

Strauss and Skinner
as Readers of
Hobbes's Theory of the State

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Abstract: Strauss and Skinner are concerned with different concepts in Hobbes's theory of the state. Whereas Strauss argues that Hobbes's theory of the state emerges out of his struggle between monarchy and democracy, Skinner focuses on Hobbes's theories of the person of the state, attributed action, and representation. I will argue that their different readings stem from their philosophical-political projects. Whereas Strauss believes Hobbes developed his political philosophy generally and his theory of the state in particular against the ancient and Christian traditions, Skinner claims that it was theorized against the republican tradition. In other words, for both Strauss and Skinner, Hobbes is a foil for their own political positions.

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Hobbes was the first who felt the necessity of seeking, and succeeded in finding, a *nuova scienza* of man and State.¹

Leo Strauss

It would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that ... Hobbes closes one chapter in the history of the modern theory of the state and opens another and more familiar one.²

Quentin Skinner

Introduction

Thomas Hobbes is one of the founders of modern political thought.³ His thought, however, had been continuously pertinent to the philosophical and

¹ Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis*, trans. Elsa M. Sinclair (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 1.

² Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, Vol. 1, *Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 14.

³ In this paper I use political thought, political theory, and political philosophy interchangeably. However, especially for Strauss and Skinner, they are not the same. Regarding Strauss see his "What Is Political Philosophy?" in L. Strauss, *What Is Political Philosophy? And Other Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 12-3; regarding Skinner see George Klosko, ed., "Introduction," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4-5.

political issues of the seventeenth,⁴ eighteenth, nineteenth,⁵ and twentieth⁶ centuries. It also remains relevant to today's issues.⁷ Hobbes, however, was concerned that he might be misunderstood.⁸ He was right to harbor that feeling. It has been argued that he has been misunderstood in his time and ours.⁹ Leo Strauss and Quentin Skinner, the two most formidable readers of the Malmesbury philosopher, have also mounted their reading of Hobbes by criticizing previous interpretations.¹⁰ The importance of Strauss's and Skinner's readings of Hobbes stems from the fact they are both historians of ideas and political theorists.¹¹ While it has been customary to compare Strauss's approach to the history of political thought with that of Skinner,¹² there has not been much work on comparing their readings of Hobbes.¹³ The latter is the central focus of this paper. My aim, however, is not to evaluate

⁴ Reinhart Koselleck asserts that Hobbes's thought had characterized the seventeenth century, see his *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society*, trans. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1988), esp. 40.

⁵ Strauss claims that Rousseau's, Kant's, and Hegel's philosophies would not have been possible without Hobbes's, see *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 1.

⁶ Carl Schmitt controversially claims that the issues of liberalism can be tackled by Hobbes, see his *The Concept of the Political*, expanded ed., trans. George D. Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

⁷ Sharon A. Lloyd, ed., "Editor's Introduction," in *Hobbes Today: Insights for the 21st Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), xi.

⁸ Carl Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes: Meaning and Failure of a Symbol*, trans. George D. Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 86.

⁹ Jeffrey Collins argues that Spinoza did not realize Hobbes's preservation of individual's right, see his "The Early Modern Foundation of Classic Liberalism," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy*, 273-4; Koselleck claims that Arendt makes the same mistake, see *Critique and Crisis*: 24.

¹⁰ Leo Strauss, "On the Basis of Hobbes's Political Philosophy," in *What Is Political Philosophy? And Other Studies*, 196; Quentin Skinner, "Hobbes's 'Leviathan,'" *The Historical Journal* 7, no. 2 (1964): 333.

¹¹ Mark Bevir, "The Contextual Approach," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy*, 11-23; Catherine Zuckert, "The Straussian Approach," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy*, 24-35.

¹² Ian Ward, "Helping the Dead Speak: Leo Strauss, Quentin Skinner and the Arts of Interpretation in Political Thought," *Polity* 41, no. 2 (2009): 235-55; Rafael Major, "The Cambridge School and Leo Strauss: Texts and Context of American Political Science," *Political Research Quarterly* 58, no.3 (2005): 477-85.

¹³ For a comparison between the Straussian and the Cambridge school readings of Machiavelli see Harvey C. Mansfield, "Strauss's Machiavelli," *Political Theory* 3, no. 4 (1975): 372-84; J. G. A. Pocock, "Prophet and Inquisitor: Or, a Church Built upon Bayonets Cannot Stand: A Comment on Mansfield's 'Strauss's Machiavelli,'" *Political Theory* 3, no. 4 (1975): 385-401; Harvey C. Mansfield, "Reply to Pocock," *Political Theory* 3, no. 4 (1975): 402-405.

the hermeneutic qualities of their interpretations.¹⁴ Rather, I attempt to highlight their different estimations of Hobbes's theory of the state. I then continue to demonstrate that such a difference stems from their distinct political-philosophical positions.

The idea of the sovereign state shapes our everyday life;¹⁵ it is the main subject of political philosophy,¹⁶ and crucial to democratic theory.¹⁷ Yet, it is not completely clear what we mean when we refer to "the state."¹⁸ It has been argued that an investigation into the history of the concept of the state is necessary to have an understanding of what the state means.¹⁹ To begin at the beginning, Hobbes is an immediate choice. Hobbes's theory of the state has been argued not only as epoch-making,²⁰ but also the one which illuminates contemporary states.²¹ Both Strauss and Skinner acknowledge that Hobbes is indispensable to grasp what the state is which lead them to elaborate on his theory of the state.

In order to compare their elaboration, I will pose three questions: what is Hobbes's theory of the state? Why did Hobbes develop it? And why

¹⁴ Regarding Strauss see for example: Adrian Blau, "Anti-Strauss," *Journal of Politics* 74, no. 1 (2012): 142–55; A. P. Martinich, "Leo Strauss's Olympian Interpretation: Right, Self-preservation, and Law in *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes*," in *New Studies in the History and Historiography of Philosophy: Vol. 3, Reading between the Lines: Leo Strauss and the History of Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Winfried Schröder (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 77–97; Devin Stauffer, "Strauss's Discussion of Hobbes in *What Is Political Philosophy?*" *Perspectives on Political Science* 39, no. 2 (2010): 87–91; regarding Skinner see for instance Karl Schuhmann, "Skinner's Hobbes," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 6, no. 1 (1998): 115–25; Jeffry Collins, "Quentin Skinner's Hobbes and the Neo-Republican Project," *Modern Intellectual History* 6, no. 2 (2009): 343–67; Philip Pettit, "Freedom in Hobbes's Ontology and Semantics: A Comment on Quentin Skinner," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 73, no. 1 (2012): 111–26.

¹⁵ Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics, Vol. 3, Hobbes and Civil Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 178.

¹⁶ Christopher M. Morris, "The State," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy*, 544.

¹⁷ Mark E. Warren, "Democracy and the State," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*, eds. John S. Dryzek, Bonnie Honig, and Anne Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 383.

¹⁸ Morris, "The State," 544–47.

¹⁹ Terence Ball, James Farr and Russell L. Hanson, eds., "Editors' Introduction," in *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1–5.

²⁰ Quentin Skinner, "Hobbes on Representation," *European Journal of Philosophy* 13, no.2 (2005): 177.

²¹ Morris, "The State," 549.

are Strauss and Skinner readers of Hobbes? In the first section, I shall elaborate on Strauss's reading. I will demonstrate that, for Strauss, Hobbes's theory of the state emerges out of his struggle between two opposite traditions, that is, monarchy and democracy. In the second section, I will discuss the idea that Skinner's reading is concentrated on the concept of the person of the state and the ways in which it can be represented. Both Strauss and Skinner are interested in interrogating why Hobbes developed his theory, the discussion of which will be presented in the third section of this paper. I will demonstrate that, for Strauss, Hobbes's theory of the state is another rejection, perhaps the main one, of ancient thought. Similarly, for Skinner, Hobbes's theory is an attempt to undermine the theory of public sovereignty that was developed by the Parliamentary writers. Finally, in the fourth section, I will try to investigate what prompted Strauss and Skinner to elaborate on Hobbes. I will bring to the fore that, for Strauss and Skinner, Hobbes's political thought is a foil for their own political-philosophical positions.

I. Monarchy and Democracy

Hobbes's theory of the state, in Strauss's reading, is the "institutional artificial monarchy."²² Strauss argues, however, such a theory evolves out of "the union of two opposed traditions:" the monarchic and the democratic traditions.²³ Strauss thus begins from the beginning and elaborates on the ways in which Hobbes finds himself in the midst of these two traditions.

Strauss highlights that "Hobbes was from the beginning on the side of patrimonial monarchy; but from the outset he had scruples of democratic origin against this view."²⁴ The first exposition of his preference for monarchy, Strauss shows, emerges in his translation of Thucydides, in the introduction of which Hobbes claims that Thucydides, "the most politic historiographer that ever writ,"²⁵ believed that "the regal government" is better than democracy. Strauss claims that Hobbes's positive tone in the introduction indicates that "Hobbes whole-heartedly adopts the point of view of his author."²⁶ Later, in his autobiographies Hobbes explains that he translated Thucydides because "he wished to communicate to his fellow

²² Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 65.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Thomas Hobbes, *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, vol. 8, ed. Sir William Molesworth (London: Bohn, 1839–45), viii.

²⁶ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 59.

citizens the teaching that democracy is wrong and monarchy to be preferred."²⁷

Strauss explains that Hobbes had always maintained his preference for the monarchic state, but his account of monarchy changed. What kind of monarchy does Hobbes prefer? Strauss claims that although Hobbes considers "absolute monarchy and dictatorship as the only practical forms of government" and esteems dictatorship, "he recognizes absolute monarchy as the superior form."²⁸ Strauss, however, elaborates that there are two reasons which prove that Hobbes prioritizes the patrimonial monarchy over the despotic monarchy: (1) Hobbes discusses the right of succession in monarchies "only with regard to patrimonial monarchy"; (2) all traditional arguments that Hobbes provides in favor of monarchies "are exclusively related to patrimonial monarchy and not to despotic monarchy."²⁹

So far we have seen that for Hobbes, in Strauss's estimation, the patrimonial monarchy is the preferred form of the state to which Strauss adds another important elaboration. Hobbes distinguishes between two forms of the state: the natural and the artificial. He also differentiates between "'the commonwealth by acquisition,' which is based on natural force, whether of the father or of the conqueror, and 'the commonwealth by institution,' which comes into being by voluntary subjection to an elected government, i.e. artificially."³⁰ Since the patrimonial monarchy is the superior form of any "commonwealth by acquisition," for Hobbes, Strauss claims, the natural state and patrimonial monarchy are identical.³¹ Now, one part of the quarrel between the two traditions, out of which the theory of the "institutional artificial monarchy" emerges, is clear. By monarchic tradition, Hobbes means the patrimonial monarchy. Where does the other tradition, i.e. democracy come from? This is the question to which I now turn.

Strauss discusses that for Hobbes the artificial state can take three forms: democratic, aristocratic, or monarchic.³² In *The Elements*, however, Hobbes contends that "Democracy precedeth all other institution of

²⁷ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 59.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 60.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 61-2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, 63.

government.”³³ Although Strauss emphasizes frequently that Hobbes had always preferred monarchy, now, he claims that “it would be a mistake to believe that Hobbes originally preferred monarchy, on account of its natural origin, to artificial democracy.”³⁴ Strauss goes further and states that Hobbes’s early systematic philosophy “is the most democratic.”³⁵ Strauss provides two reasons to foster his claim. First, Hobbes admits that “Aristotle saith well, The ground or intention of a democracy, is liberty; which he confirmeth in these words: For men ordinarily say this; that no man can partake of liberty, but only in a popular common-wealth.”³⁶ Second, Strauss refers to a paragraph in *The Elements* in which Hobbes defends democracy:

The subjection of them who institute a commonwealth amongst themselves, is no less absolute, than the subjection of servants. And herein they are in equal estate; but the hope of those is greater than the hope of these. For he that subjecteth himself uncompelled, thinketh there is reason he should be better used, than he that doth it upon compulsion; and coming in freely, calleth himself, though in subjection, a Freeman; whereby it appeareth, that liberty is ... a state of better hope than theirs that have been subjected by force and conquest.³⁷

Strauss interprets that “the motive which leads to the natural State is fear; on the other hand, the motive that leads to the artificial State is hope or trust.”³⁸ Strauss goes on that since democracy is the primary form of the artificial state, democracy has the edge over the patrimonial monarchy. In other words, Strauss informs us that Hobbes was in a dilemma between monarchy and democracy. In Strauss’s words: “we have at all events to take cognizance of the paradoxical fact that the earliest presentation of Hobbes’s political philosophy is at one and the same time the one most in favour of patrimonial monarchy and of democracy.”³⁹ Strauss further elaborates on this paradox and explains that the patrimonial monarchy and democracy are in self-contradiction because they are traditional ideas, and Hobbes had not yet developed his untraditional theory of the state, that is, the institutional artificial monarchy.

³³ Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, ed. Ferdinand Tönnies 2nd ed. (London: Cass, 1969): Pt. 2, ch. 2, § 1.

³⁴ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 63.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Hobbes, *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, Pt. 2, ch. 8, § 3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Pt. 2, ch. 4, § 9.

³⁸ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 64.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 65.

How does Hobbes resolve this paradox? We first need to consider two points. First, as we have seen above, for Hobbes, originally, only the patrimonial monarchy and the natural state are identical. Later in his thought, Hobbes asserts that the patrimonial monarchy and monarchy based on conquest are equivalent.⁴⁰ Strauss suggests that this change is the result of the theory of the artificial monarchy which in comparison to other forms of authority, “which are not of artificial production and are not based on voluntary delegation,” seems natural as well. Specifically, Strauss observes that while in *The Elements* the relation between the monarch and the subjects are as father and children, such a definition disappears in *De Cive* and *Leviathan*. Instead, in *De Cive*, Strauss interprets, “monarchy is to cease to be personal government in any higher degree than democracy or aristocracy.”⁴¹ In *Leviathan*, Strauss claims, Hobbes continues to redefine monarchy by discussing institutional monarchy. Strauss concludes his observation as follows:

The more sharply Hobbes elaborates the idea of representation, the more clarity he achieves as to the essence of institutional monarchy and the differences between the king as natural person and the king as politic person, the less important does the natural State, patrimonial monarchy, and the affinity between monarchy and the paternal authority become for him.⁴²

Second, such a process of weakening the patrimonial monarchy was followed by Hobbes regarding democracy. As it was indicated above, in *The Elements* Hobbes contends that democracy is superior to all other institutional forms of government. Strauss meticulously highlights that that statement appears in *De Cive* “only in a much weakened form,” and in *Leviathan* there is no sign of it.⁴³ To put it another way, Strauss informs us that Hobbes had already weakened patrimonial monarchy and democracy before he introduced his final theory.

After having undermined the two traditions, Hobbes now seeks for, Strauss describes, a ground upon which a reconciliation can be reached between the two. Strauss comments that Hobbes needed to satisfy both

⁴⁰ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 62. See also Kinch Hoekstra, “The De Facto Turn in Hobbes’s Political Philosophy,” in *Leviathan after 350 Years*, eds., Tom Sorell and Luc Foisneau (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 33–74.

⁴¹ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 62.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 63.

monarchic and democratic parties. He had already convinced the former by acknowledging the superiority of the monarchic state. Now he needs to involve the proponents of democracy. As we have seen, Hobbes asserts that democracy is based on hope and monarchy is based on fear. Strauss claims that Hobbes finds the common ground in the fear of violent death “which he had originally, as it seems, connected only with the natural State. In this sense the precedence of the natural over the artificial State is acknowledged by Hobbes to the end.”⁴⁴ Strauss thus states that Hobbes deals with two profoundly distinct theories of sovereignty: according to the first, sovereign authority is based on the natural right of father over children and servants; according to the second, sovereignty stems from the voluntary delegation of authority of the majority of free citizens.⁴⁵ Strauss concludes

in Hobbes’s final theory of sovereignty the involuntary as well as the voluntary nature of subjection is more systematically reconciled: men -the individuals, not the fathers- at the founding of the artificial State delegate the highest power to a man or an assembly from mutual fear, the fear of violent death, and fear, in itself compulsive, is consistent with freedom.⁴⁶

Strauss also adds that although it is an explanation for the legal monarchy, Hobbes later asserts that “every effective rule is *eo ipso* legitimate.”⁴⁷

If Hobbes’s final theory of the state, that is, institutional artificial monarchy is a combination of monarchy, due to the continuation of the monarch as chief ruler, and democracy, as to the artificial part of the theory, one might claim that this is another argument for a mixed constitution. Strauss disagrees. First, Strauss elaborates that Hobbes considers any limitation to the sovereignty as absurd. Second, Hobbes, however, in the translation of Thucydides refers to, and does not criticize, Thucydides’s opinion that “a mixed constitution of democracy and aristocracy deserves primacy over democracy on the one hand, and aristocracy on the other.”⁴⁸ He also, in *The Elements*, admits that

but though the sovereignty be not mixed, but be always either simple democracy, or simple aristocracy, or pure monarchy; nevertheless in the administration thereof, all these sorts of government may have place subordinate ... So also in a monarchy there may be a council aristocratical of

⁴⁴ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 66.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 67.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 68.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

men chosen by the monarch; or democratical of men chosen by the consent (the monarch permitting) of all the particular men of the common-wealth.⁴⁹

Strauss, however, informs us this passage disappears in later expositions of his political philosophy. Strauss thus comes to the conclusion that Hobbes had gradually rejected the idea of mixed constitution.⁵⁰

There is another point to be made about Hobbes's theory of sovereignty. Strauss observes that in Hobbes's early systematic philosophy he offers both a voluntary and an obligatory limitation on sovereignty. Although Hobbes never binds the sovereign by civil law, his early theory of sovereignty is not as absolute as in *Leviathan*.⁵¹ Whereas in *The Elements* Hobbes accepts that the sovereign is bound by natural law, in *Leviathan* he rejects such a limitation in that every law, natural and divine, is binding only if the sovereign says so. Strauss goes further and highlights another difference between Hobbes's early and later works. While in *The Elements* Hobbes mentions "solicitude for the eternal salvation of the subjects and for marriage laws which correspond to natural law"⁵² as duties of the sovereign, in *De Cive* the former is not mentioned anymore and the latter is defined under civil law; however, both duties are completely dropped in *Leviathan*.⁵³ In other words, Hobbes's theory of sovereignty becomes gradually more absolute.

Strauss's account of Hobbes's theory of the state can be summarized as follows: while Hobbes was open to both monarchy and democracy from the beginning, he preferred the patrimonial monarchy not only over despotic and dictatorship monarchies but also over democracy. Hobbes originally defined monarchy as the primary form of the natural state which is based on fear. He also originally defined democracy as the primary form of the artificial state which is based on hope. As far as hope is superior over fear, the preferable form of the state is democracy which is in opposition to Hobbes's preferred state, i.e. monarchy. To resolve this puzzle, Hobbes introduces the fear of violent death, originally attributed to the natural state, which goes beyond both fear and hope and formulates Hobbes's final theory

⁴⁹ Hobbes, *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, Pt. 2, ch. 1, § 17.

⁵⁰ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 68.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

of the state as the artificial monarchy.⁵⁴ Strauss's reading of Hobbes's theory of the state is mostly focused on how Hobbes developed his theory, but Strauss does not explain *why* Hobbes preferred monarchy over democracy. I will return to this question from another perspective in the third section of this paper.

II. The Artificial Person and Representation

Like Strauss, Skinner also traces a democratic tradition in Hobbes's theory of the state. Unlike Strauss, however, Skinner claims that the democratic tradition is not embedded in Hobbes's theory of the state; rather, it is a rejection of it. Skinner demonstrates that during 1640s in England there was a group of theorist, the Parliamentarian writers, or as Hobbes calls them "democratical gentlemen,"⁵⁵ who had already developed a theory of representative government by which they hoped "to legitimize the conversion of England into a republic or 'free state' in 1649."⁵⁶ I will elaborate on Skinner's claim in section III. But, we first need to render Skinner's account of Hobbes's theory of the state.

Skinner claims that Hobbes's theory of the state should be understood as the purely artificial person of the state. In "The Epistle Dedicatory" and "Introduction" of *Leviathan* Hobbes briefly explains his theory of public

⁵⁴ Strauss's reading of Hobbes's theory of the state has raised an outpouring of literature on democratic aspects of Hobbes's thought. Richard Tuck argues that Hobbes's idea of "sleeping monarch" and the distinction between the sovereign and the government are at the heart of his theory of democracy, see Richard Tuck, "Hobbes and Democracy," in *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, eds. A.S. Brett, J. Tully, and H. Hamilton-Bleakley (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 171-90; Tuck fully develops this idea in his *The Sleeping Sovereign: The Invention of Modern Democracy* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2016); see also Vickie B. Sullivan, *Machiavelli, Hobbes, and the Formation of a Liberal Republicanism in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), see esp. 83; for criticism on Hobbes's democracy see Kinch Hoekstra, "A Lion in the House: Hobbes and Democracy," in *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 191-218; Alan Apperley, "Hobbes on Democracy," *Politics* 19, no. 3 (1999): 165-71; Alexandre Matheron, "The Theoretical Function of Democracy in Spinoza and Hobbes," in *The New Spinoza*, eds. Warren Montag and Ted Stolze (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 207-18.

⁵⁵ Hobbes asserts that "democratical gentlemen had received them [petitions of right] into their counsels for the design of changing the government from monarchical to popular, which they called liberty," see *Behemoth or the Long Parliament*, ed. Ferdinand Tönnies (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1889), 26.

⁵⁶ Skinner, "Hobbes on Representation," 155.

power as “the Seat of Power”⁵⁷ which is occupied by “that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMON-WEALTH, or STATE.”⁵⁸ Skinner begins from here. He claims that there is a puzzle in Hobbes’s theory of the state. On the one hand, Hobbes asserts that the sovereign makes law and his will is the will of the state. But on the other hand, Hobbes also contends that the state cannot do anything; it is “but a word, without substance, and cannot stand.”⁵⁹ Skinner thus asks how it is possible for such an abstract entity to be the name of the sovereign who takes political decisions and actions.⁶⁰ To anticipate his answer, Skinner explains that a multitude can make an agreement among themselves to choose a representative. The outcome of such an agreement, however, is not only one representative but two persons. The first one is the person of the state, which is, in Skinner’s reading, a purely artificial person, and the second person is the sovereign who represents the person of the state. The person of the state, like bridges and hospitals, is a purely artificial person, but it is capable of being represented by the sovereign whose actions can be attributed to the person of the state. As we have seen, we need to fathom three principal concepts all of which, in Skinner’s reading, are at the heart of Hobbes’s theory of the state: attributed action, person, and representation.

Skinner describes that the term “attributed” was a common term in legal terminology at the time.⁶¹ It means a class of actions that “can be validly attributed to agents, and genuinely counted as theirs, even when the agents in question did not in fact perform the actions, and perhaps could not in principle have performed them.”⁶² It seems that it is not difficult to understand what attributed action is, but it is not without difficulty to grasp how it is possible to attribute an action to someone who did not do it. In Skinner’s reading, however, Hobbes’s answer is straightforward but deceptive: if B represents A, and B performs the action C, then the action C can be attributed to A since he or she has been “personated” by B.⁶³ Skinner observes that Hobbes had developed this idea before *Leviathan*, but it is only in the *Leviathan* of 1651 that he systematically formulates his theory. Yet,

⁵⁷ L Epistle: 3. I cite *Leviathan* as (L chapter: page number) and refer to the following edition: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁵⁸ L Introduction: 9.

⁵⁹ L 26: 184.

⁶⁰ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 177.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 178.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 179.

Skinner continues, Hobbes had improved his theory both in *De Honine* in 1658 and the Latin version of *Leviathan* in 1668.⁶⁴

The other two principal concepts, “person” and “representation,” are firmly connected to the concept of attributed action. Hobbes explains that

*A PERSON, is he, whose words or actions are considered, either as his own, or as representing the words or actions of an other man, or of any other thing to whom they are attributed, whether Truly or by Fiction.*⁶⁵

Skinner tries to elaborate the ways in which these three principal concepts are closely interrelated. Skinner thus interprets Hobbes’s aim as an attempt to explain how it is possible for one person to represent himself or herself on the one hand and represents someone else on the other. In both cases, Hobbes’s theory of attributed action also aims to demonstrate how an action done by the representative can be attributed to someone else who is being represented, since, as Hobbes emphasizes: “to *Personate*, is to *Act*, or *Represent* himselfe, or an other; and he that acteth another, is said to beare his *Person*, or act in his name.”⁶⁶

Skinner claims that Hobbes’s account of representation was not new since, by the time he published *Leviathan*, “a number of English political writers had already developed a fully-fledged theory of representative government.”⁶⁷ Hobbes’s definition of “person” was also common at the time of publishing of *Leviathan*, and they come from theatre as Hobbes declares that “a *Person*, is the same that an *Actor* is, both on the Stage and in common Conversation.”⁶⁸ What makes Hobbes’s theory of the state original, however, is not its terminology, Skinner claims. At the heart of the theory there is a pressing question: what “distinguishes representation from misrepresentation?”⁶⁹ Hobbes’s answer to that question is, in Skinner’s construal, “his most original contribution to the theory of the state.”⁷⁰ Skinner clarifies that, in Hobbes’s account, B can be said to represent A “if and only if the representative [B] has in some way been duly authorised, and hence instructed and commissioned, to perform the action concerned.”⁷¹

⁶⁴ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 180.

⁶⁵ L 16: 111.

⁶⁶ L 16: 112.

⁶⁷ Skinner, “Hobbes on Representation,” 155.

⁶⁸ L 16: 112.

⁶⁹ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 182.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Skinner reveals that these terms cannot be found in *The Elements* and *De Cive*; nevertheless, in *Leviathan* Hobbes “deploys the concepts of authorisation and of ‘being an author’ to furnish the entire theoretical grounding for his theory of the legitimate state.”⁷² What does Hobbes mean by authorization? Skinner refers to chapter 16 of *Leviathan* where Hobbes asserts that

Then the Person is the *Actor*; and he that owneth his words and actions, is the AUTHOR: In which case the Actor acteth by Authority. For that which in speaking of goods and possessions, is called an *Owner*, and in latine *Dominus*, in Greeke *κύριος*, speaking of Actions, is called an Author.⁷³

Skinner notes that B can claim that he or she represents A if A duly authorizes them. The result is that A is responsible for the actions that have been performed by B. Skinner recognizes that there are two conditions in Hobbes’s argument: “The first states that anyone who authorises an action can be identified as its author. The second adds that, when we speak about the authors of actions, we are equivalently speaking about their owners, since we are speaking about those who must ‘own up’ to whatever is done in their name.”⁷⁴ In a word, if B has been authorized by A, the latter owns what B has done. Otherwise, Skinner implies, A is not responsible for B’s actions if the former did not authorize the latter. In Hobbes’s word, if “the Authority is feigned, it obligeth the Actor onely; there being no Author but himselfe.”⁷⁵ Skinner shows that Hobbes emphasizes his point regarding authority by using analogy with the ownership of goods:

And as the Right of possession, is called Dominion; so the Right of doing any action, is called AUTHORITY. So that by Authority, is always understood a Right of doing any act; and *done by Authority*, done by Commission, or License from him whose right it is.⁷⁶

What Skinner extracts from this passage is that, apart from what has been said so far, licensing or commission must be granted voluntarily. Skinner thus continues that if A authorizes B, he or she is responsible for the actions performed by B. What is more, after authorizing, A is not allowed to

⁷² Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 183.

⁷³ L 16:112

⁷⁴ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 184.

⁷⁵ L 16: 113.

⁷⁶ L 16: 112.

interfere in B's action since he abandons his right to do the act himself. Skinner claims that Hobbes's word regarding this issue is "minatory:"⁷⁷

When a man hath in either manner abandoned, or granted away his Right; then is he said to be OBLIGED, or BOUND, not to hinder those, to whom such Right is granted, or abandoned, from the benefit of it: and that he *Ought*, and it is his DUTY, not to make voyd that voluntary act of his own: and that such hindrance is INJUSTICE, and INJURY, as being *Sine Jure*; the Right being before renounced, or transferred.⁷⁸

So far we have seen "the basic case"⁷⁹ of Hobbes's theory of attributed action according to which (1) a person can authorize another person to act in his or her name; (2) the action which has been done by the authorized person can be attributed to the authorizing agent; (3) the latter owns and is responsible for the former's actions and cannot interfere in them. We still need to find out what the artificial person is.

Skinner reminds us that Hobbes distinguishes between two distinct types of person: the natural and the artificial. Chapter 16 of *Leviathan* begins as follows:

A PERSON, is he, *whose words or actions are considered, either as his own, or as representing the words or actions of an other man, or of any other thing to whom they are attributed, whether Truly or by Fiction.*

[1] When they are considered as his owne, then is he called a *Naturall Person*: [2] And when they are considered as representing the words and actions of an other, [3] then is he a *Feigned or Artificiall person*.⁸⁰

This is an intricate passage. In the sentence number (2), it seems that Hobbes talks about actions done by the *representative* that are actions *representing* the volitions of another person, who is thus being *represented*. Skinner states that the sentence number (3) raises a complicated question: to whom does the final "he" refer: the representative or the represented? Skinner offers two answers. First, by requiring strict grammar, the final "he" refers to "an other"; therefore, "the artificial person must be the person represented."⁸¹ Second, the structure of the paragraph and the sentence deceptively suggests, however, that the final "he" refers to "the natural person

⁷⁷ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 185.

⁷⁸ L 14: 92-3.

⁷⁹ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 185.

⁸⁰ L 16: 111.

⁸¹ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 187.

mentioned at the start of *the first paragraph*, in which case the artificial person must be the representative."⁸² But Skinner is mistaken here. There is no sign of the natural person in *the first paragraph*. It is the second paragraph in which Hobbes mentions the natural person. In his revised version of "Hobbes and the Purely Artificial Person of the State," published in *Hobbes and Civil Science* (2002), Skinner adds the phrase "of the first paragraph." But in his original paper in 1999 that phrase does not exist.⁸³ Nevertheless, in both versions Skinner maintains that the structure of the sentence suggests that "the artificial person must be the representative."⁸⁴ To recap, while Skinner claims that Hobbes's true intention is that the artificial person is the person who is represented, the structure of the paragraph suggests that the artificial person is actually the representative.

Skinner states that Hobbes was aware of this ambiguity and he initially supports the second possibility, that is, the artificial person is the representative. This is so because Skinner claims that, in Hobbes's account, some persons are artificial since they act as public persons such as "the King of any Countrey is the *Publique* Person, or Representative of all his own Subjects."⁸⁵ Other examples of public persons are "a lieutenant, a vicar, an attorney, a deputy, a procurator, a rector, a master, an overseer, a guardian, a curator and the like."⁸⁶ Skinner suggests that Hobbes's early endorsement of the representative as the artificial person was not a mistake; rather, Hobbes aimed to emphasize that by accepting one or more of these public roles we enter in an artificial world, that is, the world of civil society "in which our behaviour is conditioned and regulated by the artificial chains of the civil law."⁸⁷

Skinner, nevertheless, emphasizes that the belief that the representative is the artificial person was not Hobbes's final theory, and many interpreters are wrong to think so.⁸⁸ Why is it wrong? Skinner argues

⁸² Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 188, (emphasizes is mine).

⁸³ Quentin Skinner, "Hobbes and the Purely Artificial Person of the State," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 7, no.1 (1999): 11.

⁸⁴ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 188; Skinner, "Hobbes and the Purely Artificial Person of the State," 11.

⁸⁵ L 35: 285.

⁸⁶ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 190.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Skinner refers to Hannah F. Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); David P. Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan: The Moral and Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); David Copp, "Hobbes on

that “if we adopt Hobbes’s initial proposal and call representatives artificial persons, then sovereigns are artificial persons while states are not. This is bad enough in itself, since states are obviously not natural persons, while sovereigns obviously are.”⁸⁹ So, how does Hobbes make it clear that the artificial person is the person who is represented? First in the English *Leviathan*, Skinner shows, Hobbes contends that Moses and Christ both represented God in different ways: “one Person as represented by Moses, and another Person as represented by his Sonne the Christ.”⁹⁰ Skinner thus claims God becomes an artificial person.⁹¹ Second, in *De Homine*, Hobbes stresses that the artificial person is the person who is represented: “A person is someone to whom the words and actions of men are attributed, whether they are his own or those of someone else. If they are his own, then the person is a natural one. If they are those of someone else, then the person is a fictitious one.”⁹² Finally, in the Latin version of *Leviathan* Hobbes explains that if B acts in the name of A, B is only a representative. Hobbes does not describe B as artificial or fictitious anymore.⁹³ Skinner summarizes Hobbes’s theory of person as follows:

Natural persons convert themselves into artificial persons - even into a variety of different *personae* - by agreeing to be represented in different ways. But natural persons who agree to serve as representatives also convert themselves into artificial persons, since the act of making such an agreement is at the same time the act of turning oneself from a private individual into a public person discharging a recognised role.⁹⁴

Before applying these concepts to Hobbes’s theory of the state, two other points need to be made about Hobbes’s account of the natural and artificial persons. First, Skinner states that Hobbes believes that not all people can be natural persons, for instance children and servants, since they are incapable of being responsible for their actions. Yet, they can exercise rights because they can have guardians whose actions can be attributed to them. Second, we have seen that natural persons can also be artificial

Artificial Persons and Collective Actions,” *The Philosophical Review* 89, no. 4 (1980): 579–606; David Runciman, *Pluralism and the Personality of the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁸⁹ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 188.

⁹⁰ L 41: 338.

⁹¹ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 189.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 190.

persons. Skinner claims that Hobbes is interested in those artificial persons “who are not natural persons at all.”⁹⁵ While Hobbes does not offer any particular term for this category, Skinner calls them *purely* artificial persons.⁹⁶ As Hobbes indicated, there are two types of these (purely) artificial persons: “those whose words and actions can be ‘truly’ attributed to them, and those who can only have words and actions attributed to them ‘by Fiction.’”⁹⁷ An example for the latter is theatrical characters. In Hobbes’s account, Agamemnon is a purely artificial person, Skinner states, since he is only a character on the stage, does not exist in the real world, and actions and words can be attributed to him only by a player fictitiously.⁹⁸ The first category, in contrast to the second, does exist in the real world but still incapable of being natural persons. Among these artificial persons, as we have seen, are children, servants, to which Hobbes adds hospitals, churches and bridges. Like children who can be represented by guardians, these inanimate objects can also be personated or represented by a rector or a priest. Although hospitals and bridges, like Agamemnon, are artificial entities, they, unlike Agamemnon, can validly be represented.

After having defined the basic concepts and terminologies, Skinner begins to demonstrate Hobbes’s theory of the state as the purely artificial person. Skinner informs us that Hobbes’s discussion of the person of the state belongs to his account of sovereignty “by Institution” and not of sovereignty “by acquisition.”⁹⁹ In Hobbes’s theory of the state a multitude can transform themselves into one unit if, and only if, they authorize a person or persons to represent them. Hobbes makes it clear that “The Multitude naturally is not *One*, but *Many*,” but they can be united “when they are by one man, or one Person, Represented.”¹⁰⁰ The mechanism by which people choose their representative is well-known as the social contract theory, the result of which Skinner shows, in Hobbes’s account, goes beyond just an agreement and the people “appoint one Man, or Assembly of men, to beare their Person.”¹⁰¹ Now, Skinner indicates, there is an artificial person “brought into existence when a multitude forms itself into such a unity by instituting a representative.”¹⁰² What is the name of this

⁹⁵ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 192.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 193.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 197.

¹⁰⁰ L 16: 114.

¹⁰¹ L 17: 120.

¹⁰² Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 198.

artificial person? Skinner asks. When people agree with each other to choose one person, they “so united in one Person, is called a COMMON-WEALTH, in latine CIVITAS,”¹⁰³ or “LEVIATHAN, or rather of that *Mortall God*, to which wee owe under the *Immortal God*, our peace and defence,” Hobbes answers.¹⁰⁴ So, the state is a purely artificial person, but who is the sovereign? Sovereign is “he that carryeth this Person,” Hobbes responds.¹⁰⁵ It is a conundrum. Now there are two persons: the state and the sovereign. Skinner reveals that “the sovereign is the name of the representative of the multitude united in one person, and is thus the name of the representative of the state.”¹⁰⁶

III. Why Did Hobbes Develop His Theory of the State?

So far we have seen that whereas Strauss is concerned with the monarchic and democratic aspects of Hobbes’s theory of the state, Skinner glosses over concepts such as person and representation in the same theory. Strauss’s and Skinner’s investigations into Hobbes’s theory of the state, however, do not end here. They both go further and claim that Hobbes must have been aware of what he was doing.¹⁰⁷ They both thus take pains to find out why Hobbes developed his theory of the state.

Strauss claims that Hobbes’s political philosophy can be traced back to “his actual experience of how men behave in daily life and in ‘public conversation.’”¹⁰⁸ Strauss goes further and asserts that such an experience can also be traced back to Hobbes’s “specific moral attitude,” that is, man’s

¹⁰³ Skinner claims that Hobbes always translates *civitas* as state.

¹⁰⁴ L 17: 120.

¹⁰⁵ L 17: 121.

¹⁰⁶ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 199. Skinner’s reading of Hobbes’s theory of the person of the state has come under criticism. David Runciman argues that Skinner is mistaken to portray the person of the state as purely artificial. What Hobbes had in mind, Runciman claims, is a “person by fiction,” see his “What Kind of Person Is Hobbes’s State? A Reply to Skinner,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2000): 268-78; see also Brian Trainor, “Hobbes, Skinner and the Person of the State,” *Hobbes Studies* 14, no.1 (2001): 59–70; Arto Tukiainen, “The Commonwealth as a Person in Hobbes’s Leviathan,” *Hobbes Studies* 7, no.1 (1994): 44-55; Christine Chwaszcza, “The Seat of Sovereignty: Hobbes on the Artificial Person of the Commonwealth or State,” *Hobbes Studies* 25, no. 2 (2012): 123–42.

¹⁰⁷ Leo Strauss, “The Three Waves of Modernity,” in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy: Ten Essays by Leo Strauss*, ed. Hilail Gildin (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 83; Quentin Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), xvi.

¹⁰⁸ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, x.

life is based on natural right and not on natural law.¹⁰⁹ These two beliefs demanded new ways of explanations. Hobbes thus “was the first who felt the necessity of seeking, and succeeded in finding, a *nuova scienza* of man and State”¹¹⁰ which are his moral and political philosophy respectively. To be new, his science of man and the state should be distinguished from old views, i.e. Christian and ancient thought.¹¹¹

Hobbes’s political work might not be as theological as Spinoza’s, and for that reason, Strauss suggests, may not be read as a theological-political treatise.¹¹² Yet, religion is an indispensable aspect of Hobbes’s political thought. As we have seen, Strauss offers a detailed reading of Hobbes’s theory of the state and the ways in which he provided a reconciliation between monarchy and democracy on the one hand, and the natural state and the artificial state on the other hand. Similarly, Strauss also provides a meticulous reading of the ways in which Hobbes dealt with religion in evolution of his theory of the state. Strauss claims that Hobbes’s strategy regarding religion embraced two aims: “in the first place in order to make use of the authority of the Scriptures for his own theory, and next and particularly in order to shake the authority of the Scriptures themselves.”¹¹³ The second goal, however, Strauss goes on, became important only gradually. In other words, as far as Hobbes was concerned with the natural state, theology played a pivotal role in his discussion of natural law and the absolute power of the king. As Hobbes moved from the natural state to the artificial state, theology became less and less important.

First, Strauss highlights that on his way from *The Elements* to *Leviathan*, Hobbes gradually allocates more space for criticizing religion.¹¹⁴ In *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, Skinner argues that from *The Elements* to *Leviathan*, Hobbes’s discussion of liberty increases dramatically which is an indication that Hobbes gradually became more concerned with the danger of the republican ideal of liberty.¹¹⁵ If this is an argument, so is Strauss’s. Strauss reminds us that “three chapters in the *Elements* correspond to four in

¹⁰⁹ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, viii.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹² Edwin Curley disagrees, see “I Durst Not Write So Boldly,” or How to Read Hobbes’s Theological-Political Treatise,” in *Hobbes e Spinoza*, ed. Daniela Bostrenghi (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1992), 497–593.

¹¹³ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 71.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, 127.

De cive and seventeen in the *Leviathan*. This quantitative extension is accompanied by a deepening of the criticism [of religion]."¹¹⁶ Qualitatively speaking, the question "on what authority does one believe that Scripture is the word of God?" receives different answers in Hobbes's political works: "In the *Elements*: On the authority of the Church, the successors of the Apostles. In *De Cive*: Not on the authority of the Church, but on that of Jesus. In the *Leviathan*: On the authority of the teachers whose teaching is permitted and organized by the sovereign power."¹¹⁷ Such a reduction in the authority of the church can also be seen in Hobbes's discussion of whether Christians are obliged to obey a power which forbids them from faith. Whereas in earlier thought Hobbes suggests "passive resistance" and "martyrdom," in *Leviathan*, Strauss claims, Hobbes denies both and suggests full obedience.¹¹⁸

Second, Strauss's close scrutiny brings to the fore another dramatic alteration in Hobbes's discussion of religion. Since in *The Elements* Hobbes defends both "episcopal constitution of the Church," which asserts that the authority of apostles and presbyters come from Christ, and "the authority of the Scriptures," Strauss suggests that Hobbes was following an "Anglican episcopal conception."¹¹⁹ However, Strauss continues that Hobbes had dismissed the episcopal constitution in his later political work because it is contrary to "Evangelical freedom" and came to embrace "Independentism" in *Leviathan*.¹²⁰ Strauss states that such a change of faith can be explained by

¹¹⁶ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 71.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹¹⁸ Hobbes put that "such a forbidding is of no effect; because Beleaf, and Unbeleef never follow mens Commands. Faith is a gift of God, which Man can neither give, nor take away by promise of rewards, or menaces of torture" (L 42: 343). Carl Schmitt claims that Hobbes here makes a distinction between inner faith and outer confession. Schmitt calls it "the barely visible crack" in *Leviathan* upon which Spinoza's freedom of thought is based, see Carl Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, 57.

¹¹⁹ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 73.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* Hobbes states that "And so we are reduced to the Independency of the Primitive Christians to follow Paul, or Cephas, or Apollos, every man as he liketh best: Which, if it be without contention, and without measuring the Doctrine of Christ, by our affection to the Person of his Minister (the fault which the Apostle reprehended in the Corinthians,) is perhaps the best" (L 47: 479-80). This passage has been the basis of many scholarly work on Hobbes's theory of toleration, see Teresa Bejan, "Difference without Disagreement: Re-thinking Hobbes on 'Independency' and Toleration," *The Review of Politics* 78 (2016): 1-25; see also Alan Ryan, "Hobbes, Toleration, and the Inner Life," in *The Nature of Political Theory*, eds. David Miller and Larry Siedentop (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 197- 218; Arash Abizadeh, "Publicity, Privacy, and Religious Toleration in Hobbes's *Leviathan*," *Modern Intellectual History* 10, no. 2 (2013): 261-91; Edwin Curley, "Hobbes and

the fact that “in the later writings Hobbes attaches much less value to conformity with the teachings of Scripture.”¹²¹ Strauss also claims that from *The Elements* to *Leviathan*, Hobbes’s unbelief is more exposed.¹²² Finally, Strauss asserts that all the aforementioned critiques of religion are steered towards positive religion. Regarding natural religion, Strauss claims that Hobbes was more skeptical in his later thought than in the beginning.¹²³ Strauss explains that Hobbes “systematically excluded not only revealed theology but also natural theology from philosophy,” and, to be compatible with his critique of religion, “Hobbes fought his battle against natural theology in the name of strict belief in the Scriptures and at the same time undermines that belief by his historical and philosophical criticism of the authority of the Scriptures.”¹²⁴

So far we have seen the ways in which Hobbes criticizes religion in order to make space for his new theory of secular authority. Strauss still needs to demonstrate the ways in which Hobbes’s new science of the state is distinguished from that of ancient. Such a demonstration, in Strauss’s construal, is based on the fact that Hobbes’s political philosophy is based on his moral philosophy, which is not based on a new natural science but a new moral attitude.¹²⁵ Hobbes’s new moral attitude is based on two fundamental human passions: vanity and fear of violent death.¹²⁶ The former winds up in war all against all, the latter brings to the fore the right of self-preservation on which Hobbes’s new science of the state is based. As we have seen in section I, in the final analysis between monarchy and democracy, Strauss claims that monarchy is based on overcoming fear of violent death and democracy depends on achieving hope. In other words, since fear of the violent death is the common human passion, monarchy is superior over democracy.

It remains to see how Strauss depicts that Hobbes’s discussion of human passions is different from that of the ancient thought. Strauss claims that Hobbes’s discussion of passion was influenced by Aristotle’s thought in

the Cause of Religious Toleration,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes’s Leviathan*, ed. Patricia Springborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 309–36.

¹²¹ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 74.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 75.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, X.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 10–15.

Rhetoric.¹²⁷ Strauss, however, goes on and highlights that “whereas Aristotle discusses honourable and estimable passions with the same emphasis as base and blameworthy ones, the emphasis for Hobbes is from the beginning laid on the ‘dissembled passions,’ which are *eo ipso* to be condemned.”¹²⁸ The difference between the two philosophers’ discussion of passion in their moral philosophies can also be seen in their different account of life, good things, anger, pleasant things, and causes of crime, which for Hobbes, in contrast to Aristotle, is vanity.¹²⁹ Hobbes’s political philosophy, however, should also differ from that of Plato since both Aristotle and Plato are “the founders of traditional political philosophy.”¹³⁰ Strauss argues that it seems, at first glance, Hobbes departs from Aristotle and arrives at Plato in that the former remains in everyday politics and opinion, but the latter stems from ideas and seeks for an exact political science.¹³¹ Hobbes, however, departs also from Plato. Whereas for Plato, Strauss argues, the fundamental antithesis is between passion and reason, from which exact political science arises, for Hobbes the antithesis is still between two passions, fear and vanity, which are identical with reason and passion respectively.¹³² Hobbes’s desire for applicability of his political philosophy, moreover, is also in contrast to Plato’s thought.¹³³

One might say Skinner’s account of Hobbes’s theory of the state is a pure Straussian, i.e. philosophical explanation. After all, Skinner himself acknowledges that his main purpose of elaborating on Hobbes’s theory of the person of the state is philosophical.¹³⁴ This is bizarre since Skinner also declares that “if there is to be any prospect of clearing up the confusions into which the study of Hobbes’s work has fallen, it is less philosophy, and more history, which is needed.”¹³⁵ Skinner’s interrogation, however, does not end with philosophical explanation. Skinner, as an intentionalist,¹³⁶ expresses that he has a higher goal: “I try to bring Hobbes down from the philosophical heights, to spell out his allusions, to identify his allies and adversaries, to indicate where he stands on the spectrum of political

¹²⁷ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 30-43.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 132-134.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, viii.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 149-150.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹³⁴ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 178.

¹³⁵ Skinner, “Hobbes’s ‘Leviathan,’” 333.

¹³⁶ Bevir, “The Contextual Approach,” 15.

debate."¹³⁷ He thus asks "what prompted Hobbes to develop this novel and intricate theory of the state?"¹³⁸ As we have seen in section II, Skinner claims that Hobbes had developed his theory of the state as a reaction to the Parliamentary writers to which he adds theorists of divine right. Or, as Hobbes himself declares; *Leviathan* encounters "those that contend, on one side for too great liberty, and on the other side for too much Authority."¹³⁹

Unlike Strauss, Skinner does not have much to say about religion.¹⁴⁰ The second group consists of those who argue any kind of authority and power is a divine right and God is the ultimate source of power.¹⁴¹ Skinner points out that Hobbes's counter-argument is straightforward: all political power is artificial and it needs "the consent of every one of the Subjects."¹⁴²

Skinner claims that, however, it was the first group, democratical gentlemen, with whom Hobbes was more concerned. The Parliamentary writers, like Hobbes, unlike theorists of divine right, argued that all power stems from people's consent.¹⁴³ However, they go further than Hobbes. Their argument goes like this: (1) since the sovereign's authority stems from the subjects, the king's position is lesser than the people; (2) if the king violates the original consent, the people have a right "to withdraw their consent and set down the authority they originally set up."¹⁴⁴ Skinner reveals that "it would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that Hobbes's entire theory of lawful government as he articulates it in *Leviathan* takes the form of a critical commentary on the parliamentary arguments."¹⁴⁵ First, Hobbes disagrees with the Parliamentarians that there is "the body of the people" before covenant. As we have seen, Skinner demonstrates that, in Hobbes's account, the multitude is many and they can only be one person when they transfer their right to "One Person,"¹⁴⁶ i.e. the person of the state. As a result, Skinner argues, "it makes no sense to think of them as a collective body setting limits

¹³⁷ Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, xvi.

¹³⁸ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 204.

¹³⁹ L Epistle: 3.

¹⁴⁰ Collins argues that Skinner's inattention to Hobbes's religious thought undermines his reading of Hobbes, see "Quentin Skinner's Hobbes and the Neo-Republican Project," 362.

¹⁴¹ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 204.

¹⁴² L 28: 219.

¹⁴³ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 204.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 205.

¹⁴⁵ Skinner, "Hobbes on Representation," 167.

¹⁴⁶ L 17: 121.

in advance to the exercise of sovereign power.”¹⁴⁷ Second, the theory of attributed action paved the way for Hobbes to claim that whatever actions the sovereign, as the representative of the person of the state, may undertake, they must be owned by the people. Moreover, as we have seen, Hobbes argues that by choosing the representative to act in their name, people cannot interfere with the sovereign’s actions or question them.¹⁴⁸ Skinner thus claims that “the theory of attributed action lies at the heart of the politics of *Leviathan*.”¹⁴⁹ Finally, Skinner highlights that Hobbes offers an “astonishingly reactionary response” to the Parliamentary writers’ agenda.¹⁵⁰ In chapter 22 Hobbes asserts that assemblies like Parliaments cannot represent the multitude since the sovereign, as the representative of the person of the state which itself emerges out of an agreement among the multitude to be represented, is “the absolute Representative of all the subjects,” as a result of which “no other, can be Representative of any part of them, but so far forth, as he shall give leave.”¹⁵¹ Skinner thus comments that, in Hobbes’s account, “Parliaments can never amount to anything more than purely consultative bodies that monarchs may choose to summon from time to time if they happen to want some information or advice,”¹⁵² from which it follows that, Skinner argues, Parliaments cannot have “an independent right at any stage to speak and act in the name of the populace as a whole.”¹⁵³ Otherwise, in Hobbes’s word: “two Sovereigns, over the same people; which cannot consist with their Peace.”¹⁵⁴

IV. Why Are Strauss and Skinner Readers of Hobbes?

Strauss and Skinner, as we have seen, offer different accounts of Hobbes’s theory of the state. More specifically, while Strauss’s reading of Hobbes’s theory of the state is mostly focused on *The Elements* and *De Cive*, Skinner’s account is fully concentrated on *Leviathan*. The pressing question thus is: why are they concerned with different aspects and representations of Hobbes’s theory of the state? An answer to these questions can be found in a more general question: why are Strauss and Skinner readers of Hobbes?

¹⁴⁷ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 206.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 206-7.

¹⁴⁹ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 208.

¹⁵⁰ Skinner, “Hobbes on Representation,” 176.

¹⁵¹ L 22: 156.

¹⁵² Skinner, “Hobbes on Representation,” 176.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 177.

¹⁵⁴ L 22: 162.

Regarding Strauss, we first need to locate his reading of Hobbes's theory of the state in his account of the political philosophy of the English philosopher, and, second, we should situate Hobbes's political philosophy in Strauss's philosophical project.¹⁵⁵ Strauss's estimation of Hobbes's theory of the state is located in chapter 5 of his book *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*. Why is this important? The book can be divided into two parts: in the first five chapters, Strauss concentrates on the basis of Hobbes's political philosophy. In the last two chapters, entitled "The New Morality" and "The New Political Science," Strauss is concerned to demonstrate that there is a distinction between "the political doctrine of Hobbes, as the founder of modern political philosophy" and "that of Plato and Aristotle, as the founders of traditional political philosophy."¹⁵⁶ As we have seen, Strauss highlights that Hobbes's account of passion, on which he erects his theory of the state, is different from that of both Plato and Aristotle. In order to show Hobbes's moral and political philosophy is "new," Strauss, as discussed above, also argues that it is in contrast to the Christian tradition.

After having located Strauss's account of Hobbes's theory of the state in Hobbes's moral and political philosophy, we are in a position to ask: why Strauss is a reader of Hobbes? Briefly speaking, Strauss is concerned with the crisis of modernity, that is, the fact that "modern western man no longer knows what he wants- that he no longer believes that he can know what is good and bad, what is right and wrong."¹⁵⁷ In other words, since these are political and philosophical questions, Strauss claims that "in our time ... political philosophy is impossible."¹⁵⁸ Political philosophy, however, Strauss reports, used to be possible. As a result, Strauss asserts that "the crisis of modernity is then primarily the crisis of modern political philosophy,"¹⁵⁹ and, there should be a distinction between premodern and modern political philosophy.¹⁶⁰ If that is the case, Strauss indicates that we need to ask who is the first political philosopher "who explicitly rejected all earlier political philosophy as fundamentally insufficient and even unsound"? To which he responds that "the man in question was Hobbes."¹⁶¹ Strauss thus reads

¹⁵⁵ For a detailed discussion of Strauss's project see Catherine H. Zuckert, *The Truth About Leo Strauss: Political Philosophy and American Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), esp. ch. 1.

¹⁵⁶ Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, viii.

¹⁵⁷ Strauss, "The Three Waves of Modernity," 81.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

Hobbes in order to distinguish him from Aristotle and Plato. That is why Strauss, in his reading of Hobbes's theory of the state, focuses on *The Elements* and *De Cive* since, Strauss claims, it is the early works in which Hobbes clearly reveals his original motive, i.e. seeking a new science of the state.¹⁶² More generally, Strauss's philosophical project aims to reopen the quarrel between premodern political philosophy, including that of ancient and medieval, and modern political philosophy on the one hand, and to question "the longstanding judgment that the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns had been definitively settled in favor of the moderns."¹⁶³ For Strauss thus Hobbes is a pivotal reading in the quarrel between the ancient and the modern.

Regarding Skinner, unlike Strauss, we cannot locate his reading of Hobbes's theory of the state in his account of Hobbes's political philosophy since Skinner claims that there is no such philosophy in Hobbes. In other words, Skinner acknowledges that "I approach Hobbes's political theory not simply as a general system of ideas but also as a polemical intervention in the ideological conflicts of his time."¹⁶⁴ So, we should alter our question and ask in which political conflicts Hobbes's theory of the state takes part. As we have seen, Skinner claims that Hobbes's theory of representative government was an "epoch-making" response to the debate over sovereign power. On the one hand, the divine right theorists had argued that "sovereignty is the defining attribute of kings."¹⁶⁵ On the other hand, the "democratical gentlemen" had stated that "the body of the people is the original and natural subject of sovereignty."¹⁶⁶ In contrast to both, by developing theories of attributed action, the person of the state, and representation, Hobbes demonstrates that the state is "*One Person, of whose Acts a great Multitude, by mutuall Covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the Author*" and the sovereign "*Present the Person*" of the state.¹⁶⁷

After depicting the political debate in which Hobbes participated, we are able to pose our main question: why is Skinner a reader of Hobbes? It

¹⁶² Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 170.

¹⁶³ Devin Stauffer, "Reopening the Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns: Leo Strauss's Critique of Hobbes's 'New Political Science,'" *American Political Science Review* 101, no. 2 (2007): 223.

¹⁶⁴ Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, xvi.

¹⁶⁵ Skinner, "Hobbes on Representation," 177.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ L 17: 121.

seems that Skinner is concerned with Hobbes even more than Strauss, since the former has written three major books and dozens of papers on the philosopher of Malmesbury.¹⁶⁸ As in the case of Strauss, the answer lies in Skinner's political project. Skinner had begun writing on Hobbes even before he theorized his methodology in the history of political thought. His magnum opus *The Foundation of Modern Political Thought* in 1978, however, was a turning point at which Skinner began writing about civic humanism and republicanism. These two topics, Hobbes and republicanism, finally came together in 1990s the result of which was Skinner's anti-republican reading of Hobbes. Skinner develops his reading in three books. In *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* Skinner argues that Hobbes had begun his writing with a concern for humanism. But, in *The Elements* and *De Cive*, that concern turned to scientific method. Hobbes, however, failed to keep up with his scientific method and finally in *Leviathan* and its Latin version he took refuge in rhetoric again. Such a return to rhetoric and humanism, in Skinner's account, stemmed from the fact that rhetoric was a republican style of persuasion to which Hobbes objected. As a result, Skinner takes his first step in his anti-republican reading of Hobbes. The second step takes place in *Liberty before Liberalism* in which Skinner develops his republican ideal of freedom, that is, liberty as "non-dependency" or "non-domination," to which Hobbes opposes by his liberal definition of freedom as "non-interference." Finally, in *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* Skinner presents his reading of Hobbes as "the most formidable enemy" of republican liberty.¹⁶⁹ To recap, in *Reason and Rhetoric* and *Liberty before Liberalism* Skinner plants the seed of his anti-republican reading of Hobbes the fruit of which reaps in *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*.

Skinner's reading of Hobbes's theory of the state follows the same logic. Republicanism is a theory of both state and freedom.¹⁷⁰ Skinner thus reads Hobbes to demonstrate that his theory of the state is also in contrast to the republican tradition, i.e. the parliamentarian writers. That is why Skinner's reading of Hobbes's theory of the state, in contrast to that of Strauss, is mainly focused on *Leviathan* since, Skinner claims, it is *Leviathan* in which Hobbes offers his theory of representative government against the

¹⁶⁸ Skinner's forth book is forthcoming: *From Humanism to Hobbes* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2017).

¹⁶⁹ Collins, "Quentin Skinner's Hobbes and the Neo-Republican Project," 344-48.

¹⁷⁰ Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997).

Parliamentarian writers.¹⁷¹ More generally, in Skinner's account, modern political thought evolved out of the question of popular sovereignty in northern Italy early in the last millennium and then in northern Europe during thirteenth and seventeenth centuries. Whereas popular government was advocated by republicans, Levellers and constitutionalists, Hobbes, Skinner claims, opposed all of them.¹⁷² More specifically, in his seminal paper "The State" in 1989, Skinner takes pains to demonstrate in detail how the modern concept of the state had evolved.¹⁷³ From the point of view of our present question here, why Skinner reads Hobbes's theory of the state, however, it is illuminating to note that, after having composed his reading of Hobbes's theory of the person of the state in 1999, Skinner revised his paper, "The State," and changed its title to "From the State of Princes to the Person of the State" in 2002.¹⁷⁴ In other words, Skinner now realizes where to locate Hobbes's state in his political project: "it would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that, by placing the concept of artificial personality at the heart of his civil science, Hobbes closes one chapter in the history of the modern theory of the state and opens another and more familiar one."¹⁷⁵ Skinner, however, confesses that republican writers had lost the battle with Hobbes, but "it is still worth asking if he won the argument."¹⁷⁶ Skinner reads and criticizes Hobbes in order to demonstrate that republicanism could have won the argument.

Conclusion

In this paper, regarding Hobbes's theory of the state, I have posed two questions to which both Strauss and Skinner provide different answers. According to the first question, what Hobbes's theory of the state is, both Strauss and Skinner claim to have provided philosophical explanations. Strauss argues that Hobbes's theory of the state emerges out of his struggle between the natural state, religion, and monarchy on the one hand, and the artificial state and democracy on the other hand. Strauss demonstrates that, as explained above, Hobbes began with the best form of the natural state, i.e. the patrimonial monarchy the priority of which can also be defended by theological arguments. From the outset, Hobbes was also aware of the

¹⁷¹ Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science*, 180.

¹⁷² Hoekstra, "A Lion in the House: Hobbes and Democracy," 191.

¹⁷³ Quentin Skinner, "The State," in *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, 90-131.

¹⁷⁴ Quentin Skinner, in *Visions of Politics*, Vol. 2, *Renaissance Virtues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 368-413.

¹⁷⁵ Skinner, *Regarding Method*, 14.

¹⁷⁶ Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, 216.

advantages of the artificial state and its primary form, i.e. democracy. From *The Elements* to *Leviathan*, however, Hobbes gradually moved from the natural state to the artificial state on the one hand, and from deploying theological arguments to the rejection of the authority of scripture on the other hand. By prioritizing fear of violent death over hope, Hobbes also demonstrates preference for monarchy over democracy. In his final theory of the state, democracy is epitomized by the artificial aspect of the theory, and the natural state is maintained in the monarchic aspect of the theory. Religion, nonetheless, is completely subjugated to the state. Skinner, however, is concerned with none of these concepts. Skinner, as we have seen, is concerned with the concepts such as attributed action, the person of the state, and representation. In a complex reading, Skinner claims that two persons emerge out of people's covenant: the purely artificial person of the state and the sovereign who represents the former. What connects the people with these two persons is the concept of attributed action. People are responsible for actions which are done by the sovereign who is the representative of the person of the state. Regarding the second question, why Hobbes developed his theory of the state, we have also seen that Strauss's answer is distinct from that of Skinner. Whereas Strauss believes Hobbes developed his political philosophy generally and his theory of the state in particular against the ancient and Christian traditions, Skinner claims that it was theorized against the republican tradition. I have also posed the question of why Strauss and Skinner are readers of Hobbes. The answer, I have depicted, lies in their political-philosophical projects. For both Strauss and Skinner, as I demonstrated above, Hobbes is a foil for underlining the ancient and republican traditions respectively. More generally, they both want to reopen two battles. Whereas Strauss "Hobbesifies" modern political philosophy to critique it, Skinner tries to "liberalize" Hobbes for bringing to the fore his distinction with the republican writers.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁷ Collins, "Quentin Skinner's Hobbes and the Neo-Republican Project," 350.

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Toleration:
Towards a Prudential-Principled Argument
(Research Proposal)

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1. Summary

After more than three centuries of its conceptualization, toleration is still an issue. Toleration has always been investigated by two arguments: principled and prudential. Both arguments, however, fall short to fully explore the problems of toleration since each focuses on one issue at the expense of another one. Theorists of the principled argument, the founding father of which is John Locke, claim that freedom of expression is a right, but they ignore, or do not discuss, the fact that not all expressions can be tolerated. Proponents of the prudential argument, which harks back to Hobbes, argue that toleration is a political necessity, but they ignore the fact that political consideration may infringe people's right. My project, first, aims to bring to the fore that both arguments should be seen in a broader picture, that is, the relationship between theories of the state and liberty on the one hand, and toleration on the other. Second, I will argue that Spinoza's theory of toleration can shed new light on current issues regarding freedom of expression in that his toleration theory is both principled and prudential and belong to a republican account of the state and liberty.

(Word Count: 194)

2. Description of the Proposed Research

2.1. The Problem

At the heart of debate over toleration there are two main arguments: principled and prudential. According to the former, toleration is, and should be, based on a moral right. On the contrary, according to the latter, toleration is, and should be, a political necessity. Both arguments, however, raise grave questions. On the one hand, principled arguments take pains to establish a common ground upon which toleration can be justified. Such a ground locates principled arguments in the liberal tradition which harks back to John Locke.¹ Liberal toleration, nevertheless, has come into challenging questions: can liberal democracies retain a neutral position in relation to religious diversity; how ought the boundary between what is and is not tolerable be inscribed? Insofar as liberal, democracies are concerned with preserving the rights and freedoms of its citizens, so how are they to engage individuals who prioritize the salvation of the few over the good of the many and who recognize secularism as a threat to their ways of being in the world?

Prudential arguments, on the other hand, propose that toleration is necessary for the peace and stability of the society and the state. Since the peace of the society is an absolute priority, freedom of expression cannot be based on a moral right the

¹ Stephen Macedo, "Toleration," in *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, eds. Robert E. Goodin, , Phillip Pettit, and Thomas W. Pogge (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 813.

result of which is that, in Alan Ryan's criterion,² prudential argument is outside of the liberal framework. Such a prudential approach can be traced back to Hobbes.³ Like principled arguments, prudential toleration has also raised pressing questions: how is it possible to realize an expression dangerous to the peace of the society? What sort of expression does undermine peace? Who is to decide that? How far should toleration go?

Both arguments, as we have seen, fall short to grapple with the questions of toleration. While on the one hand, toleration needs to be based on a moral ground, such a ground, on the other hand, is not enough to secure toleration. To put the question other way around, although toleration demands prudential consideration, such considerations might wind up in arbitrariness. This research aims to fill this lacuna by investigating the ground on which a compromise can be reached between principled and prudential arguments. I will argue that such a compromise can be found in Spinoza. Spinoza's theory of toleration is neither principled nor prudential, but both simultaneously. In my project, I will demonstrate that the difference between Spinoza's theory of toleration on the one hand, and those of Hobbes and Locke on the other hand, stems from their distinct accounts of the state and liberty.

2.2. Historical and Philosophical Background

Both Hobbes and Locke belong to the liberal tradition. The difference is that whereas the former has been considered as the founder of the tradition, the latter has always been praised as "the saint of liberalism."⁴ Paradoxically, Hobbes's theory of toleration had received attention long after Locke's. Sir Leslie Stephen, in his book on Hobbes in 1904, referred to a neglected passage in *Leviathan* in which Hobbes favors "Independentism" and describes it as "perhaps the best."⁵ Since then, other readers of Hobbes such as Strauss, Ryan, and Tuck have erected Hobbes's theory of toleration on the aforementioned passage in *Leviathan*.⁶ Hobbes's argument for toleration is prudential since it is based on the peace of the commonwealth. Although Hobbes endorses uniformity and subjugation of religion, he declares that

² "The advocacy or denial of toleration as a matter of right divides the liberal and the nonliberal more sharply than anything else," Alan Ryan, "Liberalism," in *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, 369. In my research, however, I will cast doubt on Ryan's criterion.

³ Ibid. See also Arash Abizadeh, "Publicity, Privacy, and Religious Toleration in Hobbes's *Leviathan*," *Modern Intellectual History* 10, no 2 (2013): 271-76.

⁴ Alan Ryan, "A More Tolerant Hobbes," in *Justifying Toleration: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives*, ed. S. Mendus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 40.

⁵ Leslie Stephen, *Hobbes* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), 233; Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 479-80.

⁶ Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Genesis*, trans. Elsa Sinclair (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), see esp. 73; Alan Ryan, "Hobbes, Toleration, and the Inner Life," in *The Nature of Political Theory*, eds. David Miller and Larry Siedentop (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 197-218; Richard Tuck, "Hobbes and Locke on Toleration," in *Thomas Hobbes and Political Theory*, ed. Mary Dietz (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990), 153-71.

when such uniformity might endanger the peace, independency could be a second-best option.⁷

Locke's theory of toleration is the most famous and attractive in the history of political thought. Since his *Letter Concerning Toleration*, he has always been at the heart of debates about toleration. Yet, his account of toleration has also come into question in that it is theological,⁸ ethically thin, and excludes other sects.⁹ Locke's theory, however, remains in sharp contrast to that of Hobbes since it separates the realms between the church and the commonwealth and insists that salvation is a personal issue.¹⁰ These are tenets that awarded him the founder of liberal toleration.

Spinoza's theory of toleration historically precedes that of Locke, and it is more systematic than Hobbes's; yet, it has not received much attention.¹¹ It has been argued, however, that Spinoza's theory is "the most sweeping" and "the most important" toleration theory.¹² This is so because, in contrast to Locke, it embraces both freedom of thought and expression. Spinoza's theory is principled in that it accepts the right of individuals over their consciences, and it is prudential since it emphasizes the peace and stability of the state.

2.3. State of the Art

Much ink has been spilled on Locke's theory of toleration to the extent that it is physically impossible to read them all. Commentators, however, have recently tried to redeem Locke's theory of toleration and connect it to the contemporary issues such as hate speech.¹³ Teresa Bejan argues that Locke does not offer a "mere toleration"; rather, he is also concerned with disagreement and incivility in the society.¹⁴ Others have gone further and suggest an ethical reading of Locke's

⁷ Abizadeh, "Publicity, Privacy, and Religious Toleration in Hobbes's Leviathan," 275.

⁸ Jonathan Israel, "Spinoza, Locke and the Enlightenment Battle for Toleration," in *Toleration in Enlightenment Europe*, ed. O. P. Grell and R. Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 103.

⁹ Teresa Bejan, "Locke on Toleration, (In)Civility and the Quest for Concord," *History of Political Thought* 37, no 3 (2016), 557; see also Jeremy Waldron, "Locke: toleration and the rationality of persecution," in *Justifying Toleration: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives*, 61–86; Susan Mendus, *Toleration and the Limits of Liberalism* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1989).

¹⁰ Stephen Macedo, "Toleration," 814.

¹¹ Jonathan Israel, "Introduction," in *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. M. Silverthorne and J. Israel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), xxii.; Edvin Curley also claims Spinoza has been neglected in Anglo-American tradition, see his "Kissinger, Spinoza, and Genghis Khan," in *Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, ed. D. Garret (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 315.

¹² Israel, "Introduction," xxii.

¹³ Jeremy Waldron, *The Harm in Hate Speech* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), ch. 7; Richard Vernon, "Lockean Toleration: Dialogical not Theological," *Political Studies* 61, no. 1 (2013): 215-30.

¹⁴ Bejan, "Locke on Toleration," 556-587.

theory.¹⁵ Thanks to contextual approach to the history of political thought, Hobbes's theory of toleration has recently received new attention. Bejan demonstrates that Hobbes offer two solutions to disagreements among people in a society discipline and education.¹⁶ Other commentators have tried to locate Hobbes's "Independentism" in its context and argue that Hobbes to some extent allows freedom of public worship.¹⁷ Jonathan Israel's reading of Spinoza as a radical thinker has recently animated a new interest on Spinoza. Israel argues that Spinoza's theory of toleration is more important and expansive than Locke.¹⁸ Whereas Justin Steinberg argues that Spinoza's theory of toleration is prudential and "circumstance-relative,"¹⁹ Steven Nadler claims Spinoza offer a principled argument.²⁰

2.4. Scientific Contribution of the Proposed Research

The proposed project diverts from the aforementioned scholarship in the way that they either ignored, or briefly discussed, the relationship between toleration, the state, and freedom. My project, however, mainly focuses on the ways in which Locke's, Hobbes's and Spinoza's definitions of the state and liberty influence their accounts of toleration. The only commentator who adopts this approach is Michael Rosenthal; however, due to the brevity of the paper, he does not portray a full picture of the relationship between the state, liberty, and toleration, and he focuses only on Spinoza.²¹

2.5. The Research Project

In this project, I will demonstrate that Spinoza's theory of toleration is both prudential and principled. In doing so, I will argue that such an aspect of his

¹⁵ Steven Forde, "The Charitable John Locke," *The Review of Politics* 71, no. 3 (2009): 428–58; Robert Lamb and Benjamin Thompson, "The Meaning of Charity in Locke's Political Thought," *European Journal of Political Theory* 8, no. 2 (2009): 229–52.

¹⁶ Teresa Bejan, "Difference without Disagreement: Re-thinking Hobbes on 'Independency' and Toleration," *The Review of Politics* 78, no. 1 (2016): 1-25.

¹⁷ Jeremy Waldron, "Hobbes on Public Worship," in *Toleration and its limits*, ed. M. S. Williams and Jeremy Waldron (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 31-53; see also Edwin Curley, "Hobbes and the Cause of Religious Toleration," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's Leviathan*, ed. P. Springborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 309-336; J. Judd Owen, "The Tolerant Leviathan: Hobbes and the Paradox of Liberalism," *Polity* 37, no. 1 (2005): 130–48.

¹⁸ Jonathan Israel, "Spinoza's Liberty of Thought and Expression," in *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man, 1670–1752* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 155-63.

¹⁹ Justin Steinberg, "Spinoza's Curious Defense of Toleration," in *Spinoza's 'Theological-Political Treatise': a Critical Guide*, eds. Yitzhak Y. Melamed and Michael A. Rosenthal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 210-230.

²⁰ Steven Nadler, *A Book Forged in Hell: Spinoza's Scandalous Treatise and the Birth of the Secular Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 200-14.

²¹ Michael A. Rosenthal, "Spinoza's Republican Argument for Toleration," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 11, no 3 (2008): 320-37.

toleration theory stems from his theories of the state and liberty. I will investigate the ways in which the definitions of the state and liberty steer the definition of toleration. Toleration is about the scope and limits of freedom and cannot be fully understood without grappling with the question of liberty. The definition of freedom is also cannot be grasped without its connection with the theory of the state. In my project, I will explore such a nexus in the political philosophies of Hobbes, Locke, and Spinoza. Much is known about these thinkers' theories of toleration, but it has not been fully attempted how their theories are influenced by their accounts of the state and liberty. I plan to offer a systematic reading of the relationship between the state, liberty, and toleration.

Hobbes argues that religious authority should be subjugated to secular authority.²² This is an exact opposite of Locke's account of the state. For Locke there is a distinction between sacred and secular realms the authorities over which are church and the state respectively. Their boundaries, in Locke's account, are fixed, and they cannot interfere with each other.²³ Hobbes's subjugation of the religion is the cause of his toleration theory.²⁴ In Hobbes's account, religious authority does not have the power to force people to seek salvation. Hobbes's state, however, does have such a power, but he advises the sovereign that when uniformity of religion is dangerous to the peace of the state, toleration is the best option.²⁵ In Locke's estimation, neither the state nor the church possesses such a power. Man's salvation is an individual choice and should be tolerated by both the state and the church. Spinoza's state, like Hobbes's, and unlike Locke's, also seeks for the subordination of religious authority to secular authority.²⁶ Spinoza's toleration theory, however, is not based on the necessity of man's salvation; rather, it is based on freedom of thought and expression. A free state is the one which tolerates and promotes freedom of thought.

Such a relation between the state and toleration can also be deciphered between liberty and toleration. Both Hobbes's and Locke's accounts of freedom are negative, that is, freedom of non-interference. Both argue that people are free to pursue their wills unless there is a law against a will. As a result, In Hobbes's account, when there is no law against religious beliefs, the sovereign should tolerate people's religious thought. In Locke's estimation, however, there should not be any law at all. In contrast to both Hobbes and Locke, Spinoza's positive account of freedom is based on civic virtue and human good. For Spinoza, toleration is both a

²² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 269.

²³ John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689), ed. J. H. Tully (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1985), 33.

²⁴ Curley, "Hobbes and the Cause of Religious Toleration," 326.

²⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 479-80.

²⁶ Benedict De Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. M. Silverthorne and J. Israel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), ch.19, § 5.

civic virtue, by which people promote toleration among themselves, and a political solution, by which the relation between the state and the people can be moderated. That is why Spinoza insists that the aim of the state is freedom.²⁷ Such a freedom can be achieved by active role of the citizens in the state. Whereas Hobbes and Locke do not prefer any form of the government, Spinoza suggests that democracy is the best form of the government since it promotes participation. Toleration is thus necessary in order to encourage people to participate in the state.

2.6. Aim and Methodology

By ways of historical and textual analysis, comparative studies, and conceptual argumentation, this projects aims to shed new light on the concept of toleration and its relation to those of the state and liberty. In so doing, early modern political thought and comparative study are the best substantive and methodological choices. This is so because the concept of toleration emerged in the West in the early modern period,²⁸ and it was a contested concept.²⁹ My aim thus is not to merely interpret Hobbes's, Locke's and Spinoza's toleration theories; this has already been done. Rather, this project opts to demonstrate that toleration is not an isolated concept but related to political-philosophical system of its theorist. Such systematic reading of toleration theories, I will demonstrate, allows us to highlight the prudential-principled aspect of Spinoza's theory of toleration which can address unaddressed problems in both prudential and principled approaches.

(Word Count: 2486 [including footnotes])

3. Summary in Keywords

Toleration, the state, liberty, prudential, principled, Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke

4. Timetable

Year 1 and 2: The first stage of the project is estimated to need two years of reading and writing. I will divide the first stage into three parts each of which may require six to eight months. In the first part, I will focus on Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* and his *Letter Concerning Toleration*. I shall try to bring to the fore the relationship between the two and depicting why they belong to the liberal tradition. The second part will be focused on Hobbes's *Leviathan* and will follow the same approach. In contrast to Locke, I also need to defend the liberal reading of Hobbes. In the last part of the first stage of the project, I shall provide critiques of the liberal toleration and will try to trace them back to the Locke's and Hobbes's theories.

²⁷ Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, ch.20, § 6.

²⁸ Peter Zagorin, "Religious Toleration," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy*, ed. G. Klosko (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 689; see also Peter Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

²⁹ Israel, *Enlightenment Contested*, 135-63.

Year 3: The second stage of the project will take up one year and will be divided to two parts. The first part, which will take up nine months, will be devoted to Spinoza's political philosophy. Specifically, I will develop a republican reading of Spinoza's theories of the state and liberty. I will engage in the secondary literature, such as *Spinoza and the Rise of Liberalism* and *Spinoza and Republicanism* to give context to my reading.³⁰ In the second part, the last three months, I will locate Spinoza's theory of toleration in the republican tradition.

Year 4: The fourth year of the project will be devoted entirely to compare the result of foregoing three years and to write a PhD thesis.

5. Summary for Non-specialists

Toleration is still a problem. Specifically, freedom of expression, both of religion and speech, is being attacked and being misused simultaneously. First, it is under attack by the state even more than three hundred years after its modern birth in the early modern period. The state, however, is not the only problem. While the contemporary states seem more tolerant than before, toleration is still a problem among the people. We are witnessing that speeches are being halted by students at universities even though the speech in question is allowed by the authorities. In other words, social groups in the same society accuse each other of misusing free speech. Traditionally, there are two arguments for these problems. First, the principled argument suggests that toleration is a moral right, and the state and the people have to tolerate each other. To put it simply, toleration is a principle and non-negotiable. Such a definition, however, raises challenging problems. If all of us have the right to express our opinions, there will be conflicts among different opinions in a society. Is the liberal state can take a neutral position in these conflicts? Is everything can be tolerated? Even John Locke, the father of liberal tradition, confessed that not all people can be tolerated. Second, the prudential argument claims that toleration is a mean and not a right. It is, in Hobbes's word, a mean for the peace and stability of the society and the state. Thus, toleration should be considered on a case by case basis. This approach is also problematic. Who is to decide about the cases? On what criteria decisions should be made?

In contrast to both arguments, there is Spinoza's toleration theory. He offers a prudential-principled argument which is neither principled nor prudential, but both simultaneously. It is not principled since Spinoza believes that the peace of the society is more important than any other rights. It is not a mere prudential approach in that Spinoza asserts that minds cannot be compelled. Spinoza's toleration theory, however, is prudential-principled due to the fact he sees toleration as both moral and political problems. Morally, people should learn how to tolerate each other.

³⁰ Lewis S. Feuer, *Spinoza and the Rise of Liberalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958); Raia Prokhovnik, *Spinoza and Republicanism* (Basingstoke Etc.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

Politically, the state should practice toleration for the peace of the society. In other words, according to people as a problem, Spinoza suggests that toleration should be promoted as a civic virtue. According to the state as a problem, Spinoza warns the states that they cannot fully control minds and speech.

In my project, I aim to compare Spinoza's toleration theory with those of Locke's and Hobbes's. I will discuss that what makes their approaches different is not just prudential or principled arguments; rather, it is their different account of the state and liberty which is decisive. I will demonstrate that current issues regarding toleration can be traced back to the liberal tradition. Then, I shall argue that Spinoza's republican approach can help us to shed new light on these problems.

(Word Count: 490)

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