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International Organization / Volume 50 / Issue 02 / March 1996, pp 213 - 236

DOI: 10.1017/S002081830002854X, Published online: 22 May 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S002081830002854X

How to cite this article:

Michael C. Williams (1996). Hobbes and international relations: a reconsideration. International Organization, 50, pp 213-236 doi:10.1017/S002081830002854X

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Hobbes and international relations: a reconsideration

Michael C. Williams

The name of Thomas Hobbes and the concept of anarchy often seem virtually synonymous in discussions of international relations. Indeed in the controversies between neorealists and neoliberals; structuralists, poststructuralists, and feminists; and rationalists, constructivists, and realists (among others) that currently dominate our fields, the adequacy of a Hobbesian vision of international politics provides a common rhetorical and analytic touchstone, much as it has in varying forms for generations.¹

The common interpretation of Hobbes's conception of international relations centers around his famous depiction of the state of nature as a realm in which "it is manifest that during the time that men live without a common power to keep them in awe, they are in that condition which is called war, and such is a war of every man against every man."² In the traditional "realist" vision, this provides an enduringly powerful formulation of the essence of international relations: in Hans Morgenthau's words, it provides the "stock in trade" of the discipline; or, as Michael Smith puts it, Hobbes's "analysis of the state of nature remains the defining feature of realist thought. His notion of the international state of nature as a state of war is shared by virtually everyone calling himself a realist."³

Yet realists have not been alone in claiming Hobbes as one of their own. Indeed, a conspicuous challenge to this prevailing appropriation is provided in

For their thoughtful and helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article, I thank Charles Beitz, Paul Evans, and especially Keith Krause and Ross Rudolph. Many thanks also to John Odell and the anonymous reviewers for *International Organization*. While I may have been unable to meet all the concerns of those who commented upon this essay, I have benefited greatly from their insights. Responsibility for the shortcomings that remain obviously rests with me.

1. For examples of the controversies among international relations scholars, see Wendt 1992; and Buzan 1993. For a small but diverse sample of discussions of the Hobbesian vision, see Ferguson and Mansbach 1989, 186; Campbell 1992, 61–68; Hoffmann 1965, especially 57–68; Beitz 1979, pt. 1; Viotti and Kauppi 1993, 41; Walker 1993; and Grant 1991, 9–11.

2. Hobbes [1651] 1993b, 76.

3. See Morgenthau 1967, 113; and Smith 1986, 13, respectively.

the reading of Hobbes characteristic of the so-called English school of international theory.⁴ Adopting a “rationalist” or “Grotian” perspective on world politics, proponents of this alternative understanding of Hobbes’s theory of international relations begin by asking a long-standing and deceptively simple question: why, if Hobbes felt the solution to anarchy in the state of nature lay in the creation of the Leviathan, did he not extend the logic of this solution to the international level? In short, if Hobbesian individuals were able to enter into contracts with one another in the state of nature, why are not Hobbesian states capable of doing so in the international anarchy? John Vincent notes that “it is even reasonable to ask why, if Hobbes’s view of international politics was really as the Realists take it to be, he did not seek to bring the international anarchy to an end in the same way as *Leviathan* ordered relations among individuals?”⁵

An attempt to answer this question is at the heart of the English school’s quite different understanding of Hobbes, anarchy, and international relations. From the rationalist perspective of authors such as Vincent and Hedley Bull, Hobbes’s “failure” to extend his argument to the creation of a global Leviathan reflects neither an oversight nor a claim about the impossibility of such a transition. Rather it emerges from the fact that Hobbes did not view international relations to be directly analogous to the state of nature.⁶ To Vincent, one simply cannot make sense of Hobbes’s failure to extend the logic of his political theory to the international realm without significantly modifying the realist interpretation: “Unless one thinks of Hobbes as a Rationalist as well as a Realist it is hard to explain his complacency about international politics.”⁷

From this perspective, Hobbes’s so-called failure to extend this solution to international relations provides a fundamental insight into his thinking, the basis of a different reading of his vision of international anarchy, and ultimately a part of the foundation of a theoretical alternative to realism.⁸ International relations, in this view, may be anarchic in the sense that states lack an overarching power, but this does not make them a Hobbesian state of nature. In fact, Bull argues, a clear understanding of Hobbes’s ideas yields results almost directly contrary to the realist interpretation, forcing us to recognize “how deeply pacific Hobbes’s approach to international relations was, at least in the values from which it sprang. There is no sense in Hobbes of the glorification of war, nor of relish for the game of power politics as an end in

4. As examples, see Bull 1977a; Cutler 1991; and Wight 1992.

5. Vincent 1981, 85.

6. Bull 1977b.

7. Vincent 1981, 85.

8. For a recent discussion of the relationship between neorealism and the English school, see Buzan 1993.

itself, nor of willingness to abdicate judgement in favour of the doctrine that anything in the international anarchy is permissible.”⁹ Hobbesian international theory, in this perspective, becomes a support for the rationalist emphasis on rules and norms in the constitution of “international society.”

Despite its pervasiveness, then, the conventional characterization of international relations as a realm of Hobbesian anarchy raises more questions than it resolves. Both “Hobbes” and “anarchy” have different meanings within competing theoretical traditions. In the light of these divergent interpretations, and in the broader context of the ongoing debates over the foundations of international political theory and the concept of anarchy currently under way within the discipline, a reevaluation of Hobbes’s views on international relations seems in order.

This article presents such a reinterpretation. It seeks not to critically evaluate Hobbes’s vision of international relations but to present an alternative understanding of that vision in order to highlight both inadequacies in prevailing appropriations and a series of issues that such a reinterpretation raises for contemporary theorizing about international politics. Drawing upon recent analyses in the history of ideas, it argues that Hobbes is neither a foundational figure in the neorealist tradition nor a straightforward rationalist of the English school. Indeed, if we examine more deeply the foundations of Hobbes’s thoughts on international relations and come to appreciate these in the light of his broader intellectual and political concerns, a picture emerges that is both significantly at odds with conventional portrayals and that resonates remarkably with many of the most vibrant debates within contemporary international relations. Questions at the heart of current methodological debates, such as objectivity and relativity, science and interpretation, and ideas and practices, were at the heart of Hobbes’s understandings of politics and of international relations.

Substantively, Hobbes’s ideas lend support not to contemporary analyses that focus upon the structural determinations of anarchy but to those that focus upon the interrelationship between domestic political structures and global processes. Hobbes’s most famous legacy to international relations, the “state of nature,” is grounded not in an assumption of natural human aggressiveness nor in a “security dilemma” brought about by a “logic of anarchy.” Rather, it lies in much deeper questions of knowledge, legitimacy, and the social construction of action. Indeed Alexander Wendt’s claim that “anarchy is what states make of it” is one toward which Hobbes might have been highly sympathetic, though the grounds upon which Hobbes would have based that claim are somewhat different and raise important questions for contemporary theories of world politics.¹⁰

9. Bull 1977b, 729.

10. Wendt 1992.

Hobbes and skepticism

Several recent philosophical treatments have argued at length that the central intellectual context in which Hobbes's thought must be located is the *crise Pyrrhonnienne* of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹¹ Led by figures such as Montaigne, the skeptical movement was complex, but for the purposes of this argument it consisted of two central themes. First, it held that sense perception was always potentially misleading. A straight stick appearing to bend when placed in the water was a classic illustration. Moreover, the senses could easily provide differing perceptions depending upon the use, for example, of magnifying lenses or changes in perceptual capacities due to changes in health or age.

The truth of the various and competing perceptions could not, therefore, be settled by the evidence of the senses alone but rather required a set of rational criteria for their evaluation. But where were these criteria to come from? If they were held to emerge from reason itself, the problem of self-referentiality emerged. Reason, in effect, would be declaring what was reasonable and true on the basis of its own definition. Yet if, as the skeptics argued, there were many different forms of life and of reason, then what would be required would be a Reason to judge all Reasons, again yielding the self-referentiality problem, and again putting into place the skeptical challenge to any definitive claim to know. Quoting Montaigne, Richard Popkin has summarized the problem of the criterion at the heart of the skeptical challenge: "If our sense experiences vary so much, by what standards are we to judge which are veridical? We need some basis for judging, but how shall we determine objectivity? 'To judge the appearances that we receive of objects, we would need a judicatory instrument; to verify this instrument, we need a demonstration; to verify the demonstration, an instrument: there we are in a circle.' " In addition to this dilemma of circularity, there is the problem of locating the nature of reason itself, a problem that leads to "an infinite regress, in the search for a basis of knowledge. 'Since the senses cannot decide our dispute, being themselves full of uncertainty, it must be reason that does so. No reason can be established without another reason: there we go back to infinity again.' "¹²

This skepticism provided the context for Hobbes's philosophical and political project, and while his reaction to it was complex, for our purposes here it had two major elements. The first was a general assent to skeptical claims about the basic indeterminacy of sensory knowledge and the adoption of a radical nominalism. But the second, and here more important, claim was that the recognition of this inherent unreliability was, paradoxically, the foundation for understanding the problems of political order and from these, their necessary solutions.

11. See Tuck 1988; 1989; Flathman 1993; and also Popkin 1979.

12. Popkin 1979, 51.

Knowledge of the truth about empirical and moral questions, Hobbes argued, is purely knowledge of things as they *appear* to us as conditioned by our individual appetites and aversions. As Richard Tuck has noted, in this regard Hobbes's "crucial idea . . . was simply to treat what is perceived by man—the images and so on which are immediately apparent to an internal observer—as bearing no relationship of *verisimilitude* to the external world. Man is effectively a prisoner within the cell of his own mind, and has no idea what in reality lies outside his prison walls. . . ." ¹³ In *Leviathan*, for example, Hobbes puts the point this way: "whatsoever is the object of any man's appetite or desire that is it which he for his part calleth *good*; and the object of his hate and aversion, *evil*; and of his contempt, *vile* and *inconsiderable*. For these words of good, evil, and contemptible 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."¹⁴

This stance leads logically to Hobbes's nominalism and his characteristic stress on the importance of language and definitions in understanding. Foreshadowing a theme crucial in understanding his conception of international relations, he completes the passage above by noting that the only sources of judgment in these matters arise either "from the person of the man (where there is no commonwealth), or (in a commonwealth) from the person that representeth it, or from an arbitrator or judge whom men disagreeing shall by consent set up, and make his sentence the rule thereof."¹⁵ For Hobbes, truth is not an objective characteristic of things; rather it resides within a framework of accepted and logically related definitions and referents. Or, to put this another way, for Hobbes truth is a function of logic and language, not of the relation between language and some extralinguistic reality.¹⁶

The connection of this framework to empirical reality is always problematic. Empirical knowledge is always hypothetical and conjectural; there is no way to get behind appearances to the thing itself. Rational knowledge, by contrast, consists (like language) of a set of formal definitions and relational rules. Tuck's portrayal of Hobbes's position is exemplary on this point; he argues that for Hobbes "the actual existence of anything which is the object of our thinking is irrelevant. A language is simply a formal system whose relationship to reality is puzzling and contentious; but it is the only tool we have to *reason* with. Hobbes consistently used the analogy of counting to explain what he meant by reasoning. Just as effective counting consists in understanding the rules of a formal system (the natural numbers) which may not have any relation to reality, so effective reasoning consists in understanding the meanings of words within

13. Tuck 1989, 40, emphasis original.

14. Hobbes [1651] 1993b, 28, emphasis original.

15. Ibid.

16. I am thankful to Ross Rudolph for stressing the importance of this point to me.

the system of language without having any clear belief about what they refer to.”¹⁷

Seen in this context, Hobbes’s view of the world is not objective or “scientific” in the positivist sense of the term. And this view is not limited to the problem of empirical knowledge. That which we view as good, or beneficial, is not so in itself but is so only because it appears to us as such. And since these perceptions are inescapably conditioned by the different appetites and aversions of each individual, there is no natural harmony or order among them.

Yet Hobbes’s skepticism is limited. It leads him neither to a Pyrrhonian denial of all knowledge claims nor to the alternative view (not uncommon at the time) that since we cannot know better we have no grounds upon which to challenge prevailing views.¹⁸ Hobbes’s solution, of course, lies in his rationalism and his belief that a universal foundation for action—a foundation for the laws of nature—could be found in the desire for self-preservation and the fear of a violent and painful death. But his rationalism is conditioned by his skepticism in ways central to understanding his theory of politics and indeed the role of politics in his resolution of theoretical dilemmas raised by skepticism.

The laws of nature may in principle be universal and capable of apprehension by all people (though he has severe doubts about humanity’s abilities to do so), but universal recognition would not for Hobbes solve the problem directly. In the absence of a sovereign authority to fix meanings, determine contested facts, and the like, the laws of nature in themselves are an inadequate foundation on which to construct and maintain social order. Similarly, Hobbes was not willing to believe that the individual urge for self-preservation could lead directly to a natural balance of violence born of rational calculation. Each of these situations would require epistemic agreement concerning the realities of the situation: the facts in light of which individuals commonly calculated. But it was the very absence of this commonality that for Hobbes was the source of the problem in the first place; it could hardly be the solution. Rational knowledge may be certain, but taken alone it is in a practical (and quintessentially political) sense inadequate.

By themselves, the laws of nature are not enough, not because rational actors cannot trust each other enough to enter into a social contract but because in the condition of epistemological indeterminacy that Hobbes portrays as natural, this universality is at best a partial step. For even if all were to agree on the right to self-preservation, all need not necessarily agree on what comprised threats to that preservation, how to react to them, or how best to secure themselves against them. Conflict is not simply intrinsic to humanity’s potential for aggression; nor can it be resolved directly through the utilitarian calculations of competing and conflicting interests. On the contrary, Hobbes believes

17. Tuck 1989, 42, emphasis original.

18. For discussions of Hobbes’s conception of science, see Flathman 1993; and Shapin and Shaeffer 1985.

that the answer lies in recognizing the problem: namely, the inability to resolve objectively the problem of knowing facts and morals in any straightforward manner. Once this is recognized, the stage is set for Hobbes's solution, a solution that lies not—as Donald Hanson has argued—in a flight from politics but rather in an appeal to politics.¹⁹ Or, put another way, Hobbes tries to show how rational certainty and skepticism can be paradoxically combined into a solution for politics and a solution by politics.

To escape the state of nature, individuals do not simply alienate their “right to everything” to a political authority.²⁰ More fundamentally, what is granted to that authority is the right to decide among irresolvably contested truths: to provide the authoritative criteria for what is and thus to remove people from the state of epistemic and ethical anarchy that form the basis of the state of nature. Hobbes uses his skepticism both to show the necessity of his solution and to destroy (what he views as dogmatic) counterclaims to political authority based upon unsupportable (individual) claims to truth. In arguing against what he views as seditious individual claims against the authority of the sovereign in *De Cive*, Hobbes puts it in the following way: “*the knowledge of good and evil belongs to each single man*. In the state of nature indeed, where every man lives by equal right, and has not by any mutual pacts submitted to the command of others, we have granted this to be true; nay, [proved it] . . . [But in the civil state it is false. For it was shown. . .] that the civil laws were the rules of *good and evil, just and unjust, honest and dishonest*; that therefore what the legislator commands, must be held for *good*, and what he forbids for *evil*.”²¹ Earlier in the same work, he phrased the argument even more unequivocally, noting that since “the opinions of men differ concerning *meum and tuum, just and unjust, profitable and unprofitable, good and evil, honest and dishonest*, and the like; which every man esteems according to his own judgment: 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.” It follows that for Hobbes: “All judgment therefore, in a city, belongs to him who hath the swords; that is, to him who hath the supreme authority.”²²

These are the fundamental reasons why the sovereign must be unchallengeable; to rebel is to return to the subjectively relative claim to know and the conflict that this inevitably entails. They also explain why the sovereign ultimately must control language (which defines what is) and clarify Hobbes’s repeated stress on the importance of education rather than coercion as the

19. For the argument that the solution lies in flight from politics, see Hanson 1984, 353.

20. The quotation is from Hobbes [1651] 1993b, 80.

21. Hobbes [1651] 1993a, 244, emphasis original. The moral element of this argument was also noted in Morgenthau 1951, 34.

22. Hobbes [1651] 1993a, 178, emphasis original. See also the rendition in Tuck 1989, 65.

essential element in a successful sovereign's rule.²³ Interpretive dissent leads to political dissension and to conflict. In the words of Hobbes's patron, the Earl of Newcastle, "controversy Is a Civil Warr with the Pen which pulls out the sorde soon afterwards."²⁴

Hobbes's purpose is to demonstrate the nature of the problem of political order and, as David Johnston has persuasively argued, to convince people of his as the only final solution to the dilemma.²⁵ The purpose of *Leviathan* was to convince people that this is how a society must be ordered politically, and Hobbes employs both rationalist and skeptical arguments, as well as his considerable rhetorical abilities, to this end. The coercive powers of the sovereign will alone, Hobbes argues, never be sufficient to maintain a political order. Only if the people understand why the polity must be ordered as it must, and only if they continue to view the sovereign as a legitimate authority and trust in its judgment, can a political order be secure. *Leviathan* is an attempt to create precisely this understanding, acceptance, and support, and through them to legitimize and strengthen the political order of the state.

Hobbes does not believe that the simple existence and power of the sovereign are adequate to ensure a stable political order.²⁶ No government is powerful enough to regulate totally the lives of recalcitrant citizens or compel them continually to obey. Rational (Hobbesian) citizens will accept the rule of the sovereign in part out of fear of its power but primarily because they understand the foundations of its authority and the disastrous consequences of its dissolution. As a corollary, the rational (Hobbesian) sovereign will recognize the practical, if not juridical, limits upon its authority and will moderate its actions accordingly. This point, as I will argue later, is vital in understanding Hobbes's vision of international relations.

Hobbesian individuals never give up their right to judge situations for themselves in the sense that if they believe their self-preservation to be threatened, they retain (via the right of nature) the right of rebellion against the sovereign. This puts considerable practical limits upon the sovereign for Hobbes, and given its implications for state action it is important to understand fully the rather complex argument he makes in this regard. If an individual judges his or her life to be in danger (and in this realm the individual's judgment remains supreme) or has committed an act that is a capital crime, then even if juridically wrong, such an individual has by nature the right to defend his- or herself. Equally, should a group come to feel that the sovereign is not protecting their lives adequately, or should they come to judge that the sovereign constitutes a threat to their lives, they have the right to band together in mutual defense. As Hobbes puts it: "But in case a great many men together have already resisted the sovereign power unjustly, or committed some capital

23. Hobbes [1651] 1993a, 262–63.

24. Newcastle is quoted in Shapin and Shaeffer 1985, 290.

25. Johnston 1986.

26. For an argument that Hobbes sees power as an end in itself see Wight 1992, 104.

crime for which every one of them expecteth death, whether have they not the liberty to join together, and assist, and defend one another? Certainly they have; for they but defend their lives, which the guilty man may as well do as the innocent."²⁷

Ultimately, by this logic, if this group should become strong enough that it threatens the ability of the sovereign to guarantee the security of other subjects, or they feel that to obey the rebels is necessary to their survival (in their judgment), then these individuals are at liberty to do so. In this way, Hobbes tries to show how on the very basis of the principles of its foundation and within its own logic, civil order can break down and (civil) war emerge. The fragility of this order, and the disastrous consequences of its breakdown become a lesson to both citizens and the sovereign to understand the practical and prudential limits upon their claims and activities. Rational beings should not challenge the sovereign, Hobbes believes, but this does not mean that they *will not*; and the "Negligent government of Princes," he argues in characteristically dire terms at the conclusion to Part 2 of *Leviathan*, is naturally attended by "Rebellion; and Rebellion, with Slaughter."²⁸

The sovereign should assiduously avoid policies that make rebellion likely. It must educate subjects so that they understand and accept the principles of sovereign authority, and it must maintain sufficient coercive power to convince them if they do not. But even in this latter case, Hobbes accentuates the importance of acceptance and legitimacy, for the coercive capacities of sovereigns themselves depend upon it. If the people rebel, the sovereign must, Hobbes argues, have recourse to arms to enforce civil order. But the possession of this coercive power and the ability to wield it is dependent upon the prior and continuing legitimacy of the sovereign's authority in the eyes of those who will act on its behalf. The problem, as he pointedly asks in *Behemoth*, is that "if men know not their duty, what is there that can force them to obey the laws? An army you will say. But what shall force the army?"²⁹ Without the social legitimacy that makes it possible, the sovereign's coercive power is likely to prove chimerical.

While the sovereign thus has in principle the right to act in any way it chooses, Hobbes argues that a correct understanding of politics will lead not only to obedient citizens but also to prudential self-limitation of activity by a rational sovereign. The sovereign will avoid actions that too obviously threaten the interests of the citizens for fear that it will lose their acceptance of its authority and foment dissension and rebellion.³⁰ This places considerable limits (again rationally, not juridically) on state action both domestically and internationally.

27. Hobbes [1651] 1993b, 143.

28. *Ibid.*, 243.

29. Hobbes [1682] 1969, 59. Again, my thanks to Ross Rudolph for alerting me to this passage.

30. On this theme, see especially Flathman 1993, 121–25.

Since the sovereign's authority rests not just on coercive power or the ability to manipulate utilities but also depends upon its ability to retain legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens, the sovereign should always weigh the implications of its actions on the lives and opinions of its citizens and keep these issues clearly in mind. In its external relations, the same logic applies. The sovereign should not unnecessarily do things that would push the citizens too hard, threaten them or their livelihoods too much, or cause them to question their belief and trust in the judgment and actions of the sovereign.

Indeed, in external relations this logic may be even more imperative. For since the sovereign may be asking (and potentially compelling) the citizens to put their lives at risk in war (and thus potentially allowing them to rebel on the grounds of self-preservation, which is their right by nature) it can do so only if the vast majority of the population continues to trust in the sovereign's adjudication of the situation (threat) and the necessity of risking citizens' lives. It is in war that the continuation of the sovereign's rule is potentially most in jeopardy, not just from the power of other sovereigns but also from domestic dissension. Hobbes, of course, believes that the sovereign is justified in forcing citizens to go to war, but he nonetheless feels it would be unwise and unreasonable to force them to do so needlessly or in situations where the judgments of threat decided upon by the sovereign are shaky and risky enough potentially to erode their legitimacy in the eyes of the citizenry.

Hobbes's understanding of the problems of both domestic and international political relations is intrinsically bound with his skepticism. It is based not upon an empirical science of human behavior in the positivist sense but upon the impossibility of knowing with certainty *that* we know, in the empirical realm. His paradoxical science of politics results not in an objective description of behavior but in a tension-filled stress on practical action in light of the limits and possibilities he outlines. These difficult practical judgments, Hobbes believes, are inescapable; but they are also capable of being successfully carried out by rational people who understand (and who are taught to understand) the foundations of politics. While Hobbes may not have been particularly optimistic about the abilities of human beings to live up to these possibilities, he believes he has provided as definitive an answer to the problem of political order as the limits of human knowledge will allow. It is an answer that is crucial not only to his theory of government but also to his understanding of international relations.

The Hobbesian theory of international relations reconsidered

Anarchy has long been the central concept of realist and neorealist theories of international politics. The key question often has revolved around its source, a divergence also found in different appropriations of Hobbes. In the categories

popularized by Kenneth Waltz (although he does not deal directly with Hobbes) is Hobbes a first-image theorist, basing his analysis upon a series of claims about the nature of individuals; a second-image theorist concerned with the nature of states; or a structural realist, who emphasizes the (third-image) determinations of anarchy itself?³¹

References to Hobbesian anarchy are commonplace among each of these alternatives. All, however, have tended to miss the centrality of his skepticism. The interpretation of Hobbes's vision of politics developed so far allows us both to gain a critical perspective upon each of these prevailing readings and to develop an alternative understanding of his position. While the following discussion can in no way be comprehensive and most particularly will leave his relationship to so-called classical realism largely implicit, it seeks to sketch some of the implications of this reading of the foundations of Hobbes's thought for prevailing theories of international relations and his place within them.

Anarchy and objective knowledge: neorealism

Perhaps the most dramatic implications of this rereading of Hobbes are, ironically, for the perspective that most conspicuously dismisses his reasoning: Waltz's structural realism. While Hobbesian anarchy is often used as a shorthand characterization of the neorealist vision of international relations, Waltz is considerably more precise. To Waltz, Hobbes is a classical realist (like Morgenthau) in that he finds the source of anarchy in the nature of human beings or the state rather than locating it—as does Waltz's structural realism—in a scientific grasp of the nature of the interstate system itself.³² In Waltz's view, then, Hobbes provides an example of the errors and limitations of "reductionist" theory.

Even leaving aside the question of Waltz's conception of structure, Hobbes's analysis provides two fundamental challenges to Waltz's neorealist position.³³ He first challenges the very assumption of the state that Waltz relies upon. For Hobbes, the state is a highly complex and fragile construction: a practical political project whose international actions are circumscribed not just by its capabilities but also by the practical constraints of its domestic construction. The state cannot be reduced to a set of objective capabilities because the continued existence of these capabilities and the ability to exercise the power they represent are inextricably bound with the legitimacy of the political order itself.³⁴ The implications of this point for Hobbes's vision of international relations will be detailed below, but in relation to Waltz's neorealist formulation the important point is that state power is not simply a means or an

31. For definitions of these categories, see Waltz 1959.

32. Waltz 1991, 35; see also Waltz 1979.

33. For further discussion of Waltz's conception of structure, see Ashley 1984; Dessler 1989; Walker 1989; and Wendt 1987.

34. Waltz 1991, 36.

objective capability. For Hobbes, it is a result of the resolution of fundamental problems and dilemmas in the construction of a potentially fragile and contingent political order. The existence and exercise of state power, therefore, cannot for Hobbes be viewed in isolation from the constraints and considerations surrounding its genesis and continued legitimacy.

The second and related challenge lies in the fact that Hobbes is a reductionist precisely because he regards as inescapably problematic the form of knowledge upon which Waltz builds his theory of international relations. The distinction between fact and theory, central to modern empiricism and to Waltz's conception of theory, is one that Hobbes vociferously denied. Much like contemporary postempiricists, Hobbes denies the claim that matters of fact upon which theories can be built are unproblematically given. In fact, his skepticism provides a challenge to Waltz's conception of theory that is remarkably—and ironically—analogueous to that of contemporary postpositivism. Hobbes regarded experiential knowledge—or what he preferred to call “natural history”—as at best probabilistic.³⁵

Hobbes cannot be marginalized by a rhetorical banishment as a reductionist theorist. He takes this stance not because he is ignorant of science but because he is skeptical about its foundations and highly concerned with the structure of knowledge and its political implications. And as we have seen, it is Hobbes's skepticism about the status of empirical knowledge that forms the basis for his concerns with questions of order, authority, and legitimacy within the state. These concerns in turn are directly reflected in both the theoretical foundation and practical content of his understanding of the relations between states.

In sum, Hobbes is not a mistaken reductionist whose analyses reflect a more general realist failing to understand adequately the nature of scientific explanation. Nor, paradoxically, is he an advocate of a positivist-inspired science of international politics as some so-called critical theorists recently have averred.³⁶ His stance is a result of a rejection of both of these theoretical alternatives.

Anarchy and rational action: rational-choice theory

If Hobbes's thought raises difficult questions for Waltz's conception of science and knowledge, it sits equally uncomfortably with the (often, and in various ways, related) attempt to construct a science of international relations upon rational-choice foundations.³⁷ There can be no doubt that on first glance Hobbes's theory of the anarchy of the state of nature possesses considerable similarities to rational-choice theories. His portrayal of the state of nature

35. On the question of knowledge, certainty, and probability in science see Simon and Shaeffer 1985; and, more generally, Hacking 1984; and Shapiro 1983.

36. See, for example, George 1994, 49–50.

37. For an analysis of other shortcomings in attempting to read Hobbes in this way, see Herzog 1989, chap. 3 especially.

seems to provide a compelling formulation of the problem of coordinating the actions of rational individuals in the absence of an authoritative decision-making and enforcing entity. The Leviathan is precisely such an entity and solves the problem for domestic society, but the creation of domestic stability comes at the cost of the creation of international anarchy. States as rational utility maximizers now find themselves in an international state of nature.³⁸ While all would be best served by cooperation, in a condition of self-help and anarchy, who contracts first? How can any state trust the others to obey the laws of nature and thus join them in the contract, if the Leviathan is not yet in existence to ensure (enforce) their compliance?

Yet this reading is subject to a number of difficulties. If this is the logic of anarchy faced by Hobbesian states-as-individuals, then how (logically) could those Hobbesian states ever themselves have come into existence? From this perspective, in other words, the logic of suspicion and calculation between individuals would seem to preclude the possibility of the (state-creating) Hobbesian contract in the first place. If the claim is that the international system is directly analogous to the Hobbesian state of nature, and thereby incapable of transcendence, then the creation of the Hobbesian state—upon which the entire rational-choice analysis is built—itself seems a logical impossibility.³⁹ And if this is the case, then relying on the Hobbesian contract as the initial condition that creates the international anarchy is fallacious. It is based upon a logic of action that undermines its very premises. To put the point slightly differently: if states are identical to Hobbesian individuals—that is, if the purported anarchy of international relations relies upon a direct analogy to Hobbesian political theory—why does not the move to an international Leviathan also follow directly? Conversely, if it is argued that states-as-Hobbesian-individuals would not contract globally because none could trust the others, then the initial construction of the Hobbesian contract must also be cast into doubt; and it is upon that contract that the whole of the rational-choice analysis of the creation of the international anarchy is premised.

If we adopt the rational-choice reading of Hobbes, we must see him as confused. Either his theory of the creation of the Leviathan is flawed, or his failure to extend the logic of his argument to a global scale is illogical. Yet is it likely that Hobbes, so renowned for his logical rigor, simply failed to recognize that his theory seemed either necessarily to require an extension of the contract to relations between sovereigns or to be logically contradictory? The interpretation of Hobbes developed earlier allows us to answer some of these questions and to see why, in Hobbes's eyes, his logic does not fall prey to the apparent contradiction that plagues a strict rational-choice appropriation of his ideas.

38. For an example of an interpretation of Hobbes's theory in rational-choice terms, see Gauthier 1969.

39. For an application of this argument as part of a critique of the supposedly Hobbesian premises of neorealist international political economy, see Inayatullah and Rupert 1994, 62–64.

From Hobbes's position, the central problematic of rational-choice theories of anarchy, that of who contracts first and its apparently insuperable paradoxes, simply does not arise, because Hobbes's theory is not based upon a purely utilitarian calculus. The Hobbesian contract is not an event whose actuality—historically or logically—Hobbes must contest. He is not outlining an empirical theory of how societies came into being but rather is delineating what he believes to be the terms for correct thinking about politics and is elucidating the principles upon which states *ought* to be structured. His argument is a deduction based upon a skeptical analysis of the nature of human knowledge. Societies and governments, Hobbes seems to imply, may have come into existence historically through all kinds of mistaken or false ideas, but so long as they remain founded upon those ideas they are inherently unstable and bound to dissension, turmoil, and collapse. Only a reconstruction of such societies, along the lines demonstrated by Hobbes himself and in virtue of the problems he outlines, can he feels serve to avoid this disastrous fate.

Far from seeking to develop either a straightforward rational-choice theory of social life and an analogous account of international relations, or a scientific theory along the lines of Waltz's structural realism, it is from the problem of objective empirical knowledge itself that Hobbes begins. It cannot be overstated that his is a political theory based not upon modern political science in either of these forms but upon a profound skepticism concerning the very kind of knowledge that provides the foundation of the theoretical positions.

Hobbes as a theorist of international society

Despite its more nuanced reading of Hobbes, a similar dilemma underlies the English school's attempt to enlist Hobbes as a theorist of international society. Rather than building its analysis upon the supposed affinities between a Hobbesian state of nature and an international state of war, the case for viewing Hobbes as a rationalist emerges in part from an attempt to resolve the question of why Hobbes fails to make the apparently obvious logical extension of the contract binding individuals to one binding states. Rationalists find the answer in Hobbes's stress on the clear differences between the situation of individuals in the state of nature and that which pertains between states.⁴⁰ In *Leviathan*, Hobbes argues that "Nature hath made men so equall, in the faculties of body, and mind; as that though there be found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body, or of quicker mind than another; yet when all is reckoned together, the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable, as that one man can thereupon to himself any benefit, to which another may not pretend as well as he."⁴¹ There is no natural hierarchy in the state of nature upon which order can be based. Characteristics advantageous in the

40. For a complementary view from realism, see Smith 1986, 13–14.

41. Hobbes [1651] 1993b, 74.

struggle are diversely distributed: some are strong, others quick, still others clever. Moreover, this relative equality of capacities is tied to the existence of these individuals as solitary individuals. Even the strongest must sometimes sleep, and all are subject to disease, age, and ultimately death, circumstances that make any continuing exercise of domination impossible.

For rationalists, these considerations radically differentiate the relations of Leviathans from those of individuals. The Leviathan never sleeps and (except in specific circumstances) it never dies. As ever-alert and immortal, it transcends the limitations that simple individuals encounter in their attempts to survive in the state of nature. As a corporate body, its strength is the strength of all its members. In both cases, the result is that the radical equality that defines the state of nature composed of individuals is not present in the relations between states; they are qualitatively different orders. And since states are not subject to the same conditions as individuals—equality, sleep, mortality—they can transcend some of the more anarchic qualities of the state of nature and create more stable forms of coexistence among themselves. The continuing absence of a global Leviathan itself has implications for the international situation. While this absence has not yielded a situation directly analogous to that pertaining within commonwealths, neither has it yielded the opposite—an anarchic international state of nature (war).

On this basis, Bull notes that “the idea of a covenant of sovereigns does not seem to have occurred to Hobbes” and argues that this is because the Hobbesian laws of nature provide a common, if imperfect, foundation for the coordination of interstate relations.⁴² Rational self-interest provides a common foundation for the coordination of action, the conduct of behavior, and the creation of relatively stable international orders. In Bull’s view, “imperfect though they are, these laws of nature, ‘the articles of peace’ as Hobbes calls them, are the lifeline to which sovereign states in the international anarchy must cling if they are to survive.”⁴³ Although the embodiment of these precepts in practice is difficult and contingent, and certainly different from the realm of domestic politics, these laws of nature form a common foundation of political order at both levels. As Bull argues, “The articles of peace contain within them most of the basic rules of co-existence on which states have relied in the international anarchy from Hobbes’s time and before it to our own.”⁴⁴

In this “rationalist” tradition in international relations therefore, the differences between individuals in the state of nature and those between states in the international system provide a critical perspective upon “realist” claims that international politics is a straightforward condition of Hobbesian anarchy or is directly analogous to a Hobbesian state of nature. As such, this recognition becomes a useful corrective to the appropriation of Hobbes’s thought by

42. Bull 1977b, 726.

43. *Ibid.*, 728.

44. *Ibid.*, 728.

theorists of *realpolitik*. On the other hand, as both Bull and Vincent are at pains to emphasize, it is also a recognition that undermines the arguments of those who seek to use Hobbesian premises as the bases for the necessary transcendence of this international state of war. For if international anarchy is in significant ways not directly analogous to the Hobbesian state of nature, then a move along Hobbesian lines from this situation toward a global covenant does not follow either. Instead, the rationalist approach argues, this interpretation allows us to move beyond the continual vacillation between these poles to explore the nature and functioning of an international society within a Grotian approach to world politics based upon shared interests and norms.

Yet the attempt to portray Hobbes as a rationalist confronts a significant problem when viewed from within the skeptical foundations previously discussed. The proposed alternative to the realist reading of Hobbesian anarchy focuses upon the rules and norms that differentiate international society from an international state of nature. A key question thus becomes the source and nature of these rules. Bull, as we have seen, finds them in the (albeit imperfect) extension of the logic of self-interest (the Hobbesian laws of nature) from the domestic to the international realm. While insightful, this transference of the laws of nature (essentially a shift in the nature of the analogy, not in the adequacy of the analogy itself) misses the complexity of the question and the difficulties that Hobbes's line of thought presents to such a solution.

A recognition of the role of skepticism in Hobbes's thought considerably complicates too-easy an acceptance of the rationalist view because the epistemological relativism it yields undermines the coordination of actions based upon self-interest and self-defense. Just as in the state of nature between individuals, the laws of nature are an inadequate basis for order between sovereigns because in themselves they cannot overcome the lack of epistemic agreement necessary for their effective functioning. As Tuck has argued, if there is no epistemic agreement concerning the facts of the situation, "then there will be no agreement about what should be done, and everyone will act on the basis of their own different assessments of the situation. Conflict will arise despite the apparent solution to the relativist problem contained in the idea of a natural and universal right of self-defence. The grimmest version of skeptical relativism seems after all to be the only possible ethical vision; and for ethics taken independently of politics, this is indeed Hobbes's position."⁴⁵

Again, Hobbes's problematic is not simply one of rational coordination and self-interest. It is also (indeed fundamentally) one of epistemic agreement. Without such agreement, he holds, social concord cannot come about. Hobbes rejects the extension of the social contract to the international level, not only because international relations do not constitute a true (and therefore less intolerable) state of nature, or because the laws of nature are not universal.

45. Tuck 1989, 64.

Rather, his view seems to be that the necessarily authoritative role of sovereigns domestically precludes the extension of agreement internationally.

The sovereign must remain absolutely authoritative or it cannot perform its necessary role. To hold it susceptible to international standards (or those of other sovereigns) would be the same as holding it accountable to individual judgments (and thus challenges) from its citizens domestically. And this is just what Hobbes feels it is imperative to avoid. The appeal to the laws of nature that underlies the rationalist view is inadequate as an understanding of Hobbes's international theory for the same reasons as a focus solely on the laws of nature provides an incomplete understanding of his theory of sovereignty; namely, it overlooks the importance of Hobbes's skepticism and the role of this skepticism in both making necessary and justifying Hobbes's belief in the need for absolute sovereignty.

It is important to stress that a recognition of this shortcoming in the rationalist interpretation rests upon issues far removed from those invoked by neorealism and should in no way be seen as supporting neorealist claims. But it does pose a series of important and complex questions for the rationalist perspective on international society. For Hobbes, the link between the rational and the epistemological realms is crucial. He claims that the problems of political order can only be resolved by a shared understanding of the relationship between knowledge and politics (the rational principles of the laws of nature, the limits of human knowledge, and the necessary legitimacy of absolute sovereign authority that follows in their wake) together with the existence of a political authority that can overcome the limits of a purely rational solution.

It could certainly be argued, though I will not attempt to do so fully here, that Hobbes could (and probably did—think of medieval Christendom) envision the existence of transnational norms. But he would most likely view these norms as analogous to the (irrational) customary beliefs and ideas that often have existed as the bases for political orders. His concern would then be similar to that which he levels at domestic political orders constructed upon the same foundations, i.e., that they are inherently contingent and likely to crumble—with catastrophic (conflictual) consequences. Hobbes's own solution to the problems of international order is, as I shall argue shortly, grounded less in a reliance upon such norms and more upon the consequences of well-ordered sovereignties. But whatever the case, Hobbes's views on international relations speak to contemporary rationalist concerns in ways not often sufficiently acknowledged.

Hobbesian international political theory

The argument as developed thus far can be restated in the following terms: “Natural” human aggressiveness, vanity, and the like are not the sole or

fundamental bases for Hobbes's analysis of the state of nature. Neither does that foundation lie in the assumption that utilitarian individuals are equally rational in competitive pursuit of the same things; nor that they are objectively determined by the (scientifically discernible) structure within which they find themselves. Rather, the dilemma is that human beings have no natural way of agreeing upon what things are—what the reality of the world *is*—in either an empirical or a straightforwardly moral sense.

In Hobbes's theoretical universe, there are no objective facts to which to appeal in order to resolve this situation. The laws of nature provide a partial solution, but their valid appraisal is linked to a correct grasp of the skeptical dilemma and its implications. Perceptions of what is good as well as bad, potentially beneficial as well as threatening, are at the most basic level inescapably relative. This is the source of Hobbes's portrayal of the state of nature. It is not simply authority or coordination that is lacking. For Hobbes, it is truth in the conventional sense that is absent. Without agreement upon what is good and bad, true and false, right and wrong, and what ought to be done about it, the condition that he terms the "state of nature" is inevitable. The fear of death and the capacity for rational understanding of their situation, as well as for the rational calculation of the way out of it, unite all of humanity. But this is not enough to secure peace, order, and commodious living. For Hobbes, without the existence of an authoritative sovereign to define the ethical and material world in which we live, this commonality is the source of the problem; it is not the solution.

This interpretation of Hobbes's thought considerably complicates the picture of Hobbesian anarchy so often analogously painted in international relations.⁴⁶ Contrary to neorealism (and many critics of its purportedly Hobbesian foundations), Hobbes does not build his political vision upon a correct analysis of the empirical facts or upon the straightforward rational calculations of rational actors responding to the objective conditions in which they find themselves. And contrary to the rationalist view, his solution does not rest upon a form of agreement derived from the straightforward extension of the laws of nature based upon self-interest and self-preservation. Rather, Hobbes argues that the Leviathan solves a series of much more difficult problems concerning epistemology and ethics and their role in the creation of political communities. This claim is of great relevance in understanding his view of international relations.

Hobbes's vision of politics (and the science of it) is, as Richard Flathman has recently and vigorously argued, a highly "chastened" one, in both its epistemological claims and practical recommendations.⁴⁷ While some scholars continue to call for a discipline constructed along the lines of positivist science, this is not a stance Hobbes would have supported; nor can it be sustained by a reference

46. For one attempt to move beyond these formulations, see Navari 1978.

47. Flathman 1993.

to the "Hobbesian" analysis of international relations.⁴⁸ Indeed as Flathman notes, to the extent that Hobbes's ideas in this realm were "In important respects anticipating views now prominent in the philosophy of science, it is not an account that is likely to warm the hearts of the apostles of science—whether natural or the so-called science of politics."⁴⁹ Whether or not those who continue the attempt to found a science of international politics will find Hobbes's reasoning on these questions compelling is, of course, open to debate. One thing seems clear, however: Hobbes certainly cannot easily be enlisted as an authority in support of that enterprise.

Skepticism about the limits of human knowledge leads Hobbes to great caution in human affairs, especially regarding the relationship of theory to practice. He warns that to act as if we can know (predict) and control the future is to court disaster. In this light, then, it is an interesting (if anachronistic) question to ask what he might have thought about, for example, the intimate relationship between the science of strategic studies and American involvement in the Vietnam War.⁵⁰ It is probably equally fair to say that he would have had little sympathy for continuing efforts toward the creation of "policy sciences" in the discipline as a whole.⁵¹

Hobbes's skepticism also plays a role in his positing of an international system populated by sovereigns operating upon Hobbesian principles. Knowing the limitations of human knowledge, and the inability to know God's will or other visions of ultimate human fulfillment, Hobbes believes that rational sovereigns will not act in an unnecessarily aggressive manner. His vision of foreign policy is cautious and essentially pacific, a position that, as Flathman has illustrated drawing upon a passage from the *Elements of Law*, is conditioned by—or perhaps founded in—his skepticism: "Hobbes is far from a supporter of bellicose or expansionist policies. Because no preparation can assure victory, 'such commonwealths, or such monarchs, as affect war for itself . . . out of ambition, or of vain-glory, or that make account to avenge every little injury, or disgrace done by their neighbours, if they not ruin themselves, their fortune must be better than they have reason to expect.'"⁵²

The hubris engendered by religious dogma, political fanaticism, or (social scientific?) claims to political wisdom will most likely lead to disaster. This fits clearly with both Hobbes's strictures on the claims to religious knowledge and his attacks on militaristic or destructive ideologies of honor.⁵³ Skepticism leads to a suspicion of, and attack against, dogmatism and (in Hobbes's sense) irrationalism. Again this illustrates that Hobbes was attempting to create a new

48. For such an analysis in the field of security studies, for example, see Walt 1991.

49. Flathman 1993, 29; see also 49.

50. For broad analyses of the relationship between social science and strategic studies, see Kaplan 1983; Trachtenberg, 1991; and especially Klein 1994.

51. For a somewhat complementary contemporary analysis, see Gaddis 1993.

52. Flathman 1993, 110.

53. See Thomas 1965, 196–98 especially. See also the argument about the implications of the acceptance of limits pursued in Coker 1992.

political understanding and with it, new political practices, not describe an existing state of affairs between Hobbesian Leviathans.

In their relations with one another, Hobbes claims that correctly constituted sovereigns exist in the same situation of skeptical relativism toward one another as individuals in the state of nature. But there are crucial differences. One of these, well-recognized in the rationalist perspective, concerns the different physical capabilities of states and individuals and the fact that within Hobbesian states the most destructive and fearful aspects of the state of nature have been ameliorated, lessening the radical insecurity and conflict that otherwise would be dominant. Less well-recognized is the amelioration of conflict due to a second pacifying dynamic: the implications of the relationship between the sovereign and its own citizens. In the neorealist appropriation of Hobbes, and in its analysis of international relations, this question is almost completely obscured. The problem of sovereignty and authority is taken as resolved through an absolute Leviathan. This in turn allows us to treat states-as-actors in terms analogous to those of Hobbesian individuals. It follows that the only major constraints on state action are its capabilities and the relative capabilities of other states.

It is apparent, however, that this is far from Hobbes's position. In his view, rational sovereigns cannot act toward each other as individuals might because as a corporate body the sovereign must consider the relationship between its external relations and relations with its own citizens. The sovereign, recognizing the foundations of its authority, must be careful not to lose the trust of the citizens. Domestically, this loss can arise from an abuse of its powers. Even though the sovereign has the right to treat its citizens in virtually any way it sees fit, Hobbes believes that it should not, and he believes he has given convincing reasons why it should not.

These considerations put limitations on the actions of the sovereign beyond those of simple caution or restricted material capabilities. Hobbes's analysis is not simply that an adventurous foreign policy is imprudent. Rather the question of knowledge and social consent is once again key. Since aggression is not innate but arises in part from uncertainty, Hobbes's Leviathans are not necessarily aggressive toward one another. More importantly, since they must ultimately convince the citizens to obey their judgments of threats (and thus convince citizens themselves to go to war or support preparations for it) the prudent sovereign will be cautious in engaging in the practice for fear of losing the trust of the citizens in its judgment (just as it should not oppress the citizens unnecessarily for the same reason), and by so doing push them to dissension or rebellion.

This question was of the utmost importance for Hobbes. In his own time the monarch's demands for Ship Money for the building of a larger navy, which Hobbes helped collect despite the objections of many citizens, was a crucial

issue in the onset of the English civil war.⁵⁴ It remains an important contemporary question. Consider again, for instance, the domestic travails of the U.S. government over its engagement in the war in Vietnam and the impact of that experience upon subsequent policy debates; the dilemmas of European governments in dealing with broad-based peace movements in the 1980s; and the considerable ideological resources mobilized to legitimize virtually any contemporary use of military force.

Finally, Hobbes's conception of international relations poses difficult questions for yet another aspect of contemporary international relations theory. For if, as some argue today, we need to appeal to rules and norms (or, more broadly, to postmodern or constructivist methods, and concepts such as governance) in our understanding of international relations, Hobbes's views raise a series of fundamental issues.⁵⁵ On the one hand, it needs to be recognized at the very least that Hobbes's less than sanguine vision of international politics cannot be dismissed as naively positivist, and those theories critical of positivist-inspired theories of international relations would be well-served by a serious engagement with his thought rather than with its summary dismissal. His political vision is intimately intertwined with epistemological and ethical issues at the heart of current debates. If Hobbes's view is held to be inadequate (which in many ways I would argue it is, though that is another question), such judgments must come to terms with the sophisticated and difficult questions around which his thought revolves.

Hobbes's concentration on issues of knowledge, consent, and legitimacy in social action make his thought of great, if often uncomfortable and certainly unfamiliar, relevance to current research into international regimes, epistemic communities, political discourse, and the like. But his thought also poses substantial challenges to too-easy a belief that a turn to norms and subjectivity represents inherently progressive alternatives to the essentialist visions of human nature, anarchy, or the state often found in realism or the scientific pretensions of structural neorealism. His anti-objectivist epistemological stance does not lead to a happy world of openness, play, and difference; rather it highlights the ways in which such a position can underlie dangerous and potentially bloody dynamics.

As an intellectual ally in an anti-objectivist crusade, Hobbes is a very tricky and difficult partner. He develops a sophisticated vision of the difficulties involved in constructing and securing fragile and inherently contingent political orders, whether they be domestic or international. It is a much different and more sophisticated vision than that which focuses upon timeless natures or supposedly eternal structural determination, but in its stress on the nature of human subjectivity and the limits of human understanding, Hobbes's analysis

54. See Somerville 1992, 18.

55. For example, on governance, see Rosenau and Czempel 1992. On rules and norms, see Onuf 1989; and Kratochwil 1989.

raises very difficult questions. For those who would like to appeal to concepts such as relativity and intersubjectivity in the construction of a different understanding of international politics, an engagement with Hobbes serves, to borrow a phrase from John Dunn, as a “tart reminder” of the less salutary implications that such a position can yield and the questions that it must confront.⁵⁶

Hobbes’s theory of international politics, to summarize, does not provide the foundation for an objective structural analysis of international relations immune from the questions of ethics and the domestic character of states. While some might suggest that his arguments open more questions than they answer and that Hobbes’s own attempts to answer them may be ultimately unconvincing, an adequate grasp of Hobbes’s thought demands that international relations engage a series of questions long central to modern political thought. Rather than severing international relations (both in theory and practice) from questions of the political order of modernity, Hobbes’s philosophy of international politics places these questions at the center of any attempt to grasp contemporary world politics.

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56. Dunn 1991, 47.

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