## 1 - FW

#### The meta-ethic is Constructivism: Universal moral truths don’t exist, instead, they’re simply categories of language created by us.

**Parrish** (Rick Parrish. "Derrida's Economy of Violence in Hobbes' Social Contract." Theory & Event 7, no.4 (2005)https://muse.jhu.edu/)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 betaken 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. 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 another justice." 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," 32 **persons will" mete good and evil by diverse measures ,"creating 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 co---urse the key to the famous Security Dilemma that international relations theorists spend so much time trying toovercome34--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." 35Given that persons "are individual in experience, they are individual in their conceptions and in their speech. Their power of reasoning with words . . . dissociates them and provokes violent competition" 36 specifically 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.

#### We are all restricted by our experiences; Thought/reason is finite and it is impossible to ever be truly objective.

**Mitchell 93’** (“Hobbes and the Equality of All under the One”, Joshua Mitchell, February 1993, https://www.jstor.org/stable/191853)

Consider the picture Hobbes presents. Human **beings dwell in** a world of **constant movement**. They are impinged on by the motions of the world, which are registered by the senses, and experience these sensory impinge- ments as appearances or representations of something from without; it is **only from** these appearances and **representations** that **thought originates**.'9 Dreams and imaginings - and by this he has in mind what often passes as religion - what are these but agitations which arise from within the body when the organs of sense are "benumbed" and unexcited by outside objects?20 **Only motion begets thought**. Even the "visions" that one may claim of another world transpire from internal disturbances.2' Visions have no referent inde- pendent of the world of motion; if we could only grasp this, then false religion - not all religion -could be dispelled: If this superstitious fear of spirits were taken away, and with it prognostics from dreams, false prophecies, and many other things dependent thereon, by which crafty ambitious persons abuse the simple people, men would be much more fitted than they are for civil society.2 Enveloped in a world of motion**, humanity cannot know** anything about **the infinite**, about God. All **thought is** necessarily **finite.** We rise above the beasts through the use of speech and method;23 yet, in spite of its grandeur, this height still remains within the limits of finititude. What separates humans from beasts is a difference of degree and not of kind. There can be **no legitimate idea of the infinite.** We can, at best, only know our inability to know it. At best, we invoke the name "God" not to make us conceive the infinite but to honor what we cannot know.24 **Reason works** on something finite and **toward something equally finite**. The discourse of the mind and the activity of reason is nothing but a "seeking," a "hunting out," of the causes and effects of sense impressions.25

#### Competition in the state of nature to create meaning causes violence (and makes it impossible to generate moral claims).

**Parrish 05’** Rick Parrish, 2005 “Derrida’s Economy of Violence in Hobbes’ Social Contract” Theory & Event 7:4

"For Hobbes truth is a function of logic and language, not of the relation between language and some extralinguistic reality," 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.  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 another justice."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,"32 persons will "mete good and evil by diverse measures,"33 creating labels for things as they see fit, based on individual appetites. One of the most significant objects that receives diverse labels in the state of nature is 'threat'.

#### To escape the state of nature, people unite to imbue a sovereign with absolute authority to define ethics and enforce them at will. The sovereign is the only binding ethical force–Absent the sovereign, ethics fail, since everyone has competing conceptions of the good.

**Parrish 2**(Rick Parrish. "Derrida's Economy of Violence in Hobbes' Social Contract." Theory & Event 7,no. 4 (2005)https://muse.jhu.edu/)All of the foregoing points to the conclusion that in the commonwealth**the sovereign's**firstand most fundamental**job is to be the ultimate definer.**Several other commentators have also reached this conclusion. By way of elaborating upon theimportance of the moderation of individuality in Hobbes' theory of government, Richard Flathman claims that**peace**"**is possibleonly if**the**ambiguity**and disagreement that pervade general thinking and acting**are eliminated by**the stipulationsof a**sovereign.**Pursuant to debunking the perennial misinterpretation of Hobbes' mention of people as wolves, PaulJohnson arguesthat "one of**the**primary**function**s**of the sovereign is to provide**the necessary**unity ofmeaning**and reference for the primary termsin which men try to conduct their social lives." 58 "The whole raison d'être of sovereignhelmsmanship lies squarely in the chronic defusing of interpretive clashes," 59 without which humans would "fly off in all directions" 60 and fallinevitably into the violence of the natural condition.26. It is not surprising that so many noted students of Hobbes have reached thisconclusion, given how prominently he himself makes this claim. According to Hobbes, "in the state of nature, where every man is his ownjudge, and differeth from others concerning the names and appellations of things, and from those differences arise quarrels and breach ofpeace, it was necessary there shouldbe a common measure of all things, that might fall in controversy." 61 The main categories of thesovereign's tasks are "to make and abrogate laws, to determine war and peace, [and] to know and judge of all controversies,"62 but each ofthese duties is asubspecies of its ultimate duty to be the sole and ultimate definer in matters of public importance**.It is**only**throughthesovereign's**effective continued**accomplishment**of this duty**that**the**people**of acommonwealth**avoid the**definitionalproblems thattypify**thestate of nature.**27. Judging controversies, which Hobbeslists 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 ofnature 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 toabove, this**agreement to abide by**the decision of a third party arbitrator, a**sovereign**in the commonwealth,**isnecessary because of**the fundamentally perspectival and**relative nature of**persons' imputations of**meaning**and value into the situations they construct. Hobbes understands thisproblem, as evidenced by his claim that "seeing rightreason is not existent, the reason ofsome man or men must supply the place thereof; and that man or men, is he or they, thathave thesovereign power" 64 to dictate meanings that will be followed by all. The sovereign is even protected from potential democratic impulses, bywhich 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 onenumber of men, makes the certainty," they willstill "come to blows . . . for want of a right reason constituted by nature" 65 unless both themajority and the minority agree to abide by the meanings promulgated by the sovereign. 28. These meanings are usually createdandpromulgated by the sovereignin the form of laws, another of the tasks with which 7/29/13 RickParrish | Derrida's Economyof Violence inHobbes' Social Contract | Theory& Event 7:4[https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory\_and\_event/v007/7.4parrish.html](https://www.dropbox.com/referrer_cleansing_redirect?hmac=irLNHrXE58tjOqQgz5qTbR%2BeoSf20DX6SbB0nhPFfqw%3D&url=https%3A%2F%2Fmuse.jhu.edu%2Fjournals%2Ftheory_and_event%2Fv007%2F7.4parrish.html)13/42 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

#### The standard is inescapable – when one sovereign is removed each individual becomes their own sovereign and attempts to subsume others until one comes above the rest.

**Parrish 06,** Rick, “Violence Inevitable: The Play of Force and Respect in Derrida, Nietzsche, Hobbes, and Berlin,” 2006. NK.

But even more significantly for his relationship with Derrida, Hobbes argues that **in the state of nature persons** must not only try to control as many objects as possible -- they must also **try to control as many** persons **as possible.** "There is no way for any man to secure himself so reasonable as anticipation, that is, **by force** or wiles to master the persons of all men he can, so long **till [t]he[y] see no other power great enough to endanger [them].** And this is no more than his own conservation requireth, and is generally allowed."37 While it is often assumed that by this Hobbes means a person will try to control others with physical force alone, when one approaches Hobbesian persons as meaning creators this control takes on a more discursive, arche-violent character. First," says Hobbes, "among [persons in the state of nature] there is a contestation of honour and preferment,"38 a discursive struggle not over what physical objects each person will possess, but over who or what will be considered valuable. **Persons,** as rationally self-interested beings who "measure, not only other men, but all other things, by themselves,"39 and **value themselves above all others, attempt to force that valuation on others. "The human desire** for 'glory', which in today's language translates not simply as the desire for prestige, but also the desire to acquire power over others," **is** therefore **primarily about subsuming others beneath one's own personhood,** as direct objects or merely phenomenal substances. As above, the inevitability of this situation is given by the fact that the primarily egoistic nature of all experience renders the other in a "state of empirical alter-ego"41 to oneself. Those who prefer a more directly materialistic reading of Hobbes may attempt to bolster their position by pointing to his comment that "the most frequent reason why men desire to hurt each other, ariseth hence, that 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."42 This quote also supports my reading of Hobbes, because quite simply **the primary thing all persons want** but can never have in common **is the status of** the **ultimate creator of meaning, the primary personhood,** from which all other goods flow. Everyone, by their natures as creators of meaning whose "desire of power after power . . . ceaseth only in death,"43 tries to subsume others beneath their personhood in order to control these others and glorify themselves. As Piotr Hoffman puts it, "every individual acting under the right of nature views himself as the center of the universe; his aim is, quite simply and quite closely, to become a small "god among men," to use Plato's phrase."Hobbes argues that **this discursive struggle** rapidly **becomes physical** by writing that "every man thinking well of himself, and hating to see the same in others, they must needs provoke one another by words, and other signs of contempt and hatred, which are incident to all comparison, till at last they must determine the pre-eminence by strength and force of body."45 The ultimate violence, the surest and most complete way of removing a person's ability to create meaning, is to kill that person, and the escalating contentiousness of the state of nature makes life short in the war of all against all. But this does not render the fundamental reason for this violence any less discursive, any less based on "one's sense of self-importance in comparison with others"46 or human nature as a creator of meaning

## 2 - Sovereign

#### 1] The sovereign has absolute authority; strikes contest the rule of the authority of the sovereign which leads to infinite regress and freezes action.

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Although Hobbes offered some mild pragmatic grounds for preferring monarchy to other forms of government, his main concern was to argue that **effective government—whatever its form—must have absolute authority.** Its powers must be neither divided nor limited. **The powers of legislation, adjudication, enforcement, taxation, war-making (and the less familiar right of control of normative doctrine) are connected in such a way that a loss of one may thwart effective exercise of the rest;** for example, **legislation without interpretation and enforcement will not serve to regulate conduct. Only a government that possesses all of what Hobbes terms the “essential rights of sovereignty” can be reliably effective**, since **where partial sets of these rights are held by different bodies that disagree** in their judgments as to what is to be done, **paralysis of effective government, or degeneration into a civil war to settle their dispute, may occur.** Similarly, **to impose limitation on the authority of the government is to invite irresoluble disputes over whether it has overstepped those limits. If each person is to decide for herself whether the government should be obeyed**, factional disagreement—**and war to settle the issue, or at least paralysis of effective government—are [is] quite possible**. **To refer resolution of the question to some further authority, itself also limited and so open to challenge for overstepping its bounds, would be to initiate an infinite regress of non-authoritative ‘authorities’** (where the buck never stops). To refer it to a further authority itself unlimited, would be just to relocate the seat of absolute sovereignty, a position entirely consistent with Hobbes’s insistence on absolutism. **To avoid the horrible prospect of governmental collapse and return to the state of nature, people should treat their sovereign as having absolute authority.**

#### 2] The sovereign cannot impose a moral obligation on themselves, only on the people in which they rule over. Therefore, it cannot impose a moral obligation on itself to recognize the right to strike, even if they want to.