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It's (Not) All in Our Heads: Reconstructing Thomas Hobbes's Theory of Cognition in the 'Leviathan'

Dieten, Teun van

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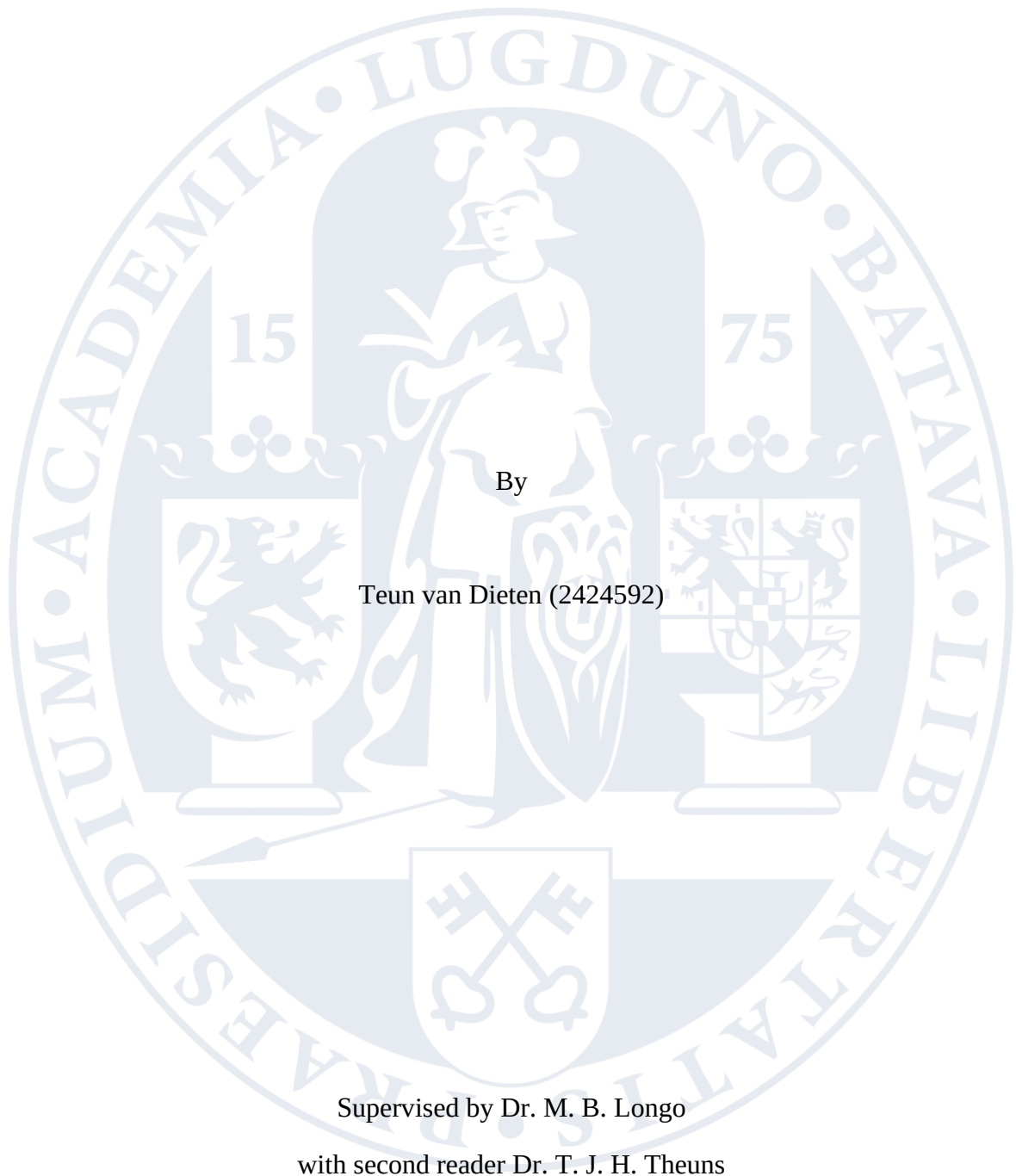
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It's (Not) All in Our Heads: Reconstructing Thomas Hobbes's Theory of Cognition in the *Leviathan*

Bachelor Thesis: Readings in the History of Political Thought



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1. Introduction

Many feminist theorists (hereafter: feminists) have pointed out the problems with dichotomous thinking that is widely prevalent in liberal Western societies. Feminists have traced the development of this thinking, with Prokhovnik (2002) making the convincing case that a theory of the separation of reason and emotion maps onto other dichotomies, specifically the mind/body, sex/gender and the male/female dichotomies. The prevalence of these dichotomies in Western liberal thought is often traced to influential rationalist Enlightenment thinkers such as Descartes, who theorised a split between matter and mind (Robinson, 2023; see also Lloyd, 1979).

Various pernicious consequences of this mode of thinking can be identified, both politically and scholarly. Politically, feminists have pointed out that an equation of reason with masculinity has been used as a justification for the oppression of women, especially in such activities as philosophy and from (intellectual) education (Lloyd, 1979). The scholarly consequences are related: certain types of knowledge, such as women's, have been de-emphasised, limiting humanity's pursuit of truth. To resolve these issues, Prokhovnik (2002) argues powerfully and radically that emotion and reason should be considered as two ends of a spectrum, and that the relationship between the two must figure centrally in theoretical practice—what I term the *relational perspective*.

Hobbes's *Leviathan* (2017[1651]) is widely considered a mechanistic and rationalistic argument for an all-powerful authoritarian sovereign. However, the argument Hobbes makes in the *Leviathan* is much more nuanced than this simple picture suggests. Hobbes explicitly argues that “Reason suggesteth [the] convenient articles of peace upon which men may be drawn to agreement” (XIII, p. 105[63])¹ which is the foundation of his theory for how a commonwealth ought to be designed: he even makes explicit that he believes that “Books of Philosophy” (IX, p. 67[40]) are filled with what Hobbes terms Reason. Therefore,

¹ Hereafter, I use capitalisation to distinguish Hobbes's concepts (e.g.: Reason as opposed to reason). Citations of the *Leviathan* take the following format: (Chapter number in Roman numerals, page number[original publication page number]). Both conventions are followed throughout this paper.

understanding Reason (the closest Hobbesian term to rationality) is paramount to understanding the *Leviathan*.

However, Reason is not the only human mental faculty that is fundamental to Hobbes's theory. Extensive discussions of the role of the Passions (the closest Hobbesian equivalent term to emotions) in driving human behaviour show the *Leviathan*'s reliance on more than rationality alone (Schmitter, 2011). Especially pertinent Passions include Glory and Fear. In fact, the sentence preceding Hobbes's statement of the importance of Reason quoted above, makes this explicit: "The Passions that encline men to Peace, are Feare of Death; Desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and a Hope by their Industry to obtain them" (XIII, p. 105[63]). This phrase hints that emotions and rationality cannot be separated. Additionally, the social and intersubjective nature of these passions shines through Hobbes's argument at multiple junctions. This is puzzling: Hobbes is often considered a forefather of liberalism (see, e.g.: Jaume, 2007), a core tenet of which is an individualist focus (see, e.g.: Mill, 2001[1859]). Additionally, the prevalence of Enlightenment ideals of cool, calculated rationality as the right way to do philosophy has perhaps influenced the reading of the *Leviathan* in those terms. Even Hobbes himself downplayed the importance of emotion in his explicit theorisation of Reason and Science. In this project, I aim to assess the relationship between emotion and rationality in the *Leviathan*, especially considering the relational perspective.

This paper considers solely Hobbes's arguments in Parts One and Two of the *Leviathan*, introducing an obvious weakness in dismissing sections of this book. Many others (see, e.g.: Skinner, 1996; Hoyer, forthcoming;) have additionally convincingly shown that Hobbes's convictions changed over the course of his life. Additionally, several crucial concepts, including Reason and aspects of Hobbes's theory of emotions are treated more extensively in other works (Skinner, 1996). However, given the ubiquity of the (study of the) *Leviathan* in fields such as the history of political thought and international relations, I take it as a self-contained theory and consider it in that scope. As for Parts Three and Four, Craig (2009) argues that Hobbes's goal was "to [show] that the 'ground of [his] Discourse' is compatible with a distinctly *Christian* commonwealth [...]" (p. 143, original emphasis). Here, I concern myself with Hobbes's theory of human rationality and emotion as they figure into his defence of the *Earthly* commonwealth.

In this paper, I start by restating the value of rereading the *Leviathan* in the context of a dichotomous construction of rationality and emotion by pointing to the puzzles presented by Hobbes's treatment of Reason, and the space they leave for a rereading of his theory of cognition, broadly understood. Next, I sketch a short history of the placement of rationality as opposed to emotion in philosophy, and the connections to other dichotomous modes of thinking and oppression that feminists have identified. Following that, I extensively discuss Prokhovnik's (2002) argument for the relational perspective. These analyses set the stage for my own interpretation of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, in which I discuss several concepts related to cognition and intersubjectivity in detail. Ultimately, I conclude that reading the *Leviathan* correctly shows the deficiency of a rigid rationalist and individualist interpretation. Instead, the relation between rationality and emotion in Hobbes's theorising is highlighted, especially through correctly understanding the importance of intersubjectivity and intersubjective constructions of knowledge and cognition. Finally, I discuss the wider consequences of my reading of the *Leviathan*, specifically for readings of Hobbesian cognition and other issues, liberal (individualist) theory, and the understanding of dichotomies and their potential dismantling.

2. Feminist Contributions and Hobbes Scholarship

In this section, I first highlight several authors' qualms with Hobbes's theory of Reason and Science, and the solutions they proposed, as well as my issues with these. I then note that a consideration of Hobbes's intersubjective theory of emotions points to another solution to the problem of Reason. First, however, I sketch a short history of dichotomous thinking to understand the common readings of the *Leviathan*. Of particular focus are rationality and emotion, and the connection of this dichotomy to gendered thinking. Afterwards, I outline how emotion is socially constructed, leading into a discussion of Prokhovnik's (2002) alternative view: the relational perspective—rationality and emotion as a spectrum of cognition. Finally, I argue for the value of a reading of the *Leviathan* from the relational perspective.

2.1 Hobbes's *Leviathan*: A puzzling theory of emotion and rationality

Hobbes's *Leviathan* is not only a nigh-essential component of any political theory syllabus, but also “represent[s] a threshold, after which reason and emotion were regarded as radically divorced” (Prokhovnik, 2002, p. 9). Reflecting this divorce, Hobbes is predominantly read as a rationalist (see, e.g.: Kavka, 1986; Sorell, 2007). This seems a logical reading: Craig (2009) points out that Hobbes explicitly claims that his theory is a work of (his conception of) Reason, and that he presents a new Civil Science. However, as Craig's (2009) extensive treatment of Hobbesian Reason shows (and I extensively discuss separately below), this relatively vacuous concept fails to form an adequate basis for his theory. The strongly related concept of Science, which Hobbes equates with Philosophy and whose content *is* Reason, is therefore also deficient as a tool to understand Hobbes's project. A superficial rationalist reading therefore falls flat, and an alternative reading should be developed.

Several authors noted this problem and proposed different solutions. Craig (2009) submits, based on Hobbes's strong resemblance with large parts of Plato's (political) thought, to substitute Hobbes's understanding of rationality with Plato's. While the parallels with Plato's work are pertinent, this argument neglects Hobbes's great indebtedness to Aristotelian notions of emotion and of rhetoric, especially (Skinner, 1996, p. 38). Skinner's (1996) account of Hobbes's philosophy incorporates this point, arguing that it relies heavily on “the

moving power of eloquence” (p. 427) to arouse emotions in his readers and convince them of his arguments. While this account importantly reveals connections in Hobbes’s philosophy between rational argumentation and emotional arousal, the role of emotions in the construction of knowledge in the first place remains underdeveloped. Contrastingly, Schmitter (2011) claims, based on Hobbes’s materialism, that rationality and emotion are so strongly related that “ultimately, it’s passions all the way down” (p. 5). In particular, they point to the essential role Hobbes ascribes to the Passions in motivating behaviour and directing Reason. Importantly, Schmitter (2011, p. 20) highlights the importance of intersubjectivity in their discussion of fear in Hobbes, by pointing to the power differences between people that cause it. Moreover, the centrality of intersubjectivity to the construction of the Hobbesian Passions is accorded by Heyd’s (1982) work on Hobbes’s discussion of Laughter. Heyd points to feelings of Glory held by persons that wield power over others as constitutive of Laughter.

While these works offer essential arguments to understanding Hobbes’s theory of emotion and rationality, the epistemological and methodological content of rationality and emotion in Hobbes remains under-analysed. Craig’s (2009) relative lack of engagement with the Passions, Skinner’s (1996) focus on Hobbes’s style and rhetorical goals, and Heyd’s (1982) and Schmitter’s (2011) focus on people’s emotions in relation to their place in society leave space for a rereading of Hobbes from another perspective. However, understanding the (historical) basis of the emotion/rationality dichotomy that led to the analytical split, as well as an alternative perspective, must be reached first.

2.2 History of dichotomous thinking

Lloyd’s (1979) paper *The Man of Reason* offers a powerful analysis of the development and place of rationality for men and women in philosophy. In it, she argues that millennia of philosophical thought led to the seventeenth-century ideal of the “Man of Reason” (p. 19). Specifically, she elucidates the “maleness of the Man of Reason” (p. 19), in that the characteristics of this ideal philosopher are typically considered masculine traits. By quoting the views of (the rational deficiency of) women of such canonical authors as Aristotle and Augustine, she sketches the long history of the link between men and rationality on the one hand, and women and non-rationality on the other. However, she points out, the seventeenth century witnessed the arrival of the Man of Reason, and the development of “a rather

different situation in the relationship between philosophical thought and social reality” (p. 23).

It is the works of rationalist philosophers Descartes and Spinoza that are especially pertinent in this development, Lloyd (1979) argues. Descartes’s innovation in this field, she claims, was to frame reason as the correct, even only, method to obtain true knowledge. This frame relates to Descartes’s strong mind/matter split by relegating emotions and senses to matter rather than mind. As reason resides solely in the mind and is the only path to true knowledge, emotions and senses are completely denied a place in theorising. Lloyd argues that, as emotion and sensuality were historically ascribed primarily to women (as described above), Descartes’s theory led to a stronger denial of women’s ability to reason well. Additionally, “[t]he contrast involved in the idea that man was made in God’s image and woman was made to be a companion for man [took] on a new dimension” (p. 25): Cartesian theory advocated that men learn to separate “the sensuous from thought” (p. 23) to become a Man of Reason, but women should refrain from doing so, to prevent them losing their ability to provide for men.

2.3 (Problematic) definitions of rationality and emotion

Prokhovnik (2002), in her book *Rational Woman*, building on Lloyd’s (1979) insights, connects Descartes’s dualism to post-Enlightenment beliefs on the right way to do (empirical) science, that is, “a strict separation between ‘reason’ as the logical cognitive faculty of the mind, which gives rise to knowledge, and ‘emotion’” (Prokhovnik, 2002, p. 8). From these arguments, the question of the nature of both reason and emotion arises. She outlines six common, overlapping understandings of rationality as it is used within the Western philosophical tradition: (1) instrumental rationality, for example as a justification for action or discovering the most effective means to an end; (2) rationality as logic, “the [cognitive, objective] ability to make valid inferences” (p. 67); (3) rationality as (the Greek) *logos*, an understanding of the logical ordering of the universe (Philosophy Tube, 2023), connected to the expression of reason in language; (4) rationality as distinguishing factor between humans and animals; (5) rationality in psychology, the cognitive faculty of knowledge; (6) Cartesian rationality as *cogito*, connecting rationality with subjectivity (we are because we think/thinking makes us people). These understandings of rationality are strictly divorced from emotion.

As Prokhnovnik (2002, p. 68) argues, this divorce from emotion was partly motivated by the 19th-century conviction that recognising emotions as important would cause chaos and discord between the sexes and races. Furthermore, with a reduction in the belief of the importance of God in human affairs following Enlightenment thought, rationality gained a stronger place in grounding knowledge and morality. Especially following Descartes's arguments, reason came to be seen as the primary mode for judging actions, especially with regards to the intentionality of actions—with greater rationality supposedly leading to greater intentionality of actions. Prokhovnik argues that this is another element of reason onto which the male/female gender binary maps: as “women have [traditionally] been associated with a life in which intended action does not play an important part” (p. 73), their lives being ruled by supposedly natural processes or strong normative ideas surrounding the role of the mother in the family. Pivotaly, she notes: “[t]he dependence of the *conceptual* definition of reason on the *social* evidence of men's and women's lives demonstrates just how deeply reason has been socially constructed” (p. 73, original emphasis).

Prokhovnik's (2002) arguments cogently expose the intellectual connections between such (seemingly) disparate concepts as the body, men and women, and cognitive and emotional capabilities. Furthermore, her arguments show that a narrow understanding of rationality as lying solely within the mind and linked to intended action and masculinity is problematic, not just because it reinforces a hierarchy between men and women, but also because it denies sociality as a crucial element of rationality. Prokhovnik points out that, though some philosophers have recognised these issues, their solutions have been lacking. Although, as she points out, some political philosophers have tried to use an Aristotelian understanding of reason and emotion to fuse the concepts and develop a political theory that incorporates emotion. Additionally, some liberal theorists have attempted such a fusion, through the concept of “reasonableness” (p. 75) as a criterion for judging socio-political arrangements. For Prokhovnik, such attempts to incorporate emotion into political theorising neglect to take the relationship between emotion and rationality seriously enough: she points out that their relationship can and should be the basis for theorising more abstractly; outside of concrete, practical concerns. One particularly powerful, but neglected connection relates to human sociality.

2.4 Socially constructed nature of emotion

I have alluded several times to the idea of the social construction² of reason, an essential component of Prokhovnik's (2002) theory and deeply connected to the idea of the socially constructed nature of emotions. Several different strains of theory have noted the former, with postmodern thinkers such as Foucault arguing reason to "[have taken] shape in a confluence of concepts, institutions, and practices" (Aylesworth, 2015, p. 17), all of which are constituted by interactions between individuals. Reason in the sense of knowledge has been cogently theorised by Marxist and feminist epistemologists as heavily dependent and shaped by the social positionality of the subject (Anderson, 2020; Grasswick, 2018).

Typically, Prokhovnik (2002) argues, such theories broadly and problematically concur with the dichotomous construction of reason and emotion. To alleviate this issue and strengthen her argument for the relational nature of the two, Prokhovnik outlines "three main features which establish the argument for a social construction, as against a biological 'naturalness' of emotions" (p. 102). The first of these is her argument of emotions as relationally and contextually constructed (p. 103-105). She argues that three elements interact to constitute emotions: "the human body [a genetic predisposition to certain emotions], human consciousness [the individual's experience], and the [social] world around the person" (p. 105). The second feature is the importance of "individual agency and reflection" (p. 107), relating to the way individuals construct their identities in relation to the intersubjective, social world influenced by the emotions they feel. The final feature relates to the role of memory, as Prokhovnik argues that memories are linked to feelings: she points out that we remember primarily how we felt during a past event. Emotions, she argues, are also "constructed in self-reflection, in secondary and tertiary reflections on events." (p. 110).

2.5 Breaking down the dichotomy: rationality and emotion in relation

Prokhovnik (2002) offers a radical rethinking of the dichotomy emotion/reason. She argues that instead of being conceptually (and/or physically) separate and distinct, rationality and emotion form a spectrum of cognition:

² The deeply contested nature of the meaning of social construction is beyond the scope of this paper. I follow the definition that our mental activity is heavily affected by social conventions and norms as to what is right or accepted.

What is proposed [...] is not a unitary concept but an area of significant overlap on a continuum between two distinct capacities. The continuum has the pure reason of formal logic near one extreme, and pure emotional expression as in hysteria near the other. However, this description is qualified by the recognition that, on the one hand, even logic is affected by emotion in a limited sense (in Hobbes's terms, all thinking is driven by passions [...]). On the other hand even hysteria can be understood as in a limited sense a rational response, and takes different culturally influenced forms. (pp. 78-79)

This is a powerful argument, that if taken seriously, has the potential to radically draw into question longstanding dichotomous views in theorising regarding the primacy of rationality that I described above. Additionally, and more acute for the feminist political project and intellectual tradition that Prokhovnik draws upon, is the potential of overthrowing other dichotomies that the reason/emotion dichotomy maps upon, especially the male/female and sex/gender dichotomies. Essential for doing philosophy is her argument that emotion plays into more than coupling or grounding reason in practical concerns. She notes that “[i]n general terms emotions play a crucial role in knowledge because the production of knowledge, the discussion of ideas, and the recognition of a piece of theorising as knowledge all involve social activities expressed in particular social practices which are interpersonal and require ‘emotional engagement’ (Stocker 1996: 175)” (Prokhovnik, 2002, p. 83).

Prokhovnik (2002) identifies five main (non-exhaustive) ways “in which emotions play a role *in* knowledge, ways in which emotion enables the use of reason.” (p. 85, original emphasis). The first way is what she terms “salience” (ibid., p. 85). With this, she means the role of the emotions in showing a person what is important to them. As she puts it, the emotions “give *normative* values to cognitions, and [serve to] identify *instrumentally* which cognitions are valuable” (p. 87, original emphasis). Drawing on De Sousa (1987), Prokhovnik (2002) argues that, in an important sense, emotions can act similarly to the perceptual system, in filtering information and the cognitive pathways open to us. This role of emotion is additionally linked to the social understanding discussed above, in the sense that emotions are greatly culturally anchored. The second way is closely linked to the first but relates to the way that emotions push thinking forward. Prokhovnik emphasises the dynamic nature of emotions as

ever-changing and evolving, whereas logical reasoning stays the same. Powerfully, she argues that emotion “gives direction [to], selects and stimulates” (p. 89) reason. The third way that emotions figure into theorising is by “underpinning the development of reason” (p. 93). By this, she refers to the nature of rational (dis)agreement as being informed by the levels of trust and love in other people, emotions that are necessarily imbued in childhood emotional development. For rational decisions to take place and have value at all, a strong sense of (emotional) connectedness to others is essential. The fourth way “concerns the expression of theorising in language” (p. 95). Prokhovnik notes that language is heavily imbued with values and that it always (seeks to) sparks emotional responses. Finally, the fifth way is related to the concept of “intellectual virtues” (p. 97): she argues that common understandings of intellectual virtuosity (and intelligence more broadly) implicitly and necessarily incorporate emotions into them. Specifically, Prokhovnik claims that emotion is heavily involved in keeping a person intellectually interested, as well as for the effective drawing of links between concepts.

With this new perspective, a valuable alternative to dichotomous thinking about rationality and emotion has been developed. Given the importance of intersubjectivity and the Passions to Hobbes’s theory, as well as the lack of a comprehensive reading accounting for potential connections between his various accounts of cognition including both rationality and emotion, I believe the stage is now set for a rereading of the *Leviathan* from the relational perspective that Prokhovnik (2002) developed.

3. Rationality in Hobbes's *Leviathan*

In this section, I will discuss (the deficiencies) of Hobbes's theorisation of various concepts related to cognition. To start with, I cover his fundamentally materialist view of human nature. Afterwards, I discuss the contents and relationship of the concepts of Reason and Science. Finally, a thorough reading of the concepts of Speech and Knowledge completes my discussion of the content of Hobbes's most explicit conception of rationality, opening space for a relational reading, to be developed further in the next chapter.

3.1 The foundations: Hobbesian materialism

Any reading of rationality logically starts Hobbes's fundamental theory of (human) nature, especially regarding the overarching materialism in his theory. Chapter I, 'Of SENSE', contains one of the most concise articulations of this theory, with Hobbes's claim that every feeling is "[...] but so many several motions of the matter, by which it presseth our organs diversly" (I, p. 12[3]). Hobbes claims here that all feelings (Senses) are engendered by the material world, not by mental states that somehow stand apart from the physical world. In fact, his materialism applies to every mental faculty—though not always obviously.

The first evidence of his *mental materialism* comes in Chapter II, 'Of IMAGINATION', where Hobbes first explicitly discusses a concept that 21st-century philosophers would consider an essential component of mental life: Imagination. Hobbes elects to keep his discussion short, despite the essential role that (a 21st-century reader would ascribe) imagination plays in grounding a theory of state—an abstract entity after all. By noting the difficulty of stopping objects in motion (II, p. 13[4]), Hobbes argues that the senses (which are, after all, just movements of matter), leave impressions in the mind. Imagination, Hobbes claims, consists of these slowly "*decaying sense[s]*" (II, p. 14[5], original emphasis). Curiously, Hobbes proceeds to equate Imagination with Memory. Recalling Prokhovnik's (2002) argument for the emotional content of memories in reading this juxtaposition is the first hint to the place of emotions in Hobbesian cognitive content. At this early stage in the *Leviathan*, the centrality of intersubjectivity in Hobbes's ideas of cognition is also becoming apparent. He notes: "Imagination that is raysed in man by words, or other voluntary signes, is what we generally call *Understanding*" (II, p. 19[8], original emphasis). Many 21st-century

readers may have a more individualist conceptualisation of understanding, for example one based on personal experience. Hobbes's conception of this essential component of human cognition, however, is based solely on communication between people.

Before coming to the details of his theory of communication, Hobbes defines (the nature of) thought(s) itself, which he does in Chapter III, '*Of the Consequence or TRAYNE of Imaginations*'. Here, Hobbes develops a binary model of the "Trayne of thoughts, or Mentall Discourse" (III, p. 20[9]). The two modes of thought he identifies are characterised by the presence/absence of a guiding emotion, the presence of which causes thinking to be "[...] more constant; as being *regulated* by some desire, and designe. For the impression made by such things as wee desire, or feare, is strong, and permanent, or [at least] of quick return" (III, p. 21[9], original emphasis). Of the two, Hobbes discusses the former much more and takes its definition as given for the rest of the book—showing how important he considers the driving force of emotions for thought (recall Prokhovnik (2002) here again).

Regarding the objects of thought, Hobbes identifies two kinds: "One, when of an effect imagined, wee seek the causes, or means that produce it [...]. The other is, when imagining any thing whatsoever, wee seek all the possible effects [...]" (III, p. 21[9]). These are two sides of the same coin: Hobbes is arguing that the function of thought is limited to relationships of cause and effect. I submit that this definition does not hold under scrutiny: clearly, thought has other functions. To take only the Cartesian conflation of thought with subjectivity as a (problematic) example: humans use thought to make sense of their place in the world and their very being. While the Hobbesian objection to my example may be that the question of 'place in the world' is one of cause—as in what caused a person to exist—I would stress the more abstract nature of this question, in the sense of a questioning the very *essence* of what it is to be alive. From this short discussion, the pertinence of considering as stretching beyond Hobbes's theory of cognition beyond Reason and Science has become clear.

3.2 Reason and Science: Hobbesian rationality and (connecting to) epistemology

In Chapter V, '*Of REASON, and SCIENCE*', Hobbes presents his most explicit articulation of a theory of rationality and epistemology. He opens with the crux of this theory: "When a man *Reasoneth*, hee does nothing else but conceive a summe totall, from *Addition* [...], or

conceive a Remainder, from *Subtraction*” (V, p. 34[18]). In short, “REASON, [...] is nothing but *Reckoning* [...] of the Consequences of generall names agreed upon” (V, p. 35[18], original emphasis). As Craig (2009) points out, the mental operation(s) Hobbes refers to here are “more familiarly known as *deductive reasoning*” (p. 147, emphasis mine). Closer inspection of this definition reveals it as “grossly inadequate” (p. 147), becoming clear, for example, in the fact that Hobbes’s definitions (including that of Reason) cannot (only) follow from calculation. The power to create definitions (generall Names), as Krohnman (1980) puts it, “would be impossible unless the inventor already possessed the distinctive schematizing vision which allows one to see a concrete and evanescent particular as the reflection or image of something ‘true in *all times* and *places*’” (p. 174, original emphasis). Hobbes’s theory of Reason does not provide for such a vision.

Likewise, although Hobbes claims that the *Leviathan*, as a work of philosophy, is a work of Reason, it is not at all convincing that *this* conception of Reason can “[suggest the] convenient articles of peace upon which men may be drawn to agreement” (XIII, p. 105[63]). Hobbes’s structure, fleshing out various aspects of (being) humans, does not lend itself to simple addition or subtraction, as the various concepts and characteristics are not circumscribed (and normatively equally valuable or important) wholes. The analysis of the nature of people in Part 1 does not, therefore, simply ‘calculate’ into his theory of the state in Part 2.

Central to Hobbes’s concept of Reason is his argument that it “is not as Sense, and Memory, borne with us; nor gotten by Experience onely [...], but attained by Industry” (V, p. 38[21])—by which he means hard (intellectual) work. This work consists specifically of

first apt imposing of Names; and secondly by getting a good and orderly Method in proceeding from the Elements, which are Names, to Assertions made by Connexion of one of them to another; and so to Syllogismes, which are the Connexions of one Assertion to another, till we come to a knowledge of all the Consequences of names appertaining to the subject in hand; (V, p. 38-39[21])

These activities (to obtain Reason) taken together form what Hobbes calls “SCIENCE” (V, p. 39[21]). A comparison to the concepts of Sense and Memory (see above) makes clear what he considers to be special about Science:

And whereas Sense and Memory are but knowledge of Fact, which is a thing past, and irrevocable, *Science* is the knowledge of Consequences, and dependance of one fact upon another: by which, out of that we can presently do, we know how to do something when we will, or the like: Because [...] when the like causes come into our power, wee see how to make it produce the like effects. (V, p. 39[21], original emphasis)

Here, Hobbes claims that Science is key to understanding consequences, as well as the development and connection of concepts. It is therefore essential to the use of Reason and may fill the ‘abstraction’ gap that Krohnman (1980) identified. However, the circular nature of the two concepts prevents this, in the sense that the faculty of Reason is required “for the *marking* and *signifying* of our thoughts” (V, p. 35[18]), which in turn is necessary for the “apt imposing of Names” (V, p. 38[21])—requiring the ability to put our thoughts into words in the first place. This puzzle of the first making/convention of the meanings of words can be traced back to Hobbes’s theory of Speech.

3.3 Speech: Hobbesian communication and language

In Chapter IV, ‘Of SPEECH’, Hobbes lays out the foundations of his theory of language and communication. As is becoming a theme, Hobbes’s explicit treatment of this topic is highly deficient. For example, Hobbes argues that Speech is nothing but “[...] *Names* or *Appellation*, and their Connexion[s]” (IV, p. 25[12], original emphasis). As Craig (2009) cogently points out, much common use of knowledge consists of using words in a different manner than Hobbes suggests here. This becomes especially visible in Hobbes’s exposition of the “Uses” and “Abuses” of Speech (IV, p. 26[13]). He argues that the main use of speech is to “transfere our Mentall Discourse, into Verbal; or the Trayne of our Thoughts into a Trayne of Words” (IV, p. 26[12]), for two purposes: 1) to facilitate remembering our thoughts, and 2) to communicate mental content to other people (including everything from

thoughts and feelings to goals). Hobbes notes four related “Speciall uses of Speech” (IV, p. 26[13]):

First, to Register, what by cogitation, wee find to be the cause of any thing, present or past; and what we find things present or past may produce, or effect: which in summe, is acquiring of Arts. Secondly, to shew to others that knowledge which we have attained; which is, to Counsell, and Teach one another. Thirdly, to make known to others our wills, and purposes, that we may have the mutuall help of one another. Fourthly, to please and delight our selves, and others [...]. (IV, p. 26[13])

Of special note here is Hobbes’s first explicit mention of the concept of *knowledge* and his recognition of the importance of Speech to both it and the Arts, (which Hobbes considers to be opposites) in the first two special uses. Additionally, his emphasis on helping each other betrays his conviction of the importance of interpersonal relationships in general, and in Counsell and Teaching (both essential to the good functioning of his commonwealth, see Chapter XXV and XXX respectively³), specifically.

Crucial to Hobbes’s theory both of communication and of knowledge itself is his argument that “*True and False* are attributes of Speech, not of Things [a]nd where Speech is not, there is neither *Truth* nor *Falsehood*” (IV, p. 29[15], original emphasis). The truth, for Hobbes, lies especially in developing and using correct Definitions:

truth [consists] in the right ordering of names in our affirmations, [and] a man that seeketh precise *truth*, had need to remember what every name he uses stands for, and to place it accordingly [...]. And therefore in Geometry, (which is the onely Science [...]) men begin at settling the significations of their words; [...] *Definitions* (IV, p. 29[15], original emphasis)

³ In these Chapters, Hobbes argues that any good ruler requires competent advisors and points to the importance of teaching subjects how not to threaten the integrity of the state.

While the importance of the use and development of correct or at least generally agreed-upon) definitions can easily be granted Hobbes here, the problem identified in the section above remains: he cannot provide for a prior, general, agreement of the meanings of words. Hobbes himself appears to be aware of this:

[f]or seeing all names are imposed to signifie our conceptions; and all our affections are but conceptions; and all our affections are but conceptions; when we conceive the same things differently, we can hardly avoyd different naming of them. For the though the nature of that we conceive, be the same; yet the diversity of our reception of it [...] gives everything a tincture of our different passions. And therefore in reasoning, a man must take heed of words; [...] which have a signification also of the nature, disposition, and interest of the speaker (IV, p. 33[17])

Despite this awareness, Hobbes does not offer a convincing solution. As shown above, Science and Reason circle around the subject, and despite his point that there is “no Reasoning without Speech” (IV, p. 31[16]), Chapter IV does not offer a way to break the circle.

The problem of the deficiencies in Hobbes’s explicit treatment of rationality becomes particularly acute in considering his clear hierarchisation and split between two kinds of Knowledge, laid out in Chapter IX: ‘*Of the Severall SUBJECTS of KNOWLEDGE*’. Here, Hobbes dichotomises knowledges into “*Knowledge of Fact [and] Knowledge of the Consequence of one Affirmation to another*” (IX, p. 68[40], original emphasis). The first of these relates to Memory, specifically of sensual, physical experiences. The second, which Hobbes claims is “the knowledge required in a Philosopher; that is to say, of him that pretends to *Reasoning*” (IX, p. 68[40], original emphasis), is Science. As Hobbes considers himself a Philosopher (XXXI, p. 304[194]), the *Leviathan* can be considered a Book of Philosophy. The acuteness of the issue, therefore, lies in Hobbes’s equation of (the overly simplistic) Science and Reason with Philosophy. However, despite the deficiencies in Hobbes’s explicit account outlined above, I submit that a careful reading of the intersubjective nature of several concepts of his theory implicitly reveals a solution.

4. Intersubjectivity and Relationality in Hobbes's *Leviathan*

In this section, I will consider Hobbes's treatment of emotion, especially the closest Hobbesian equivalent: Passions. I point out Fear as particularly important to Hobbes's philosophy in general and highlight the intersubjective nature of it. Afterwards, I discuss the Hobbesian concepts of Deliberation and Discourse, to draw the link between emotion and rationality.

The centrality of the Passions⁴ for Hobbes's theory becomes readily apparent at several junctions. Chapter VI, '*Of the Interiour Beginnings of Voluntary Motions; commonly called the PASSIONS. And the Speeches by which they are expressed*' contains Hobbes's expression of the function(s) and content of the Passions. In classic Hobbesian fashion, his discussion builds up from a materialist base with the concept Endeavour. He claims that before a movement is made in the real world, the beginning of that motion can be seen inside: "[t]hese small beginnings of Motion, within the body of Man, before they appear in [...] visible actions, are commonly called ENDEAVOUR" (VI, p. 42[23]). Endeavour, Hobbes points out, can be in two directions: either toward or away from something, termed respectively "Appetite" and "Aversion" (VI, p. 42[23]). Hobbes argues that these can arise from a "Promise", "Effect" or "Means", of either "Good" or "Evil" (VI, p. 44[24]).

4.1 The social/philosophical construction of Fear

While most of the descriptions Passions Hobbes presents in this Chapter are fairly commonsensical and/or superficial, I want to draw attention to the intersubjectively constructed Fear. Although Hobbes's definition of fear in Chapter VI is compact ("Aversion, with opinion of Hurt from the object" (VI, p. 45[25])), the breadth of its content and importance in his theory can hardly be understated. For starters, "The Passions that encline men to Peace, are Feare of Death; Desire [of means to live well]; and a Hope by their Industry to obtain them" (XIII, p. 105[63]). Additionally, Hobbes says, "Feare of oppression, disposeth a man to anticipate or seek ayd by society" (XI, p. 82[49]). The "perpetuall feare" (XII, p. 88[52]) that Hobbes identifies as an essential component of the human condition can

⁴ In line with Heyd (1982, p. 286), I suggest the Hobbesian concept 'Passion(s)' can be broadly understood to correspond closely with our concept of 'emotions'.

be linked to a deep curiosity about the causes of things⁵. The problem with this quest is that “Science [...] is not Absolute, but Conditionall” (VII, p. 53[30]) and that especially the *first* cause in a causal chain is fundamentally unknowable and therefore invisible.

Another cause of Fear betraying its intersubjective nature relates to Hobbes’s conceptualisation of people as fundamentally equal (XIII, p. 100[60]), in the sense that every person could conceivably (fatally) harm another. Hobbes points out that “[f]rom this equality of ability, ariseth equality of hope” (XIII, p. 101[61]), leading to “a time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man” (XIII, p. 103[62]) and consequently “men have no pleasure in keeping company” (XIII, p. 102[61]). Be that as it may, “[t]he Passions that encline men to Peace, are Feare of Death; Desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and a Hope by their Industry to obtain them” (XIII, p. 105[63])—showing the role of fear both in people’s “great deale of griefe” (XIII, p. 102[61]) in being with others, but also in grounding Hobbes’s argument for their inclination to Peace (and thereby the commonwealth).

4.2 Deliberation and Discourse

Hobbes’s concept of Deliberation encompasses his theory of how a person springs to action in the presence of a variety of emotions regarding the same subject. In his words: “the whole summe of Desires, Aversions, Hopes and Fears, continued till the thing be either done, or thought impossible, is that we call DELIBERATION” (VI, p. 49[28]). The connection to Reason is obvious in the language Hobbes uses to describe this concept: he clearly believes that a calculation (“summe” (VI, p. 49[28])) is used to decide what to do. The difference of the kind of Speech used to communicate the two, however, differs primarily in the way that “Reasoning is in generall words; but Deliberation for the most part is of Particulars” (VI, p. 51[29]). The difference additionally relates to the temporal direction of thought, where Reasoning (and Science) are related to uncovering the truths (in the form of causal chains) of the past, Deliberation is focused on what to do to influence the future. In drawing attention to the concept of Deliberation, my purpose is twofold. Firstly, to highlight Hobbes’s connection of Reason and Passion, and the extensive similarities he sees between the two. Secondly, and

⁵ As he says: “the continuall and indefatigable generation of Knowledge, exceedeth the short vehemence of any carnall Pleasure” (VI, p. 47[26]) and “it is peculiar to the nature of Man, to be inquisitive into the Causes of the Events they see, some more, some lesse; but all men so much, as to be curious in the search of the causes of their own good and evill fortune” (XII, p. 87[52]).

related to the intersubjective nature of Passions and Hobbes's theory in general, link of Deliberation with the final important concept for my argument, Discourse.

Discourse, Hobbes claims, is a specific kind of mental or verbal activity, in which a person's beliefs about some things oscillate between "thoughts that the thing will be, and will not be; or that is has been, and has not been, alternately" (VII, p. 52[30])—compared to Deliberation, which Hobbes here restates as "the whole chain of Appetites alternat[ing], in the question of Good, or Bad" (VII, p. 53[30]). The links and similarities between Reason (and its method, Science) and the Passions shine through again in Hobbes's drawing of this parallel. Crucial is Hobbes's related dichotomising of Discourse as either starting with Definitions, or not. The former is related to Science (but its mental/verbal expression), whereas the latter is Opinion, on which Hobbes claims "that whatsoever we believe [...] then what is drawn from authority of men onely [...] is Faith in men onely" (VII, p. 55[32]). By doing this, he circles back to the point that I made above: ultimately, all Definitions are also made by people "in such manner, as need [...] taught them" (IV, p. 26[12]), and therefore, Science and Reason are also based in the intersubjective construction of language, and the supposed dichotomy falls apart.

5. Discussion

5.1 Wrapping up: Prokhovnik's relational perspective in Hobbesian cognition

My analysis of the universe of concepts related to Hobbes's theory of cognition has shown that, despite Hobbes's apparent insistence on their primacy, Reason and Science alone fail to form an adequate basis for his philosophical project in the *Leviathan*. The literal reading of these concepts fails to recognise the intersubjective nature of these concepts, highlighted in my discussion of Speech. Crucially, through this intersubjectivity, a strong link can be drawn between the Passions and Reason and Science. Recalling Prokhovnik's (2002) argument is especially valuable here. In her argument for a relational understanding of rationality and emotion, she points to several ways in which "in which emotions play a role *in* knowledge" (p. 85, original emphasis). My reading of the *Leviathan* shows Hobbes's concurrence with several of these.

For starters, Prokhovnik (2002) points to the way in which emotions are constructed by and connected to the social environment of a person, and how that shapes the kinds of cognition that take place. My discussion of Fear in the *Leviathan* highlights both these points: Fear is constructed by the social environment of a person, and is paramount in driving humanity to seek peace, Hobbes argues. Recall also Heyd's (1982) points about the social positionality inherent in the concept of Laughter and Schmitter's (2011) points about Fear. Additionally, the construction of Knowledge through the development of correct definitions, is heavily shaped by intersubjective processes of language development. Such processes require intense emotional engagement with others and the environment, to be able to trust others and to identify what's important (recall the parallel of the emotional system with the perceptual system).

Hobbes's implicitly relational approach to rationality and emotion is shown not only through these points, however. At several points in the *Leviathan* I highlighted above, the language he uses to describe typically 'emotional' and 'rational' processes is usually the same. Despite small differences that Hobbes points to, such as a disposition to the future or the past, he clearly considers both elements of the same system. This fits with the materialist foundations of Hobbes's theory—*everything* in the mind is ultimately some kind of movement of matter.

My reading of the *Leviathan* has consequences for several others, including an individualist one—the intersubjectively constructed nature of cognition precludes such a reading. Additionally, a strictly rationalist reading is undermined by my reading showing the relational aspect of cognition, especially with the role of cognition, in the *Leviathan*. Likewise, readings of the Passions (of which most agree that especially Fear is pivotal) should be expanded to properly account for the connections to rationality and knowledge-obtaining processes that are essential to Hobbes’s theory. Studies of Hobbesian epistemology would also benefit from my reading, as it offers more clues as to his philosophical commitments, especially compared to a superficial reading of Science and Reason.

5.2 Applications

I have shown that Hobbes’s theory of cognition hinges on a relational understanding of emotion and rationality, concurring with some of the epistemological innovations that 20th (see, e.g.: Grasswick, 2018) and 21st-century feminists (e.g.: Prokhovnik, 2002) have proposed. This reveals significant shared methodological commitments between the two, prompting questions of interpretation and philosophising in general, a few of which I will aim to answer here.

To begin, Hobbes’s insistence that his philosophical work is a work of Reason, narrowly understood, is puzzling. Craig (2009, p. 452-453) claims that Hobbes believed the best way to convince his audience of the value of his work was to show the practical (political) utility of Philosophy. He points out that Hobbes’s understanding of Reason and Science heavily references Francis Bacon’s theory of technological progress, which focusses on utility and de-emphasises the emotions. Rhetorically, therefore, it makes sense that Hobbes explicitly highlights Reason as rationality. For Hobbes’s materialist⁶ conception of mind to be consistent, however, it is logical that the Passions and Reason are so closely linked. Of course, Hobbes’s reliance on Aristotle’s theory of emotion (Skinner, 1996, p. 38) also plays into this. The latter also drew a strong link between the emotions and rationality, especially in his political philosophy (Sokolon, 2003).

⁶As Gert (2001) claims, Hobbes’s materialism, in turn, was designed to distance himself and undermine religious reasoning prevalent at the time.

The emphasis on intersubjectivity in my reconstruction of Hobbes theory further undermines liberal individualist reasoning. Not only are some of his key emotional drivers to a large extent socially constructed, but I have also shown the very basis of (Hobbesian) knowledge to also depend on intersubjective construction. As the influence of the *Leviathan* on the constitution of contemporary liberal states can hardly be overstated, the political consequences of my reading may be radical. Specifically, notions of the importance of individual responsibility should be reconsidered: as our ideas about the world are so heavily shaped by the social environment, perhaps we can instead emphasise social responsibility over individual responsibility. Contemporary feminist critiques of consent discourse are also pertinent to briefly consider here. Some feminists have pointed to the liberal focus on the *moment* of consent, and a failure to consider the power relations that structure any contract and preceding circumstances (see, for example: Hensman Kettrey, Davis & Liberman, 2021). While Hobbes obviously disregards power differentials as an excuse not to engage in covenant in Chapter XIII, his acute awareness of the power differentials and always socially informed decision-making and knowledge production may serve as inspiration for reconsidering liberal notions of consent. Furthermore, if even the anxious(ly inspired) Hobbes recognises the essential role of sociality in the production of knowledge, liberals' insistence on the state's focus on individual development and freedom may be mistaken.

When it comes to the dichotomous mode of thinking about rationality and emotion in philosophy, my reading of the *Leviathan* provides further basis to discard it. Additionally, my reading may provide fertile ground for feminist interpretations of the *Leviathan*, especially given feminists' focus on other issues than the content of cognition, such as the gender of Hobbes's sovereign (Hirschmann & Wright, 2012) and Hobbes's theory of sexuality (Sreedhar, 2012). Uncovering the potentially gendered aspects of Hobbes's complete conception of cognition, as well as the potential social power relations involved in the intersubjective construction of knowledge, would be an extremely valuable intellectual pursuit.

Finally, the consequences of the relational reading of cognition for the academic pursuit of philosophy more broadly are also radical. Most conventional ideas about philosophical practice are heavily influenced by Cartesian dualism, and place 'rational' reasoning above 'emotional' reasoning—in the context of this paper evidenced by the typically separated

interpretations of Hobbesian rationality and emotion. Taking Prokhovnik's (2002) and my argument seriously raises questions about various theoretical methods and traditions. I have made a start to an answer with my discussion of liberal theory, but a deep engagement with emotion and the social construction of knowledge would look very different from the typical (derogatorily put) 'armchair philosophy' of academia.

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