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General Introduction

Hobbes's *Leviathan* is arguably the most brilliant and influential political treatise ever written in English, and it certainly stands as the first major work of English political philosophy embedded in an encyclopaedic corpus. But it has long awaited an authoritative English critical edition and was until recently rarely read in its entirety.[1] Even in Germany, where pioneering bibliographical work on Hobbes's texts was undertaken by Ferdinand Tönnies, an important political theorist in his own right, Hobbes was mostly read in an abridged edition that omitted the last two books, which comprise more than half the length of the original work. These two books, 'Of a Christian Commonwealth' and 'Of the Kingdom of Darkness', are important sources for Hobbes's theology, and were very controversial in his day. Recent critical debate suggests that they are now again controversial.

In *Leviathan* Hobbes gave institutional sanction to the principle on which the great schism created by the Protestant Reformation was decided: *cuius regio eius religio*; it was up to the godly prince to decide religious orthodoxy. On this principle, the peace of Westphalia of 1648, which closed half a century of religious wars and marked the creation of the modern international system of states, was founded. Sect and schism are persistent *topoi* of Hobbes's works, beginning with his 1645 debate with Bishop Bramhall in Paris, conducted under the auspices of the Earl of Newcastle but published only in 1654, and dominating his works of the 1660s, written when Hobbes was himself under threat of indictment for blasphemy and possible heresy. But heresy was a much older issue, arising initially due to the contamination of the faith of Christ and his apostles by the Greek sects

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of the Roman and Hellenistic empires, Hobbes maintained. Its roots lay in excessive philosophizing about the Christian mysteries, and a failure to observe the simple principles of faith contained in the Scriptures, causing the Church to lose its way and to create parallel ecclesiastical structures of power to challenge the state.

Heresy was precisely the issue over which the Church had struggled in the third and fourth century synods and councils in which the central dogmas of the Christian mysteries were established. We know that Hobbes considered the doctrinal struggles of these councils a defining moment for the Church from the fact that he too wrote an *Historia Ecclesiastica*, a work in the long tradition of historiography that included the *Historiae Ecclesiasticae* by the fourth century Eusebius, by the Arian Philostorgius, by the Nestorian Theodoret, by Sozomen, by Socrates of Constantinople, by Evagrius of a later generation, by Bede, and by the fourteenth century Ptolemy of Lucca, interlocutor with Aquinas. Hobbes's ecclesiology in his own *Church History* has yet to be reconciled with the received wisdom about the last two books of *Leviathan*.[2]

Efforts to restore the integrity of *Leviathan*, and particularly the last two books, have not produced consensus on many of Hobbes's most central views hitherto. There is simply no agreement on whether or not Hobbes was sincere in his religious views, the degree to which they are representative of standard positions in the theological discourse of the day, or whether they were intentionally heretical or seditious. Positions vary from the more sceptical views of Edwin Curley and David Berman,[3] the latter accusing Hobbes of 'theological lying', to the more cautious positions of Karl Schuhmann, Arrigo Pacchi, Gianni Paganini and Cees Leijenhorst, who argue rather that Hobbes's views were Aristotelian, Epicurean or Sceptic in the antique sense.[4] Gianni Paganini, by ingenious textual archaeology, has demonstrated that some of Hobbes's ideas trace a direct line of descent from Lorenzo Valla through Erasmus, who had read and annotated Valla's *Elegantiae* at the age of eighteen, and who discovered and published Valla's *Adnotationes in Novum Testamentum* in 1505;[5] and finally, one might add, to Luther.

George Wright, translator of the 1668 Appendix to the Latin *Leviathan*, in which Hobbes retracts his controversial views on the Trinity in the English Leviathan, only to itemize views equally controversial on the Nicene Creed, has shown Hobbes's affinity with the

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views of Luther on the role of Scripture, witnesses, and minimalist views about the Soul and the Heavenly Kingdom.[6] Wright and Martinich represent English-language commentators who take Hobbes's religious views as those of a serious Christian.[7] Jeffrey Collins's revisionist Hobbes, by contrast, is first and foremost an Erastian and secondly a Cromwellian, just because Cromwell's religious settlement freed the state from the rule of bishops and their 'ghostly' parallel sphere of spiritual power, the most notable example being the Church of Rome and its pope, the 'Ghost of the Roman Empire', but not just the pope, equally Laudian bishops and Presbyterians who claimed *jure divino* powers. The degree to which *Leviathan* was received both at home and abroad as a libertine and Erastian work,[8] subversive of episcopacy, is demonstrated by the reaction of the Presbyterian printers, a case study developed here by Collins in 'The Silencing of Thomas Hobbes', that nicely illustrates his general thesis.

It is not too much to claim that resituating Hobbes's *Leviathan* has been a major accomplishment of twentieth-century political theory, and in particular of the Cambridge Contextual Historians, Quentin Skinner, John Pocock, and their students.[9] The restoration of the missing last two books is a large part of the story, for it is clear that the theological books are integral to the whole. But these modern debates about the significance of *Leviathan* are spread over journals and edited volumes in all the languages in which Hobbes scholars are operating, and have rarely been brought together between two covers in relation to the structure of the text itself. No collected edition of recent scholarship on Hobbes's theology and ecclesiology exists, much less a critical commentary on *Leviathan* that would integrate these elements, working through topics in all four books. This volume of new essays commissioned from leading contemporary Hobbes scholars attempts to redress this lack. It roughly follows the order of presentation of topics in *Leviathan* and, although necessarily selective, demonstrates the considerable undertaking of twentieth-century political philosophy to recover the integrity of Hobbes's work.

The *OED* tells us that Hobbes's *Leviathan* changed forever the meaning of the word, which originally connoted the biblical sea monster or whale, familiar from Isaiah and the Book of Job, but with Hobbes became an epithet for the all-powerful state. From its

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publication in 1651 on, *Leviathan* was greeted by a storm of controversy, both in England, where Hobbes became the target of a parliamentary enquiry during the 1660s into possible blasphemy charges, and on the Continent, where its reception had already been foreshadowed with the publication of his Latin *De Cive*. Hobbes's desire to participate in cosmopolitan humanist discourse prompted him to translate *Leviathan* into Latin also, the language of Western humanism. *Leviathan* continued to have a life of its own in the subsequent history of European political thought, lending its title, for instance, to the work by Carl Schmitt, the German jurist and practitioner notoriously influential under the Third Reich, whose reflections on Hobbes's famous use of the ancient aphorism *homo homini lupus* led to a theory of generalized hostility to the other in a world divided between *Freund und Feind* (friend and foe).[10] Schmitt met his own foe in Franz Neumann, whose critical analysis of Nazism borrowed another Hobbes title: *Behemoth: The Structure and Function of National Socialism*, while the controversy between Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss, of enormous consequence in the history of political thought, takes Hobbes as its reference point.[11] Only recently has Strauss's important early work on Hobbes's radical Enlightenment Deism been republished in German and translated into French, and it still awaits an English translation.[12]

The volume of Hobbes scholarship over three and a half centuries is of course vast. But until recently the divide between Hobbes's English works and his Latin works has been paralleled by a divide between English language and Continental Hobbes scholarship.[13] Hobbes, like Locke, spent time in exile on the Continent. As a peripheral member of the Stuart Court in France in the 1640s, he belonged to important scholarly circles centred around Mersenne and Descartes. He is thus a philosopher whom the French, for good reason, also claim. Early in his career, together with his charges, the young Cavendish sons, Hobbes had undertaken the European Grand Tour on three separate occasions. On one of these he was reported to have met Galileo and Paolo Sarpi and, on his return, translated for his patron, William Cavendish Duke of Devonshire, Italian correspondence from Fulgenzio Micanzio, Sarpi's associate, on Venice's problems with the pope. The reception of Hobbes in France, Italy and Germany has given rise to schools of scholarship in those countries, producing traditions of thinking about Hobbes that

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have yet to be fully integrated into the corpus of English-language scholarship. This is also a lack that this volume seeks to remedy.

In this respect, recent scholarship that focuses on Hobbes the Renaissance humanist has effected an important breakthrough. Hobbes was the author of classical translations and imitations, most notably his translations of Thucydides and Homer, and his own efforts at Latin poetry in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* and his country house poem, *De mirabilibus pecci carmen.* Perhaps for this reason, commentators have tended to go directly to classical sources for the provenance of his views. Due to this prejudice Hobbes's debt to Renaissance transmitters of antique philosophy has often been overlooked, and yet his adoption of symptomatic forms, the diatribe, the hexameter epic, and a certain style of philological and exegetical discourse, point us unmistakably in the direction of Lorenzo Valla, Erasmus, and their Renaissance contemporaries, whose hostility to the Scholastics and impatience with the Aristotelian tradition Hobbes shared. For Hobbes, like most of us, was primarily engaged by contemporary debates, and while positions in these debates were often flagged by the banners of the classical philosophical schools, their immediacy related to preoccupations of the day.

The classical sources transmitted by Renaissance humanists for Hobbes's physics, epistemology and mechanistic psychology have recently been subjected to detailed scrutiny by a number of prominent scholars, including Karl Schuhmann, Gianni Paganini and Cees Leijenhorst. Hobbes is an eclectic thinker, and as Leijenhorst has shown by careful examination of the Aristotelian commentaries, there is no doubt that he was well versed in the scholastic tradition.[14] Evidence for the influence on Hobbes of the late Aristotelians Telesio and Campanella has been carefully documented by Schuhmann and Leijenhorst; while Paganini, by following the paper trail and by brilliant textual exegesis has provided important evidence for the influence of Valla and Gassendi.[15]

More systematic Hobbes scholarship produces new resources. So Quentin Skinner's seminal *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*[16] set the scene for detailed studies of the Renaissance context for Hobbes's thought. The Clarendon Hobbes series of critical editions promises a systematic contextualization of Hobbes's entire corpus, and Noel Malcolm's excellent edition of the *Hobbes Correspondence* in this series has been a major turning point. Internal

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and external evidence and timing, corroborated in the *Hobbes Correspondence*, are critical. No one has made better use of this resource than Jeffrey Collins in his recent revisionist *Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes*;[17] while Noel Malcolm's collected essays in *Aspects of Hobbes* are a model of Hobbes scholarship, combining percipient textual exegesis, paleographic analysis, and exhaustive archival research, to cast new light on the tradition of biblical criticism within which Hobbes was working, and the reception of his corpus in the European Republic of Letters.[18]

Attempts to recontextualize Hobbes's political philosophy have led to important initiatives in intellectual history in general. See, for instance, the series of conferences of the History of Political and Social Concepts Group, inaugurated by the 1998 conference hosted by the Finnish Institute in London, on the convergence of the historiography of the Cambridge Contextual Historians with the *Begriffsgeschichte* of Reinhart Koselleck, as well as the important debate between Quentin Skinner, Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, and Yves Charles Zarka, Director of the Centre Hobbes at the Sorbonne and general editor of the French critical edition of Hobbes's works published by Vrin.[19] Hobbes hovers at the margins of recent debates over republicanism, as Zarka emphasizes, noting Hobbes's specific contribution to the reinvention of republicanism in his notion of a *public* political will.[20] This Cambridge Companion is an unparalleled opportunity to showcase these important departures in Hobbes scholarship and to reexamine the relationship between Hobbes's physics, metaphysics, politics, psychology and religion in a topic by topic sequence of essays that follows the structure of the four parts of Hobbes's *Leviathan*: I, 'Of Man'; II, 'Of Commonwealth'; III, 'Of a Christian Commonwealth'; and IV, 'Of the Kingdom of Darkness'; as well as a concluding section V, on Hobbes's reception.

I

We begin with the Leviathan of the frontispiece, the sea monster from the book of Job. Carl Schmitt made a famous throw-away remark that in Hobbes's day the notion of Leviathan was no longer shocking, but had become a gentleman's joke,[21] effectively deflating the terrible force of the beast. This is strange, given that Schmitt's *Leviathan*

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is the most extreme extension of Hobbesian absolutism. Horst Bredekamp in his exacting analysis of Hobbes's political iconography shows that it is, moreover, implausible. Hobbes's participation in the design of the frontispiece to *Leviathan* suggests that this illustration, like those that preface his *Thucydides*, *De Cive*, and *Philosophical Rudiments*, belonged to an iconographic strategy intended to alert the reader by striking images.[22] Bredekamp supports his case with an art historian's analysis of the iconography of representation that ranges from Hermetic works, of enormous Renaissance significance, to the composite Archimboldesque portraits of Hobbes's own day, and the works of his illustrators, adept in *avant garde* techniques of representation. But Hobbes's iconography is also a self-conscious semiotics. As Bredekamp notes: 'The frontispiece of *Leviathan* furnishes the state-giant not only with the memories of the individual as *marks*, but capable also of assuming the character of a general *sign* "by which what one man finds out may be manifested and made known to others".[23] The picture of *Leviathan* completed the step from mark to sign not only as a representation of individual imagination, but also because it forms the sign of the state, with the power to direct action'.

Bredekamp's study of the aesthetics of representation, 'Hobbes's Visual Strategy', is nicely complemented by Quentin Skinner's account of Hobbes's theory of political representation, a view of representative government challenging that of parliamentarians in his day. Skinner addresses the nature of the polemics in which Hobbes was engaged, and his contribution to the refinement of the vocabulary of 'representing', 'representation' and 'representative' government at this critical moment. He is the first systematically to compare Hobbes's views on representation with those of parliamentary writers, intent on countering royal absolutism with classical republican notions of accountability, who debated the question to what degree a representative must 'picture' the polity. For, parliamentary writers, seeing the issue of legitimacy and political obligation primarily in terms of the 'representative will' of the people, saw their task as first to set about giving a satisfactory account of the representation of the 'body' of the people. But, as Skinner points out, the great strength of Hobbes's position is to argue that until the authorization of a sovereign there is no body politic to be represented at all, only a disaggregated multitude. In this way Hobbes effectively

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deflated centuries of political theology on the organic nature of the body politic and the fiction of incorporation on which legitimations of popular sovereignty were based. In terms of legitimacy the Cromwellian Commonwealth was not essentially different from the monarchy, and Hobbes was careful to argue that sovereign assemblies were representative in exactly the same way as monarchs, both *post facto*, or after the fact of authorization, as long as they honoured the pact of protection in exchange for obedience.

Johan Tralau, in his essay 'Leviathan and the Riddle of Hobbes's Sovereign Monster', mindful of Bredekamp's thesis, takes up the issue of Hobbes's sovereign monster from a slightly different perspective, claiming Leviathan among the category of powerful hybrids, part man/woman, part beast, familiar to us from classical mythology. Appealing to Machiavelli's famous account of human nature, according to which man is like the centaur, capable of greatness, but also a monster to his fellows – a *topos* introduced by Hobbes no doubt with reference to Machiavelli – Tralau argues the likelihood of Hobbes drawing on this tradition. He dismisses Schmitt's paradoxical thesis (paradoxical given the role of terror in the third Reich) that the terrifying power of the Leviathan monster, is by Hobbes's day defanged, showing rather how seriously Hobbes took the Book of Job and its model, the God of fear. Just as the pagans of old invoked the terrifying hybrids, Medusa and Dionysus, and Hermeticism the speaking statues of ancient Egypt (discussed by Bredekamp and Paganini), Hobbes's hybrid monster too evokes the fear necessary for obeisance to absolute power. So, in the last two books of *Leviathan*, Hobbes shows how, in order to 'regulate this their fear', pagan kings established 'that DEMONOLOGY (in which the poets, as principal priests of the heathen religion, were specially employed or reverenced) to the public peace, and to the obedience of subjects necessary thereunto'.[24] Idols served a political purpose, and so does Leviathan. As sources of fear and awe they appeal to the same psychological vulnerabilities; for fear, and especially fear of death, is the well-spring of religion and superstition in the Deist and Epicurean traditions, to which Hobbes belonged.

The architecture of *Leviathan*, presenting to the reader first an iconographic frontispiece, proceeds in book I 'Of Man' to a sensationalist psychology in which Hobbes's theory of signs is embedded, and then to a general theory of human nature and motivation. Cees

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Leijenhorst, in the tradition of Karl Schuhmann and Gianni Paganini, demonstrates again the coherence of Hobbes's philosophy, in which epistemology is explored in terms of a mechanistic psychology that draws on elaborate Aristotelian theories of perception, but in order to defend an anti-Aristotelian theory of psychological mechanism. One of the most striking aspects of Hobbes's anthropology and psychology is his resort to the thought experiment of the state of nature. In many respects Epicurean, Hobbes draws in fact on a long classical tradition, as Kinch Hoekstra shows, to demonstrate that the ungoverned passions of individuals in the state of nature are an analogue for the state of anarchy to which civil society is too easily returned. It is the saving grace of reason that permits humans to make the rational calculation of long-term enlightened self-interest that alone can save them from this fate, as modern rational choice models, discussed by Kinch Hoekstra, have stressed.

II

Emphasis on the social contract as a mental construct or a thought experiment, investigated by Hoekstra, has long obscured the classical and biblical sources for Hobbes's theory of incorporation and covenant, topics explored by Skinner and Lessay in their essays. For Hobbes's thought experiment is not without context as Hoekstra makes clear. Nor would it have worked in his day without traditional sanctions, in the form of biblical and classical legitimations. Traditional theories of representation and models for covenanting allowed Hobbes the space to explore his own solutions in terms of recognizable paradigms. Hobbes's sensationalist psychology requires him in turn to reevaluate conventional moral theory, the subject of Tom Sorell's essay, a task Hobbes ingeniously melds to his resuscitation of the natural law tradition. His derivation of the laws of nature serves two purposes:[25] first, the need to find a psychologically compelling basis for the Christian virtues, or facsimiles of them; second, the need to distinguish basic from nonbasic virtues, as well as giving agreed senses to virtue terms in order to stabilize moral rhetoric – a problem to which Quentin Skinner has been particularly attentive in his *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (1996), and his many essays on the humanist Renaissance Hobbes in his *Visions of Politics* (3 volumes, 2002). Hobbes succeeds in deriving a theory

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of the virtues that radically revises virtue theory, a position, Sorell argues, that is compatible with disagreements in human valuations, without necessarily involving him in moral scepticism or relativism.

Gabriella Slomp takes a particular case in the human constellation of virtues and vices, that of glory-seeking, to show that Hobbes's treatment of glory in *Leviathan* and previous works affords insights into some of the continuities and developments of his philosophy of man. Hobbes's treatment of the glory-seeker challenges traditional assumptions about his theory of human nature, namely, that it assumes independent individuals with given aims and desires, that it is 'reductive' and unduly pessimistic. For, in fact, in the tradition of Machiavelli's *grandezza*, or greatness, glory is for Hobbes a source of optimism, offering the opportunity for a programme in civic education, in which good teachers (Hobbes himself) and good books (*Leviathan*), teach people the need for civil obedience and knowledge that might protect them from the rhetoric of glory-seeking demagogues.

If Hobbes's position on glory-seeking is to some extent counterintuitive, the same could be said of his relation to liberalism. Lucien Jaume, taking up the thesis that liberal thought is founded on the distance between citizen and government, or on *the right of judging*, and consequently of criticising the exercise of governmental sovereignty, notes that by placing a centre of resistance and a reservoir of natural right at the core of society, from which the right to resist could be drawn, Hobbes can be said to have inspired liberalism. Both Jaume's essay and that of Dieter Hüning focus on the little explored subject of Hobbes's contribution to Continental European juridical thought. We know from Hobbes's works of the 1660s, especially the *Dialogue Concerning the Common Laws*, written after 1668, and *Behemoth*, written between 1668 and 1670, that he was bitterly opposed to parliamentarians and Common Lawyers because of their failure to treat satisfactorily the problem of sovereignty. Hüning is among the first to examine Hobbes's positive endorsement of, and contribution to, the European civil law tradition, going so far as to argue that Hobbes may even be said to have invented the concept of *Rechtsstaat*. His immense influence on Pufendorf and on the subsequent civil law treatment of 'the right to punish' is a test case for Hüning's thesis. We are left asking ourselves whether Hobbes's diatribe against Edward Coke in the *Dialogue*, and his fulminations

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