo*, 310.

57 *ibid.*, 311.

most notably his explicit endorsement of Tertullian,⁵⁸ it becomes clear that Hobbes might be ever so slightly 'opening the window', allowing us to catch a glimpse of his true thought.

Even though Hobbes eschewed the use of language which was non-honorific or definite when discussing God, he repeatedly implies that God is (contradictorily) both naturalistic and beyond comprehension. Calling on Tertullian (possibly to buttress his position against charges of heresy),⁵⁹ Hobbes created a natural theology which, because of the demands of his materialism, asserts God's corporeality. For instance, this lead Hobbes to define those punishments which follow from disobeying natural law in natural terms, believing, 'Naturall Punishments must be naturally consequent to the breach of the Lawes of Nature; and therefore follow them as their naturall, not arbitrary effects.'⁶⁰ In addition to this, Hobbes's revealed theology is equally materialistic.

Throughout the course of *Leviathan* Hobbes repeatedly alludes to the idea that God and nature are equatable phenomena, or that God's will and natural processes are one in the same. Hobbes demystifies those passages of the Bible which describe the spirit of God, setting those passages in material terms by interpreting 'spirit' as meaning 'Motion', 'Wind', 'Zeal', the 'recover[ing] my vitall strength', and so on.⁶¹ Hobbes defines God's will in material terms, as 'the Power, by which he effecteth every thing.'⁶² Hobbes's particular brand of theology leads him to the view that because God is infinitely powerful, he has a right to everything; meaning, God's power extends over all things (all natural occurrences can then be understood as expressions of God's power). Yet, Hobbes, when pushed, shows resistance to the idea that God and nature are

58 Hobbes, 'Appendix', 542. To see just how close Hobbes's pronouncements about the corporeity of God are to Tertullian's, see George Wright's *Religion, Politics, and Thomas Hobbes*, 189-190.

59 Hobbes, Thomas, 'An Answer to a Book Published by Dr. Bramhall, Late Bishop of Derry; Called the "Catching of Leviathan."', 307.

60 *ibid.*, 193.

61 Hobbes, Thomas, *Leviathan*, 208-209.

62 *ibid.*, 190.

equatable.

In *Leviathan* Hobbes says something which could undue any hopes of proving that he held a naturalistic conception of God. Rebuking the philosophers of antiquity, Hobbes says 'that those Philosophers, who sayd the World, or the Soule of the World was God, spake unworthily of him; and denyed his Existence: For by God, is understood the cause of the World; and to say the World is God, is to say there is no cause of it, that is, no God.'⁶³ The reason why Hobbes condemns the theological position held by philosophers who believed 'the World is God' is because by affirming such a position they ceased to look upon God honorifically. What Hobbes took issue with was those philosophers' failure to see God as *the* cause. However, if Hobbes sees God only as a cause how is it that he could have said, 'NATURE (the Art whereby God hath made and governs the World) is by the *Art* of man'.⁶⁴ This statement, which opens *Leviathan*, seems to imply that God is both the cause of the world and engrained within the world itself insofar as God 'governs the World'. The cipher, which can be used to understand how it is possible for Hobbes to hold both of these positions, is provided in 'Of Liberty and Necessity'.

As briefly mentioned earlier, Hobbes parted ways with Aristotle's teleological view of causation by reducing all causes to efficient and material causes (i.e. 'the source of the movement' of something and 'the matter out of which something comes').⁶⁵ To understand Hobbes's natural theology though, we must understand how Hobbes collapsed final causes ('the end or purpose for the sake of which the originator of an entity brought it into existence')⁶⁶ into efficient causes. A consequence of Hobbes's mechanistic-materialism was that he reduced all causality to matter in motion. Causation could be understood as matter in motion affecting

63 *ibid.*, 190.

64 *ibid.*, 1.

65 Stanton, 'Hobbes's redefinition of the commonwealth', 9; 8.

66 *ibid.*, 9.

matter motion (or affecting matter which is then put *into* motion),⁶⁷ setting off sequences of causes and effects, which owed their origination to the sequence of causes and effects which preceded them on a timeline. God holds a special position in this sequence.

Hobbes explains in 'Of Liberty and Necessity', 'Nor does the *concourse of all causes* make on simple *chain* or concatenation, but an innumerable number of chains, joined together, not in all parts, but in the first link God Almighty'.⁶⁸ This idea is more clearly elucidated in 'The Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance': 'all external causes depend necessarily on the first eternal cause, God Almighty, who works in us, both to will and to do, by the mediation of second causes', that all causes 'do proceed from the providence, good pleasure, and working of God'.⁶⁹ All causes and effects are to be understood as the consequence those causes and effects which preceded them and are dependent upon a chain of causes and effects (or the convergence of different chains of causes and effects), and God forms the foundation for all causal chains. Thus, God is not only the First Cause, but as such, is ingrained in all of nature as it plays out according to His divine will. But to what *degree* is Hobbes's conception of God naturalistic?

Although Hobbes seems to be dismissive of naturalistic conceptions of God in much of what he *writes*, given the various features of his theology which seems to imply a naturalistic conception of God, I think it reasonable to assume that Hobbes should not always be taken at his *word* when everything else seems to point to the contrary. Even though Hobbes masks his ideas with Christian theology, it will be shown in the proceeding sections that there is a certain naturalistic logic existing beneath many of Hobbes's ideas which cannot be denied. What adds

67 Hobbes, Thomas, *De Corpore* in *The Elements of Law* (op. cit.), 198.

68 Hobbes, 'Of Liberty and Necessity', 246-247.

69 Hobbes, Thomas, 'Selections from Hobbes, *The Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance*' in *Hobbes and Bramhall on Liberty and Necessity* ed. Vere Chappell (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1999), 89.

even more credence to the idea that Hobbes held a naturalistic conception of God is that by understanding God naturalistically a number of inconsistencies in Hobbes's philosophy are resolved. In addition to this, realizing that Hobbes's theology is naturalistic is the first step to understanding the true purpose and function of Hobbes's political enterprise as well as redefining the relationship between Hobbes and Spinoza's thought.

However, in order to understand how Hobbes's understanding of God structures the whole of his political enterprise we must start at the very foundations of Hobbes's political system, showing how those foundations are inspired by his naturalism. The next section will discuss man's passions and how Hobbes's mechanistic-materialism affects his understanding of man's passions. Understanding man's passions, and the basis for these passions, is important insofar as man's passions structure his will, and because from his will the commonwealth is generated, understanding the passions is necessary to understanding why (for what reason) man willed that the commonwealth be constituted.

Section II: Man's Passions and Their Foundations

Hobbes in his verse biography lays out how the different parts of his tripartite philosophy interrelate:

To various Matter various Motion brings
Me, and the different Species of Things.
Man's inward Motions and his Thoughts to know,
The good of Government, and Justice too,
These were my Studies then, and in these three
Consists the whole Course of Philosophy:
Man, Body, Citizen, for these I do
Heap Matter up, designing three Books too.⁷⁰

Hobbes committed himself to the idea that nature was a subject fit for scientific exploration, and

⁷⁰ Hobbes, Thomas, *The Verse Life in The Elements of Law* (op. cit.), 248.

that all causation (occurring in nature) was reducible to matter in motion. The question is what role does Hobbes's mechanistic-materialism play in his politics, and further, because of the relationship between God and his mechanistic-materialism, how does God figure in Hobbes's politics. Hobbes's understanding of causation is the constituent cause of his politics ('To various Matter various Motion brings'), and Hobbes's natural theology not only explains, but provides structure and direction to his science of rights and obligations.⁷¹ However, in order to see how it structures and gives direction to his science of rights and obligations we must first understand Hobbes's subject as he exists in nature and how Hobbes's natural subject's passions are constructed.

Nature might be best understood within the context of Hobbes's thought by understanding what nature implies, that being necessity. Everything which occurs as a result of nature, occurs out of necessity: from what is willed by men to the earth's revolving, and from the molecular structure of water to the nebular birth of stars. This makes everything, including the appetites of men, viable objects of scientific study, being able to be analyzed and understood scientifically. Hobbes realized this and tailored his project accordingly. Referring to himself in the third-person, Hobbes said in *The Prose Life*, 'When he became aware of the variety of movement contained in the natural world, he first inquired as to the nature of these motions, to determine the ways in which they might effect the senses, the intellect, the imagination, together with the other natural properties'.⁷² The study of nature would inevitably yield not only elemental information about the universe, but about man, his actions, and the causes for his actions.

71 Noel Malcolm would be inclined to disagree, insofar as he believes (I think mistakenly) 'Hobbes's formal science of rights and obligations assumes the existence of a human nature which can be described by mechanistic science of causes; but it is not itself a product of that science', 'Hobbes's Science of Politics and his Theory of Science' in *Aspects of Hobbes* (op. cit.), 155.

72 Hobbes, Thomas, *The Prose Life* in *The Elements of Law* (op. cit.), 247.

Aversion and appetite could be understood in an intelligible scientific way.

Hobbes sees appetite and aversion⁷³ as being developed through experience and as signifying that from which one moves away or moves toward. Pleasure and delight, by Hobbes's understanding, 'seemeth to be, a corroboration of Vitall motion' while *molesta* and offense 'hind[er], and troubl[e] the motion vitall.'⁷⁴ Whether a person forms an aversion to, or an appetite for a thing is determined by the natural effect that thing has on that person's vital motion; whether it adds to, or detracts from that person compositionally. This idea is markedly similar to Spinoza's idea relating to the genesis of emotions: 'Pleasure is an emotion whereby the body's power of activity is increased or assisted. Pain, on the other hand, is an emotion whereby the body's power of activity is diminished or checked.'⁷⁵ The result of Hobbes and Spinoza's setting appetites and aversions in material terms is that it makes appetites and aversions necessary and pre-determined.

In 'Of Liberty and Necessity' Hobbes makes his necessitarian agenda clear: '*The last dictate of the judgment*, concerning the good or bad, that may follow on any action, is not properly the *whole causes*, but the last part of it, and yet may be said to produce the effect *necessarily*, in such manner as the last feather may be said to break a horse's back, when there were so many laid on before as there wanted but that one to do it.'⁷⁶ What Hobbes is describing is an account of human action whereby actions are to be understood in terms of the multifarious causes which give rise to them. Hobbes's words find their correlate in Spinoza's *Ethics*: '*In the mind there is no absolute, or free, will. The mind is determined to this or that volition by a*

73 Hobbes, *De Homine*, 45.

74 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 25.

75 Spinoza, Baruch, *Ethics in The Ethics, Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect, and Selected Letters* tr. Samuel Shirley ed. Seymour Feldman (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992), 177-178.

76 Hobbes, 'Of Liberty and Necessity', 247.

*cause, which is likewise determined by another cause, and this again by another, and so ad infinitum.*⁷⁷ Such causes give rise to material effects, and with regard to human action, elicit a particular physio-psychological response, thus making any idea of free will incoherent.

The drive to action is a response to matter in motion. All human action therefore is structured by, and is to be understood according to, nature (God's will), which consists of matter in motion. Despite the perception of free will, Hobbes thought man to be like a wooden top: 'A wooden top that is lashed by the boys, and runs about sometimes to one wall, sometimes to another, sometimes spinning, sometimes hitting men on the shins, if it were sensible of its own motion, would think it proceeded from its own will, unless it felt what lashed it.'⁷⁸ Hobbes's understanding of man's will is structured by his mechanistic-materialist world view. As a result, Hobbes's mechanistic-materialism seeps into every element of his politico-social theory, providing the framework upon which his political superstructure is built.

Often overlooked is the central role Hobbes's mechanistic-materialism has to play in man's pre-political psychology which is antecedent to man's political psychology. It is true that the information yielded by civil science, as opposed to natural science, is different in terms of its epistemological certainty. Man is capable of having absolute knowledge of the former (since the commonwealth is of his creating) while the latter can only be discovered inferentially.⁷⁹ To say, however, that Hobbes's civil science is not the product of his mechanistic-materialism is to neglect the fact that pre-political man and those rights and obligations which *do* pertain to him are explained by Hobbes's metaphysics.

77 Spinoza, *Ethics*, 95.

78 Hobbes, Thomas, 'The Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance, Clearly Stated and Debated' in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes* ed. William Molesworth, reprinted edition, Vol V (Germany: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1962), 55.

70 Hobbes, *De Homine*, 45.

Man's pre-political rights and obligations then form basis for his political rights and obligations which exist only after the generation of the commonwealth. In order to establish what these pre-political rights and obligations *are* though we must return to our discussion of Hobbes's natural theology. We will show, eventually, that not only by obeying and understanding nature man becomes closer to God, but that the concept of natural right, man's propensity to self-preservation, as well as the laws of nature, cannot be understood outside of Hobbes's metaphysics and natural theology.

Section III: The Naturalistic Foundations of Hobbes and Spinoza's Understanding of Natural Right and the Laws of Nature

One of the greatest objections which has leveled against those who wish to establish connections between Hobbes and Spinoza is given by Edwin Curley, objecting that in Hobbes infinite power is a term which can only be coupled with God, causing God to be the only 'beneficiary of the equation irresistible might with right.'⁸⁰ Rightly so, in *De cive*, Hobbes makes this point abundantly clear: 'in the natural state of men, *sure and irresistible power gives the right of ruling and commanding those who cannot resist*; so that the right to do anything whatsoever is an essential and direct attribute of omnipotence.'⁸¹ The division in thought here, which separates Hobbes from Spinoza, seems to be driven by the fact that Spinoza makes right identical with power.⁸²

Curley concluded that 'Hobbes does not so much change his position as he does vacillate

80 Curley, Edwin, 'The State of Nature and Its Law in Hobbes and Spinoza', *Philosophical Topics* vol. 19 no. 1 (1991), 100.

81 Hobbes, *De Cive*, 31.

82 Curley, 'The State of Nature and Its Law in Hobbes and Spinoza', 97.

on the issue discussed here: the existence of obligations in the state of nature and the relationship between right and power'.⁸³ The idea is that man cannot act *rightly* in all that he does in the state of nature. That is, man is still accountable to God, whose right extends from His power (meaning, men can still commit injustice, even in the state of nature). What Curley is pointing to here is presumed to be an irreconcilable difference between Spinoza and Hobbes's metaphysics/theology, especially when considering how those differences cash-out in terms of how each respectively conceives of natural right. For Spinoza natural right is never forfeited as a result of his metaphysical views, whereas Hobbes seems to say that one's natural right can be forfeited. We will spend the next few paragraphs trying to determine precisely what Hobbes and Spinoza each meant by God, man's relation to that deity, and how that relation affects man's natural right.

Hobbes defines God as irresistibly powerful out of necessity. God's power is infinite because it must be by definition. In the Appendix to the Latin *Leviathan* Hobbes explains that because matter was created *ex nihilo* God 'has his existence from his own power, not from any other thing; and therefore, that he also exists from eternity; and because there was nothing which gave God existence, there also will be nothing which will make him not exist'.⁸⁴ Because of what God *is*, that is, First Mover, by His own power he must exist, and because He exists from eternity, He must therefore *be* eternal or infinite. The quantity (this term is used loosely since God's power is beyond measure) of God's power derives from the fact that He created all out of nothing, His power must then necessarily be in-finite. God's power, however, delimits man's power, making God the only entity whose might always makes right. Therefore, there are quantitative limits to the natural right with which man can act in the state of nature. For Spinoza,

83 *ibid.*, 101.

84 Hobbes, 'Appendix', 500.

because of his extreme (nearly Parmenidean) monism there ultimately ceases to be any difference between God's power and man's.

The answer to the question 'with what right does man act in nature?' for Spinoza is tied up in his metaphysics: every person in nature acts (persists) according to nature, that is, by necessity and without limitation. In the *Theological-Political Treatise* Spinoza defines the supreme law of nature as 'that each thing endeavors to persist in its present being, as far as in it lies, taking account of no other thing but itself, it follows that each individual has the sovereign right to do this, that is (as I have said), to exist and to act as it is naturally determined.'⁸⁵ This thought is echoed in the *Ethics*: '*[e]ach thing, in so far as it is in itself, endeavors to persist in its own being.*'⁸⁶ Spinoza's conception of 'Nature' however should be looked at within the context of his metaphysics.

In his metaphysics we learn that 'Nature' is a term used interchangeably with 'God'. 'God' or 'Nature' constitutes an infinite substance of which everything existing is a mode: 'if there were any other substance but God, it would have to be explicated through some attribute of God, so there would exist two substances with the same attribute, which is absurd. So there can be no substance external to God'. Therefore, '*Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God.*'⁸⁷ God, an infinite substance, of which each of us is a mode, '*acts solely from the laws of his own nature, constrained by none.*'⁸⁸ The power with which God acts is infinite, and as a mode of God we therefore act, by nature, with the power of God. Each thing acting in accordance with the law of nature acts to persist in its being according to its own nature infinitely. Thus, however it persists it does so rightly as it does so by nature. This is why

85 Spinoza, TTP, 179.

86 Spinoza, *Ethics*, 108.

87 *ibid.*, 39-40.

88 *ibid.*, 44.

Spinoza draws no difference between 'fools, madmen, and the sane' and those 'endowed with reason' since '[w]hatever an individual thing does by the laws of its own nature, it does so with sovereign right'.⁸⁹

Therefore, apparently, what drives Spinoza and Hobbes apart is their conception of God, and the effect this conception has upon their understanding of natural right. Yet, in light of the discussion undertaken in the first section of this chapter we must ask if this difference is *real* or *apparent*, and come to the tentative conclusion that this difference between Hobbes and Spinoza is only apparent. In coming to this conclusion we now have the means not only to refute Curley, but to recast Hobbes's entire political enterprise.

Curley's objection receives its force from a passage taken from 'Of Liberty and Necessity', where Hobbes states,

*Power irresistible justifies all actions, really and properly, in whomsoever it be found; less power doe not, and because such power is in God only, he must needs be just in all actions, and we, that not comprehending his counsels, call him to the bar, commit injustice in it.*⁹⁰

There might be some tendency to misunderstand this passage, especially since in it Hobbes refers to concepts such as 'injustice' and what is 'just'. The tendency to anthropomorphize Hobbes's thought is more than a present one. Meaning, an interpretation which reads the above passage as dealing with the (formal) concepts of justice and injustice, as those concepts relate to humanity, is an easy one to fall into. We must however understand this passage in terms of Hobbes's necessitarianism.

In *Leviathan* while discussing the book of Job Hobbes indicates that the application of just or unjust lose their meaning when applied to God's will because of the power with which God acts, saying, 'God himselfe taketh up the matter, and having justified the Affliction by

89 Spinoza, TTP, 179.

90 Hobbes, 'Of Liberty and Necessity', 250.

arguments drawn from his Power'.⁹¹ Events following from God's will (a will which 'effecth all') cannot be set in moral terms inasmuch as they occur out of necessity. God's irresistible power is to be understood as physical power, that is, the power by which all physical eventualities are decided.

Problems arise only when we interpret what Hobbes says in 'Of Liberty and Necessity' as indicating that God's will and human action are separable events. Within (and technically without) the context of the state of nature any action taken by a person is to be understood as right insofar as that action coheres with God's will. When in the natural condition man cannot violate God's will inasmuch as every action undertaken by man in nature occurs *by* God's will. To say that man can commit injustice in nature is tantamount to saying God can violate His own will, which is a self-defeating statement. Man *will* act in such a way that he considers to be conducive to his preservation and in doing so he is acting by nature, which justifies the use of any means necessary to preserve himself.

Furthermore, C.B. Macpherson hypothesizes 'the motion of individual human beings could be reduced to the effects of a mechanical apparatus consisting of sense organs, nerves, muscles, imagination, memory, and reason...The apparatus was not, strictly speaking, self-moving, but it was always in motion because other things were impinging on it...it had, built into it, a desire to endeavor to maintain its motion.'⁹² This makes natural right, not a right in the juridical sense,⁹³ but a permanent feature of man's psychology, both political and pre-political. Natural right, as in Spinoza's theory, becomes an empirical fact, not a subject fit for political debate. Nonetheless, decisions based on the short term are not always conducive to long term

91 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 188.

92 Macpherson, C.B., Introduction to *Leviathan*, by Thomas Hobbes (London: Penguin, 1985), 28.

93 Georg Geissman disagrees in 'Spinoza--Beyond Hobbes and Rousseau', *Journal of the History of Ideas* vol. 51 no. 1 (1991), 47.

interests. That is to say, even though man acts *rightly* in whatever he does--acting according to nature like 'fish' that are 'determined by nature to swim, and the big ones to eat the smaller ones' -⁹⁴ this does not guarantee man's longevity. There is a difference between acting by necessity and acting in such a way which is in *harmony* with nature; in such a way which will guarantee man's *being*.

The utilization of reason makes one's preservation more probable. For Spinoza, reason 'demands nothing contrary to nature, it therefore demands that every man should love himself, should seek his own advantage (I mean his real advantage), should aim at whatever really leads a man towards greater perfection, and, to sum it all up, that each man, as far as in him lies, should endeavor to preserve his own being.'⁹⁵ For Hobbes, acting according to right reason entails acting in such a way which is consistent with the prudential knowledge gained from experience; that is, acting according to the laws of nature, which demand that we restrain ourselves from acting imprudently and instead act modestly and in moderation. Although in the following (rather lengthy) quote Gilles Deleuze's intention was to provide an explanation regarding the correspondence of good-bad and material effects in Spinoza, it seems to fit here as an explanation as to what Hobbes was doing with regard to his materialistic explanation of appetites and aversions:

Hence good and bad have a primary, objective meaning, but one that is relative and partial: that which agrees with our nature or does not agree with it. And consequently, good and bad have a secondary meaning, which is subjective and modal, qualifying two types, two modes of man's existence. That individual will be called *good* (or free, or rational, or strong) who strives, insofar as he is capable, to organize his encounters, to join with whatever agrees with his nature, to combine his relation with relations that are compatible with his, and thereby to increase his power...That individual will be called *bad*, or servile, or weak, or foolish, who lives haphazardly, who is content to undergo the effects of his encounters, but wails and accuses every time the effect undergone does not agree with him and reveals in his own impotence.⁹⁶

94 Spinoza, TTP, 179.

95 Spinoza, *Ethics*, 164.

96 Deleuze, Gilles, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (San Francisco: City Light Books, 1988), 22-23.

'Good' and 'Bad', are simultaneously objective and relative terms. They are objective insofar and they are used as a means of classification, indicating that which is either harmful or destructive or that which is beneficial to man's nature. Each thing, Spinoza (and Hobbes) believes is driven by '[t]he conatus with which each thing endeavors to persist in its own being'--and this is its nature, or 'the actual essence of the thing itself'.⁹⁷ The subjective usage of 'good' and 'bad' relates to the behavior of individual men, and whether those men do things that are either destructive or constructive as it concerns their nature. That is, whether a man engages in decision making that increases and does not diminish the likelihood of his having a future; whether he acts in a way which agrees with his nature--which is to persist in *being*.

We will soon see that the purpose of the state is not to rescue man from nature, but rather, to reorganize men in such a way which will align their passions and bring them into better harmony *with* nature; to bring them closer to the divine order, and more in tune with--borrowing for a moment a concept from the Stoics--*λόγος* (*logos*). The pre-political man does not forfeit his judgment-making capacity to the sovereign because he is by nature inclined to harm others. Rather, it is because others misunderstand nature and the consequences of their actions that man seeks solace in the commonwealth; he does so out of fear of others. The laws of nature, God's divine law, are meant to harmonize man with nature (for Spinoza these were the 'dictates of reason' or 'guidance of reason'),⁹⁸ allowing man to keep *moving*, postponing his material decomposition. By violating these laws man incurs natural punishments (i.e. eating nothing but unhealthy fatty foods drastically increases one's risk for heart disease, putting one at risk of heart attack).

⁹⁷ Spinoza, *Ethics*, 108.

⁹⁸ Cairns, Huntington, 'Spinoza's Theory of Law', 1242.

Hobbes's natural theology forms the foundation for his entire political enterprise. Hobbes and Spinoza's thought come closer together once we come to realize that for Hobbes knowledge of nature yields information about how to best preserve ourselves since we understand the causes which give rise to passions, and therefore discord and disorder. What is important to remember before we move on however is that the most rudimentary element of Hobbes's moral system, self-preservation, is an outgrowth of his mechanistic-materialism. The science of rights and obligations which follow from this element should not therefore be understood solely in terms of this element, but in terms of Hobbes's metaphysics.

The state must be understood as existing for the purpose of attuning man to nature; bringing him closer to God through the codification of the laws of nature; teaching him how he might best preserve himself by demonstrating, with mathematical precision, the causes of passions which give rise to noxious effects; and most of all, removing those harmful doctrines from the public discourse which only further remove man from nature, and the sometimes harsh realities of material existence.

Chapter II: Hobbes's Politics and the Republicans of the Early Dutch Enlightenment

The focus of Chapter I was nature, looking at how Hobbes's natural theology affected his understanding of natural right, the laws of nature, and the passions. What should be taken away from Chapter I is that Hobbes's natural theology is a foundational element of his political philosophy. This chapter will continue to build on this thought and will demonstrate that Hobbes's conception of sovereignty is informed by his understanding of the laws of nature, natural right, and man's passions, which are in turn informed by his understanding of nature. Consequently, we will begin to demonstrate that the distinction between nature and artifice dissolves when one looks more closely at what role Hobbes expected the sovereign to play in the commonwealth, and understanding this role involves looking at how the laws of nature affect the sovereign's decision making.

This chapter will show that alongside Hobbes 'principle of publicity'⁹⁹ (which will be discussed at greater length in Chapter III) the laws of nature form the legal context within which the sovereign acts. That is to say, the laws of nature, while they are to be considered mere precepts, contain within them the information necessary to maintaining the health and vibrancy of the commonwealth. The successful implementation of the laws of nature is key to ensuring that the commonwealth succeed. In turn, because the laws of nature are to be understood as the means by which man comes into harmony with nature, the purpose of the state is to put man in

⁹⁹Waldron, Jeremy, 'Hobbes and the Principle of Publicity', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* vol. 82 (2001): 447-474.

closer accord with nature.¹⁰⁰ Proving this conclusion will demonstrate that the sovereign is in fact not above the laws of nature and that those who view Hobbes as a crude absolutist, and then adduce this conclusion in demonstrating that Hobbes and Spinoza held opposing conceptions of sovereignty,¹⁰¹ are mistaken. It will be shown that Spinoza's and the brothers van den Hove's--who influenced the development of Spinoza's political theory—conception of sovereignty is extremely similar to Hobbes's conception of sovereignty. Like Spinoza, Hobbes believed that the sovereign's acting in such a way which is conducive to the health of the commonwealth not only ensures that longevity of the commonwealth, but the safety of the sovereign itself.

Section I: The Laws of Nature and Hobbes's Conception of Sovereignty

In the early modern period absolutism began to firmly take root, and there was a steady proliferation of literature which defended and promulgated the concept of absolute sovereignty. Contained within this literature was a subset of literature which very closely aligned itself with Machiavelli's and endorsed (albeit to different degrees) Machiavelli's concept of *ragion do stato* (reason of state). Putting it simply, reason of state theory believes it might be necessary (and if so, justified) for the sovereign to sin by perpetrating falsehoods, and by possibly committing more egregious acts--as Machiavelli says 'a prince who wants to keep his state, is often bound to do what is not good'¹⁰²--in order to ensure the survival of the commonwealth. While this way of thinking was prominent when Hobbes wrote (especially in the intellectual circles in which

100Harold J. Cook in 'Materialism and the Early Modern State' *Osiris* 2nd series vol. 17 Science and Civil Society (2002) explicitly disagrees with this interpretation, 46.

101Geismann, Georg, 'Spinoza--Beyond Hobbes and Rousseau', *Journal of the History of Ideas* vol. 52 no 1 (1991) 37; Prokhovnik, Raia, 'Spinoza's Conception of Sovereignty', *History of European Ideas* vol. 27 (2001), 295; McShea, Robert J., *The Political Philosophy of Spinoza* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 149; Feldman, Seymour, Introduction to *Theological-Political Treatise* by Baruch Spinoza (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998), xxxix.

102 Machiavelli, Niccolo, *The Prince* tr. and ed. Robert M. Adams (New York: Norton, 1992), 53.

Hobbes ran)¹⁰³ Hobbes failed to embrace this line of thought as well as the strain of absolutism it endorsed.

Noel Malcolm in his essay 'Hobbes's Theory of International Relations'¹⁰⁴ corrects those who have claimed Hobbes is a proto-realist. In doing so, Malcolm delivers a blow to those hardline interpretations which see Hobbes's political theory as being one which grants the sovereign the ability to act without recourse, of some kind, to the citizenry on whose behalf it is acting (arguing against seeing Hobbes as a proponent of political subjectivism, arbitrariness, or amorality).¹⁰⁵ Malcolm inches towards a position which begins to erode the power of the sovereign. However, Malcolm's argument is never taken to fruition. While he argues that we might be able to understand Hobbes as giving us a theory of politics which certainly splits with the *raison d'état* tradition, he fails to offer us a fully developed account of how the laws of nature and Hobbes's determinism affect and delimit the power of the sovereign. In addition to this, how these laws affect Hobbes's conception of sovereignty as well as his views on what form the sovereign is to take and how it should function.

Hobbes, throughout his three major political works (*The Elements of Law* (1640), *De cive* (1642), and *Leviathan* (1651)), gives us reason to believe that the laws of nature have significant bearing on how the power of the sovereign is situated. While it is true that a successful state must have 'a supreme authority issuing and enforcing commands to all subjects and receiving none; creating law but not itself subject to it',¹⁰⁶ Hobbes believes that '[t]he Law of Nature, and

103Malcolm, Noel, *Reason of State Theory, Propaganda, and the Thirty Years' War* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2007), 112-113.

104Malcolm, Noel, 'Hobbes's Theory of International Relations' in *Aspects of Hobbes* (op. cit.).

105ibid., 436.

106Peters, Richard, *Hobbes* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1956), 215.

the Civill Law, contain each other, and are of equall extent.'¹⁰⁷

The original contract from which the sovereign derives its power is made in the interest of securing peace, and the laws of nature are the means by which peace is secured. The reason why civil and natural laws are coequal relates to Hobbes's materialism: because the laws of nature cannot be enforced by their author (God), there must be an earthly representative who undertakes the responsibility of codifying, and systematically enforcing the divine law.¹⁰⁸ Once the laws of nature have been codified and have behind them the force of the sovereign they become civil law. The sovereign's moral compass is assumed to be directed by the laws of nature insofar as

the duty of the sovereign consisteth in the good government of the people; and although the acts of sovereign power be no injuries to the subjects who have consented to the same by their implicit wills, yet when they tend to the hurt of the people in general, they be breaches of the law of nature, and of the divine law: and consequently, the contrary acts are the duties of sovereigns, and required at their hands to the utmost of their endeavor, by God Almighty, under the pain of eternal death.¹⁰⁹

One could rejoin however that because the sovereign is held accountable only by God, its power is not in fact limited since the sovereign could freely breach the laws of nature, harm its citizenry, and accept the consequence that upon death and judgment he will spend all of eternity damned. Or even more powerfully, one could simply rejoin that for an atheist sovereign this poses no problem insofar as he does not fear eternal damnation. It could also be objected that because in the Christian commonwealth the sovereign is the conduit through which God's word and will is made known--the sovereign is God's representative--Hobbes creates a system in which the will of the sovereign is to be interpreted as the will of God. If this is true, then it would be contradictory to say that the will of the sovereign could ever transgress God's will.

Regarding the first rejoinder, we must concede in part that this is true. If the sovereign

¹⁰⁷Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 138.

¹⁰⁸ibid., 186.

¹⁰⁹Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, 172.

were to choose fire and brimstone then it would be free to act either in the interest or disinterest of those whom it is said to represent. Along the same line, if the sovereign were an atheist then there is no dilemma of which to speak. The sovereign would simply act without fear of eternal damnation, and without that psychological inhibitor, the sovereign would be free to act without limitation. But Hobbes intimates, in his discussion on natural punishments, that both of these sovereigns, by choosing to actively disobey or disregard God's law, are putting their lives in jeopardy. Hobbes determines,

Intemperance, is naturally punished with Diseases; Rashnesse, with Mischances; Injustice, with the Violence of Enemies; Pride, with Ruine; Cowardise, with Oppression; Negligent government of Princes, with Rebellion; and Rebellion, with Slaughter. For seeing Punishments are consequent to the breach of Lawes; Naturall Punishments must be naturally consequent to the breach of the Lawes of Nature; and therefore follow them as their naturall, not arbitrary effects.¹¹⁰

All are subject to the punishments which flow from violating the laws of nature, and in acting against the good of the people¹¹¹ the sovereign seems to be taking its life into its own hands. Even though in such a circumstance, if a rebellion were to arise the sovereign would have the right to quell it, history has shown us that a sovereign does not always have the power¹¹² or opportunity to do so.

The second objection questions whether the sovereign can *ever* be in violation of divine law insofar as the Christian sovereign is God's representative on earth, making it the sole interpreter of the laws of nature, thus making impossible for it to err in its interpretation of the laws of nature. Hobbes equivocates somewhat (but no more than usual) on this point.

¹¹⁰Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 193. Edwin Curley, in his edition of *Leviathan*, overlooks Hobbes's omission of examples of natural punishments from the Latin *Leviathan*; see: Hobbes, Thomas, *Leviathan sive DE MATERIA, FORMA, ET POTESTATE CIVIATIS ECCLESIASTICAE ET CIVILIS* in *Opera philosophica quae latine subscript omnia* ed. William Molesworth, reprinted edition (Germany: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1962), 263.

¹¹¹Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, 172.

¹¹²Hobbes, Thomas, *Behemoth or The Long Parliament* ed. Ferdinand Toennies (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 135 (hereafter referred to as *Behemoth*).

In *The Elements of Law* he espouses the position that what is 'good' (what is 'right' and 'wrong') can only be defined by the sovereign¹¹³ since, as he later notes in *De homine*, 'good is said to be relative to person, place, and time'.¹¹⁴ Any *truly* objective inquisition into what is 'good' is impossible because Hobbes approaches the concept of 'good' in the state of nature as a moral subjectivist.¹¹⁵ However, elsewhere, Hobbes indicates that the laws of nature are the standard against which what is 'good' is weighed.

The sovereign is entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the continuation of political society and its 'duty [is] to obey right reason in all things so far as they [the sovereign] can; right reason is the natural, moral and divine law',¹¹⁶ and 'the practice of *natural law* is necessary for the preservation of peace, and *security* is necessary for the practice of *natural law*'.¹¹⁷ Hobbes believes that even though everything the sovereign does, it does with right, that is, '*without inflicting a wrong on himself, he will not do so justly, that is, without violating natural laws and wronging God*'.¹¹⁸ The sovereign's duty, like the duty of his citizens, is the product of Hobbes's egotistically-motivated moral theory. However, unlike that of its citizens, the sovereign's preservation is dependent upon good governance and the justifiability of the laws it enacts. Whether those laws are justifiable depends on whether they tend towards the continued sustainment of the commonwealth and the interests of those who reside within it, or prove to be injurious to the commonwealth and its citizenry. Even though justice is a term defined and given meaning by the sovereign, the laws of nature seem to be a standalone system of morality, discovered through right reason, against which the sovereign's actions can be judged, not by

113Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, 181.

114Hobbes, *De Homine*, 47.

115Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, 44.

116Hobbes, *De Cive*, 143.

117*ibid.*, 70.

118*ibid.*, 83.

individuals qua citizens, but by nature.

Like the natural person, whose actions must be carefully thought out insofar as they determine the likelihood of his having a future, the sovereign, who has yet to leave nature, must be a careful and astute legislator if he wishes not to succumb to Charles I's fate, who was 'Murder'd by th' *English*, an Eternal Blot.'¹¹⁹ The laws of nature, while not having any express affect on the decision making of the sovereign, do bind the hands of the sovereign if the sovereign wishes to retain control of the commonwealth. It is true that God's reprisal for violating His law might not be felt until one has passed from this life to the next, but in considering Hobbes's eschatology we learn that Hell is a metaphor.

Hobbes understood Hell as being 'the same with no more dying'.¹²⁰ If the decision is made to violate the laws of nature, the consequence of such a decision could prove to be disastrous both for the commonwealth and the sovereign itself. Hobbes's resistance to a dualistic metaphysic forces him to interpret eternal damnation as physical death. Nature's judgment, its punishment, relates not to some supernatural fate, rather, it is a natural fate. Natural punishments are the natural (necessary) effects of actions taken in the material world.

The Stoics used the metaphor of '[a] cylinder is at rest' to demonstrate the idea that '[i]f it is set in motion it will move necessarily in a circular manner, in obedience to its given shape. But whether it is set in motion or not lies within the realm of possibility...man is determined by his given nature, but he is free to act in terms of it.'¹²¹ So too, the sovereign's scope of action is defined by nature. However, acting sheerly by nature does not guarantee one's preservation. Instead, one must act with foresight and the wisdom which accompanies knowledge of natural

¹¹⁹Hobbes, *The Verse Life*, 259.

¹²⁰Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 243.

¹²¹Colish, Marcia L., *The Stoic Tradition From Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages* vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 35.

causes.

While the sovereign's scope of action might theoretically be quite broad, pragmatically the sovereign's scope of action, and therefore its power, is delimited by the laws of nature. Absolute obedience can only be gained through the systematic implementation of the laws of nature, and while power is concentrated absolutely in the sovereign, that power is dependent upon the obedience of those under the command of the sovereign.¹²² Whatever form the sovereign takes is ultimately irrelevant insofar as what Hobbes values is the sovereign's function, and whether it is able to command the obedience of its subjects.

Hobbes only offers us empirically based practical advice about which form of sovereignty is best. He lands on monarchy because power is most highly centralized in a monarchy, allowing decision making to be fast tracked, thus, eliminating the infighting that comes with aristocracy and democracy.¹²³ We should not come to the conclusion that Hobbes was necessarily a monarchist based on this, however. Hobbes was a pragmatist whose conception of sovereignty does not judge based on form but on effectiveness.¹²⁴ As a result, Hobbes's conception of sovereignty has more to do with the successful systematization of the laws of nature and the creation of human law in harmony with nature than whatever particular form a sovereign might take (whether democracy, aristocracy, or monarchy). *One* of the ways to connect Hobbes to the republicans of the early Dutch Enlightenment lies in this pragmatic way of thinking.

The next section will look at Hobbes's conception of sovereignty and how it compares with the republicans of the early Dutch Enlightenment (focusing on the brothers van den Hove and Spinoza). We will show that while there are some differences, the political philosophy

¹²²Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 181.

¹²³Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, 139.

¹²⁴Tuck, 'Hobbes and Democracy', 187.

produced by the brothers van den Hove, and more importantly, Spinoza fit with our revised interpretation of Hobbes. This begging the question if possibly the brothers van den Hove and Spinoza inherited more than Hobbes's absolutism and pragmatism; possibly inheriting Hobbes's aspiration of creating a political theory whose object is perpetual peace.

Section II: Hobbes, the Brothers van den Hove, and Spinoza

Jonathan Israel's *Radical Enlightenment*¹²⁵ gives us an historical analysis of Spinoza's philosophical growth, convincingly arguing that Spinoza's philosophical journey initiated earlier than most believe and at these early stages was guided by the ex-Jesuit Latin Master Franciscus van den Eden.¹²⁶ However, the principles of Spinoza's political theory, while grounded in his metaphysics,¹²⁷ can be traced to a tradition of political thought which most likely owes the course of its evolution to the religious and political developments of the Netherlands around mid-sixteenth century.¹²⁸ That is to say, the political and religious landscape of what was to become United Provinces had almost a certain effect on the politico-religious discourse of which Spinoza was part.

The religious divisions in the Netherlands were deep and varied, from Catholic to Calvinist, from Remonstrant to counter-Remonstrant, as well there 'divisions within the

125While scholars of the Dutch Enlightenment are quick to praise Israel, Hobbes scholars have obvious issues with Israel's underplaying the influence Hobbes's ideas had on Continental thought; see: Patricia Springborg's 'The Enlightenment of Thomas Hobbes', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* vol. 12 no. 3 (2004): 513-534; and, Noel Malcolm's 'Hobbes and the European Republic of Letters' in *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002): 457-545, especially, Chapter VII and Chapter VIII.

126Israel, Jonathan, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 168-169.

127However, Tom Sorell in 'Spinoza's Unstable Politics of Freedom' in *Interpreting Spinoza* ed. Charlie Huenemann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), like Steven B. Smith 'What kind of Democrat was Spinoza?' (op. cit.), but along *somewhat* different lines, demonstrates that there is tension between the objective of Spinoza's politics and ethics, 165.

128Prokhovnik, Raia, *Spinoza and Republicanism* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), Chapter 1.

Reformed Church, and tolerationist impulses', and these divisions, especially between Catholic and Calvinist, have been blamed in part for the Dutch revolt. However, these religious divisions should not overshadow, nor be considered apart 'from the constitutional issues at stake.'¹²⁹ The constitutional issue relates to the status of the provinces as having relative latitudinal freedom in decision making while under the authority of the Spanish crown prior to the revolt. The question which interests us is how does Hobbes's work relate to the development of Dutch political thought around the time of the early Dutch Enlightenment? While the political and religious history of the Dutch provinces had a profound impact on the political theory being developed in the Netherlands around the mid to late seventeenth century, the wide dispersion of Hobbesian ideas as well as his work and what effect his ideas might have had on the development of Dutch political thought is what interests us. This interests us because it is thought that the development of Spinoza's political theory was influenced to a greater degree by other Dutch republicans (and his historical circumstances) than by Hobbes,¹³⁰ when in fact, it is possible that Hobbesian ideas were transmitted to Spinoza through the works of his Dutch contemporaries.

De cive (1642, with the 1647 edition appearing in the Netherlands), published in the then universal language of Latin, was widely disseminated and read across the Continent. In fact, '[e]ight editions of *De cive* were published in the country [the Netherlands] between 1647 and 1696' and 'at least four editions of *Leviathan* between 1651 and 1670' with the 'complete works in Latin in 1668'¹³¹ and the Latin *Leviathan* coming out in Amsterdam in 1668¹³² (there was also

¹²⁹ibid., 30.

¹³⁰Petry, M.J., 'Hobbes and the Early Dutch Spinozists' in *Spinoza's Political and Theological Thought* ed. C. de Deugd (Amsterdam: North Holland, 1984), 155.

¹³¹ibid., 155.

¹³²Malcolm, Noel, 'Hobbes and Spinoza', 41.

a Dutch edition of *Leviathan published in 1667*).¹³³ On the Continent, unlike in Britain where Hobbes's ideas were generally met with harsh criticism, Hobbes experienced greater success, hence the epitaph on his grave marker reads that he was 'well known for his learning at home and abroad'. The question is which parts of Hobbes's philosophy were transmitted to the political theorists of the early Dutch Enlightenment.

M.J. Petry commenting on the connection between Hobbes and the brothers Johan and Pieter van den Hove (aka Johan and Pieter de la Court), who were 'the most influential Dutch political writers of the 1650s and 1600s' and whose work incorporated 'reason of State, Tacitism, religious toleration, the defense of unitary civil power, republicanism, Cartesianism, and Hobbesianism',¹³⁴ astutely notes that Hobbes's 'policy was...to support whatever power was capable of preventing civil strife, and his Dutch interpreters, almost without exception, seem to have found little reason to disagree with him on this point.'¹³⁵ However, Petry sees the 'van den Hoves' as 'transform[ing] Hobbes' doctrine from a straightforward social contract theory based on psychology into a consideration of the state as an institution making possible the satisfaction of a great variety of human needs.'¹³⁶ The van den Hoves 'deviate from Hobbes on seeing the end of politics as laying beyond politics' believing 'an absolute sovereign power may have some merit in that it serves as a defence for intellectual freedom.'¹³⁷ Wijnand Mijnhardt agrees, '[f]or the de la Courts' the 'raison d'état' of 'sovereign power...is the promotion of an active and prosperous population' and the 'sovereign power is not located in a monarch but resides in the people', and only once the power has shifted to the people 'can rulers be forced to care for the

133Sprinborg, Patricia, 'The Enlightenment of Hobbes' (op. cit.), 528.

134Malcolm, 'Hobbes and Spinoza', 42.

135Petry, 'Hobbes and the Early Dutch Spinozists', 157.

136ibid., 156.

137ibid., 152.

public good in their own interest'.¹³⁸ Petry concludes though that 'within the broader historical perspective, it was in fact Hobbes' principle of the unquestionable sovereignty of the individual head of state which triumphed in both England and the Netherlands.'¹³⁹

That Hobbes's ideas could have been transmitted through van den Hoves to Spinoza is obvious. In actuality, Spinoza encountered Hobbes both first hand and then also most likely through the van den Hoves. Spinoza not only had read *De cive*, but he weighs his conception of natural right against Hobbes's in a letter to his friend Jarig Jelles. In addition to this, Christoffel Koenraad, who printed Spinoza's *Tractatus Philosophico-Politicus*, also printed the bear emblem edition of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, released in 1667 in Amsterdam.¹⁴⁰ But to what degree are Spinoza and Hobbes similar ideologically? This is the question many commentating on Spinoza and Hobbes's conception of sovereignty ask, and in answering this question have come to the determination that Spinoza was closer ideologically to the van den Hoves than Hobbes. Noting that while Spinoza often starts from Hobbesian premises,¹⁴¹ e.g. absolute sovereignty, his conclusions turn out to be un-Hobbesian, much like the van den Hoves'.

Spinoza, in a letter to his friend Jarig Jelles, attested to the fact that '[w]ith regards to Politics, the difference between Hobbes and me...consists in this, that I ever preserve the natural right intact so that the Supreme Power in a State has no more right over a subject than is proportionate to the power by which it is superior to the subject.'¹⁴² This is a difference which has been picked up on by virtually all of the secondary literature comparing Hobbes and

138Mijnhardt, Wijnand, 'The Construction of Silence: Religious and Political Radicalism in Dutch History' in *The Early Enlightenment in the Dutch Republic, 1650-1750* ed. Wiep van Bunge (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 252.

139Petry, 'Hobbes and the Early Dutch Spinozists', 157-158.

140*ibid.*, 155.

141Prokhovnik, 'Spinoza's Conception of Sovereignty', 300.

142Watkins, J.W.N., 'The Posthumous Career of Thomas Hobbes', *The Review of Politics* vol. 19 no. 3 (1957), 355.

Spinoza's conception of sovereignty.¹⁴³ Natural right, in Spinoza's system is not a juridical concept. Strauss stresses that within the context of Spinoza natural right should be understood as legitimizing all naturally occurring events, from man's passions to 'thunderstorms'.¹⁴⁴ Georg Geismann, producing work paralleling Strauss', makes this same point: that natural right in Hobbes's system is of juridical significance whereas Spinoza's conception of natural right is empirically based.¹⁴⁵

Spinoza makes natural right a constitutive element of man's ontology.¹⁴⁶ While a certain proportion of power can be forfeited to the sovereign, thereby giving the sovereign a certain amount of power, natural right cannot be. The juridical right with which the sovereign acts in Spinoza's system is contingent on its power, and its power is contingent on its ability to effectively govern. The sovereign derives its power from those who put it in power, therefore, 'the greater the number of subjects who are given cause by a commonwealth to join in conspiracy against it, the more must its power and right be diminished.'¹⁴⁷

While Spinoza, like Hobbes, does believe that when performing a cost-benefit analysis, obeying the state is almost always in one's benefit,¹⁴⁸ 'it is exceedingly rare for governments to issue quite unreasonable commands; in their own interest and to retain their rule, it especially behooves them to look to the public good and to conduct all affairs under the guidance of reason.'¹⁴⁹ Spinoza believed that the sovereign should be obeyed absolutely, and that 'everyone

143Strauss, Leo, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* (New York: Schocken, 1965), 239; Donagan, Alan, *Spinoza* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988), 178; Prokhovnik, 'Spinoza's Conception of Sovereignty', 294; Feldman, Seymour, 'Introduction' to *Theological-Political Treatise*, xli.

144Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, 178.

145Geismann, Georg, 'Spinoza--Beyond Hobbes and Rousseau', 48.

146Spinoza, *Ethics*, 108.

147Spinoza, *Tractatus Politicus* in *Benedict de Spinoza: The Political Works* ed. A.G. Wernham (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958), 293.

148ibid., 289.

149Spinoza, TTP, 184.

transfers all the power that he possesses to the community, which will therefore alone retain the sovereign natural right over everything.¹⁵⁰ However, at the same time he has the expectation that the sovereign will act in the benefit of those whom it is thought to represent. Otherwise, because Spinoza makes right identical with power, the sovereign stands at risk of being overthrown in a *coup d'état*.

Hobbes's sovereign has, like Spinoza's, the juridical right to rule over and guide the commonwealth. Hobbes, while believing that the power of the sovereign is not infinite,¹⁵¹ thinks that the juridical right with which the sovereign acts does not expire until the sovereign itself relinquishes that right.¹⁵² However, as it concerns the transference of natural right, what is transferred to the sovereign is man's capacity to make judgments--his right to act in a certain way. What is not transferred is man's desire to preserve himself, for this right, cannot be forfeited, and is elemental when considering man ontologically.

It has been said that Hobbes 'vacillates' on the issue of natural right insofar as upon entering the commonwealth man relinquishes his natural right completely, yet, if the state were to condemn that man to death he would be able to defend himself, and do so rightly by his natural right.¹⁵³ Man's natural right, his propensity to self-preservation, is an outgrowth of Hobbes's mechanistic-materialism, and cannot be forfeited. The only instance where man could justifiably violate the laws of the sovereign, would be if his life is in jeopardy. In such an instance, man does not have the juridical right to act, rather his actions can be the subject of no moral debate insofar as his actions are purely the consequence of *nature*, and therefore occur by

150*ibid.*, 183.

151Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 135.

152*ibid.*, 118.

153McShea, *The Political Philosophy of Spinoza*, 139-140. For an in-depth, if not slightly misguided, analysis of self-defense in Hobbes, see: Claire Finkelstein's 'A Puzzle About Hobbes on Self-Defense' *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 82 (2001): 332-361.

necessity. One passage from *Leviathan*, which demonstrates this thought, has seemingly gone overlooked¹⁵⁴ by most commentating on Hobbes's conception of natural right. Hobbes says there,

If a man by the terrour of present death, be compelled to doe a fact against the Law, he is totally Excused; because no Law can oblige a man to abandon his own preservation. And supposing such a Law were obligatory; yet a man would reason thus, *If I doe it not- I die presently; if I doe it, I die afterwards; therefore by doing it, there is time of life gained*; Nature therefore *compells* him to the fact.¹⁵⁵

We should not underplay differences between Hobbes and Spinoza when such differences present themselves. Spinoza's conception of sovereignty is incompatible with Hobbes's since Hobbes believed that even if a sovereign lacks power it still possess the *right* to act until that right has been formally forfeited. Although, *like* Spinoza, Hobbes seems to intimate that man's natural right is inalienable. Making things slightly complicated, this right is empirically based and is simply a *fact* and should not be mistaken for its juridical counterpart. Even though Hobbes and Spinoza converge over the issue of natural right, Spinoza's endorsement of democracy as the best form of governance seems drive them apart ideologically.

Spinoza considered democracy, like other Dutch republicans of his era, to be the best form of governance, believing democracy allows for the most freedom. Democracy enables such a condition "because they [men] are, as equals, most fully bound, by consent, as a part of the sovereign, they are most free."¹⁵⁶ However, Spinoza, in his *Tractatus Politicus*, seems to be just as open to monarchy and aristocracy as he is democracy in the *Theological-Political Treatise*.¹⁵⁷

154One notable exception is Charles D. Tarlton's 'To Avoyd the Present Stroke of Death: Despotical Dominion, Force, and Legitimacy in Hobbes's "Leviathan"', *Philosophy* vol. 74 no. 288 (Apr., 1999), 242-243; also, part IV of his article is worthy of attention.

155Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 157, emphasis added on 'compells'.

156Prokhovnik, *Spinoza and Republicanism*, 208.

157Spinoza, Baruch, *Tractatus Politicus*, Chapters VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, and XI. However, as George M. Gross points out, Spinoza still seems give preference to republicanism, 'Spinoza and the Federal Polity', *Publius* vol. 26 no. 1 (Winter 1996), 121-122.

Spinoza's position on what might be considered the best form of governance changes between his *Theological-Political Treatise* and the *Tractatus Politicus*. This change corresponds to the regime change that took place in the Netherlands in the early 1670s.

The republican regime headed by Johan de Witt was overthrown (de Witt and his brother killed) and William of Orange took his place in 1672. Spinoza as well as the brothers van den Hove, who supported de Witt's regime, responded to this change. Petry recalls that after the fall of de Witt's regime 'Spinoza set about revising that part of his political theory concerned with monarchy, and Peter van den Hove made certain that he settled down into a quiet and unobtrusive retirement'.¹⁵⁸

What matters for Spinoza is how effective a government is, however, for Spinoza, 'effective' is narrowly defined. In addition, regardless of his pragmatism, the form of governance which is most effective is defined as that which allows for the most freedom, which is democracy (however, it will be demonstrated at the conclusion of Chapter III that even this point fails to separate Spinoza's political philosophy from Hobbes's).

Spinoza shared the van den Hoves' desire that the end of politics lay beyond politics. The ultimate purpose of Spinoza's commonwealth is not security but freedom and individual development and perfection. The object of the commonwealth and its system of laws, according to Spinoza, is to facilitate reasoned and rational understanding and thought. Its 'purpose' is 'to avoid the follies of appetite and to keep men within the bounds of reason, as far as possible, so that they may live in peace and harmony'.¹⁵⁹ Put simply, the object of Spinoza's system is self-government. For Spinoza, 'The purpose of civil society is not simply safe, peaceful, and commodious living but the attainment of our rational nature, living under laws that we have

¹⁵⁸Petry, 'Hobbes and the Early Dutch Spinozists', 157.

¹⁵⁹Spinoza, TTP, 184.

made for ourselves.¹⁶⁰ Unlike Spinoza, the purpose of Hobbes's civil society *is* to ensure 'commodious' living.¹⁶¹ Yet, our above discussion of natural right in Hobbes as well as our discussion of the laws of nature and Hobbes's conception of sovereignty seems to imply that Hobbes was doing something substantially more than making the end of civil society 'safe, peaceful, and commodious living'.

Implied by the above discussion on natural right is the idea that the state's purpose is not to simply govern. Rather, the purpose of the state is to provide an environment most conducive to man's desire to preserve himself, and the only way to do this would be to provide all men with the means necessary to allow them to become in closer harmony with nature. Right reason gives the sovereign access to the laws of nature and therefore the foundations necessary for the creation of human law. Human law engenders peace, but because of the self-evidence of their foundations, can be understood, taught and demonstrated, just like those natural laws on which they are based. It is expected that those residing within the Hobbesian polity will not only be secure and peace-loving but enlightened and free--the products of Hobbes's mathematically based political education.

It is entirely possible that Spinoza and the van den Hoves could have extrapolated this thought from Hobbes's *De cive* (which was widely available in Amsterdam for public consumption), seeing in Hobbes's philosophy what others could not. In the 'Epistle dedicatory' to *De cive* Hobbes's words, seemingly referring to the object of his own project, find their compliment not in Machiavelli but in the writings of the Dutch republicans such as Spinoza and the van den Hoves:

For if the patters of human action were known with the same certainty as the relations of magnitude

160Smith, Steven B., 'What kind of Democrat was Spinoza?', 18.

161Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 63.

in figures, ambition and greed, whose power rests on the false opinions of the common people about right and wrong [jus et iniuria], would be disarmed, and the human race would enjoy such secure peace that (apart from conflicts over space as the population grew) it seems unlikely that it would ever have to fight again.¹⁶²

It is also possible that the Dutch republicans were simply influenced by the political and religious milieu in which they found themselves as well as the iconic republics of history. What will be made evident shortly though is that Hobbes's political philosophy not only shares the pragmatic dimension of the van den Hoves and Spinoza's thought, but the metapolitical object of their respective political theories, and ultimately, Spinoza's desire that men be self-governing.

¹⁶²Hobbes, *De Cive*, 5.

Chapter III: Hobbes's Utopia

What has yet to be discussed is how Hobbes planned on implementing his system. While Chapter I discusses pre-political man, his passions, and how he is affected by nature, and Chapter II looks at the duty of the sovereign, and how the sovereign's function is defined by the laws of nature and its purpose is to bring men into closer harmony with nature through the systematic codification of the laws of nature, this chapter will look at political man. More specifically, this chapter will highlight the importance of language in Hobbes, demonstrating that Hobbes believed that linguistic training is the means to implementing political change and is the avenue by which man could be made to understand nature. This chapter will finish by observing what a Hobbesian political system should look like, that is, what a political society, embracing Hobbes's political philosophy to the fullest extent, would look like if all of the various components of Hobbes's political philosophy were put into full effect. We will show that the object of the Hobbesian commonwealth is self-government, and demonstrate that Hobbes's political society is a utopia in which citizens, set free from irrational wants and desires, have absolute freedom.

Section I: Hobbes and Language

An interesting exchange took place between Hobbes and the poet and Royalist William Davenant regarding Davenant's heroic poem 'A discourse upon Gondibert' in 1650. Regarding Davenant's contention that the poetry might be enlisted to assist in 'taming this wilde Monster, the People',¹⁶³ Hobbes, while looking on poetry with admiration, responded with a familiar

¹⁶³Davenant, William, 'THE Author's Preface to his much honoured friend Mr. HOBBS' to *A Discourse upon Gondibert: An Heroick Poem* by William Davenant (Paris: Chez Matthieu Guillemot, 1650), *Early English Books Online*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/fulltext?SOURCE=var_spell.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=D0000013109156000

skepticism, saying,

I may also add the ambitious obscurity of expressing more then is perfectly conceived; or perfect conception in fewer words then it requires. Which Expressions, though they have had the honour to be called strong lines, are indeed no better then Riddles, and not onely to the Reader, but also (after a little time) to the Writer himself, dark and troublesome.¹⁶⁴

This linguistic concern, rooted in Hobbes's nominalism, lurks behind much of Hobbes's writings. Truth, in Hobbes's system, relates to the correct ordering of names, that is, truth is the result of propositions put into syllogistic form producing conclusions. Those propositions dependent upon names, and those names, because of Hobbes's nominalism, are connected to that which they denote: 'A NAME or APPELLATION therefore is the voice of a man, arbitrarily imposed, for a mark to bring to his mind some conception concerning the thing on which it is imposed.'¹⁶⁵ What names refer to relates to the 'causal interaction between the material characteristics of things (ultimately matter in motion), and our own material being (including the materialist version of what it is for us to notice aspects).'¹⁶⁶

Language is the means to understanding,¹⁶⁷ and therefore, the *misapprehension* of language, caused, for example, by equivocation¹⁶⁸ or the use of contradictory terms (such as incorporeal substance), could cause one to grossly misunderstand the material world, possibly leading one to make serious misjudgments about what is right and true. Furthermore, the

0&WARN=N&SIZE=147&FILE=../session/1220823895_29476&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&DISPLAY=AUTHOR (Accessed November 1, 2007), 77.

164Hobbes, Thomas, 'THE ANSVVER OF Mr. HOBBS TO Sr. WILLIAM D'AVENANT'S PREFACE before GONDIBERT' in *A Discourse upon Gondibert: An Heroick Poem* by William Davenant (Paris: Chez Matthieu Guillemot, 1650), *Early English Books Online*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/fulltext?SOURCE=var_spell.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=D0000013109156000&WARN=N&SIZE=147&FILE=../session/1220823895_29476&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&DISPLAY=AUTHOR (Accessed November 1, 2007), 138-138.

165Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, 35.

166Soles, Deborah Hansen, *Strong Wits and Spider Webs: A Study in Hobbes's Philosophy of Language* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1996), 101.

167Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, 37.

168In the early modern linguistic context 'equivocation' relates to the use of a word in more than one sense.

'artificial body of the commonwealth' is a 'rendered bod[y] by the artifice of linguistic truth--that is, by a truth that is defined solely as the ordering of names'.¹⁶⁹ Likewise, the dissolution of that body could be caused by the perpetuation of untruths founded on faulty reason or the misapprehension, or incorrect ordering of names. Behind civil war, untruth seems to have been Hobbes's greatest fear. However, this fear may have been even greater than Hobbes's fear of civil war insofar as, in the case of the English civil war, it was, according to Hobbes, not only the ecclesiastics but the schoolmen who helped to subvert the *ancien régime* through 'the trick of imposing what they list upon their readers, and declining the force of true reason by verbal forks; I mean, distinctions that signify nothing, but serve only to astonish the multitude of ignorant men.'¹⁷⁰

Unifying all people under one lexicon is a crucial role of the sovereign insofar as it is through the definition of words (such as 'justice' and 'injustice') that its power will be consolidated and made absolute. These words combine to form propositions, and propositions provide the foundation for truth—truth, it was expected, that could be accepted universally. Hobbes's politics above all depended on the truth of science and mathematics and the self-evidence and indubitability of precepts derived from science and mathematics. In *Behemoth* it is clear that the multitude was taken advantage of because of their ignorance, because they did not *know* what was right and true, that is, they had not been instructed in the proper usage and meaning of words. Hobbes had the expectation that his mathematically based politics could cut through the fog laid down by the schoolmen and ecclesiastics which was used to disorient the multitude and obscure truth. Hobbes did not wish however to indoctrinate, his wish was that the

¹⁶⁹Feldman, Karen S., *Binding Words: Conscience and Rhetoric in Hobbes, Hegel, and Heidegger* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2006), 44.

¹⁷⁰Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 41.

whole of the multitude might be exposed to truth.

Davenant, finding inspiration in Hobbes's psychology, wrote *A Proposition for Advancement of Moralities* and in doing so proposed a 'training program' (of sorts) that could be used for 'mobilizing the passions' in such a way which is peace-engendering and *could be* 'extend[ed] to the engendering of false consciousness at the sovereign's command. Pleasant diversions might, for instance persuade people that war is peace', 'manipulating the senses and thus programming the passions of the common people'.¹⁷¹ Unlike Davenant, what Hobbes proposed cannot be reduced to manipulation.

David Wootton incorrectly concludes that Hobbes assumes 'that most people are incapable of processing information or making up their own minds' and that Hobbes's politics is one of 'censorship and brainwashing'.¹⁷² While Hobbes's *Leviathan*, was, at 8 shillings 6 pence,¹⁷³ not intended for consumption by common people, it *was* written in English and in a style easily understandable, appealing to a broader (yet still more or less affluent) audience. Bishop John Bramhall berated Hobbes for the style in which Hobbes wrote, claiming that while *he* 'retain[s] the proper terms of the Schools; Mr. Hobbes flies to the common conceptions of the vulgar'.¹⁷⁴

In response to Wootton's interpretation, Hobbes might liken the function of the sovereign to that of the Fisher of Men, Christ: 'winning men to obedience, not by Coercion, and Punishing; but by Perswasion: and therefore he said not to his Apostles, hee would make them so many

171 Jacob, James R. and Timothy Raylor, 'Opera and Obedience: Thomas Hobbes and *A Proposition for Advancement of Moralities* by Sir William Davenant', *The Seventeenth Century* vol. 6 no. 2 (1991), 225.

172 Wootton, 'Thomas Hobbes's Machiavellian Moments', 242.

173 Martinich, A.P., *Hobbes: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 213.

174 Bramhall, John, 'The Works of the Most Revered Father in God, John Bramhall, D.D., Sometime Lord Archbishop of Armagh, Primate and Metropolitan of all Ireland. With a Life of the Author, and a Collection of his Letters' vol. IV (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1842), 209.

Nimrods, Hunters of men; but Fishers of men'.¹⁷⁵ We should not take this comparison too far though, insofar as Hobbes does believe that obedience to the sovereign is generated through use of the 'publique Sword'.¹⁷⁶ While we cannot ignore that Hobbes believed '[t]he making...of right belong to him that hath the power of the sword, by which men are compelled to observe them',¹⁷⁷ he also makes it clear that civil 'Law can never be against Reason'.¹⁷⁸ In the paragraphs following this quotation Hobbes makes clear that when he is talking about 'Reason' he is referring to the reason of the sovereign. We should not however be misled into believing that the sovereign's reasoning cannot be affirmed by those for whom the sovereign is representative. In fact, it is essential that the sovereign's reasoning be not only valid, but cogent. Hobbes's principle of publicity demands that not just 'the Letter, but the Intendment, or Meaning' of a law must be disclosed publicly by the sovereign.

Hobbes believed that law backed by sound reason could be delivered, like the precepts of his own political philosophy, without the aid of 'Similitudes, Metaphors, Examples, and other tooles of Oratory' used only to arouse 'the common Passions',¹⁷⁹ appealing to reason only.

Hobbes believed, as Jeremy Waldron points out, that

without the discipline of reason, political ideology is tremendously insecure; and the discipline of reason is incapable of mitigating this insecurity except as logic, i.e. except in a way that is firmly oriented to the pursuit and preservation of truth...Hobbes thought it certain that lies (of the sort that were currently being taught) would not conduce to stability. And so, he maintained the prudent sovereign had no choice but to experiment with the teaching of the truth.¹⁸⁰

What Waldron says requires some clarification though.

Insomuch as Hobbes was a conventionalist he saw truth as the product of agreement, and

175Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 270.

176*ibid.*, 89.

177Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, 113.

178Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 139.

179*ibid.*, 132.

180Waldron, 'Hobbes and the Principle of Publicity', 459.

this agreement concerns establishment of linguistic norms and rules, and more importantly, semantic meaning. Hobbes, like Bacon, sought to reacquaint knowledge and reason. Bacon believed that one of the 'villains' who 'lurked behind the overall deficiency of knowledge' was Aristotle, whose 'system of logic hardly promoted civics' and whose 'propositions and syllogisms resulted in divorcing reason from knowledge.'¹⁸¹ The correct ordering of names, because of Hobbes's nominalism, corresponds to, and produces, real knowledge concerning existence and the material world. Truth, in Hobbes's system, is neither transcendent (as it is for Plato) nor transcendental (as it is for Kant), and this is an important fact to grasp in understanding why and how Hobbes's political system functions. However, truth *could* be personal inasmuch as Hobbes draws a distinction between public and private reason in a bid to preserve the idea of liberty of conscience.

There have been some who have argued that Hobbes projects a reason of state mentality, and because of which his political system is unstable. Their point of contention is that because Hobbes distinguishes between public and private reason,¹⁸² the consequence of his defense of liberty of conscience,¹⁸³ his commonwealth is necessarily unstable inasmuch as public and private reason are incongruent. As Carl Schmitt points out, 'Public power and force may be ever so completely and emphatically recognized and ever so loyally respected, but only as a public and only an external power, it is hollow and already dead from within.'¹⁸⁴ According to this logic, the Hobbesian citizen must partake in dissimulation, masking their true beliefs and

181McCrea, Adriana, *Constant Minds: Political Virtue and the Lipsian Paradigm in England, 1584-1650* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 87.

182Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 237-238.

183ibid., 300; 378; 384; 385.

184Schmitt, Carl, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes: Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol* tr. George Schwab and Erna Hilfstein (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), 61.

feelings through a public guise¹⁸⁵ intended to reflect the ethos of the public consciousness and not their own. In actuality however, Hobbes's differentiation between public and private reason is not a source of instability in the political system he creates. The truth is quite the opposite; the political system Hobbes seems to outline through much of his work is incredibly stable.

Unlike theorists¹⁸⁶ who have attempted to formulate political conceptions of justice which make no statement of *truth*, instead seeing political conceptions of justice as something to which persons agree, thus, opening up the possibility for *disagreement*, political justice, for Hobbes, is firmly grounded in truth. Truth for Hobbes is not metaphysical.¹⁸⁷ Truth is supported evidentially: 'Evidence is to truth, as sap is to the tree, which so far as it creepeth along with the body and branches keepeth them alive; when it forsaketh them, they die,' and importantly, '[f]or this evidence, which is meaning with our words, is the life of truth; without it truth is nothing worth.'¹⁸⁸ What Hobbes is describing is a scientific conception of truth, he defines truth earlier more generally as 'a true proposition', true propositions are grouped to form syllogisms, and syllogisms form the foundation for right reason or ratiocination.¹⁸⁹

Truth consists in deductive statements which can be verified by experience. Or put differently, truth is simply the right ordering of names producing statements which can be supported by experience. Statements of truth are not a problem for Hobbes and the self-evidence of these truths is what makes them true. Samuel Sorbiere, in a letter to Hobbes, commented 'no seeker after truth, and no one who has learned from his own experience, will be ale to doubt that

185Frost, Samantha, 'Faking It: Hobbes's Thinking Bodies and the Ethics of Dissimulation' *Political Theory* vol. 29 no. 1 (2001): 30-57; Replogle, Ron, 'Personality and Society in Hobbes's "Leviathan"', *Polity* vol. 19 no. 4 (1987), 570-594.

186See John Rawls' *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), especially, 140, 144.

187Hobbes *does* say in a letter to Samuel Sorbiere dated 10 February 1657, 'The kingdom of truth is not of this world, but the next. For truth will win at last,' *The Correspondence* vol. I, 448.

188Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, 41.

189*ibid.*, 38.

what you have asserted about the state of nature and that of dominion is absolutely certain and proven.¹⁹⁰ Civil law, coequal with natural law, which is discovered through right reason, encompasses right reason and is grounded firmly in truth. Hobbes solves the public-private problem by proposing that the precepts upon which civil law is based be self-evidently true. This the reason for which it is imperative that the sovereign not only disclose what the law *is* but its reasoning and intention behind making it.

Jon Parkin developed an incredibly helpful analogy, which he uses to explain how Hobbes's materialism and nominalism work together in discovering self-knowledge. This analogy is useful here as it helps to explain how it is that, according to Hobbes's thinking, 'there is no way whatever that an autonomous self could be isolated and secured inviolably against the intrusions of the outside world.' Parkin explains:

Hobbes's nominalism and his materialism are put to work together, and their cutting effect, like that of a pair of scissors, derives from their mutual interaction. Everything is body, and the names we give to bodies tell us only how we think of them; which opens the possibility that we could learn to think differently about them. Together, Hobbes's materialism and his nominalism cut through a whole range of putatively authoritative claims made about the self by his predecessors. But Hobbes's aim is positive as well as negative. This destructive work is accompanied by a positive explanation of the kind of practical self-knowledge that men are capable of under these conditions.¹⁹¹

Political education in Hobbes's system is not only highly effective, it is absolutely effective (bar children and fools). Hobbes's materialism and nominalism make it possible for there to be statements of absolute truth, statements beyond debate or doubt. Effectively, Hobbes dissolves the distinction between public and private reason as a result of the indubitable nature of civil law.

Private reason becomes public reason once a citizen accepts the foundations and the reasons for which a law is made, and a citizen's acceptance of such is unquestionable if indeed that law conforms to what is universally discoverable through right reason. The idea of civic

190Sorbiere, Samuel, '31 March 1660, Samuel Sorbiere to Hobbes, from Paris' in *The Correspondence* vol. II, 517.

191Parkin, 'Thomas Hobbes and the Problem of Self-Censorship' (op. cit.), 17.

education in Hobbes can be by no means reduced to 'a coercive program of mind control, at least not under its formal description as a system of education in evident truths consonant with basic human interests by means of reasoned argument exposing their true grounds'.¹⁹²

Section II: Civic Education and Hobbes

Political education is an incredibly important facet of Hobbes's project, and this section will ask of what does the Hobbesian syllabus consist?

As mentioned earlier, Hobbes believed at fault for the civil war were those who purveyed untruth and disseminated opinions which, in the end, were at fault for the collapse of the monarchy in Britain. Hobbes believed '[t]he *Universities*' were to Britain leading up to the collapse of the monarch 'as the wooden horse was to the Trojans'.¹⁹³ Although the common person was not university-educated, they received instruction on what their duty to the state consisted of by those who were educated, those educated persons being priests. From the 'pulpit' the 'multitude...learned their disobedience'.¹⁹⁴

The collapse of the monarchy could be attributed to the lack of sound instruction concerning the 'rules of *just* and *unjust*' which are derived from 'principles evident to the meanest capacity' yet the rules were inadequately demonstrated.¹⁹⁵ The dissolution of the state was caused by ill-defined words. Understandably, one of Hobbes's main agenda items was to reform Britain's educational apparatus, and besides giving a laundry list of duties he thought it necessary for the sovereign to fulfill, Hobbes provided a science of politics which could be taught and accepted without reservation. Like Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy*, Hobbes intended

192Lloyd, S.A., 'Coercion, Ideology, and Education in *Leviathan*' (op. cit.), 59.

193Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 40.

194ibid., 39-40.

195ibid., 39.

Leviathan to be a textbook. Through *Leviathan* Hobbes corrected what he saw as one of the main flaws in Aristotelian ethics, that '[t]heir doctrines have caused a great deal of dispute concerning virtue and vice' but provide 'no knowledge of what they are, nor any method of attaining virtue or avoiding vice.'¹⁹⁶ The object of the Hobbesian educational apparatus is to provide scientifically based knowledge of virtue and vice, and Hobbes's philosophy itself provides the method wherewith knowledge of virtue and vice is attained.

Mary Dietz correctly observes that 'the civil law, the rights of the sovereign, and the commonwealth itself are secured only when the people have a sense of duty that springs "naturally" from the cultivation of certain qualities' and gives the example of 'keeping the faith.'¹⁹⁷ Dietz spends a large part of her discussion of the idea of civic virtue in Hobbes on the laws of nature, which give those 'qualities' of which are necessary if the commonwealth is to be secured and function properly. However, she observes that '[u]nlike the schoolmen and Christian humanists, Hobbes was not inclined to articulate a whole panoply of moral virtues in his account of what obliges a person'.¹⁹⁸

What Hobbes provides in the laws of nature are the most basic foundations necessary for the preservation of peace in the commonwealth, and it is important to recognize that while the citizens must play their part in working to sustain the commonwealth, the sovereign must play its part as well. The Hobbesian educational system is directed towards this end: the systematic inculcation of men, fostering within them a peaceful disposition, instructing them in the virtues necessary for the sustainment of peace and in civil law. Hobbes's educational system does much more than this though.

¹⁹⁶ibid., 44.

¹⁹⁷Dietz, Mary G., 'Hobbes's Subject as Citizen' (op. cit.), 104.

¹⁹⁸ibid., 103.

Deleuze in his celebrated book on Spinoza makes a key distinction between *morality* and *knowledge*. Deleuze asserts that the difference 'between knowledge and morality, is between the relation of command and obedience and the relation of the known and knowledge.'¹⁹⁹ The question is, which does Hobbes seek to achieve? Is his educational system merely set on instructing citizens of their duties, or does it look to instead equip them with knowledge, furnishing them with the 'immanent power that determines the qualitative difference of existence (good-bad)'?²⁰⁰

Hobbes wishes, through political education, to do more than provide men with a particular mindset. Looking to the beginnings of his philosophy he wished to alter completely their passions. Hobbes's wish was not to *restrain* some passions while allowing others to flourish, the object of Hobbes's entire political system is to make man's 'constitution [the commonwealth]...everlasting,'²⁰¹ and to do so it is necessary to alter men's passions altogether. Once the cogs of the Hobbesian political machine are in full and simultaneous movement, the machine begins to churn out Hobbesian citizens which are not only instructed in virtue and vice, but agree with and affirm civil law, realizing that in obeying civil law absolutely they are maximizing their potential for living. Still though, does this machine churn out a morally aware citizenry, or a *knowledgeable* citizenry? And how does Hobbes believe the passions of men can be altered? To answer these questions we must return to what was discussed in Chapter I and Chapter II.

¹⁹⁹Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 24.

²⁰⁰ibid., 25.

²⁰¹Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 176.

Section III: Bringing Chapters I & II into Focus

In Chapter I we discussed seeing God in Hobbes's philosophy as nature, and as being the force by which all physical eventualities are decided. We also began to set up the proposition that an understanding of nature (matter in motion) yields information not only about the physical world around us, but ourselves, our composition, and our passions. We came to the determination that in acting in harmony with nature we would stand the best chance of preserving ourself, and that we discover nature through right reason and ratiocination. Furthermore, based on these conclusions we discovered how truly close Hobbes and Spinoza are, both in how they reduce God to nature, in how they define the passions, and how they view and use reason.

The center of focus of Chapter II was the concept of sovereignty in Spinoza and Hobbes. With regard to Hobbes, we showed that Hobbes does not expect his sovereign to be a Nero, some of whose deeds were not 'the essence of *Monarchy*',²⁰² but itself enlightened with an in depth understanding of 'naturall justice'.²⁰³ While Hobbes does believe that power should be centralized, he cares not how it is centralized, that is, whether the commonwealth is one where power his held by one person, the few, or the many. What Hobbes cares for is the effectiveness of the sovereign's government. This pragmatism can be seen in early Dutch Enlightenment political theory.

However, what ostensibly separated Hobbes from Spinoza with regard to sovereignty was how each conceived of natural right as well as the ends of the commonwealth. We showed that natural right is not something which drives Spinoza and Hobbes apart. Instead, we demonstrated that it is something that brings them closer together, *even if* ironing out Hobbes's conception of natural right in order to prove this proved to be awfully complicated (insofar as the term 'natural

202Hobbes, *De Cive*, 120.

203Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 194.

right' can mean different things depending on the context in which it is used). In addition to this, we concluded that Hobbes and Spinoza have similar ideas about what the ends of the commonwealth should be. This conclusion is based on the function of the sovereign, which is to systematically codify the laws of nature, using them as the basis for civil law, and form an environment most conducive to man's continued preservation.

The conclusions drawn in Chapter I and Chapter II fit together to form one coherent thought. The focus of Chapter I, which was nature, fits with the focus of Chapter II, which was artifice. The topic of Chapter I was pre-political man and his relationship to nature, while the topic of Chapter II the sovereign, and now in Chapter III, political man. It has long been thought that between nature and artifice in Hobbes there exists an infinite void, and this the reason why his political philosophy cannot be defined along Aristotelian lines.²⁰⁴ However, this thought can now be shown to be incorrect.

The laws of nature are God's law, and as such are intended to put us into harmony with nature--God's will. The fear of what others might do in the state of nature keeps man from acting by the laws of nature while in nature. Hobbes says in the state of nature man can 'practis[e] the equality of nature, and allows others everything which he allows himself', however, there are also those who 'wan[t] everything allowed'.²⁰⁵ Man then leaves nature and generates the commonwealth, abiding by law securely fastened to the laws of nature whose object is the preservation of man, allowing for him to live out his nature. The purpose of the commonwealth

204Arnhart, Larry, 'The Darwinian Biology of Aristotle's Political Animals', *American Journal of Political Science* vol. 38 no. 2 (May 1994), 464-465. The only other person who makes this argument and connects it to Hobbes's stoicism is Jamie C. Kassler in his exceptional essay 'The Paradox of Power: Hobbes and Stoic Naturalism' in *The Uses of Antiquity: The Scientific Revolution and the Classical Tradition* ed. Stephen Gaukroger, Australasian studies in history and science vol. 10 (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991): 53-78; however, he only adduces as support Hobbes's treatment of the passions, the purpose of reason and the laws of nature, as well as his determinism, and therefore fails to sufficiently demonstrate how Hobbes's entire project is directed towards this one end .

205Hobbes, *De Cive*, 26.

is to harmonize man with necessity, and if this proposition is true, then the distinction between nature and artifice in Hobbes falls away.

The commonwealth was generated, and the sovereign erected, for the purpose of uniting men under the common goal of being able live in accord without the suspense of future harm. The educational apparatus Hobbes constructs not only instructs men about virtue and vice, but equips them with right reason, thereby providing them with the tools necessary in deriving the laws of nature and the means to unraveling nature, the divine order, allowing for man to act in such a way which is in agreement with necessity. Restating the questions, does the Hobbesian machine churn out a morally aware citizenry, or *knowledgeable* citizenry? And furthermore, through what means can the passions of men be altered?

Section IV: Reason, Man, and the State

This very last section will show that Hobbes and Spinoza each create a political system in which reason plays a central role, enabling men live freely in a state of self-government. The Hobbesian citizen, through civic education, is made rational and equipped with the reasoning power whereby he able to make decisions informed by right reason and a rational understanding of nature. In essence, Hobbes's citizen, through reason, achieves true and absolute freedom.

Hobbes, in 'Of Liberty and Necessity', uses the image of a river to explain liberty:

As for example, the water is said to descend *freely*, or to have *liberty* to descend by the channel of the river, because there is no impediment that way, but not across, because the banks are impediments. And though the water cannot ascend, yet men never say it wants the *liberty* to ascend, but the *faculty* or *power*, because the impediment is in the nature of the water, and intrinsic.²⁰⁶

The object of Hobbes's educational system is to endow man with *knowledge* of nature, and the means to such knowledge, right or correct reason, effectively instructing him in the correct

209Hobbes, 'Of Liberty and Necessity', 274.

interpretation of nature. Suddenly, man undergoes a drastic change. Through embracing right reason he is no longer combative, he understands the passions, understanding how appetites and aversions form, and bases all decision making on that reason with which he is now equipped.

Like the river, man travels in channels, not extending or moving beyond the banks which restrict his movements. There exist no impediments in his way, and though, unlike the water, he has the power ascend and move beyond the banks, he does not because the impediments are a constitutive part of his thought, that is to say, the impediments help to shape and form his will, causing him to move in one way or another. What is being described here is the concept of *absolute* freedom in Hobbes, or rather, Hobbes's rationalistic conception of liberty.

Hobbes curiously defines liberty as freedom from external impediment. Hobbes's conception of liberty is a materialist conception: that one has physical freedom if one is not physically restrained. What this paper suggests is that for the Hobbesian citizen there exists no external impediment which can limit his liberty (except for death) because buried within Hobbes there exists a second complimentary conception of liberty, which is best described as being a rationalistic conception of liberty.

This conception of liberty is necessary if Hobbes believes that what he has given us is necessary for a peaceful commonwealth 'everlasting'. By enshrining the laws of nature in civil law, civil law preserves the self-evident nature of the laws of nature, thus, making them incontestable. Additionally, by instructing its citizenry in linguistic usage and the significance of words, the Hobbesian educational system both shows its citizens that civil laws are right and true, but more importantly, instructs its citizens in how to use and understand the public lexicon. In doing so, it puts its citizens in the surprising position of acting independently of the sovereign whose role, among others (its other roles dependent on this one), is to define words and their

usages.²⁰⁷ Once instruction has taken place, and Hobbes's thinking bodies are no longer colliding with perilous effect, any need for the sovereign is eliminated and the Hobbesian commonwealth becomes a self-sustaining society.

In this very last way, Hobbes and Spinoza share the same goal. They wish to establish a society whose residents embrace reason and act in such a way conducive to their needs and the needs of others, all without the enforcement of a moral system by an entity whose power is absolute. Hobbes and Spinoza share a common view with regard to the ends of the commonwealth. While fear might be necessary at times to bring about obedience, and punishment equally necessitated for the same purpose, once the *ends* for which Hobbes and Spinoza's commonwealth was founded are fulfilled, and all the components of their individual philosophies begin to work together, fear and punishment become anachronistic concepts. If considered as isolated, enclosed political systems, Spinoza and Hobbes's respective commonwealths turn out not to be political societies cast in shadow, but utopias.

²⁰⁷Cook, 'Body and Passions: Materialism and the Early Modern State', 31.

Conclusion: Hobbes, Spinoza, and Stoicism

The purpose of this conclusion is to consider the conclusions drawn by this dissertation. We will consider how those components of Hobbes and Spinoza which led to the conclusions drawn by this paper were set in motion by a Stoically-based logic. We will begin with a quick overview of Stoicism, and from there, we will then discuss how Hobbes and Spinoza's philosophies embrace certain Stoic ideas which give their philosophies their direction.

At a very basic level, Stoicism might be best understood as one's harmonizing of oneself with, or acting according to *λόγος* (*logos*)--*λόγος* being understood as 'the eternal meaningful order that lay beneath the appearance of things'.²⁰⁸ The question asked by Stoic philosophers is what depends on us? That is, what are those things over which we express some control, and what are those things over which we have no control? Epictetus, for example, was 'concerned to identify the things (activities, behaviour) that in the course of one's life can in no circumstances be prevented or spoiled by external factors, including other people's interference. It is the question of someone who plans their future life and actions and wants to know which factors of their future life can be relied on with certainty.'²⁰⁹

Stoicism (used as a broad term) sought to articulate the scope of human action, telling us what is in our power and what is not. For Stoicism, evil stems from human vice of which 'springs from the passions--pleasure, pain, fear, and desire', all of which 'divert man away from the good. In order to avoid evil it is therefore necessary to achieve a state of *apatheia*, in which the *logos* frees man from the power of the passions'. *Apatheia*, despite common misconceptions,

208Cook, 'Body and Passions: Materialism and the Early Modern State', 27.

209Bobzein, Susanne, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*, *Oxford Scholarship Online*, 2003, <http://oxfordscholarship.com/oso/private/content/philosophy/9780199247677/p013.html#acprof-0199247676-chapter-1> (Accessed July 21, 2008), 332.

does not entail 'a state of *anesthesia* in which the subject feels nothing at all', instead, '[t]he Stoics hold that some emotions, such as benevolence, mercy, sympathy, and the sober joys of friendship, are good, because they are rational passions'.²¹⁰ Through harmonizing himself with the rational law of nature man is freed of those passions which would arouse fear and harmful desires both of which 'arise from false judgments about what to expect in the future'.²¹¹ In order for one to align oneself with λόγος one must have a rationalistic understanding of nature, understanding through reason that over which one has no express control.

To say that Hobbes and Spinoza *were* Stoic would be a mistake. One of the distinctive features of Hobbes's philosophy, a feature which Strauss—writing on the heels of Dilthey's work on the subject—picks up on and accurately explains, is that Hobbes took 'traditional theses and concepts' and reshaped them, causing them to 'take on an entirely untraditional meaning'.²¹² Strauss takes exception to Dilthey's alignment of Hobbes with Stoic thought, explaining, 'the Stoic conception of passion must be basically modified when it is taken over by a philosopher who systematically denies the possibility of *beatitudo* [blessedness], and for whom the contrary of passion is no longer a state of repose.'²¹³ What is driving Strauss' critique of Dilthey, *presumably*, is that, in the case of Hobbes's philosophy, there is no *finis ultimus* or *summum bonum*. Hobbes's decision to omit the idea of a *finis ultimus* or *summum bonum* from his study of man is driven by his observation that '[f]elicity is a continuall progresse of the desire, from one object to another'.²¹⁴ However, it is important to recognize that Hobbes's point is empirical and not metaphysical.

210Colish, *The Stoic Tradition From Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, 42.

211*ibid.*, 43.

212Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis*, 4.

213*ibid.*, 5.

214Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 47.

What Hobbes believed is that '[n]or can a man any more live, whose Desires are at an end, than he, whose Senses and Imaginations are at a stand.'²¹⁵ Hobbes is making the very simple point that, as it concerns man, there can never be a cessation of desires because man, as matter in motion, will attempt to sustain his motion until he ceases to move, that is, until he succumbs to death. Strauss is wrong though about there being no possibility of *beatitudo* in Hobbes.

Hobbes and Spinoza both understand passions as being an inexorable feature of man's existence. Therefore, they are not looking to restrict or suppress man's passions, rather, they are looking to provide man with the tools necessary with which he will be able to accurately assess, and realize the truths of nature, and by correctly assessing nature man's passions will naturally be altered. Man will continue to *will* and *act*, but differently. For Spinoza, man's ultimate possibility is blessedness, and blessedness arises from 'love towards God...this love must be related to the mind in so far as the mind is active'²¹⁶—'active emotions' are defined as 'those desires that are defined by man's power, that is, by reason' and 'are always good'.²¹⁷ Blessedness is not attained through the suppression of the passions; instead, the alteration of man's passions is the result of blessedness.²¹⁸ Understood slightly differently, man does not actively suppress his passions, what he desires is structured by reason (by his understanding of God); reason becomes a constituent element of man's decision making processes. He does not *suppress* those passions incongruent with his nature; he ceases to *have* those passions which would be harmful or hurtful to his nature.

While Hobbes might deny a *finis ultimus* or *summum bonum* as an empirical fact,

215*ibid.*, 47.

216*ibid.*, 223.

217*ibid.*, 196.

218*ibid.*, 223.

Hobbes, like Spinoza, believes man is ultimately capable of thinking, and therefore acting, in a blessed way. Hobbes explains that the diversity of man's passions (putting them into conflict) are the product of 'the difference of the knowledge [amongst men], or opinion each one has of the causes, which produce the effect desired.'²¹⁹ The outcome of Hobbes's political education is that citizens begin to use and understand language uniformly. Thus, political education eliminates the possibility for any difference of knowledge, or divergent opinions about causes between men. Through political education, men's passions are made harmonious, providing them with the means to rationalistic freedom: blessedness.

Returning to the discussion of Stoicism, although I do think it is wrong to call Hobbes and Spinoza outright Stoics, their individual philosophies have elements seemingly influenced by something akin to Stoicism if not Stoicism itself. It so happens that these elements, most notably their determinism and materialism—both of which relate to their respective natural theologies—give their philosophies their trajectory, and ultimately, define their purpose. The purpose of Hobbes and Spinoza's commonwealth is to put the whole of its citizenry in touch with *λόγος*, achieving a state of *apatheia*.

By understanding Hobbes in this way his philosophy ceases to be at odds with Spinoza's, but more importantly, by understanding Hobbes in this light his philosophy ceases to be one of domination--a philosophy in which individual liberty takes a back seat. The Hobbesian commonwealth is put into motion for the very purpose of harmonizing man with nature, allowing him the opportunity to attain the absolute freedom which comes with self-government.

²¹⁹Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 47.

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