# Man: Body and Will—Hobbes's theory of representation

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*This article examines the nature of the will and its connection to representation in Hobbes's political philosophy. The argument is that Hobbes's notion of willing is not an empty formalism but hinges upon a dynamic and fluid account of human nature which informs the sovereign and its subjects concerning the dangers of representing and being represented. The position taken stresses Hobbes's use of the metaphor of the stage in his account of representation. In conclusion, the argument is advanced that Hobbes's position is flawed by an emphasis upon an individualistic subjectivity which makes representation subject to insurmountable difficulties.*

## Introduction

Hobbes is often taken as the model case of a voluntarist account of political obligation (for example, Hirschmann, 1989). A voluntarist account emphasizes the role of free will or voluntary acts in the consensual act of creating political obligations. Consequently, one must come to terms with Hobbes's view of the faculty of the will as making possible the acts of authorization (Martin, 1980) to create the artificial person who would represent its creators. But the nature of the will itself is, for Hobbes, a consequence of his view of human mental processes (Trainor, 1985). In turn, Hobbes's theory of representation depends upon an imaginative use of the metaphor of the stage which flows from his attempt to forge a linkage between the judgments emerging from those mental processes and the acts of the sovereign. That theory of representation succeeds or fails largely on the cogency of his account of the will.

I shall attempt to show how it is that Hobbes best helps us understand the dilemmas of representation if he is read as providing an account of the mental life of prospective subjects characterized by the turmoil of "decaying

sense," "imagination," "deliberations," and other "seemings." This interpretation is in contrast to the rigid and mechanistic interpretations of Hobbes popularized by those who see Hobbes as providing a prescription for proto-totalitarianism (Macpherson, 1964; Pitkin, 1964).

It ought not be surprising that Hobbes's conception of the will is given little attention. Considerable attention is lavished upon literary issues in political theory in general, and Hobbes is no exception (Johnson, 1986; Whelan, 1981; Danford, 1980). But very little is made of Hobbes's account of mental faculties. This is likely due to the assumption current among most commentators that Hobbes proceeds deductively from intuited postulates (Bluhm, 1971; Sabine, 1973, pp. 424-5; Berns, 1963; Pitkin, 1964). Hobbes is generally seen as the great political geometrician. Using external preferences for peace and orderly commerce, Hobbes is supposed to arrive at a coherent, rigid set of formulae for absolutism (Warrender, 1971; Jacobson, 1971). This paper offers an account of the will contained within Hobbes's account of mental processes.

Hobbes's conception of the will is rarely dealt with systematically. Where there is attention to the will in Hobbes's theory, it is usually in isolation (Riley, 1982, Chapter 2; Sibley, 1970), or as the prelude to the act of covenanting (Trainor, 1985; Martin, 1980). Often, the place of the will in Hobbes's theory is ignored altogether. This is most notable in Macperson's (1964) influential and mechanistic account of Hobbes's psychology.

The most comprehensive exposition with respect to Hobbes's theory of representation is the body of works by Hanna Pitkin (1964, 1972). Pitkin argues that "the very problems that he solved formally, on a logical plane . . . can in fact be solved empirically by the very aspects of representation that he overlooked." (Pitkin, 1964, p. 918) She concludes that although Hobbes was "sincere...[h]is definition is not so much false as incomplete. It stresses only the formal aspects of what it means to represent someone." (1972, p. 35)

Hobbes does, in fact, take into account precisely those empirical aspects of representation. This view is based upon using Hobbes's discussion of human mental processes as a context for the faculty of willing and the consequent creation of a representative sovereign understandable to Hobbes only through the surreal appeal to a metaphor — that of the *stage*, no less (Dallmayr, 1969).

## Hobbes's Method

The focus of this paper is Hobbes's 1651 masterwork, *Leviathan*. This work brings together Hobbes's thoughts in what he felt to be their most cogent form. To understand the order of the *Leviathan*, one must recall what

Hobbes himself says about his project. In his "Introduction," Hobbes makes the famous analogy of the human body to a machine: "for seeing life is but a motion of limbs." (p. 19) This is usually understood as if Hobbes had said that life is but a motion, instead of an alternative possibility that motion is all of life that we see. What follows in Hobbes supports the alternative interpretation that the analogy with motion suggests the difficulty of understanding the passions of others. In turn, this leads to a summation of the difficulty for rulers:

> He that is to govern a whole nation, must read in himself, not this or that particular man; but mankind; which though it be hard to do, harder than to learn any language or science; yet when I shall have set down my own reading orderly, and perspicuously, the pains left another, will be only to consider, if he also find not the same in himself. (pp. 19-20)

The problem as Hobbes sees it is that we can not "see" beneath the surface of any human. The only recourse we have is to examine our own mental processes, our consciousness, in an imaginative attempt to comprehend what might be going on in the minds of others.

**Mental Processes**

Hobbes begins that imaginative effort in the first five chapters of the *Leviathan*. He deals in turn with "sense," "imagination," "trains of imaginations," "speech," and "reason" before coming to the "will" in chapter six. It is important then that we follow him in an "orderly and perspicuous" fashion.

A thought is for Hobbes a representation of something outside of us. A conception is then dependent upon a sense. "Imagination . . .is nothing but *decaying sense*." (Hobbes's emphasis, p. 23) Hobbes is suggesting that through introspection we may find a series of pictures, symbols, or signs which, though dependent upon sensory experience themselves gradually, fall away from that which produced it. As we recall the decay, inexactly, we have memory. The important point is that the pictures in our minds are never a match for reality. They are mere representations, and hazy at best.

In Hobbes's view, understanding is something not unique to human beings as it can be "raised" in other animals such as dogs through custom or habit. In this connection Hobbes first mentions the will as something recognized by men or dogs as belonging to the master. Understanding insofar as it is special to humans "is the understanding" not only of the master's "will,

but his conceptions and thoughts, by the sequel and contexture of the names of things into affirmations, negations, and other forms of speech." (p. 27) Anticipating the relationship of subject and sovereign, Hobbes notes that humans can guess accurately at the conceptions of others by way of the context in which the motions of others take place. We must, however, supply the context ourselves. This context is the train of thoughts we have within us. Hobbes calls this train of thoughts "mental discourse" implying an exchange within our conceptions, themselves decaying sense. We talk to ourselves, "re-presenting" the actions, words, and deeds of others in a conscious empathetic act. Thus, we may be said to "understand" another, but only through the process of representation.

Chapter 5 of the *Leviathan* is pivotal to Hobbes's argument. The mental discourses which go on within us are, of necessity, based upon sensory experiences. These sensory experiences are manifestly different for each of us. Further, if we assume (and Hobbes is not explicit about this) that our mental talents are different, then even if we were to have the same experiences, our "decaying sense" would shape them differently. The question which arises is how is it possible for us to communicate well enough to enter into a civil society?

In his effort to answer this question, Hobbes's treatment of the human faculty of reason seems to go off in a different direction than his analysis of our mental discourses.[1] Whereas our mental discourses are profoundly individualistic in nature, reason would seem to operate the same way in each of us. Reason is for Hobbes an adding and subtracting, "done by words . . . conceived of the consequence of the names of all the parts, to the name of the whole." (p. 41) Reason then "reckons consequences," but those consequences are the products of "general names agreed upon for the <u>marking</u> and <u>signifying</u> of our thoughts." (p. 41) Marking indicates for Hobbes an agreement with one's own self. Signifying indicates an agreement with others. Obviously, we might have difficulty remembering our own markings; but how difficult it must be to reach those agreements with others, particularly in the state of nature. Still, Hobbes asserts that reason does function for each of us. This is an assumption which is ultimately unprovable in Hobbes's own view but necessary if communication is to be at all possible. Reason is necessary, after all, for the laws of nature without which agreement to the political covenant would be problematic.

The end result is that if we all think about the same thing, reason functions in such a way that we all reach the same conclusions. But, of course, we cannot, in Hobbes's view, know for certain that we are thinking of the same thing. Thus, we still need to be able to will.

## The Will

In our mental discourses we are unsure of even that which we would mark for ourselves; still, we need to act even though we are faced with the terrible dangers of the state of nature. (pp. 98-99) The concept of will must perform a crucial function for Hobbes, given his account of our mental processes. If we were merely mechanically reasonable then the will could be interpreted mechanistically too. But we are passionate as well, and given our fear of death, Hobbes needs to give an account of the will which is compelling both in its correctness as well as in its ability to sway us when our passions are not so consumed by those fears pushing us into civil society. Hobbes needs to convince us that we will in a way that always dictates obligations and that we always will no matter what the circumstances. Fear and necessity do not provide an excuse for voiding obligations later on.

Thus, Hobbes asserts:

> and because *going*, *speaking*, and the like voluntary motions, depend always upon a precedent thought of *whither*, *which way*, and *what*, it is evident, that the imagination is the first internal beginning of all voluntary motion. (p. 47)

The appetites for Hobbes signify those things we voluntarily move toward or avoid. Hobbes's account of deliberation suggests again the difficulty of acting:

> *Deliberation*, when in the mind of man, appetites, and aversions, hopes, and fears, concerning one and the same thing, arise alternately; and divers good and evil consequences of the doing, or omitting the thing propounded, come successively into our thoughts; so that sometimes we have an appetite to it; sometimes an aversion from it; sometimes hope to be able to do it; sometimes despair, or aversions, hopes and fears continued till the thing be either done, or thought impossible, is that we call DELIBERATION. (p. 53)

Finally, Hobbes stipulates the will is "the last appetite, or aversion, immediately adhering to the action, or to the omission thereof." (p. 54) Without forgeting that some motions are involuntary, as are some appetites or aversions, we must be equally on guard against talking as if the will is produced by reason. The will is ultimately a passion, an appetite, and thus, a

conception. Conceptions were defined at the outset by Hobbes as "seemings." When we deliberate, we work on "seemings" again. We conclude our deliberations always choosing a "seeming good." (p. 55) We are, Hobbes emphasizes, probably incorrect in our assessments. And, then, for Hobbes, once deliberation is over, an end is put to the liberty we had. (p. 53)

What is the liberty we lose? Hobbes calls liberty the "absence of external impediments." (p. 103) The will puts an end to liberty by completing the process of deliberating, thus rendering impediments or their absence irrelevant. For instance, if a robber demands, "Your money or your life," (p. 110) a certain impediment exists to one's liberty. But Hobbes insists the will might choose either alternative. Even if the reason counsels surrender, the will must put an end to our deliberations. Once it has done so, we are without the liberty to choose otherwise. The die is cast.

Hobbes's will then acts. As in Bergson's metaphor, the will for Hobbes performs "often like a *coup d'etat*." (Arendt, 1978, 101) By putting an end to deliberation rather than merely *being* the end, the will, in Hobbes's account, carries more importance both in theory and in the practice of convincing passionate readers. Arendt (1978, p. 26) argues that Hobbes needs to supply the will with power. It is in this sense of the will as a mental *coup d'etat* that Hobbes is able to supply the will with that power—in the sense of power as the capacity for action.

The will's power has, as well, important consequences for Hobbes's theory of right. A right is the "liberty to do, or to forebear." (Hobbes, 1962, p.103) If the will renders impediments to our liberty irrelevant, what is the relationship of a "right" to the will? Hobbes asserts that if one wills a motion, the motion may be either done by right or not, apparently regardless of the presence or absence of external impediments. This approach makes a right irrelevant as well unless we think of right as something to be willed. A right becomes the capacity to choose. When we give up rights, as in covenanting, we "forebear" (p. 103) our liberty to choose. In this light Hobbes's definition of a contract, a "mutual transference of right" (p. 106) becomes a mutual transference of will. One agrees that one ought not will the dissolution of the political covenant.

Accordingly, a covenant for Hobbes is a promise, indicated by such phrases as "*I will give, I will grant*." (p. 106) When I "will" give or grant a thing, I put an end to my liberty, by putting an end to deliberation. My deliberation comes to an end as each act of the will takes place. Thus, when our reason informs us through the laws of nature that we must honor our covenants, the obligation is empowered by our will.

Is the will free then? To answer this we first have to be careful of suggesting that an action be both voluntary and involuntary. If we think an act

is involuntary because the will is somehow frustrated, then we fall into what Hobbes would consider an absurd manner of speech. He makes it clear that aversion and fear can produce voluntary actions as completely as could, say, lust. (p. 54) Thus, the freedom of the will may remain a philosophic problem, but it is surely a political fact.[2] Hobbes's assertion of the freedom of the will explains how necessity and fear do not render our covenants invalid. The great practical application of this conclusion is to be found in Hobbes's conception of representation.

**Representation**

Hobbes's discussion of representation depends on two distinctions and a metaphor, all from Chapter 16 of *Leviathan*.[3] The first distinction is between natural and artificial persons. For Hobbes, a person is "he, whose words or actions are considered either as his own, or as representing the words or actions of another man, or of any other thing, to whom they are attributed, whether truly or by fiction." (Hobbes, 1962, p.125) A person may either act or represent. If a person acts, i.e., if a set of words or deeds are to be considered to be of the person performing them, then the person is a natural person. On the other hand, if a person represents, i.e., if his words or deeds are to be considered of another, then the person is a "feigned or artificial person." (p. 125) Thus, a natural person acts, and an artificial person represents the actions of a natural person.

The parallel distinction between artificial and natural persons is that of the author and actor. For Hobbes, the "owner" of an action is the author of a action. The acts of an author are analogous to the possessions of a landowner. They are his, and actions or deeds pertaining to them are done by right. On the other hand, an actor performs a particular deed. If the deeds or actions belong like a possession to the actor, then the actor is also the author of the action, and, we may assume, a natural person. But if the actions of an actor belong to another, then the actor is an artificial person and, we may assume, merely carrying out a representative function. Furthermore, an action is always said to be carried out by an actor. The trick is determining who the author of an action is. Presumably one may carry out one's own deeds. Thus, one might be both actor and author of a deed. Moreover, it might even be said that one who performs one's own action is both a natural person and an artificial person. This could be claimed insofar as anyone who acts bears a *persona*, a face, or a mask. Thus, anyone who acts does not intend to reveal himself utterly. Everyone is then an actor and, therefore, artificial. The implication of Hobbes's distinction reveals something important about the

way he regards public life. Politics is not, for Hobbes, a place of intimacy as it is for Burke or Rosseau. It is a realm of conflict, competition, and tragedy.

Hobbes is clear about the importance, the difficulties, and the dangers of this authorization which creates the representative.[4] There are two aspects of any authorization that must be understood: they are not limiting nor are they escape clauses, for both are inappropriate to our considerations. First, the author of an action may not be said to be responsible or "obliged" for actions which are not his, i.e., which he did not authorize. As Hobbes puts it: "For no man is obliged by a covenant, whereof he is not author." (p. 126). Secondly, an actor is, likewise, not responsible for actions performed within an authorization duly covenanted.

It is through this "miracle" of authorization, an act of willing, that representation may be created. In only this fashion, so far as Hobbes can see, can each member of a multitude each be represented by a single person. Of course, this requires the authorization of each and the understanding of an actor as to the nature and scope of the authority in question. To unravel these knots Hobbes leads us to the metaphor of the stage:

> The word person is Latin...which signifies the *face*, as *persona* in Latin signifies the *disguise*, or *outward appearance* of a man, counterfeited on the stage; and sometimes more particularly that part of it, which disguiseth the face, as a mask or visard: and from the stage, hath been translated to any representer of speech and action, as well in tribunals, as theatres. So that a *person*, is the same that an *actor* is, both on the stage and in common conversation; and to *personate*, is to *act*, or *represent* himself, or another; and he that acteth another, is said to bear his person, or act in his name; in which sense Cicero useth it where he says, *Unus sustineo tres personas; mei, adversarii, et judicis*: I bear three persons; my own, my adversary's, and the judge's; and is called in divers occasions, diversely; as a *representer*, or *representative*, a *lieutenant*, a *vicar*, an *attorney*, a *deputy*, a *procurator*, an *actor*, and the like. (p. 125)

On the stage the intention of an actor is to reveal the meaning of the author. By hiding behind a mask the actor directs the attention of the audience towards the words and motions prescribed by the author. In this way the author is able to transmit his meanings to others through the performances of intermediaries. This is the case even if, as I have noted before, the author is the actor as well. For politics the metaphor of the theater

suggests that meanings of actions may be hidden. They may be superficial or deep. There may be problems of interpretation. There may even be different legitimate interpretations of a particular action. The problem of interpretation is not the sole responsibility of any single partner in this process. It is possible that an author may be unclear in his authorization. The *Leviathan* as a whole speaks to the need for care in such matters. The actor, for his part, may be careless or stupid in his interpretation of his role. And, of course, the audience may not be paying attention to the play. This is not an easy way to get one's point across. It is, in Hobbes's view, the only way.[5]

If we assume that the author is careful in giving instructions to the actor, then we can determine when the author is being represented by the actor and when the author is bound by the deeds of the actor on his behalf. It ought to be clear that any actor will bring an interpretation to an authorization. A great actor is notable for the ability to suggest the full meaning of a playwright. The greater the actor, the more we see of the playwright. By the same token, the worse the actor, the less we see of the author. Equally obvious, some deeds are inappropriate to a particular authorization, some actors' intrepretations would be too incongruous. Imagine King Lear doing pratfalls or a stuttering Henry V. If we are aware that a playwright is not responsible for a foolish actor, then we understand the lack of obligation when any actor performs actions outside his authorization. The formula for Hobbes is that one is only bound by one's own authorizations and actions.

When Hobbes cites Cicero's assertion that as an actor "I bear three persons: my own, my adversary's and the judge's" (p. 125), he implicitly raises the question of who shall judge whether an authorization is enacted or not?[6] In the metaphor of the theater we can imagine an audience throwing rotten vegetables at an actor only because the author is hidden behind the curtain. Clearly, the actor may be blameless, or he may not be. It is possible to imagine the audience demanding their money back rather than having to bear Lear played as a fool. The problem is persistent.

If the audience is learned, then they may know the text of the play themselves. In this case they may reasonably be expected to evaluate the deeds of the actor within the guidelines established by the script. This is obviously an uncommon instance in the theater and in politics. Still, an audience may make a tentative judgment to blame the author, or the actor, depending upon the context provided. There is, however, one person who probably knows for certain whether or not the actor is in character — the playwright.

Every playwright must be somewhat tolerant of an actor's weaknesses, strengths, and personal interpretations of a role. But no playwright ought to be condemned when his authorization has clearly been violated. The creation

of a sovereign is akin to the creation of a role by a playwright. The difference is the stakes are higher for citizens than for playwrights. Therefore, we can reasonably assume that all citizens will be careful in their authorizations; otherwise, why would they flee the state of nature? What would they have gained?

Applying the analogy of the theater to the relationship of citizen and sovereign, the sovereign must surely be granted as much room for interpretation as any actor. Hobbes had already established that a covenant without the means for its performance was not binding: "Right to an end, containeth right to the means." (p. 109) This suggests as well that within the authorization granted him in the original covenant a sovereign must have the means to carry out the authorized actions. This accounts for the extensive nature of representation for Hobbes. He is willing to admit of many different interpretations of a role.

The direction of the argument should be clear by now. The sovereign is terrible. So terrible is he that he can create peace where there was none. The limits of his authorization though are clear: he may do whatever he thinks is useful "for their peace and common defence." (p. 132) The sovereign is like any actor who may interpret his role but, at the same time, may not do that which is outside his authorization. Spelling out the analogy with the stage the playwright could say, "This man we call Lear, knowing full well that he is not Lear but merely that he carries with him for a time that *persona* which I have given him." Likewise, the citizen could say, "This man we call sovereign, a mortal god, knowing full well that he is not a god but that he merely carries with him for a time that *persona* which I have given him."

When an actor violates the role of Lear, we know it, and we do not think of that individual as Lear. By the same token, when an actor violates the role of sovereign, we know it, and we do not call that individual our ruler. We have already established some of the guidelines by deciding when to call an actor by the name of his character or when to ask for our money back, but what of the case of a sovereign who ceases to act out his role? The stakes here are higher, obviously; and as the stakes get higher, the will re-enters Hobbes's politics.

### Willing and Representation

I have offered an account of a Hobbesian theory of mental discourse and of representation neither of which appear as formalistic as Hobbes is usually assumed to be. Indeed, the only part of the picture that appears mechanical or formal is the operation of the will. The will is, after all, merely the last appetite before we act. When, however, we tie the operation of the

will to representation, the will assumes its proper emphasis in Hobbes's scheme of things, and then even the will is no longer a mechanical or formal device. Further, this approach enriches our understanding of the nature of representation.

Consider first of all how the act of authorizing is like all actions a result of willing. But this act, because of the radical insecurity of the actor, is a model case against which all other examples of willing must be compared. It is, of course, fear which provides the passion for peace which moves the will, but the will must be seen as fearful too of what is to be created: Leviathan. One cannot help but notice that Hobbes never actually insists upon the actual event of an original covenant. Because of the terror implicit in this act of willing, there is no way to know for certain if the Leviathan will be chosen over the state of nature. Even the choice to create the Leviathan is subject to the vagaries of the will. All that is certain is that Leviathan does exist and the state of nature always threatens.

In this light it is easy to see why Hobbes wishes to stress the compatibility of the state with the will:

> Lastly from the use of the word *free-will*, no liberty can be inferred of the will, desire, or inclination, but the liberty of the man; which, consisteth in this, that he finds no stop, in doing what he has the will, desire, or inclination to do. (p. 159)

But all this and the other talk of the compatibility of the will and necessity pale in contrast with the fundamental fact that for Hobbes the will is a passion. Further, for Hobbes the will must act. Lastly, no contract is valid unless it carries with it the means for achievement. This usually is taken to suggest the proper need of the sovereign for absolute power, but it works on behalf of the will as well.

For Hobbes, no sane man can will his own death. Acts of the sovereign which threaten in fact the life of an individual may return that individual back to the state of nature. It is not, however, simply acts which *in fact* threaten which invalidate the political covenant. Like the idiosyncratic theater critic, each of us must decide if the state is carrying out our particular authorization. Each of us must decide what we feel is necessary for our survival. Our judgments are not, as we have established, in any sense mechanically reasonable; they are subject to all the difficulties of mental processes described above. Consequently even the sovereign's factually correct interpretation of his authorization may lead to his plunging society back into the state of nature.

Of course the Leviathan has its tools, such as its awesome power and the right to teach particular doctrines. Control over the socialization process may actually inhibit more would-be revolutionaries than simple fear. But the fact remains that men "will" act and (as suggested above) external impediments and right may be irrelevant to them. For example, when one fears for one's own life, the life of one's beloved, or the salvation of one's soul, then it may not matter what awesome power the sovereign keeps at its disposal. In *De Cive* (1949, p. 98) Hobbes warns sovereigns not to sleep for the assassin might get lucky. In many places Hobbes warns sovereigns to take care to guard against the unreasoning passions of their subjects.[7] These warnings point up the relationship of willing to the process of representation.

Representation can not be considered a lifeless, formal process when those who are being represented are as potentially rambunctious as this. Each part of Hobbes's theory taken individually and superficially may seem mechanical, like a Euclidean/Rikerian nonpolitics of rational calculation and occasional (Arrow's?) paradox. Placed in context it is probably only inertia of an imagination as strong as the one which Hobbes describes that keeps any actor safe on the political stage.

**Subjectivity and Responsibility**

A Hobbesian account of rebels whose motivations are impenetrable even to the most well-meaning sovereign runs the risk of suggesting that empathy is the great, though flawed, political virtue. Ironically, just when Hobbes seems to be rescued from one extreme (Hobbism) he seems to flow into another (subjectivism).

Hobbes's goal is always to provide an uncompromising account of how things are, no matter how unpromising. Further, his account of political thinking – reasoning, re-presenting, and struggling to understand others from behind one's mask – is a convincing account of how things actually are. If so, his insistence on a will which binds us to responsibility for our covenanting can be seen as an attempt to steer clear of the extreme of subjectivism.[8] After all, we are responsible for honoring our promises even to the thief who would spare us for the ransom to follow:

> [I]f I covenant to pay a ransom, or service for my life, to an enemy; I am bound by it: for it is a contract, wherein one receiveth the benefit of life; the other is to receive money, or service for it; and consequently, where no other law, as in the condition of mere nature, forbiddeth the performance, the covenant is valid.... even in commonwealths, if I be

> forced to redeem myself from a thief by promising him money, I am bound to pay it, till the civil law discharge me. For whatsoever I may lawfully do without obligation, the same I may lawfully covenant to do through fear: and what I lawfully covenant, I cannot lawfully break. (p. 110)

The success of Hobbes's project depends upon his ability to convince us that in spite of the isolation of our subjective worlds, in our fear, we are still responsible for that which we will. We must pay our ransom to our representatives. As true as this may be when either sheriff or robber comes to collect, probably even Hobbes would be surprised if the individual, once freed from his captors, returned to pay for his promise. No doubt the freed man would find "some new, and just cause of fear, to renew the war." (p. 110)

In the end, Hobbes's insistence upon individual responsibility is due to his inability to conceive of unity except through the will of the representer: only if one voice speaks is there unity for Hobbes. There is no chorus in the Hobbes's theatre. This is the point at which Hobbes fails. It is surely true that fear is consistent with the will. Further, the liberty of the will is also undoubtedly "consistent with the unlimited power of the sovereign." (p. 161) But this last necessary prerequisite for Hobbesian politics is not adequate when liberty is found only in the silence of the laws (p. 165). On such a stage, no political action would be possible, except, perhaps, retroactive legitimation of revolution.

Hobbes, in the final analysis, rejects the Greeks who found freedom in the public arena where each was accountable publicly[9] and begins the great liberal turning-away from the public realm. He insists upon obligation and responsibility without appearance, as though we could express our wills through some essentially private practice like voting. Hobbes does not find a way to enable us to fulfill our obligations without feeling them to be ransoms; and, given the individualistic perspectives which result, no doctrines, however convincingly taught, can overcome this failing. (p. 137)

This defect in Hobbes becomes a central problem for his successors in what became the liberal tradition. It has profound consequences today for such practices in liberal democratic societies as voting and the accountability of both government officials and citizens. Additionally this defect is the basis for a sense of ambiguity and cynicism about the roots of liberal governments which has been too easily exploited by critics who favor ideologies of left or right.

**NOTES**

1. See Whiteside's (1987) discussion of Hobbes's apparently contradictory uses of language.
2. See Arendt (1978, p. 26 and p. 101) on this problem.
3. I intend to argue the importance of the metaphor of the stage for Hobbes in the following. The irony of this follows from Hobbes's list of the abuses of language. Surely a metaphor is an inconstant signification (Hobbes, 1962, p. 40). See also Wolin (1960) and Whiteside (1987) for an examination of these issues and difficulties.
4. It is not clear though whether or not one can be mistaken about an interpretation. Significance or meaning can only be given by an author who is also a member of the audience. Still although one may not properly be said to ever be mistaken, Hobbes thinks one can certainly be foolish.
5. After pondering this I wonder if it is not the case that Hobbes would consider it a miracle when representation takes place as the author would hope. Given the events of the Civil War, Hobbes may have thought so.
6. Pitkin (1972, pp. 24-27) deals with the question of how we are to regard Cicero's reference to the orator (lawyer), Anthony, as he prepares a case by listening to his client in private. The orator must imagine the objections of the other actors in the courtroom by asking himself what he would do if he were in their place. Pitken does not view this metaphor as compatible with the stage. She argues that the orator acts on one's behalf, whereas the actor pretends to *be* Hamlet (her example). Pitkin is further concerned that this reading of Hobbes admits the possibly of swindle or fraud as the basis of the state. I am arguing here that the metaphor does work in precisely that light. After all, no one *really* believes that the actor *is* Hamlet. For futher examination of Pitkin's position, see Mansfield (1971).
7. Taking Hobbes's theory piecemeal and out-of-context is, I believe, the problem which undercuts Bluhm and Pitkin. These influential works have helped keep alive what Sterling P. Lamprecht (1949, xv) described in his Introduction to *De Cive* as "Hobbism".
8. In Dallmayr's (1969) excellent article he argues that Hobbes's view of the mental processes is like Sartre's insistence upon absolute responsiblity. From this perspective, Hobbes's fool is akin to Sartre's practitioner of "bad faith".
9. Hobbes's views were, in turn, rejected by the communitarian tradition, beginning with Rousseau, which would revive the ancient quest for freedom in the public arena.

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