## 1

#### The material world holds no normative truths– if I see a tree, then I can see that is obviously a tree, but the natural world does not tell us that that is what a tree is. Rather, we are the creators of our own meaning, and we derive ethics on our own and by sharing meaning with others. Since our empirical experiences in the world are egoistic, we always experience the world in our own point of view, furthering self-interest.

#### This search for power and advantages allows us to create meaning, but that meaning will always be formed in our own self-interest. This makes violent conflict and the will to dominate over others in the state of nature inevitable.

Parrish 1 Rick Parrish; “Derrida’s Economy of Violence in Hobbes’ Social Contract”; Pgs. 4-5. 2004

Perhaps the single most telling quote from Hobbes on this point comes from The Philosophical Rudiments Concerning Government and Society (usually known by its Latin name, De Cive), in which he states that "to know truth, is the same thing as to remember that it was made by ourselves by the very usurpation of the words."24 "For Hobbes **truth is a function of logic and language, not of the relation between language and some extralinguistic reality,"**25 so the "**connections between names and objects are not natural**."26 **They are artificially constructed by persons, based on individual psychologies and desires.** These individual desires are for Hobbes the only measure of good and bad, because value terms "are ever used with relation to the person that useth them, there being nothing simply and absolutely so, nor any common rule of good and evil to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves."27 Since **"there are no authentical doctrines concerning right and wrong, good and evil**,"28 **these labels are placed upon things by humans in acts of creation rather than discovered as extrinsic facts.** 16. Elaborating on this, Hobbes writes that "the nature, disposition, and interest of the speaker, such as are the names of virtues and vices; for one man calleth wisdom, what another calleth fear; and one cruelty what anotherjustice."29 A more simplistic understanding of the brutality of the state of nature, which David Gauthier calls the "simple rationality account,"30 has it that mere materialistic competition for goods is the cause of the war of all against all, but such rivalry is a secondary manifestation of the more fundamental competition among all persons to be the dominant creator of meaning. Certainly, Hobbes writes that persons most frequently "desire to hurt each other" because "many men at the same time have an appetite to the same thing; which yet very often they can neither enjoy in common, nor yet divide it; whence it follows that the strongest must have it, and who is strongest must be decided by the sword."31 But this competition for goods only arises as the result of the more primary struggle that is inherent in the nature of persons of meaning creators**. In the state of nature, "where every man is his own judge,"32persons will "mete good and evil by diverse measures,"33creating labels for things as they see fit, based on individual appetites**. 17. One of the most significant objects that receives diverse labels in the state of nature is 'threat'. **Even if most people happen to construe threat similarly, there will be serious disagreement regarding whether or not a specific situation fits a commonly-held definition**. This is of course the key to the famous Security Dilemma that international relations theorists spend so much time trying to overcome34 -- certain perfectly innocent actions by one person (or state) can easily be construed, and rationally must be construed, as a threat. Furthermore, any attempt by one person to allay another's fears about the threatening nature of actions must be taken as strategic disinformation, rather than as genuine explanation. **Even if "I agree with you in principle about your right to preserve yourself," this agreement is useless "if I disagree about whether this is the moment for you to implement that right.**"35 Given that **persons "are individual[s’] in experience, they are individual in their conceptions and in their speech.** Their power of **reasoning with words . . . dissociates them and provokes violent competition"36specifically because concepts that seem simple invoke very different interpretations.** If there were some universally objective and knowable set of circumstances that constituted Threat as such, **the rationally self-interested persons of the state of nature would not have to seek control over all things for their own protection.** All persons could both avoid actions that would be defined as threat and shed the overbearing suspicion that, taken together, make the Hobbesian state of nature so unbearably brutish.

#### Violence occurs because people lack objective authority to which we can appeal in resolving disagreements since the individual is self-interested. However, violence is in itself an internal contradiction– other people, from their perspectives, are also meaning creators opposed to you, and you are also a meaning creator.

#### Thus, only the sovereign can be the third-party arbitrator which eliminates conflict by restricting individuals’ self-interest and creating a unified moral code. There is no genuine morality absent what the sovereign wills.

Parrish 2 Rick Parrish; “Derrida’s Economy of Violence in Hobbes’ Social Contract”; Pgs. 4-5. 2004

All of the foregoing points to the conclusion that in the **commonwealth the sovereign's first and most fundamental job is to be the ultimate definer**. Several other commentators have also reached this conclusion. By way of elaborating upon the importance of the moderation of individuality in Hobbes' theory of government, Richard Flathman claims that **peace "is possible only if the ambiguity and disagreement that pervade general thinking and acting are eliminated by the stipulations of a sovereign**."57 Pursuant to debunking the perennial misinterpretation of Hobbes' mention of people as wolves, Paul Johnson argues that "**one of the primary functions of the sovereign is to provide the necessary unity of meaning and reference for the primary terms in which [people] men try to conduct their social lives.**"58 **"The whole raison d'être of sovereign helmsmanship lies squarely in the chronic defusing of interpretive clashes**,"59 **without which humans would "fly off in all directions"**60 **and fall inevitably into the violence of the natural condition**.     26. It is not surprising that so many noted students of Hobbes have reached this conclusion, given how prominently he himself makes this claim. According to Hobbes, "in the state of nature, where every man is his own judge, and differeth from others concerning the names and appellations of things, and from those differences arise quarrels and breach of peace, it was necessary there should be a common measure of all things, that might fall in controversy."61 **The main categories of the sovereign's tasks are "to make and abrogate laws, to determine war and peace, [and] to know and judge of all controversies**,"62 but **each of these duties is a subspecies of its ultimate duty to be the sole and ultimate definer in matters of public importance**. It is **only through the sovereign's effective continued accomplishment of this duty that [can] the people of a commonwealth avoid the definitional problems that typify the state of nature**.   27. Judging controversies, which Hobbes lists as the third main task of the sovereign, is the duty most obviously about being the ultimate definer. In fact, Hobbes declares it a law of nature that "in every controversy, the parties thereto ought mutually to agree upon an arbitrator, whom they both trust; and mutually to covenant to stand to the sentence he shall give therein."63 As I repeatedly alluded to above, this agreement to abide by the decision of a third party arbitrator, a sovereign in the commonwealth, is necessary because of the fundamentally perspectival and relative nature of persons' imputations of meaning and value into the situations they construct. Hobbes understands this problem, as evidenced by his claim that "seeing right reason is not existent, the reason of some man or men must supply the place thereof; and that man or men, is he or they, that have the sovereign power"64 to dictate meanings that will be followed by all**. The sovereign is even protected from potential democratic impulses, by which a 'true' meaning would be that agreed upon by the greatest number of people. Because "no one man's reason, nor the reason of any one number of men, makes the certainty," they will still "come to blows . . . for want of a right reason constituted by nature**"65 **unless both the majority and the minority agree to abide by the meanings promulgated by the sovereign**. 28.    29. These meanings are usually created and promulgated by the sovereign in the form of laws, another of the tasks with which Hobbes charges it. In one of his clearest explanations of the law, Hobbes writes that "it belongs to the same chief power to make some common rules for all men, and to declare them publicly, by which every man may know what may be called his, what another's, what just, what unjust, what honest, what dishonest, what good, what evil; that is summarily, what is to be done, what to be avoided in our common course of life."66 The civil law is the set of the sovereign's definitions for ownership, justice, good, evil, and all other concepts that are important for the maintenance of peace in the commonwealth**. When everyone follows the law (that is, when everyone follows the sovereign's definitions) there are far fewer conflicts among persons because everyone appeals to the same meanings**. This means that people know what meanings others will use to evaluate the actions of themselves and others, so the state of nature's security dilemmas and attempts to force one's own meanings upon others are overcome**. There is to be no question of the truth or falsity of the sovereign's definitions because "there are no authentical doctrines concerning right and wrong, good and evil, besides the constituted laws in each realm and government**."67 In fact, Hobbes specifically says that one of the "diseases of a commonwealth" is that "every private man is judge of good and evil actions."**68 Only when individual persons agree to follow the meanings promulgated by the sovereign, which of course includes refraining from trying to impose their own meanings on others, can persons live together in peace -- when they take it upon themselves to impose meaning on situations of public import, they descend into violence again**.   30. 31. Hobbes also says that sovereignty includes the ability to "give titles of honour, and to appoint what order of place and dignity each man shall hold, and what signs of respect, in public or private meetings, they shall give to one another."69 This is necessary so that private individuals all follow the same system of meanings where respect and honor are concerned. If they maintained their own individual meanings, a hand raised in greeting could easily be taken for an insult, and medals of honor would be indistinguishable from scarlet letters. Again, the state of nature would be the result.  **After exploring the difficulties raised by the nature of persons as creators of meaning, Hobbes grants the sovereign "the right to decide among irresolvably contested truths: to provide the authoritative criteria for what is and thus to remove people from the state of epistemic and ethical anarchy that form the basis of the state of nature."70Only by appointing a sovereign to dictate meanings and values to them can persons live together in relative peace** -- a fundamentally political solution to a metaphysical crisis that Richard Tuck claims is Hobbes' "most distinctive contribution to political theory."71 Although I will not elaborate on this point here, the foregoing all points to the conclusion that a Hobbesian commonwealth is best described as a group of persons who have all agreed to live by a single system of meanings and values, created and promulgated by a sovereign that they have agreed upon.

**Thus the standard is consistency with the will of the sovereign. Prefer:**

#### 1] Bindingness: Only the sovereign is able to get everyone to follow their rule and enforce the law, it creates motivations for any moral rules we create. Otherwise, the framework collapses and truth becomes impossible

#### 2] Weighability: this framework is just a question of whether or not you’re consistent with the sovereign’s will

#### 3] Inclusion: Hobbes is mainly analytic so it doesn’t require a ton of topic prep which is good for accessibility for small-school debaters.

#### Now negate:

#### [1] Legislation – Strikes undermine the sovereigns’ ability to legislate since it’s subjects can place infinite demands on it and undermine its legitimacy

#### [2] Autonomy – you can’t place an obligation onto the sovereign or force it to recognize something it doesn’t already recognize.

#### [3] Self Defense – the right to strike would weaken the power of the state since it would force the sovereign to recognize revolts that oppose it.